



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:



Lawrence Wayne Hennessee



Daniel R. Keyser



Jamie Morgan Mychael
Bratton-McNeeley



Rory David Boyer

♥ Always In Our Hearts ♥



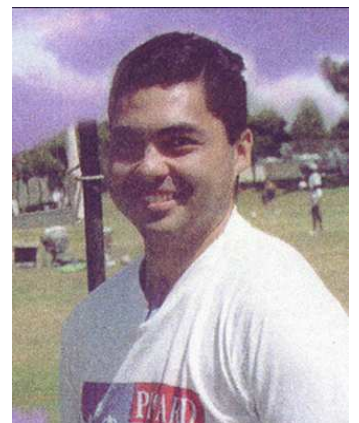
Vince Lopez



Ethan Estin Wozniak



Todd Almeida Cutler



Darryl C Hohman

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January /
February
2019

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**Location,
see p. 3**

Next Meeting

Wednesday
January 2nd

Wednesday
February 6th

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.

- ♥ David & Ruth Keyser — In memory of our beloved son and brother Daniel Ransom Keyser. "We still carry you everyday in our hearts. We will always Love you". Dad and Mama, Anna and Lauren.
- ♥ Steve & Suzanne Wozniak — In Loving Memory of their son Ethan.
- ♥ Elene Bratton — In Loving Memory of her son Jamie.
- ♥ Sandra & Larry Hennessee — In Loving Memory of their son Lawrence.
- ♥ Richard & Gloria Selby — In Loving Memory of their son Todd. "We miss you, son, every moment of every day." Love, Mom & Richard.
- ♥ Lynn & Norval Lyon — In Loving Memory of their son Rory.
- ♥ Lisa & Del Hohman — In Loving Memory of their son Darryl.
- ♥ Barbara Lopez — In Loving Memory of her son Vince.
- ♥ Yolanda Nerio — In Loving Memory of all children gone too soon

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.*

*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,
With inspiration from Jason
11-26-74 to 4-11-99*

*Submitted by Vince and Gary's
Mom, Barbara Lopez*



***Our Children – Loved, Missed and Remembered
January & February***
We remember the families of:



Birthdays

Darryl Charles Hohman, born 1-4
Madison Renee White, born 1-5
Stephen William Anderson, born 1-6
Lawrence Wayne Hennessee, born 1-6
Azja K. Ostrye, born 1-8
Julie Elizabeth Richardson, born 1-8
Yehudit Sherman, born 1-8
Philip Glynn Murphy, born 1-15
Mark E. Gannon, born 1-15
Philip Glynn Murphy, born 1-15
Daniel R. Keyser, born 1-16
Justin Scott, born 1-23
Rory David Boyer, born 1-26
Riley Gail Horgan, born 1-27
Larry Stauffer, born 1-31
Vince Lopez, born 1-31
Cari Tate, born 2-3
Frank Palmer, born 2-5
Mitchell Szegi, born 2-6
Joshua Linzy Fogel, born 2-8
Andres Saputo, born 2-12
Justin Knapp, born 2-13
Leticia Raimer, born 2-18
Spencer Clay, born 2-19
Todd Almeida Cutler, born 2-28

Anniversaries

Lisa Marie Stoefen, died 1-3
Julie Hart, died 1-4
Madison Renee White, died 1-6
Matthew C. Colbert, died 1-9
Renee Eleonor Dawson, died 1-12
Cari Tate, died 1-13
Matthew Beaver, died 1-14
Chad Eugene Clausen, died 1-17
Jason Wilshe, died 1-25
Sara Elizabeth Chandler, died 1-25
Jamie Christopher Yates, died 1-26
Aymee Sofia Garcia, died 1-27
Lucas Daniel Giaconelli, died 1-29
Brittany Grell, died 2-3
Philip Glynn Murphy, died 2-7
Milton (Danny) Smith, died 2-10
Damian "Damo" Reid Carver, died 2-12
David John Merritt, died 2-14
Heather A. Avilez, died 2-14
Jana A. Warda Schott, died 2-15
Angela Scarbrough, died 2-22
Rosa Griffith, died 2-23

A Valentine for Mom

As we grow older, we find that the simple reflections of our children are often the best memories we have. One such memory most mothers have is a valentine.....maybe many valentines. These special valentines were made by our children just for us. They were made when mom was the most important person in their world.

Some of us have kept each little memento of our child's years....from the first little hand plaque to the handmade gifts and cards to the special gifts that our children purchased with their own money. Each one is a part of our child, a part of us and a part of our shared history.

