



# *The Compassionate Friends*

## *Marin County Chapter*

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



**May—June, 2024 ISSUE**

**Vol 45, No. 3**

**#1184**

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

#### **Chapter Leader:**

Eileen Rusky  
erusky@gmail.com

#### **Facilitator:**

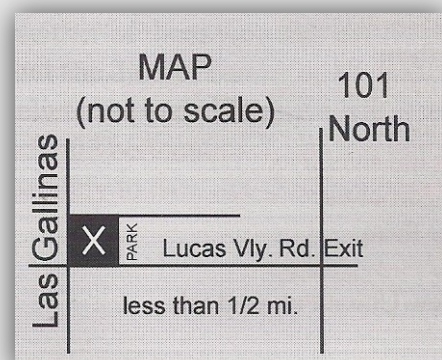
Mark Rosengarden

#### **TCF Marin Monthly Meetings:**

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. The final meeting at this location will be June 17, 2024.

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.



As of January 2025, The Compassionate Friends of Marin newsletters will be available to everyone online. The print version will be available on a subscription basis only.

TCF Marin is a non-profit, all volunteer organization. The cost for printing the newsletter is \$3000 a year plus mailing. The printed version is the same as the online version except the "Our Children Remembered" pages include the full names, birthdates & anniversary dates of all children as listed by the parents when they joined TCF. Due to privacy concerns this information is redacted from the online version.

If you would like to continue to receive the printed version, please complete the form below and send in a \$20.00 per year or more subscription

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Child \_\_\_\_\_

Mail the information above along with your donation (check) made payable to TCF Marin to: TCF/Marin c/o Newsletter, P.O. Box 150935, San Rafael, CA 94915-0935 .



#### **Meeting Calendar**

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

Monday, May 20, 2024  
Monday, June 17, 2024  
Monday, July 15, 2024  
Monday, August 19, 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  
survivorsof suicide.com  
griefspeaks.com  
[friendsforsurvival.org](http://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 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday 11a-12p. Pre-registration required.  
· Marin and SF (415) 526-5699  
· Sonoma (707) 931-7299  
Email: [griefsupport@bythebayhealth.org](mailto: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.friendsfordurval.org  
Ph.: 1.800.646.7322

## Mother's Day Floods the Heart with Memories

I remember the day you were born; it was the Wednesday after Mother's Day in 1967. The first time I held you and looked at your sweet face, your rosebud mouth, tiny nose, big, soft eyes and long eyelashes, my heart was forever captured. You wrapped your little hand around my finger and looked at me as if you'd known me forever. For over an hour, silent tears trickled down my face. An unexplained sadness swept over me. I blamed it on the war of the day in the Middle East, Vietnam, the mess we mortals had made of the world. But mostly it was fear for your future in an uncertain, mean world-how to keep you safe yet not smother you. In that hour I came to see the deepest meaning of a Mother's love.

Last year was my first Mother's Day without you. I went to the cedar chest you gave me and took out all the Mother's Day cards you had ever given me. I put them on the piano. The hand painted cards, the little hand plaque, the carefully written cards and finally the many cards you selected from age 12 until your 35th year. It was a painful day, a heartbreaking time for me. I thought of myself as a childless Mother.

Will I torture myself again this year? I don't think so. This year I will quietly and thankfully remember that you were in my life for over 35 years. I will reflect on the fact that the single defining moment in my life was your birth. I reframed my life on that day. Had you never lived, I would be a different person today. Learning to put the needs and wants of my only child ahead of all else has made me a better person. I loved being your Mom, watching you learn to walk and talk, grow and learn. Answering your questions, helping you with your projects and studies, encouraging you, talking with you, candidly discussing your strengths and teaching you to capitalize on those strengths while minimizing the impact of any weaknesses.

Gradually you became self-sufficient, kind and gentle, concerned about others, soft-spoken and quietly independent. You learned to keep your own counsel, lend a hand when needed and see people with your heart but evaluate situations with your mind. Intuitively I cautioned you against violence, alcohol, drugs, meaningless pursuits, dysfunctional and negative people. In the process of helping to form who you were and how you perceived the world, I became a better person. You became the man that every Mother wants her son to be: strong, self-sufficient, kind, loving, balanced, mature and accomplished.

You are my son. And while we no longer inhabit the same plane, the wonders and joy of our time together on this earth will sustain me always. While I live there will always be silent tears of overwhelming sadness, but these are tempered by the wonderful memories we shared. In my heart I hear your wishes for a Happy Mother's Day.

Annette Mennen Baldwin  
TCF, Katy, TX

---

"A feeling of pleasure or solace can be so hard to find when you are in the depths of your grief. Sometimes it's the little things that help get you through the day. You may think your comforts sound ridiculous to others, but there is nothing ridiculous about finding one little thing to help you feel good in the midst of pain and sorrow!"

