



The Compassionate Friends

Marin County Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies



JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2016 ISSUE

Vol 37, No. 1

This issue of the TCF Marin Newsletter is sponsored by love gifts from our members.

Please call the TCF Hotline (415/457-3123) if you have any questions.

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Our Chapter

On Jan. 30th, 1979, the Marin Chapter of the Compassionate Friends was opened by Georgia and John Alioto and another couple who had also lost a child. For thirty six years, our chapter has helped countless families who've experienced the death of a child, sibling or grandchild. For thirty six years, we have held monthly meetings and sent out monthly or bi-monthly newsletters. For a few of those years, our chapter even held monthly meetings in San Francisco, as well as Marin, until people came forward to run it themselves. Our chapter has created a wonderful Children's Memorial in Greenbrae and for almost 20 years, we have held Candle Lighting ceremonies to coincide with TCF's World Wide Candle Lighting.

All of this didn't just happen. It was due to the people who volunteered to run our chapter by being on our Steering Committee. As people began to heal, they offered to give back by helping to run the chapter and by doing so, help others. In the last few years, that has not been happening, new people have not come forward and the same people have been running the chapter for too long. This is an untenable situation. We are at a crossroads. We need help in order to survive as a chapter.

If you feel you can help in any way, please send us your name, e-mail and phone number. We hope to get together in January or February with anyone who signs up to go over what needs to be done and to plan for the future of our chapter.

“Tears shed for another person are not a sign of weakness. They are a sign of a pure heart.”
— José N. Harris, *MI VIDA: A Story of Faith, Hope and Love*

“We bereaved are not alone. We belong to the largest company in all the world--the company of those who have known suffering.”
— Helen Keller

Additional Support Sites

opentohope.com
bereavedparents.com
bereavedparentsusa.org
survivorsofsuicide.com
griefspeaks.com

Other Grief Counseling Resources

Hospice by the Bay offers individual and group grief counseling.
Marin and SF (415) 526-5699
Sonoma (707) 931-7299
Email: griefsupport@hbtc.org
Website: www.hospicebythebay.org

TCF Sonoma County Chapter

tcf.sonomacounty@gmail.com
(707) 490-8640

From the Editor:

I wish to take this opportunity to remind you that our chapter is semi-inactive until we locate a suitable meeting place and acquire a few more willing volunteers to help with the organization.

As soon as we determine when and where we are able to restart holding Compassionate Friends group meetings I will send out an email with that information. If you are not on our email list, please contact us at tcfmarin@gmail.com to be added to the list. The email list receives periodic updates on our chapter's activities and offers the opportunity for members to respond and give voice to their needs.

“It is the gift of HOPE which reigns supreme in the attributes of The Compassionate Friends.

HOPE that life can still be worth living and meaningful.

HOPE that the pain of loss will become less acute, and above all else,

The HOPE that we do not walk alone, and that we are understood.

The gift of HOPE is the greatest gift that we can give to those who mourn.”

The Compassionate Friends is about transforming the pain of grief into the elixir of hope. It takes people out of the isolation society imposes on the bereaved and lets them express their grief naturally. With the shedding of tears, healing comes. And the newly bereaved get to see people who have survived and are learning to live and love again.

Canon Simon Stephens – Founder

Donations

The Compassionate Friends relies heavily on donations to cover the everyday running costs of the organization in supporting bereaved parents and their families. Every gift towards this is greatly appreciated. TCFMarin is a 501(c)3 charity.

Carol's Corner

by Carol Kearns



Columns for The Compassionate Friends

I have found great solace volunteering for The Compassionate Friends, a hard-working group that supports families seeking “the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child” (www.compassionatefriends.org). My columns discuss topics of continuing concern in the Marin County CA newsletter. - Carol

A Grandmother's Grief

My mother, diagnosed with lymphoma, died just before Mother's Day in 2008. Only two months prior, she had been a high spirited fun-loving woman, the heart of our family who was looking forward to her 90th birthday celebration that fall. As I cared for my dear mother, knowing I would soon lose her, I reflected back on my daughter Kristen's death at age seven and my mother's concerns about me at that time.

