



Newsletter of the San Diego  
Chapter of "TCF"  
**The Compassionate Friends**  
A non profit self-help organization  
for families who are grieving the death of a child.



*These pages Dedicated with Love to:*

November /  
December 2016

Issue 128

Dedication and  
Love Gifts 1-2

Mission Statement  
Meeting Location 3

Telephone Friends  
Loved, Missed and  
Remembered 4

Articles 5-10

Websites  
Steering Committee 11

*Location, see  
p. 3*

Next Meeting

Wednesday  
November 2nd

Wednesday  
December 7<sup>th</sup>

Note Time Change:  
Holiday Program  
Starts 6:00 pm



Kristina Michelle Bennett

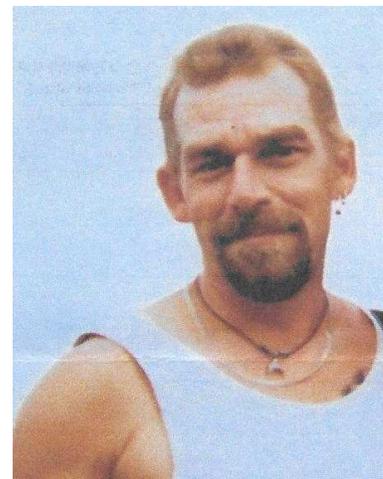


Allen J. Kha

♥ Always In Our Hearts ♥



Joshua James Lubrich



Duane Charles Alley

San Diego Chapter of TCF  
11582 Fury Lane #118  
El Cajon, CA 92019  
(619) 583-1555  
[www.sdtcf.org](http://www.sdtcf.org)

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Web Site: [www.compassionatefriends.org/](http://www.compassionatefriends.org/)

## Donations and Love Gifts

Dedications and Love Gifts go towards the cost of: printing and mailing of this Newsletter; outreach activities to the newly bereaved; and other expenses necessary to continue our chapter in San Diego. These donations are tax deductible. Our sincerest thanks to all who honor their children in this way.

- ♥ Susan Wen & Long Kha — In Loving Memory of their son Allen.
- ♥ Louise Hendrickson — In Loving Memory of her son Duane.
- ♥ Yvonne & Lucien Bennett-Niang — In Loving Memory of their daughter Kristina. “Merry Christmas in heaven to Tina. We wish you were here.” from your family.
- ♥ Sandi and Mark Terrell— In Loving Memory of Joshua. To our beloved son & brother, Joshua: Happy 27th Birthday Joshua! We Love You and Miss You Forever and Always!! You will always be our “Jewel” in the family, one to be “Gone But Never Forgotten!” We miss you more with each passing day! You’re still a part of everything we do; you’re on our hearts, just like a tattoo, “Just like a Tattoo, we’ll always have you!” ♥ Mom, Dad, Best Friend Zachary and Stephane, Ryan and Kiersten with baby Lily Mae, Andrew and Virginia with baby Andrew Joshua, Best Friend Jason and Brittney with baby Dylan Amir and baby Jayce Benjamin and Best Friends Forever, Persio!
- ♥ Elene Bratton — In Loving Memory of Her son Jamie. Elene has found several ways to honor her son, one is to raise money by a celebration of his life with family, friends, guests and sharing a contribution with TCF. Thank you Elene for not only finding a way to remember your son, but also help us.



### About our Memorial Balloon Release in September.

We had a nice turnout, enjoyable occasion. So many pitched in to make it happen.

Special Thanks to:

Kathy Shott for reserving and helping setting up the site for us. Mayra helped but unable to attend, purchased drinks.

Mark & Sandi bring food and barbecuing, drinks.

Young people, Frankie, Joseph, Calli and others taking goods to and from cars to picnic site. All around helpers.

Helium tanks, balloon inflation, many helped.

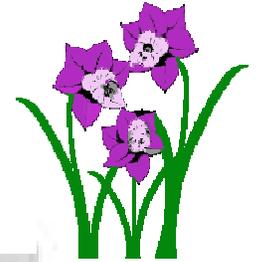
Special thanks to all.