My first valentine from my child was a handmade red construction paper heart glued to heart shaped white lace paper... On it he had written "Happy Valentine's Day to my MOM. I love you. Todd." Shyly he asked if I liked it. I told him I loved it, and that his valentine was the most beautiful valentine a mother could receive. It is a treasure I have always kept. "I just wanted to be sure," he whispered.

In my office I have a gift that Todd bought me five years ago. All grown up now with an MBA, bright future, important corporate job, family of four children, a beautiful new home, and major responsibilities, precious little time was available for finding the perfect gift for his mom. His life was busy; his free time was limited, but a something special caught his eye and he thought about me. He decided to buy it. A few weeks later, he gave me a brightly wrapped package containing a beautiful plate picturing a Sioux Indian princess. "She's beautiful, just beautiful", I told him. "Do you really like it?" he asked. The detail, the essence of her heritage and her outlook were captured perfectly. I told him, "I love it, Todd I'll keep her in the office so I can see her every day. I think she is beautiful." And she is in my office today, another treasure I will always keep. "I just wanted to be sure," he whispered.

Much has happened since my three year old son gave me that handmade valentine and my adult son gave me that special gift. The years have raced by; my son has been dead for over two years. And so this month I will open another special gift that my son bought me when he was still in college: my cedar chest. I'd always wanted a cedar chest for the special keepsakes marking our lives. That cedar chest contains pictures, cards,

handmade gifts and other things that only a mother could hold in her hands while watching the movies play in her head. There are many movies in that cedar chest, but only I can see them. That is the beauty of memories.

Each of us has our memories of our child. Whether our child was 5 days old or 55 years old, we have special memories that are as much a part of us as our faces. Valentine's Day was always a special day for our family. We exchanged valentines and sometimes give a special gift.

This Valentine's Day I will send my son a special handwritten valentine, carried on the wind to the cosmos. The message will be simple. "Happy Valentine's Day to my SON, Todd. I love you. Your Mom."

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



Valentine Message

I send this message to my child
Who no longer walks this plane,
A message filled with love
Yet also filled with pain.

My heart continues to skip a beat
When I ponder your early death
As I think of times we'll never share
I must stop to catch my breath.

Valentine's Day is for those who love
And for those who receive love, too
For a parent the perfect love in life
Is the love I've given you.

I'm thinking of you this day, my child,
With a sadness that is unspoken
As I mark another Valentine's Day
With a heart that is forever broken.

(From Same person as above)

From "We Need Not Walk alone" Autumn / Winter

The Wisdom of Darcie Sims

A New Year ... A New Me

A new year. Another new beginning. Another chance; a new start; a new look. A new me?

I've always wondered why the new year begins buried in snow, frozen in ice or blanketed in mud. It always seems harder to begin (again) when my feet are encased in leaden boots or stuck in frozen mud. Wouldn't it be easier to begin a new journey (again) if the weather were warmer and my feet were strapped into sandals or even bare? Wouldn't new beginnings be easier if the air around me wasn't so frigid, the ground below me not so frozen, the path before me not so slippery?

I think the new year should begin in springtime instead of during a month when all I want to do is crawl under the covers and hide. January is for hibernating, not starting something new. The start of the new year is a time of reflection, recollection and re-connection. Light reflects off the ice crystals of winter when the new year starts in January. Tears collect as we pack away the holidays, recalling happier times. And without the distractions of the holidays, we have time and opportunity to reconnect to ourselves. It's a time to review, rearrange and renew.

The beginning of the new year is a time for me to take stock, to rearrange and reorganize. I review life insurance policies, tax records, calendars, household inventories and my life. It just seems a good time to check on how I'm doing and where I'm going. Am I making progress? How am I doing? Where am I going?

I used to think that grief was a process with a definite beginning and an easily identifiable end. I know when it began. It's the ending I'm having trouble with. After more than 30 years, I'm beginning to suspect that grief really is a journey. It's got an easily identifiable beginning and really no ending at all. That doesn't mean I'm stuck or even particularly s-l-o-w in my grief. It just means I'm going; I'm moving; I'm grieving, and it appears to be a lifetime journey. So, if there is no end, how do I know I'm making progress?

You know you're making progress through grief when:

- You don't always choke when you say your loved one's name. Now, I can say my loved one's name without that "catch" in my throat (most of the time), and I can even smile as I remember something wonderful instead of always reviewing one of the horrible moments.