I had been so consumed by my own grief then, and the grief of my young son, only nine when his sister died, that I was hardly aware of others' grief. Not until a few years ago did my mother confide her pain of not only grieving for her precious granddaughter, but her daughter as well. Her fear was that the tragic and sudden loss of Kristen could also mean the loss of her daughter. “Kristen drowned in the ocean,” she said, “but you were drowning in grief. I know you felt helpless to save her, but I felt the same about you. I had no idea how to rescue you.” Surprised to hear this, even though I had also feared losing my mind, I became aware for the first time of the unique role grandparents play when their grandchild dies.

I recently became a grandmother myself and have been overjoyed with this new role of welcoming Joseph into the world. My favorite picture is of my mother, shortly before she died, with a huge smile and outstretched arms reaching for baby Joseph when meeting him for the first time. While my mother's death, unlike Kristen's, is part of the natural cycle of life, I will miss her deeply. She taught me so much. I think of her often in my new role as a grandparent.

When Joseph was born, I had the luxury of spending the first several weeks with him, watching him change daily as his parents moved nervously into their new role. I loved being witness to the bond developing as they changed from being a couple to being a little family.

My son, a resident in anesthesiology, studies nightly, often with Joseph nestled against his chest in a baby sling. He once shared how much he misses his baby while he spends long hours at the hospital. Watching the creation of this strong parental bond, I became aware of the unique dual bond of the grandparent. A bond that takes her heart to places she never thought possible...a bond that should never be broken. I now appreciate more than ever what my mother experienced.

Our Children Remembered - January, 2016

<i>Child</i>	<i>Dates</i>		<i>Bereaved</i>	
Peter Demetrius Alex	01/06/1964	06/28/1979	Bill & Pat Alex	
John Christopher Alioto, Jr.	07/21/1960	01/27/2005	John & Georgia Alioto	
Eric Tyler Anderson	04/03/1978	01/05/2007	Bill & Liz Anderson	
Daniel Zacharia Ashkenazy	09/07/1984	01/14/2005	Pamela & Dan Ashkenazy	
John Charles Berges	1	2/20/1966	01/04/2001	Mary Berges
Christopher Abram Bruce	01/20/1994	03/21/2004	Mike & Louise Bruce	
Laura Alicia Bruce	01/22/1989	04/07/2005	Mike & Louise Bruce	
Daniel Keith Cracchold	01/31/1965	06/14/2004	Linda Winslow	
Misty Dollwet	10/08/1976	01/21/1996	Ronald & Joan Crook	
Hannah Beth Engle	11/06/1980	01/22/2006	Enid Pollack	
Matthew Christopher Fields	02/08/1988	01/01/2015	Cathy Morocco	
Basilio Nathan Garza Jr.	01/15/1993	07/12/2014	Renee Garza	
Vincent Alfred Hinds	11/23/1966	01/11/1994	Henry & Ginny Hinds	
Stefanie Helen Jacobs	05/26/1987	01/10/1997	Nanette Jacobs	
John Nicholas Klingel	12/25/1967	01/30/2003	John & Karen Klingel	
Trey Lagomarsino	11/28/1989	01/22/2013	Mike Baxman & Susan Kim	
Mathew Gary Luce	01/07/1991	05/30/2013	Alice Clary	
Marci Eilene Meyring	09/25/1979	01/05/1987	Gary & Natalie Meyring	
Michael Patrick O’Riordan	02/18/1965	01/30/2011	Mary O’Riordan	
Lucia Zoe Ostojic’-Portello	12/13/1997	01/06/2000	Radiça Portello	
Luke Benjamin Pedemonte	01/06/1978	07/22/2006	Richard and Therese Pedemonte	
Lindsey Opal Quinby	05/09/1982	01/21/2012	Paul Quinby	
Anna Elizabeth Russell	01/25/1988	08/24/1988	Lorene Jackson	
Joaquin A. Santos	04/01/1967	01/12/2007	Lorena Santos	
Dennis Howard Schonborn	03/24/1957	01/14/2004	Felicia Schonborn-Young	
Julian Ali Thomas	03/05/1992	01/05/2014	Fariba Thomas	
Karl Ingemar Thunstrom	01/29/1968	04/11/2012	Avghi & Bert Thunstrom	
Adrian Rodolfo Valderrama	10/12/1984	01/09/2010	Rosa Sandoval & Rodolfo Valderrama	
Malika Ziani	09/17/1973	01/26/2011	Phyllis Callahan	



“When your road is blocked by a landslide, you clear it by taking away one rock at a time.” -- Warm Spring Native American tribal saying