***Our Children – Loved, Missed and Remembered  
November & December***

**We remember the families of:**



**Birthdays**

***Luis Walter & Teresa Carolina Bernal,  
born 11-1***

***Davey Johnson, born 11-2***

***Sammy Fishkin, born 11-2***

***Gregg Garon, born 11-3***

***Joshua James Lubrich, born 11-3***

***Sumi Suresh, born 11-4***

***Allen J. Kha, born 11-10***

***Craig Thomas Markley, born 11-16***

***Rick E. Pieramico, born 11-19***

***Kyle Goff, born 11-21***

***Kristy Shoemate, born 11-24***

***Josh Forness, born 11-27***

***Dylan Libby, born 11-28***

***Mikael Larson, born 12-2***

***Steve Kraft, born 12-4***

***Malini Elizabeth Sathyadev, born 12-7***

***Ronald Jack Drew, born 12-7***

***Anthony James Shott, born 12-13***

***Collin Barnes, born 12-15***

***Rick Nolin, born 12-21***

***Ginger Melania Walker, born 12-24***

***Milton (Danny) Smith, born 12-28***

***Jasmine Bellofatto, born 12-29***

***Ron Laverty, born 12-30***

**Anniversaries**

***Luis Walter & Teresa Carolina Bernal,  
died 11-1***

***Azja K. Ostrye, , died 11-4***

***Mark E. Gannon, died 11-06***

***Joshua Pudsey, , died 11-12***

***Alan H. Balsam, died 11-13***

***Alexander Joseph Niazi, died 11-26***

***Gary R. Lopez, died 11-12***

***Alan James Hein, died 11-25***

***Skip Anaya-Summers, died 11-21***

***Reese Kaitlyn, died 11-19***

***Allison Dunn, died 11-30***

***Daniel R. Keyser, died 12-2***

***Amy Sara Bowden, died 12-21***

***Justin Scott, died 12-9.***

***Stephanie Johanna Westrich, died 12-10***

***Riley Gail Horgan, died 12-11***

***Marsha Cushing, died 12-19***

***Wallace Michaelson, died 12-19***

***Andrea Lynn Montisano, died 12-19***

***Megan Ashley Landis, died 12-17***

***Vincent Glen Ruddy, died 12-13***

***Jennifer Ann Donnell, died 12-24***

***David Sullivan, died 12-9***

***Andres Saputo, died 12-23***

***Anthony James Shott, died 12-25***

***Ryan Kelley Spohr, died 12-20***

# Annual Holiday Program And Candle Lighting Ceremony



Join the San Diego Chapter of  
“The Compassionate Friends”  
in this annual  
worldwide candle lighting ceremony

**“ . . . that their light may always shine.”**

**Sunday, December 11, 2016**

—New Start Time— **6:00 to 8:00 pm**



**Community of Christ Church**

**4811 Mount Etna Dr 92117**

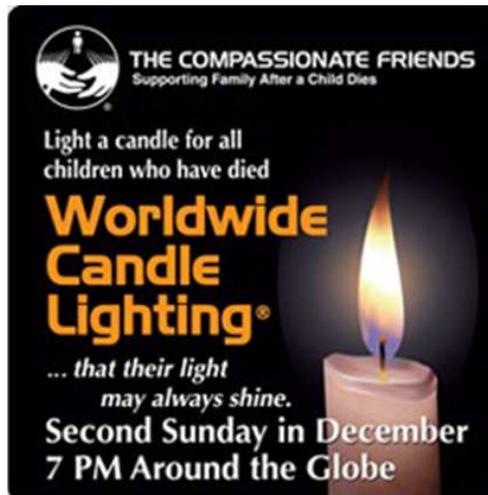
**In the Clairemont area of San Diego**

Please join us as the light is passed on from the Mountain to the Pacific Time zone. It is then passed on its 24-hour trip around the world in our children’s memory. This night is dedicated to our children. We invite grandparents, aunts, uncles, brother, sisters and friends in this night of sharing. If you wish, please bring a finger food to share.

## Share your memories

This year a part of the holiday program will be dedicated to non-denominational remarks from family members or friends. These special memories or poems should be two minutes or less. This will allow more to participate.

If interested please contact Barbara at (619) 660-5115.



## Directions:

Community of Christ Church  
4811 Mount Etna Dr.

Take I-805 to Balboa Ave. west. Turn right (north) on Genesee Ave. one block, Left turn (west) on Mount Etna Dr. ½ mile or so. (Church is on left side.)

