



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:*

May / June 2016

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Kristin Elizabeth Hawkinson



Ramiro Zuñiga-Cedillo



Gary R. Lopez

♥ Always In Our Hearts ♥

*Location, see p. 3*

**Next Meeting**

Wednesday  
May 4th

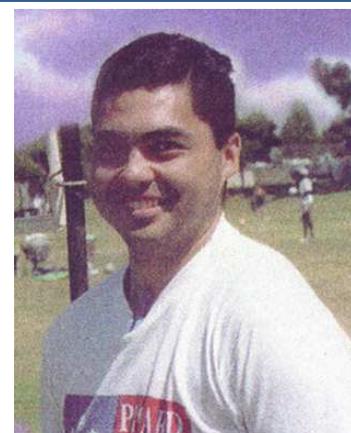
Wednesday  
June 1st



Todd Almeida Cutler



Hugo Payne



Darryl Hohman

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

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## 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.**

- ♥ **Siquard Stautland — In Loving Memory of their daughter Kristin.**
  - ♥ **Patricia Van Eaton — In Loving Memory of her son Hugo.**
  - ♥ **Barbara Lopez — In Loving Memory of her son Gary. "We still miss you every single day."**
  - ♥ **Gloria C. de Zuñiga — In Loving Memory of her son Ramiro.**
  - ♥ **Del & Lisa Hohman — In Loving Memory of their son Darryl.**
  - ♥ **Richard & Gloria Selby — In Loving Memory of their son Todd. "You are loved and missed beyond words."**
- 

## A Tear Fell

I rode by your school by chance today  
 And I just happened to look that way.  
 The boys all had their ball caps on;  
 then I remembered my son was gone.  
 Just when I thought I was doing so well,  
 Before I knew it - a tear fell.  
 Then on Sunday as I sat in church  
 I looked around and missed you so much.  
 I saw other boys in their Sunday suits  
 And I remembered you were just as cute.  
 People all think I'm doing so well;  
 They don't know today - a tear fell.  
 When I'm reminded of what might have been  
 It gets too hard to hold it in.  
 When life will catch me off my guard,  
 That's when I seem to be hit so hard.  
 It seems all roads lead back to you  
 As I take each day and try to get through.  
 They say time makes it better, but I cannot tell.  
 I only know today - a tear fell.

Carolyn Bryan  
 TCF Orange Park, FL





***Our Children – Loved, Missed and Remembered  
May & June***

**We remember the families of:**



**Birthdays**

***Ramiro Zuñiga-Cedillo, born 5-3  
Matthew Scott Lewis, born 5-5  
Jason Wilshe, born 5-6  
David Ward Ray, born 5-7  
Paul Albert Alferos Jr., born 5-8  
Julie Hamilton, born 5-9  
Kristin Elizabeth Hawkinson, born 5-9  
Brittany Dawn Williams, born 5-10  
Jered Dillard, born 5-13  
Andrew K. Scott, born 5-13  
Gary R. Lopez, born 05-18  
Chad Eugene Clausen, born 5-20  
Kristine L. Foss, born 5-20  
Kai Wright, born 5-21  
Jamie Morgan Mychael Bratton-McNeeley,  
born 5-24  
Alexander Nicholas Model, 5-25  
Kate Brumfield, born 5-27  
Aymee Sofia Garcia, born 5-30  
Joshua Pudsey, born 5-31  
Amanda Jo Stuart, born 6-2  
Cooper Jancic, born 6-2  
Todd Schulman, born 6-8  
Marsha Cushing, born 6-15  
Richard Wilson, born 6-16  
Wallace Michaelson, born 6-16  
Maxim Dudinov, born 6-20  
Heather A. Avilez, born 6-23  
Rosa Griffith, born 6-24  
Kenneth W. McCormick III, born 6-24  
Tara Michelle Hickman, born 6-27  
Jason Robert Chambers, born 6-29  
Ryan McDonough, born 6-30***

