

The Compassionate Friends Marin County Chapter Supporting Family After a Child Dies

September—October, 2023 ISSUE

Vol 44, No. 5

#1184

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

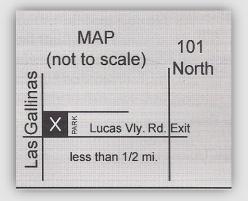
Chapter Leader: Eileen Rusky erusky@gmail.com

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.

ANNOUNCEMENT:

Annual Candle Lighting Ceremony Sunday, December 10, 2023, 7:00 P.M. Unity in Marin 600 Palm Drive, Novato, CA 94949

Please join us to commemorate all children of all ages who have gone before their time.

For the 27th year, this deeply moving ceremony will celebrate, remember and honor the children who have died leaving behind family and friends searching for answers and support. Together we will share the joy of having known them and the sorrow of having lost them.

Starting in Greenwich, England at 7:00 p.m., participants light their candles to remember the children and, in our small way, to push back the darkness of loss. Then, heading westward as night comes to each community in turn, more candles are lighted in remembrance. As the world turns, the ceremony creates a virtual 24 -hour wave of light passing from time zone to time zone all around the planet. This powerful tradition unites family and friends around the globe in remembering those who left us too soon.

The ceremony begins at 7:00 p.m. During the course of the ceremony, each of us will light a candle to remember and celebrate a child we have lost.

The Compassionate Friends is an international, nondenominational support group made up of and for families who have lost children. At our monthly meetings we offer friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings who have experienced the death of a child from any cause, at any age. There, you will find a safe place to meet and talk freely about your child and your grief. There are no dues or fees.

Meeting Calendar Third Monday of the Month: Monday, September 18, 2023 Monday, October 16, 2023 Monday, November 20, 2023 Monday, December 18, 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 1,650.359.7928, 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 friendsforsurvival.org

Other Grief Counseling Resources:

By the Bay Health (formerly Hospice by the Bay) offers individual and group grief counseling. Free Monthly Grief Support Group for Bereaved Parents 1st Thursday 11a-12p. Pre-registration required.

- Marin and SF (415) 526-5699
- · Sonoma (707) 931-7299

Email: <u>griefsupport@bythebayhealth.org</u> Website: <u>https://bythebayhealth.org/</u>I:

North Bay Grief Recovery in San Rafael : www.NorthBayGriefRecovery.com Ph.: 1.415-250-3027 LINK TO WEBSITE

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: www.afsp.org Ph.: 1.707.721.4062

Friends for Survival, Inc www.friendsfordurvival.org Ph.: 1.800.646.7322

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

"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." — Anne McCaffrey, *Dragonsinger*

"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

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

"Grieving is a journey that teaches us how to love in a new way now that our loved one is no longer with us. Consciously remembering those who have died is the key that opens the hearts, that allows us to love them in new ways." - Tom Attig, The Heart of Grief

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

Suicide and Loss

I was asked the question, "What do you tell parents who have suicidal thoughts after their child dies?" As you all know, the death of a child is one of life's greatest pains. I think the only pain greater is losing more than one child, and too many of you parents have. When filled to the brim with pain, we may feel the only way to get rid of the pain is to get rid of ourselves. We can't imagine living without our child. Suicide may seem like the only option when the light at the end of the tunnel is either nonexistent or very dim. A suicidal person's perspective on life can narrow to the extent that she feels she has nothing to offer. The world is better off without her.

I remember well those suicidal feelings after my daughter Kristen's death and mention in my book how, when taking a bubble bath, I wanted to slip under the water and disappear. Exhausted from the pain, I saw this as an easy solution. Thank goodness an equally strong feeling overtook me: I could never do this to Michel, my son who was nine at the time. He had just lost his sister. He didn't need to lose his mother.

Still, living a life of pain would be like living a death. That wasn't an option. The only option was to somehow turn the pain into something meaningful.

