

The Compassionate Friends

Marin County Chapter Supporting Family After a Child Dies

March—April, 2024 ISSUE

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#1184



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

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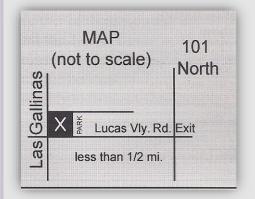
Mark Rosengarden

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 with our last meeting on June 17, 2024. We will let you know where the July meeting will be held. Chapter Leadership would appreciate any suggestions for venues that might be available that we could use in central Marin.

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.



THE HOLIDAYS ARE BEHIND US

It is the new year. The holidays are behind us. We did with them what we could. Whether they were a time of sorrow, a time of joy, or a combination of each, they are now a part of our memories. In a strange way, as a memory in our hearts and in our minds, our child's place is there amongst all the other memories of the season. There is hurt along with the memory, but also thankfulness for the memory.

Now we look out on a winter landscape. The earth is cold, the land sharply defined. Yet underneath the hard crust, the great energy and warmth of our earth is guarding and providing life to all that grows. We may personally know the coldness and hardness of a grief so fresh that we feel numb; a grief so hurtful that our body feels physically hard; our throat tight from the muscles pulled by tears, shed or unshed; our chests banded tightly by the muscles of a mourning heart.

If we are not now experiencing this, our memories recollect so easily those early days. Yet, as we live these days, like the earth from which we receive our sustenance, we, too, in our searching, find places of warmth and change and love and growth, deep within. Let our hearts and minds dwell in these places and be warmed and renewed by them, and let us have the courage and love to share them with our loved ones, to talk about even that first dim shape of new hope, or of new acceptance, or of new understanding, or of new love.

These are the new roots, born of our love of our child, forming and stirring within, gathering strength so that our lives, at the right time, can blossom once again and be fruitful in a new and deeper way.

MARIE ANDREWS TCF Southern Maryland



Meeting Calendar Third Monday of the Month:

Monday, March 18, 2024

Monday, April 22, 2024

Monday, May 20, 2024

Monday, June 17, 2024



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: griefsupport@bythebayhealth.org/ Website: https://bythebayhealth.org/!:

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

SOAR ON MY SWEET SON

A balloon flew out of my car trunk today
Just took flight soaring away
Watching the balloon as it flew
The horrible pain came back just like
The day we had to physically let you go.

I watched that balloon for a while
Never realizing I had tears flowing down
As I continued to watch the balloon
All I can do is see your beautiful smile
The one you had on the day you let go
To soar with the eagles.

Although it totally broke my heart
I felt you with me as I watched that balloon
Like you were saying "hey Momma, I am ok"
He is continuing to soar and watch over us
He is also telling me it is ok to physically let go
As I am ok and will be with you always.
Soar on my sweet son, Kevin.

In loving memory of her son Kevin Robert 7/19/94 – 5/10/98 KATHIE KELLY

EASTER AND PASSOVER

The Easter and Passover seasons are upon us. They are special family times that make it more obvious that one is missing. Some parents are struggling with what they believe. The pretty dresses and hats don't seem to matter as much as they did. There are more important things on our minds now. We are facing the renewal of life all around us — and yet the missing child's life is not renewable. We hurt because life is going on and his or hers is not. These are normal reactions for some when grief is fresh, for the changing of seasons is a poignant time for many.

Those of us who have had the necessary time, wish to convey to those who have not that it won't always be this painful. When your grief softens (and it will), so will many of the hurtful responses. If you can, get out in the sunshine, go for a walk, smell the fragrance of the flowers and allow the warmth and beauty of the season to permeate your being. It just may make your day a little lighter.

Article written by Mary Cleckley of TCF/Atlanta, GA

Snowflakes

Every snowflake that falls is unique and has its own individual design. There are beautiful patterns in each snowflake and even the tiniest of flakes have their own markings. These patterns change again and again—even after the flake touches the ground. Each snowflake is a cause for wonder, each flake is one of a kind. No two are exactly alike.