- Tears don't always well up in your eyes when you think of your loved one. I might cry once in awhile, but for the most part, my memories don't bring pain any more. I can remember the laughter, the smiles, and the good times more often than I can recall the tough times.



- The cause of death isn't the emphasis anymore. In the beginning, the cause of death was one of the first things out of my mouth. Now, as I realize I am beginning to heal, I often tell a "life story" instead of a "death story." How my loved one died is not as important as how he lived, and that's a nice thing to remember first!
- Memories, for the most part, bring comfort, not pain. At first, I couldn't even look at a picture of my loved one without a searing pain ripping through my body. Now I cherish the pictures we have and I love having them out to enjoy. I am not sure that time was the great healer. After all, the only thing that time does is pass. It's what you do with the time that makes the difference. I guess that grief work is really just that...lots and lots of work is involved in order to reorder the memories. I still have the difficult ones. I just don't recall them FIRST any more!
- You realize your plans don't include your loved one anymore. This was hard. Because we are a career military family, we move a lot. For the first several years, every new set of military quarters or houses that we lived in had an empty room to them. I kept looking at the empty bedroom as a place that "should have been something else" (like his room). After I began to make peace with my memories and began to realize that my loved one lives within me and not in the tangible things I kept, then I could allow my life to move forward. Always carrying the love between us with me, but no longer having to assign a bedroom or choose a

More on Darcie Sims

neighborhood because of the school district. (That one was really hard, however!)

- You realize you are someone different. Grief does change us. I am neither a stronger nor better person than before my loved one died, but I am a different person. My patience has changed, as has my tolerance level. My perspective has changed. I have truly learned how precious life is, and I don't want to waste any of its moments. I say what I mean the first time and I never forget to tell people how much they mean to me or that I love them. I take more chances and live more deeply and fully.
- You can forgive yourself for living, when your loved one did not. This is perhaps the most difficult task of grieving, but one I am finding is easier as the years go by. I have created list after list of things I should have done to prevent the death. I have written out countless "If only" lists. I have "shoulded" myself almost into insanity! The trouble with those lists and that way of thinking is it only serves to increase the guilt, and I cannot erase what happened yesterday in order to change my today. Sometimes that makes me angry and sometimes it makes me sad. So, I have learned that once my lists are of no more value to me, I can release them. Once they are no longer within my sight, I then must learn to relinquish them emotionally as well. That is difficult to do, but once I found I could do that, I discovered there was room for love to return. Once I could let go of the guilts, there was room for happy memories and love to come back.

Grief isn't a seasonal song; it's a lifetime song, but it doesn't have to be a sad song forever.

- Your identity is no longer highlighted by the word bereaved. I will forever be a bereaved mom, but I am less a grieving mom than I was. I am beginning to be free of the hurt and pain of grief, and it has been replaced by a wonder and amazement that I got to share that wonderful life, even if only for a little while. How grateful I am, that our loved one lived! It wasn't long enough; it never could be! But I am forever filled with gratitude that we got to hold love in our arms at all! It wasn't long enough, but it was something and for that I am thankful!

Perhaps the greatest measure of my progress

in this new year and in every new year, is my ability to embrace the joy of my loved one's life, no matter how small the horizon. He lived. I loved him and I still do, and that is something to bring with me into this new year. This year, I will remember the life and the love, not just the death. You know that even though your loved one died, the love between you can never be destroyed.

Grief isn't a seasonal song; it's a lifetime song, but it doesn't have to be a sad song forever.

Happy New Year! Happy New Beginnings! If not this year, then perhaps next year, you will be able to embrace the LIFE, not just remember the death. Keep walking...the journey does get easier.

May Love Be What You Remember the Most

The late Darcie Sims wrote hundreds of articles over the years on grief and loss which have been extremely popular and shared in hundreds of TCF publications. We Need Not Walk Alone is proud to honor her by featuring selections of her work in a column titled "The Wisdom of Darcie Sims."



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We Need Not Walk Alone | 17

When Sadness Becomes Depression: Some Thoughts for Bereaved Parents

About a month after my son died, I went to visit my doctor for my annual checkup. He was aware that my son had died and was very concerned about my state of mind. He asked me how I felt, and I told him this was the worst trauma of my life and I was "in the hole" mentally. When he offered to write a prescription for an anti-depressant, I declined. Why did I do that?

