



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
2017

Issue 131

Next Meeting

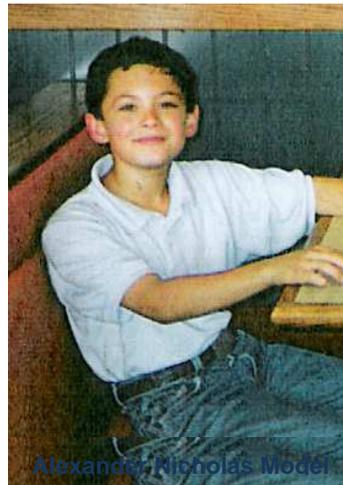
Wednesday
May 3rd

Wednesday
June 7th



Kristin Elizabeth Hawkinson

Kristin Elizabeth Hawkinson



Alexander Nicholas Model

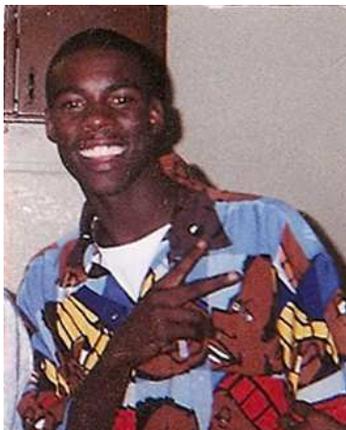
Alexander Nicholas Model



Rosa Griffith

Rosa Griffith

♥ Always In Our Hearts ♥



Richard Wilson



Ramiro Zuñiga-Cedillo



David Michael Ellis



Gary Lopez

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Issue 131

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**Location,
see p. 3**

Next Meeting

Wednesday
May 3rd

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June 7th

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.

- ♥ Rosa Garrett — In Loving Memory of her daughter Rosa. “Our time together was far too short.” Love Mama Rosa
- ♥ Maxine Ellis — In Loving Memory of her son David.
- ♥ Gloria C. de Zuñiga — In Loving Memory of her son Ramiro. “Rami, All those who loved you, especially your family, will miss you forever.” Zuniga family and Friends
- ♥ Tamara & Siquard Stautland — In Loving Memory of their daughter Kristin. “Happy birthday. We love and miss you more and more!”
- ♥ Marchell Crain — In Loving Memory of her son Richard.
- ♥ Thelma & Gerald Model — In Loving Memory of their son Alexander.
- ♥ Barbara Lopez — In Loving Memory of her son Gary.

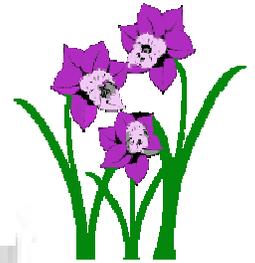


The
Compassionate
Friends



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 5-13-83
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, 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

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
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
Bianca Ciara Santanna, died 5-23
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 6-10-15
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
Leticia Raimer, died 6-23
Nicole Kaitlynn, died 6-23
Vinny Palermo, died 6-29



THE 40TH TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The Compassionate Friends is pleased to announce that Orlando, Florida, will be the site of the 40th TCF National Conference on July 28-30, 2017. “Rays of Sunshine, Oceans of Hope” is the theme of this year’s event, which promises more of last year’s great National Conference experience. The 2017 Conference will be held at the Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek. 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.

Conference Registration

[Register today](#) for the 40th National Conference. Pre-registration will be available until July 7, 2017. Please note: while on-site conference registration will be available, the Friday lunch and Saturday dinner is only available with pre-registration.

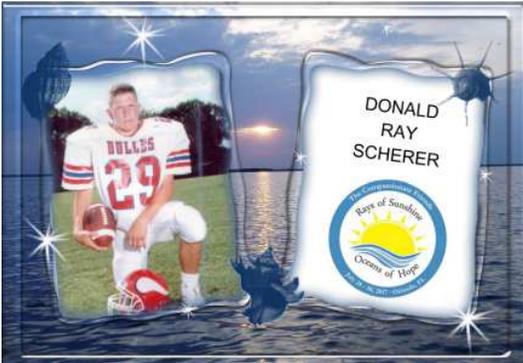
Hotel Reservations

[Click here](#) to make your hotel reservations online or by calling 888.353.2013 at the Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek.

Oceans of Hope Photo Frame

This year's Conference Committee will offer a "Oceans of Hope" photo frame. Your loved one's picture will be printed on your choice of six backgrounds and inserted into a curved wooden frame. The frame measures 5-5/8 inches x 7-1/8 inches.

