



# The Compassionate Friends

**El Paso Chapter**



**June**



**July**



**August**



## WELCOME TO THE SUMMER MEETINGS

**Date:** Wednesdays  
June 29, 2011  
July 27, 2011  
August 31, 2011

**Program:**

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

**Place:**

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

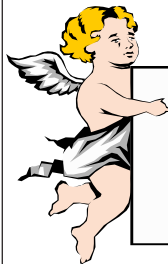
**Board of Directors:**

Chairperson: Ray Gallardo  
Sec/Treasurer: Lou Cain  
Newsletter, Copies & Mailing:  
The Winkelmans

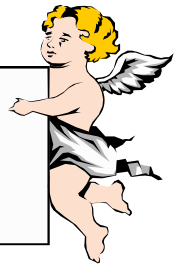
### **Mark Your Calendar For Future Meetings**

Sept 28: Regular Meeting  
Oct TBD: Annual Balloon  
Picnic  
Oct 26: Regular Meeting  
Nov 30: 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.

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ejwinkel@sbcglobal.net

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Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696  
(630) 990-0010 or (877) 969-0010  
www.compassionatefriends.org

## Child Loss often Makes a Father Feel Like a Failure

Men go through all kinds of identity changes when they experience the loss of a child, especially a child who is older and has lived long enough to create established memories with his father. A man identifies himself by mainly two things: the job he has and the family he has. When a child is taken away by death, a man suddenly loses the largest, most important part of his identity and a real crisis situation has been created, not just for the father, but also for the role the father plays with the family. Fathers love to feel needed, and they love to feel like they are the one responsible for the happiness of the entire family.

Men are far less verbal than women by nature, and it makes it much more difficult for family members and friends to understand the changes that are taking place with a father when he loses a child. He often feels like a total failure because he was unable to prevent the death or to fix the death once it took place. This is especially true if the child's life was lost due to an illness. Fathers are notorious for fixing things that are broken or in need of repair, and when they cannot fix their child's illness and the end result is death, a father goes through a deep grieving period of feeling tremendous guilt and failure.

A father who loses a child also loses such a large part of his dreams. Fathers don't always openly talk about their dreams of hunting and fishing with their children, or of taking bike rides together, going to ball games together or of tossing a ball in the backyard, but they think about these events all of the time. Fathers of girls daydream about walking their daughter down the aisle and dancing that first dance at the wedding. They dream about taking care of all of their child's hurts, wiping their tears away, and being called "hero" for all of the ways they show their strength to their son or daughter. Child loss, in a father's eyes, often represents weakness. Men believe fathers are to be strong and in charge, not at a loss for knowing what to do when death turns life upside down. Child loss is such a helpless feeling, and often this is a foreign emotion for fathers who have been immersed in the lives of being a tower of strength for their child. What is a father to do? How can a father go on and feel whole once again? It takes time to work through the pain of loss. It takes a long time to build back a feeling of belonging as a father. It will often take years for a father to be able to reclaim his identity of a father. It will take lots of working

through feelings of failure and loss to feel like a man who can always proudly wear the name father. Take it a day at a time, a step at a time. Begin by telling yourself over and over that you will always be a father. Nothing can change that – not even death. Remind yourself often that some things cannot be fixed by you. Remember often that lost dreams are part of the pain every parent feels when a child dies. It takes a lot of tears and years to work past the milestone markers of such things as dreams of your child playing ball, driving a car, dating, getting married, and having children. These are not easy dreams to release, but with time you will be able to more vividly remember the times you had with your child than to sorrow over the time you never had. Be patient with yourself! Be kind to yourself! And, when you fall into the emotional pain of feeling like a failure, remind yourself that you will always be a father and nothing can take away that badge of honor, not even death!

Lastly, remind yourself that you will make it! There will be a day when you can say with confidence, "I am a father – always and forever, and I am so thankful for that!"

Written by Clara Hinton

From the web site [www.silentgrief.com](http://www.silentgrief.com)

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### July's Child

Fireworks race toward heaven  
Brilliant colors in the sky.  
Their splendor ends in seconds  
On this evening in July.  
"Her birthday is this Saturday,"  
I whisper with a sigh.  
She was born this month,  
She loved this month  
And she chose this month to die.  
Like the bright and beautiful fireworks  
Glowing briefly in the dark  
They are gone too soon, and so was she  
Having been, and left her mark.  
A glorious incandescent life,  
A catalyst, a spark...  
Her being gently lit my path  
And softened all things stark.  
The July birth, the July death of  
my happy summer child  
Marked a life too brief that ended  
Without rancor, without guile.  
Like the fireworks that leave images  
On unprotected eyes...  
Her lustrous life engraved my heart...  
With love that never dies.