---

— Elizabeth Berrien, Creative Grieving: A Hip Chick's Path from Loss to Hope

---

No one ever told me that grief felt so much like fear. - C.S. Lewis

# Carol's Corner

by Carol Kearns, PhD  
author of "Sugar Cookies and a Nightmare"



## Columns for The Compassionate Friends

I have found great solace volunteering for The Compassionate Friends, a hard-working group that supports families seeking "the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child" ([www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)). My columns discuss topics of continuing concern in the Marin County CA newsletter. Please visit my newly updated website at [www.carolKearns.com](http://www.carolKearns.com). - Carol

### The Dance of Life and Death

I just became a grandmother for the first time. Early Saturday morning our son called to say his wife was in the hospital with labor pains that were five minutes apart. After calling the airlines, my husband and I darted for the airport to catch the next flight to San Diego. While joyfully awaiting our flight we received a message that one of our dear friends was nearing death after a long battle with ovarian cancer. We were completely unprepared for the immediate flood of contrasting feelings: Devastation over hearing we would never see our friend again collided head on with the ecstasy we had felt only moments before.

The mysterious weaving of life and death...a tapestry none of us can fully understand. Our friend had battled cancer with a dignity and strength we all admired. She had also just become a new grandmother with a little grandson that made her world complete whenever she held him. She had set a goal to be at her daughter's wedding this summer. She was experiencing life's great joys when her life ended.

I thought about Isabel Allende's words in her beautiful book, "Paula", as she prepared her daughter's body after death, gently washing and anointing her while at the same time welcoming her new granddaughter into the world. When I first read her book, I was fascinated by her insight into these seemingly contrasting situations. She didn't see it that way. "We celebrated the gifts [Paula] had given us in life, and all of us said goodbye and prayed in our own way. As the hours went by, something solemn and sacred filled the room, just as on the occasion of Andrea's (the granddaughter's) birth. The two moments are much alike: birth and death are made of the same fabric. The air became more and more still; we moved slowly, in order not to disturb our hearts' response. We were filled with Paula's spirit, as if we were all one being and there was no separation among us: life and death were joined. For a few hours, we experienced that reality the soul knows, absent time or space."

Many of us were in a joyful time of life before our own child died. A new promotion, a son accepted into the college of his choice, a fun family vacation, new home

or recent graduation - events like these were in full swing, and then our child was taken from us. I was in the midst of an exhilarating children's weekend that had been planned for two months with my friends and their children when my daughter Kristen was swept out to sea. The intensity of our joy only moments before was washed away by an intense sorrow. How could that happen?

As I look into my newborn grandson's eyes I can't help but wonder what life will ask of him. I know he will experience both pain and happiness, for that is what life is about. I know that at times, these emotions may also collide for him as they did for us. We can not always protect him. I only hope that with our love we can give him the courage and confidence not to fear but instead to grow from these holy mysteries of life.

---

### MOTHER'S DAY, 1981

The words can not begin to  
Tell of feelings formed through  
Years of Mothering.

Michel and Kristen -  
Spirits so close, bodies so far -  
Hurt cushioned by love.  
Love always in bloom.

So let us share today of love.  
For love holds us all as one.

My love, Bob

---

### MOTHER'S DAY, 1991

Full of thoughts, dreams -  
Fulfilled and frustrated, yet  
Rich...rich with knowing and  
Feeling that your life, and their  
Lives were and are complete.  
Filled with joy, memories, and  
Much, much more to come.

My love, Bob

# Our Children Remembered

## May

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

“Now something so sad has hold of us that the breath leaves and we can't even cry.”  
 — Charles Bukowski, You Get So Alone at Times That it Just Makes Sense

Guilt is perhaps the most painful companion to death. - Elisabeth Kubler-Ross



# Our Children Remembered

## June

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

## Father's Day Is Still a Time for Celebrating . . .

A long time has passed since I've enjoyed a holiday—or for that matter any special occasion. With Father's Day coming up shortly, I've decided that this year I'm celebrating.

The kids used to love when special occasions came along. I can still remember Stef's eighth birthday, only three months before her death, and how proud she was when we told her she could invite her best friends over for a birthday party. She wore her prettiest blue trimmed party dress with the lace ruffles.

The games they played still stick in my mind. There was "pin the tail on the donkey" and then "Simon Says." I remember clothes flying everywhere in a contest to see which child could put on a complete set of clothes fastest over her party clothes. I remember the hotdogs, punch and cake, the party favors. I remember Stef's giggles.

The memories also wander back to the party our family threw for Stephen's fifth birthday, only three days before the accident which also claimed his life. I still have the picture in my mind of that goofy orange cap someone had given Steve. He loved it, but it was at least two sizes too small. When he tried to put it on, the bill of the cap was up and Stephen flashed us one of those impish grins that reminds you of Spanky and Our Gang.

As I'm writing this, the tears are flowing down my cheeks remembering the good times we had together. A lot of things changed when the kids died. Christmas, Easter, birthdays all became days other people celebrated. But not us.

I've done a lot of thinking since then. I know Stef and Steve are in a better place than I could ever imagine and that every day is a holiday for them. In my mind, I think Stef and Stephen would be sad if they felt their Mom and Dad couldn't celebrate life anymore.

