



The Compassionate Friends

Marin County Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

NOVEMBER—DECEMBER, 2020 ISSUE

Vol 41, No. 6

#1184



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

Chapter Leader:

Eileen Rusky
erusky@gmail.com

Facilitator:

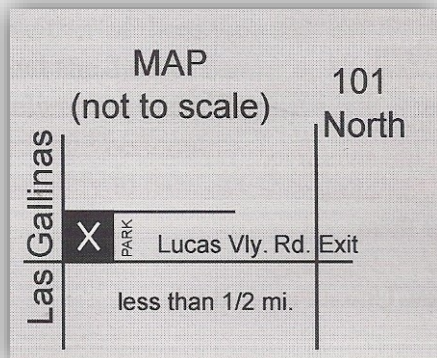
Mark Rosengarden

TCF Marin Monthly Meetings: **Meetings are being held via ZOOM**

Group meetings are normally 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 sincerely regret not being able to hold our usual monthly support meetings due to the Coronavirus pandemic and the mandatory shelter-in-place quarantine. Please know that we ARE here to help you in your times of need. Please reach out to us by email at tcf-marin@gmail.com or check our website for more up to date contact information. Monthly meetings are being presented online via ZOOM.

Please let us know if you are not receiving periodic email information or if your email address is not on our contact list. We will add you to the list. Thank you for your continuing support at this trying time.



About Christmas

For those who think that Christmas and Chanukah are just nice days to give and get presents, bereaved parents have another message. Mixed with the joy is the knowledge of sadness. With the hope of birth comes the threat of death. We should not try to cover up our sadness in front of people, for we have a lesson to teach them.

But the holidays have a lesson for us, too. Yes there is death. Yes, there is a great bitterness in life. There is darkness. But there is hope. There is birth. There is light.

In a society which works so hard to deny death, perhaps only bereaved parents and a few others can truly understand the depths of these holidays.



Dennis Klass
TCF St. Louis, MO

Meeting Calendar

Third Monday of the Month:

Monday, November 16, 2020
Monday, December 21, 2020
Monday, January 18, 2021
Monday, February 15, 2021



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

[LINK TO WEBSITE](#)

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

www.afsp.org Ph.: 707.721.4062

A NEW THANKSGIVING

On Thanksgiving morning 1991, I was standing at the sink, peeling potatoes. The turkey was in the oven, the pies were cooling on the sideboard. Just another normal holiday morning. At 10:30 the phone rang. I was closest, so I answered it.

That call from the San Diego medical examiner changed my life forever.

Within seconds our whole household was in chaos and shock our beautiful daughter Nancy had been killed in a car accident earlier that morning.

How could this be? I had just talked with her less than 24 hours before. She had wished us a "happy Turkey Day" and closed her call with "I love you, Mom." That was to be the last time I would hear her voice.

How did I get from that day of wrenching pain to this day nine years later? The simple answer is: a minute, an hour, a day at a time....putting one foot in front of the other, reaching out for people who had been where I was.

The first Thanksgiving after Nancy's death was the most difficult. I couldn't bring myself to cook or even look at a turkey. The decorated paper plates and napkins in the store were sickening to me. My solution to the turkey was to serve prime rib instead. That strategy got me through the next two Thanksgivings.

One of my watershed moments came on the fourth Thanksgiving after Nancy's accident. My surviving children wanted the traditional turkey-and-trimmings dinner. They missed the old ways. The truth is, they had moved forward and they wanted me to take that step also.

Reluctantly, I obliged, but with a heavy heart. With red roses nearby and her candle lit, we gathered together and counted our blessings.

Today with love and support of family and friends, I will once again prepare the Thanksgiving dinner. It will always be "different." I can't change what was. I can, however, choose to embrace the life I have now. There is so much more to be grateful for. Not a day goes by that I don't count my blessings. Among the greatest of these is the love of family and friends, and peace in my heart.

I truly believe that those blessings can be yours, too. Time, tears, love of family, good friends, and reinvestment can lead you there.



Mary Conway
TCF, Nashville, TN
In Memory of my daughter, Nancy

There are two ways of spreading light:

to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it.

Edith Wharton



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

How to Deal With Friends You Lose After the Death of a Child

True friends don't leave us. Circumstances and miles may separate good friends for years with the only contact being the annual holiday card. However, when finally together, close friends soon find that cozy place of their friendship. We often have different friends for different reasons. Some friends might be skiing or hiking friends, while others are for sharing plays, books, events or juicy intellectual conversations. Only a few fall into the category of a close deep friend where we can share profoundly of ourselves. These good friends don't abandon us after a crisis, especially after the death of our child.

Friendships are sometimes tricky, especially after a crisis. This can often be a sorting process of who your true friends really are. It is easy to have friends when times are good but what happens when the chips are down? We might instead discover that people we thought were close to were not the good friends we believed they were.