—Sally Migliaccio, TCF Babylon, Long Island, NY

# June, July and August 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.*

LIKE LEAVES IN AUTUMN



HERE AND THEN GONE

## BUT ALWAYS REMEMBERED

| <b>Death Date:</b> | <b>Age:</b> | <b>Child's Name:</b> | <b>Parents:</b>                        |
|--------------------|-------------|----------------------|--|
| 6/1/1993           | NB          | Daniel               | Son of Charla McDaniel                 |
| 6/4/2001           | 24          | Ernesto Torres       | Son of Connie Arce                     |
| 6/6/2009           | 30          | Ruben Lizarraga      | Son of Jose and Alicia Hernandez       |
| 6/17/1991          | 23          | David                | Son of Karen Valentino                 |
| 6/19/1995          | 35          | Mark                 | Son of Estella Townsend                |
| 6/24/2008          | 16          | Hector Jr.           | Son of Hector and Sandra Garcia        |
| 6/26/1988          | 17          | Peter                | Son of Bonnie Winkelman                |
| 7/1/2004           | 2           | Merry                | Daughter of Patrick and Julie Tanwater |
| 7/13/1996          | 9           | Thomas               | Son of Ann Sparkes                     |
| 7/14/2007          | 31          | Lawrence             | Son of Elsie and Edward Margerum       |
| 7/19/2010          | 3 Months    | Julian Daniel        | Son of Omar and Joanne Velasquez       |
| 7/22/2010          | 31          | Richard              | Son of Dioncio and Gladys Capacetti    |
| 7/24/2010          | 18          | Martin Mario         | Son of Annette Garcia                  |
| 7/29/2008          | New Born    | William David        | Son of Jorge and Vanessa Ramirez       |
| 8/1/2008           | 27          | Vicente David        | Son of David and Debbie Costalez       |
| 8/7/1993           | 19          | R. J.                | Son of Mr. & Mrs. Joe Halow            |
| 8/9/2004           | 29          | Teddy                | Son of Katrinka Jennings               |
| 8/24/2008          | 19          | Ruben Soliz          | Son of Ruben Navarette                 |
| 8/26/1996          | 28          | Philip               | Son of Mr. & Mrs. Herb Winograd        |

## I Know

You don't need to say you're sorry  
 It's written in your face.  
 I know you share my sadness  
 By the warmth of your embrace.  
 Don't try to justify the "why"  
 Or "how" this came to be;  
 Or explain away the mystery

Of death's reality.  
 Just know that more than any words  
 The thing I hold most dear  
 Is the friendship in your handshake  
 And your hug and that you're here.  
 By Bruce Conley, Columbia, MO  
 "A Journey Together"  
[www.bereavedparentsusa.org](http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org)

## COME, LET ME TAKE YOUR HAND

Come, let me take your hand. For where you must walk, I too, have walked. The road that we must walk is not one that we would choose to walk; it is a difficult road, full of many obstacles. Yes, we are still fathers. We love and remember our sons or daughters who have died. Their death has left us with a hole in our heart, an ache in our stomach, a pain in our chest and eyes that cannot see as they are filled with tears. We must grieve because we dared to love and it is through grief that we will recover. We may never have the life that we once had, but we can build another life. Our heart will heal, our pain will lessen and we will be able to talk about our son or daughter without the tears. There will come the day when we dare to laugh again.