Like the snowflake, our beautiful children were each unique and special; some we only dreamed about and some danced upon the earth. They filled our lives with wonder and transformed our world. We held them too briefly, but we will hold them in our hearts forever. We shall remember them always.

At this time of remembering, it may help to reflect upon how our lives have been enriched by the love we have given and the love we have received from our children. Our children leave treasures behind that time can never take away.

Denise Falzone

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

How Many Children Do You Say You Have?

What was once an easy question becomes very difficult after the death of a child. This is especially true in the first few years following our child's death. To answer you have one child when you once said two, not only feels like a betrayal to our deceased child (and ourselves) but is yet another reminder of how much life has changed. There is no right or wrong response. We must answer this question in a way that works for us.

I have learned over the years to protect myself when asked this. My response now completely depends on the circumstance. Many times I don't feel like dealing with the reaction to this well intentioned question when it is learned my child has died. Usually the response is shock, dismay and/or discomfort. Whatever it might be, I now choose when I want to share that my daughter has died. "I have a 38 year old son, Michel, and a daughter, Kristen, who died when she was seven."

Part of our healing process is to take care of our feelings and appreciate how new many of these feelings are for us. The grieving process can become easier if we check in with ourselves on a regular basis, try to identify our feelings and learn the best way to process them.

Our response may be new and surprising in many situations we face after our child's death. We are learning about ourselves in a new and extremely stressful situation. This is why we must protect ourselves. I might often respond to the question of how many children I have by saying, "I have one child, my son Michel." My daughter is buried in my heart and never far from me. I know I will always have two children. It doesn't matter to me if others do.

BUT YET...

Motherhood - for you so full of meaning. A young mother with son and daughter -Babies to care for, husband as doctor. So right, so "family," so American - but yet...

Departure, splitting, declaration of independence.

The perfect family no longer
All units broken - three families sundered at once,

At least seemingly - but yet...

A single parent, a mother alone with only what counted:
Herself, her son, her daughter...Love,
Slowly rebinding. Her parents to understand.

The father to realize. Michel and Kristen to grow. Becoming
Perfect - but yet...

Torn apart and carried away by a wave.

Meaning shattered. Kristen. Beautiful, budding
Kristen - lost forever. Motherhood brutalized
Unity, peace and peacefulness, purpose lost - but yet...

Motherhood tested and understood as never before
Love for Michel life itself against otherwise
Suicidal confusion.
Life slowly reborn
Kristen's spirit scented in bath's bubbles - but yet...

Michel must go too.

A mother apart, searching, regenerating
Bob, Elisabeth, hints of love, new meaning A rosebuds; blooms - but yet...

Haunting emptiness.

His choice to be with Dad. My choice here
But whose choice apart?

Not ours. No answers now or ever - but yet...

Minneapolis. Michel. Mom again!
Breakfasts together. Shared stories of school days.
A family of three now true, but testing Friends and father gone - only temporary? But yet...

Relaxing - a new family relaxing
Ringing - Copper wind chimes ringing and bringing
A new day - May 9. The first real Mother's Day
In years. Celebrate for today - and now!

My love, Bob Mother's Day 1982

"It has been said, 'time heals all wounds.' I do not agree. The wounds remain. In time, the mind, protecting its sanity, covers them with scar tissue and the pain lessens. But it is never gone."