Pat and I now have another son, Christopher, plus we have our fourth child on the way. We're trying to rebuild our lives and I feel we have been blessed along the way. Of course, Christopher is too young to understand Father's Day, but even without him here, I would still consider celebrating Father's Day.

I can still remember the Father's Day a couple of years before Stef and Stephen died. With their mom, they had searched all over for something special for me, finally deciding on a T-Shirt that said "World's Coolest Dad." I still wear that now faded shirt occasionally despite the many grass stains and grease marks.

When Father's Day arrives, I think I'm going to pull out that old T-Shirt and wear it.

*I'm going to lay down out in the grass, letting the warm breeze hit me. And I'm going to pretend I'm being caressed by Stef and Steve. I'm going to remember . . . and I'm going to celebrate!!!*

Wayne Loder

TCF Lakes Area, MI  
In Memory of Stephanie and Stephen Loder

---

## Let Us Not Look For You

Let us not look for you only in memory,  
Where we would grow lonely without you.  
You would want us to find you in presence,  
Beside us when beauty brightens,  
When kindness glows  
And music echoes eternal tones.  
When orchids brighten the earth,  
Darkest winter has turned to spring;  
May this dark grief flower with hope  
In every heart that loves you.  
May you continue to inspire us:  
To enter each day with a generous heart.  
To serve the call of courage and love  
Until we see your beautiful face again  
In that land where there is no more separation,  
Where all tears will be wiped from our mind,  
And where we will never lose you again.

JOHN O'DONOHUE  
Excerpt from, 'On the Death of the Beloved,'

---

## A Tear Fell

I rode by your school by chance today  
And I just happened to look that way.  
The boys all had their ball caps on;  
then I remembered my son was gone.  
Just when I thought I was doing so well,  
Before I knew it - a tear fell.  
Then on Sunday as I sat in church  
I looked around and missed you so much.  
I saw other boys in their Sunday suits  
And I remembered you were just as cute.  
People all think I'm doing so well;  
They don't know today - a tear fell.  
When I'm reminded of what might have been  
It gets too hard to hold it in.  
When life will catch me off my guard,  
That's when I seem to be hit so hard.  
It seems all roads lead back to you  
As I take each day and try to get through.  
They say time makes it better, but I cannot tell.  
I only know today - a tear fell.

Carolyn Bryan  
TCF Orange Park, FL



## Love Gifts

### The following love gifts were received for May—June:

Donor/s: Shirlee Newman  
 Child: Richard C. Mannheimer, Jr.  
 Dates:  
 "In my heart forever. Your loving mom."

Donor/s: Shirlee Newman  
 Child: Michael Allen Mannheimer  
 Dates:

Donor/s: Annette Broussard  
 Child: Larry Antoine Boyd  
 Dates:

### The Piano Sits Silent

I etch her name in the dust.  
 Run my hands over the keyboard,  
     too long untouched  
     by the pianist;  
 The one no longer  
     physically here,  
 who played the songs,  
     badly at times,  
     yet unstoppable in  
 her need to make music.  
 As if it was her mission  
     to get it right.  
 As if she knew there was little time  
     to master the melody.  
 So she played and played.

### 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

Melancholy tunes  
 that spoke of lives gone too soon.  
 I would call to her,  
 "You're playing too loud,  
 I can't hear myself think."  
 If I could just take back those words,  
     for I long to hear my  
     beloved child play the music,  
 that once rang through these halls.  
 Those uneven strains would be  
 the sweetest music to my ears.  
 I touch the ivories and hear  
     the foreign sound of this long  
     silent instrument.  
 And remember my precious child,  
     remember the joy  
     her efforts brought her...  
 Remembering, remembering....  
 Though my tears fall gently,  
     my heart smiles as I  
 recall the sweet sounds of her life.  
 And even as the piano sits silent,  
     My memories resound  
 and I recall the love, always the love.

Cathy L. Seehuetter  
 TCF St. Paul, MN

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

Grief is not a disorder, a disease or a sign of weakness. It  
 is an emotional, physical and spiritual necessity, the price  
 you pay for love. The only cure for grief is to grieve. - Earl  
 Grollman

One cannot get through life without pain...What we can do  
 is choose how to use the pain life presents to us. - Bernie  
 S. Siegel

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**

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

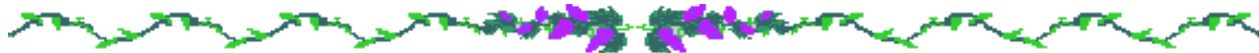
The Compassionate Friends, Marin County Chapter  
P. O. Box 150935  
San Rafael, CA 94915



**MAY—JUN, 2024**

Copyright © 2024 - All Rights Reserved  
The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

**Dated Material - Please Deliver Promptly**



*Compassion*  
FILLS THE AIR

**47TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE**  
**JULY 12-14, 2024 | NEW ORLEANS, LA**

**MORE INFORMATION** **REGISTER NOW**

TCF 47<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2024  
New Orleans, LA

Sponsored by The Marin  
County Chapter of The  
Compassionate Friends  
[www.tcfmarin.org](http://www.tcfmarin.org)