There can be many reasons for losing friends after we lose a child. Some are that they may think we are not moving fast enough through the grief process and therefore are no longer fun to be around. Dinner invitations may cease for concern of the gloom the bereaved may bring to event. Other friends may not know what to say and therefore avoid us. This unfortunately can be true in tragic death situations such as murder or suicide. At a time when the bereaved need people most, they may instead find themselves isolated.

Another reason, especially in the death of a child, is the inherent fear that surfaces in other

parents. Their vulnerability in realizing they can't always protect their children from death, is too much to handle. I'm not justifying their behavior but pointing out reasons I've encountered in my 25 years as a therapist.

In my personal experience after Kristen's death, I had friends who let me know that I could call them no matter if it was in the middle of the night. I never had to because the comfort of knowing they were there for me was all I needed. These were my good friends. At the same time, I was conscious of others avoiding me. This once happened when I was at the grocery store and saw a person I thought was a friend notice me and turn her cart around to retreat down another aisle. I'm certain she didn't know I saw her do this. On the other hand, certain people, whom I had not counted among my closer friends, emerged and were there for me when I needed them most. In a crisis we learn so much about ourselves, and so much about others. A few good friends are worth more than a thousand others. You probably have discovered who they are.

THE SEAL

A small seal glides effortlessly across the
water.
Divinely, perfectly there, then gone.
My eyes search for another glimpse.
I'm sad to lose my joyful moment.
Then calm as I reflect that the seal swims
on,
Only beyond my sight, away from my
senses
She swims.

November 13, 2002

Our Children Remembered, November, 2020

Child	Dates	Bereaved
Alana Teresa Alioto		John Alioto
Bret William Baumgarten		Bobbi & Dan Baumgarten
Kristen Leigh Bonocore		Joseph & Phyllis Bonocore
Jonathan Eugene Brilliant		Girija & Larry Brilliant
Joey Burger		Bob & Darlene Burger
Max Hart Chappell		Jeanne Vukasovich
Jason Paul Ewing		Harry & Josie Ewing
René Garcia		Bertila, Carmen & Jose Armando Garcia
Vincent Alfred Hinds		Henry & Ginny Hinds
Rodrigues Julian		Connie Rodrigues
Kristen Michele Kearns		Dr. Carol Kearns
Gabriel Michael Kerekes		Martie Jean
Trey Lagomarsino		Mike Baxman & Susan Kim
Evan Porter Larsen		Libby McQuiston
Trevor London Leopold		Michelle & Jeff Leopold
John Francis Lino		George & Marianne Lino
Michael J. Lockwood		Barbara Lockwood Albertoni
Alia Rose Jackson Mehta		Gail & Roy Jackson
Jakob Montoya		Michelle Padilla-Goode
Kayden Montoya		Michelle Padilla-Goode
Amanda Jacqueline Noland		Cecile & Doug Noland
Katie Okura		Ginny Anderson
Rebecca E. Pabst		Alan & Virginia Pabst
Alexander Rayburn		Mindee & Steve Rayburn
Carrie Jean Esler Rollison		Judith Esler
Nevra Rubenstein		Janet Rubenstein, Zev Rubenstein
Susan Rudolph		Jackie Martin
Marc Paul Seregin		Sonya & Paul Seregin
Cary Warren Smith		Patsy Curry
Robert Craig Wilson		Mary C. Fishman

"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*](#)

"Death leaves a heartache no one can heal, love leaves a memory no one can steal."
— [a headstone in Ireland](#)

"And we wept that one so lovely should have a life so brief;" — [William Cullen Bryant](#)

Our Children Remembered, December, 2020

Child	Dates	Bereaved
John Charles Berges		Mary Berges
Stephen Anthony Castaldo		Joanne Castaldo
Matthew D. Cevallos		Moe & Gloria Cevallos
Blake Coffman		Ellen & Fred Coffman
Travis William Cole		Kingston Cole
Matthew Corral		Karen Corral
Chelsea Faith Dolan		Colleen Dolan
Michael Anthony Dollwet		Ronald & Joan Crook
Bradley Leroy Epperson		Kristine Epperson
Errol Friedman		Jeff & Barbara Friedman
Charli Mae James		Samuel Davis-Flake
Bowen Kader Johnson		Julie & Brian Gordon
John Nicholas Klingel		John & Karen Klingel
Natalie Jane Kriebel		John Kriebel, Amy Holle
James Scott Lambert		Linda Hicken
Ruth Dasha Goldie Levy		Shary Levy, Arthur Levy
Albert Levy		Shary Levy, Arthur Levy
John Francis Lino		George & Marianne Lino
Jakob Montoya		Michelle Padilla-Goode
Alexander Sol Olive		Judy Olive
Nicolas James Pitti		Robert & Rose Marie Longoria
Ruby Rhea		Bertha Jean Schmidt
David Arthur Ross		Arthur & Joan Ross
Michael Kevin Sadler		Kathy Miles
Casey Sandvick		Rich Sandvick
Robbie Severdia		Deedee Severdia
Adam James Parks Steinberg		Ella & Steve Steinberg
Jackson Jonathan-Michael Talbott		Meghan & Jason Talbott
Gabriel Alexander Whooley		Monica Whooley
Gregory Brian Wilhelm		Patricia & Roger Wilhelm
Kendra Elizabeth Young		Betsy & Bryant Young

