



The Compassionate Friends

Marin County Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

September—October, 2021 ISSUE

Vol 42, No. 5

#1184



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

Chapter Leader:

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Facilitator:

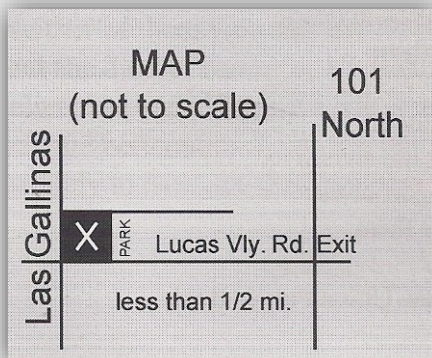
Mark Rosengarden

TCF Marin Monthly Meetings:

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.



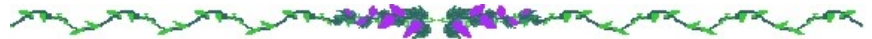
FORWORD to this edition and note from the editor:

We are once again holding our usual monthly support meetings at the Hillside Church in Terra Linda. Attendees must show proof of Covid-19 vaccination and a picture ID. Facemasks are required.

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.

I apologize for the untimely delay of this edition of the newsletter. I am recovering from open heart surgery and have been unable to produce the newsletter. I hope to be able to do so from this point forward.

Heinz Scheuenstuhl, TCFMarin editor



FALL

It is so hard to believe that summer is over! Even though summer is technically still here until September, the cool evenings we have been having, school starting, and football games being played are all signs that fall is here. And I love it!

To me, fall is the most invigorating time of the year. The crispness of the air, the beautiful coloration of the trees, the smell of leaf and wood smoke, the sky full of birds traveling south "talking" with one another as they go, are all part of this wonderful world we live in. I hope all of you will be able to feel and see the wonders of fall.

Sometimes we are so "down" and preoccupied with our child's death, and we are working so hard to just get through each day, that we are unable to appreciate what is going on in the world around us. Try to take a few minutes each day and look around. If you can focus on a beautiful tree or leaf, smell the chrysanthemums blooming in the garden or bite into a fresh apple just picked and enjoy doing this for just a few minutes, it will make your day seem brighter. And, if you are up to it, go to a high school football game or a band competition. The enthusiasm of the young people participating in these events is contagious.

Yes, it sometimes hurts. We want our children to be there also, enjoying these activities. But it also gives us renewed faith that life does go on, and there is happiness and excitement in the world. I hope you all can find some beauty and peace in the fall months ahead.

Peggy Hartzell
TCF Ambler, PA

Meeting Calendar

Third Monday of the Month:

Monday, September 20, 2021
Monday, October 18, 2021
Monday, November 15, 2021
Monday, December 20, 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
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@hbtc.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

Our Many Special Days

The beginning of the school year each fall seems to signal the coming holidays. The commercial market starts stocking school supplies just after the Fourth of July; shortly thereafter, by late summer the school supplies are crowded out by all the paraphernalia of Halloween! A glimpse of Thanksgiving whizzes by and it is an all out affront on the Christmas season. After the death of our child we stumble around each year looking for the appropriate way of handling these seasons that once had so much joy to them.

But the calendar holidays are far from the only "Special Days" that bereaved parents face. Our child's birthday and death date are especially hard days but also are the days relating to their illness or other events that relate to their death date and funeral or memorial. The most obvious days are not always the only hard days to live with. Rainy days, snowy days, starry nights can all trigger tugging emotions. Tuesday for laundry day may be the hardest day all year long.

No bereaved parent will have the same feeling of a special day or have the same special day because our children were different people to each person. Because of this, like in everything else in our grief work, we have to allow space for each other's "bad" days.

Each passing year after the death of our child finds us relating to special days differently each year. It is a continuing process never to return to that which used to be. As the years pass and we work hard at our "grief work" we will heal but that does not mean being like we were or doing the things we used to do. We are an evolving new person learning to live again.

Gerry Hall
TCF South Central, MO



Halloween

It is here, this day of merriment and children's pleasure.

Gremlins and goblins
and ghosties at the door
of your house.

And the other children
come to the door of your mind.

Faces out of the past,
small ghosts with sweet, painted faces.

They do not shout.
Those children
who no longer march laughing
on cold Halloween nights,
they stand at the door of your mind

and you will let them in,
so that you can give them
the small gifts of Halloween,
a smile and a tear.