“There need not be a purpose to a person’s death, other than that they have lived the length of their days on this Earth and now begin the longer part of their existence.”
— Brian M. Holmes, What Are You Crying About? Defeating Grief for Christians

Our Children Remembered - February, 2016

<i>Child</i>	<i>Dates</i>		<i>Bereaved</i>
Maraina Lee Arik	02/04/1973	07/22/2009	Rich & Linda Arik
Paul Beaudoin	02/18/1953	09/16/2003	Midge Beaudoin
Tobias M. Biedul	02/13/1970	08/31/2000	Charles Feeney & Holly Biedul
Jacob Westley Brumbaugh	09/13/1986	02/17/2011	Mark & Deborah Brumbaugh
Larry Mark Chipley	02/04/1958	11/13/1969	Lauretta Chipley
Joey Ciatti	02/10/1971	10/06/1986	Becky Oken
Lisa Danielle Clark	07/14/1990	02/16/2015	Julie & Bruce Clark, Lucy Martinez
Jonathan Conrad	05/31/1985	02/04/2007	Karen & John Christopher
DeWayne D. Dearstyne	07/29/1964	02/26/1983	Mary Ellen Dearstyne
Michael Anthony Dollwet	12/04/1980	02/01/2005	Ronald & Joan Crook
Peter John Scott Doughty	02/15/1964	03/05/1983	John & Wendy Doughty
Debra Lynn Ferrua	02/27/1957	10/11/2003	Ronald & Joan Crook
Matthew Christopher Fields	02/08/1988	01/01/2015	Cathy Morocco
Chloe Foster	09/03/1998	02/15/2001	Nilda Thompson
Lori Ann Elizabeth Gentry	02/02/1970	06/28/1991	Genesse & Bill Gentry
Katie Ann Hagerty	02/05/1990	03/21/1994	Pamela & George Hagerty
James Robert Harter	02/16/1965	12/12/2006	Gail Harter
Pamela Dawn Heaster	02/08/1964	10/29/2010	Ila Benavidez-Heaster
Anna Maria Kakis	07/15/1985	02/14/2005	Anthony and Lella Kakis
Frank D. Kovach, Jr.	10/23/1960	02/20/1986	Frank & Barbara Kovach
Chris Leach	02/12/1974	09/02/2002	Marcie & Don Leach
Ruth Dasha Goldie Levy	12/14/1980	02/23/2001	Shary Levy & Arthur Levy
Laura Catherine Maatz	07/13/1961	02/16/2010	Russell & Marcia Lizza
Michael Patrick O'Riordan	02/18/1965	01/30/2011	Mary O'Riordan
Bobby Orr	05/19/1984	02/17/2002	George & Karen Orr
Timothy Parnow	08/05/1957	02/22/2003	Caroll Parnow
Alexander Rayburn	11/27/1988	02/21/2015	Mindee & Steve Rayburn
Rodney Robinson-Billings	02/28/1961	08/25/1984	Judith Billings Wriston
David Arthur Ross	12/30/1961	02/25/2001	Arthur & Joan Ross
Richard Sielert	02/19/1964	07/12/2014	Diane Sielert
Kyle Bernadette Sievers	02/25/1989	04/22/2009	William & Daria Sievers
Eric Storace	02/25/1957	07/25/1996	Ilene Storace
Stephen Taketa	02/24/1976	10/28/1993	Michael & Teri Taketa-Graham
Elizabeth Torlakson	02/06/1983	03/15/2004	Kathy Bodnar
Richard Lee Wallace	02/01/1958	04/05/1978	Joann Jelly
Robin Leigh Wallace	02/26/1954	02/26/1954	Joann Jelly



“No one ever told me that grief felt so like fear.”
— C.S. Lewis, A Grief Observed

LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY

“Why does it hurt so much? Why is this grief so incapacitating? If only the hurt weren’t so crushing.” Sounds familiar? All of us have known hurts before, but none of our previous “ouchies” can compare with the hurt we feel. Nothing can touch the pain of burying a child.

Yet most of us have discovered that the sun still comes up. We still have to function. We did not die when our child did, even though we wished we could have, so...we are stuck with this pain, this grief and what do we do with it? Surely we can’t live like THIS forever!

There are no magic formulas for surviving grief. There are a few recognized patterns for grief, but even those are only guidelines. What we do know is that the emptiness will never go away. It will become tolerable and livable...some day.