Genesee Ave. runs north and south about one mile west of I-805 and can be accessed from Balboa Ave.; Clairemont Dr.; or Hwy 52.

Our children’s photos will be shared in a video presentation. If your child’s picture is not on our picture board and you wish it to be in the video presentation, please try to have it available by the November TCF meeting. Or e-mail picture to: Norval Lyon [2zimba2@gmail.com](mailto:2zimba2@gmail.com) or send by regular mail to: SDTCF, 11582 Fury Ln. #118, El Cajon, CA. 92019. Please have it available no later than November 15.

*A Birthday Message*

To: her son, Duane Charles Alley

*I can't call you on your birthday and sing Happy Birthday.**I can't see your wish list so that I can buy you a gift.**I can't give you a birthday hug and kiss.**I can't celebrate with you.**I can visit you at the cemetery.**I can hurt and long for you.**I can think about you.**I can share my sadness with whoever calls.**I want to do what I cannot and not what I can.**I love you.**Happy Birthday.**Mom* (Louise Henderson)*(original by Phyllis Levine in beyond tears)**Since memories are all I have, I remember you in this picture on your 34th birthday and all the fun we had. Forever in my heart. Love Mom.*

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**I Am Your Sister and Always Will Be**

"I am your sister and always will be." That's how Susie signed her cards to me. After a while, she shortened it to, "I am..." And of course I knew the rest of it. Susie was two and one-half years younger than I. She was alive one evening talking on the phone to Mom about the Oscars and to Dad about moving. The next day she was found. Whatever it was--it ended her life and changed mine forever.

There was a wonderful side of my sister that I didn't pay enough attention to. She was a kind and loving person, always ready to shelter lost animals and lost souls. When she was in a good mood, her smiles warmed my heart. Yet I spent most of my life wishing that things were different: wishing that she thought more of herself, wishing that she would take my advice, wishing that she were happier, wishing that we could accept each other.

Now, for two years, I've done nothing but wish she were here so we could have another chance to work at our relationship. Now, I wish that I had been able to give her my unconditional love & support. (She needed it and deserved it.) Now, I wish that I could have been with her that night so she would not have been alone. Now, I wish that I would have held her in my arms and told her how very much I loved her. Because, Susie, I am your sister and always will be.

Michele Walters  
TCF Baltimore, MD  
In Memory of my sister, Susie

## Thanksgiving Marks Beginning Of Holiday Madness and Sadness

In our society we have turned the holidays into a never ending round of parties, shopping, cooking, preparations for guests or travel and stress, lots and lots of stress. It begins in October with the not so subtle reminders from our friendly retail stores. Most of us dread this time of year because as members of Compassionate Friends, we have one more item on our list and it invariably is at the top.....my child is gone.....how can I handle the holidays?

This will be my third Thanksgiving without my son. We had 35 wonderful Thanksgiving celebrations together, and now it's just me. My only child is gone, my grandchildren now live solely in their mother's world. I am not a part of that world.

But I am learning to cope with this reality. I am learning that I can hold on to the traditions that don't cause me sadness and let go of those that do. As bereaved parents we fall into a unique category. As humans we accept that the loss of parents, spouses, aunts, uncles, siblings, friends and acquaintances is inevitable. But never, never, were we taught or conditioned to the idea that our children would or could precede us in death. The very notion of this shook us to our core.

Now we have lost our child to death. Nobody prepared us for this mind numbing loss. The rules have been broken. We have no coping skills. Our friends usually can't help. Our families try, but until one endures a loss of this magnitude, the ability to fully comprehend the never ending rounds of sadness is simply not there.

We do have a support system.....we can choose to participate or simply be there, in the moment, at our Compassionate Friends meetings. Here we find our most meaningful and helpful connection with other parents.....parents who are walking the road we now walk. These bereaved parents are here to help us on this unfamiliar road. They cannot answer every question because the answers don't exist to most questions. When will this pain end? When will life go back to "normal"? There are different types of pain and new kinds of normal. We gather each month to help each other, to lean on each other, to find hope in each other's ability to function. From this meeting of kindred souls we do derive some solace, some peace and some hope.

