



The Compassionate Friends

Modesto/Riverbank Chapter

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

June 2019

tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com

Happy Father's Day Daddy -

It's me, Makayla.
I hope you and Mom and Atalee
are doing well.

I just want you to know
that I'm doing just fine.
I get to run and play
and have fun all the time!

So don't cry Daddy.
I love you so much.
I'll ask Jesus to reach down
with a Heavenly touch.
And you know that sunset
that you see every night?
Well, God lets me help Him
to make it just right!

And the birds you hear in the morning,
singing so pretty and sweet?
You've got it, that's me also,
giving you a sunrise treat.

So see, Daddy, I'm with you everywhere.
Though mostly in your heart.
And I just want you to be happy.
Even though we are apart.

I love you Daddy!

Love, Your Big Girl Makayla

The poem was selected by Chad Homme (a member of the chapter Steering Committee). The names were changed in the poem to reflect the Homme family. Happy Father's Day from Heaven is an original poem written by, Kristy Turner in memory of her daughter, Michelle.

MONTHLY MEETING

7:00 PM

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

*Please join us at our
next meeting on
Monday, June 10th.
*Please arrive by 6:50 PM
so we may begin promptly
at 7:00PM**

Upcoming Meetings

July 8th
August 12th
September 9th

MESSAGE LINE

(209)622-6786
*If you leave a message
a steering committee member
will return your call.*



Visit us on Facebook
The Modesto-Riverbank
Area Chapter of TCF

JUNE EVENTS

Lunch with the Ladies

Date: Friday, June 21st 2019

Time: Noon

*Location: Shang-ri La China Bistro
1500 McHenry Avenue, Modesto*

*To RSVP - call or text Tracey at 209-996-2040 or email
tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com.*



Saturday Morning Breakfast with the Dads

Save the dates Saturday, June 1st and Saturday, July 6th
for breakfast with other bereaved dads in our chapter.

8 am at Perko's in Riverbank, 2120 Patterson Rd, at corner of
Oakdale Rd. Confirm with Chad at 209-338-8496 or
chomme@gmail.com, or Norm at 209-345-0601 or
nandrews6863@charter.net, & they'll save a seat for you.



Suicide Loss Support Group

7 pm at the Sutter Health Education Center
in the back of McHenry Village, suite B.

The group meets the third Monday of each month.

For more information, contact Norm at 209 345-0601
or at nandrews6863@charter.net

Grieving Fathers, We See You



Fathers are meant to be...

- Strong
- Courageous
- Brave
- Protectors
- Providers
- Builders
- Fixers

What happens when a grieving father can't fix what's broken? When he can't protect his family from an agonizing goodbye as the life of his child quietly slips away, leaving that man standing beside a grave, holding his weeping wife up with his strong hands?

What happens when his child dies? What happens then?

His dreams are gone in that moment. Forever changed. His wife, his love will never be the same. He will never play ball in the yard with his son. He will never get to walk his daughter down the aisle toward her groom.

His mind is reeling. And he is trying to stay strong. Trying to keep it together for his partner. Trying to hold her up, carrying the weight of the world on his strong shoulders... shoulders that are sagging from the heaviness of this burden.

He is sometimes criticized and misunderstood for his silence. What you may not see is how he cries in the shower. What you may not understand is his need to grieve differently. Sometimes alone.

He needs a safe place too, and often his safe place is different than hers. In a world that doesn't acknowledge his grief, he may never find that safe place.

Recently, I was speaking to a wonderful father at our other boys' baseball game many years after losing his daughter. It always strikes me how uniquely each heart experiences grief. I was grateful to hear his perspective.

It has been an honor to come alongside not only mothers but fathers too, as they say, hello and goodbye to their sweet children. To watch his strong hands tenderly care for tiny babies, his loving arms holding other children – doing his best to offer comfort and support, and gently wiping tears from his partner's eyes. I get to bear witness to the most sacred acts of love in those moments.

I'm also a mother who watched my own husband wrestle with the need to be strong when everything is broken. It's so important to make sure fathers know their grief matters.

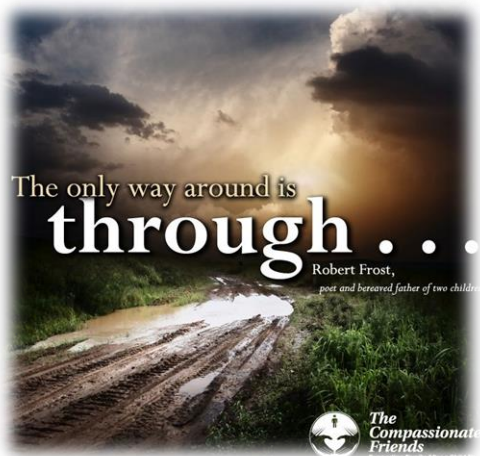
Grieving fathers, we see you. We see you trying to be strong. Trying to hold everyone up. Pushing to go to work each day. Trying to find your way in a world with no fix for your family's broken hearts.

