



# *The Compassionate Friends*

## *Marin County Chapter*

### **Supporting Family After a Child Dies**



**MAY—JUNE, 2021 ISSUE**

Vol 42, No. 3

#1184

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

#### **Chapter Leader:**

Eileen Rusky  
erusky@gmail.com

#### **Facilitator:**

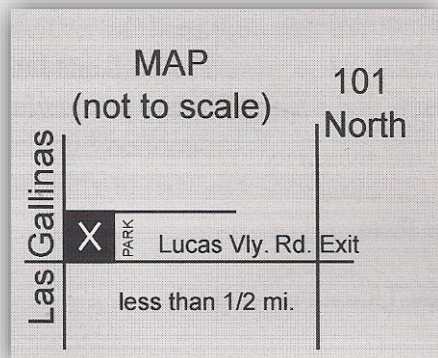
Mark Rosengarden

#### **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. Please know that we ARE here to help you in your times of need. Please reach out to us by email at [tcfmarin@gmail.com](mailto:tcfmarin@gmail.com) or check our website for more up to date contact information. Monthly meetings are being presented online via ZOOM. Please watch your email for meeting announcements.

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.



#### **Mother's Day**

Mother's Day.....a time set aside to honor each mother's role in her child's life.....is often dreaded by bereaved parents. This holiday, like Father's day, is dedicated strictly to us, as parents. Other holidays differ from this one. That difference, which once was so meaningful to us as parents, is now a poignant reminder of all that once was and will never be again.

Bereaved mothers often approach this holiday with much anxiety. Yet, the holiday itself is generally not as difficult as the ramp-up to it. There are television specials, movies, commercials, signs in stores and advertising everywhere we look.....all of which remind us that our children are no longer with us. This is a difficult time for many bereaved mothers-difficult but not insurmountable.

During the month before the second Mother's Day without my son, I realized that it was my perspective that was the problem. I understood that the world was going to continue to spin, the commercialism would build and the reminders would increase until the holiday arrived. I could either ignore the advertisements through my superb channel surfing skills or I could watch them and torture myself. Passing up print ads was simple....I scanned right past them in the newspaper, and I put the mailings in the

#### **Meeting Calendar**

##### **Third Monday of the Month:**

Monday, May 17, 2021  
Monday, June 21, 2021  
Monday, July 19, 2021  
Monday, August 16, 2021



## TCF RESOURCES:

### *The Compassionate Friends, Marin County 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](mailto:cwhallum1@mac.com)  
Co Leaders: Meg Cunningham, Doug Cameron

### *TCF Sonoma County Chapter*

[tcf.sonomacounty@gmail.com](mailto:tcf.sonomacounty@gmail.com)  
(707) 490-8640

### *Northern CA Regional Coordinator:*

Nancy Juracka  
[nancy\\_juracka@yahoo.com](mailto: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](mailto:nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org)  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

### *Additional Support Sites*

[opentohope.com](http://opentohope.com)  
[survivorsofsuicide.com](http://survivorsofsuicide.com)  
[griefspeaks.com](http://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](mailto:griefsupport@hbtb.org)  
Website: [www.hospicebythebay.org](http://www.hospicebythebay.org)

### *North Bay Grief Recovery in San Rafael*

[www.NorthBayGriefRecovery.com](http://www.NorthBayGriefRecovery.com)  
Ph.: 415-250-3027

[LINK TO WEBSITE](#)

### *American Foundation for Suicide Prevention*

[www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org) Ph.: 707.721.4062

trash without comment. Each time I actively said "no" to these reminders, I became a little stronger.

As the week before Mother's Day crawled to a close, I thought I had it aced. Then came Mother's Day. My husband gave me a card and a gift. That was it. The gift and card were both lovely and sweet. My husband cried. I cried. Then we settled down and read the Sunday paper. We had both agreed that we would stop protracting the self-torture and live in the moment. Since I was keeping Mother's Day in my heart, the celebrations and thoughts and sales projections of others mattered not. I keep Mother's Day as I choose.

Each of us must work at developing coping skills. Logic is the choice for some. Setting boundaries works for others. Some parents choose to go with their emotions. The decision to celebrate a holiday and the level of the celebration is a choice unique to each parent. We cannot allow others to set our agenda. Mother's Day is the singular holiday which serves to reinforce that I am forever Todd's mom. My child lived, loved and laughed with us, and this holiday brings deep, beautiful memories of that time. I choose to keep those sweet memories of my son in my heart. Making that decision was one more emotional choice in my grief work. Letting go of what was, living in the moment and cherishing my child forever.....all of these have helped me to find an ever brightening light of hope.