I have watched the newly bereaved, raw in their sadness when they first attend a meeting. As the months move forward, I begin to see a change in these parents. Each changes in a different way, for each experiences their loss and their grief process in a different way. Some changes aren't apparent for months, even a year or two. Learning that we are not alone in the grievous burden of our loss is comforting. Learning that others have developed ways to cope with the holidays, the birthdays, the death anniversaries and other special occasions gives us the hope that we, too, will one day feel comfortable in our new "normal."

I have chosen to accept this group of gentle, kind and compassionate friends as an integral part of my life. The first holidays were horrible. I learned that I had to do what I felt was right. I learned to let go of the expectations of others and live in the moment. Even if I plan to do something and change my mind, I feel no guilt. I learned that those who truly love me understand. I have found that I am truly becoming myself....my new self. It is a slow process. There are setbacks.

Holidays are extremely difficult for every parent who has lost a child.....it matters not how long ago our child died. The pain is fresh, new and raw at this time of year. This is the season for leaning on our compassionate friends, for asking questions, expressing fears, anxieties, doubts, depression and anger and for finding the comfort, hope and understanding that each of us so desperately seeks.

Annette Mennen Baldwin  
In memory of my son, Todd Mennen  
TCF, Katy, TX

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"No matter how much time has passed,  
I still feel your touch,  
see your light,  
and still love you eternally".

Gary Lopez  
May 18, 1966 - Nov. 12, 2001

from his Mom  
Barbara Lopez

## A Story About John

As Christmas time nears, we who have lost a child only have our memories to carry us through. My mind has been reeling with memories of years past. But there was one that I will always remember.....

It was a cold snowy December that year in 1976. Frigid temperatures had me piling more and more wood into our wood burner in the living room. Andy wanted to go outside and build a snowman. I told him no, it was too cold. He then wanted to go over to "John's" trailer and visit. I said no. John lived on the adjoining property. An elderly man who never had any children of his own, he took a shining to my son. Every time Andy was outside playing, I could hear his giggles over at John's house as they planted a garden outside in summer, or Andy "helped" John work on some project he was doing. John didn't have much. His trailer was old and ragged looking. Andy didn't see the "old" trailer. He only saw a man who loved kids and a man who could bring a smile on a child's face daily. Andy didn't notice the tattered clothes John wore. But I did. Andy didn't notice the hands that were calloused from years of hard work, only I did. And yet, I still didn't want Andy to go over to John's house. Maybe I was afraid he'd pick up germs. Maybe I was afraid John's shabbiness would rub off onto Andy. How wrong I was. How blind, I, as an adult, was that cold snowy winter.

It was Christmas Eve Day when the knock came at the door. I was baking cookies so Andy went to the door. I heard his squeal of "JOHN" as he opened the door. John had never been to my house before and I wondered why he was there standing with his hat in his hand, head bowed in a blinding snow storm. I went to the door as the old gray eyes looked up at me and his voice said, "I've made something for Andy for Christmas." Behind him, in the snow, sat the most beautiful wood crafted toy box on wheels that I'd ever seen. Andy jumped out the door and hugged John's neck. I helped John bring the toy chest into the house. I noticed how smooth the corners were sanded. I noticed how much work was put into making the box being a wood crafter myself. I knew John had spent hours making the toy chest.

The three of us sat down as I offered John a piece of cake and a glass of milk. I saw the old gray eyes lovingly look at Andy, and I saw the love and admiration in Andy's eyes as he looked up at John. It was Andy, after John left to go back home, that went into his room and dug out a piece of wood he'd painted and told me he wanted to give it to John for Christmas. I watched as my little boy trucked through the snow to John's trailer to share the true meaning of Christmas with his friend. It was a month later on January 22 when another knock came at the door. Andy opened the door to see John standing there holding a cake he'd made with crooked letters on it saying, "Happy Birthday Andy and Andy's mom." I offered to have him come in and we'd share the cake, but he declined. He handed Andy a paper sack and hugged him before he left. I will always remember Andy reaching in the bag and pulling out the finest crafted little car I'd ever seen.

