



The Compassionate Friends

Marin County Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies



MARCH—APRIL, 2020 ISSUE

Vol 41, No. 2

#1184

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

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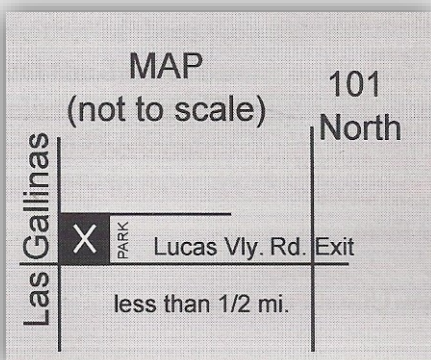
Mark Rosengarden

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 Hillside Church at Lucas Valley.

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.



FORWARD to this edition:

We recognize all too well that it takes courage to come to the first meeting, whether you are a bereaved parent of one month or 5 years. You are welcome to bring a friend or relative for moral support if you wish. You will find that it is all right to cry or to laugh, to share how you feel or just listen. You are welcome to come late and leave early. We recommend that you attend 2-3 meetings before deciding if TCF is not for you. Each meeting is as varied as the attendees and the topic.

You will meet parents in both early and late stages of the grief process. Longtime members are present at meetings to help new members process the tremendous losses in their lives, and to show that some time down the road of grief, they too will be able to function and grow and learn how to live with these losses. It is best if you contact TCF prior to your first meeting at (415) 457-3123 so we can meet with you at 7:00 p.m. before the meeting begins.

The Compassionate Friends is a nonprofit self-help organization offering friendship and support to families who have experienced the death of a child. The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families in the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child and to provide information to help others be supportive.

“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



Meeting Calendar

Third Monday of the Month:

- Monday, March 16, 2020
- Monday, April 20, 2020
- Monday, May 18, 2020



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@hbthb.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

Sign up for Compassionate Friends E-Newsletter

The Compassionate Friends National Office publishes a monthly e-newsletter designed to keep you up-to-date on what's going on with the organization and its chapters. The e-newsletter includes information on such things as TCF National Conferences, the Walk to Remember, the Worldwide Candle Lighting, regional conferences, and other events of importance. Visit <http://www.compassionatefriends.org>.

IT'S OKAY

It's Okay to Grieve:

The death of a child is a reluctant and drastic amputation, without anesthesia. The pain cannot be described, and no scale can measure the loss. We despise the truth that the death cannot be reversed and, somehow, our dear one returned. Such hurt! It's okay to grieve.

It's Okay to Cry:

Tears release the flood of sorrow, of missing and of love. Tears relieve the brute force of hurting, enabling us to "level off" and continue our cruise along the stream of life. It's okay to cry.

It's Okay to Heal:

We do not need to "prove" we love our child. As the months pass, we are slowly able to move around with less outward grieving each day. We need not feel "guilty," for this is not an indication that we love less. It does mean that, although we don't like it, we are learning to accept death. It's a healthy sign of healing. It's okay to heal.

It's Okay to Laugh:

Laughter is not a sign of "less" grief. Laughter is not a sign of "less" love. It's a sign that many of our thoughts and memories are happy ones. It's a sign that we know our dear one would have us laugh. It's okay to laugh.

Marianne Waite
TCF EI Paso, TX

Author and lecturer Leo Buscaglia once talked about a contest he was asked to judge. The purpose of the contest was to find the most caring child.

The winner was a four year old child whose next door neighbor was an elderly gentleman who had recently lost his wife.

Upon seeing the man cry, the little boy went into the old gentleman's yard, climbed onto his lap, and just sat there.

When his Mother asked what he had said to the neighbor, the little boy said,

"Nothing, I just helped him cry."

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

Moving Beyond Grief

Recently I went to the wedding of my niece, who was born a few months before Kristen. Most likely, my daughter would have been one of her bridesmaids. Kristen's absence was obvious and felt by many. So many years, yet so many tears, and again those crazy mixed-up emotions emerged all at once. I was so joyous for my radiant niece on the happiest day of her life, and yet so sad.

At these times, I am once again struck by the power of grief, but instead of that heartbreaking sense of loss hanging on for days, it only lasts for minutes, and I can go on to enjoy major events in my life, like the wedding. I have learned how important it is to be gentle and loving to myself at these times. When I care for myself, grief finds its place and no longer takes over my life.