Annette Mennen Baldwin  
In memory of my Son, Todd Mennen  
TCF, Katy, TX

---

## Mourning Is My Mode

Today I realized that I have become a shell of the person I once was. What would my child think of this? I am alone, my only child is gone, yet I know he would not be pleased with the way I have isolated myself, wrapped in invisible crepe, sheltered by a mental wall. This is not the mom he knew. I am someone different now.

What am I to do with this? I feel like a lonely, mourning swan, swimming endlessly from shore to shore. I have no direction, I want no direction, I just keep moving with no purpose. I must get a grip on myself.

I know my motions must take on some meaning. I look to others for help. Yet I realize that if I do not reach out and help myself, I will crash on the rocks with the raging tide.

I decide I will add one new thing, one new event, one new person or one new writing to each day. I will reach out to others. I will force myself to move slowly back into life.

I will spend some time with my family. I will enjoy their children. I will mentor a child. I will start putting my thoughts into a written form.

I begin to do these things. I feel better. I attend another meeting of the parents who have lost their children. I feel as if I do belong here. It has been four months since my son died. I am overwhelmed.

Annette Mennen Baldwin  
In memory of my son, Todd Mennen  
TCF, Katy, TX



*"Sadly enough, the most painful goodbyes are the ones that are left unsaid and never explained." — Jonathan Harnisch, Freak*

## 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](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)). My columns discuss topics of continuing concern in the Marin County CA newsletter. Please visit my newly updated website at [www.carolKearns.com](http://www.carolKearns.com). - 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.

---

#### MOTHER'S DAY 1993

The love for her children,  
Deep but never smothering  
Keeping a fire burning at home,  
For the son tentatively venturing  
Toward a world of his own -  
Nurturing yet nudging him -  
Like the tigress with her cubs,  
A precarious yet perfect balance.  
Memories of the other cub,  
The daughter gone but so ever - present  
Watches and nudges too  
Her beloved brother - guided somehow  
By her spirit never far.  
Two children and a mother  
Mystically intertwined  
Love's ultimate expression.

---

#### DARKNESS DENIED

Spirit of light twinkling,  
Filling the darkness with  
Memories of joy and love  
Beckoning through the night.  
Glowing, forever twinkling,  
Her brightness most resplendent  
In the darkest sky - Kristen.

Bob  
November 13, 2000

## Our Children Remembered, May 2021

<i>Child</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Bereaved</i>
Garrett Artigiani		Joe & Anya Artigiani
Barbara Ann Balesteri		Mary Balesteri, Harry & Josie Ewing
Bode Derrin Barringer		DeAnn Wylie-Gonzalez
Meredith Kathryn Emma Bates		Laura & John Pattillo
Nino Angelo Bosco		Frauka Kozar
Madeleine Bourque		Suzanne Bourque
Michelle Gayle Carter		Cynthia Carter
Josh Clark		Susan Radelt
Zachary Andrew Clayton		David Clayton
Kevin C. Craft		Debbie & Curtis Craft
David Bradley Etling		Stephen Etling & Benjamin Bloodworth
Matthew Finzen		Barbara & Fritz Finzen
Neel Thomas Foon		Brad & Genie Foon
Peter Alexander Forstner		Kitty Forstner
Michael Chad Harris		Jerry & Trena Harris
Christopher Robin Hotchkiss		Radha Stern
Stefanie Helen Jacobs		Nanette Jacobs, Rob Jacobs
Joanne Rae Kline		Donna & Sylvan Kline
Patrick Alan Kolsky		Alan & Linda Kolsky
Maximillian Letizi		Anthony & Terry Letizi
Sabrina Elizabeth Lew		Teri Miller
Adam Blake London		Trudie London
Jesse Colin Lux		Marcia Lux, Bobby Lux
Katherine N. Mackura		Jaeson & Kelly Mackura
Marco Antonio Joseph Martinez		Samuel Martinez & Brenda Bloomfield
Timothy Patrick McBride		Lois Kortum & George McBride
Erin Kathryn McEowen		Sandy & Jerry McEowen
Robert Scott McIntosh		Jennifer Holman McIntosh
Kevin Connor Olaeta		Lonnie Olaeta
Alexander Sol Olive		Judy Olive
Melody Rae Osherooff		Aaron Osherooff
Nicolas James Pitti		Robert & Rose Marie Longoria
Lindsey Opal Quinby		Paul Quinby, Jean Quinby Reiss
Ruby Rhea		Bertha Jean Schmidt
Anthony Joseph Rios		Barb Curtice
Ruby Salkeld		Cathie Merkel
Nicolas Simard		Julie Chabot & François Simard
Zackary Spencer Stuart		Michelle Stuart

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,  
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,  
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum  
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.