**Anniversaries**

***Creta (CJ) Smith, died 5-1  
Larry Stauffer, died 5-21  
Frank Palmer, died 5-7  
Andrew (Andy) Hale, died 5-24  
Joseph Roy Elkins, died 5-12  
Kathleen Bohanon, died 5-8  
David Michael Ellis, died 5-19  
Claire Devins, died 5-10  
Luther "Woody" Ellett, died 5-11  
Maxim Dudinov, died 5-11  
Todd Almeida Cutler, died 5-14  
Nicholas James Reynolds, died 5-16  
Tara Michelle Hickman, died 5-23  
Douglas Lorente, died 5-18  
Derek Reed Thomas, died 5-30  
Nick Jellison, died 5-21  
Bianca Ciara Santanna, died 5-23  
Kristy Shoemate, died 5-4  
Michael Shawn Kyle, died 5-29  
Joseph Balan, died 6-4  
Jason Robert Chambers, died 6-6  
Ellie Kennison, died 6-9  
Michael Lopez, died 6-10  
Steve Kraft, died 6-13  
Dan Gerald Bruce, died 6-11  
Lauren Francis, died 6-16  
Klay Budz, died 6-20  
Brad Huska, died 6-16  
Sammy Fishkin, died 6-9  
Nicole Kaitlynn, died 6-23  
Vinny Palermo, died 6-29  
Leticia Raimer, died 6***



## REGISTER TODAY FOR THE 39TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE!



### 39th Annual National Conference

Conference registration is now open for the 39th National Conference in Scottsdale, Arizona. [Register online](#) or print out a registration booklet to register by mail. The [Conference schedule](#) is available to help plan your weekend. Visit our [website](#) for more information.



### Hotel Reservations

Reserve your room at the Fairmont Scottsdale Princess [online](#) or by calling (800) 344-4758. Please note that each attendee will only be able to reserve two rooms. If your group needs to reserve a larger block of rooms, please contact the National Office to make arrangements for your reservation.

TCF National Office Web Site: [www.compassionatefriends.org/](http://www.compassionatefriends.org/) Phone toll free (877) 969-0010

# TCF National Conference Keynote Speakers



**Alan Pedersen**, *Opening Ceremony Speaker*  
2016 National Conference, Scottsdale, Arizona

Alan is the Executive Director of The Compassionate Friends/USA, a position he has held since December of 2013. In August of 2001, Alan's world changed forever when his 18-year-old daughter Ashley was killed in an automobile accident. After attending TCF meetings in Littleton, Colorado and serving on his steering committee for nearly 2 years, Alan, an award winning singer/songwriter and recording artist began writing songs about the experience of love, loss and trying to find life again after the death of a child. For nearly 10 years Alan traveled to more than 1000 cities across the United States and Canada sharing his music and story and offering support and hope to others in grief. In 2010, Alan was awarded the TCF Professional Award by The Compassionate Friends, and in 2011 he was named the Humanitarian of The Year by the Healing Hearts Foundation. Alan is certified as a Grief Services Provider and lives with his wife Denise in Roseville, California.



**Nivia Vázquez**, *Saturday Evening Dinner Speaker*  
2016 National Conference, Scottsdale, Arizona

Nivia is the bereaved mother of José Francisco "Yoito" Barreto and the bereaved sibling of Teresita and Miguel. Yoito died in a car accident in 1993. His surviving brother is Roberto José. She became involved with The Compassionate Friends after attending an International Conference in 1995 and in 2000 she and five other bereaved parents chartered Los Amigos Compasivos in San Juan, Puerto Rico. She has been Chapter leader for 15 years, is a professional bilingual legal secretary, translator and a professional/personal/spiritual coach. She is a member of TCF Board of Directors, has served on several Board committees, and currently serves as Secretary to the Board.



