



The Compassionate Friends

Marin County Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies



September—October, 2024 ISSUE

Vol 45, 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:

The Compassionate Friends of Marin meets from 7:30 to 9, at Christ Presbyterian Church in their main sanctuary.

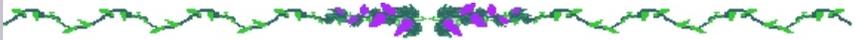
620 Del Ganado Rd.
San Rafael, CA

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:

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 only.

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 donation.



Name _____

Address _____

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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

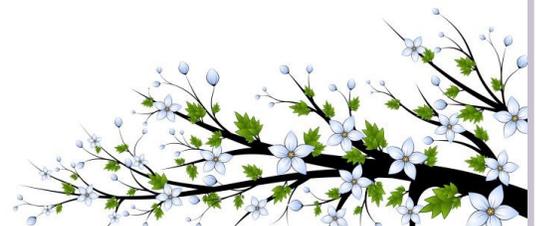
Whose is this cherub smile
that on the mantel rests –
forever silent lips
and eyes of brown?
I knew him once
too short a time
a lifetime ago.

Excerpt from "A Lifetime Ago"
by Heinz Scheuenstuhl, 2009

Meeting Calendar

Third Monday of the Month:

- Monday, September 16, 2024
- Monday, October 21, 2024
- Monday, November 18, 2024
- Monday, December 16, 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:

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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.friendsfordurival.org

Ph.: 1.800.646.7322

Our Many Special Days

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

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

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

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

Gerry Hall
TCF South Central, MO

FALL

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

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

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

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

Peggy Hartzell
TCF Ambler, PA

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

PTSD and the Bereaved Parent

I was once asked by a bereaved parent if the death of a child can cause PTSD (Post-traumatic Stress Disorder). My answer was, "ABSOLUTELY!" The essential feature of this disorder is the development of characteristic symptoms following exposure to an extreme traumatic stressor. What could be more extreme for parents than the death of their child? This is the greatest nightmare of any parent.

In this article I will identify the criteria needed to make this diagnosis and in the next newsletter, I will address ways parents can be helped. For grieving parents, PTSD can be especially severe when the death of their child was of human design, as in murder or suicide. This disorder can occur at any age including childhood and can develop in individuals without any predisposing conditions.

The bible for mental health clinicians is the DSM-IV. The criteria that validate this diagnosis in a bereaved parent are:

The death of one's child as experienced by the parent is considered a traumatic event and (2) due to the death, the parent has experienced intense fear, helplessness, or horror. In children this may be expressed instead by disorganized or agitated behavior.

The trauma of the death is persistently re-experienced in one (or more) of the following ways: (1) Recurrent and intrusive distressing recollections of the event. In young children, repetitive play may occur where themes or aspects of the death are acted out. (2) Distressing dreams and with children this may occur without recognizable content. (3) Flashbacks of the event including a sense of reliving the experience. (4) Intense psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that resemble the death. (5) Physiological reactivity when exposed to these cues.

Avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and a general numbing of responsiveness that wasn't experienced before the child's death that includes three or more of the following: (1) Avoidance of thoughts, feelings or conversations associated with death. (2) Avoidance of activities, places or people associated. (3) Inability to recall an important aspect of the death. (4) Markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities. (5) Feelings of detachment or estrangement (6) A restricted range of affect (e.g. unable to have loving feelings). (7) A sense of a foreshortened future.

Persistent symptoms of increased arousal that includes two or more of the following: (1) Sleep difficulties. (2) Irritability or anger outbursts. (3) Difficulty concentrating. (4) Hypervigilance. (5) Exaggerated startle response.

Duration of the disturbances in B, C, and D last more than one month.

The disturbances cause significant distress in areas of functioning from social to career.

