**The Compassionate Friends**
***Greater Providence Area Chapter***
**Supporting Family After a Child Dies**

Winter 2016

## In Loving Memory: Natalie Joy

On March 18, 2007, my life was suddenly shattered. My heart was forever broken. I woke up that morning to find my sweet baby daughter, Natalie, had passed away in her sleep. Suddenly I was living every parent's worst nightmare. Natalie was only 19 months old. She was a happy and healthy little girl with a pure heart that was full of love and sweetness.

This year will mark the 9th year since we lost Natalie. And even though life has gone on and I have become "used to" her absence, a part of me still cannot truly believe she is really gone. I remember how it felt different during that first year. How little things like finding the basement door open would cause my heart to leap out of my chest and I'd think, "we need to keep it closed or Natalie could fall down the stairs!" I no longer have that thought when the basement door is open because I am used to her being gone. And sometimes that makes me mad because I don't want to ever be used to it. Because it never should have happened. Because to be used to it would somehow make it OK. And it's not OK. It never will be.

Shortly after Natalie died, I found out about two organizations that help people who have lost a child: The Compassionate Friends and the SUDC Foundation. SUDC stands for "sudden unexpected death in childhood," which is basically like SIDS only for children over the age of 12 months. Like TCF, SUDC provides support services to families. They also have a research component with the ultimate goal of finding a way to prevent these mysterious deaths.

After we got the Rhode Island Medical Examiner's report, which took about 7 months, I wasn't satisfied with their findings. The cause of death was listed as "acute bronchitis and bronchiolitis." Even the ME said she wasn't confident about it, but she "had to put down something." At this point, I applied to the SUDC Research Project to get a second opinion. It took 4 years, but we finally got an answer in 2011. Natalie's death was found to be a case of SUDC.

Like SIDS, SUDC is a diagnosis of exclusion. It basically means they don't know. There is no reason why Natalie, a happy, healthy little girl, just stopped breathing and quietly died in her sleep. No reason. No reason.

*If you are interested in sponsoring a newsletter, please contact Lucille at (401) 231-9229.*

Thinking back to those first dark, foggy weeks and months, I don't know what I would have done without the support of SUDC and TCF. I remember walking into my first TCF meeting in July, just a few months following her death in March. I was shaking all over—not sure what to expect and just overcome with emotion. I was soon put at ease. When it was my turn with the rock, it was hard to get the words out through the tears, but it was important that I did and it helped. It helped just to tell her story and to be among people who truly understood the pain I was feeling.

Over the years, I have been able to share my grief and, just as importantly, share Natalie with the group. I soon realized after she died that the second worst thing after losing her would be for her to be forgotten. It became my mission to not let that happen. First, I created a memorial website and then the next year, I started a blog about my life with and without my children (Natalie was survived by her big sister and her baby brother born after she died).

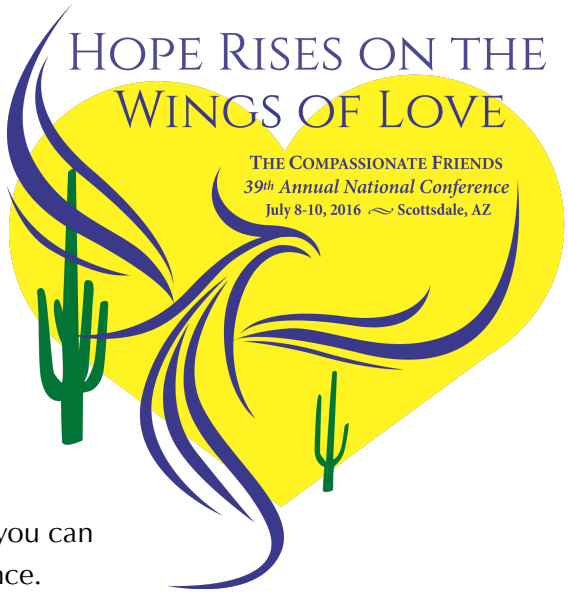
For a person who was on this planet for a very short time, Natalie lived life to the fullest. She did everything with gusto. Whether it was pulling books or videotapes off the shelf or dumping boxes of blocks on the floor—her grandma fondly nicknamed her "the demolition crew"—or eating her beloved blueberries, humming with delight after each one. It seemed as if she did these things to say, "Hey, look at me!" As if to prove her own existence. Well, Natalie, we are so grateful you were here, if only for a short time—and we will remember you always.

