



# The Compassionate Friends



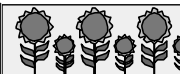
**El Paso Chapter**



**March**



**April**



**May**



## WELCOME TO THE SPRING MEETINGS

**Date:** Wednesday Evenings  
March 31, 2010  
April 28, 2009  
May 27, 2009

**Program:**

**Time:** 7:00-9:00 p.m.

**Place:**

St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
1000 Montana Avenue  
El Paso, Texas

**Board of Directors:**

Chairperson: Susan Crews  
542-0908

Meeting Facilitator: Susan Crews

Treasurer: Lou Cain

Newsletter, Website & Mailings:  
The Winkelmans

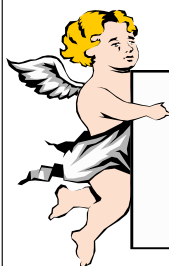
### Mark Your Calendar For Future Meetings

June 230: Regular Meeting

July 28: Regular Meeting

Aug 25: Regular Meeting

**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS** is a self help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents. The purpose of TCF is to aid parents in the positive resolution of the grief experienced upon the death of their child and to foster the physical and emotional health of bereaved parents and surviving children. The El Paso chapter meets in donated church facilities, but no religious creed or affiliation is involved. There are no dues and no one is required to talk at any meeting. Listening is okay! Please join us, together we can make it.



## Editor's Notes



We want this newsletter to be *your* newsletter. To do that, we need your help. You are invited – actually, you are strongly encouraged – to contribute to this publication. If you have something to share with other bereaved parents, e-mail it to me so that it can be published in our next newsletter. Please write and share your stories of your child or your sibling. Some of us get to know each other's children through the monthly chapter meetings. But, this newsletter also can be a forum for us to share. Writing is a form of therapy. It will help us get to know each other a little better and it will help us to heal a bit, too. We all have favorite memories that we can share – things that have helped us over the days, months or years. I hope you'll share them with us. It doesn't even have to be a full article. Sometimes, brief paragraphs of memories or thoughts are perfect.

Mail all Entries to: Eric Winkelman  
5337 Hunters Glenn  
El Paso, TX 79932  
or  
E-mail me at: [ejwinkelsbcglobal.net](mailto:ejwinkelsbcglobal.net)  
Visit our Website at: [www.elpasotcf.org](http://www.elpasotcf.org)

National Office: TCF National Office  
PO Box 3696  
Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696  
(630) 990-0010 or (877) 969-0010  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

# Mother's Day...Father's Day... Graduations...Proms

Spring comes – and with it comes the uneasy awareness of difficult days ahead. For those who are still going through all the “firsts” without your child, we share with you some special ways other parents have coped and managed.

Mother's Day...Father's Day...graduations...vacations... these are special family times which often catch us unaware and bring unexpected tears and painful memories of young lives cut short. It does get better! And you can make these special days better with some planning and with encourage-ment from those who have already been there.

Whatever the “special day” that lies ahead for your family, try to focus on doing something meaningful and tangible in remembrance of your child. Share as a family thoughts and suggestions about planting a tree or starting a rose garden, donating a book to the library or school, putting flowers on the altar, lighting a special candle or taking that long talked-of vacation. Tears and moments of sadness are okay, for they are expressions of love.

Remember:

- Take one day at a time.
- Keep things simple by playing down the holidays and special days, while they are so painful.
- Change your routine from past years.
- Make plans to be “busy” during at least part of the day (go out to lunch or to a movie, or visit friends)
- Give your older children some “space.” They not only feel your extreme sadness at these times; they also have their own feelings to deal with.

The anticipation is often worse than the day itself!

*From Fox Valley TCF Chapter, Aurora, Illinois*

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## Please See Me Through My Tears

You asked, “How are you doing?”

As I told you, tears came to my eyes...and you looked away and quickly began to talk again, All the attention you had given me drained away.

“How am I doing?”...I can do better when people listen, though I may shed a tear or two.

This pain is indescribable. If you've never known it you cannot fully understand.

Yet I need you.

When you look away,

When I'm ignored,

I am again alone with it.

Your attention means more than you can ever know.

Really, tears are not a bad sign, you know!

They're nature's way of helping me heal...

They relieve some of the stress of sadness.

I know you fear that asking how I'm doing brings me sadness...but you're wrong.

The memory of my loved one's death will always be with me, Only a thought away.

My tears make my pain more visible to you, but you did not give me the pain...it was already there.

When I cry, could it be that you feel helpless, not knowing what to do?

You are not helpless,

and you don't need to do a thing but be there.

When I feel your permission to allow my tears to flow, you've helped me.