I came back from emotional death. My dreams for a future with Kristen ended with her death, but I built others. I'm no longer detached from life, moving about in an unknown world, numbed by pain. At one time, overwhelmed by emotion, I thought I might die in the process of reconciling Kristen's death. I didn't. I feel very much alive and fulfilled by new dreams.

Not long ago, my precious grandson was born, and only four months later, my beloved mother unexpectedly died. I look into baby Joseph's sweet face, and I see a glimpse of my son in his smile, his mother in his eyes, and Kristen in his profile. When I look in the mirror, a reflection of my mother looks back. Time, and with it

generations, like the waves of the ocean that took Kristen out to sea, continues.

Kristen's death taught me this: The truly wonderful things in life are so simple that one is often not aware of their wonder until they are beyond reach. What is most important is what we often take for granted. Anyone who has lost a loved one knows this. The beauty in life lies in the quality of our relationships, for what else could possibly matter?

Excerpt from the Epilogue of Carol's book, *Sugar Cookies and a Nightmare*

KRISTEN'S RIBBONS

The waves rushed in and took their toll
In their wake, anguish filled my soul.
Where have you gone and why?
Clouds of gray, sheets of mist filled the sky.

You didn't wait to say good-bye.
I searched in vain but could not find,
A trace to ease my troubled mind.
In my despair I turned to prayer
And looked to heaven above,
And there, trailing rainbow colored ribbons
in your hair,
You waved good bye with love.

Grandma Michel
November, 1976



Our Children Remembered, March, 2020

Child	Dates	Bereaved
Lancelot Argall		Grier Argall & Jeanni Lang
Kristen Leigh Bonocore		Joseph & Phyllis Bonocore
Christopher Abram Bruce		Mike & Louise Bruce
Brian Jay Buckley		Merilee Rossi, Chris Valentino & Family
Tony Burger		Bob & Darlene Burger
Aura Celeste		Joshua Nagler
Damon Clark		Susan Radelt
Taylor Lynn Cohen		Michael & Gail Cohen
Travis William Cole		Kingston Cole
Oksana Collins		Susan Collins
Matthew Jason Comin		Marci & Mark Comin Comin
Bodi Cooper Ealey		Sarah Ealey, Eli Echelmeier
John Patrick Feeney		Lois & Dan Feeney
Neel Thomas Foon		Brad & Genie Foon
"Ryan" Stephan Fyles		Susan & Dale Fyles
Reneé Francesca Garcia		Bertlla, Carmen & Jose Armando Garcia
William Turner Gundry		Karen Gundry Smith & Frank Gundry
Ellen Marian Haas		Harold & Mary Haas
Jessica Marie Hildreth		Julie & Ed Taylor
Mark Hornor		Christa Kaufmann-Hornor
Christopher Robin Hotchkiss		Radha Stern
Matthew David Hubal		Bruce & Louise Hubal
Ian Emerson Jones		Nanette Biers
Gabriel Michael Kerekes		Martie Jean
Patrick Alan Kolsky		Alan & Linda Kolsky
Natalie Jane Kriebel		John Kriebel, Amy Holle
Alicia Scott Lee		Jon & Cathie Lee
Maximillian Letizi		Anthony & Terry Letizi
Erin Kathryn McEowen		Sandy & Jerry McEowen
Alia Rose Jackson Mehta		Gail & Roy Jackson
Christopher J. Murphy, Jr.		Tina Smith
Amanda Jacqueline Noland		Cecile & Doug Noland
Emily Grace Panicacci		Scott & Jennifer Panicacci
Phillip E. Perry		Sue Hecht
Carolyn Reichling		Michelle Miller
James Aaron Rosengarden		Mark Rosengarden
Lara Rachel Rusky		Edward & Eileen Rusky
Dennis Howard Schonborn		Felicia Schonborn
Caleb Kalani Sears		Tim & Eliza Sears, Ann Bentley
David Paul Seregin		Sonya & Paul Seregin
Matthew Paul Seregin		Sonya & Paul Seregin
Flennis Anthony Simón II		Donna & Flennis Simón
Julian Ali Thomas		Fariba Thomas
Elizabeth Torlakson		Kathy Bodnar
Eloi Ivan Vasquez-Margolin		Wendy Margolin

“Everyone grieves in different ways. For some, it could take longer or shorter. I do know it never disappears. An ember still smolders inside me. Most days, I don’t notice it, but, out of the blue, it’ll flare to life.” — Maria V. Snyder, *Storm Glass*

“If you have ever lost a loved one, then you know exactly how it feels. And if you have not, then you cannot possibly imagine it.”
— Lemony Snicket, *The Bad Beginning*