Natalie's passing is the single most difficult and painful thing I've ever experienced. (I suspect most of you reading this feel the same way about your child, too.) Even though 9 years have passed, I still struggle with the idea of accepting her death. I don't dwell on it on a daily basis or anything, but from time to time, I do still question how a perfectly healthy toddler could just go to sleep and not wake up—and I still can't accept it.

Although sometimes I think it might bring me peace if I could accept it, I don't think I really want to. I do believe that the intensity of my pain is a measure of the intensity of my love. And I'm not sure I want to give that up. For the pain to go away, would somehow mean the love has diminished. So instead, I embrace the pain and accept that it is now part of who I am.

*By Beth Adamo, Natalie's Mom, TCF Providence*

## Save the Date! TCF National Conference July 8-10, 2016




The Compassionate Friends is pleased to announce that Scottsdale, Arizona, will be the site of the 39th TCF National Conference on July 8-10, 2016. "Hope Rises on the Wings of Love" is the theme of this year's event, which promises to be another great national Conference experience. The 2016 Conference will be held at the The Fairmont Scottsdale Princess. For more details, visit the national website, as well as the TCF/USA Facebook page and our chapter's Facebook page at The Compassionate Friends of Greater Providence. We hope you can plan to come and be a part of this heartwarming experience.

## Congratulations to the following winners of the 2015 TCF Calendar Raffle:

Brenda Leone
Susan Rappaneau
Alyssa Capasso
Elizabeth M. Conley
Stephanie DiBenedetto
Peter Sakell
Brenda Celona
Lou Goncalo
Gail Luszcz
Angela & Richard Boscia
Frank Peters
Myra Lamkins
Theresa Lefebvre
Val DiPippo

**We are grateful to the following winners who donated their raffle prize money back to our Chapter:**

Ocean State Pressure Washing
Doris Ead
Margie Hirsch
Mike Whitefield
Donald Capasso
Craig Valliere
Larry Williams

## Candle Lighting Donations

Thank you to the following people whose donations helped make our 2015 candle lighting service so memorable.

Barbara and Ed Allard for donating our Memory Candles in memory of their son **Joe**.

**Sheila and Donald Capasso** for donating refreshments in memory of their son **Donald**.

Mike Whitefield for donating refreshments in memory of his daughter **Rebeckha**.

Beth and Christopher Adamo for donating the keepsake ornaments in memory of their daughter **Natalie**.

Lucille and Paul Valliere for donating the keepsake ornaments in memory of their son **Christopher**.

## Birthday Remembrances

*We celebrate the day they were born and hold them in our hearts forever.*

### February

Angeline Nayah Antoine
Matthew Arsenault
Christiano Barbosa
Adam Joseph Brackett
Donald Anthony Capasso
Daniel John Coleman
Richard Collins
PFC Kyle Joseph Coutu
Gary E. DeMoura
Nicholas Dobbe
Jeniya Angelli Marie Ebert
Jennifer Golouski
Peter Anthony Alexander Habib
Matthew George Iavarone
John Anthony Koczan
Jay Lawrence
Stephen Leach
Jennifer Leigh Lesperance
Reid Christopher McDermott
Michael Pelliccia
Jennifer Lynn Peterson
Heather Saad
Brent Douglas Sheldon
Emma Elizabeth Soares
Sam Oliver Stein
Justin Michael Berkley Straus
Michael Travis
Jonathan Blake Waxler
Rebeckha Lynn Whitefield
Margaret Lucia Worthen