You need not speak. Your silence as I cry is all I need.

Be patient...do not fear.

Listening with your heart to “how I am doing” relieves the pain,

for when the tears can freely come and go, I feel lighter,

Talking to you releases what I've been wanting to say aloud, clearing space

for a touch of joy in my life.

I'll cry for a minute or two...

and then I'll wipe my eyes,

and sometime you'll even find I'm laughing later.

When I hold back the tears, my throat grows tight, my chest aches, my stomach knots...

because I'm trying to protect you from my tears.

Then we both hurt...me, because my pain is held inside,

a shield against our closeness...and you,

because suddenly we're distant.

So please, take my hand and see me through my tears... then we can be close again.

*Kelly Osmont*

# Spring's Children Remembered

If your child's name has been left out of this section, or there is missing/incorrect information, please contact me immediately so I can update our data base. Register your child at the El Paso Compassionate Friends website at [elpasotcf.org](http://elpasotcf.org)

LIKE LEAVES IN AUTUMN



HERE AND THEN GONE

BUT ALWAYS REMEMBERED

Death Date:	Child's Name:	Age:	Parents:
3/1/09	Alan D.	22	Son of David and Chela Bardnell
3/2/09	Chistopher	19	Son of Lisa Schiefelbein
3/12/09	Diego	5 Mo.	Son of Francisco & Marcela Zubiato
3/14/07	Yvonne Pixler	38	Daughter of Gloria & Esiquio Trujillo
3/18/93	Robert Todd	23	Son of Mary Lou Cain
3/27/59	Dennis	NB	Son of Carol Winkelman
3/31/95	David Fox	18	Son of Nina Turley
3/31/08	Aaron	17	Son of Sibrena Sinagal
4/29/94	Matthew	4	Son of Eric and Patsy Winkelman
4/30/09	Mark	21	Son of Bethany and Gustavo Olivas
5/5/09	Monica Belle	5 Mo.	Daughter of Monica Marquez
5/11/04	Christopher	19	Son of Colleen Lydon
5/16/09	Tania	15	Daughter of Abraham & Veronica Lozoya
5/18/04	Aylssa	15 Months	Daughter of Desiree and Hugo Villanueva
5/30/04	Anthony	20	Son of Richard and Sylvia Chacon

## Tears and Flight

Why when I cry do people run and hide?  
 Is any emotion other than a false happiness not to be shared?  
 I cry for my daughter when I speak of her because of both the happiness I felt when she was here and the grief I feel because she is gone.  
 If I pretend to be happy people will talk to me and ask me about her and when I start to cry they take flight.  
 Is the world such an emotional desert that people are not allowed to show other emotions?  
 Everyone is flying here and there never stopping to say they love someone or they miss someone.  
 No one hold hands and holds each other anymore.  
 They pat your back or hug themselves.  
 Are we so engrossed in our own personal space that we cannot break thru to someone else to share their pain and their happiness too?

I often wonder if my daughter had not died would I still be behind the shell of anonymity that the rest of the world hides behind....  
 When you lose someone you lose your shell and the world seems harsher and at that time unrealistic but in all reality it's just you are outside yourself, your safe zone because you have been forced to admit you are not infallible, and that the world doesn't start and stop with you. That there are people in it that you depend upon even if you didn't know it and that changes you; you become lost and bereft of what you never even knew you had....  
 You become a survivor; the one left behind, the lost, the scarred, and the heartbroken and that makes you so very different than the false happiness shelled in people around you.  
*SLH...in memory of Sarabeth Cheyenne*

# Mother's Day, 'Before' and 'After'

While sorting through boxes and bags, it is not unusual for me to find something unexpected. It happened just the other day. Shifting through a box, I came across a wrinkled, somewhat yellowed piece of lined school paper. I carefully unfolded it only to find a drawing of a stick-Mom and stick-daughter standing alongside a mammoth daisy. The mom and little girl were holding hands with huge lop-sided grins on their faces. In her little girl just-learning-to-print handwriting were the words, "Happy Mother's Day, Mommy. I love you, Kristina."

Even six years later, little "gifts" such as these can bring fresh tears. It is times like these that I am glad that I was an incredible pack rat, especially when it came to saving things that my children have made. I can picture my then-blond, petite little Nina (her nickname), with the wispy hair, bent over the kitchen table, crayon in hand, creating that handmade card filled with love. Memories of breakfasts in bed, only to return to the kitchen after finishing the "gourmet" meal served with tender care, to find it in such disarray that it took hours to clean up! Even through the tears, these are the sweetest memories.