Rose Kennedy



Our Children Remembered March

Child	Born	Anniversary	Bereaved
Lancelot Argall			Grier Argall & Jeanni Lang
Kristen Leigh Bonocore			Joseph & Phyllis Bonocore
Larry Antoine Boyd			Annette Broussard
Christopher Abram Bruce			Mike & Louise Bruce
Brian Jay Buckley			Merilee Rossi, Chris Valentino & Family
Tony Burger			Bob & Darlene Burger
Aura Celeste			Joshua Nagler
Taylor Lynn Cohen			Michael & Gail Cohen
Travis William Cole			Kingston Cole
Oksana Collins			Susan Collins
Matthew Jason Comin			Marci & Mark Comin Comin
Bodi Cooper Ealey			Sarah Ealey, Eli Echelmeier
John Patrick Feeney			Lois & Dan Feeney
Neel Thomas Foon			Brad & Genie Foon
"Ryan" Stephan Fyles			Susan & Dale Fyles
Reneé Francesca Garcia			Bertlla, Carmen & Jose Armando Garcia
William Turner Gundry			Karen Gundry Smith & Frank Gundry
Ellen Marian Haas			Harold & Mary Haas
Elizabeth Alexandra Hamp			Emily Hamp
Jessica Marie Hildreth			Julie & Ed Taylor
Mark Hornor			Christa Kaufmann-Hornor
Christopher Robin Hotchkiss			Radha Stern
Matthew David Hubal			Bruce & Louise Hubal
lan Emerson Jones			Nanette Biers
Justin Edward Keaton, Jr.			Billy Farrer
Gabriel Michael Kerekes			Martie Jean
Spencer Al-Samarrie King			Nadia Al-Samarrie
Miles Walter Kintz			Laura Muckenhoupt
Patrick Alan Kolsky			Alan & Linda Kolsky
Natalie Jane Kriebel			Amy Holle, John Kriebel
Alicia Scott Lee			Jon & Cathie Lee
Maximillian Letizi			Anthony & Terry Letizi
Erin Kathryn McEowen			Sandy McEowen
Alia Rose Jackson Mehta			Gail & Roy Jackson
Christopher J. Murphy, Jr.			Tina Smith
Amanda Jacqueline Noland			Cecile & Doug Noland
Emily Grace Panicacci			Scott & Jennifer Panicacci
Phillip E. Perry			Sue Hecht
Duke Allan Petty			Diane & Lee Petty
Carolyn Reichling			Michelle Miller
James Aaron Rosengarden			Mark Rosengarden
Lara Rachel Rusky			Edward & Eileen Rusky
Dennis Howard Schonborn			Felicia Schonborn
Caleb Kalani Sears			Tim & Eliza Sears, Ann Bentley
David Paul Seregin			Sonya & Paul Seregin
Matthew Paul Seregin			Sonya & Paul Seregin
Flennis Anthony Simón II			Donna & Flennis Simón
Jess Stringer			Judy Stringer
Brent Robert Taylor			Sherry & Robert Taylor
Julian Ali Thomas			Fariba Thomas
Elizabeth Torlakson			Kathy Bodnar
Eloi Ivan Vasquez-Margolin			Wendy Margolin

Our Children Remembered April

Child	Born	Anniversary	Bereaved
Jonathan Adkisson, Jr.			Anne & Jonathan Adkisson
Eric Tyler Anderson			Bill & Liz Anderson
Barbara Ann Balesteri			Mary Balesteri, Harry & Josie Ewing
Meredith Kathryn Emma Bates			Laura & John Pattillo
Sylvia Chantal Bingham			Francoise Blusseau & Stephen Bingham
Sean Stephen Bourke			Beryl Bourke
Laura Alicia Bruce			Mike & Louise Bruce
Seána Canavan			Tonia & Sean Canavan
Matthew David Cevallos			Moe & Gloria Cevallos
Blake Coffman			Ellen & Fred Coffman
Kevin C. Craft			Debbie & Curtis Craft
Bradley Leroy Epperson			Kristine Epperson
Jacob Samuel Freeman			Michael Freeman & Lisa Klairmont
Jessica Marie Hildreth			Julie & Ed Taylor
Alexandra Hopping			Mark & Kathryn Hopping
Charli Mae James			Samuel Davis-Flake
Ashley Ann Johnson			Philip Johnson
Kristen Michele Kearns			Dr. Carol Kearns
Jessica Ann Kellar			
			Jacqueline Summerfield
Joanne Rae Kline			Donna & Sylvan Kline
Ryan W. McKnight			Bob & Leesa Tuley
Peter McLaughlin			Eve Pell
Sean Michael Morgan, Jr.			Sean & Claire Morgan
Anthony Dino Nay			Bob & Diana Nay
Kevin Connor Olaeta			Lonnie Olaeta
Ryan Thomas Osorio			Roxanne Osorio
Duke Allan Petty			Diane & Lee Petty
Anthony Joseph Rios			Barb Curtice
Steven Rodriguez			Rafael & Alex Rodriguez
Carrie Jean Esler Rollison			Judith Esler
Benjamin Rosenthal			Robert Rosenthal
Anthony Salvatore Santa Maria			Pam Santa Maria
Benjamin P. Scheuenstuhl			Maureen & Heinz Scheuenstuhl
Ellen Alexandra Scott			Carol Scott
David Paul Seregin			Sonya & Paul Seregin
Matthew Paul Seregin			Sonya & Paul Seregin
Marc Paul Seregin			Sonya & Paul Seregin
Robbie Severdia			Deedee Severdia
Dakota Fay Standley			Holly Somers
Zackary Spencer Stuart			Michelle Stuart
Meghan Rae Teresi			James Teresi & Lynda Cardwell
Karl Ingemar Thunstrom			Avghi & Bert Thunstrom
Aurora Alice Turnbaugh			Sandra Maxwell & Kevin Turnbaugh
Jesse R. Venegas			Brent R. Venegas
John Elliot Vipiana			Lisa Vipiana, John Vipiana
Phoebe Stewart Washer			Drew Washer, David Washer
Brittney Marie Weaver			Janine Schengel
			Lee Weldon
Craig Weidon			
Craig Weldon Brekhus Alan Williams			Catherine & Scott Williams