Our Children Remembered, April, 2020

Child	Dates	Bereaved
Jonathan Adkisson, Jr.		Anne & Jonathan Adkisson
Eric Tyler Anderson		Bill & Liz Anderson
Barbara Ann Balesteri		Mary Balesteri, Harry & Josie Ewing
Meredith Kathryn Emma Bates		Laura & John Pattillo
Sylvia Chantal Bingham		Francoise Blusseau & Stephen Bingham
Sean Stephen Bourke		Beryl Bourke
Laura Alicia Bruce		Mike & Louise Bruce
Seána Canavan		Tonia & Sean Canavan
Matthew D. Cevallos		Moe & Gloria Cevallos
Blake Coffman		Ellen & Fred Coffman
Kevin C. Craft		Debbie & Curtis Craft
Bradley Leroy Epperson		Kristine Epperson
Jacob Samuel Freeman		Michael Freeman & Lisa Klairmont
Jessica Marie Hildreth		Julie & Ed Taylor
Alexandra Hopping		Mark & Kathryn Hopping
Charli Mae James		Samuel Davis-Flake
Kristen Michele Kearns		Dr. Carol Kearns
Joanne Rae Kline		Donna & Sylvan Kline
Ryan W. McKnight		Bob & Leesa Tuley
Peter McLaughlin		Eve Pell
Sean Michael Morgan, Jr.		Sean & Claire Morgan
Anthony Dino Nay		Bob & Diana Nay
Kevin Connor Olaeta		Lonnie Olaeta
Anthony Joseph Rios		Barb Curtice
Steven Rodriguez		Rafael & Alex Rodriguez
Carrie Jean Esler Rollison		Judith Esler
Benjamin Rosenthal		Robert Rosenthal
Anthony Salvatore Santa Maria		Pam Santa Maria
Benjamin P. Scheuenstuhl		Maureen & Heinz Scheuenstuhl
Ellen Alexandra Scott		Carol Scott
David Paul Seregin		Sonya & Paul Seregin
Matthew Paul Seregin		Sonya & Paul Seregin
Marc Paul Seregin		Sonya & Paul Seregin
Robbie Severdia		Deedee Severdia
Zackary Spencer Stuart		Michelle Stuart
Meghan Rae Teresi		James Teresi & Lynda Cardwell
Karl Ingemar Thunstrom		Avghi & Bert Thunstrom
Aurora Alice Turnbaugh		Sandra Maxwell & Kevin Turnbaugh
Jesse R. Venegas		Brent R. Venegas
John Elliot Vipiana		Lisa Vipiana, John Vipiana
Phoebe Stewart Washer		Drew Washer, David Washer
Brittney Marie Weaver		Janine Schengel
Craig Weldon		Lee Weldon
Brekhus Alan Williams		Catherine & Scott Williams

“It is okay to release your feelings when you feel the waves coming. It's all part of the process of having to let go of your relationship with your loved one as you once knew it. And remember, letting go is not the same thing as forgetting!”

— Elizabeth Berrien, Creative Grieving: A Hip Chick's Path from Loss to Hope

Grief is not a disorder, a disease or a sign of weakness. It is an emotional, physical and spiritual necessity, the price you pay for love. The only cure for grief is to grieve. - Earl Grollman

No one ever told me that grief felt so much like fear. - C.S. Lewis

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 Mar/ Apr newsletter.

Donor/s: David Clayton & Gayle DeKellis
Child: Zach Clayton
Dates: 6/6/74 - 5/8/90
"In memory of Zach Clayton."

Donor/s: Becky Oken
Child: Joey Ciatti
Dates: 2/10/71 - 10/6/86
"In loving memory of my beloved son's birthday and a Special Pizza dinner!"

Donor/s: Beryl Bourke
Child: Sean Bourke
Dates: 4/23/75 - 7/29/16
"In memory of Sean Bourke"

Donor/s: Gerri Behan
Child: Sean Behan
Dates: 9/21/74 - 6/24/19
"In memory of Sean Behan"

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

Donor/s: Patsy & Roger Wilhelm
Child: Gregory Wilhelm
Dates: 6/6/74 - 5/8/90
"We love you and miss you."

Donor/s: Steve & Laurel Murray
Child: Julia-Dawn Fazzio
"In memory of Julia-Dawn Fazzio"

The following additional donations were made to the Georgia Alioto Memorial fund to develop our leadership group and provide conference support:

Merilee Rossi in memory of Brian Buckley

The Rossi Family Foundation.

