



The Compassionate Friends

Marin County Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies



SEPT-OCT, 2019 ISSUE

Vol 40, No. 5

#1184

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

Our Co-Leaders:

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Facilitator:

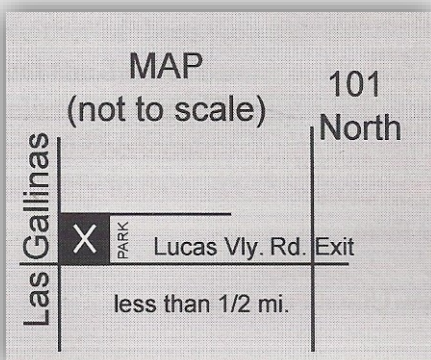
Mark Rosengarden

TCF Marin Monthly Meetings:

Group meetings will be held on the third Monday of the month from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Lucas Valley Community Church.

2000 Las Gallinas Avenue
(at Lucas Valley Road)
San Rafael, CA

First time attendees are encouraged to arrive at 7:00 for orientation. All attendees arriving before 7:00 p.m. are asked to sign in and be seated in the lobby until the meeting room is ready. The TCF Newsletter and informational pamphlets will be displayed for attendees to browse.



First Anniversary

When a bolt of lightning took the life of my son, Curtis, my life changed forever. The first winter after the loss was the darkest period of my life. In my misery I'd often daydream of sitting on a warm, sandy beach, watching the waves roll in. I believed this might bring some peace to my aching heart.

At last, winter turned to spring and then summer. For many weeks I dreaded the coming of the first anniversary, July 24th, but knew I wanted to spend the day by the water. My husband and I made plans to travel to Bayfield County, Wisconsin. The 24th was a beautiful, sunny day when we arrived on the shores of Lake Superior. As we set up our chairs in a shady spot on the beach, we looked around at the many families surrounding us. Parents were relaxing as their children played in the sand and water. Tears ran down our cheeks as we watched and remembered Curt and his sister, Pam, doing the same thing as youngsters. The memories were hard to bear—this wasn't the soothing, peace-filled day that I had hoped for. As we left the beach, I wondered if people noticed my tear-streaked face. The next evening we traveled to a different, more secluded beach. The sun setting over the water was a beautiful sight, and the photo I took is one I love to look at, especially in the cold winter months.

Bayfield County is known for its many orchards. The sweet cherries and blueberries were ready for picking, so we decided to take advantage of the opportunity. For several hours we worked side by side, first picking the cherries from low-hanging branches, and then kneeling to pick the loaded blueberry bushes. We talked as we worked, occasionally sampling the delicious fruit, and surprisingly, even laughing. For short periods of time we were able to put aside the sadness and enjoy the moment. When we arrived back home, the "anniversary" cards and messages waiting for us from thoughtful friends touched our hearts. We took great pleasure in sharing our fruit with family and friends.

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As the 4th anniversary of Curt's passing approaches, I look back and

Meeting Calendar

Third Monday of the Month:

- Monday, September 16, 2019
- Monday, October 21, 2019
- Monday, November 18, 2019
- Monday, December 16, 2019



TCF RESOURCES:

TCF Marin County, CA Chapter

P.O. Box 150935
San Rafael, CA 94915
www.tcfmarin.org
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/36595597804>
Info: Eileen Rusky (415) 457-3123

TCF San Francisco and Peninsula Chapter

Meets: 2nd Wednesday
Taraval Police Sta. 2345, 24th Ave
Contact: Audre Hallum
650.359.7928, cwhallum1@mac.com
Co Leaders: Meg Cunningham, Doug Cameron

TCF Sonoma County Chapter

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

Northern CA Regional Coordinator:

Nancy Juracka
nancy_juracka@yahoo.com

TCF National Office:

P.O. Box 3696
Oak Brook, IL 60533-3696
Phone: (630) 990-0010
Toll Free: (877) 969-0010
Fax: (630) 990-0246
Email: nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org
www.compassionatefriends.org

Additional Support Sites

opentohope.com
survivorsofsuicide.com
griefspeaks.com

Other Grief Counseling Resources

Hospice by the Bay offers individual and group grief counseling.
Free monthly drop in 1st Thursday 11am-12pm 17 E. Sir Francis Drake, Larkspur.
Marin and SF (415) 526-5699
Sonoma (707) 931-7299
Email: griefsupport@hbtb.org
Website: www.hospicebythebay.org

North Bay Grief Recovery in San Rafael

www.NorthBayGriefRecovery.com
Ph.: 415-250-3027

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

www.afsp.org Ph.: 707-968-7563

see the progress I've made. The grief process is exasperatingly slow. Healing doesn't magically happen with the passage of time, but requires lots of hard work and patience. My journey through grief continues, and sometimes I question if it will ever end. However, I do know that the crushing sorrow I once felt no longer rules my life. I've done what I thought was impossible—I've survived the loss of my precious son and have become a more caring, compassionate person because of it. I know that I must live for today, appreciating the beauty and surprises that each day brings. I will do the best I can because this is what my son would want.