“And perhaps there is a limit to the grieving that the human heart can do. As when one adds salt to a tumbler of water, there comes a point where simply no more will be absorbed.”
— Sarah Waters, The Little Stranger

“The sorrow we feel when we lose a loved one is the price we pay to have had them in our lives.” — Rob Liano

“There is no grief like the grief that does not speak.” — Henry Wordsworth

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.

The following love gift was received too late for the September/October newsletter.

Donor/s: John & Berit Lelas
Child: Nicholas Plaskon
Dates:

The following love gift was received for November & December.

Donor/s: Mary Fishman
Child: Robert Craig Wilson
Dates:
"Forever loved and missed."

At some of the darkest moments in my life, some people I thought of as friends deserted me-some because they cared about me and it hurt them to see me in pain; others because I reminded them of their own vulnerability, and that was more than they could handle. But real friends overcame their discomfort and came to sit with me. If they had not words to make me feel better, they sat in silence (much better than saying, "You'll get over it," or "It's not so bad; others have it worse") and I loved them for it.

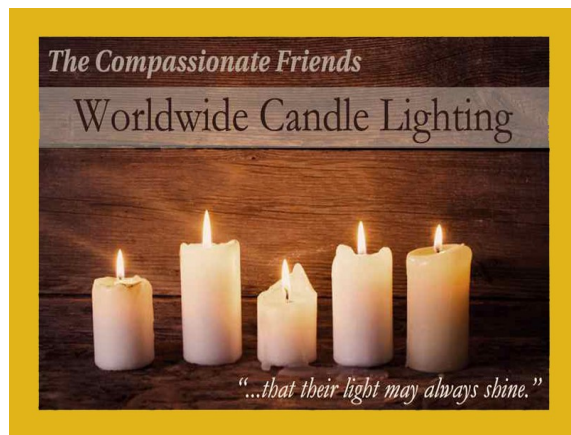
— Harold Kushner, *Living a Life that Matters*

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

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.



The 24th annual TCF Worldwide Candle Lighting will take place on Sunday, December 13, 2020. Be prepared to light your candles at 7:00 to join the wave of light around the world.

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.

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

What is New about the New Year?

There is a lot of silliness about ringing in the New Year, and I have never been able to enter into the spirit with noisemakers, funny hats and loud hurrahs. Since the death of my son, I especially find myself wondering what this is all about. I think some of the partying and celebrating are motivated by a deep desire for a new start in our lives; a desire to leave behind some of the problems, sorrows, worries and pain of the year just ending. The short, sunless days and long, dark nights make us want something to cheer us. So we give the New Year's Eve party a try.

But it really doesn't work for most of us; we see now that we are just the same and the heaviness in our hearts, as we continue with the struggle to cope with the loss of our child, remains with us. Can we find new ways to live our lives in the New Year?

I'd like to suggest a few things we can try. Let's make an effort to find new friends. A good place to start this is at Compassionate Friends meetings. Here you are with a group of people who care about each other in special ways. We understand the pain and anger, the confusion and the inertia suffered by bereaved parents.

In the New Year, let's also find new ways to be close to the family that we have left. We feel regrets about hugs not given, letters not written, "I love you's" not said often enough. We can do all these things now. We can establish new memories with the family we have right now.

Another way to move into this New Year with a better feeling is to think about what we can do for others, because that is truly a way to help ourselves, too. If we can reach out to other sorrowing families, give a gift of our time, a note of love, a listening ear, or a shoulder to lean on, we'll grow stronger ourselves.

For those parents who are suffering the deep pain of the newly bereaved, none of the things I've mentioned may be possible yet. For you, I hold out the hope that soon your days will be just a bit better, your sorrow a little lighter, your tears healing, your friends strengthening and your memories filled more with the good times and less with the unhappiness of your grief.

Dory Rooker
TCF Upper Valley, VT





The Compassionate Friends

Marin County Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

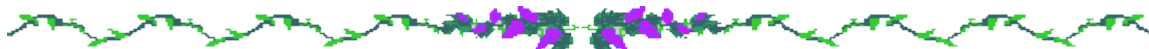
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The Compassionate Friends of Marin County
P. O. Box 150935
San Rafael, CA 94915

NOV—DEC, 2020

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Dated Material - Please Deliver Promptly



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://www.amazon.com) and [AmazonSmile](https://smile.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.

