



## Tips to Help You Have a Positive Conference Experience!

The Compassionate Friends wants to welcome you and all of the many parents, siblings, grandparents, relatives and friends who will be coming to Costa Mesa, CA for TCF's 35th National Conference/5th International Gathering July 20-22, 2012. This guide is designed to help you know what to expect during the conference.

**Hotel Information:** The host hotel, the Hilton Orange County Costa Mesa is about 10 minutes from John Wayne Airport (SNA) and free shuttle service is provided by the hotel throughout normal arrival and departure periods for the conference. Shuttles start at 5 a.m. and leave the hotel on the hour and half hour. They leave the airport 15 minutes and 45 minutes after the hour.

If you are arriving at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), you can take the SuperShuttle for a discounted rate of \$36 for the first person and \$9 for each additional person. To get this rate (which is 10% off first person), you must pre-order your SuperShuttle transportation through the link on TCF's 2012 national conference page at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org). Taxi is \$125-\$135 (without tip) to the hotel for up to 3 people in a regular size cab. Travel time is 40 to 90 minutes depending on time of day.

For questions related to transportation, call the hotel at 714-444-4463.

For those arriving by car, details on how to best reach the hotel (which is located at 3050 Bristol Street, Costa Mesa, CA 92626) are included with this registration packet. As of the start of registration, there were very few rooms left at the conference host hotel. Please check TCF's 2012 national conference page for the latest up-to-date information regarding room availability, plus information on overflow hotels. You are welcome to call the hotel's reservation desk at 1-714-540-7000 to check room availability (latest date for room reservations at special conference rates is June 26 or until rooms are no longer available).

**Parking:** Hotel self-parking for attendees is \$7 per day with in and out (special pricing for TCF attendees; normally \$21 per day). Valet parking is \$25 per day.

**Child Care:** Sorry, child care is not available at the conference and children cannot be taken to openings or closings, workshops, sharing sessions, banquets, etc. Minimum age for conference registration is nine.

**Check-in:** You will receive your full conference packet including Program Book at the Registration area (Banquet Level 1). Check-in times are: Wednesday, 3 p.m. – 8 p.m.; Thursday, 3 p.m. to 9 p.m.; Friday, 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.; and Saturday 8 a.m. to Noon. The Program Book will provide you complete information on workshops, presenters, times of events, etc. There is also a personal page in the Program Book where you can place your event plans for throughout the conference. This will help you make the best use of your time. Please examine the map of the hotel floor plan on the back page of the program book. You may want to mark the locations of the workshops you wish to attend. We recommend that you take the time to walk through the conference areas and orient yourself before the conference begins.

**Name Badge:** You will receive this during check-in at the conference registration area. Please wear your name badge at all times during the conference as only those wearing a name badge will be allowed to enter workshops or banquet areas. If you have reserved banquet reservations, you will receive tickets with your conference bag at registration. For safekeeping, you may want to place them in your name badge holder. So that others who notice may give you more hugs, those who are newly bereaved will have a heart sticker on their name badge while first time attendees will have a butterfly sticker.

**Volunteer Desk:** Location of the Volunteer Desk will be in the Program Book. Volunteers will be visible and circulating throughout the conference to answer your questions.

**Message Board:** You will find a message board strategically placed if you wish to leave a message for another person attending. No general notices please.

**Hospitality Rooms:** There will be a hospitality rooms for parents and grandparents, plus a sibling hospitality room. Enjoy time making new friends (and meeting your old friends) in a relaxed atmosphere.

**Sharing Sessions:** These will be held Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings. A list of sharing sessions, times, and locations will be included in your Program Book.

**Memory Boards:** Bring a picture no larger than 8”X10” or a memento to place on the memory boards. Spend as much time as you’d like looking at the pictures and reading the stories.

**Orientation:** An orientation for first-timers will be from 8-9 a.m. Friday (anyone is welcome to attend). This year Sibling Meet & Greet (Thursday—see Meet and Greets below) replaces Sibling Orientation. Check Program Book for locations.

**Meet & Greets:** You are invited Thursday 7-8 p.m. to attend any of the following Meet and Greets that would be appropriate: Sibling Meet & Greet; Grandparent Meet & Greet; Online Support Community Meet & Greet; TCF/USA Facebook Fans Meet & Greet; Regional Coordinators Meet & Greet Chapter Leadership. Check program book for locations.

**Siblings:** There will be plenty of workshops and sharing sessions, as well as a trip to Dave and Buster’s for food, fun, and games. There will be a sibling choir and opportunities to meet with, and talk to, other bereaved siblings.

**Changes to conference events:** Occasionally a workshop will have to be cancelled or relocated. Any changes of this type will be posted at the registration desk and mentioned at the Opening Ceremony or during the program portion of the Friday afternoon banquet.