We see you.

As we are often concerned with many mothers walking through loss, let us never forget the sacred love of a father...and the deep and real grief he carries in his strong daddy heart. Not all dads are able to stand so boldly in love and protection of their families, even speaking bold truth in moments when it is needed.

For the grieving father carrying this weight quietly, you are not alone. Your part in your child's life and your family's life are so important and valid....and so is your grief.

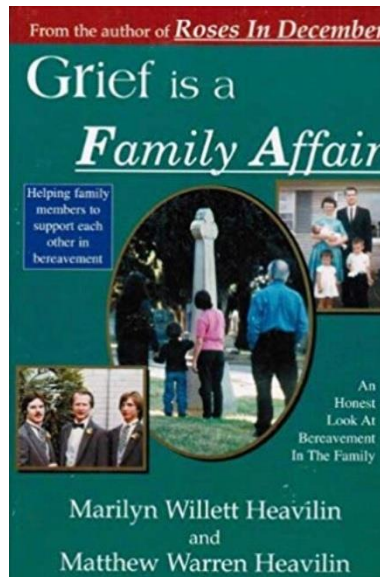
www.stillstandingmag.com



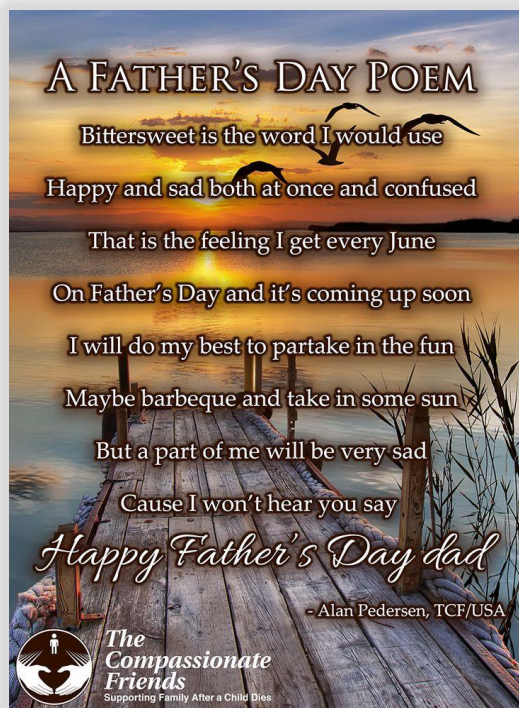
Book of the Month



This month's spotlight book is:



Please take full advantage of our chapter library. We have a nice selection of books to choose from. The library is available before and after the monthly meeting.





REMINDERS

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

You can still get photo button made of your child, grandchild or sibling with our new button machine! Buttons can be made at 6:30 pm on our meeting nights. Bring an extra copy of a photo or a photocopy of it, that can be cut into a circle 3" in diameter. Close-up photos usually work the best. You may bring a graphic design instead of a photo, if you wish. This will be a wonderful way to get acquainted with each other's children! Magnets are also available!!



Sunday
July 28, 2019
9AM

Swenson Park Golf Course
6803 Alexandria Place
Stockton, CA 95207

www.kristen-casity-perez.com

SAVE THE DATE

5th Tuesday Dinner

July 30, 2019
Time: TBA
Place: TBA

This “Sickness” Called Grief



Our society is broken. Broken in the way it handles grief and those deep within its trenches. Our society is broken in the way it turns its back on the sorrow-filled simply because it's just too uncomfortable to look.

A trend has set in where those in mourning are not only isolated but put on the clock. With a timer in one hand and a bouquet of flowers in the other, our culture looks down at the bereaved and says, "It's ok that you're not ok... for now."

And the clock starts ticking.

Our culture "accepts" grief to a point, but after that threshold is crossed, it is deemed excessive, over the top, or even unhealthy.

There is a deep tension between what is seen as normal and what is not. The bereaved are lined up and categorized by how "well" they handled their loss. As if intensity and duration need to be put in a society built box of what is considered appropriate.

I'll say it again... our society is broken. How can a broken society with broken norms and broken expectations properly care for THE BROKEN?

Simply put, it can't and it doesn't. Certainly not in the way they deserve to be cradled, uplifted and loved on.

And so the cycle continues to spiral downward and more and more out of control. As a result, the grieving are left to live in a world that makes them feel isolated, judged and crazy. They are expected to survive – and eventually thrive – in a world that is foreign, scary and seemingly... against them.

Even in the most perfect of healing environments, the grief-stricken see the world as overwhelming and spinning far too fast. So what chance does that give them here – in a culture that teaches them and every new generation that what they carry is an illness?

A massive disservice has taken root. This wrinkle has comfortably made its home in the forehead of our society and continues to grow deeper and wider with each passing year.

Along with it? The distance between the REAL process of grief and our culture's naive expectations. This disconnect has become nothing short of toxic.

So here it is, a cry to you big world... if nothing else please hear this.

Our grief is not something to cure.

