



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.*



May / June 2018

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Next Meeting

Wednesday
May 2nd

Wednesday
June 6th

These pages Dedicated with Love to:



Kristin Elizabeth Hawkinson



Ramiro Zuñiga-Cedillo

♥ Always In Our Hearts ♥



Jamie Morgan Mychael Bratton-McNeeley



Alexander Nicholas Model

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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.

- ♥ **Gloria C. de Zuñiga — In Loving Memory of her son Ramiro. “DEAR SON, YOUR FAMILY WISHES YOU THE BEST OF BIRTHDAYS. THIS YEAR YOU HAVE SOMEONE WHO LOVES YOU DEARLY TO CELEBRATE THE DAY WITH YOU. WE MISS YOU AND WISH YOU WERE HERE. YOU WILL BE IN OUR HEARTS FOREVER.”**
- ♥ **Elene Bratton — In Loving Memory of her son Jamie Morgan Mychael Bratton-McNeeley.**
- ♥ **Thelma & Gerald Model — In Loving Memory of their grandson Alexander.**
- ♥ **Tamara & Siquerd Stautland — In Loving Memory of their daughter Kristin. “Happy Birthday. We love and miss you more and more!”**

PICTURES FROM THE HEART

Since we have lost our children, part of what remains of them are pictures from the heart, which are those mental images we hold so dear. For some of us these pictures are memories of what had been, and for others these pictures are dreams of what might have been. And for some of us these pictures are a little of both. For us, dreams and memories are really the same. It is the dimension where our children now reside.

In a sense, dreams are nothing more than memories of the future, because we remember our children by the dreams we had for them; and memories are nothing more than dreams of the past, because to remember them is certainly to dream of them. I believe it is incorrect to think that someone will not hurt as much because they only had their child for a little while or to think that someone will not hurt as much because their child had the chance to grow up. In these dreams and memories, these pictures from the heart, all of our children are infants and all of our children have grown up. The sadness and pain comes from the broken heart, the memories and the dreams from the pieces that remain.

Kenneth Hensley
TCF Nashville, TN



Our Children – Loved, Missed and Remembered May & June

We remember the families of:



Birthdays

Michael Scott Ayers, born 5-2
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
Kyle Joseph Carranza, born 5-14
Gary R. Lopez, born 05-18
Chad Eugene Clausen, born 5-20
Kai Wright, born 5-21
Jamie Morgan Mychael Bratton-McNeeley,
born 5-24
Alexander Nicholas Model, born 5-25
Kate Brumfield, born 5-27
Aymee Sofia Garcia, born 5-30
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
Nicholas Ferrell, born 6-30

Anniversaries

Creta (CJ) Smith, died 5-1
Frank Palmer, died 5-7
Larry Stauffer, died 5-21
Joseph Roy Elkins, died 5-12
Kathleen Bohanon, died 5-8
David Michael Ellis, died 5-19
Maxim Dudinov, died 5-11
Jerome Allen, died 5-13
Todd Almeida Cutler, died 5-14
Nicholas James Reynolds, died 5-16
Pamela Broderick, 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
Kristy Shoemate, died 5-4
Michael Shawn Kyle, died 5-29
Allen J. Kha, died 5-31
Joseph Balan, died 6-4
Jason Robert Chambers, died 6-6
Ellie Kennison, died 6-9
Michael Lopez, died 6-10
Stephen Matthew Kraft III, died 6-13
Dan Gerald Bruce, died 6-11
Lauren Francis, died 6-16
Klay Budz, died 6-20
Sammy Fishkin, died 6-9
Brad Huska, died 6-16
Leticia Raimer, died 6-23
Nicole Kaitlynn, died 6-23
Kyle Joseph Carranza, died 6-26
Vinny Palermo, died 6-29

41ST TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE JULY 27 - JULY 29



The Compassionate Friends is pleased to announce that St. Louis, Missouri, will be the site of the 41st TCF National Conference on July 27-29, 2018. “Gateway to Hope and Healing” is the theme of this year’s event, which promises more of this last’s great National Conference experience. The 2018 Conference will be held at the Marriott St. Louis Grand Hotel. We’ll keep you updated with details here, on the national website as well as on our [TCF/USA Facebook Page](#) and elsewhere as they become available. Plan to come and be a part of this heartwarming experience.