**Steve Fugate**, *Closing Ceremony Speaker*  
2016 National Conference, Scottsdale, Arizona

I'm Steve Fugate, I'm from Vero Beach, Florida and I'm 70-years-old. In seeking relief from my intense pain of losing both my beautiful children, my son to suicide at 26, while I was hiking the Appalachian Trail which we planned he would do the following year, and then six years later my daughter died at 36, due to an accidental drug overdose. I took to the road walking with a message over my head, "LOVE LIFE." Giving that message of love and life helped to heal me as well as some others. I began calling my endeavors Trail Therapy, and like all trails, it goes both ways. During those eight crossings of America on foot, accumulating over 43,000 miles in 16 years, I spoke to all who would listen about my message of loving life, in hopes of preventing as many as possible from doing what my two precious children did and keeping their parents from facing that horror of horrors! My creed: *"To mend the broken heart while it is yet beating."*

*On May 18th Gary would be 50 years old. So hard to believe. This poem is one of my favorites.*

## In the Silence

In the silence Mom you hear me

In the silence I am here.

In the silence you can feel me,

In the silence it is clear.....

That my spirit hasn't left you,

I am just a thought away,

You can see me in the shadows,

Anytime you look my way.

Look for me in the sunshine

And the stars at night,

In the wind,trees and flowers,

Everything that is in sight .

Talk to me, say my name,

Know that I'm still here,

In my death I have a new life,

and one day it will be clear.

So talk to me and look for me

In everything you do,

For I haven't gone so far away ,

I'm really right next to you.

By Joy Curnutt for Jason

*In Memory of Gary 5-18-66 11-12-01  
From Gary's Mom, Barbara Lopez*

## The Gate to Tomorrow

There is a gate that each of us has unknowingly passed through. This gate opens only one way.....once we have passed through this gate we cannot return to the other side. Each of us stepped through the gate at a different time and in a different way. This gate opens to the world of parents whose children have died; it is their gate to every tomorrow.

There is no other place that compares with life in this world beyond the gate; there is no sorrow like the sorrow inside the gate. The numbing pain and perpetual agony we experience when first stepping through this gate are so overwhelming that we often don't immediately realize that there will be no return. But we will never return to life before the gate.

The new world inside the gate is populated with friends who are strangers and strangers who are friends.

Our perspective on life has changed forever. Few of our friends from life before the gate will linger with us now; these people are now the strangers. Our pain is all encompassing; they have lives to live, things to do, plans to make, happiness to capture. We are no longer part of their picture. Rare is the friend who stands by us inside the gate.....stands by us until one of us dies and leaves the world inside the gate.

The strangers who are now friends live inside the gate with us. Some have just come through the gate; others have been here a long, long time. But these strangers who are now friends share our experience; they understand our need to talk about our children, each life and each death. They applaud our tiny advances toward acceptance and serenity and peace. Although we can never go back to life before the gate, we now have our compassionate friends.....once strangers but now kindred souls who share our lives and our world.

Life will not be the same again, yet life can be good again. Inside the gate we will each find ourselves with the help of our compassionate friends. They listen carefully to stories about our child. They know our child's name better than they know our name. And that's how we want it to be....remember our children. Remember with us.

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

## Wish You Were Here

You'd be nineteen if you were here  
 But why you're gone still isn't clear.  
 Your things are still all in your room  
 As if you'd be returning soon.  
 Spongebob waits there by the door.  
 Your shoes are still there on the floor.

Your friends are all young women now.  
 They're working jobs or college bound.  
 Sometimes we see them and they say  
 We miss her so, wish she had stayed.

Your boyfriend's in the Army too  
 And by the way, he still loves you.  
 You thought his love was not so true  
 And that some other girl he'd choose.  
 But near two years have passed on by  
 Still to your grave he goes to cry.

Your niece and nephews miss you too,  
 And talk of the things you used to do.  
 Your Mother's going to be alright  
 And doesn't cry so much at night.  
 She puts the flowers on your grave,  
 And scrapbook pictures tries to save.

And me, I'm still the same old Dad,  
 The same old routine like I had.  
 I work real hard to make a way  
 To pay some bills and pass the day.

I'm not as funny as before  
 My world's not happy anymore.  
 I don't let on the pain I feel  
 But deep inside the hurt is real.

Time passes by year after year,  
 Life goes on with seldom a tear.  
 One wish I have, a wish so clear  
 My wish most of all, I wish you were here.

~Dad  
 Steve Tutt  
 TCF Tyler, TX

## You were on my mind . . .

When I woke up this morning...  
 You were on my mind. You were on my mind.

