



The Compassionate Friends

Marin County Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

November—December, 2022 ISSUE

Vol 43, 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:

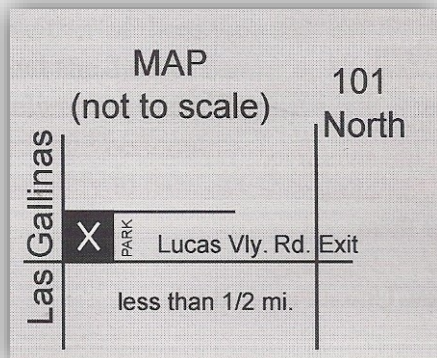
Mark Rosengarden

TCF Marin Monthly Meetings:

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 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.



Submit your photos to:
Radha Stern
radha-stern@msn.com

This year's ceremony will be presented via Zoom like last year. This format has proven to be very effective.

Let us know if you have any suggestions or questions at:
tcfmarin@gmail.com.

**26th ANNUAL WORLDWIDE
CANDLELIGHTING CEREMONY**
Sunday, December 11, 2022, 7:00 pm

It is time to get pictures submitted for the "NEW" video this year. If parents have submitted their children in the past there is no need to do so again. The photos **MUST** be in by November 21st.



Meeting Calendar

Third Monday of the Month:

Monday, November 20, 2022
Monday, December 18, 2022
Monday, January 16, 2023
Monday, February 20, 2023



TCF RESOURCES:

The Compassionate Friends, Marin County Chapter

P.O. Box 150935
San Rafael, CA 94915
www.tcfmarin.org
tcfmarin@gmail.com
<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

THANKSGIVING

You may ask, "What do I have to be thankful for now that my child is dead?" After the death of a child, where is the joy in a day off from work? What pleasure can we derive from sitting around a table when someone is missing, and an uttered prayer of thanksgiving echoes hollow in our hearts?

Maybe we have been concentrating on the loss which has brought the overwhelming sorrow of death, and have forgotten the complete joy of life. When I remember laughing brown eyes, a mischievous grin, a scraped knee that Mommy could fix, a new word learned, even the memory of the realization that I had a baby boy, I have a great deal to be thankful for. I had 1 1/2 years of a dream come true, and I'm truly thankful I had my child.

Sure, the agony of grief, the anguish of losing my precious child to death, the torture of wanting to see that child grow and mature and the pain of never knowing, rips me up.

There is no Thanksgiving in entertaining these thoughts, so this month I am going to concentrate on the Living of my child, the Life that brought me so much joy. In this I am thankful that Evan was born, thankful that he lived, thankful that even for those short 30 months—I lived them too. Even so, as he lived once, I live now and want a productive life.

I am thankful I have come that far in my grief work to know I want to live and remember the good times without sorrow. And, I am thankful for my husband, who stood by me during the rough times. The husband who is the father of the child of our love. In him I have found my child, in our marriage I have found love, and that love taught us how to love that child. I am also thankful for you, my real friends—Compassionate Friends.

Edie Kaplan
TCF Ft. Lauderdale, FL
In Memory of my son, Evan



Some Suggestions for Thanksgiving

Throughout our lives, expectations of things to come are based upon past experiences. If, in the past, you had set a glorious table and were the perfect host or hostess, it is very possible that friends and family will expect more of the same this year. They may not be aware that you are not looking toward the holidays with a fun and games attitude. They probably do not know that in anticipation of Thanksgiving, Christmas and Hanukkah, you may feel anxiety and fear. They are probably thinking this year will be different and some sadness will accompany it, but I don't think they are aware of your anguish, especially if it's been "awhile."

I would like to suggest to you that in fairness to yourself you need to be honest about your feelings and, just as important, you need to communicate these feelings to those around you. I really don't think it is necessary for you to believe that because you set a tradition and always made the turkey, fried the latkes, and always had the family over, you need to feel obligated to do it again this year. Perhaps you would like to tell everyone:
* Someone else will have to do dinner this year.

* You want to make dinner in your home, but you need lots of help because you don't have the energy to do it.

* You want to go to the parties, but you are afraid you may break down and cry and you want them to know in advance this is really okay.

* You want to tell them it's okay to talk about your child. Not to, makes it very uncomfortable.

The list goes on, but the point is that to pretend everything is "just fine" is a lie, and that's not fair to you or to the people who you love.

Diane Zarnkoff
TCF, Simi Valley, CA



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

Honoring the One Year Anniversary of My Daughter's Death

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

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

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

Sitting on that rock, I was aware of these internal waves, but they didn't engulf me. I was as distanced from the grief as I was from the waves surging below. It was symbolic of all we had been through in the year prior. Kristen was gone forever and nothing would bring her back. But now,

rather than drowning with her as I once thought I might, I felt encouraged. We would have days of sadness ahead... many more. But we were making it. We were both survivors.