### March

Angela Argentieri
Brandon Bellucci
Linda Marie Caito
Jessie Crum
Jamie Dale Ebert
Rebecca Eisen
Marc T. Fears
Todd Gareau
Servulo J. Gonsalves
Rebecca Greene
Thomas P. Kenney
Jeffrey S. Monica
Candice Myrick
Lauren Rose Norwood
Brendan Matthew O'Connell Roberti
Anisa Amber Rossi
Patricia Lynn Salera
Angela Rose Sbardella
Jeffrey Stephen Shank
Julianne Smith

### April

Christopher Ancone
Patrick Avitabile
Jason David Bates
Richard W. Buteau
Anthony Stephen Casale
Christopher Jacob Costello
Anthony Michael D'Arezzo
Gabrielle Dinsmore
Nicholas Gershkoff
Katey Haberek
Stephen Hallisey
Christopher Higgins
Raymond Louis Leoncavallo
Matthew McGowan
Cheryl A. Kenney Milone
Gregory "Josh" Montigny
Joslyn Moynagh
Louie Moynihan
Andrew Patterson
Stephanie Porter
Joshua Smith
Brian Squadrito
Justin Troiano
Sharyn Yanku-Wilk
Chad Allan Woodsom

## In Memory of Our Children

*As long as we live, our children too shall live, for they are part of us in our memories. We lovingly remember the following children on Their Anniversary.*

### February

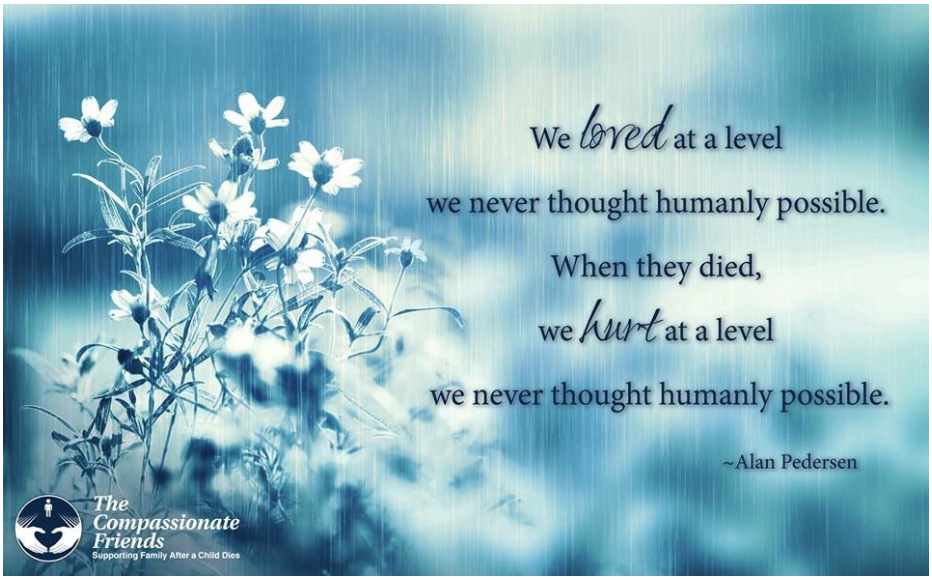
Elizabeth Argentieri
Christine Marie Bernier
Derrick Blair
Christopher Robert Boone
Kendra Bowers
Adam Joseph Brackett
Madeline Courtemanche
PFC Kyle Joseph Coutu
Gregory S. Earley
George Eaton, Jr.
Katey Haberek
Jay Lawrence
Jeffrey Wood Martin
Jeffrey Stephen Shank
Julianne Smith
Samantha Walsh
Conor Alexis Young