TCF . . . Unconditional Caring

My Son Philip died in August 1994, when he was 26 years-old. He died by suicide, influenced by a genetic illness, bipolar mood disorder (manic depression). I well remember how I flinched inwardly when people began referring to Philip's having "committed suicide." It seemed to diminish my wonderful son, to make him into what he never was: a kind of criminal. I wanted people to remember the beauty of his soul, yet what they focused on was the shocking way in which he died.

So it has been personally important to me to learn that TCF has made a change in the language it uses related to suicide. TCF now uses the terms "died of suicide" or "died by suicide" in all publications and presentations. The new, emotionally neutral language helps to lift the burden of stigma from all of us whose children or siblings died by suicide. It gives us strength and helps us heal.

If your child or sibling has died in one of society's less "acceptable" ways-by suicide, murder, alcoholism, from a drug overdose, AIDS or sexually transmitted diseases or in prison—do know that TCF does not accept society's stigmas. There is no room for blame or condemnation when all our hearts are aching for the children we no longer have. We honor your child and your grief, no matter the cause of death.

Similarly, if you are a parent or sibling who may feel "other" in our oft-judgmental society, please know that you will not be "other" in TCF. We welcome you with understanding and compassion, whatever your age, your race, your ethnicity, whether you are rich or poor, married or single, gay or straight, whatever your religion or lack of religion. We welcome you.

And if you have endured the most terrible tragedy, if you have had more than one child or sibling die or have lost all your children or siblings, you are welcome. Many people are terrified that we are "contagious" because the worst nightmare has become a reality in our lives. They don't want to believe what we know: that neither we, nor they, can keep our children safe and alive. So they avoid us. And they especially may avoid you who have had more than one child or sibling or all your children die, because the horror of what has happened in your lives terrifies them. We welcome you, and we honor your courage and want to be helpful to you in your healing. We offer our compassion and understanding to all parents and siblings and other family members who are on this very difficult journey into healing. May the unconditional acceptance one finds in TCF someday be mirrored in a wiser and more tolerant society.

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

A Native American Lesson in Grief

One of the most common questions that family and friends ask is how long does it take to "get over" the death of a loved one. Native American culture holds many lessons about grief and its duration. The Native American legend of the Caterpillar people holds lessons for us all in grief. This legend is traditionally told during funeral services of the Shoshone.