- Paul Kinney TCF, Louisville, KY

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### THE SCREAM

The smile you see is not all of me,  
For I'm not what I seem.  
I laugh and smile but all the while,  
My smile holds in a scream.  
For when I see a little girl,  
So innocent and free,  
I think about my little girl,  
Who died at seventeen.  
And then the scream comes welling up,  
From in my soul so black,  
And so my smile must block it in,  
And laughter hold it back.  
I saw her born and watched her grow,  
from child to blooming lass,  
But through the years I couldn't know,  
I'd have to see her pass.  
The suffering within my heart,  
I hide from all the world.  
I do my job, I play the part,  
And miss my little girl.  
A song about a father's love,  
So sweet with tenderness,  
Awakes in me the horror of,  
My loss and loneliness.  
So, if they say "He takes it well,  
He'll be OK we all can tell.  
How well his life continues on,  
It's almost if she wasn't gone."  
Remember that I'm not so sane,  
Playacting, keeping up the game,  
My nightmare life trapped in a dream,  
You see, my smile holds in a scream.  
Steve Tutt ~ TCF, Tyler, Texas  
Remembering our daughter, Lisa  
1987-2004

### Lost Graduation

Pomp and Circumstance,  
Speeches,  
Happy faces,  
Proud parents,  
It's not fair  
Because you're not there.  
Mortar boards flying,  
Diplomas,  
Tassels tossed,  
It's too much to bear  
Because you're not here.  
School song playing,  
Gifts,  
Celebrations,  
Laughing friends,  
We cannot share,  
Because you're not here.

*Sue Snepp, Tucson TCF*

*-dedicated to the children who graduated only in our hearts*

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### ON NOT SAYING IT

I never got around to saying it.  
There was always tomorrow,  
When the time would be more appropriate.  
Besides, you hated "embarrassment,"  
Or was the embarrassed one really me?  
Now I say it a lot,  
To the sky, to your photo, to a gravestone.  
Knowing facts say you cannot hear it,  
But believing, inside me, you can.  
When a child, a youth, then a young man,  
I remember how you watched my face.  
First as your god, then as your monitor,  
Finally, I hope, as a friend.  
But "I love you," as years went by,  
Were words we kept bottled inside.  
Now that you've left, the bottle overflows.  
Until I, too, cross the Divide,  
I have to believe you knew.  
And forgave me for not saying it.  
Leonard Ruppert, TCF, Atlanta, GA

## Our Children are Always With Us In Spirit

By Sandy Fox

*I know for certain that we never lose the people we love, even to death. They continue to participate in every act, thought and decision we make. Their love leaves an indelible imprint in our memories. We find comfort in knowing that our lives have been enriched by having shared their love.* - Leo Buscaglia -

I happened to see this quote in a current issue of the online Compassionate Friends Newsletter. How true! How true it is! I think of how I can apply this quote to everything I have done since my daughter died.

Every time I have to make a decision about something, whether it be to participate in an event, give to a charity or even just where to travel, I always think of how my daughter, Marcy, would have responded. "Mom," she would say, "Go for it! You're good at organizing events. You're a Virgo and Virgos are perfectionists." I smile. That I am, just as she was a stubborn Leo.

I have taken on national bereavement conferences and am happy to help others. I have walked for charities or just donated when receiving information on that charity, if I believe it is worthwhile. And traveling, my passion and hers also: I am always so sad that she is not able to see all the places I know she would have liked. When I am at a destination, I turn to my husband and always say, "Marcy would have loved this city... these mountains... this exhibit."

We never forget our children, no matter how long it has been since they died. A piece of our heart has died with them, yet we go on. Then something always triggers a remembrance, and that is okay. Whether it makes you smile or cry, either one is a healthy reaction. You don't have to be ashamed or embarrassed around others, because your feelings for your child will always be within you, no matter what.

So many good memories...why not write them down, put them away and treasure them always? If you are having a bad day, take one out and remember, smile or even laugh. The parents of 9-year-old Christina Green from Tucson, who was born on a tragic day 9/11/2001 and died in a tragic shooting in Tucson in January that also seriously wounded Congresswoman Gabrielle Gifford, will always think of her when thinking of politics, how enthusiastic she was about serving her country and wanting to get to know her congresswoman from Tucson. It would not surprise me if her parents or sibling, years from now, honor her memory by doing something along political lines, whether as a volunteer or as an advocate.

This is how we share our love for our children when they are no longer with us physically but always in our hearts and minds. We try to do good; we try to help others as our children would have done; we try to find a cause that will bring a smile to our child's face, wherever they are and to ours. Our lives have been enriched for having them, and we become better people for it.