Sascha Wagner
The Compassionate Friends

My sun sets to rise again.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

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. Please visit my newly updated website at www.carolKearns.com. - Carol

The Treatment of PTSD in the Bereaved Parent

In the last newsletter we looked at the diagnosis of PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) and the bereaved parent. Briefly, there are four categories of criteria needed to make this diagnosis. (1) The occurrence of a traumatic event. (2) Experiencing a reoccurrence of nightmares, flashbacks or psychological distress. (3) Avoidance of trauma-related stimuli. (4) Manifestations of hypervigilance, irritability, emotional numbness and/or difficulty sleeping. These symptoms persist for at least one month and cause significant disturbance in the patient's social and/or occupational functioning.

As we know, we all grieve differently. While some parents have a need to talk about the death, others don't and where some have a need to relive all the details, others won't. For this reason, treatment can be difficult. If any of the above symptoms do persist, I would highly recommend seeing a therapist. When choosing a therapist, make sure they are not only compassionate, but experienced with grief related issues.

After the death of a child, a family system can become pretty dysfunctional pretty fast. A mother may not be able to stop crying while a father can't talk about it. The surviving children become fearful and begin acting out. The surviving children's needs go on while we as bereaved parents want to disappear under the covers until the nightmare goes away. Some parents turn to alcohol and drugs, prescription or otherwise, to numb the pain and others disappear into their work. With both parents hurting, the normal spousal support systems are nonexistent, creating an exceptionally high divorce rate amongst bereaved parents. These families need help.

There are three arms of treatment available. First is educational. Helping a bereaved parent understand what they are going through and what is to be expected is very important. This normalizes the process of grief and feelings of going crazy. The Compassionate Friends is invaluable to this part of healing. Because these parents are in all stages of healing, sharing our stories with them not only helps with the normalization process but with learning methods of coping that may work for us as well.

The second arm of treatment is psychotherapy. When I would see bereaved couples, I would from time to time see them individually as well. The reason for this is that couples often have a need to protect each other and may feel they are inflicting more pain if they share certain feelings, i.e. guilt, anger, suicidal ideations. Ideally, the therapist will focus on the effects of the child's death on the family as well as the individual. Therapy should be symptom focused with an eye toward individualized coping mechanisms along with breathing and muscle relaxation techniques for insomnia and generalized anxiety. Substance abuse programs may be warranted as an adjunct to therapy.

Thirdly, there is sometimes a need for pharmacologic treatment if the symptoms persist. These may include antidepressants or medications for persistent insomnia accompanied by significant hyperarousal and re-experiencing symptoms. If symptoms persist despite these initial interventions, a consultation with a psychiatrist should be obtained before sedative or hypnotic agents are used.

Our Children Remembered

September

| Child | Dates | Bereaved |
|---------------------------|-------|--------------------------------------|
| Daniel Zacharia Ashkenazy | | Pamela Ashkenazy, Dan Ashkenazy |
| Sean Behan | | Gerri & Robert Behan |
| Sylvia Chantal Bingham | | Francoise Blusseau & Stephen Bingham |
| Jason Bohlke | | Adam Bohlke & Britt Rosenmayr |
| Jacob Westley Brumbaugh | | Mark & Deborah Brumbaugh |
| Damon Clark | | Susan Radelt |
| Oksana Collins | | Susan Collins |
| Chelsea Faith Dolan | | Colleen Dolan |
| Dylan Simon Duncan Wright | | Mara Duncan |
| Jacob Samuel Freeman | | Michael Freeman & Lisa Clairmont |
| Errol Friedman | | Jeff & Barbara Friedman |
| Savannah Louise Hill | | Andrea Hill |
| Alecia Anne Marie Hopper | | Bill Hopper, Constance Blake |
| Dana John Hudson | | Diana Hudson |
| Evan Porter Larsen | | Libby McQuiston |
| Chris Leach | | Marcie & Don Leach |
| Athena Maguire | | Alexandra Maguire |
| Fernando Martinez | | Don & Maria Pazour |
| Timothy Patrick McBride | | Lois Kortum & George McBride |
| Daniel McLaughlin | | Eve Pell |
| 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 |