"Long ago, there were two caterpillar people who loved each other very much. When the caterpillar man died the caterpillar woman was overcome by her grief. In her remorse she withdrew into herself and pulled her sorrow around her like a shawl. She walked and mourned for a year and because the world is a circle she ended up where she had started. The Creator looked down upon her and

told her that she had suffered too long. 'Now,' he told her, 'is the time for you to step into a new world of beauty.' He clapped his hands and the caterpillar woman burst forth as a butterfly. Her world was now full of beauty and color." *

Many Native American tribes see the butterfly as a symbol of everlasting life. The Wilik-wilik waashaashut or the Butterfly Dance enacts this legend. Young women line up single file and pull their shawls over their heads to cover them. This represents the caterpillar in the cocoon. The drummers sing and drum sadly. After the head dancer returns where she begun the dancers open their arms and display the brightly colored shawls. The song becomes more upbeat and the women dance to represent the fluttering of the wings.

Another saying of the Warm Spring Native American tribe is to compare the death of a loved one to a land-slide. "When your road is blocked by a landslide, you clear it by taking away one rock at a time." In a time, when we want definite answers or a quick fix, we should heed the wisdom these legends impart and let us work through grief at our own pace.

Trudy Weathersby, RN, M.Ed. is an active licensed Registered Nurse and the Death and Dying Online Guide for about.com at http://dying. about.com/health/dying/mbody.htm

* Reference: Tafoya, Terry, "The Widow as Butterfly, Innovative Approaches for Bereavement Based on Native American Tradition," The Director, February, 1998.

THE GIFT OF SOMEONE WHO LISTENS

Those of us who have traveled a while Along this path called grief Need to stop and remember that mile, That first mile of no relief.

It wasn't the person with answers Who told us of ways to deal. It wasn't the one who talked and talked That helped us start to heal.

Think of the friends who quietly sat And held our hands in theirs. The ones who let us talk and talk And hugged away our tears.

We need to always remember That more than the words we speak, It's the gift of someone who listens That most of us desperately seek.

NANCY MYERHOLTZ

TCF Waterville/Toledo, OH



Love Gifts

The following love gifts were received for March—April:

With apologies, correction to our January-February is-

Donor/s: Becky Oken Child: Joey Ciatti

Dates:

"Remembering you, my dear son, on your 53nd Birthday. Forever Love & Wonderful memories of your life."

(Received too late for the Jan/Feb Newsletter)

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

Dates:

"Our beloved son, brother and uncle, we will keep you always in our hearts. Love, Mother & Dad, Chris, Lesley & Ireland, Ireland David & Michaelanne Daly"

Donor/s: Therese & Richard Pedemonte

Child: Luke Pedemonte

Dates:

Donor/s: Mark Rosengarden Child: Jamie Aaron Rosengarden

Dates:

"Happy Birthday, Jamie."

Donor/s: Tony & Fiona Preston

Child: Amy Marie Tharp

Dates:

Donor/s: Brad and Genie Foon

Child: Neel Thomas Foon

Dates:

"Dear Neil, we honor your life and legacy on this 7th anniversary. As time goes forward we carry you with us in our hearts and our everyday lives. You are forever missed by all of us.

Travel well dear son."

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

GRIEF IS LIKE A RIVER

My grief is like a river –
I have to let it flow,
But I myself determine
Just where the banks will go.
Some days the current takes me
In waves of guilt and pain,
But there are always quiet pools
Where I can rest again.

I crash on rocks of anger –
My faith seems faint indeed –
But there are other swimmers
Who know that what I need
Are loving hands to hold me
When the waters are too swift,
And someone kind to listen
When I just seem to drift.

Grief's river is like a process Of relinquishing the past. By swimming in Hope's channel, I'll reach the shore at last.

> Cynthia G. Kelley TCF Cincinnati, OH

You all know that I have been sustained throughout my life by three saving graces - my family, my friends, and a faith in the power of resilience and hope. These graces have carried me through difficult times and they have brought more joy to the good times than I ever could have imagined.

~ Elizabeth Edwards

"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

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.



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



MAR—APR, 2024
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Dated Material - Please Deliver Promptly



47TH TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE

New Orleans, LA New Orleans, LA, United States

JULY 12, 2024 @ 8:00 AM - JULY 14, 2024 @ 1:00 PM



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