Waiting for the Wake-Up Call

I'm waiting for the wakeup call that surely must come someday in this journey through grief. When *will* it get better?!! I'm waiting for the day when the memories are softer, the step a little lighter and when the sounds in my heart aren't always those of sadness, I'm waiting for the music to return, for the light to shine, for the magic to come back. I'm waiting for the pain to stop, the hurt to leave and for everything to go back to its original place. I want the picture to look the same as before, and I'm waiting until it does.

But, while I'm waiting, I'm learning a lot, I know I have to make lists now in order to capture my chores and things I have to do. I gave up trying to remember and now just carry a notepad with me (with a pencil attached!) I have set the clocks 10 minutes fast so I have a better chance of being on time, and I have stocked the car with maps of every place I need to be.

I make menus and create shopping lists. I plan ahead, write down everything and then don't worry when I lose the list, get lost, or simply change my mind, I think most people thought I was always confused, so now I don't worry so much about not remembering. I'm liking advantage of being bereaved and am learning to work with the lack of concentration, the forgetfulness, the confusion. If it isn't written down, it doesn't exist and I've been much happier ever since!

If the weather and the seasons can't get it together, why should I try to coordinate an outfit? I'll just wear what's comfortable for the moment and worry less about what others think. Maybe they are as confused as I am. Maybe they're struggling too. Maybe we should all just stop, look and listen...trying to remember to hold hands when crossing the street and practice hugging instead of hitting.

Maybe spring reflects nature's inability to make up its mind or maybe that hesitation to change is more of Mother Nature's mourning the passing of her winter season. Maybe it's hot one day and cold the next to keep us on our toes, to keep the blood flowing, the legs moving. Maybe shoveling snow one day and planting seeds the next is what we are

supposed to be doing...maybe spring is the season of change and we should let go of the whys? and work on the hows? Maybe pushing the plow is better than trying to pull it.

Maybe just relaxing into the craziness and letting the tides ebb and flow across the beach will work better than trying to direct the winds that change rides on. Perhaps letting the sun warm my winter-weary bones is a more productive activity than rearranging the closet, and maybe the good memories will come back if I let them.

Maybe spring is the reason for getting up...to simply see what is possible today. Maybe today is the day and if I'm in bed, I'll miss the beginning, and I'll still be lost.

Maybe I'm already in the middle of change and maybe I will always be confused, lost and slightly off balance, but maybe that's okay, and I'll just have to figure out how? instead of why? And when that happens, I know I won't be lost anymore! It really doesn't matter if it's Tuesday or Friday (unless one of those days is garbage day, and then it does matter!) Maybe I can let go of the time frames and calendar pages that dictate my life and my emotions and let life simply flow.

Perhaps you and I have already answered the wake up call. Don't let a poor yesterday or an uncertain tomorrow use up today. I think this is it, and now is the time for being all I can be. Half of me is still in winter and dyeing eggs. All of me is still perhaps a bit off balance, but I am alive and that's a start! This wasn't the life I expected to live, but it is the one I've got.

If I'm lost, I'd explore wherever it is I am. If I'm late, I'll just apologize and enjoy the time I have left. If I'm out of place, out of style or out of sync, I'll just keep dancing to the tune I hear and let the rest of the world figure out their own melody...

Darcie Sims
Bereavement Magazine Mar/Apr 1995

Goodnight, Sweet Son

The young mother held her newborn son close to her breast and stroked the wisps of his blonde hair back from his forehead. She felt his soft, baby skin under her fingers and sang him a lullaby. "Goodnight, sweet son," she whispered. She kissed him gently on the forehead and laid him on his tummy in the crib.