Sandy Fox 2011, from [www.opentohope.com](http://www.opentohope.com)

## Choosing Life

By Marcia F. Alig TCF, Mercer Area Chapter, New Jersey

It will never be the same. Never. As a bereaved parent, you have often heard or said these words to express grief's profound feelings of sorrow and disorientation. Your life has suddenly taken an unexpected course that appears both uncharted and endless. Bewildered, you vainly search for pathways back to your former life, until you confront the reality that there is no way back. Your child is dead forever. It is then that you may say, ...never the same.

This is the aspect of grief that Simon Stephens calls The Valley of the Shadow. It is that very long time between the death of your child and your reinvestment in life. *Between*. It is not supposed to be a permanent resting place. Although some people do take up residence in the valley, it is a transition from the death of your child to life with renewed purpose.

The key to this transition is yourself. You must choose between life and the valley. You and only you can decide. And you must make that decision again and again, each day.

Giving in to the hopelessness of the valley is tempting. Choosing to move on toward life requires a great deal of work. You must struggle with the pain of grief in order to resolve it. It is a daily struggle full of tears, anger, guilt and self-doubt, but it is the only alternative to surrendering yourself to the valley. Little by little you choose to move on. Little by little you progress toward the other side of the valley. It takes a very long time, far longer than your friends or relatives suspected. Far longer than you had believed - even prayed - that it would be. When one day you find yourself able to do more than choose merely to live but also how to live, you will know you are leaving the valley of the shadow. There will still be more work to do, more struggle and choosing. The valley, however, stretches behind rather than in front of you.

When you have resolved your grief by reinvesting in life, you will be able to realize that nothing is ever the same. Life is change. We would not have it be otherwise, for that is the valley of the shadow. Change has the promise of beginning and the excitement of discovery.

Life is never the same. Life is change. Choose life!

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## As Long As I Can

By Sascha. (*Sascha's son Nino drowned at age 3; years later, her daughter Eve died by suicide at age 21.*)

As long as I can, I will look at the world for both of us. As long as I can, I will laugh with the bird, I will sing with flowers, I will play to the stars, for both of us.

As long as I can, I will remember how many things on this earth were your joy. And I will live as well as you would want me to live, as long as I can.

# 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 Summer

Gordon Mahon Jr, In Loving Memory of His Son Samael, 9/5/2006, Age 28

### Summertime

With summer comes more time for relaxation and more time for get-togethers with family and friends. After our son died it left a void in all those family activities and lots of time for thoughts of summers gone by - vacations, 4th of July's, Bible schools, camps, baseball games, swimming lessons, skiing at the lake, and many other memories. It still seems important for us to participate in those same activities because on each occasion some memory is stirred of a time when our son was a part of these activities that made summer such a special time for us. At first those memories made us so sad, but now when we remember what he did or said in certain situations, our hearts are a little lighter and even sometimes a little smile appears on our faces.

These memories are what we have left and they are so very precious. Summers are a good time to relax and remember our happy times together.

By Carol Linch, TCF LaGrange, GA

### Holding Onto Love

Trees and flowers seem suddenly reborn,  
As another spring arrives fresh and new,  
Surrounded by such beauty,  
My thoughts turn to you.  
As another college graduation looms,  
Great excitement fills the air,  
Glancing at the smiling students,  
I still search for strawberry blonde hair,  
No matter what I do in life  
You are always there,  
I feel your presence constantly,  
As each new experience we share.  
Though physically, you have left us,  
Your love remains here to stay,  
A bond so strong and nourishing,  
It gets us through another day.  
By Chuck Collins  
Burke/Springfield/Fairfax Chapter TCF

### *Who Am I Now?*

Who am I now that my sibling has died? I have asked myself that question many times over the last four years. When I think of my brother, Sean, I think of how things used to be. I also think of all the things that he will miss. For example, my husband or my children will never know Sean. Sean will never have children. There are just so many things that he will miss. I began to question who I was about a month after Sean died. He and I shared a great love of music. When I think of music, I think of Sean. At first, every song I heard made me cry. After a while though, I began to try to find a deeper meaning in the songs. I know that a lot of teenagers and young adults identify important times in their lives by music. I am one of those people. Now I am trying to figure out what place the music has in my life. After Sean died, music took on new meaning for me. The music I sing and listen to is my special connection to my brother. The song "Because You Loved Me" by Celine Dion was especially powerful for me. I came to realize that through simply loving and supporting me, my brother had helped to shape the person that I was becoming and who I want to become. I have realized now that my life's direction has taken a slight detour. I have had to reroute my image of myself. When I see music, I see my brother and I hope that will never change. When I saw myself in the past, I saw Sean by my side. That picture has now been altered. The biggest part of the question, "Who am I now?" is also "Am I still a sister?" The answer to that is a simple yes! Sean will always be my brother and I will be his sister. Forever.