I explained to my doctor that I was supposed to be depressed, disconnected, tearful, sad, angry, withdrawn and deeply hurt. That is expected in the initial stages of this grief process. I told him that if I had said, "Oh, I'm doing great. No problems. Just another little hiccup in life," that he probably would have had me in a straight jacket on the way to a mental hospital. "Wouldn't you think I was completely insane if said I was 'ok'?" He agreed and said that a loss of this magnitude was incomprehensible to him, and he was available day or night if I needed his help.

A year later when I went back for my annual physical, we had the same conversation. This time, though, I was in a different frame of mind. I wasn't depressed, I was simply very, very sad. Medications were not necessary.

However, I have met many, many bereaved parents who are unable to start seeing hope after six months, eight months and then a year. These parents are in a paralyzing fog of deep depression. Once we pass the one year mark, we are still devastated, but we are usually functioning on most levels, albeit without the joy that once was in our lives. Those parents who are still depressed, unable to motivate themselves, unable to function, continually tearful and withdrawn, are probably clinically depressed. These deep, continuing depressions call for a medication to work on the physiological causes and a good grief counselor to work on the damage to your psyche. There is no shame in this; it is a matter of simple survival.

Here is a good description of depression and anxiety (both so very common to bereaved parents) from the DSM-Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, published by the American Psychiatric Association:

"A person is suffering from a major depressive episode if he or she experiences items number 1 or

2 from the list of symptoms below, along with any 4 others, continuously for more than 2 weeks:

1. Depressed mood with overwhelming feelings of sadness and grief
2. Apathy--loss of interest and pleasure in activities formerly enjoyed
3. Sleep problems--insomnia, early-morning waking, or oversleeping nearly every day
4. Decreased energy or fatigue
5. Noticeable changes in appetite and weight (significant weight loss or gain)
6. Inability to concentrate or think, or indecisiveness
7. Physical symptoms or restlessness or being physically slowed down
8. Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, and helplessness
9. Recurrent thoughts of death and suicide, or a suicide attempt."

While the above are also symptoms of the initial grief for the bereaved parent in the early months, these symptoms should modify toward the end of the first year. If they do not, the "episode of depression" referenced above will become a never-ending way of life. Should this happen to you, address it now. Talk to your doctor and a counselor about your days and nights and feelings. Let them know what you feel...not what others want you to feel. You won't be pulling yourself up by the bootstraps on this one, gentle parent. You are unique in your grief. I have never seen any two parents grieve in the same way. I've often said that my odds of winning the lottery 20 times are better than my odds of seeing a bereaved couple who travel the grief road in exactly the same way.

It may surprise you to know that a substantial number of our members are seeing counselors and many are taking medications for depression and anxiety. This is the harsh reality of life after the death of our children. The shock and the overwhelming sense of loss do damage us both physically and psychologically. That's our truth and our reality. Not all parents experience this. But to deny that many of our members do experience depression and deep anxiety is to deny the very essence of our souls. Be honest with yourself. Be open to possibilities.

There is hope. You see it in the eyes of those who have passed the third, fourth, fifth, tenth and even twentieth anniversary of their child's death. But many of these people were clinically depressed and wisely sought professional help. Do this for yourself. Depression is a roadblock to your grief work.

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

WHAT I NEED

TIME ~ Time alone; and time with others whom I can trust and who will listen when I need to talk. Months and years of time to feel and understand the feelings which go along with loss.

REST ~ I may need extra amounts of things I needed before. Relaxation, exercise, nourishment, diversion, hot baths, afternoon naps, a trip, a cause to work for, to help others, any of these may give me a lift. Grief is an emotionally exhausting process. I need to replenish myself – to follow what feels healing and what connects me to the people and things I love.

SECURITY ~ I need to reduce, or find help for financial or other stresses in my life. I need to allow myself to be close to ones I can trust. It helps when I allow myself to get back into a routine, and to do things at my own pace.

HOPE ~ I find hope and comfort from those who have experienced a similar loss. Knowing some things that helped them, and realizing that they have recovered and that time does help, gives me hope that sometime in the future my grief will be less raw and less painful.

CARING ~ I try to allow myself to accept the expressions of caring from others, even though they may be uneasy and awkward. Helping a friend or relative also suffering from the same loss often brings me a feeling of closeness with that person.

GOALS ~ It often feels that much of life is without meaning. At times like these, small goals are helpful. Something to look forward to, like playing tennis with a friend next week, a movie tomorrow night, a trip next month, helps me get through the time in the immediate future. Living one day at a time is a good rule of thumb. At first, my enjoyment of these things just isn't the same. I know this is normal. As time passes, I will need to work on some longer range goals to give some structure and direction to my life. It is OK to get some guidance or counseling to help with this.