As I type this, I look at another gift from a Mother's Day past; a little statue of a harried mom, surrounded by mop, broom and bucket, that says, "World's Greatest Mom," chosen for me at a neighborhood garage sale. I came across it accidentally shortly after Nina's death, unearthing it from its hiding place. I wondered to myself, why had I packed it away? Did Nina know that I did and did she think that, by doing so, I hadn't appreciated her gift? Did I ever thank her for it along with the other garage sale items that she proudly brought home to me, or did it show on my face that I really didn't need anymore "junk" around the house?

Sometimes resurrecting these treasures can bring unpleasant feelings of guilt as we wonder if our children knew how much their little gestures of love meant to us. When our child dies, it becomes easy to second-guess ourselves, trapped in our fixations and exaggerations of the negative things that may have occurred during our child's life.

The first Mother's Day after Nina died was a grief-numbing blur, as it occurred only three days following her death. Unlike previous joyful dinners out with my four children pampering their mom, we spent the day making funeral arrangements and choosing a casket for one of them. In the early evening, I overheard it said to someone else, "Happy Mother's Day." I turned to my own mother and apologized for having forgotten.

I could not imagine ever celebrating another Mother's Day again. I am sure the dads have these same feelings on Father's Day. My heart goes out to them, because I think we forget that they, just like us, grieve and hurt, too.

For those mothers and fathers who have lost their only child, I have been saddened by stories told to me by them of attending church on Mother's Day Sunday and when the pastor asked the mothers in the church to please stand, they were undecided on whether they should stand or not. I hope that they will always remember, and the fathers as well, "Once a mother, always a mother; once a father, always a father." We are forever their parents.

If we are fortunate to have surviving children, they are often forgotten as well. In the early days, we become obsessed with the one who is missing. My own children showed quiet patience with this. I often wonder if they thought "What about us? We're still here!" Now with almost seven Mother's Days behind me, I try to accentuate what I do have.

This does not happen overnight. I found that in celebrating my surviving children, I could still honor Nina's memory and find ways to include her as well. I have developed a ritual where I get up early on that morning and bring flowers out to the cemetery. I bring a flower and a note to some of the mothers that I know who have buried children there to tell them I am thinking of them and their child.

There is something very healing when reaching out to others. I then sit by my daughter's grave-site on the spring-green grass listening to the sweet call of a robin. I bring her a flower and write in her journal telling her how thankful I am to be her mother, how much I love and miss her. That is our private time together; the rest of the day is spent honoring my other children.

Mother's Day and Father's Day are holidays especially created for us. Try to get through them the best that you can, in whatever way feels right for you. Truly, only you know what that is.

Whether it is alone those first few years or with people that you love and who understand, do something that you find comforting. It is your day, for you were the giver of a precious life – you held a miracle in your arms. Even as powerfully destructive as death is, even that cannot take those memories away from you – they are your child's gift to you.

With gentle thoughts and peace on your special day,

*Cathy L. Seehuetter,  
TCF/St. Paul, MN*

# Helping Your Grieving Adolescent

Parenting teenagers...it's a tough job under the best of circumstances. But when a teenager is grieving as well, four dynamics place additional stress on the situation. First, grieving families often feel a need to pull together for support. Since adolescence is increasingly a time of breaking away and relying on peer support, these conflicting needs can place parents and teens at odds with one another.

Second, adolescents are keenly aware of parental reactions and, when parents are grieving, often try to protect them from further pain.

Most commonly, this takes the form of not talking about it. Third, simply because they've experienced the death of a loved one, grieving teens tend to feel different from their peers. In an attempt to fit in, they may try to ignore their own grief reactions. Nevertheless, their normal grief reactions seethe beneath the surface, waiting for expression – healthy or unhealthy, at appropriate or inappropriate times.

Fourth, the stress of bereavement adds to the physical and emotional swings already common in adolescence.

So what's a caring parent or caregiver to do? Here are four strategies for helping your adolescent through bereavement.

1. Provide an environment the adolescent perceives as safe. Like adults, if they don't feel safe, young people can't do the necessary grief work. They need to know that they can trust themselves as having grief reactions that are normal, their peers and adults to be supportive, and parents to be a dependable safety net.

You can help through structure, discipline and education. Structure and maintaining routines provide adolescents with a subtle, daily sense of continuity and permanence at a time when everything else seems up for grabs.

Discipline – reasonable and caring, but consistent and firm – reassures adolescents that someone is in control and will save him or her from serious harm.