Each photo frame is \$15.00. If you are not attending the National Conference, a \$5.00 additional charge will be added for shipping and handling. Please allow 4 to 6 weeks after the Conference for your "Oceans of Hope" photo frame to reach you. Orders must be placed by June 9, 2017.



One way of ordering is to go to the Conference website, Click on "Register Today", scroll down to and click on "Order a Frame".

HE ONLY TOOK MY HAND

Last night while I was trying to sleep
My son's voice I did hear,
I opened my eyes and looked around,
But he did not appear.

He said, "Mom you've got to listen,
You got to understand,
God didn't take me from you, mom,
He only took my hand.

When I called out in pain that day,
The moment that I died,
He reached down and took my hand,
And pulled me to His side.

He pulled me up and saved me
From the misery and pain.
My body was hurt so badly,
I could never be the same.

My search is really over now,
I've found happiness within,
All the answers to my empty dreams
And all that might have been.

I love you all and miss you so,
And I'll always be nearby.
My body's gone forever.
But my spirit will never die.

And so, you must all go on now.
And live, and understand
God did not take me from you,
He only took my hand."

-Author Unknown-

Submitted by Dee Louise's mother
Diane Hochstetler

Month of May Brings Tears, Fond Memories

The month of May is a time of many memories and many tears for mothers who have lost a child to death. The memories are tied to our natural association of May as being the "Mother's Day" month. We can't escape the reminders. Second only to the Christmas season in commercialization, Mother's Day is thrust at us in television commercials, billboards, radio spots, magazine and newspaper ads and special features, local and national news shows and each store we enter. Heart breaking, emotional, touching movies or television shows are aired in May in big part because of Mother's Day. The reminders are endless. Our emotions build and build until we think we will snap.

Most of us have memories of happier Mother's Days, time spent with our children opening their gifts and reading their special cards, talking, laughing and enjoying the moment. The counterpoint to our memories is that Mother's Day intensifies the deep void that will always remain in our lives. In the words of one mother, "One day after my son had been gone for several months, I realized that this nightmare life is my life forever." May is doubly difficult for this mother because of Mother's Day and because her son died in May. May is doubly difficult for me as my son was born in May.

Even without a birth or death anniversary, May can be extremely stressful and sad. We enter the countdown on the first day of May. Some of us begin to improve after Mother's Day passes, some of us can't let go until the month ends. Some of us suffer lingering effects for several weeks or months.

My first Mother's Day without my son was a horrifying time. No gifts, no cards, no call. I took all the cards he had given me for Mother's Day and put them on my piano...the time honored place in our home for special occasion cards. My second Mother's Day was different. I simply refused to acknowledge it. My husband gave me a card and a small gift, and we left it at that. A few tears, but we decided to relax and do things that would keep us away from the Mother's Day celebrations.

This will be my third Mother's Day without my son. I do miss him terribly; there will be no replacement for that relationship in my life. Unlike losing a parent, a spouse, a grandparent, a sibling or a friend, the loss of our child means the loss of a big part of ourselves. That is our new reality. What

will I do this Mother's Day? I don't really know, but it will dawn on me that I should do one thing or another.

What you do this Mother's Day is your choice. You owe no explanation to anyone. As we walk through this grief of losing our children, we owe no explanations. Our love for our dead children lingers, and in that love is a goodness and purity that allows us to gently be ourselves. Our emotions are not intended to offend; but sometimes the pain is so overpowering that we must block out the world. And sometimes, we are able to overcome it. I will handle in the best way I can. So will you.

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

A Mother

*There once was a girl so desperate,
To be loved, appreciated, and needed.
She looked everywhere,
And it suddenly became clear
Her due date would be September 15th.*

*She jumped and hollered "Hooray,
Finally someone would love me."
She went to school,
Made clothes for her baby,
And picked out a beautiful girls' name.*

*That August was one to remember,
When new life was born,
A Mother brought forth,
A father was torn,
And a Daughter was named Casondra.*

*Tragedy struck 2 years later,
Not even a 2nd birthday was celebrated.
'Amazing Grace' played,
Masks were displayed,
And a Mother was grief-stricken forever.*

*Many years have now gone by,
That Mother does still cry.
It took many years,
To deal with her fears,
And is now able to help another.*

Christine Gannon
TCF Siskiyou County Chapter, CA
In Memory of my daughter, Casondra Lynn Sybert-
Gannon

Father's Day

I just finished watching another miserable cologne commercial on TV. For some reason these are the first signs of the upcoming holiday, commercials that are only shown at Christmas and Father's Day to give wives and kids some idea of what to get Dad to celebrate a gift-oriented holiday.