You with that genuine enthusiasm,  
 like a kid with his first bicycle.

You with the curiosity and excitement  
 that dads love to be there for.

There's so much of you still with me.  
 Still with us!

It's not fair that we feel cheated or  
 that we won't share your ways anymore.

But in reality, after all the tears and  
 inner feelings of pain and sadness pass

We will have joy and great happiness because  
 we shared your days. Your laughter. You.

And when I wake up each morning  
 It will be OK that you were on my mind...  
 You are on my mind.

That's a special place for you to be, because it will  
 be forever.

Michael Tyler  
 TCF Lighthouse Chapter, Lewes, DE

## Their Song of Love

Remembering on this Mother's Day  
 the melody your child etched  
 in your heart.  
 The sweet song of love  
 that only your child could place there.  
 As this special day brings  
 their song to you,  
 may the warmth of their eternal love  
 fill your heart once again,  
 For their song is never ending.

Patty Erdman  
 TCF Longview, WA

# One Tough Mama

by Alice J. Wisler

"You are Wonder Woman. You know that, don't you?"

The nurse in the recovery room kept her eyes on a drowsy Daniel but I knew that she was addressing me. Me, the mom with an 11-month-old son in a stroller, a child of unknown gender in my belly, and four-year-old Daniel in the hospital bed, about to wake up from his third radiation treatment.

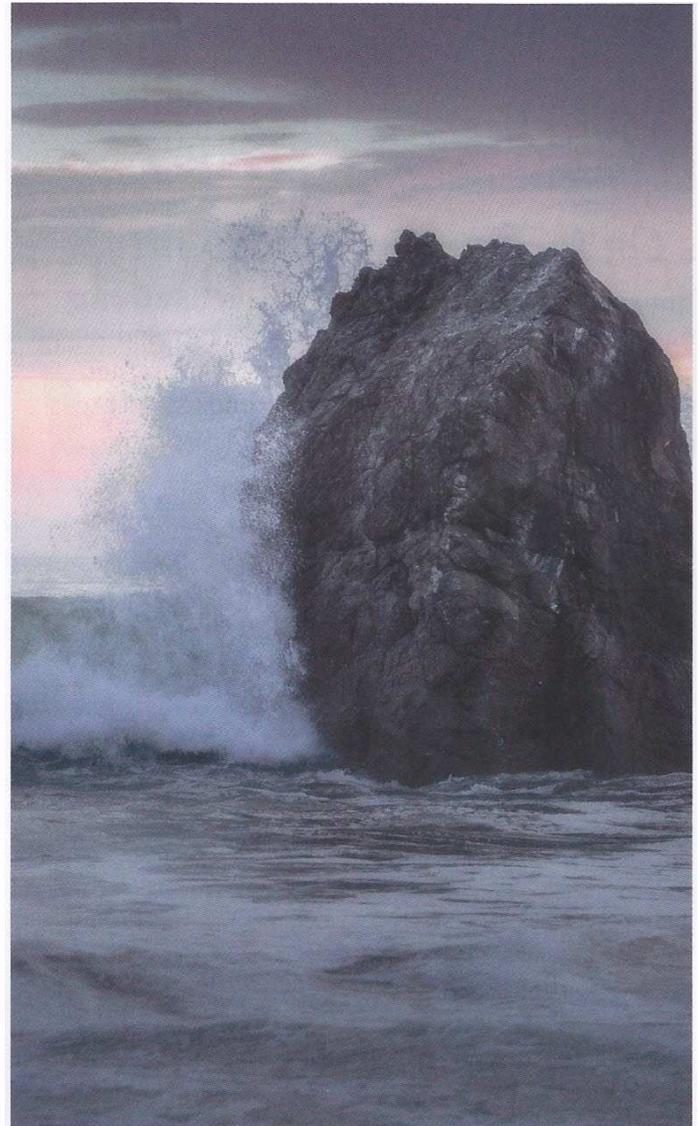
I only smiled.