**Dress:** During the daytime, we suggest comfortable, casual clothing and shoes. Room temperatures fluctuate, so you may want to layer your clothes. For the Saturday evening banquet, business casual is suggested.

**Workshops:** On your registration form you were asked to write down the workshops you were interested in attending. This was for planning purposes only and did not register you for the workshops. Attend any you wish. On occasion a workshop may be filled beyond capacity as we are limited in the number and size of break out rooms available to us by the hotel. Some workshops may be repeated for this reason. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

**Etiquette at workshops:** You will find workshops attended by 5 people to 100 or more. Most workshops will have time for questions either during or at the end. Please remember that everyone has a story, and everyone in the audience should use common sense in asking questions and properly using time. Please do not have side conversations with others during a workshop as this can be disruptive. An evaluation form will be handed out by the end of each workshop. Please take a moment to answer the questions and feel free to express your honest opinion on both the good points of a workshop and the bad points. You do not have to give your name.

**Tears:** Everyone understands why you are at the conference. Tears are common. They are a tribute to your child, sibling, and/or grandchild and your love for that child. Tissues will be placed throughout the conference.

**Button Machine:** A picture button of the child, sibling, or grandchild you are remembering will be made at no charge. Bring an uncut picture on bond paper, if possible, to fit a 3” diameter button.

**Remembrance of Love:** If you ordered a Remembrance of Love prior to the conference, you will find it displayed in specially designated areas throughout the conference (pre-order these online at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)). Please do not remove them until Sunday. If multiple copies were ordered, one copy will be displayed. Your additional copies may be picked up at the Volunteer Desk.

**Memory Book:** At each national conference you will find a memory book open where you may request your child, sibling, or grandchild's name and information be added. If you have requested a name be placed in the memory book previously, there is an index in the front of each volume so you can find the child's listing.

**Area restaurants:** You're free to seek meals wherever you wish. A list of nearby establishments will be included in the conference bag.

**Banquets:** Those who signed up on their registration form to attend the Friday afternoon or Saturday evening banquets should find confirmation in this packet. No on-site banquet tickets will be sold. Please note: only those registered for the conference may attend the banquets. We try to provide accommodations to hear keynote speakers even if you choose not to attend the banquets.

**Friday Evening:** While this is free time, enjoy the special presentation of "An Evening with Darcie Sims." More information will be in the Conference Program Book. Conference registration gains you admittance. Dress: casual.

**Special Wednesday and Sunday Outdoor Buffets:** Wednesday Barbeque Buffet and Sunday South of the Border Buffets are \$25 each and from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Again, you must be pre-registered and there will be no tickets sold on-site. Only those registering for the conference may attend.

**Pre and Post Conference Excursions:** Thursday, July 18 you have the opportunity to join in a trip to the Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens. Chartered bus leaves the hotel at 9:30 a.m. and returns at 6 p.m. Charge is \$25 per person which includes transportation and admittance. Food is available to purchase on premises. This excursion must be pre-registered as there is no on-site registration.

Monday, July 23 we will be providing transportation by bus for \$10 to Disneyland. Please use the link from the 2012 TCF National Conference/International Gathering page at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) to purchase tickets directly from Disneyland at special reduced pricing (purchase Convention 1-Day 1 Park Ticket; prices \$66 to \$71). Bus leaves at 9:30 a.m. and returns at 10:45 p.m. Transportation tickets must be pre-purchased as there is no on-site registration.

Only those registered for the national conference may participate in the excursions.

**Local Attractions:** Check TCF's national website 2012 conference page for information on area attractions.

**Walk to Remember:** If you have not registered for the Walk to Remember, we encourage you to do so. This is an opportunity for your child, sibling, or grandchild to be remembered. The Walk to Remember is one way we work to make certain no child is ever forgotten.

If you have pre-registered for the conference, as well as the Walk to Remember, you will pick up your T-Shirt and Walk Bib when you check-in at the registration desk. If you are only attending the Walk to Remember, we highly recommend that you pick up your T-Shirt and Bib by end of regular registration Saturday. Please do not wait until Sunday morning prior to the event as the registration area for the event will be backed-up. Bottled water will be provided. The Sunday morning two-mile walk will start from a location specified during the conference and will include a short kick-off ceremony. Don't miss the opportunity to participate in this event—and bring your camera!

**Where else should you plan to stop?** Meet Barney, the therapy dog and the folks from Centering Corporation at the conference book store; The Butterfly Boutique will carry a wide selection of reasonably priced gift type items; Reflection Room provides a peaceful atmosphere and tranquil environment. Meet authors attending during the Authors Hour. Join in the silent auction and raffle.

There's lots going on—take time to rest and remember,

***We Need Not Walk Alone!***