SMALL PLEASURES ~ I no longer underestimate the healing effects of small pleasures. Sunsets, a walk in the woods, a favorite food - all are small steps toward regaining my pleasure in life itself.

BACK-SLIDING ~ Sometimes after a period of feeling good, I find myself back in the old feelings of extreme sadness, despair or anger. Intellectually, I know this is often the nature of grief, up and down, and it may happen over and over for a time. I'm told, this is because as humans, we cannot take in all of the pain and the meaning of death all at once. So, I give myself permission to let it in a little at a time.

DRUGS? ~ Drugs are not always helpful. Sometimes, even medication intended to help me get through periods of shock may prolong and delay the necessary process of grieving. I cannot prevent or cure grief. The only way OUT is THROUGH.

Alan Taplow

Adapted by Alan Taplow from Judy Tatelbaum's book, The Courage to Grieve

The Holiday Bill of Rights For Grievers

by Bruce H. Conley - Conley Outreach Community Services

When it comes time for the first holiday season after the passing of a loved one, you should recognize that it will not be the same and that trying to keep everything as it was will only result in disappointment. Doing things even a little bit differently can acknowledge the change in your life while preserving continuity with the past. No matter how you choose to make changes, be sure that one of them does not involve isolating yourself from others.

Nothing will change the fact that the holidays will be difficult for you, but there are also ways to experience joy and pleasure. Finding joy in giving and receiving does not mean that you have forgotten your loved one or that you love him or her any less. That is why we offer you the Griever's Holiday Bill of Rights:

1. You have the right to say, "Time out!" any time you need to. Time out to let up, blow a little steam, step away from the holidays, have a "huddle" time and start over.
2. You have a right to tell it like it is. When people ask, "How are you...?" you have the right to tell them how you really feel, not just what they want to hear. (P.S. You also have the right to smile and say you're fine, because telling them how you really feel isn't worth your time; some people will never understand, anyway.
3. You have the right to some "bah humbug" days. You don't have to be "Jolly Old Saint Nicholas" all the time. You are not a bad person just because you don't feel like singing Christmas carols all day.
4. You have the right to do things differently. There is no law that says you must always do Christmas the same way. You can do ten cards instead of a hundred--or no cards at all! You can open presents at somebody else's house. You can do without a tree. You can have pizza instead of turkey! The list is endless.
5. You have the right to be where you want to be. Be at home or at the relatives. Be in any city, any state you choose! Nobody said you have to have snow to have Christmas! There's no law that says you must stay home.
6. You have the right to some fun! When you have a day that isn't so bad and you feel like doing something for fun, then do it! Don't be afraid of what someone else will say if they see you laughing and having a good time. Laughter is every bit as important as tears!
7. You have a right to change direction in midstream. Holiday grief is unpredictable. You may be all ready to go somewhere or do something and suddenly be overwhelmed. When that happens, it's alright to change your mind. There's plenty of time in life to be predictable. Exercise your right to change when you need to.
8. You have a right to do things at different times. Go to church at a different time. Open presents at a different time. Serve your meal at a different time. Give up and go to bed at a different time. Don't be a slave to the holiday clock!
9. You have a right to rest, peace and solitude. You don't need to be busy all the time. Take a nap whenever you need one. Take time to pray and meditate to recharge your spirit--it can you do much more good than eating another huge meal.
10. You have the right to do it all different again next year. Just because you change things one year does not mean you have it written in stone. Next year, you can always change it back or do it in yet another new way.

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From: "We Need Not Walk Alone" Autumn / Winter

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COMPASSIONATE
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① OUR LOCAL WEB SITE

Visit the San Diego Chapter homepage:

www.sdtcf.org

Email: leaders@sdtcf.org

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

TCF Regional Coordinator

① OTHER LOCAL RESOURCES

MADD 858-564-0780
Empty Cradle 619-595-3887

Survivors of Suicide
 619-482-0297
info@SOSLsd.org

Bereaved Parents of the USA
www.bereavedparentsusa.org

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

Alive Alone - for now childless parents
www.alivealone.org

① INFORMATION ON THE NET

Visit the TCF national homepage:
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)

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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
March / April 2019

Issue of The Compassionate Friend is

February **15, 2018**

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

January / February 2019

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.