It was two months before Christmas in 1977 as I sat in a funeral home, my heart broken, as my little boy lay in the casket. Oblivious to whom was near me, only knowing I could not go on without my son, I didn't look up when I felt hands rest on my shoulder. And yet they stayed there. I remember turning my head to see John standing there, those gray eyes filled with tears as he looked at me. John lost his little friend that day. I had once been blinded by the love between a little boy and an old man. And yet, that little boy taught me to look beyond tattered clothes and old shabby trailers. He taught me to see real beauty, in an old man's eyes. For on that day, I saw love, genuine love from the heart from an old man who loved my son. John joined Andy in heaven the following winter.

God Bless you John. Take care of my little boy for me until I get there.

Love, Andy's mom Sharon Bryant  
In memory of Andy Dunbar  
January 22, 1972 - October 24, 1977  
I'm his mom and he's my angel forever.....  
Reprinted by permission of author

## Pictures on a Mantle

As I wake each morning, the first thing that I see  
Your picture on our mantle smiling down at me.  
I whisper good morning, I Love You Forever,  
Make a wish that can never be.

Here's your picture as an infant, sitting on my knee  
Now you're a toddler, how daring you could be  
First trip on the bus, your first day of school  
All the new friends you met.  
Your first dog, first trip to the beach  
How much better could it get?

There's your soccer team, your baseball team  
Oh the pride you made me feel  
A bases clearing triple to end the game  
Could this be for real?

Out of grade school, on to high school  
Your innocence almost gone  
Your first car, your first prom  
A young man you've become

A bumpy road in high school  
Trouble we couldn't see  
Lots of jobs, two years of college  
An Associate's Degree.  
At last, you were close to being  
The person you wanted to be.

When you left that fateful night  
You said, "Dad, I'll see you then."  
How could I have ever known  
That I would never see you again?

I know you're out there somewhere  
In a place we cannot see  
Your picture on God's mantle now  
Smiling down at me.

Tom Murphy  
Greater Cincinnati TCF - East Chapter, OH  
In Memory of my son, Brennan Murphy

## November Mourning

Memories rain down like falling leaves  
Amidst a torrent of tears  
Fall used to be my favorite -  
Now November brings only fear.

For October was the last full month  
That we could share together.  
My bright October full of joy  
When again we heard your laughter.

Then darkness came November eight  
Now there is only pain.  
For when your gentle heart was stilled  
We knew only loss and shame.

How could we lose our only son?  
Our precious gift from God?  
We miss you with an intense love  
And grief is the road we plod.

Never will I feel the joy  
That autumn used to bring -  
Although I smile at memories  
Of you saying funny things.

Those days we spent are treasures;  
How I wish for just one more!  
So now, I'm waiting for the day  
We meet on eternity's shore.

Sarah Chavez  
TCF Greater Ozarks, MO

## ***The Luck of the Irish??***

*By Wayne Loder*

My name should have been O'Loder, for it seemed like I had the luck of the Irish.

After all, I grew up in a great home with a wonderful family.

I received an excellent education.

I got a great job where I met a special person who became my life's partner.

I began my own business, which became very successful.

And the greatest luck of all—my daughter was born. It wasn't planned, but God knew what was best.

Three years later we were blessed with a son. Stef and Steve lived and played together with a special love.

I still remember the St. Patrick's Day assignment Stef brought home only days before the accident that took her life and that of her brother. Asked to tell why she was lucky, she wrote, "*because I have a brother!*"

A few days later my life lay in a shambles—the best part of my life gone. Stef was only eight and Stephen just five. They hadn't had a chance to really experience what life was all about. It was painfully obvious my name did not start with an O'.

Three years have now passed since that day. The shock of the moment has worn off. My wife and I have somehow survived the deaths and now have a new wonderful son and daughter with which to share our lives—and our love.

But, perhaps, the luckiest thing of all that happened to us since the accident is that we have made new, very special friends—Compassionate Friends who have helped us with our survival.

We have a new family of special people who have survived the unluckiest day of their lives and are able to share their loss with us. Isn't this really what "luck" is all about?

\*\*\*\*\*

Here are two name poems we just received from one very special Compassionate Friends, Sandy Roush, which she wrote specially for our Stephanie and Stephen.