Ruth Ann Meyer
TCF Greater Antigo Area, WI
In loving memory of my son, Curtis

Resisting Resentment

I have been aware for years now that battling a descent into self-pity is pretty much a daily struggle. More recently, I am noticing how much I struggle with resentment.

I am at an age when many of my friends have children who are nearing adulthood or have reached adulthood. As a consequence, their lives are focused on graduations, new jobs, new apartments, weddings, and grandchildren. None of those things are happening for me and I am finding it hard. I don't resent the friends who are enjoying those life pleasures; in my own weirdly stunted way, I am happy for them. But I do resent that those things aren't going to happen for me.

Didn't I change an equal number of diapers? Didn't I nurse children through all the miseries of childhood maladies? Didn't I pack all those school lunches? Didn't I cheer at all those soccer games? I know I did.

I know I carefully assembled Easter baskets and tried to be creative about Halloween costumes. I played Santa. I never missed a Parent/Teacher conference. I organized elaborate birthday parties. I even provided pick-up and delivery service for a tuba for two years.

I cooked dinners for the Youth Group. I made gingersnaps and date nut bars and pumpkin streusel muffins (his favorites). I fixed daily BLTs in August when the tomatoes were ripe.

But my son will never graduate from college. He'll never get married. He'll never have a career. He won't have children. He won't call me on my birthday or negotiate with me about when and for how long to visit. And I resent it.

I go to Crate and Barrel, or Bed, Bath & Beyond, or Pottery Barn and I select wedding gifts from a registry. I send checks for graduations. I buy gift cards from Target for baby showers.

And I resent it.

Peggi Johnson
TCF Piedmont Chapter, VA

Peggi Johnson

Carol's Corner

by Carol Kearns, PhD
author of "Sugar Cookies and a Nightmare"



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

Honoring the One Year Anniversary of My Daughter's Death

I thought that I would share an excerpt from my book *Sugar Cookies and a Nightmare* about the one year anniversary of my daughter Kristen's death. Kristen died in November and for all of us, the day our child was taken from us is a day we'll never forget. There is never an easy way to acknowledge that day. I felt it was important on the one year anniversary to return to the ocean and the spot where Kristen was pulled out to sea. The following is from a letter I wrote to my son who was 10 at the time. We had climbed down some rocks that projected just above the beach at the same time of the day that she drowned. Our plan was to have a quiet, meditative moment where we would each reflect on Krissie in our own way.

We huddled on a big rock and watched the waves churn below us. I asked if you were afraid that you might drown too, or were you mostly thinking about Krissie? You told me that you were just sad. Holding you, I told you I was sad too but knew we would be okay. Michel, I really meant it. There was a time when I wanted so much to tell you that but had my doubts. I no longer had any.

The rhythm of the waves as they moved in and out below us felt analogous to the waves of grief I had experienced since Kristen's death. That past year had been a long and tedious growing process. At times, the waves of grief pounded with a force that threatened to pull me under forever. At other times, I was free.

Sitting on that rock, I was aware of these internal waves, but they didn't engulf me. I was as distanced from the grief as I was

from the waves surging below. It was symbolic of all we had been through in the year prior. Kristen was gone forever and nothing would bring her back. But now, rather than drowning with her as I once thought I might, I felt encouraged. We would have days of sadness ahead... many more. But we were making it. We were both survivors.

The waves swirled around the rocks and scavenged for anything on the beach. I thought of many things as I watched them. I thought of the seashells I had collected over the years from my walks along beaches. Tiny fragile shells I found completely intact, lying in the sand, survivors of the breakers. Yet Kristen had not survived.

At one time I had watched similar waves, thinking about how they washed and cleansed our beaches, keeping the coast beautiful. From time to time, they would even deposit deep sea treasures for those lucky enough to find them. It would take me a long time before I saw waves in this way again.

We sat, able to be still with our thoughts and feelings. I began to feel a strength come back and could sense this happening for you as well. We had needed to return for that moment alone. We were reclaiming ourselves. That was the last time I went to Bandon. I never want to go again.

