

The Compassionate Friends

The Modesto Area Chapter of The Compassionate Friends

Supporting Families 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

December 2022

tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com

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, December 12th*

**Please arrive by 6:50 p.m.
so we may begin promptly
at 7:00 p.m.**

Upcoming Meetings

Jan 9th

Feb 13th

Mar 13th



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

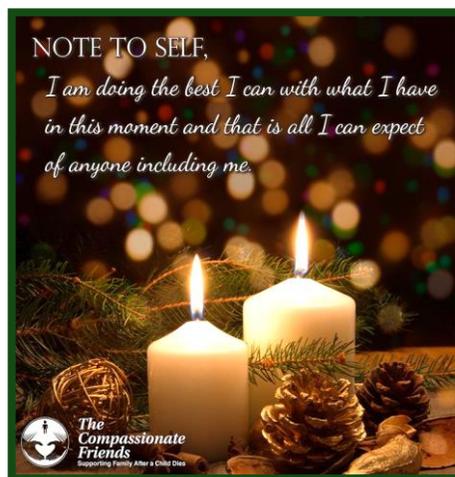
Use the link below to find TCF chapters in other cities and states.
[Chapter Meeting Locator - Compassionate Friends](#)



Our Mission

*The mission of
The Compassionate Friends:*

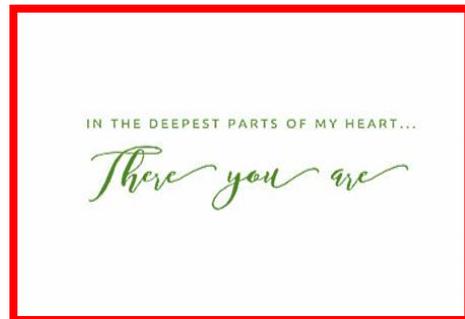
When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister or a grandchild, and helps others better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



MESSAGE LINE

(209)622-6786

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



2022 Steering Committee

Tracey Parker
Chapter Leader

Devon Homme
Secretary

Elsie Freeman
Treasurer

Janet Neal
Outreach Coordinator

Vacant Position
Hospitality & Library

Chad Homme
Public Relations

Kris Leitner
Newsletter Editor

Mike & Suzanne Casity
Website

A Farewell Letter from the Leader



Dear Members,

I am not even sure where to start. I guess, at the beginning....many (like 31) years ago I had a friend who had lost her infant daughter before her twin sons were born and she belonged to the local chapter of The Compassionate Friends. So most of my adult life I was aware of TCF. I just didn't know what an important part of my life it would become. My son, James, died in February of 2014, and in May of that same year (79 days later to be precise) I walked through the door of my first meeting. I credit our chapter for saving me. I honestly don't know how (or if) I would have made it through those first few years without the support and compassion I was given.

In January 2016 I was asked to be a member of the chapter's Steering Committee. It was then that I began to realize the impact of those who had served before me. Those who were there for me in my most desperate times of need. In 2018 I took over as Chapter Leader and truly learned the importance of providing support and compassion to those newer in their journey than myself.

And now the time has come where I must not only step down as Chapter Leader but must also leave our chapter altogether as I embark on a new journey in Michigan. I cannot express my gratitude for everything I have received from our chapter; you showed me compassion, offered me understanding, provided me with hope, and most importantly, gave me love. For that, and so much more I thank you. I will carry each of your loved ones in my heart, right next to James, for the rest of my life. You are the most amazing group of people I wish I never met. I wish each and every one of you hope and healing.

~Tracey Parker

James' Mom 



PLEASE JOIN

*The Modesto Area
Compassionate Friends*

11 December | Candle Lighting
2022 | 7:00 PM

Bereaved families & their friends are invited to attend in memory of their children, grandchildren, and siblings.

COMMUNITY HOSPICE
4368 SPYRES WAY
MODESTO, CA 95356

Please arrive early to pick up your candle.
A display table will be available for a photo of your loved one.
Each family will receive a small remembrance gift.
Please RSVP by December 9th to reserve your seat.



*The Modesto Area
Compassionate Friends*
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

TCFMODESTORIVERBANK@GMAIL.COM 209 622-6786



Dear Members, We have been so pleased to be meeting in person again. The pandemic affected so many individuals, businesses, and communities. Both in big and small ways. It affected our chapter as well. Typically we add one or two members to our Steering Committee each year. We haven't been able to do this in over two years. Several of our Steering Committee members have either left or will be leaving their leadership roles at the end of this year. This is our call to those of you who feel like you might like to volunteer for the upcoming year. The National Compassionate Friends Organization provides training and a variety of resources for specific committee positions. A few of the positions we are hoping to fill for 2023 are Publicity/Outreach. Social Media Manager, Librarian as well as Members at Large. Volunteering can be as much or as little of a commitment as you want it to be. If you would like more details about any of these positions please email me @tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com.

~Tracey Parker Chapter Leader & James' Mom

♥ 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 Norman Moses Rodriguez, beloved son of Norman Rodriguez

In loving memory of Jason Aaron Moland, beloved son of Kathleen DuBose

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



Surviving the Holidays after Losing an Only Child

After losing an only child, surviving each day is so very painful and difficult for single parents, and holidays make it even more excruciating. It may seem that there is no one with whom you can truly share the joy of the holiday. Everyone else seems to have families who are intact and have a reason to celebrate. The dark cloud of loneliness seems to pervade everything we do, everywhere we go, and even our inner self.