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

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

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

REMEMBERING KRISSIE

Dear Krissie,
Thought I'd write you a letter...
Time has dimmed the memory
Of that gray November day.
When God reached down
His loving hand
And carried you away.
I do not know the reason
Why this had to be.
I only know, when my day comes,
Reach out your hand to me.

Grandma Michel
November 13, 1980

Our Children Remembered

November

Child	Dates		Bereaved
Alana Teresa Alioto	08/15/1967	11/14/1978	John Alioto
Beth Ann Aney	11/15/1966	08/10/2021	Sharon Guy
Bret William Baumgarten	07/08/1970	11/26/2014	Bobbi & Dan Baumgarten
Kristen Leigh Bonocore	11/10/1976	03/22/2011	Joseph & Phyllis Bonocore
Jonathan Eugene Brilliant	11/06/1984	01/20/2011	Girija & Larry Brilliant
Joey Burger	11/06/1978	02/04/1999	Bob & Darlene Burger
Max Hart Chappell	11/24/1991	02/11/2011	Jeanne Vukasovich
Jason Paul Ewing	11/10/1970	06/22/1994	Harry & Josie Ewing
René Garcia	07/05/1954	11/27/1976	Bertila, Carmen & Jose Armando Garcia
Vincent Alfred Hinds	11/23/1966	01/11/1994	Henry & Ginny Hinds
Rodrigues Julian	11/03/2015	06/18/2017	Connie Rodrigues
Kristen Michele Kearns	04/19/1969	11/13/1976	Dr. Carol Kearns
Gabriel Michael Kerekes	03/30/2000	11/19/2018	Martie Jean
Trey Lagomarsino	11/28/1989	01/22/2013	Mike Baxman & Susan Kim
Evan Porter Larsen	09/21/1981	11/15/2019	Libby McQuiston
Trevor London Leopold	01/30/2001	11/17/2019	Michelle & Jeff Leopold
John Francis Lino	11/08/1960	12/25/1988	George & Marianne Lino
Michael J. Lockwood	08/25/1971	11/06/2003	Barbara Lockwood Albertoni
Alia Rose Jackson Mehta	03/30/1978	11/27/2014	Gail & Roy Jackson
Jakob Montoya	12/26/1998	11/21/2018	Michelle Padilla-Goode
Kayden Montoya	10/24/1995	11/21/2018	Michelle Padilla-Goode
Amanda Jacqueline Noland	03/25/1982	11/02/2002	Cecile & Doug Noland
Katie Okura	11/19/1975	08/28/2017	Ginny Anderson
Rebecca E. Pabst	08/08/1968	11/09/1994	Alan & Virginia Pabst
Kunal Pradhan	05/18/1995	11/01/2020	Padmaja Pradhan
Alexander Rayburn	11/27/1988	02/21/2015	Mindee & Steve Rayburn
Carrie Jean Esler Rollison	11/15/1972	04/14/2014	Judith Esler
Nevra Rubenstein	11/01/1999	06/04/2015	Janet & Zev Rubenstein
Susan Rudolph	11/29/1964	10/15/2010	Jackie Martin
Marc Paul Seregin	04/20/2001	11/19/2008	Sonya & Paul Seregin
Cary Warren Smith	08/07/1963	11/07/2016	Patsy Curry
Jess Stringer	11/15/1976	03/05/2002	Judy Stringer
Robert Craig Wilson	10/25/1956	11/21/1983	Mary C. Fishman

“My sister will die over and over again for the rest of my life. Grief is forever. It doesn't go away; it becomes a part of you, step for step, breath for breath. I will never stop grieving Bailey because I will never stop loving her. That's just how it is. Grief and love are conjoined, you don't get one without the other. All I can do is love her, and love the world, emulate her by living with daring and spirit and joy.”

