

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

May 2025

tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com

MONTHLY MEETING

7:00 PM

**Community Hospice
4368 Spyres Way
Modesto, CA 95356**

Please join us at our
next meeting on

Monday, May 12th

Please arrive by 6:50 p.m.

We begin promptly

@ 7:00 p.m.

Upcoming Meetings

June 9th

July 14th

August 11th



**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.

2025 Steering Committee

Kris Leitner
Chapter Co-Leader

Suzanne Casity
Chapter Co-Leader

Melinda Lansberry
Secretary

Elsie Freeman
Treasurer

Janet Neal
Outreach Coordinator

Lorie Boisse
Hospitality

Michele Mootz
Public Relations/Social Media

Kris Leitner
Newsletter Editor

Mike & Suzanne Casity
Website

"In these moments of heartbreaking grief, I remember the only reason we have an empty space is because we were blessed with someone who loved us so beautifully it occupied an entire part of our soul."



Member Submissions for the Newsletter

If you have found an article, a poem, a saying or a photograph that has given you comfort or offered some healing to your heart, we would love to share it with the chapter. You never know what might help another grieving parent or sibling. What has given you comfort or hope may provide the same for someone else.

Please email your contribution to tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com.

We look forward to hearing from you!



The event is scheduled for June 14, 2025 and will be held at Swenson Golf Course in Stockton, CA.

Registration for the event has begun.

Proceeds for this year's event will be supporting The Kyle J. Taylor Foundation kylejtaylor.org

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

**Get a photo button made of your child, grandchild or sibling with our button machine!
Close-up photos usually work the best.**

Buttons can be made at 6:30 pm on our meeting nights. Bring an extra copy of a photo that can be cut into a circle 3" in diameter.

OR

You can email a copy of your child's photo to Suzanne at scasity@comcast.net and one will be made for you and brought to the next meeting.

This is a wonderful way to share their sweet faces!!



We are very pleased to announce The Compassionate Friends (TCF) 48th Annual National Conference in Bellevue, WA! TCF's National Conference is an enriching and supportive event for many newer and long-time bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings. Attendees come and find renewed hope and support, as well as strategies for coping with grief. Participants create friendships with other bereaved people who truly understand the heartbreaking loss of a child, sibling, or grandchild. Lifelong friendships are often formed and rekindled each year at TCF conferences.

click photo to register

♥ 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.

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.

The Unbroken

There is a brokenness
out of which comes the unbroken,
a shatteredness
out of which blooms the unshatterable.

There is a sorrow
beyond all grief which leads to joy
and a fragility
out of whose depths emerges strength.

There is a hollow space
too vast for words
through which we pass with each loss,
out of whose darkness
we are sanctioned into being.

There is a cry deeper than all sound
whose serrated edges cut the heart
as we break open to the place inside
which is unbreakable and whole,
while learning to sing ...

Rashani Réa

I'll Meet You There

On the days I miss you most
I'll close my eyes and sleep.

I'll meet you in my dreams
in a moment we can keep.

I'll meet you with a hug
and with things I want to say.

I'll meet you under the sun
or a different place each day.

I'll meet you by the river
or back at our old home.

And at the times I cannot find you
In my dreams I shall still roam.

I'll meet you in the coffee shop
or at your favorite place.

I don't care just where it is
as long as I see your face.



I'll meet you at a park
so you can watch the children play.

You can take their laughter
back to the heavens every day.

I'll meet you on each birthday
we no longer get to share.

I don't care just where it is
but I'll meet you there.

I'll meet you in the sunshine
or in the pouring rain.

I will walk through any storm
just to see you again.

I will meet you in my thoughts
a million times a day,

along with every memory
I am lucky to replay.

Author Joanne Boyle

❧ *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 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 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

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.



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



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

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.

[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](#)