

# The Compassionate Friends

## The Modesto Area Chapter of The Compassionate Friends

### Supporting Families After a Child Dies

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

[www.modestoriverbanktcf.org](http://www.modestoriverbanktcf.org)

May 2026

[tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com](mailto:tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com)

#### MONTHLY MEETING

7:30 PM

Community Hospice  
4368 Spyres Way  
Modesto, CA 95356

Please join us at our  
next meeting on

**Monday, May 11<sup>th</sup>**

Please arrive by 7:20 p.m.

We begin promptly  
@ 7:30 p.m.

#### Upcoming Meetings

June 8<sup>th</sup>

July 13<sup>th</sup>

August 10<sup>th</sup>



### 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.

#### 2026 Steering Committee

Kris Leitner  
Chapter Co-Leader

Suzanne Casity  
Chapter Co-Leader

Melinda Lansberry  
Secretary

Elsie Freeman  
Treasurer

Janet Neal  
Outreach Coordinator

Michele Mootz  
Hospitality

Lorie Boisse  
Public Relations/Media

Kris Leitner  
Newsletter Editor

Mike & Suzanne Casity  
Website

THERE IS NO STRONGER,  
BRAVER, OR MORE COURAGEOUS  
MOTHER THAN A MOTHER THAT  
HAS EXPERIENCED THE DEATH OF  
A CHILD. A MOTHER WHO HAS  
ENDURED THE UNTHINKABLE  
AND YET SHE STILL LOVES WITH EVERY  
OUNCE OF HER BEING. A MOTHER WHO  
HAS ENDURED THE WORST PAIN  
AND STILL SHE IS BRAVE  
ENOUGH TO FACE ANOTHER DAY.  
*-Jessi Snapp*

**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

On Mother's Day  
I can think of no mother  
more deserving than a  
mother who has had  
to give her child back.

Sometimes  
the healing  
is in the  
aching



**PLEASE NOTE THE TIME FOR THIS MONTH'S MEETING!!**  
**Due to a scheduling conflict with another group, the May meeting**  
**will begin at 7:30PM and conclude at 9:00PM.**  
**It will be for the month of May only!**  
**We will go back to our 7PM meeting time in June.**

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International Bereaved Mother's Day is observed on the first Sunday in May. This day honors mothers who have lost a child and acknowledges the pain of those who cannot become mothers due to infertility or health issues. It serves as a reminder that their grief is valid and recognized by society.

**Importance of Acknowledgment**  
Acknowledging this day helps validate the feelings of bereaved mothers, fostering a sense of community and support.

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## Spring Issue!

The national magazine of The Compassionate Friends, *We Need Not Walk Alone*, featuring articles by and for parents, siblings, and grandparents who are grieving the death of a child in their family.

(Click on the magazine to be directed to the website)



Kristen|Perez  
Golf Tournament

The KCP Golf team is happy to announce that we will continue our annual golf tournament this year. The event is scheduled for Saturday, June 6, 2026, and will be held at Swenson Golf Course in Stockton, CA. Please save the date and we hope to see you at this year's event!

The tournament price per player will remain at \$100.00.

Sponsorship Opportunities will open later this month and registration for the golf tournament will begin Early-April. We will be emailing you to let you know when registration opens.

The family of Kristen Casity Perez appreciates your participation and enthusiasm and looks forward to seeing you there.

[www.kcpgolf.com](http://www.kcpgolf.com)

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Click on the photo to be taken to the registration page!



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## ♥ 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 loving memory of all our beloved children.*

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, and 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 forbidden 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 its 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 after's — 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. (Neither) time nor death can change it. (Neither) 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.**

*By Contributor Jessi Snapp: [stillstandingmag.com](http://stillstandingmag.com)*

## GRIEVING YOUR CHILD ON MOTHER'S DAY

I miss my child every day. This grief of mine will never leave me, and honestly, why should it? I love my child more than I ever could have imagined, and yes, I do mean present tense "love". It is excruciating knowing that my child will never return to my arms. However, a mother's love for her child doesn't require physical presence; this can be proven by the fact that most mothers love their children well before they are even born. I will love my child forever, and therefore, I will grieve my child forever. This is just how it goes.

I know it's difficult for some people to understand my ongoing grief, I guess because they want me to "get better" or return to "normal." Actually, I *am* normal. I'm just different now. I believe those who say they want to support me on difficult days like Mother's Day, but part of this is accepting me as a grieving mother who will always love her child.

My grief is like the weather. Somedays it's calm, quiet and maybe even a little sunny. Other days it's a devastating storm that makes me feel angry, exhausted, raw, and empty. I wake up in the morning and wonder – "Am I even alive at all? And if so, how am I supposed to make it through this day?" This is why when you ask me how I feel about Mother's Day, all I can say is, "It depends". I'm going to try my best to cope with the day, but while you're hoping that your Mother's Day picnic doesn't get spoiled by actual rain, I'll be praying that the grief storms stay at bay.

Like many things in a grieving mother's life, Mother's Day is bittersweet. On the one hand, I feel immense joy because I was blessed with my child and I feel gratitude for every moment I was given with them. On the other hand, the pain of missing my child – my greatest happiness, my life's purpose, and my forever friend – is intense.

Bereaved mothers live with so many of these confusing contrasts. They are like undercurrents that tug and toss about our hearts and minds. I am a mother to a child who is not alive. Perhaps a child who you've never met. You can't ask me about their school year, or if they're enjoying piano lessons, or if they've chosen a major in college. I've imagined my child doing all these things. People don't realize that I grieve each of my child's milestones, even though they don't get to experience them.