This is the challenge we each face as bereaved parents if we are to live a life of meaning. Grief demands patience and a trust that we will find a way through. As impossible as this feels, we must try to reach deep within ourselves beyond the pain to the gifts our child gave us. Even in infant deaths, our babies gave us one of the greatest of gifts. They gave us love. We need to use the power of this love to create their legacy. Suicide robs them of that. We do not "get over" the loss of our child. We will never be the same. We will always miss them but, with the right support, we can recover from the anger, sadness, isolation and despair that threatened to devastate us. We heal and often become a better, stronger person.

From The Compassionate Friends to MADD, many wonderful organizations began with the death of a child. Great art, literature and music were created out of grief and have benefitted us all. The late Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, who pioneered the field of grief and loss often said, "Remember, the purest gold comes from the hottest fire." When you feel yourself giving into the desperate feelings of suicide, I challenge you to look for the gold. What will your child's legacy be?

After October

and if there be a perfect month, for me, it is October... with days and nights like laughing fauns, with mornings bright and sober. when wind will dance in sudden glee to do the autumn-sweeping or cloud and fog and wistful rain can move a heart to weeping. and in October You were born, four days before November... and four years later you were gone, my little son, my only son, l love you. and remember...

> Sascha Wagner © The Compassionate Friend

Our Children Remembered September

Child	Birthdate	Anniversary	Bereaved	
Daniel Zacharia Ashkenazy	09/07/1984	01/14/2005	Pamela Ashkenazy, Dan Ashkenazy	
Sean Behan	09/21/1974	06/24/2019	Gerri & Robert Behan	
Sylvia Chantal Bingham	04/22/1987	09/15/2009	Francoise Blusseau & Stephen Bingham	
Jason Bohlke	09/20/1985	09/18/2010	Adam Bohlke & Britt Rosenmayr	
Jacob Westley Brumbaugh	09/13/1986	02/17/2011	Mark & Deborah Brumbaugh	
Oksana Collins	03/11/1991	09/07/2019	Susan Collins	
Michael Kai Cornett	09/17/1993	10/15/2022	Karen & Jeff Marozick	
Scanlan Derrick	09/21/2005	08/20/2020	Susan Derrick	
Chelsea Faith Dolan	09/14/1983	12/02/2016	Colleen Dolan	
Dylan Simon Duncan Wright	07/13/1981	09/14/2013	Mara Duncan	
Jacob Samuel Freeman	09/11/1985	04/03/2007	Michael Freeman & Lisa Klairmont	
Errol Friedman	09/11/1997	12/03/2018	Jeff & Barbara Friedman	
Savannah Louise Hill	06/04/1993	09/22/2003	Andrea Hill	
Alecia Anne Marie Hopper	09/26/1974	08/30/2017	Bill Hopper, Constance Blake	
Hanna Rosa Hotchkiss	12/25/1996	09/04/2021	Marina Hotchkiss	
Dana John Hudson	02/13/1972	09/04/2016	Diana Hudson	
Grace Perin Kuhzarani	08/17/2021	09/10/2021		
Evan Porter Larsen	09/21/1981	11/15/2019	Rachel Kepp & Ali Kuhzarani	
Chris Leach	02/12/1974	09/02/2002	Libby McQuiston	
Lisa Messik MacPhee			Marcie & Don Leach	
	09/20/1997	05/02/2021	Robert MacPhee	
Athena Maguire	09/15/1988	10/07/2018	Alexandra Maguire	
Fernando Martinez	07/26/1975	09/13/1993	Don & Maria Pazour	
Timothy Patrick McBride	05/05/1986	09/24/2001	Lois Kortum & George McBride	
Douglas Duncan McGeehon	07/31/1983	09/13/2022	Patricia McGeehon	
Daniel McLaughlin	08/12/1960	09/20/2019	Eve Pell	
Marci Eilene Meyring	09/25/1979	01/05/1987	Gary & Natalie Meyring	
Lauren Nelson	08/20/1982	09/29/2010	John & Vicki Nelson	
Diego Ruiz Palomino	09/20/1982	09/25/2008	Celia Ruiz & Michael Palomino	
Clara Struthers Payne	11/17/1990	09/27/2021	Pegan Brooke	
Nicholas Plaskon	09/07/1971	06/19/1992	John & Berit Lelas	
Joshua Adam Portnoy	07/16/1978	09/27/1997	Bob & Gunilla Portnoy	
Kareem Rafeh	09/07/1982	08/25/2013	Hafez & Nada Rafeh	
Daniel James Reed	09/08/1987	10/31/2020	Diane Reed	
Carolyn Reichling	03/25/1993	09/03/2001	Michelle Miller	
Lara Rachel Rusky	03/26/1982	09/06/2009	Edward & Eileen Rusky	
Benjamin P. Scheuenstuhl	04/01/1981	09/07/1982	Maureen & Heinz Scheuenstuhl	
Nicolas Simard	09/26/2003	05/26/2016	Julie Chabot & François Simard	
Vinnie J. Simons	09/25/1982	07/11/2007	Lori Jones	
William Kreitzberg Spinrad	07/11/1990	09/13/2020	Caroline Kreitzberg	
Jessica Young	08/01/1983	09/01/2019	Barbara Young	
Malika Ziani	09/17/1973	01/26/2011	Phyllis Callahan	