NOTE:

Photographs for the annual Candle Lighting Ceremony Slide Show presentation need to be submitted no later than October 31 or there will not be time to add them to the Slide Show.

Love Gift Form:

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.

The Loving Listener

One day last month, seemingly out of nowhere, my dark and dreaded companion "grief" came roaring back in to my life. Just as I thought I was "doing all right," grief came once again to wrench, rip, and tear at the thin delicate membrane of scar tissue that had formed over the wound in my heart, that I had foolishly believed allowed me to be normal again. I was in unbearable agony. I thought, "Oh my God, I can't believe I ever hurt this bad. How did I ever survive this agony?" I finally pulled myself together as best I could and reached out to one of our beautiful angels of mercy. I called our "Loving Listener." "Hi, do you have a minute?" She chirped "Absolutely!" I went on to pour out my heart to her. She listened patiently. She offered no quick fixes or advice, trite phrases, or empty platitudes. She just spiritually embraced me and suffered along with me; quietly offering her love, compassion and understanding. When most of my pain and sorrow had finally emptied out, I realized it was coming up on the anniversary death date of my child. It would mark five years since the death of my beloved daughter Angela. This was the catalyst that had plunged me back into the abyss of grief. I could not bear the thought that my beautiful child had been dead for a half a decade. As soon as I realized what had caused this awful digression, I began to feel a little better. If your chapter has a Loving Listener, please give them a call. They will give you solace, comfort and companionship. We Need Not Walk Alone.

Janet G. Reyes
TCF Alamo Area Chapter, TX

Being Public Takes Its Toll

When one is pretending, the entire body revolts.
Anais Nin

As we attempt to return to our jobs or our social life, or just to leave the house to do errands, we may feel that we must hold our heads up and keep acting brave. So we talk about things that don't interest us instead of talking about what plagues our heart and mind. We reluctantly agree to do things in which we do not have the slightest bit of interest.

All of this takes a tremendous amount of energy. But it does something else, too. Our bodies are under a great deal of stress as we work through our child's death. Trying to create and maintain an artificial front contributes to that stress. And stress, of course, manifests itself in many ways throughout the body - in headaches, rashes, insomnia, digestive disturbances, the inability to concentrate, and the impulse to fidget or be on the move. We may also have more colds and flues as well as unexplained pains in various parts of our bodies.

GRIEF IS LIKE A RIVER

My grief is like a river –
I have to let it flow,
But I myself determine
Just where the banks will go.
Some days the current takes me
In waves of guilt and pain,
But there are always quiet pools
Where I can rest again.

I crash on rocks of anger –
My faith seems faint indeed –
But there are other swimmers
Who know that what I need
Are loving hands to hold me
When the waters are too swift,
And someone kind to listen
When I just seem to drift.

Grief's river is like a process
Of relinquishing the past.
By swimming in Hope's channel,
I'll reach the shore at last.

Cynthia G. Kelley
TCF Cincinnati, OH

One of the kindest things we can do for ourselves is to behave, as much as is possible and reasonable, in accordance with our deepest needs and desires. We can greatly reduce the amount of time and effort we put into doing what only seems socially required.

I will not push myself into false situations or require myself to perform in a way that differs significantly from my truest self. I will take care of myself by not forcing certain actions or responses, regardless of the pressure put on me to do so. My self, my body comes first, and I need to remember that my body will revolt against pretending.

Carol Staudacher
From *A Time to Grieve*

*Perhaps they are not stars in the sky,
but rather openings where our loved ones
shine down to let us know they are happy.*

- Eskimo Legend

*No farewell words were spoken, no time to say
goodbye, you were gone before we knew it, and
only God knows why.*

- Author Unknown



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The Compassionate Friends of Marin County
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MARCH—APRIL, 2020

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Dated Material - Please Deliver Promptly



The Compassionate Friends – Reality Check – PLEASE READ

We do not want to walk alone after losing a child and our chapter needs help to help others.

We are a 100% volunteer organization.

Please consider how you can make a difference.

We depend on donations to keep our chapter going.

Radha Stern – Steering Committee Member

We depend on volunteers/parents to help us with the newly bereaved and candle lighting (December each year).

There are many volunteer opportunities such as:

Being a greeter at the Candle Lighting, bringing food for the Candle Lighting, helping to set up the monthly meetings, being a steering committee member, sending out anniversary cards to parents, helping to raise money to cover the Candle Lighting expenses (approximately \$1,250), helping to get more “LOVE” gifts for the newsletter.