The baby grew to boyhood and played little league baseball. He was catcher for his team and loved the mask and kneepads he had to wear. The baseball gear made him feel "in charge" of the team. He felt good that he could throw the baseball to anyone on the team and get it directly to that player. When his mother tucked him into bed at night, he told her all about the game and relived the thrill of it all again. This little blonde haired boy was this mother's youngest son. He had two older brothers, and a younger sister. His mother stroked back the hair on his forehead from his boyish face. She kissed him softly on his white brow and whispered, "Goodnight, sweet son."

He joined Boy Scouts and worked hard to earn all the merit badges he could. He and his brothers competed to see who would get his badge first. He was proud when his mother pinned the badges onto his shirt at the Boy Scout banquet. He was so excited and loved telling his mother about the adventures as she tucked him into bed. His mother stroked his forehead, now changing from childhood to teenager. She kissed him and said, "Good night, sweet son."

In high school, the young man played tennis. He was good at it. He loved the game and won the tennis championship for his district.

He asked his mother one night, "Can you stroke my hair like you did when I was little?" She sat beside him, listening to his dreams about tennis and life. She stroked his hair from the forehead as she had done so many times before, and noticed beginning hints of a beard forming. "Goodnight, sweet son," she whispered, and kissed him good night on his cheek.

Some years later, the son was in a bad automobile accident. About five years following the accident, he got very sick. He developed a disease there is no cure for. He came home for his mother to take

care of him. Each night, she tucked him in just like she had done all his life. She pushed back the hair that had begun to fall out. When she stroked his forehead, it was hot and dry and the disease had made his skin wrinkled, and look like the skin of a 70-year-old person, not the 28-year-old man that he was. She kissed his cheek and whispered, "Goodnight, sweet son."

He grew too sick to stay at home. The ambulance took him to the hospital. One cold, grey, December day, a few days before Christmas, he got very sick. His mother was at his bedside and helped him get out of bed one last time. He wanted to show her he could do it. Then she tucked him in and stroked back his few wisps of remaining hair as she sang to him. He closed his eyes as she stroked his forehead. She kissed his cheek and whispered, "Goodnight, sweet son." He died about thirty minutes later.

At the funeral service in the church, the mother rose up to see him one last time. She leaned over the coffin, stroked back his hair, kissed his cheek and whispered, "Good night, sweet son."

Antoinette S. Murphy
TCF Sugar Land-SW Houston, TX

A PhD in Pain

I didn't take an entrance examination. I didn't apply for admission. I didn't register for classes. I never completed any assignments. I didn't write or defend a dissertation.

I didn't wear a cap, gown, or hood at graduation. I didn't walk to "Pomp & Circumstance."

I don't have this diploma framed on my wall. I don't have letters I use after my name.

But my son died five years ago.

So, I have a PhD in Pain.

I never wanted one.

Peggi Johnson
TCF Piedmont Chapter, VA

Falsely Placed Guilt

Aileen was convinced Isaac's death was her fault. She thought she must have done something absolutely horrible to have caused him to die. Cause and effect when all we have is the affect of death.

She could not deal with the reality that it just happened. And no one was responsible. No one to blame. Can't convict a bacteria which is what did kill him. So she blamed herself.

"I'm his mother. I should have protected him. I should have been able to save him. Mothers take care of their children. Not let them die."

Or "I'm to blame. I must have done something so terrible that my son died. I'm to blame. I should have gone to the City. I could have saved him. Taken him to the hospital and saved him. I failed him. It is my fault. My fault." She would keened over and over.

She could not accept the reality that it was meningitis that killed him. Not her. That even though she was his mother and mothers are powerful they are weak too. Feeble in the face of a real killer. She could not accept that his death could be so arbitrary. So pointless.

Mothers give birth. Not bury their children. Mothers nurture, buy clothes, enjoy their children. Not pick out coffins. They wrap their children in cocoons of safety, not shrouds. They make sense out of life. Not deal with the senselessness of death.

