

The Compassionate Friends

The Modesto Area Chapter of The Compassionate Friends

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A self-help organization offering friendship, understanding and hope to bereaved families that have experienced the death of a child.

www.modestoriverbanktcf.org

February 2021

tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com

MONTHLY MEETING

7:00 PM

Bridge Covenant Church
2201 Morrill Road
Riverbank, CA 95367
(Corner of Oakdale Rd and Morrill Rd)

The meeting scheduled for
Monday, February 8th
will be conducted as a
Zoom meeting online

Upcoming Meetings

March 8th
April 12th
May 10th

Visit us on Facebook
The Modesto Area Chapter
of TCF



Find us on Instagram at
Modestoriverbank_tcf



Our Mission

The mission of The Compassionate Friends:

When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

All the love you created is still there. All the memories are still there. You live on--in the hearts of everyone you have touched and nurtured while you were here...

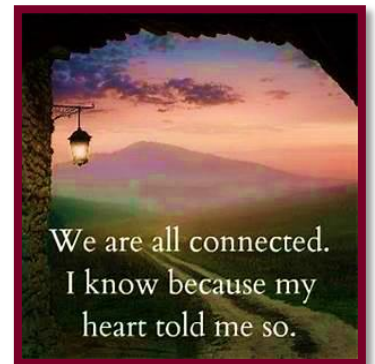
Death ends a life,
not a relationship.

tuesdays with Morrie
Mitch Albom

MESSAGE LINE

(209)622-6786

Please leave a message and
a steering committee
member will return your
call.



2021 Steering Committee

Tracey Parker
Chapter Leader
Devon Homme
Secretary
Elsie Freeman
Treasurer
Janet Neal
Outreach Coordinator
Lori Leitner
Hospitality & Library
Chad Homme
Public Relations
Kris Leitner
Newsletter Editor
Mike & Suzanne Casity
Website

"Grieving is a journey that teaches us how to love in a new way now that our loved one is no longer with us. Consciously remembering those who have died is the key that opens the hearts, that allows us to love them in new ways."

- Tom Attig, The Heart of Grief



If anything in this world could overcome death,
it would be the deep & powerful love of a parent.
You are the fiercest of warrior mamas,
carrying love & grief in your very bones
through life without your
precious child.

Excerpt from:
You Are Not Alone: Love Letters from Loss Mom to Loss Mom

OUR CHAPTER PHONE TREE



If you are struggling and need to talk, we are here for you. We have set up a phone tree and someone is available day or night. You can call or text us at (209)622-6786 and one of the Steering Committee will get back to you as soon as possible. You may also reach someone through the email address, tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com, or on our private Facebook page, which you can find by searching for *The Modesto-Riverbank Area Chapter of TCF*.

If you would like to be a part of our phone tree and be available for other members, please contact us through one of the above mentioned methods and we will add your name and number to our list.

♥ LOVE GIFTS ♥

Love gifts can be made in memory of your child, sibling or grandchild in any amount. Donations received are used for our annual Candle Lighting Program each December, for sending our monthly newsletter via US mail and for community outreach. We are here to reach out to other bereaved families who may not be aware we are here to lend our support after the death of a child. Please send your tax-deductible donation to the PO Box below.

*Louise Terra in memory of her beloved children: David, Sara, Mark and Heather ...
and grandchildren: Jesse & Jason*

If you wish to make a Love Gift donation, please fill out the information below and send with a check to:

The Compassionate Friends
Modesto Area Chapter
PO Box 578713
Modesto, CA 95357

☐ Child, ☐ Sibling or ☐ Grandchild _____

Date of Birth _____ / _____ Date of Passing _____ / _____

Donation amount _____

Your Name _____

Telephone _____ Your email address _____

Your address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Would you like your gift listed in our monthly newsletter in memory of your child, grandchild or sibling?

The amount will remain anonymous Yes ___ No ___

The Compassionate Friends is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. Donations are tax deductible

Newly Bereaved



This will likely be the hardest thing you'll ever do. Survive this. And eventually, maybe even thrive again. At times it will feel virtually impossible. You'll wonder how a human being can survive such pain. You'll learn you know how to defy the impossible. You did it from the moment your child's heart stopped, and yours kept beating. You do it with every breath and step you take. You're doing it now. And now. And now.

Your fingernails will become bloodied from clawing your way from the depths of despair. Your spirit will grow weary from fighting to survive. Your eyes will cry more tears than you ever thought possible. Your arms will ache an ache for which there aren't words. For a lifetime. Your heart will break into a million tiny pieces. You'll wonder how it will ever mend again. But with every morsel of unspeakable pain, there is love. An abundance of love. A love so strong, so powerful, it will buoy you. You will not drown.

Others will say things that are intended to be helpful, but aren't. Take what is, leave what isn't. Still, you'll meet others along the journey who will get it without ever saying a word. Kind souls who will breathe you back to life again. Let them.

Years down the road you'll tire of hearing the same advice and clichés, over and over again. Advice you don't want or need. Everyone will try to tell you how to best "fix" your broken heart. The trouble is, you don't need fixing. There is no fix for this. Eventually you'll learn how to carry the weight of this pain. At times it will crush you. At other times you'll learn how to shoulder the burden with newfound grit and grace. Either way, you'll learn how to bend with the weight of it. It will not break you. Not entirely.

And even if you don't believe in hope – not even a little – hope will light the way for you. At times you won't realize your path is lit. The darkness feels all-consuming when you're in it. But know the light is there. Surrounding you now. And now. And now. Know you're being guided, by all of us who have survived this impossible hell. You may not hear us, or see us, but we are with you. Beside you. Hand in hand, heart to heart. Always. Just like your child still is.