It is not an illness. It is not a disease. We are not an epidemic and we need to stop being treated as such. We are not sick... we are sad. Our sorrow is not something we need to get over... rather something we must go through. It's messy and it's ugly and it doesn't ever fully go away.

You see... we grieve intensely because we love intensely. If you have ever opened your heart to love, then you too are susceptible to this very grief. You may see my heart beating and I may look ok, but what you don't see is the ache behind each of those beats.

For the rest of my days, my heart is going to hurt, because it is forever changed and now... incomplete.

- *So please put down your clock and stop looking for a treatment.*
- *Stop trying to fix me.*
- *Stop trying to solve my problems.*
- *Don't cover your eyes.*
- *Don't look the other way.*

Instead...

- Sit with me.
- Cry with me.
- Validate my pain.
- Be ok with my sorrow and provide me a safe place to learn how to walk again.

And when your time of great sadness comes? I will do the same for you.

Change has to start somewhere. Too many generations have had to walk the road alone, ashamed and hiding their sorrow. It wasn't ok then and it's not ok now.

It's time to stop being uncomfortable with grief and shying away from the unknown.

Our children and our children's children deserve a better world to grow old in.

And lastly, this is my whisper to you, broken friend of mine, sitting all alone in that dark and messy place, with a heart seeping countless tears and a mind wondering if the pain will ever relent ...

It's ok that you are not ok. PERIOD.

I know this feels claustrophobic. Overwhelming. Unending.

But the heaviness will begin to lift one day. You are not alone.

Your sadness is for good reason and your tears are not too many. Grief has no timeline.

You are not doing this wrong. It hurts ... and that is ok.

The road you are on is long and difficult but can be traversed. You WILL learn to walk again, even if you must do so with a limp.

Until then, one moment at a time, one day at a time and one step at a time.

This loss, this pain, is a defining part of your life, but... it does not define you.

You are so much more.

You still have so much life to live. Even if they are too far off to see now, happier days ARE on the horizon.

Yes, you will always be broken. But even a broken crayon can still color.

They don't know any better simply because they don't understand. So help them understand.

Tell your story. Share your pain. Only then can we – the broken – break the stigma of this “sickness” called grief.



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.

Thea D'Angelo in loving memory of her daughter Darice J. D'Angelo

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/Riverbank 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.

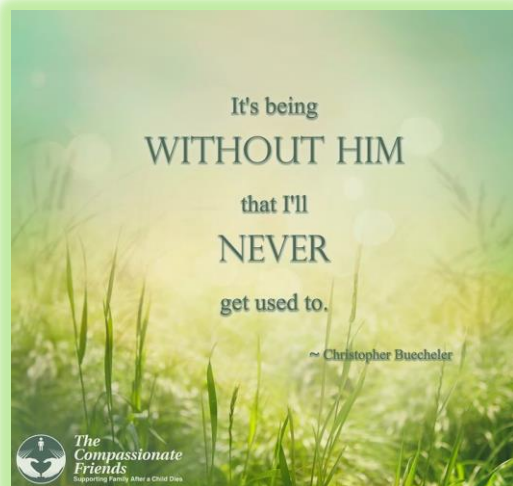


Thank you 7- Eleven stores at
2500 Geer Rd., Turlock, CA and 3225
McHenry Ave., Modesto, CA for
sponsoring our monthly
newsletter!!

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.



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

2019 Steering Committee

Tracey Parker – Chapter Leader

Devon Homme – Secretary

Elsie Freeman – Treasurer

Kris Leitner – Newsletter Editor

Janet Neal – Outreach Coordinator

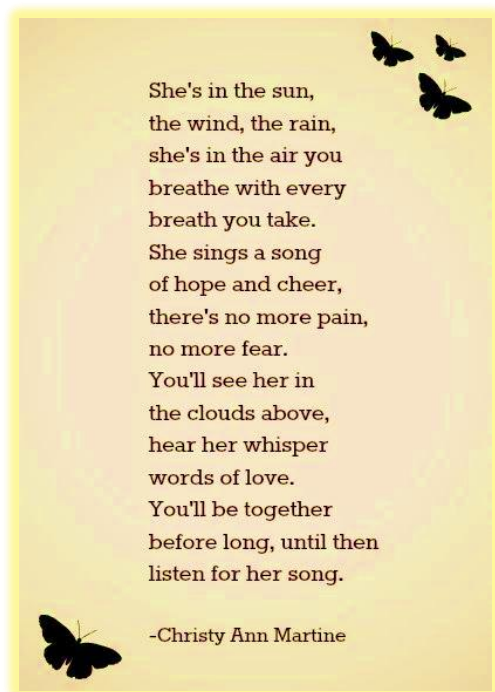
Lori Leitner – Hospitality & Library

Chad Homme – Public Relations

Mike & Suzanne Casity – Website

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.



*Check out our closed Facebook page,
Modesto-Riverbank Area*

*Chapter of TCF. Make a request to
join the page & an Administrator will
approve your request. It's a great way
to keep in touch between chapter meetings and activities.*