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



Our Children Remembered—September

Child	Bereaved
Daniel Zacharia Ashkenazy	Pamela Ashkenazy, Dan Ashkenazy
Sean Behan	Gerri & Robert Behan
Sylvia Chantal Bingham	Francoise Blusseau & Stephen Bingham
Jason Bohlke	Adam Bohlke & Britt Rosenmayr
Jacob Westley Brumbaugh	Mark & Deborah Brumbaugh
Jessica Margaret Campbell Buschu	Kathy & Chuck Campbell
Oksana Collins	Susan Collins
Michael Kai Cornett	Karen & Jeff Marozick
Charlotte Amelia Crowl	Denise & Dan Crowl
Scanlan Derrick	Susan Derrick
Chelsea Faith Dolan	Colleen Dolan
Dylan Simon Duncan Wright	Mara Duncan
Jacob Samuel Freeman	Michael Freeman & Lisa Klairmont
Errol Friedman	Jeff & Barbara Friedman
Savannah Louise Hill	Andrea Hill
Alecia Anne Marie Hopper	Constance Blake, Bill Hopper
Hanna Rosa Hotchkiss	Marina Hotchkiss
Dana John Hudson	Diana Hudson
Justin Edward Keaton, Jr.	Billy Farrer
Grace Perin Kuhzarani	Rachel Kepp & Ali Kuhzarani
Evan Porter Larsen	Libby McQuiston
Chris Leach	Marcie & Don Leach
Lisa Messik MacPhee	Robert MacPhee
Athena Maguire	Alexandra Maguire
Fernando Martinez	Don & Maria Pazour
Timothy Patrick McBride	Lois Kortum & George McBride
Douglas Duncan McGeehon	Patricia McGeehon
Daniel McLaughlin	Eve Pell
Marci Eilene Meyring	Gary & Natalie Meyring
Lauren Nelson	John & Vicki Nelson
Diego Ruiz Palomino	Celia Ruiz & Michael Palomino
Clara Struthers Payne	Pegan Brooke
Nicholas Plaskon	John & Berit Lelas
Joshua Adam Portnoy	Bob & Gunilla Portnoy
Kareem Rafeh	Hafez & Nada Rafeh
Daniel James Reed	Diane Reed
Carolyn Reichling	Michelle Miller
Lara Rachel Rusky	Edward & Eileen Rusky
Benjamin P. Scheuenstuhl	Maureen & Heinz Scheuenstuhl
Nicolas Simard	Julie Chabot & François Simard
Vinnie J. Simons	Lori Jones
William Kreitzberg Spinrad	Caroline Kreitzberg
Emmeline Jane Vita	Pamela Vita
Emmeline "Emme" Jane Vita	Ashley Keightley
Jessica Young	Barbara Young
Malika Ziani	Phyllis Callahan

Our Children Remembered—October

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

THE REASON FOR TCF MEETINGS

One could ask, "Why go and listen to the woes of other people when it is easier to get wrapped up in our own?" It is not to compare tragedies, nor assess the right or wrong means of grieving, nor to pressure or complicate or confuse a bereaved parent with timetables of grief. This is not the reasoning behind TCF meetings.

When a child of a family dies, the emotional pain can be intense. It is tempting at times to try to run either into solitude or avoidance. A balance is needed to survive and live more than a resigned existence. Finding a way isn't easy when the "rest of the world" rushes by, taking little notice that our life has changed.

The monthly meetings of The Compassionate Friends is a special time we can set aside to gain and maintain our balance. We need a lot of encouragement to endure and experience our emotions and to express ourselves while grieving. Coming to a meeting can help alleviate the feeling of being alone in sorrow. The environment of other bereaved parents offers a means of keeping in touch with reality, in which there can be a sharing and mutual understanding. There is sustained support knowing that others are willing to acknowledge that though a child's song might be over, the melody of memories will remain woven throughout the remainder of our lives.

N. Hunt
TCF Sioux Falls, SD

The Death Anniversary

On June 1, 2007, my 82-year old aunt unexpectedly and suddenly died. She and I had always talked frequently, even though she lived in Washington and I live in Texas. The last time I saw her was at my Dad's funeral in 2000. But we kept in touch, and shared a mutual interest in the family genealogy.

Many nights I would call her and we would talk for hours about the death of my son, Todd. She would always reassure me that I was the best mother a child could have. Her opinion meant much to me as she raised three sons who became very responsible, loving adults. Her life was well lived, her advice always sound.

In the spring of 2006, my aunt lost her husband of 60 years. Her three sons helped her for a while then she suggested that they get on with their lives. Moms are like that. But she and I talked about her loss, my loss and the differences between the two.

When the first anniversary of my uncle's death was approaching, I sent her a card. I wanted her to know that I remembered this sad anniversary date. I wrote about her husband, their relationship, how much I admired them, and that I was keeping her in my thoughts and prayers on this sad day.