Aileen could not stop blaming herself for what she did not do. She could not protect her son. Not fight off meningitis. Not keep him alive. So she blamed herself for what she saw as a failure.

She did not take comfort in the reality that she did what she could. When Isaac called her at 4:16 in the afternoon, she calmed him down. Made him feel hopeful. Made him believe his mother's appropriate belief that he had the flu. She made his last minutes calm and secure in her love. Her warmth. Her adoration of her son. He felt her through the phone and felt better. To the point that he ordered some food to be delivered. She

was his mother and gave him everything she could.

She was and is a superb mother. She wrapped him in her affection. Gave him security. She could not keep him alive but she gave him a last vision of hope and love. She was not a villain here. She was a hero who now because she could not save the world from the unseeable, unfightable foe of death blamed herself.

To this day she still holds herself accountable for not being able to save him. Like mothers everywhere. They feel they are real superheroes in their children's' lives. But even Superwoman cannot win over meningitis or one of the so many causes of our children's deaths. She is not to blame. They are not to blame but we will never convince them of that. She was and is after all, his mother.

Neal Raisman
TCF Central Ohio Chapter, Columbus, OH

GRIEF IS LIKE A RIVER

My grief is like a river –
I have to let it flow,
But I myself determine
Just where the banks will go.
Some days the current takes me
In waves of guilt and pain,
But there are always quiet pools
Where I can rest again.

I crash on rocks of anger –
My faith seems faint indeed –
But there are other swimmers
Who know that what I need
Are loving hands to hold me
When the waters are too swift,
And someone kind to listen
When I just seem to drift.

Grief's river is like a process
Of relinquishing the past.
By swimming in Hope's channel,
I'll reach the shore at last.

Cynthia G. Kelley
TCF Cincinnati, OH

A Grieving Dad's Father's Day Thoughts

-By Andre Parhamovich

It has been five Father's Days since my wife and I lost our beautiful daughter Andrea (Andi) to the war in Iraq. We didn't make a big deal of Father's Day when Andi was alive, but now this holiday is very special to me—a time when I reflect upon my obligation and blessings as a husband and a father.

For almost a year after Andi died, when my family needed me the most, I was emotionally paralyzed. I was so tangled in the "web of grief" that I blamed myself for Andi's death. *Why hadn't I done everything in my power to keep her from going to Iraq?*

I could not cope with Andi's death until I began realizing how her brave commitment to peace inspired her mother, me, and people around the world. We created a foundation in Andi's name that provides scholarships to young women who want to use their talent and skills like Andi did—to make this a better world.

I like to think that I have an emotional heart. Like my physical heart, it has four chambers. Each chamber represents one of my four children, with the whole heart embodying me and my wife and the unity of our family. Andi's spirit will live on in the Andi chamber of my heart.

Losing a child is terrible. The pain is always there. Some days are better than others. But I think I've learned a few lessons that may be helpful to others in their grief:

- In order to live with your grief, you must learn to forgive yourself. You must release yourself from the remorse you feel for not having said "I love you" more, for not giving your loved one more hugs.
- Each person grieves differently—you must respect that, in yourself and others.
- Do not be afraid to cry. Crying helps to "rinse" the sadness from your soul.
- Saturate your mind with positive thoughts. Try to remember that your loved one would want you to live a happy and productive life.

I get solace from reading the accounts of other people who have suffered losses. It helps me to know that I am not alone in my grief. And that also helps me to remember that it is possible to lead a productive life that is full of love even when you are sad.

Andre and his wife, Vicki, live in Painesville, Ohio, where he has been a teacher of physical education and a coach for over 30 years with the Painesville City local schools.

From "We Not Walk Alone" Summer 2012

Donald's Trail

Our son Donald died on November 15, 1989, from depression which led to suicide. One asks many times what causes a handsome, intelligent, and sensitive young man to take his life. What could be so bad he saw no other way out of this emotional pain?