### March

Natalie Joy Adamo
Melissa E. Allin
Tom Argentieri
Linda Marie Caito
John David Barthlomew Cinquegrana
Gabrielle Dinsmore
Kevin Woodbine Gaudreau
Servulo J. Gonsalves
Peter Anthony Alexander Habib
Stephen Hallisey
Sandi Igliozzi
Jennifer Leigh Lesperance
Reid Christopher McDermott
Matthew McGowan
Christopher J. Meehan
Candice Myrick
Andrew Patterson
Brendan Matthew O'Connell Roberti
Alfred "A.D." Silvia, III
Joshua Turcotte
Terry Wallas
Bobby Wallas
Beau Wennermark

### April

Matthew Arsenault
Nathaniel Robert Asselin
Michael Barry
Paul Joseph Battey
Alison Bowman
Luigi Civitelli
Richard Collins
David D. DeMoura
Gary E. DeMoura
Traci L. DeMoura
Marissa Gardner
Erika Hall
Nelly Kago
Dylan Paul Lapham
Stephen Leach
Christopher Mark Leahey
Jamie Mayer
Steven P. Neary
Martha Noble
Nathan Parker
Heather Saad
Marissa Salabert
Patricia Lynn Salera
Sheldon Schobel
Matthew K. Serio
Gregor Smith
Joshua Smith
De-Mitri J.C. Todd



# Holiday Donations and Love Gifts

A Love Gift is a living memorial to your child. Usually given on birthdays, anniversaries of their deaths, holidays, or just to remember. Our thanks to the following for their generous donations.

Margie Hirsch in memory of her daughter **Brandi Lyn** and her brother **Alan**. Merry Christmas

Deborah and Raymond O'Riley in memory of **Brandi Lyn Burgess**

Linda and Roy Chase in memory of **Josh** — we miss you every day. Love, Mom and Roy

**Patrick Barbosa** – My Beloved Son you are loved, cherished, remembered and missed forever, Merry Christmas in Heaven, Love, Mom

**Martha Noble** – Merry Christmas. We Love and Miss you so much, Mom and Liz

**Martha Noble** – Happy 37th birthday on January 15th. It's hard to celebrate with your twin, Hether, when you are not here. Much Love, Mom

John and Anita LoDico in memory of their daughter **Nichole Marie**, Love Always, Mom and Dad

Inacia Gonsalves in memory of **Alexander Veiga** and **Servulo Gonsalves**, Missed Always

Tish and Tom Young in memory of their daughter **Karen Young**, Love, Mom and Dad