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

Our Children Remembered October

Child	Birthdate	Anniversary	Bereaved	
Chancellor Argall	07/19/1996	10/18/2016	Grier Argall & Jeanni Lang	
Lancelot Argall	03/21/1998	10/18/2016	Grier Argall & Jeanni Lang	
Matthew Buckley	10/06/1975	06/04/1992	Mark & Kristina Buckley	
Joey Ciatti	02/10/1971	10/06/1986	Becky Oken	
Michael Kai Cornett	09/17/1993	10/15/2022	Karen & Jeff Marozick	
David Riley Crook	10/17/1958	07/01/2020	Ronald & Joan Crook	
Misty Dollwet	10/08/1977	01/21/1996	Ronald & Joan Crook	
Adam Teplin Emmott	10/27/1982	01/11/2015	Michelle J. Maguire, Kristina Teplin	
Debra Lynn Ferrua	02/27/1957	10/11/2003	Ronald & Joan Crook	
Reneé Francesca Garcia	03/29/1981	10/03/1996	Bertlla, Carmen & Jose Armando Garcia	
Ellen Marian Haas	10/17/1960	03/20/1998	Harold & Mary Haas	
Pamela Dawn Heaster	02/08/1964	10/29/2010	lla Benavidez-Heaster	
Bowen Kader Johnson	12/18/1996	10/13/2017	Julie & Brian Gordon	
Emma Kristen Kearns	10/27/2013	10/27/2013	Dr. Carol Kearns	
Robert LeRoy Latham	10/22/1985	06/18/2020	Sharon R & Robert Finston	
Albert Arthur Levy	12/02/1973	10/14/2016	Shary Levy, Arthur Levy	
Athena Maguire	09/15/1988	10/07/2018	Alexandra Maguire	
Chance Pierre Maurer	08/09/1998	10/18/2016	Tracy Maurer	
Robert Scott McIntosh	05/13/1985	10/03/2014	Jennifer Holman McIntosh	
Ryan W. McKnight	10/14/1985	04/20/2008	Bob & Leesa Tuley	
Peter McLaughlin	10/04/1962	04/18/2017	Eve Pell	
Brian David Mixsell	01/14/1986	10/14/2017	Bill, Sandy & Belinda Mixsell	
Kayden Montoya	10/24/1995	11/21/2018	Michelle Padilla-Goode	
Peter Langhorne Morawitz	10/20/1966		Terry Morawitz	
Emily Grace Panicacci	03/10/1995	10/02/2010	Scott & Jennifer Panicacci	
Phillip E. Perry	10/22/1982	03/25/2018	Sue Hecht	
Daniel James Reed	09/08/1987	10/31/2020	Diane Reed	
Steven Rodriguez	04/27/1994	10/17/2013	Rafael & Alex Rodriguez	
Lonnie Roper II	10/02/1979	06/11/2011	Shirlee Roper	
James Aaron Rosengarden	03/02/1988	10/26/2009	Mark Rosengarden	
Susan Rudolph	11/29/1964	10/15/2010	Jackie Martin	
Casey Sandvick	12/15/1978	10/30/1991	Rich Sandvick	
Anthony Salvatore Santa Maria	04/30/1968	10/25/2018	Pam Santa Maria	
Ellen Alexandra Scott	10/14/1971	04/01/2018	Carol Scott	
Railee Naomi Silvis	08/18/2016	10/26/2016	Linda Cox	
Adrian Rodolfo Valderrama	10/12/1984	01/09/2010	Rosa Sandoval & Rodolfo Valderrama	
Isabelle Quinn van Bergen	08/22/1995	10/27/2011	Fran Quinn van Bergen	
John Elliot Vipiana	10/28/1994	04/12/2017	Lisa Vipiana, John Vipiana	
Gregory Patrick Walsh	10/14/1971	07/11/2001	Sandy Williams	
Brittney Marie Weaver	04/05/1991	10/03/2010	Janine Schengel	
Craig Weldon	04/07/1968	10/19/2014	Lee Weldon	
Robert Craig Wilson	10/25/1956	11/21/1983	Mary C. Fishman	
Kendra Elizabeth Young	10/15/1984	12/03/2017	Betsy & Bryant Young	
-				