She e-mailed me right after she received the card. She thanked me over and over for the card and reiterated her absolute certainty that I was a good mother for Todd. Her sons had called to talk with her. However, they didn't bring up the anniversary, even though it was obvious that they were thinking about it. "Men are like that", she told me. Her sisters called and talked to her about her husband, the anniversary and more. My dad's sisters are special people. I'd like to think that I have learned from them. We must talk about our feelings; death cannot be ignored. If one of us breaks down and cries, the "girls" are there with an understanding that transcends distance. They listen; they talk

about the loss, the life, and the sadness. They encourage us to take our loved one with us. That's what they did when they lost children, parents and their husbands to death.

Bereaved parents understand the importance of death anniversaries to the family, especially to each parent. When we have lost a child, that date takes on a significance that cannot be measured. That is a date that we will never forget. A month before the date, bereaved parents begin anticipating the anniversary date. Anxiety sets in. Depression can sweep over us. We count days until the date finally arrives. Then we go with it. We let the day take us where it will. We receive cards from our Compassionate Friends. We receive some telephone calls. Sometimes our families call or send a card. Sometimes friends come over and talk. Sometimes we hear from very few people and find that to be just fine. This is a day for us, the parents who have endured the worst, to reflect, to cry, to remember, to honor our child.

Each month I read the names and death anniversary dates of the children of our Compassionate Friends. Each month I sigh, shed tears for the upcoming pain and then begin to edit the newsletter. Yet each month I feel as if, somehow, we are each lightening the burden of the others. Our presence, our concern, our acceptance of each grief journey....no matter how that road twists and winds, are meant to give each parent the light of hope.

We don't walk this road alone. We are connected to each other with an invisible golden thread that touches each heart. This is our journey.

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

The Golden Gate Bridge: Still Beautiful

On May 23rd, 1995 my son jumped off the Golden Gate Bridge [in San Francisco]. Tempting as it is to believe he'd still be alive had there been a barrier, I think it would be naive. In my despair I wanted to blame the psychiatrist who refused to see him because he'd missed some appointments, the girlfriend who'd ended their relationship just two days prior to his jump, the crisis center at the hospital where he'd gone for help and who could have kept him had they read the signs right, but didn't; myself, (especially myself), for flawed parenting. But never did I blame the bridge! In the end it was his decision. In his farewell note, he said he was going to electrocute himself. What made him change his mind? I don't know, but I believe it was the deed, not the method, that he was determined to execute. People who really want to die find a way. So while a barrier would deter suicides on the bridge, it would hardly deter suicides. Should we eliminate tall buildings, parking structures, automobile exhaust pipes, ropes? In spite of very sad memories, I still appreciate the beauty of the bridge. People from all over the world enjoy the vistas from this compelling structure. Is it fair to impair the visibility in a futile effort to control deaths from the bridge? The bridge is for the living, too.

Carol Sheldon
TCF Marin County



Love Gifts

The following love gifts were received for September—October:

(With Apologies for not being included in the July/August issue)

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: Frauke Kozar
Child: Nino Angelo Bosco
Dates:

"My fight for justice will never cease - Forever in our hearts - Never Forgotten - 4ever mom"
(Received too late for July/August newsletter)

Donor/s: George McBride & Lois Kortum
Child: Timothy McBride
Dates:
"Our Beloved"

Donor/s: Diane Sielert
Child: Richard Sielert
Dates:

Donor/s: Shirlee Newman
Child: Richard Mannheimer Jr.
Dates: 6/27/1961 - 8/22/2010
Child: Michael Mannheimer
Dates:
"In my heart forever."

Donor/s: Colleen Dolan
Child: Chelsea Faith Dolan
Dates:

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

Donor/s: Richard & Theresa Pedemonte
Child: Luke Pedemonte
Dates:

Donor/s: Becky Oken
Child: Joey Ciatti
Dates:

GIFTS TO THE CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL FUND:

Donor/s: Radha Stern
Child: Christopher Robin Hotchkiss
Dates:

Donor/s: Max Rosengarden
Donor/s: Jane Lenoir
Donor/s: Cecelia Shaw
Child: Jamie Rosengarden
Dates:

Donor/s: Barbara Meislin
Child: Lori Meislin
Dates:
"In Honor of her incredible friend Radha Stern and her 89th birthday"

Donor/s: Philip Johnson
Child: Ashley Anne Johnson
Dates:



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
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San Rafael, CA 94915



SEP—OCT, 2024

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Dated Material - Please Deliver Promptly



"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."

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