Education can transform a neutral environment into a healing one for your teen. Make sure the adults in his or her world (school personnel, coaches, bosses, clergy,

etc.) know that a death has occurred. Share with them printed materials about normal grief responses and what grieving people need. Use health classes and all-school assemblies to educate peer groups about bereavement.

And educate your child about normal reactions to grief so that he knows he is not going crazy and can trust the way his body, mind and emotions are responding. If he pulls back from discussion, provide books or movies that illustrate normal grieving.

2. Encourage your teen to express what the grief experience is like for him or her. Recognize and affirm that her experience is likely to be different from everyone else's in the family. Provide "emotional coaching" for your child by modeling appropriate emotional responses to loss.

If your teenager is a quiet or private person, encourage other methods of expression. Helpful ways of expressing emotion include playing music or musical instruments, writing (songs, poetry, diaries, letters to the person who died), sports (including martial arts and punching bags), art and photography.

3. Facilitate an ongoing connection with the person who died. Tell stories about the person. Give your adolescent a photo of him or her with the person. Support him in visiting the gravesite if that is meaningful to him. Make sure he has a memento of the person who died – a favorite tool or sports or hobby item, a piece of jewelry, a book, a sweater or robe – by which to stay connected.

And make sure you remember (in discussion, in prayer, by way of a small gift) to include the memory of the person who died in your celebration of important events in your child's life, such as graduations, getting a driver's license, participating in his or her first school play or first varsity sporting event.

4. Encourage your teenager to participate in normal adolescent life as she feels able. Grieving takes enormous energy, so your child may need to slow down a bit while she works on her grief. However, it's important for her to know that you don't expect her to take on an adult role now that someone important has died. Let her know you love and accept and support her – just as she is now, with all the normal living and loving and learning she has yet to do.

*Lovingly lifted from the TCF newsletter, Delaware County, DE*

## *The Robin's Song*

By Genessee Bourdeau Gentry



It's spring once again. Our

part of the world is turning back toward the sun; trees are leafing out; wildflowers are blooming. Robins are again singing to one another. And, I believe, also singing to those who are grieving.

Before my daughter Lori died in the summer of 1991, I was under the misperception that only the English robin had a glorious song. That smaller, red-breasted scalawag of a bird delights all who hear it, and I had felt that we in the United States had been short-changed when they'd misnamed its larger, boring, American cousin the same sweet name. All I'd ever heard our robins do was cheep! Then one spring day in the year after Lori died, during one of the darkest times of my grief, my ears and heart flew open with surprise at a song I heard outside my window. I distinctly heard, in the midst of my pain, a bird singing loudly and clearly, "Cheer up! Cheer up! Cheerio!...Cheer up! Cheer up! Cheerio!" I went outside to see what marvelous bird might have been sent to sing to me. I could barely see the bird at the top of the neighbor's poplar tree, so while hoping this exotic, magical bird wouldn't fly away while I was gone, I went to find our binoculars.

Rushing back, I could hear the bird from each room in the house. After adjusting the binoculars, I was truly amazed to see one of our "boring" American robins come clearly into view! As he continued singing clear as day, "Cheer up! Cheer up! Cheerio!" I marveled at this special message and wondered if my robin was the only one who sang these words. So I looked it up in my Audubon Society Field Guide to North

American Birds and found that my robin was not an anomaly, but that robins are considered the true harbinger of spring, singing, "Cheer up, cheer up, cheerily".

I stood there that day filled with wonder. I wasn't hearing things; there it was in the bird book: "cheer-up, cheer-up, cheerily." I thought to myself "cheerily...no, that isn't what I hear." We had lived in England for a year and our family, especially Lori, who loved to put on an English accent, often said "Cheerio!" to one another when we meant "Goodbye" or "See you later!" There was no doubt in my mind as I stood there listening. It WAS cheerio. Lori could have found no more perfect way to try to cheer me up AND say "hello"!

Nine springs have passed since then, and although I will always deeply miss Lori's physical presence in my life, those darkest of times are thankfully now mostly in the past. It is spring once again and as I hear the robin singing so hopefully in the highest branches, it takes me back to that first spring song, and I smile, remembering. And I think of all those who are now in the darkest depths. Of their own grief and pray they too will hear this lovely song.

Lovingly lifted from "Linked Together" Newsletter of the Atlanta area Chapters, April-May 2003

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### ***The Angels Cry***

Raindrops fall from the heavens, mimicking the tears falling down my cheeks. A torrent of rain is unveiled from the dark clouds above like the shadow on my soul. The angels, too, cry for my loss. Thunder and lightning are unleashed in anguish. The skies drum out my torment, until at long last I cannot cry anymore - today. The rain slowly tapers off to a gentle sprinkle, as my grief is spent. The clouds part; the sun comes out once more and dries away my tears. A robin lands nearby singing gleefully, reminding us that, with sorrow, there is also joy.