Like the other fathers who read this newsletter, I know the gift I'd like to get this Father's Day, just as I know there is no way that it will happen. My son's life. An opportunity not to hurt when I see boys who are the age my son should be now. A chance to dream those dreams for that little boy again. But that's not going to happen. Instead I will get up on that day, having called and wished my father a happy day the night before, and go to the florist for the flowers I will place on my son's grave. I will stand alone and cry for a time, then return home to my wife and our infant son. This year will have a greater measure of peace due to young Dan's arrival, but I shall always have that Alex-sized hole in my soul, a longing that I know I will have until I too die.

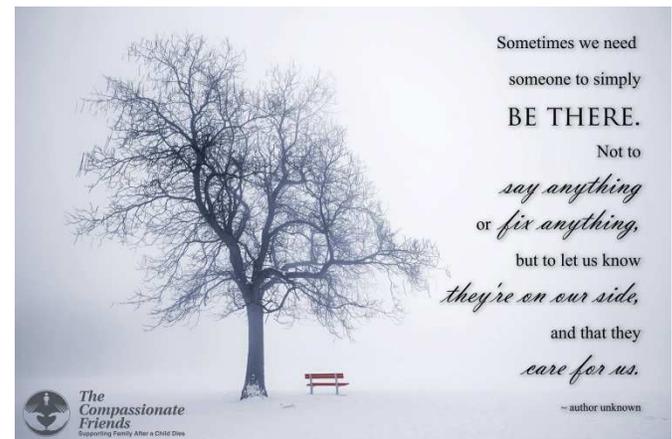
Like many bereaved fathers I have felt the lack of understanding of the non-bereaved on how a father should mourn his child's death, and for how long. I do not understand how a society can have such belief in the strength of maternal love, and do such a good job of ignoring the intensity of paternal love. From the people whose only question at Alex's memorial service was on how my wife was dealing with this tragedy, to the long-time friend who didn't understand my choking up after watching a Hallmark Card commercial last year, the majority of people around us seem to have difficulty with the thought that a father may need to grieve for his deceased child just as much as a mother might.

So that is where some support and love is needed, and needed badly. Of course we have Compassionate Friends, but something more personal and closer to home is needed. In a recent newsletter there was a note from a bereaved mother from New Jersey asking fathers and siblings to be understanding of a grieving mother's needs on Mother's Day. I agree, but I would also hope that you ladies will not forget your husband's this Father's Day as well. It is frequently

said that we males don't often talk of our emotional needs, and are reluctant to show our pain, but we need love and 'warm fuzzies' when we hurt also. Please remember us on June 18, and please remember also that those cute little sentimental commercials that hurt you in May, take their toll on us in June. There are definitely times when I can do without Old Spice, McDonalds, Hallmark, and AT&T.

Brothers, I wish you peace, comfort, and love.

Doug Hughes
TCF Cincinnati, OH
In Memory of my son, Alex



COURAGE

My brother died three years ago when he was seventeen years old. It was an accident when he fell while hiking in the mountains. I was fifteen and my brother was my hero. I would do anything to make him proud. When I lost him, I could have just given up. I have the courage to love people even though I know that I could lose them. I had many opportunities to just forget everyone else and lose myself. My brother was my best friend and when he died I could have too.

I decided that he would not have wanted me to throw my life away. I try my hardest to work hard in school and live up to what his expectations would have been. I am not living just for him. I am living for myself. A lot of people like to escape their problems by drinking or doing drugs. Alcohol and drugs only make problems worse because escaping a problem is not solving the problem. Self-respect means knowing who you are and treating yourself with dignity. I want people to look at me and to respect me. Staying in school and working to my potential is essential for respect. People cannot respect those who do not respect themselves. As Shakespeare said, "This above all else, to thine own self be true."

I do not make choices based on what the popular decision is. I base my thoughts and ideas on what I believe is right and important. I know that my brother would have been proud of me, because I made it through the most difficult time in my life, without him. I kept living when I lost the most important person in the world to me.

Courage is to keep fighting even though it looks like you are going to lose. When he died, I felt the world crash down on me. Everything I ever hoped for just seemed empty. Even now sometimes it will just hit me that my brother is gone. I have to keep on living and facing the world because that is what life is all about. Sometimes things happen that seem impossible to face. If I do not face my problems, who will?