When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives mean the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is a friend who cares. -Henri Nouwen

The Pain We Know

Pain, we've all experienced it in one form or another. Most of it fades away with time. Then on the other hand, there is the pain that comes when someone whose life you valued far above your own, who you loved unconditionally and without pause is taken away. That pain is very much different and can only be understood by those who have felt it. This type of pain or loss is the kind that leaves reparable damage, the kind that leaves the deepest of scars. Although they more often than not cannot be seen I assure you they are there, deep down below the surface and time does little to change them. The pain may dull but it always remains as a reminder of what was lost.

I have heard people say that time will heal or take the pain away but there is one thing they don't realize; for a part of us time has no meaning. A part of who we were before will forever be locked in those last moments, in that cold dark room, where years pass like seconds or time stands still altogether and the pain always remains.

People have asked "why do that to yourself, why keep the wounds open, why not move on?" The answer to that may not make sense to many. The reason may just be that although those moments are the worst, most heartbreaking, they are also the last we got to spend with the people we loved. Those moments contain the last time we held them, the last song we sang them, the last I love you and the last goodbye. So although they hurt they are valued.

I'm grateful that unlike many I had those moments with Madison. I never wanted to say goodbye, never wanted to let go, or to tell her that it was okay to leave but at least I got to have the chance. That is something many people never have.

Although I have found the strength to walk out of that room it will always be there and at times I will have to return to it. If you find me in one of those moments please don't tell me I have to move on or try to guilt me out, just simply walk inside and stand beside me while acknowledging that my pain is real and that my beautiful, sweet Madison was once very much alive and very much loved.

> Tracy Smith In Memory of my niece Madison Lynne Smith

The Color of My Grief

(this is a companion piece to The Color of My Joy)

I imagine various significant and emotional losses may be expressed as distinct colors on the color wheel with the death of a parent, grandparent, step-parent, friend, or child falling at different places. Today I decided the color of grief for the loss of a child is blue.

Anyone who has lost a child experiences blue - the constant yearning for things not to be what they now are. But how the loss occurs informs the shade of blue. A loss by miscarriage is not the same shade as a loss due to illness. A loss by suicide is not the same as the loss from an accident. And although we cannot distinguish the exact shade of blue other parents who have suffered loss are experiencing, we recognize it as blue, just like our own. We don't compare our blues, angling to see whose is darker or richer because we can only comprehend our own loss and its color. But we know the feeling of losing our most important gift, the piece of ourselves which was supposed to live beyond us, and we recognize that in others. In our loss, we all experience blue together.