By Traci Morlock, BP/USA Bereaved Sibling, St. Louis, MO

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### **Create a Family Flag**

Creating a family flag can represent your family's grief journey.

1. Use fabric of choice and cut to desired size.
2. Hem and sew one seam along the edge for the flagpole to slide through.
3. Decorate and embellish as desired. Use small jewels or photos that remind your child of your loved one or your families journey through grief.
4. Proudly display your flag to encourage hope for the future and represent love for the past.

Variation: Create a paper flag and use macaroni, stickers and strings for embellishments. Then proudly display on the fridge or on your child's bedroom wall.

Just for Me! Activities for grieving children & teens. (2009), p.10. ~ [www.ryansheartnpo.org](http://www.ryansheartnpo.org).

### **A GRANDPARENT'S POINT OF VIEW**

The death of a child is a most tragic thing. It affects so many – family, friends and even strangers. My grandchild died, and only a grandparent can understand the special love we have for our grandchildren and the loss we feel. For us, 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 they were a child. You have no answers for their questions, for 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 there is no end to the suffering. As time has slowly gone by, I see 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. In time I will learn to live with the part that is still here.

By Ruth Eaton, from *Infants Remembered in Silence*,

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### **Dear Grandma and Grandpa,**

Please accept this photo album as a gift from me to you. It's my life story. Though brief, I know that I touched many lives. Please don't tuck it away and try to forget, but keep it close and remember always. I was truly a beautiful baby!

My mom and dad are very sad, and I know you are too. I have heard your cries, and I wish that I could comfort you.

Oh, Grandpa, How I will miss the rides in your pick-up truck and rides upon your knee. Grandma, I look at you and I know how special my smile to you would be.

I have one small request I hope you will do for me. It's a gift for mom and dad, given in love from you and me. Listen to them as they talk about the person I would have become. Please, kiss my mom and hug my dad. Wrap them in your arms, and keep on holding tight. Having your support and love will help them make it through the silent nights.

I am smiling at you through my own tears, so I'll sadly say good-bye, from my place in heaven above. Hugs and kisses. Love, Tyler Jay Grandson of Betty Behnken

From [www.irisremembered.com](http://www.irisremembered.com)  
Infants Remembered In Silence

## Dads Need Hugs Too

When a child dies, everyone has such compassion for the mother. Months after the death, people still ask how she is doing. There is always a shoulder available for her to lean on to release some of her pain. Let's not forget the father. The child was a part of him, too. That child was his son, to play ball with, coach in sports, watch sports with or collect baseball cards. Or she was his daughter, his princess, the most beautiful girl that ever lived. Daddy's perfect angel. Fathers hurt deeper than mothers sometimes because there is no release for their pain, no one there to listen to them say, "I feel terrible. I miss my child so much." Or "Today reminds me of when..." The longer fathers keep silent, the more hurt they have to keep inside, pushing it deeper and deeper to make room for more.

The next time you see a father that has lost a child, don't forget to ask how he is today and give him a hug or just put your hand on his shoulder to let him know you see his pain. Dads need hugs too.

By Kathy Hunsicker, TCF Lehigh Valley, Penn.

## A Father's Grief

By Ron Howard

In silent disbelief  
I read those granite words  
That tell a soldier's tale  
And how valiantly he served.  
Monuments to freedom  
Standing straight and tall  
They represent men willing  
To sacrifice it all.  
I stand as tears fill my eyes  
And pain chokes out my heart  
So proud that you were willing  
To go and do your part.  
And though I do have pride  
In the battles that you won  
It gives me little comfort  
For I have lost my son.  
Rest peacefully my son,  
Your battles now are through.  
Look down on me from Heaven  
And remember I love you.

From Bereaved Parents USA National Newsletter "A Journey Together" [www.bereavedparentsusa.org](http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org)

Self Help Organization Offering Friendship and Understanding to Bereaved Parents

Address Correction Requested



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS  
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1000 MONTANA  
EL PASO, TX 79902