"One tough mama;" she said. "You are amazing;" My daughter would have smiled at me had she been in the room, but she was in first grade learning to write about her brother Daniel. He and I like to read funny books. He has a boo-boo in his neck. Daniel opened his eyes and looked around the room. "I had a nice nap;" he said. The nurse and I laughed. This scene is only a memory now, a memory I have recalled over the 18 years.

Eighteen years ago I did not think that I was a wonder woman. I was merely doing what any mom with a kid with cancer would do-one foot in front of the other, moving forward. It was a season of getting my three kids to where they needed to be when they needed to be there. For Daniel that meant getting him to radiation treatments every day at 6 AM for three weeks, and to the hospital once a month for week-long cancer treatments. Tears? No. Sentiment? Who had time for that? I was one tough mama.

Eighteen years ago I was 36, and believed that if you prayed hard enough and dreamed big enough, you would never have to live a life of heartache

When Daniel died at age four, people told me that they didn't know how I did it. They used words like brave and strong and inspiring.



But now I wonder if they would understand that 18 years since my little boy's body could no longer fight the battle, I'm a crumbling mess. I cry because at Home Depot a tool set has been reduced to 1992, the year Daniel was born. There's a car in the parking lot with Dan on the license plate.

Days before my Daniel's birthday (he would be 23 August 25th), I am reduced to an ache so large that I wonder if the years have stitched up my wound at all. I recall his death and his birth and the four tiny years between the two events as I prepare dinner for the living.

I stir the spaghetti sauce with blurry eyes. Tears splatter onto the counter. My other children are 25,19, and 18.

They have grown used to me, they know me. I'm the mom who collects watermelon and tells the story of how Daniel stored leftover watermelon in his hospital bathtub after the Fourth of July. I'm the one who searches for rainbows after every thunderstorm, keeps Curious George books in a dusty bookshelf and uses Daniel's phrases-like, "A spider for a pet! I have a spider for my pet!" and Daniel wisdom-"I know why they call it a parking lot, because there are LOTS of places to park:'

My kids don't mind tears in the sauce. But they also know that I won't become sad when they head off to college or leave home for a dingy house with a group of boys before completing high school.

They know I value the "normal" things kids get to do as they grow older and find their paths. I cherish them and that they get to grow up, fall down, get up, and try again. (and am grateful that the middle child did graduate eventually.)

This is who I am, this is the life of one tough mama.

*Alice I. Wisler (TCF Wake County, NC) is the author of several novels and the devotional, Getting Out of Bed in the Morning: Reflections of Comfort in Heartache (Leafwood Publishers). She teaches grief-writing workshops both online and at conferences.*

*Taken From "We Need Not Walk Alone"Autum / Winter 2015*

## A Year in the Life

How can we ever understand  
The loss of a life so dear  
It's still so hard to believe  
It's almost been a year

We miss your love  
We miss your smile  
We pray that you are near  
We pray that you will help us  
Through relentless sadness  
And endless tears

You're in a better place now  
By God you were received  
You'll never feel life's pain again  
In that we do believe

We make our weekly journey  
To the place you now call home  
Across hillsides made of monuments  
To touch your name carved in stone

We stand alone, we cry, we pray  
Your brother, mom, and dad  
A full year gone and counting  
Our lives forever sad

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

---

*When a drunk driver killed my daughter, Allison, at age 19, it was a monumental effort to just breathe much less think my mind and body could survive. I was so dysfunctional that I lived every day in just my pajamas. Going to my first support group meeting of The Compassionate Friends, I pulled a pair of jeans and sweatshirt over my pajamas. I listened as each parent spoke of their child and their grief I heard those whose child died months ago and those whose child died years ago. These were living, breathing people in the same room with me and not just names and stories in a newspaper or book. It's 14 years later and, on occasion, I'll wear a pair of pajamas under my clothes when I go to a meeting just to remind myself of where I was and how far I've come in this journey I share with others.*

Barbara Reboratti, Allison's mom  
TCF Quakertown Chapter

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FRIENDS  
SAN DIEGO CHAPTER  
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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  
**July / August 2016**

Issue of  
The Compassionate Friend is

**June 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

May / June 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.