TIME...the longest word in our grief. We used to measure TIME by the steps of our child... the first word, first tooth, first date, first car...now we don’t have that measure any more. All we have is TIME, and it only seems to make the hurt worse.

So what do we do? Give ourselves TIME...to hurt, to grieve, to cry. TIME to choke, to scream. TIME to be “crazy” and TIME to remember. Be nice to yourself! Don’t measure your progress through grief against anyone else’s. Be your own timekeeper.

Don’t push. Eventually you will find the hours and days of grief have turned to minutes and then moments...but don’t expect them to go away. We will always hurt. You don’t get over grief...it only becomes tolerable and livable. Change your focus a bit. Instead of dwelling on how much you lost, try thinking of how much you had. Try letting good memories come over you as easily as the awful ones do. We didn’t lose our child...HE [SHE] DIED. We don’t lose the love that flowed between us...it still flows, but differently now.

Does it help to know that if we didn’t love so very much, it would not hurt so badly? Grief is the price we pay for love. And as much as it hurts, I’m very glad I loved. Don’t let death cast ugly shadows, but rather warm memories of the loving times you shared. Even though death comes, LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY!

Darcie D. Sims

“I will not say, do not weep, for not all tears are an evil.” — J.R.R. Tolkien



Love Gifts

In Loving Memory

Pamela Dawn Heaster

February 08, 1964 - October 29, 2010

Ila Benavidez-Heaster

In Loving Memory

Jacob Westley Brumbaugh

September 13, 1986 - February 17, 2011

Mark & Deborah Brumbaugh

In Loving Memory of my beloved son

Joey Ciatti

February 10, 1971 - October 6, 1986

"I have so many wonderful memories that warm my heart and keep me smiling"

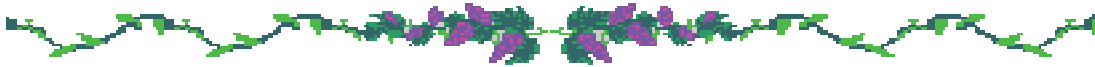
Becky Oken

In Loving Memory

Stefanie Helen Jacobs

May 26, 1987 - January 10, 1997

Nanette Jacobs



LOVE GIFT FORM

Love Gifts are "messages" published in our newsletter that honor children who have died. We are grateful to parents, grandparents and others who, by their Love Gifts donations, allow us to offer resources such as the Annual Candle Lighting Event, the newsletter, books, brochures and pamphlets at no cost to assist bereaved families. They also allow us to provide information to professionals and others who impact the lives and feelings of the bereaved. The donation amount is your choice, and Love Gifts are tax-deductible as allowed by law.

Deadlines for Love Gift information for Newsletters:

Jan/Feb issue - Dec. 15

Mar/April issue - March 07

May/June issue - April 15

July/Aug issue - June 15

Sept/Oct issue - Aug. 15

Nov/Dec issue - Oct. 15

Child's name _____ Donor's name _____

Child's Birthdate & Anniversary Date _____ Newsletter month _____

Message _____

Include your name, address and phone # **if not on check** in case of questions: _____

Mail the information above along with your donation (check) made payable to TCF/Marin
to: **TCF/Marin Newsletter Editor, P.O. Box 150935, San Rafael, CA 94915.**



The Compassionate Friends
Marin County Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2016

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The Compassionate Friends, Inc.



Dated Material - Please Deliver Promptly

Who are “The Compassionate Friends”?

The Compassionate Friends was founded circa 1968 when a chaplain at the Warwickshire Hospital in England brought together two sets of grieving parents and realized that the support they gave each other was better than anything he, as a chaplain, could ever say or provide. Meeting around a kitchen table, the Lawleys and the Hendersons were joined by a bereaved mother and the chaplain, Simon Stephens, and The Society of the Compassionate Friends was born. The Compassionate Friends jumped across the ocean and was established in the United States and incorporated in 1978 in Illinois.

Each chapter, along with the supporting National Office, is committed to helping every bereaved parent, sibling, or grandparent who may walk through our doors or contact us.

Today TCF has about 660 chapters serving all 50 states plus Washington D.C., Puerto Rico, and Guam offering friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved parents, siblings, grandparents, and other family members during the natural grieving process after a child has died. Around the world more than 30 countries have a Compassionate Friends presence, encircling the globe with support so desperately needed when the worst has happened.