Our Children Remembered, September, 2019

<i>Child</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Bereaved</i>
Daniel Zacharia Ashkenazy		Pamela & Dan Ashkenazy
Sylvia Chantal Bingham		Francoise Blusseau & Stephen Bingham
Jason Bohlke		Adam Bohlke & Britt Rosenmayr
Jacob Westley Brumbaugh		Mark & Deborah Brumbaugh
Damon Clark		Susan Radelt
Chelsea Faith Dolan		Colleen Dolan
Dylan Simon Duncan Wright		Mara Duncan
Jacob Samuel Freeman		Michael Freeman & Lisa Klairmont
Errol Friedman		Jeff & Barbara Friedman
Savannah Louise Hill		Andrea Hill
Alecia Anne Marie Hopper		Constance Blake
Dana John Hudson		Diana Hudson
Chris Leach		Marcie & Don Leach
Athena Maguire		Alexandra Maguire
Fernando Martinez		Don & Maria Pazour
Timothy Patrick McBride		Lois Kortum & George McBride
Marci Eilene Meyring		Gary & Natalie Meyring
Lauren Nelson		John & Vicki Nelson
Diego Ruiz Palomino		Celia Ruiz & Michael Palomino
Nicholas Plaskon		John & Berit Lelas
Joshua Adam Portnoy		Bob & Gunilla Portnoy
Kareem Rafeh		Hafez & Nada Rafeh
Carolyn Reichling		Michelle Miller
Justin Daniel Reynolds		Carole Bonnici
Lara Rachel Rusky		Edward & Eileen Rusky
Benjamin P. Scheuenstuhl		Maureen & Heinz Scheuenstuhl
Brian Richard Senior		Ann Senior
Nicolas Simard		Julie Chabot & François Simard
Vinnie J. Simons		Lori Jones
Malika Ziani		Phyllis Callahan

A Painless Way to Support our TCF Chapter

TCF Marin survives largely on generous love gifts throughout the year and at the Candle Lighting Ceremony in December. But there is another way to support TCF-MC that is easy and painless. That is, whenever you purchase something from Amazon, if you do so through Amazon Smile, .5% of the purchase price of selected items will be sent to TCF-MC automatically.

It's easy, it places no additional economic burden on you or your family and, when enough of us participate, it will add up and TCF-MC will be stronger and be able to provide more services.

It's simple. Here's how to do it.

To shop at AmazonSmile simply (1) go to smile.amazon.com. (If you have one, you can use the same account on [Amazon.com](https://amazon.com) and [AmazonSmile](https://amazon.com). Your shopping cart, Wish List and other account settings are also the same.) (2) On your first visit to AmazonSmile, smile.amazon.com, (3) just select TCF-MC to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping. AmazonSmile will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make at smile.amazon.com will result in a donation. Eligible products are marked "Eligible for AmazonSmile donation" on their product detail pages.

Our Children Remembered, October, 2019

Child

Dates

Bereaved

Chancellor Argall
 Lancelot Argall
 Matthew Buckley
 Joey Ciatti
 Misty Dollwet
 Adam Teplin Emmott
 Debra Lynn Ferrua
 Reneé Francesca Garcia
 Ellen Marian Haas
 Pamela Dawn Heaster
 Bowen Kader Johnson
 Emma Kristen Kearns
 Albert Levy
 Athena Maguire
 Chance Pierre Maurer
 Robert Scott McIntosh
 Ryan W. McKnight
 Peter McLaughlin
 Brian David Mixsell
 Kayden Montoya
 Peter Langhorne Morawitz
 Emily Grace Panicacci
 Phillip E. Perry
 Steven Rodriguez
 Lonnie Roper II
 James Aaron Rosengarden
 Susan Rudolph
 Casey Sandvick
 Anthony Salvatore Santa Maria
 Ellen Alexandra Scott
 Railee Naomi Silvis
 Adrian Rodolfo Valderrama
 Isabelle Quinn van Bergen
 John Elliot Vipiana
 Gregory Patrick Walsh
 Brittney Marie Weaver
 Craig Weldon
 Robert Craig Wilson
 Kendra Elizabeth Young

Grier Argall & Jeanni Lang
 Grier Argall & Jeanni Lang
 Mark & Kristina Buckley
 Becky Oken
 Ronald & Joan Crook
 Michelle J. Maguire, Kristina Teplin
 Ronald & Joan Crook
 Bertlla, Carmen & Jose Armando Garcia
 Harold & Mary Haas
 Ila Benavidez-Heaster
 Julie & Brian Gordon
 Dr. Carol Kearns
 Shary Levy, Arthur Levy
 Alexandra Maguire
 Tracy Maurer
 Jennifer Holman McIntosh
 Bob & Leesa Tuley
 Eve Pell
 Bill, Sandy & Belinda Mixsell
 Michelle Padilla-Goode
 Terry Morawitz
 Scott & Jennifer Panicacci
 Sue Hecht
 Rafael & Alex Rodriguez
 Shirlee Roper
 Mark Rosengarden
 Jackie Martin
 Rich Sandvick
 Pam Santa Maria
 Carol Scott
 Linda Cox
 Rosa Sandoval & Rodolfo Valderrama
 Fran Quinn van Bergen
 Lisa Vipiana, John Vipiana
 Sandy Williams
 Janine Schengel
 Lee Weldon
 Mary C. Fishman
 Betsy & Bryant Young

The Long Forever

You left us so quickly;
 there were no goodbyes.
 How long this forever,
 your death and our lives.

