

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

May 2021

tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com

MONTHLY MEETING

6:00 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, May 10th

*Please arrive by 5:50 p.m.
so we may begin promptly
at 6:00 p.m.*

Upcoming Meetings

June 14th

July 12th

August 9th



Are you taking a vacation?
Visiting family? Moving?
Helping someone new to TCF to
find a chapter?

Use the link below to find TCF
chapters in other cities and states

[Chapter Meeting Locator -
Compassionate Friends](#)



Our Mission

The mission of The Compassionate Friends:

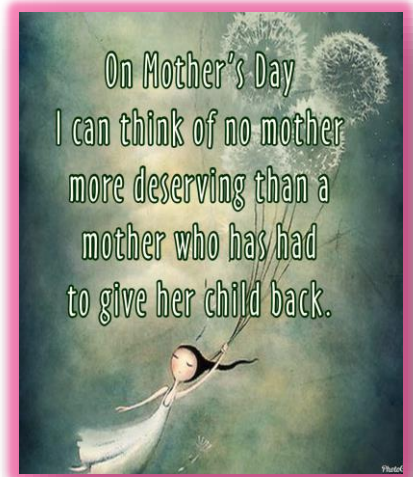
When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister or a grandchild, and helps others better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



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



May News

IN-PERSON MEETING FOR MAY

- The meeting time has been changed to 6:00 p.m.
 - We will be meeting outside in the backyard area. A greeter will be out front to assist you.
 - We will be following COVID-19 mandates by remaining six feet apart & asking all attendees to wear a mask.
 - Please bring your own chair.
 - Refreshments *will not* be provided at this meeting.
 - Should inclement weather be an issue, we will offer an online Zoom meeting at the normal 7:00 p.m. meeting time. Link for Zoom Meeting: [Inclement Weather Chapter Zoom Meeting](#)
-



Sunday Conversations Meeting

Sunday, May 16th at 3:00 p.m.

It's a chance for us to "get together" to just chat!!

Link for the meeting: [Sunday Conversations](#)



The event is scheduled for July 25, 2021 and will be held at the Swenson Golf Course in Stockton, CA.

Registration for the event will begin on May 15, 2021.

Proceeds for this year's event will be supporting [Agape Villages Foster Family Agency](#) of Manteca, CA.

There is a new website! By clicking on the link below all information for the event will be provided.

Be sure to visit and bookmark the event at www.kcpgolf.com

The Mother I've Never Met



You and I have never met, but yet we visit the same place every day. We both walk down the same unguided dark path. We cling to memories as if it's our life support. Our minds drift off to that same place, the place that temporarily distracts us from our grief.

You're the one person who knows the way my stomach feels — the unhealed knot in the center of my gut. You know the hollowness in my heart. Your tears are the same shape as mine, and they roll off the cheek without warning. You smile just like me. It's a smile that has been perfected so others would stop wondering about your state of health and when or if you would pull through this.

Our deep exhale has been performed countless times, since the reminder to breathe is still necessary.

Only you understand the box in the closet where we keep the little things — the items that most people wouldn't find a connection to. But we do. We can find that connection. Maybe it's a ribbon, a stone or a piece of paper someone had written your child's name on. An article of clothing that was last worn as we try desperately to preserve their smell.

This isn't the same box with all the newborn items in it. This is a different box than the cutely decorated one that holds baby blankets, hospital bands, old pacifiers and first haircut clippings. This box is kept much further back in the closet, almost hidden as if it's a secret.

You are the only one in this world who can look me in the eyes and say, "I get it." Dear friend, how I wish you didn't get it.

Like clockwork, I lie awake in my bed every night. I know you're probably doing the same. As lonely as I feel sometimes, I know you're feeling lonely, too. As indescribable as my pain is, I know you understand. It's like a silent language that neither one of us wants to speak.