**Matthew George Iavarone** – Today, Tomorrow and Forever in our Hearts, Love, Dad, Mom, and Kenny

David Suvall in memory of **Christopher Valliere**

Charles and Jean Miga in memory of **Christopher Valliere**

Carmen Rodriguez in memory of her nephew **Luigi Civitelli**. Love Always

**Luigi Civitelli** – Forever in our Hearts, Love Always, Mom and Dad

**Gabrielle Carmela Dinsmore** – Love Always and Forever, Mom and Dad

**Angela Rose Sbardella** – Love Always, Auntie Nettie

**Angela Rose Sbardella** – Forever in my Heart, Love, Dad

**Andrew Patterson** – Love Always, Mom

**Justin Marron** – You are missed every day and always loved, Mom

Rose Silva and Dolores Nardoliollo in memory of **Michael Buco, Jr.**

**Melissa Allin** – We Love and Miss You, Mom, Dad, Eric and Family

**Jennifer Quigley** – Love Always, Mom

**Justin Troiano** – Love Always, Mom

**Brian Squadrito** – Always in my Heart on your Anniversary, Love, Mom

**Stephen Leach** – Happy Birthday, We Love and Miss You, Mom and Paul

**Jay Lawrence** – Saved by Grace through Faith, Love, Mom and Dad

**Jennifer Peterson** – Thinking of You, Mom and Dad

**Anthony D'Arezzo** – Love, Dad

**Larry D'Arezzo** – Love, Uncle Tony

**Dina Marie Davis** – Love, Dad

**Gina Marie Pontarelli** – Love you, Miss you, Mom and Dad

**Kameron Montanino** – Love Always, Mom

**Brian Seippel** and **Rebecca Greene** – Love and Miss you every day

**Kevin Munroe** – Miss you, Love Always, Mom and George

**Joshua Spinelli** – Always in our Hearts, Mom and Dad

## 2016 Remembrance Garden
## Walkway Engraving Form

If you would like to add your child's name to the stone walkway in our Remembrance Garden in downtown Providence, please use the form below. The cost for the engraving is $50. If you have any questions, please contact Lucille at (401) 231-9229.

Name _____ Phone #_____

Address _____ Apt. #_____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

**Please clearly print your child's name as you would like it to appear in the stone walkway:**

Child's Name _____

**Please enclose a check for $50 made payable to TCF Greater Providence Chapter and mail to:**

Co-Leader Lucille Valliere
10 Dail Drive
North Providence, RI 02911

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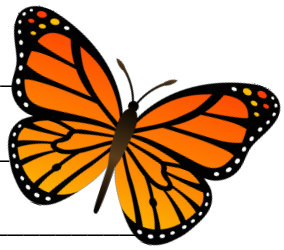
## Love Gift Donation



Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

In Loving Memory Of _____

Love Gift $ _____ Message _____

_____

I would like my Love Gift to go toward (please check one):

☐ General Chapter expenses ☐ Upkeep of our Remembrance Garden

Your tax-deductible donation provides help for those who are grieving. General Chapter expenses helps defray the cost for the newsletter, postage, and other Chapter expenses. Upkeep of our Remembrance Garden goes toward lawn care and garden maintenance. Your donation is greatly appreciated and will be acknowledged in this newsletter. Please make your check payable to: **TCF Greater Providence Chapter**.

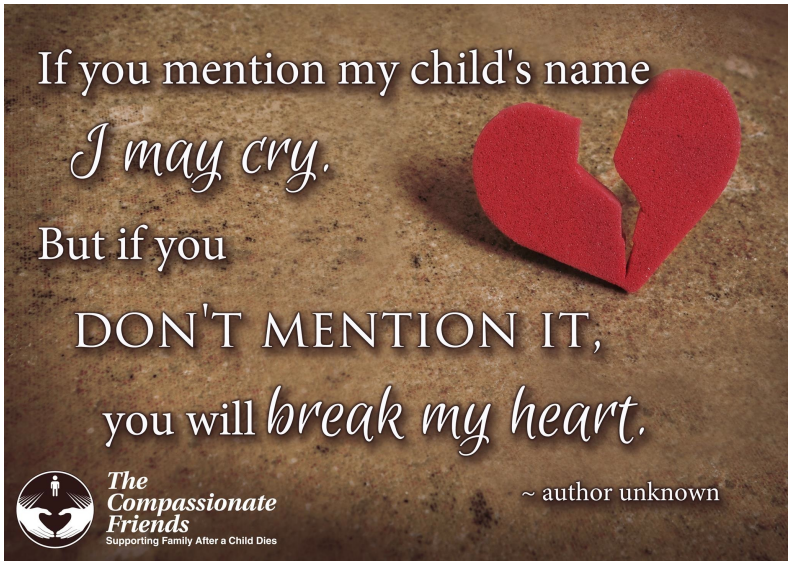
Please send donations to: Co-Leader Lucille Valliere
10 Dail Drive
North Providence, RI 02911

**The Compassionate Friends**
*Greater Providence Area Chapter*
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

10 Dail Drive
North Providence, RI 02911
tcfprovidence.com

Like Us On Facebook

## Upcoming Events

Our regular support group meetings take place on the second Monday of each month. All meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. at the Central Congregational Church, 296 Angell St., Providence, RI.

- **February 8**
- **March 14**
- **April 11**
- **May 9**