Let aeroplanes circle moaning overhead  
Scribbling on the sky the message She Is Dead,  
Put crepe bows round the white necks of the public  
doves,  
Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves.

She was my North, my South, my East and West,  
My working week and my Sunday rest,

My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song;  
I thought that love would last for ever: I was wrong.

The stars are not wanted now: put out every one;  
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun;  
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood.  
For nothing now can ever come to any good.

- Auden



**Our Children Remembered, June, 2021**

<b><i>Child</i></b>	<b><i>Dates</i></b>	<b><i>Bereaved</i></b>
Peter Demitrius Alex		Bill & Pat Alex
Shane Arneson		Carolyn Beasley
Bode Derrin Barringer		DeAnn Wylie-Gonzalez
Sean Behan		Gerri & Robert Behan
Matthew Buckley		Mark & Kristina Buckley
Stephen Anthony Castaldo		Joanne Castaldo
Aura Celeste		Joshua Nagler
Zachary Andrew Clayton		David Clayton
Daniel Keith Cracchold		Linda Winslow
Chloë Sabrina Dator		Dani Dator
Nina Embervine		Barbara McNeil
Kristopher Manuel Espinoza		Kristina Espinoza, Judy Duenas
Jason Paul Ewing		Harry & Josie Ewing
"Ryan" Stephan Fyles		Susan & Dale Fyles
Lori Ann Elizabeth Gentry		Genesse & Bill Gentry
William Turner Gundry		Karen Gundry Smith & Frank Gundry
Peter Alexander Helldoerfer		Peter Helldoerfer, Kathleen Freitag
Savannah Louise Hill		Andrea Hill
Janet Suzanne Hoch		Linda & Peter Hoch
Rodrigues Julian		Connie Rodrigues
Rodrigues Juliana		Connie Rodrigues
Dylan Clarke Krings		Randy & Sioux Krings
Robert LeRoy Latham		Sharon R & Robert Finston
Jesse Colin Lux		Bobby Lux, Marcia Lux
Michael Allen Mannheimer		Shirlee J. Newman
Richard C. Mannheimer, Jr.		Shirlee J. Newman, Richard Mannheimer, Sr.
Lori Margo Meislin		Barbara J. Meislin
Eli Thomas Olaeta		Lonnie Olaeta
Isabella Maria Pizzuti		Annmarie & Josephine Pizzuti
Nicholas Plaskon		John & Berit Lelas
Lonnie Roper II		Shirlee Roper
Jordyn Royall		Michelle Royall & Colin Fleumer
Nevra Rubenstein		Janet Rubenstein, Zev Rubenstein
Theodore "Teddy" James Russell		Anne & Tim Russell
Kyle Aaron Scourbys		Bill & Kimberly Scourbys
Adam James Parks Steinberg		Ella & Steve Steinberg
Jackson Jonathan-Michael Talbott		Meghan & Jason Talbott
Aurora Alice Turnbaugh		Sandra Maxwell & Kevin Turnbaugh
Spencer Wood		Rich & Denise Wood
Nathan Hall Wright		Elizabeth Wright



## 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 March/ April newsletter.

Donor/s: Moe & Gloria Cevallos  
Child: Matthew David Cevallos  
Dates:

"We miss you every day and remember your great smile and big hugs. Love, Mom & Dad."

### The following love gifts were received for May and June.

Donor/s: Gayle Dekellis & David Clayton  
Child: Zach Clayton  
Dates:

Donor/s: Barbara Fivis  
Child: Willy Fivis  
Dates:

"You are always in my broken heart.  
Love Forever, Mom."

Donor/s: Brad & Genie Foon  
Child: Neel Thomas Foon  
Dates:

"In one of the stars I shall be living, in one of them

I shall be laughing. And so it will be as if all the stars were laughing when you look at the sky at night."  
- *The Little Prince-Antoine de Saint Exupery.*

"Neel, we always look to the sky to see your STAR.  
Happy Birthday our dear Son."

### The following additional donation from the Purple Lady/Barbara J Meislin Donor-Advised fund was made to the Georgia Alioto Memorial fund to develop our leadership group and provide conference support.

"In memory of the Purple Lady's beloved daughter, Little Lady Lori, and Rhada Stern's beloved son, Christopher."

"The few certainties in our existences are pain, death and bereavement."

— Jane Wilson-Howarth, *A Glimpse of Eternal Snows: A Journey of Love and Loss in the Himalayas*

"Ah. I smiled. I'm not really here to keep you from freaking out. I'm here to be with you while you freak out, or grieve or laugh or suffer or sing. It is a ministry of presence. It is showing up with a loving heart."