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 Children Remembered

October

| Child | Dates | Bereaved |
|-------------------------------|-------|---------------------------------------|
| Chancellor Argall | | Grier Argall & Jeanni Lang |
| Lancelot Argall | | Grier Argall & Jeanni Lang |
| Matthew Buckley | | Mark & Kristina Buckley |
| Joey Ciatti | | Becky Oken |
| David Riley Crook | | Ronald & Joan Crook |
| Misty Dollwet | | Ronald & Joan Crook |
| Adam Teplin Emmott | | Kristina Teplin, Michelle J. Maguire |
| Debra Lynn Ferrua | | Ronald & Joan Crook |
| Reneé Francesca Garcia | | Bertlla, Carmen & Jose Armando Garcia |
| Ellen Marian Haas | | Harold & Mary Haas |
| Pamela Dawn Heaster | | Ila Benavidez-Heaster |
| Bowen Kader Johnson | | Julie & Brian Gordon |
| Emma Kristen Kearns | | Dr. Carol Kearns |
| Robert LeRoy Latham | | Sharon R & Robert Finston |
| Albert Arthur Levy | | Shary Levy, Arthur Levy |
| Athena Maguire | | Alexandra Maguire |
| Chance Pierre Maurer | | Tracy Maurer |
| Robert Scott McIntosh | | Jennifer Holman McIntosh |
| Ryan W. McKnight | | Bob & Leesa Tuley |
| Peter McLaughlin | | Eve Pell |
| Brian David Mixsell | | Bill, Sandy & Belinda Mixsell |
| Kayden Montoya | | Michelle Padilla-Goode |
| Peter Langhorne Morawitz | | Terry Morawitz |
| Emily Grace Panicacci | | Scott & Jennifer Panicacci |
| Phillip E. Perry | | Sue Hecht |
| Steven Rodriguez | | Rafael & Alex Rodriguez |
| Lonnie Roper II | | Shirlee Roper |
| James Aaron Rosengarden | | Mark Rosengarden |
| Susan Rudolph | | Jackie Martin |
| Casey Sandvick | | Rich Sandvick |
| Anthony Salvatore Santa Maria | | Pam Santa Maria |
| Ellen Alexandra Scott | | Carol Scott |
| Railee Naomi Silvis | | Linda Cox |
| Adrian Rodolfo Valderrama | | Rosa Sandoval & Rodolfo Valderrama |
| Isabelle Quinn van Bergen | | Fran Quinn van Bergen |
| John Elliot Vipiana | | Lisa Vipiana, John Vipiana |
| Gregory Patrick Walsh | | Sandy Williams |
| Brittney Marie Weaver | | Janine Schengel |
| Craig Weldon | | Lee Weldon |
| Robert Craig Wilson | | Mary C. Fishman |
| Kendra Elizabeth Young | | Betsy & Bryant Young |

Autumn

In the fall
 When amber leaves are shed,
 Softly—silently
 Like tears that wait to flow,
 I watch and grieve.
 My heart beats sadly in the fall;
 'Tis then I miss you most of all.

When

When your mind
 cannot find
 an answer,
 open your heart
 and ask
 for peace.

Sascha Wagner

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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 gifts were received too late for the July/ August newsletter:

Donor/s: Daly & David Schreck
Child: Colin Edward Schreck
Dates:

"Colin - You filled our lives with joy. You live always in our hearts. Mother & Dad, Chris, Lesley & Ireland, Ireland David & Michaelanne Daly."

Donor/s: Lynnette Frary
Child: Anthony Brandon Carmignani
Dates:

The following love gift was received for September/ October:

Donor/s: Pamela Ashkenazy
Child: Daniel Zaharria Ashkenazy
Dates: 9/7/84 - 1/14/14

"Happy Birthday, my blessed son. With eternal love, Mom."

When a person is born we rejoice, and when they're married we jubilate, but when they die we try to pretend nothing has happened. - Margaret Mead

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

The most caring child contest

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."

"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."

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.

Honoring Unhappiness

I have re-read the book *Man's Search for Meaning* by Viktor Frankl more times than I can count. In it, Frankl quotes from a paper written by Edith Weisskopf-Joelson, who had been a professor at the University of Georgia. She wrote, "Our current mental-hygiene philosophy stresses the idea that people ought to be happy, that *unhappiness* is a symptom of maladjustment....in the present day culture of the United States, the incurable sufferer is given very little opportunity to be proud of his suffering and to consider it ennobling rather than degrading...so that he is not only unhappy, but also ashamed of being unhappy."