By Lorraine Bebeau, TCF St. Albert

# Love Gifts

A LOVE GIFT is a gift of money or service to The Compassionate Friends. It is usually in honor of a child who has died but it can also be a gift to help in the work of the El Paso Chapter of TCF. Your gifts are tax deductible and are our Chapter's only monetary support. Your donation will help us pay for postage and labels for sending our newsletter each month.

## LOVE GIFT

Name of Person to be Remembered \_\_\_\_\_

Special Occasion of Person \_\_\_\_\_

Given By \_\_\_\_\_

Send To: Mary Lou Cain  
5664 Beth View  
El Paso, TX 79932

### Love Gifts For Spring

Carol Winkelman, In memory of her son Dennis 3/27/59, and her grandson Matthew's Anniversary, April 29

#### March Winds

He raced against the wind  
as if his life depended upon it.  
Eyes bright, cheeks glowing  
from the still almost chilly March wind,  
throwing me a smile now and then  
to make sure I was watching. I was,  
and when I caught a smile I applauded.  
His effort so great for one small boy  
I don't remember now if his kite ever flew  
– sometimes, in spite of heroic efforts,  
they don't. But I remember the day  
the nip in the air his cheeks glowing  
his fresh, clean smell my afternoon  
of playing catch with his smiles...  
I remember every year when March  
winds begin to blow. Even if he had  
not died long after the age of flying kites,  
I still would remember.  
Maybe if he were still here,  
teaching his own small boy  
the delicate art of flying kites  
and catching how own smiles,  
it wouldn't hurt so much  
when March winds begin to blow.



#### A Grandparent's Point of View

The death of a child is the most tragic thing that can happen to anyone. It affects so many lives – family, friends and even strangers.

I lost my grandchild through death, and only a grandparent can understand the special love we have for our grandchildren and the loss we feel when the child dies. For grandparents, it is a double loss. Not only is your grandchild gone, but you also watch your child die each day.

The smile that was always on my daughter's face is no longer there. The hurt is so deep and there are so many questions. You feel helpless as a parent. You can't kiss the hurt away, as you did when she was a child. You have no answers for her questions, as you can barely understand your own feelings.

Each day I hope and pray for a little ray of sunshine to show on my daughter's face. I search for a little something to say or do that will comfort her. It seems that there is no end to the suffering.

As time has slowly gone by, I have seen the healing process begin. IN time a ray of hope will shine on my daughter's face and a smile will make her eyes light up again. She will turn to me for what little comfort I can give her. There will always be a part of me that is gone, but in time I will learn to live with the part that is still there.

By Ruth Eaton, TCF Savannah, GA

From Songs from the Edge by Faye Harden, lovingly  
lifted from the TCF Tucson Chapter Newsletter, Vol.  
14, No. 4

## April Reflections: Spring - Easter - Passover

**Spring** means new growth, flowers, green grass, butterflies, budding trees And with this comes hope for the future.

**Easter** reminds us of a life hereafter and the children's laughter fills our hope As they engage in Easter egg hunts and Easter bunnies.

**Passover** remembers the ones no longer with us – and as we mourn their loss we understand that the life of the dead is now in the memory of the living.

**Lent** often brings up talk about “giving up things” – I would prefer to hear people say what they are doing for other, for Lent. Forgiveness could be a start, followed by love. Add also patience, understanding and friendship. It's better to be less critical of others and more loving instead.

Priorities can change. One of our bereaved parents observed how her priorities have changed since the death of her child. She used to find it important to shop for material things. She now feels time spent with children is more important. She told us about a recent

day; as she was about to leave the house her grandson wanted to show her something, but she said she didn't have time right then. After a moment, she reconsidered and said, sure she had time —

How many of us forget it only takes a few minutes or a smile, to make someone else's day. Bereaved parents know more than anyone we might not get a second chance. So tonight, when we turn out the light and reflect on the day, I hope we all can say “this was a good day not only for me but for the kindness I showed to others”

By Othell Heaney, from the Brandywine Hundred TCF Chapter, Delaware

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### To My Brother

Wherever we look, You are there,  
You are the light on the water.  
You are the blossom on the tree.  
You are a thought, And you are a feeling,  
Wherever we are, you are there.

By Martha Dubinsky, Chappaqua, NY

Self Help Organization Offering Friendship and Understanding to Bereaved Parent

Address Correction Requested



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS  
ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH  
1000 MONTANA  
EL PASO, TX 79902