The sadness, the anger,
 the loneliness of three,
 preferring four always,
 how small, this new we.

Genesse Bourdeau Gentry
 From *Stars in the Deepest Night—After the Death of a Child*

“The tears I feel today
 I'll wait to shed tomorrow.
 Though I'll not sleep this night
 Nor find surcease from sorrow.
 My eyes must keep their sight:
 I dare not be tear-blinded.
 I must be free to talk
 Not choked with grief, clear-minded.
 My mouth cannot betray
 The anguish that I know.
 Yes, I'll keep my tears til later:
 But my grief will never go.”

— Anne McCaffrey, *Dragonsinger*

Love Gifts

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.

We have received the following Love Gifts for the Sept/ Oct newsletter.

Donor/s: Nisha Zenoff, Stephen Tennis
Child: Victor Robinson Zenoff
Dates:
"Victor, we love you forever!"

Donor/s: Becky Oken
Child: Joey Ciatti
Dates:
"Always remembering the joy that you brought to my life. It brings me great comfort. Love, your mom."

Donor/s: AnnMarie Bledsoe
Child: Kevin Connor Bledsoe
Dates:

Donor/s: Ellen & Fred Coffman
Child: Blake Coffman
Dates:
"We miss you every moment."

Donor/s: Susan Fyles
Child: "Ryan" Stephen Fyles
Dates:

TCF Marin on Facebook

Our Facebook page is a "Private" group, meaning that all posts and responses are visible only to the registered members of the group. We are free to have group discussions without the general public having access to our posts.

Please check the page out at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/36595597804/?ref=bookmarks>

Thanks to Carol for the donation of 12 copies of her book: "Sugar Cookies and a Nightmare"

Donor: Carol Kearns
Child: Emma Kristen Kearns & Kristen Michele



Deadlines for Love Gift information for Newsletters:

Jan/Feb issue	Dec. 15	Jul/Aug issue	Jun. 15
Mar/Apr issue	Feb. 15	Sep/Oct issue	Aug. 15
May/Jun issue	Apr. 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 c/o Love Gifts, P.O. Box 150935, San Rafael, CA 94915.

TCF Marin Children's Memorial plaque design:

The picture below represents the 6th and final memorial plaque to be displayed on a granite boulder at our Children's Memorial across from Marin General Hospital.

We will let you know when it will be dedicated so all who are able can attend the ceremony.

Honor Your Child at the Candlelighting Ceremony

On Sunday evening, December 8, TCF, Marin will hold its annual Candlelight Ceremony at Unity of Marin Church in Hamilton Field, Novato. Many of you have attended in the past and seen the very moving slide show honoring many of our children. Every year, seeing my daughter Lara on screen both swells my heart and breaks my heart.

If you are interested in having your child included in this wonderful ceremony, please contact Edward Rusky at esr.rusky@gmail.com and provide him with (1) a clear photograph of your child, (2) your child's name, (3) your child's birthday, (4) your child's date of death.

To participate, the deadline to supply the above information is Monday, November 25, 2019.



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

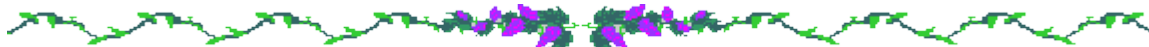
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 Permit No.41

The Compassionate Friends of Marin County
 P. O. Box 150935
 San Rafael, CA 94915

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2019

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Dated Material - Please Deliver Promptly



"In this sad world of ours sorrow comes to all and it often comes with bitter agony. Perfect relief is not possible except with time. You cannot now believe that you will ever feel better. But this is not true. You are sure to be happy again. Knowing this, truly believing it will make you less miserable now. I have had enough experience to make this statement." — Abraham Lincoln

You give yourself permission to grieve by recognizing the need for grieving. Grieving is the natural way of working through the loss of a love. Grieving is not weakness nor absence of faith. Grieving is as natural as crying when you are hurt, sleeping when you are tired or sneezing when your nose itches. It is nature's way of healing a broken heart.
 - Doug Manning

our lives mean the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is a friend who cares. -Henri Nouwen



When we honestly ask ourselves which persons in