We might want to rip the pages off the holiday calendar, go to bed and sleep away the days and nights that involve any form of celebration. Holidays bring sadness, terror, loneliness, weeping uncontrollably, inability to eat, or else overeat, inability to focus, inability to keep the house clean, to go to work, more missed work days due to illness, forgetfulness and sometimes a diminished sense of our will to survive.

Remember, no one else knows exactly how you feel. Even those of us with no surviving children have different circumstances, relationships, and experiences, so no two people's grief journey is the same. You have to read everything you can about grief, listen to others who have no surviving children, and then YOU make decisions as to what you think will work for you for *this particular holiday for this year*. Next year and each succeeding year will most likely be different.

You have the right to tell others the way you feel and what you will or will not do for the holiday. Explain that it might change at the last moment. You may arrive at a party or someone's home only to find after a few minutes that this really was not meant for you and you have to leave.

Or you may find that a few hours of *diversion* is just what you needed to survive. Do not punish yourself for whatever decision you make. Let your host know that you appreciate them thinking of you and please to continue to ask as one day you just may want to be included. Perhaps you and a friend or your spouse chooses this year to take a cruise, go out of town or out of state for a few days, just to ESCAPE. Let others know that you just cannot celebrate the holiday and that you must be alone. They may not understand but they do not understand your grief either.

It is your choice as to whether to send the traditional holiday cards. Some make special cards which include their child's photo or artwork on the cover and write a short memory of the child on the inside. Either make or have someone make address labels that include your child's name and photo which is another easy way to include your child with the greeting. It is also OK not to send any greeting cards.

If you had celebrated Christmas with a tree and do not feel you can do so this year then leave the tree in the closet or storage room. There are years when bereaved parents choose to ignore the holiday as much as possible. Some parents have chosen to put a small decorated tree at the gravesite or assist their bereavement support group to put a special tree in a public park, mall or store where trees are encouraged.

One day you may wish to use a tree you have or purchase a new one and decorate it with memorabilia that belonged to your child or simply put angels, butterflies or some objects on the tree that remind you of your child. Several bereaved parents have a special tree in their home that they can share with friends and family which permits them to talk about their child.

Doing traditional things at new times often helps during the holiday. Perhaps attending a different worship service in a different place of worship or practicing a different tradition with a friend would be helpful.

If you choose to open presents with family and friends you may want to do it at a different location, on a different day or time than what you had done previously. Remember even though things are done differently you will still feel the pain of absence of your child, but some of the changes lessen it somewhat.

Make or purchase a special candle to light at mealtime in memory of your child. If you celebrate Hanukkah, recall a memory of the deceased on each of the eight nights that you light the Menorah. Attend a local Compassionate Friends

National Candle Lighting Service held on the second Sunday in December. If there is none scheduled in your area check the website www.compassionatefriends.org and see about organizing one for your community.

Consider making a donation to a favorite charity in honor of your child or “adopt” a child or family in your community whose parents are unemployed or are having health issues this year. You may wish to let them know that you are doing this in memory of your child. You may want to share a photo and story of your child with the family, if you feel it is appropriate.

You may want to purchase a gift for yourself or treat yourself to a special day that would make you feel better and consider it as a gift from your child. Some have had a time at a spa, a day of golf or attending some sporting or theatrical event.

Remember your child this holiday in a way that is meaningful and gives peace to you. Do not do anything that is detrimental to your healing process but be kind to yourself as long as it is not harmful to someone else.

[Surviving the Holidays After Losing an Only Child - Open to Hope](#)

Coping With Grief During the Holidays

Talk about your grief. Don't worry about bringing anyone down. You're allowed to grieve and talk about it.

Create boundaries with your time. If you need to take some time for you, do it.

Find a way to honor them. Start a new tradition that honors their memory.

Set realistic expectations. You will probably be sad or maybe cranky and that's okay.

Allow yourself to feel all of your feelings. Resentment and anger are normal.

Practice self-care. Check-in with yourself on a regular basis and meet those needs.

BlessingManifesting

LOSS

*The festive season,
'the most wonderful time of the year'.
But if you are missing a face at your table,
it can be the hardest time of all.*

*How to feel merry, how to feel bright,
when your world has lost its light?
How to carry on, continue the traditions,
When the person who made it all worthwhile is not there?*

*How to face the music, the dancing,
the cheering and the reflection of a year gone by,
when the pain is already suffocating on an ordinary day?*

You just try. It is all you can do my friend

*You try very hard, to imagine
what the person would tell you,
and if you listen closely
you will hear it in their voice.*

*What would they want you to do?
Retreat?
Isolate?
Or take their favorite songs
and their funny stories
and their little festive habits
and share it with your loves?*

In their honor. Now that they cannot.

*I think we can all agree,
it is what they would wish for you.
I think we can also agree,
that they would want you to feel as loved,
As you once did when they were here.*

They would want you to feel their love still.

They are trying very hard to make you feel it.

It hasn't gone away.

*And you need that love now more than ever,
and everyone around you needs it too.*

*So, feel their love, say their name,
Bring them back to your festive table,
Even if it takes all of your courage and heart.*

It is the only way.

~ Donna Ashworth



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*.



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.

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.

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*

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smile.amazon.com

(click on the link above for further information).

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