— Jandy Nelson, *The Sky is Everywhere*

“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*

Our Children Remembered

October

Child	Dates		Bereaved
John Charles Berges	12/20/1966	01/04/2001	Mary Berges
Stephen Anthony Castaldo	06/16/1962	12/18/2013	Joanne Castaldo
Matthew David Cevallos	04/27/1970	12/28/2006	Moe & Gloria Cevallos
Blake Coffman	12/21/2000	04/17/2019	Ellen & Fred Coffman
Travis William Cole	03/31/1984	12/14/1997	Kingston Cole
Matthew Corral	12/28/1985	07/21/2019	Karen Corral
Chelsea Faith Dolan	09/14/1983	12/02/2016	Colleen Dolan
Michael Anthony Dollwet	12/04/1980	02/01/2005	Ronald & Joan Crook
Bradley Leroy Epperson	04/19/2013	12/01/2019	Kristine Epperson
Errol Friedman	09/11/1997	12/03/2018	Jeff & Barbara Friedman
Elizabeth Alexandra Hamp	12/07/1990	03/14/2021	Emily Hamp
Charli Mae James	12/02/2015	04/18/2018	Samuel Davis-Flake
Bowen Kader Johnson	12/18/1996	10/13/2017	Julie & Brian Gordon
John Nicholas Klingel	12/25/1967	01/30/2003	John & Karen Klingel
Natalie Jane Kriebel	12/30/1996	03/26/2019	Amy Holle, John Kriebel
James Scott Lambert	01/02/1972	12/29/2015	Linda Hicken
Ruth Dasha Goldie Levy	12/14/1980	02/23/2001	Shary Levy, Arthur Levy
Albert Arthur Levy	12/02/1973	10/14/2016	Shary Levy, Arthur Levy
John Francis Lino	11/08/1960	12/25/1988	George & Marianne Lino
Jakob Montoya	12/26/1998	11/21/2018	Michelle Padilla-Goode
Forest Elijah Newcomg	12/20/1991	08/23/2020	Annie Mecchi
Alexander Sol Olive	05/16/1981	12/01/1985	Judy Olive
Nicolas James Pitti	12/19/1985	05/11/2014	Robert & Rose Marie Longoria
Ruby Rhea	05/09/1969	12/17/2010	Bertha Jean Schmidt
David Arthur Ross	12/30/1961	02/25/2001	Joan Ross
Michael Kevin Sadler	02/14/1980	12/03/2016	Kathy Miles
Casey Sandvick	12/15/1978	10/30/1991	Rich Sandvick
Robbie Severdia	12/03/1973	04/01/1990	Deedee Severdia
Adam James Parks Steinberg	06/05/1991	12/02/2018	Ella & Steve Steinberg
Jackson Jonathan-Michael Talbott	06/12/2000	12/09/2017	Meghan & Jason Talbott
Gabriel Alexander Whooley	08/29/1999	12/14/2017	Monica Whooley
Gregory Brian Wilhelm	12/07/1983	01/29/2017	Patricia & Roger Wilhelm
Kendra Elizabeth Young	10/15/1984	12/03/2017	Betsy & Bryant Young

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

"The griefs that have been hardest for me were the ones I didn't recognize as griefs, because they came in what were supposed to be the best times of my life. No one whispered in my ear that the best times, the ones that change our lives, are woven with the thread of loss."

— Anna White, Mended: Thoughts on Life, Love, and Leaps of Faith

Memories of A Christmas Past

I remember the Christmas when my son was five years old. We were living a long way from family, and the prospect of yet another Christmas without a real celebration was heartbreaking. Yet, I was still in college and we didn't have the funds to fly back home. We hadn't been home for Christmas for two years. My son was very close to my dad, and he really wanted to see his grandpa at Christmas.

We did the usual Christmas routine....I had put toys in lay-away in August and would pick them up a few days before Christmas. Todd went through his toys to find ones that he had outgrown; this was our tradition. We took his toys and some other items to the Salvation Army for those less fortunate. I purchased a tiny tree and we were ready.

Two days before Christmas, an early morning knock at the door awakened us. A messenger with a large envelope awaited me. Todd was standing in his footed pajamas, thumb in mouth, blanket in hand, wide-eyed and curious. I opened the envelope. My dad had sent us tickets to fly home. Our plane departed the next morning. Todd was giddy with joy, packing his suitcase and preparing for the trip to grandpa's.

That was the Christmas worth remembering. My dad stood at the gate waiting for us. This tough WWII Marine's eyes were glistening and a few teardrops were on his face. Todd ran to my dad's arms. We celebrated at my grandparents' house and at dad's house and with friends. Aunts, uncles, and cousins from across the country were home for Christmas that year. On Christmas Eve it began to snow....light flurries followed by a starlit sky.

Christmas morning we went to Mass and set in the "Mennen" pew.....second row, in front of St. Patrick. Now the family spilled over to the third and fourth rows. Todd sat proudly next to his grandpa. When grandpa got up to help with the collection basket, he took Todd with him. Up the center aisle they went. Dad let Todd hold the basket as they worked their way to the back of the tiny church.

Todd listened intently to his grandfather and great-grandfather telling stories of Christmases past as the family settled down to dinner. My grandmother couldn't stop hugging Todd and telling him how special he was. She had baked his favorite cookies and allowed him to play with her little figurines. Todd and dad went for a walk in the snow; dad got the sled out and pulled it up the hills and laughed and ran behind Todd on the downhill slopes. In the late afternoon we gathered and sang carols and songs. Grandma and I switched back and forth playing the piano. We sang for two hours....the finale, as always, was the official song for each of the branches of the armed services. The Marine Corps Hymn was always last- in honor of grandma's only son, my dad.