Of course, our son experienced teen peer pressures; he had to face alcohol and drugs. He also took on the world's problems. The environment concerned him greatly — the ozone layer fading away, the disappearance of rain forests, and the greenhouse effect. Donald was also concerned about earthquakes, like the one in San Francisco in 1989, months before he died. He took on the problems of his friends, his family and the world. That's too tall an order for anyone to fill.

Out there in nature, we feel a oneness with Donald. No, we cannot physically see him, but we can definitely feel his presence.

A gentle breeze blows there, and the softness of a pine branch embraces my arm. I see the babbling brook, so much in a rush — like Donald was. I feel the warmth of his smile. The rocky ground reminds me of his struggle with things that became obstacles for him. It also reminds me how difficult our lives are trying to trudge the rocky ground without him. Yet, it's not all sadness, it's more like a trail map of Donald's life. Sometimes the trail is smooth and paved with soft pine needles, and sometimes it's rocky, winding and steep. At the top though are gorgeous views to take your breath away.

I believe Donald cares for this trail also and walks it many times. I'm sure his view is one of even greater beauty than we can see — and one of greater peace than we can know on this side.

Linda Trimmer
TCF York, PA
In Memory of my son, Donald

Open Letter to Our Siblings

Dear Sibling,

How can I possibly tell you how much I miss you? But of course you probably know - since you knew me better than anyone. No matter how much time passes, I still wish you were here to share our lives and the future I expected us to have together.

Even though we fought and at times neglected each other, I just assumed that you would always be there. That we'd grow old together and remember stories of growing up and laugh at each other as we looked and acted more like our parents. That we'd share our joys and setbacks, and adore each other's children.

Your death has rocked me harder than I could imagined I'd survive. Ultimately, there are no answers to my questions. There is no replacing you and there is no solace for my grief.

There is only the simple choice I make every day to live on in the honor of your memory and the love we shared. To strive to carry on the best of who you were. To cherish the brief time we have with others. To celebrate the opportunity to be alive. To have compassion for the pain of others as well as my own. To have the courage to love fully as I have loved you and to remember that you would want me to go on and find joy again.

You gave me so many gifts while you were alive and I continue to discover the gifts in this loss. I am so thankful you were born my sibling. I would not have traded our time together for anything. You are always with me because you are a part of me.

Mary Lamourex

TCF Marin County, CA

One

It was only 1 second, *one* thought, *one* decision, *one* action in a lifetime of seconds, and thoughts, and decisions, and actions. It was so fast, so permanent, so irreversible, so hopeless. This moment, this thought, this decision, this action do not define him, do not honor him, do not immortalize him. It is the preceding 946,080,000 seconds, and thoughts, and decisions, and actions that define him, that honor him, that immortalize him.

I remember my brother in all of the other seconds, and thoughts, and decisions, and actions that preceded this *one*. I remember him coming home from the hospital, lip synching in the basement, falling out of the tree, biking across campus, coming home from school, from boot camp, from war... I remember him hiking, and skiing, and running, and laughing, and crying. I remember how safe I always felt when he was around. I knew he would take care, protect, defend.

I don't remember exactly when my brother became an amazing human being – I just looked at him one day and knew he was. I knew that nothing would make him change his mind about me. He was without judgment, without prejudice, without preconception. I knew my brother because we talked and he listened. I respected my brother most for his humanity – for being so sensitive, so vulnerable, so honest. I loved my brother for sharing the load when it was too hard for someone he loved to carry alone. I knew my brother because he left so much of him in me.

I trusted and respected my brother's decisions in the preceding 946,080,000 seconds, I have to trust and respect this *one* decision the same. I honor my brother by honoring myself. I do not dwell in that *one* moment, instead I celebrate and cherish all of the others. In that 1 second, *one* thought, *one* decision, *one* action, I found the strength he had given me and I will not let him down. I will not let that *one* moment be the only *one*.

Michele Mallory

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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
July / August 2018

Issue of
The Compassionate Friend is

June 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

May / June 2018

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.