Above all else, know that no one can save you but yourself. You are the heroine/hero of this sad story. You are the one who gets to decide how, and if, you'll survive this. You are the one who will figure out a way to survive the sleepless nights, and the endless days. You are the one who will decide if and when you'll find a purpose again that means something to you. You are the one who will choose how you'll live with the pain. You are the one who will decide what you'll cling to, what will make your life worth living again. You, and only you, get to decide how you'll survive. No one else can do this for you.

People will speak of "closure," of "moving on," of "getting over it," of grief coming to an end. Smile kindly, and know, anyone who says these things hasn't lived this thing called grief. To lose a child is to lose the very heart and soul of you. It is overwhelmingly disorienting. It takes a long, long time to find yourself again. It takes a long time to grow new life around the chasm of such grave loss. It takes a long time to grow beauty from ashes. There will always be a hole in your heart, the size and shape of your child. Your child is absolutely irreplaceable. Nothing will fill the void your child left. But your heart will grow bigger– beautifully bigger– around the empty space your child left behind.

The love and pain you carry for your precious child will be woven into every thread of your being. It will fuel you to do things you never dreamed you could do. Eventually, you'll figure out how to live for both of you. It will be beautiful, and it will be hard. But, the love you two share will carry you through. You will spread this love everywhere you go. Eventually, you'll be able to see again. Eventually, you'll find your way again. Eventually, you'll realize you survived.

Author: stillstandingmag.com (January 27, 2016 article)

To the One with Aching Arms



I have to tell you. You're doing an incredible job. I know it doesn't feel like it. I know you feel like you can barely function and I know you think that you are failing at life, but listen. You're still standing. You're still breathing, and from someone who knows the pain, I know how hard even that is to do some days.

You shouldn't have to be here. It shouldn't be this way. Your arms shouldn't be aching, and your heart shouldn't be broken into the thousands of pieces it now beats in. You shouldn't have to know this pain. You shouldn't have to will yourself to breathe. You shouldn't have to function like a normal human being when nothing about this is normal. Nothing about it is fair. Nothing. Nothing. Nothing.

I'm so sorry you're here. But look at you. You are so strong. You are so brave. You are holding on.

I know you feel fragile. I know you feel broken. I know you feel jaded because life didn't treat you nicely. No one should have to say goodbye to their child. No one should know the pain when their child leaves this world before them.

I know this is hard. I know you feel angry sometimes. It's understandable. You watched as your perfect dreams shattered. And you would have settled for far less than perfect. You would have settled for anything else. Anything other than this.

On the days that it's too hard, and you find yourself at 2am sitting cross-legged on the bathroom floor, tissues crumpled in a pile beside you, whispering love and praying that they hear. In those moments, when the pain feels like it could swallow you whole, remember this: you are never, ever alone. There are few consolations in the darkest situations, but there is this: there are those who have gone before you, who are beside you, and who will come after you. People survive this. They hold on, just like you are. They grit their teeth, just like you are. They cling like hell to hope, just like you are. They claw for joy, just like you are. And they breathe in and out, moment by moment, day after day, year after year.

The pain will never subside, but a day will come when you will breathe easier. At least, that's what I have heard. I'll hold out for that day with you.

And as you face day after day without them, remember this: You're still standing. You're still breathing. You're surviving. And this is this big one: you're still parenting them with that strength and love, even though they are no longer in your arms.

Between the two of you is a love of which some only hear rumored. A love that spans across worlds, through time, and never waivers or falls. This is the love of a parent for the child they ache to hold. The love that keeps you holding on. You're still their parent, and nothing can stop that.

I know this is hard. You shouldn't have to be here. But look at you. You're still breathing. You're holding on, and even with a shattered heart, nothing can stop your love.

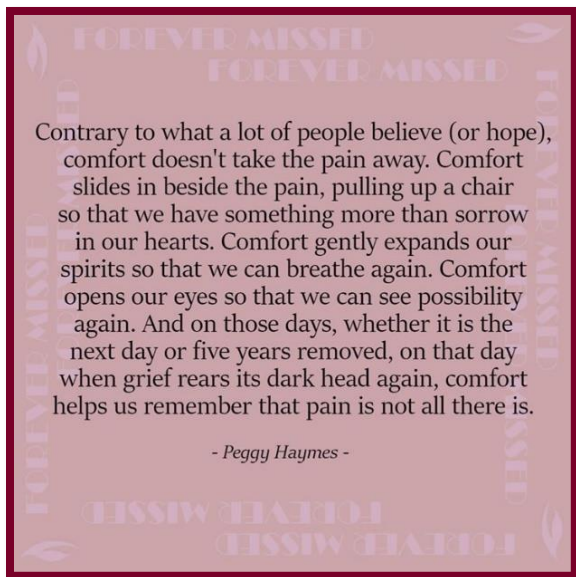
I know they are so proud to have you as their mom and dad. Please remember that.

Author: Anonymous

Check out our closed Facebook page, The Modesto Area of TCF. Make a request to join the page and an Administrator will approve your request.

Join us on our Instagram account page. You can find us at - [*modestoriverbankarea_tcf*](https://www.instagram.com/modestoriverbankarea_tcf).

Our Steering Committee wants to provide the best possible support to each of our TCF Chapter members and friends. Please contact a member of the Steering Committee with any concerns you have or any ideas about how our Chapter can be of support to you and others. We're also available if you'd like to talk about your child or some aspect of the challenges of your bereavement journey. You can reach us by email at: tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com or by phone at 209-622-6786 or on Facebook.



Please remember to send in your child's photo so that it can be added to the new TCF Modesto-Riverbank website.

Send photos to: scasity@comcast.net



Visit our website for information and to stay up to date on chapter events.

www.modestoriverbanktcf.org

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