We stayed two weeks to visit and spend time with family. Todd learned the real meaning of Christmas that year....the purest of love and joy. It wasn't about parties, toys, shopping, junk and decorations.....it was about family, tradition, heritage and the unconditional love of parents, grandparents, great-grandparents. Christmas was the glimpse into the hearts of the elders, the wise ones. I shall always keep that Christmas in my heart. Grandpa, grandma and dad are gone now. So are many uncles, aunts and cousins and Todd's daughter.

Todd joined them just before Christmas in 2002. I like to think that together my family is reliving that perfect

Christmas again this year and every year. For a loving family doesn't end at death's door.....each family continues to expand beyond that door and waits for us to join them.

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

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.

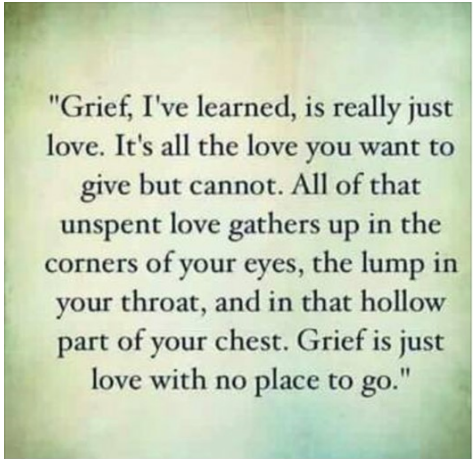
Dennis Klass
TCF St. Louis, MO

The Beautiful Name of Parent

People often ask why there is not a word for someone who has lost a child. For me the answer is quite simple; I am and always will be a parent. The death of our child does not take that precious title away from any of us. Nothing and no one can ever change the fact that we are parents. We gave life to, nurtured and raised our children, for however long or short their lives were. "Parent" is a living word. It is an eternal word.

Our children would want us to remember that we are their parents now and forever. They would want the name of "parent" that was bestowed on us at their birth to live on in our hearts. We are still actively parenting our children. We continue to bring life to our children by loving them now and forever. There is not and should never be a word to signify the endless love of a parent.

Janet G. Reyes
TCF Alamo Area Chapter,
TX



"Grief, I've learned, is really just love. It's all the love you want to give but cannot. All of that unspent love gathers up in the corners of your eyes, the lump in your throat, and in that hollow part of your chest. Grief is just love with no place to go."

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 for November and December:

Donor/s: Elizabeth Krivatsy
"In Honor of Radha Stern"

Donor/s: John & Karen Klingel
Child: John Nicholas Klingel
Dates: 12/25/1967 -1/30/2003
"We love you always."

Donor/s: Mary C. Fishman
Child: Robert Craig Wilson
Dates: 1956 -1983
"Never Forgotten! Forever loved."

Donor/s: Nadia Al-Samarrie
Child: Spencer King
Dates: 3/19/1993 - 8/15/2022

Donor/s: Mimi Tompkins
Child: Paul Tompkins
Dates: 2/6/1970 - 2/4/2022

You must do the things you think you cannot do. —Eleanor Roosevelt

Like the Butterfly

It fluttered above my head
Weightless in the soft breeze.
I reached up my hand
It lit on my finger.
Waving glistening wings gently,
It looked at me for timeless moments.
I smiled, reaching deep and
Finding all those cherished memories.
As it flitted off through the sunlit morn,
I knew we had said hello once more.

Leslie Langford
TCF, North Platte, NE

"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

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

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.



The Compassionate Friends

Marin County Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

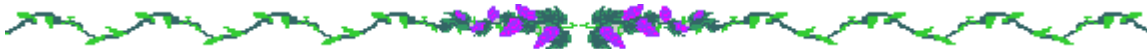
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The Compassionate Friends, Marin County Chapter
P. O. Box 150935
San Rafael, CA 94915

NOV—DEC, 2022

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Dated Material - Please Deliver Promptly



WORLDWIDE CANDLE LIGHTING MEMORIAL SERVICE

The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting on the 2nd Sunday in December unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor the memories of the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and grandchildren who left too soon. As candles are lit on December 11th, 2022 at 7:00 pm local time, hundreds of thousands of people commemorate and honor the memory of all children gone too soon.

Now believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe, the annual Worldwide Candle Lighting (WCL), a gift to the bereavement community from The Compassionate Friends, creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone. TCF's WCL started in the United States in 1997 as a small internet observance and has since swelled in numbers as word has spread throughout the world of the remembrance. Hundreds of formal candle lighting events are held, and thousands of informal candle lightings are conducted in homes, as families gather in quiet remembrance of children who have died and will never be forgotten.

Sponsored by The Marin County Chapter of The Compassionate Friends
www.tcfmarin.org * (415) 457-3123