— Kate Braestrup, *Here If You Need Me: A True Story*

"He who learns must suffer. And even in our sleep, pain that cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart, and in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom to us by the awful grace of God." —Aeschylus

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

### 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.

## Differences Between A Man's Grief and A Woman's Grief

I have attended many support groups since my daughter, Kristina's death May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2008. I have observed differences in how grief is experienced in men and how grief is experienced in women. I have also heard it said by many leaders and in many articles how unique grief is to each individual. So even though I feel I can make some generalizations based on what I have personally seen and heard, there will invariably be many exceptions.

My opinion is that the difference in how grief is experienced is at its peak in the earliest days, weeks, and months of the grief journey. There may still be differences after six months and to a lesser extent after a year, but over time as grief is processed men and women seem to become more similar in handling grief. I have noticed how men differ from women when they speak at support group meetings. Many men will choke up and become unable to speak. Women may become very emotional, but most women still can speak even if it is with difficulty. Also, the men seem to be more of one extreme or the other, either they become too choked up to speak, or they can speak about their loss with apparent ease. Many women need to have a number of friends to repeat their story over and over. Men, on the other hand, have very few friends they choose to share with, and many times no one at all. Another difference I have experienced more myself than observed at meetings is called "compartmentalizing" I assume I am not the only one to experience this because I ran into a description of this in a book also.

It seems like men in general have difficulty with verbalizing about their loss. Many times it seems to bring on an intense emotional experience which has happened to me at times. I think it is for that reason many men do not attend support group meetings. Many times men will attend one meeting and never return. A number of those tried to speak at a meeting and found themselves unable to speak because of being too choked up. Women seem to be able to speak even at times they become emotional. This has varied widely in the groups I have attended, sometimes women can speak fairly freely and other times have a great deal of difficulty.

There is a video/book called "Tear Soup" that deals with the subject of loss from many causes. The premise is that grief can be from many things, not only from a death. The video portrays the man keeping off to himself while the woman is talking to many others. This seems to me like a realistic portrayal based on what I have heard in support groups. In my opinion this is most relevant in the first few weeks after a loss, as the shock starts to wear off the men will socialize

more, but not necessarily talk about their loss. Women will look for people to talk to from the beginning. My experience was similar to men in general, I had one special person that I talked to about my feelings of grief, rather than many. It seems that women are better than men at listening, especially when it comes to feelings, and the person I talked to was a woman. She was willing to take a call about anytime, although for me the early morning hours were the most common time for intense sadness. I will never know what would have happened if I there had not been that special person to listen to me.

The concept of "compartmentalizing" I have found varies so much between people that some people seem to understand the concept immediately when it is introduced into a conversation and others seem to have no idea what it is. In my opinion this compartmentalizing is more common to men than women, but by no means exclusive. A leader in one of my support groups feels a more logically minded person is more prone to this compartmentalizing than a person who is not as logical in their thinking. In my reading I don't find this to be supported. In any case the way this is manifested is the rational side of the mind "knows" the truth, understands the death, but the emotional side does not. For me it was the strangest feeling when this was more intense, how can you know that something has happened and "feel" like it has not? I have had this sense of "unreality" become more intense and less intense at various times. Even after two or three years these feelings resurface at holidays, these feelings of "unreality." The explanation given for this in books I have read is that it is the mind's way of protecting itself. From that perspective the grief journey is more difficult for those that do not have so much of a gap between rational understanding and emotional understanding.

While the grief journey for men and woman starts out very different they become more similar over time. Men tend to stay off to themselves in the early months of grief, then gradually resume being more social. The people that have strong compartmentalizing in the early months of grief, more men than woman, find that this lessens over time.

Lance Beigh  
TCF of the Greater Kankakee Area, IL

---

"The boundaries which divide Life from Death are at best shadowy and vague. Who shall say where the one ends, and where the other begins?" -Edgar Allan Poe

---

"Saying nothing... sometimes says the most." -Emily Dickinson



# *The Compassionate Friends*

## *Marin County Chapter*

### **Supporting Family After a Child Dies**

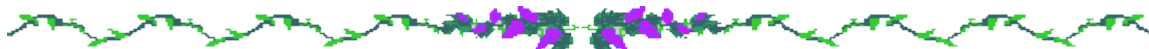
Non-Profit Org.  
US Postage PAID  
Larkspur, CA  
Permit No.41

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

**MAY—JUN, 2021**

Copyright © 2019 - All Rights Reserved  
The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

**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](https://smile.amazon.com). (If you have one, you can use the same account on [Amazon.com](https://Amazon.com) and [AmazonSmile](https://AmazonSmile). Your shopping cart, Wish List and other account settings are also the same.) (2) On your first visit to AmazonSmile, [smile.amazon.com](https://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](https://smile.amazon.com) will result in a donation. Eligible products are marked “Eligible for AmazonSmile donation” on their product detail pages.