It is my hope that all bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings will have the chance to feel that our unhappiness is honored and respected by others suffering similarly. I hope we will find validation, whether from the embrace of others at chapter meetings, from words read in a newsletter, or from conversations with other bereaved parents and siblings. I hope we will not be ashamed of being unhappy. And when our time is right, I hope we may find some moments of joy and peace even as we keep our grief for our lost children and siblings.

Peggi Johnson
TCF Piedmont Chapter, VA

Revisiting Painful Places in Our Grief

Recently I opened a trunk that I had not looked through in a long time. I didn't find what I was looking for, but I found something far more precious: negatives from my son Philip's trip to Greece when he was 16. He had taken the trip with his Latin class during his sophomore year in high school.

I had prints made from the negatives the next day and spent a long time looking through them, seeing what Philip had seen on that remarkable and wonderful journey in his young life. He had loved it. I relived our going over his pictures together, his excitement, and his desire to share the trip and its adventures with me. It had been a close and lovely time between us. I felt so grateful to have this part of Philip's life again and more so because it was a surprise.

A few days later, I dreamed of Philip, but it was not a "good" dream. I dreamed that he was to have surgery, and I was not going to be there. The focus of the dream was not on Philip, but on me. The overall feeling was criticism of me as a mother for not being with her son during his surgery. I awakened feeling horrible. But then I thought: Would I ever have let any child of mine have surgery without my being there? The answer was no, of course not. But the guilt of his death had surfaced in my dream, and I spent—and continue to spend—considerable time looking at it.

We know that our children would never hold us responsible for their deaths, no matter how they died. I know that. You know that. Yet here it is again, arising in a dream I wish I had not had, but am glad for, ultimately, because it sheds insight on an area in my grief journey I need to revisit. Beyond the ongoing ache at not having Philip here, guilt at not having protected him from his death is probably what is hardest for me.

I think this is the way it goes for those of us who have had

our children die. After the first shock wears off, after we begin to breathe again and can face the dark emptiness in our lives, we move onto an emotional terrain that goes all over the map. We learn to be immensely grateful for what once would have been a small though lovely discovery: photographs from a child's trip. And we veer from gratefulness to guilt in lightening speed. Why isn't she here? Why couldn't I protect him?

I believe we must be gentle with ourselves as we continue in our lives without our beloved children. I do two things in my own darkest moments: 1) I write a letter from Philip to me, and 2) I think of what I would tell Philip, had he been the one to lose a child. Nothing brings him back, but those two attempts at connection recall the depth of our love for one another. That love is infinite and will never die. It is the great gift you and I and our beautiful children will forever share.

Kitty Reeve
TCF Marin and San Francisco, CA
In Memory of my son, Philip

PAIN

I am not a young man, and I thought I knew the meaning of pain. I have experienced pain from a toothache, arthritis, and even the loss of relatives and friends. But nothing in my fifty-four years had prepared me for the pain I experienced when we lost our son. I had no clue to real pain.

I think only a bereaved parent knows the true meaning. Not to belittle the loss of a parent or spouse, but those who have lost both tell me that it is not the same. My mother said to me at my brother's funeral, "Now I know how you feel." Even though she had lost a grandson, it was not the same.

It has been almost five years now, and there hasn't been a day go by that I don't see his picture or think of him and feel that pain. Pain for what we lost...and for what he lost. That pain is not as intense now. I have learned to tolerate it and still lead a normal life. The Compassionate Friends helped me to realize that I was not alone and that there were many others who felt that same pain. They helped me learn how to deal with it. Now it is my turn to try to help someone else.

Harold F. Underwood
TCF Southern Maryland

"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

Gone yet not forgotten, although we are apart, your spirit lives within me, forever in my heart. - Author Unknown

"Grief can be a burden, but also an anchor. You get used to the weight, how it holds you in place."

— Sarah Dessen, *The Truth About Forever*



The Compassionate Friends

Marin County Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

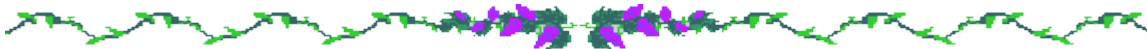
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The Compassionate Friends, Marin County Chapter
P. O. Box 150935
San Rafael, CA 94915

SEP—OCT, 2021

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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 and AmazonSmile. 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.