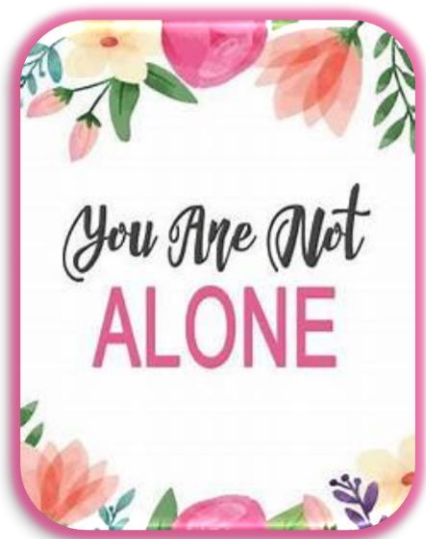
Our children's stories are most likely different. The paths that led us here are probably nothing alike. It's what happened in the after that forever bonds us now. It's the pain of burying our child that makes our scars the same and our paths cross.

I wouldn't wish this feeling on anyone, but yet to know you exist is somewhat of a selfish comfort for me. It's the only place I find acceptance — to know that someone out there is just like me. I know with you that my tears aren't measured and my sadness is never judged. The length of the time I grieve will never be rushed, all the wrong things will never be said and you understand sometimes silence is enough.

My sadness will never make you uncomfortable because our words fit together like a puzzle. Even though I'm a stranger, my heartache brings you to tears. You live with that forever emptiness, too.

So as I pray my nightly prayers, I always include you — the mother I've never met. You're the other person out there who shares my same grief. I hope you find some comfort in knowing you're not alone and that there's someone out there like you."

Written by: Michelle Haxby (used with permission)



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.

In memory of our beloved children, grandchildren and siblings.

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.

A Bereaved Mother's Love



There is a love so pure, so tender, so strong. A love that spans over a lifetime and pours in and out of other realms. It is higher than the stars that fill the moonlit skies.

Wider than the earth itself. It is deeper than the most forbidding places of the ocean.

A love that radiates brighter than the sun and pulls just as mercilessly as a black hole. A love that is insurmountable in all regards.

It is a love that transcends time and is completely unrestrained. It is free.

There is a love so sacred, so cherished, and true.

A love that is incomprehensible to the world around.

A love that can exist where others think it wouldn't.

A love so perfectly intertwined deep within your heart, your soul.

A love that makes the rest of the world look cold and gray because it's beauty and depth is unmatched. Yet at the same time, it sheds beauty upon the earth that was never before seen.

Nothing compares to this love.

This love – it does exist. It exists and we live to tell the tale of how it can exist even though unseen. With little tangible evidence remaining, it still survives.

But what's more – it thrives. It grows.

More and more each day this love flourishes and spreads like spring wildflowers in an untouched meadow. The rivers of this love never run dry and the gusts of its winds never cease.

The depth and intensity of such love is the kind you only hear about in fairy tales and happily ever afters – yet it exists in something far from that.

This love dwells in uncertainty and shaky grounds.

It lingers in silent tears and aching arms. It is the light in the most isolated place. It lives to tell the tale of what was and is no longer.

This love rests in the irrecoverable pieces of our souls and the gaping wounds of our shattered hearts.

It sways elegantly with joy in the darkest places of desolation and despair. For even in darkness it continues to grow and rejoice.

It is beauty and chaos released in the same breath.

This love – this unchanging, unwavering, unbreakable love – is that of a broken heart. This love belongs to the bereaved mother. For even in death, she loves endlessly.

For even in darkness, her love is scintillating.

Not even death could extinguish this love, for it is a love like no other. Unmatched and unparalleled – it is truly one of a kind.

The beautiful love of mother and child – put to the ultimate test and stretched far past the breaking point. Yet it remains untouched – only to grow stronger with each pull. The world stands idly by waiting for the bond to break.