Life is not supposed to be easy but it is not devastating either. There are so many wonderful things that happen and I have to have the courage to realize it. Life is not just a long line of problems. It is also a long line of answers. I need courage and self-respect to find these answers. I have to trust

myself and my future that everything will work out. It always does. The answers to life's problems can only be found through hard work and belief in yourself. My belief in myself comes from a big brother who always had faith in me.

Patricia Kelley
TCF Richmond, VA
In Memory of my brother, Sean 8/24/76 - 8/28/93

Benchmarks

Good bye would be too difficult,
Although I know you are gone.
Instead, I keep you in my heart
And your memory lives on.

I have redefined my purpose, son,
Since you are no longer here.
With your death I faced a choice
To die, exist or to live free.

My life has changed forever, child,
I'm redefined each week,
You would call these "benchmarks"
Of goals set and then achieved.

And so I set my benchmarks,
Achieving many, reshaping some...
But everything is different now
Except your mother's love.

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

"They shall not grow,
As we that are left will grow old.
As the going down of the sun and in the morning,
We will remember them".

In memory of Gary
May 18, 1966 - Nov. 12, 2001

From Barbara Lopez



SOMEHOW IT'S SPRING

It's spring in some places now. And in some places it will be winter for another couple of weeks (months?). Somewhere the tulips are beginning to push through the soft earth and somewhere the birds are returning to sing. Somewhere the air is warmer, the breezes more gentle, the land begins to awaken from a frozen sleep. The trees are beginning to bud and even the air smells fresh and clean. Somewhere windows are open and the sound of the vacuum can be heard, marking the beginning of spring cleaning... a ritual given to us long before our forefathers set sail for a new world. Somewhere the last holiday decoration is being packed away (those holiday diehards!) and somewhere a lawn mower is being readied for a new season.

As spring approaches, we begin to shed our overcoats and stand in front of the mirror... examining the body for the extra lumps we've accumulated during the hibernation season. We lace up our jogging shoes and make our way to the sidewalks, high school tracks and to the gym, eager to strip away the added inches that came because it was dark and gloomy and food seemed to soothe and comfort during the dark days of winter. Somewhere someone is planning a wedding, a graduation, a family reunion. Vacation brochures begin to appear and plans are discussed in anticipation of summer.

Spring is the reawakening season... the great wake up call for the earth. Somewhere, someone is answering that get up call... greeting the new season with vim, vigor, and vitality. There are smiles and renewed energy and hope seems to simply float on the softened air. Somewhere... all of that is occurring, but not within me. It's still snowing inside my being. It's still winter inside here and there aren't any tulips about to burst open in my spirit. I've still got my snow boots on and the sun

hasn't quite made it to my world. It's still winter inside me... I wonder if spring will ever come.

Oh, there have been moments of spring in the past. Wonderful, warm fleeting moments; moments when I "forgot" about the pain, the emptiness, the despair, the grief. Moments when the world was right side up and the music made me dance. But they were only moments and I'm waiting for spring to arrive in me.

Hope... the major ingredient in spring, seems to elude my grasp. Just when I think there might be some hope, a memory comes creeping across my soul and it's winter again in my heart. It's this lack of hope that seems especially cruel during springtime. I thought this winter inside me would end and I was looking forward to a more peaceful time in my life. I thought we would settle down, plant a garden and live our life filled with memories and the opportunity to make new ones. HA! I thought grief would end at some point. The books all say it will... everyone else looks like their grief has subsided... how come spring missed us?!

A season without hope is the ultimate in despair and I've spent too many such seasons. Where does hope go and how do I get it back?

Hope is that elusive something that keeps us moving, even in the dark. We are only powerless when we have no hope, no vision, no faith in our own abilities. We may be helpless at times. We may question the arrival of spring but we are only truly powerless when we have no hope no dreams...

Don't lose the hope! Search for it! Fight for it! Demand its return. Hope changes as we do and it can be so disguised that we may not recognize it, but it can be found — in the moments of our memories. We probably won't ever have totally happy lives again... We probably didn't have that kind of life anyway; we just thought we did.

Don't let death rob you of the moments of joy still to be remembered, and found. Don't let grief rob you of those spring places where love and joy live forever in the heart. Somewhere it is spring... Deal with the anger, the guilt, the depression as it comes and then let it go as you can... so there is room for joy to come again. Let hope come in... it's spring.

~Darcie Sims Taken from The Compassionate Friends website.

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FRIENDS
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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
Olivia Garcia 818-736-7380
oliviabgarcia1@gmail.com

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 2017

Issue of
The Compassionate Friend is

June 10, 2017

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 2017

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.