> Kimberly Starr TCF Facebook Loss to Suicide Group In Memory of my son Tom

The Color of My Joy

scarf, given to me by one of Tom's high school teachers, a thoughtful gift to wrap me up through my grief. Then the question asked, "What was Tom's favorite color?" When he was young, it was yellow (or "lellow," as he said before speech therapy). Finally, the realization during that first week of loss, yellow is the color for suicide prevention. So yellow became forever tied to the memory of my beautiful son who left this world too soon. Now everywhere I see yellow, whether natural or human-made, magnificent or mundane, I am reminded of him:

Flowers in the yard, cemetery, or in vases given to us by those who continue to care for us.

The fire hydrant in our yard.

The bracelet I wear in his memory.

The Pikachu alarm clock and giant stuffed Pikachu, both in our Toffice (Tom's room + now our office).

The owl kitchen timer.

The ribbon pinned to his favorite stuffed animal, Bubby.

The teardrop gem necklace I am wearing right now.

The stuffed duck dropped off a few days ago along with a heartfelt card.

The cookies a student gave me last week.

The crocheted afghan, a gift from a student, placed lovingly on a chair in our family room where Tom spent most of his time.

The Dollar Tree crown resting on the head of his Mariners stuffed teddy bear.

The heart painted on a sign made for us.

The yellow ribbon bow, quietly placed on the bannister leading up into my high school classroom.

The blown glass heart, a gift after his passing, showcased in our shadow box of Tom's special items.

A sunset.

Just yesterday I realized anew I will never see him or hold him, hear his laugh, or roll my eyes at his bad puns again, at least in this life. But he lives on in me and around me in so many ways. So although blue is the color of my grief, yellow is the color of my joy, because when I see it, I am reminded of him and that others remember and miss him, too. Despite the fact he is no longer here with me, he is everywhere, every day.

> Kimberly Starr TCF Facebook Loss to Suicide Group In Memory of my son Tom

I believe that imagination is stronger than knowledge—myth is more potent than history—dreams are more powerful than facts—hope always triumphs over experience—laughter is the cure for grief love is stronger than death. —Robert Fulghum

There are things that we don't want to happen but have to accept, things we don't want to know but have to learn, and people we can't live without but have to let go. —Author Unknown

"You care so much you feel as though you will bleed to death with the pain of it."

- J.K. Rowling, Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix

It was not planned, yellow meaning so much to us. First, a yellow

Love Gifts

The following love gifts were received for September and October:

Donor/s:Mary Haas Child: Ellen Marian Haas Dates: 10/17/60-3/20/98

Donor/s: Bob & Gunilla Portnoy Child: Joshua Adam Portnoy Dates: 7/16/78 - 9/27/97 "Forever 19"



Request for updated and new photographs for the upcoming Candle Lighting Ceremony

Please submit pictures with name, birth and anniversary information to tcfmarin@gmail.com No later than October 27, 2023

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

A PhD in Pain

I didn't take an entrance examination. I didn't apply for admission. I didn't register for classes. I never completed any assignments. I didn't write or defend a dissertation.

I didn't wear a cap, gown, or hood at graduation. I didn't walk to "Pomp & Circumstance."

I don't have this diploma framed on my wall. I don't have letters I use after my name.

But my son died five years ago.

So, I have a PhD in Pain.

I never wanted one.

Peggi Johnson TCF Piedmont Chapter, VA

Ritual

A gaze thru blurry window When did it start to rain? Then realize it's just the eyes They're crying once again

Emptiness is mighty Deep within begins the ache Intense, this pain that surely Will cause a heart to break

Shoulders gently tremble A moaning soft and low Arms tightly wrapped about oneself Body rocking to and fro

A ritual of comfort A numbing of the mind A cleansing of the tortured soul A knowing eye made blind

Thus begins the healing process Of this I know so well Without you, I fall victim to This mindless cast of spell

> Donna Gerrior TCF Pasco County, FL In Memory of Rob

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 P. O. Box 150935 San Rafael, CA 94915 Non-Profit Org. US Postage PAID Larkspur, CA Permit No.41

SEP—OCT, 2023 Copyright © 2023 - All Rights Reserved The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

Dated Material - Please Deliver Promptly