For the bereaved mother to let it go – to give up. Little do they know, they will wait for an eternity. The love of a bereaved mother is a force to be reckoned with. A force so powerful that nothing can stand in its way.

Time nor death can change it.

Sorrow nor pain can break it.

This love – it is our love. It survives where they are not. It is the love that occupies the space in our hearts and in our lives where they once were.

This love saves a sacred space for them. It exists only because they lived. It remains even though they left. It is neither theory nor fiction – it is an incredible, powerful truth.

The love of a bereaved mother is an implausible, fierce, interminable love that defies all odds.

This love is what has taken root in every single cell of my body and pulses through my veins with purpose and meaning.

This love has wiped my soul clean. It has changed my very being.

This love lightens the burden of loss. For it is this love that makes the pain more bearable.

Perhaps, even worthwhile.

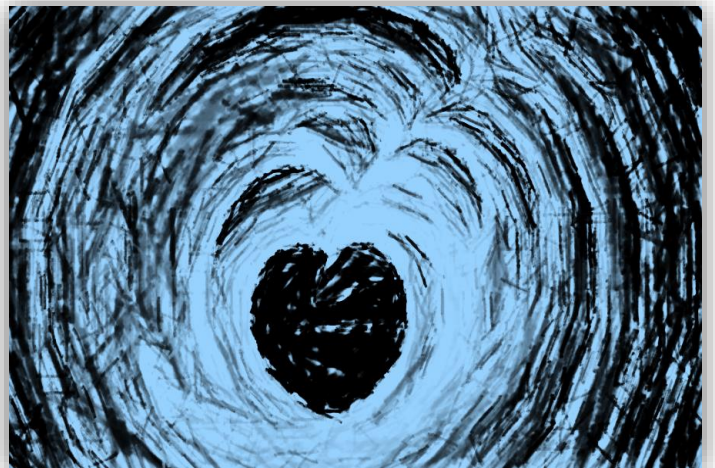
Death does not define me – it is life and this love that defines me. It is this love that has changed the course of my life and has separated me from the rest of the world. This love – it is my love.

And for the life of me – I will never let it go. It is the one thing that binds my broken soul. This love – it is what keeps me going.

It is the echo that ripples from all that I do. And all that I am.

No matter the distance, no matter the time – this love is prevailing.

And it is mine.



How to Cope With a Death Anniversary

Grief is full of painful milestones. The first birthday after your person dies. The first Christmas. Father's Day. All these occasions remind us of what we've lost. So, it's no wonder that many of us dread a death anniversary. How do you get through the day?

What is a death anniversary? A death anniversary (or 'angelversary', or 'sadiversary') is the anniversary of someone's death. For some people, the day is the same as any other. You might even find you forget the anniversary completely. But many find it a struggle: a day when it's impossible to escape the fact of your loss. The first death anniversary can be particularly hard.

So, what do you do on the anniversary of a death? We all deal with grief differently. What works for one person might not translate to another. But we've put together a list of ideas to help you find something that works for you.

How to acknowledge the anniversary of a death:

Whether you like to keep busy (and distracted) or prefer remembering a loved one on the anniversary of their death, there's no right or wrong here. There's something for everyone in our list of anniversary ideas.

Ideas for day:

- ♥ Visit their grave or the place you scattered their ashes. Take flowers or plant something there, if you can.
- ♥ Scatter some of their ashes somewhere meaningful. (On a favorite walk, for example).
- ♥ Light a candle for them.
- ♥ Write them a letter or a poem. 'Post' it by putting it on a fire, burying it, or sending it out on the river, or a lake, or the sea.
- ♥ Plant something (a tree, a rose bush, anything) in their memory.
- ♥ Throw a dinner party or a potluck with people who knew your loved one well. Everyone bringing their favorite foods and stories to share. Raise a glass in their honor and give a toast.
- ♥ Cook all of their favorite foods and drink their favorite drink.
- ♥ Have a "Duvet Day" and watch their favorite films or TV shows.
- ♥ Take a class to learn to do something your loved one enjoyed, or something you've been meaning to learn.
- ♥ Release balloons (eco-friendly), butterflies or birds at a memorial gathering or set off some fireworks in their memory. (Stay safe and buy your fireworks from a licensed shop or registered seller).
- ♥ Go somewhere that was special to the two of you or plan a picnic in a special place, leave flowers for your loved one.
- ♥ Spend the day helping others: volunteer with a charity, or organize a fundraiser for a cause that mattered to the person you've lost.
- ♥ If you are religious, go to a service, spend the day with your community or take part in a memorial ritual.
- ♥ Go to a concert or event that your loved one enjoyed.
- ♥ Do a charity run to raise money for a cause that honors your loved one.
- ♥ Collect all the photos and mementos you have of them and add them to an album or scrapbook. Make a box of keepsakes.
- ♥ Do something completely different for the day – plan an all day hike, go paddle boarding, explore geo-caching, go to the races, attend a lecture.
- ♥ Meditate, do yoga or try tai chi to relax.
- ♥ Make something artistic to celebrate the life of your loved one. You could paint, draw, sculpt, sew or write a song or a poem.
- ♥ Read your loved one's favorite book.

One year death anniversary ideas

Commemorating the one year anniversary of a loved one's death with a memorial service can be very comforting. You can invite just close family, or open it up to friends – or invite simply everyone who knew the person who has died. If you'd like it to be a quiet, reflective occasion you could hold a candlelight vigil. Many families visit the grave or scattering site and take turns to talk to the person who has died, then head back for a family meal.

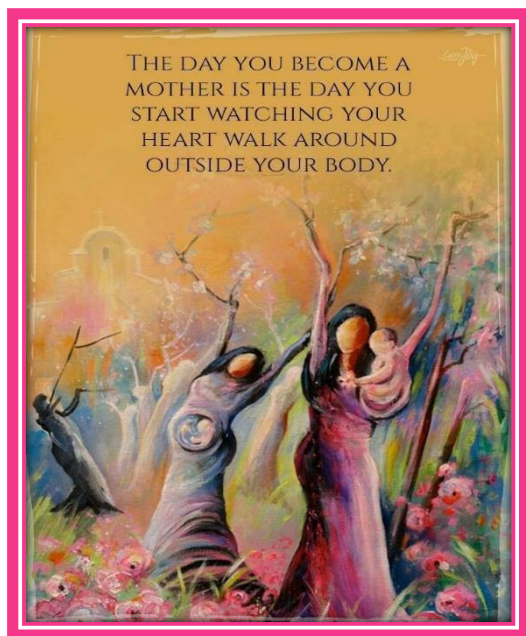
Others prefer to celebrate the life of their loved one, and make the memorial service more of a party. You could play your loved one's favorite music, cook all their favorite foods, do a toast of their favorite drink, and tell each other happy and funny stories.

But really, it's up to you how you acknowledge the anniversary of the death of someone you love. Do whatever feels right. Whether that's sleeping in all day or going out and about as usual.

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

Support our chapter by using
Amazon Smile

smile.amazon.com

AmazonSmile is a simple way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added benefit that Amazon will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchases to the charitable organization of your choice. You can choose from over one million organizations to support.

(click on the link above for further information).

How to turn on AmazonSmile in the mobile app

1

Join AmazonSmile

If you are not already an AmazonSmile member, [sign up](#) on your web browser. Simply select your favorite charity to start generating donations, at no cost to you.

2

Get the app

Download or update to the latest version of the Amazon Shopping app on your phone. You can find it in the [App Store](#) for iOS or [Google Play](#) for Android.

3

Turn on AmazonSmile

Open the app and find 'Settings' in the main menu (≡). Tap on 'AmazonSmile' and follow the on-screen instructions to turn on AmazonSmile on your phone.