**Sent by God, she  
Touched our lives  
Ever in our hearts  
Precious child  
How we miss you  
And await our reunion  
Never really far away  
In God's loving arms  
Eternity is ours**

**Song of my heart  
Taken too soon  
Ever loving son  
Pleasing to God  
He holds you now  
Everlasting life  
Now awaits in heaven**

**THE  
COMPASSIONATE  
FRIENDS  
SAN DIEGO CHAPTER  
STEERING COMMITTEE**

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**① OUR LOCAL WEB SITE**

Visit the San Diego Chapter homepage:

[www.sdtcf.org](http://www.sdtcf.org)

Email: [leaders@sdtcf.org](mailto:leaders@sdtcf.org)

The San Diego chapter home page has information about our chapter and links to more grief resources.

TCF Regional Coordinator  
Olivia Garcia 818-736-7380  
[oliviabgarcia1@gmail.com](mailto:oliviabgarcia1@gmail.com)

**① OTHER LOCAL RESOURCES**

**MADD** 858-564-0780  
**Empty Cradle** 619-595-3887  
**Jenna Druck Foundation** 619-294-8000  
**Survivors of Suicide** 619-482-0297  
[info@SOSLsd.org](mailto:info@SOSLsd.org)  
**Bereaved Parents of the USA**  
[www.bereavedparentsusa.org](http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org)

**Parents of Murdered Children National** 888-818-POMC  
**Local** 619-281-3972

**Alive Alone - for now childless parents** [www.alivealone.org](http://www.alivealone.org)

**① INFORMATION ON THE NET**

Visit the TCF national homepage:  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

The national home page is filled with information and grief resources on-line. A "chat" room for on-line discussion with bereaved families is available.

**Chat Room schedule:**

Mon 9-10 pm EST: General Bereavement  
Mon 10-11pm EST: Men's Chat  
Tue 9-10 pm EST: Pregnancy and Infant Death  
Thur 8-9 pm EST: No surviving children  
Thur 9-10 pm EST: Siblings (Minimum age is 13)  
Thur 10-11 pm: Grieving Alone (Single parents)

**member web/e-mail**

<http://www.RickPieramico.com>

Charlene Tate  
[caricat83@hotmail.com](mailto:caricat83@hotmail.com)

Elene Bratton  
[jamiesjoy@simplynet.com](mailto:jamiesjoy@simplynet.com)  
[www.jamiesjoy.org](http://www.jamiesjoy.org)

Tami Carter [haley1@san.rr.com](mailto:haley1@san.rr.com)

**TCF INFORMATION PACKAGE**

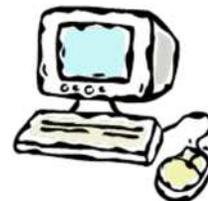
If you would like to send an information package on TCF to someone you think could benefit, (either for themselves or others) phone 619-583-1555. Leave a message with your name and phone number and the name and full address of the person you would like to receive the package.

*Be a compassionate friend*

**Our Lost Children's Photos for Newsletter**

The recommended donation for your child's photo in our newsletter is \$30. Children's pictures will be in color. Donations and love gifts are always greatly appreciated.

**WE WELCOME YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS**



Deadline for submission to the  
**January / February 2017**

Issue of  
The Compassionate Friend is

**December 10, 2016**

We warmly welcome your contributions, both original and inspirational writings. Please indicate sources of any non-original texts.



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Supporting Family After a Child Dies  
San Diego County Chapter

11582 Fury Lane #118, El Cajon, CA 92019

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

November / December 2016

## Love Gifts

*Donations and love gifts in memory of your loved one enable us to reach bereaved parents with telephone calls and information, and help defray newsletter and mailing expenses. Please indicate any special tribute you wish printed in our newsletter. When making a donation, please specify the San Diego chapter. Make your checks payable to:*

**The Compassionate Friends, San Diego Chapter, 11582 Fury Ln. #118. El Cajon, CA. 92019**

From: \_\_\_\_\_ In Memory Of: \_\_\_\_\_

## TCF The Compassionate Friends *newsletter application*

New Address

New subscription

Remove from list

Please send newsletter by regular mail.

By email, address \_\_\_\_\_

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Birth date: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of death: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Cause: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: (     ) \_\_\_\_\_

Your relationship to child: \_\_\_\_\_

Siblings/Ages: \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I would like my child's name to be listed on the anniversary pages of the chapter newsletter

Yes, I would like my child's name to be listed on the anniversary pages of the chapter web site  
If you have lost more than one child, please use a separate form for each child.