Most people don't know how to validate my child's place in the world or my ongoing role as my child's mother. This is a difficult concept for others to grasp. Sometimes even I grapple with the answers to questions like "Do you have children?" and if so, "How many?" Most bereaved mothers long for these questions to have straightforward answers.

Sadly, mothers who have experienced the death of their *only* child may even wonder whether they get to call themselves a mother at all. So, in addition to the pain of grief, these mothers have to cope with a sense of being left out, forgotten, and ignored. Can you imagine how that might feel? I think it must be like being stabbed through the heart and when you turn to others for help they say "What blood?" "What knife?"

Then, for mothers who have surviving children, there is this gem of a comment – "Don't forget, you're lucky to have other children." A mother does not forget *any* of her children. A mother loves each and every one of her children in unique and special ways, but one of her children has died and so her love for this child looks a little untraditional. Mothers do not have a finite amount of love to be shifted, divided and spread around depending on the number of children they have on this Earth. So please be careful with your comments. It's difficult enough for grieving mothers who often feel torn between feeling joy and happiness for their living children and grief for the child who has died.

So, "What is it like to grieve a child on Mother's Day?" There are as many responses as there are mothers. Each grieve in their own unique way. Here are a few things a bereaved mother might say: "This day will forever be hard. I live with an emptiness that no one can fill; so I may be sad, I may be unsociable, and I may need to take a break to be by myself in a quiet place. Whatever shape my grief takes on this day, please allow me to feel the way I feel."

"Please, acknowledge me as a mother. It makes me feel forgotten and as though my child has been forgotten when people act as though my child never existed. Also, I can sense that people feel uncomfortable talking about my child, honestly, I find it really comforting when someone talks about my child. I love hearing their name! I love hearing stories. Maybe you know a story I've never heard, or maybe I've heard it a hundred times before, it doesn't matter to me. Your acknowledgment alone is a great gift to me."

If you're worried about Mother's Day, you're not alone. Try not to get overwhelmed or wrapped up in anxiety. You may actually find that the anticipation of the day is worse than the day itself. There is no "right" way to handle Mother's Day – but do try to plan ahead a little. You may want to reach out to others who are struggling with the day &, if you can, it always helps to face the day with people who love & support you."

Whatever you do, *believe* you will make it through the day. With time, the grief storms will grow smaller and less frequent and you will find a little more balance and room to breathe. Believe you will be okay, have hope that in the future you will find yourself in a place where you can grieve & celebrate on Mother's Day at the same time.

[www.whatsyourgrief.com](http://www.whatsyourgrief.com)



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.

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Join us on our Instagram account page. You can find us at – *modestoriverbankarea\_tcf*.

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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](mailto:tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com) or by phone at 209-622-6786 or on Facebook.

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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](mailto:scasity@comcast.net)

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

[www.modestoriverbanktcf.org](http://www.modestoriverbanktcf.org)

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The vision statement of **The Compassionate Friends** is that everyone who needs us will find us and **everyone who finds us will be helped.**

The Compassionate Friends offers a variety of private Facebook Groups. These pages are moderated by bereaved parents, siblings, or grandparents, and may not be accessed unless a request to join is approved by a moderator. Please click on the link next to the group you wish to join and answer the screening questions so we can confirm your request. Please note, all three questions need to be answered in order to be approved. If you are on a phone or tablet, you will need to scroll down before hitting "submit." If you are still waiting for approval after three days, please message one of the administrators. Join requests to our Facebook groups must be requested personally, therefore when you wish to share the group with someone please pass along the link to the group.

### PRIVATE FACEBOOK GROUPS

[TCF - Loss of a Child](#)  
[TCF - Loss to Miscarriage or Stillbirth](#)  
[TCF - Miscarriage, Stillbirth, Loss of an Infant Grandchild](#)  
[TCF - Infant and Toddler Loss](#)  
[TCF - Loss of a Child 4 -12 Years Old](#)  
[TCF - Loss of a Child 13-19 Years Old](#)  
[TCF - Loss of an Adult Child](#)  
[TCF - Loss of an Only Child/All Your Children](#)  
[TCF - Grieving the Loss of a Child as a Single Parent](#)  
[TCF - Loss of a Stepchild](#)  
[TCF - Loss of a Grandchild](#)  
[TCF - Sibs \(for bereaved siblings\)](#)  
[TCF - Loss of a LGBTQ+ Child](#)  
[TCF - Bereaved LGBTQ Parents with Loss of a Child](#)  
[TCF - Multiple Losses](#)  
[TCF - Men in Grief](#)  
[TCF - Daughterless Mothers](#)  
[TCF - Sudden Death](#)  
[TCF - Loss to COVID-19 and Other Infectious Diseases](#)  
[TCF - Loss to Substance Related Causes](#)  
[TCF - Sibling Loss to Substance Related Causes](#)  
[TCF - Loss to Suicide](#)  
[TCF - Loss to Homicide](#)  
[TCF - Loss to a Drunk/Impaired Driver](#)  
[TCF - Loss to Cancer](#)  
[TCF - Loss of a Child with Special Needs](#)  
[TCF - Loss to Long-term Illness](#)  
[TCF - Loss after Withdrawing Life Support](#)  
[TCF - Loss to Mental Illness](#)  
[TCF - Finding Hope for Parents through TCF SIBS](#)  
[TCF - Grandparents Raising their Grandchildren](#)  
[TCF - Bereaved Parents with Grandchild Visitation Issues](#)  
[TCF - Inclusion and Diversity](#)  
[TCF - Grieving with Faith and Hope](#)  
[TCF - Secular Support](#)  
[TCF - Reading Your Way through Grief](#)  
[TCF - Crafty Corner](#)