

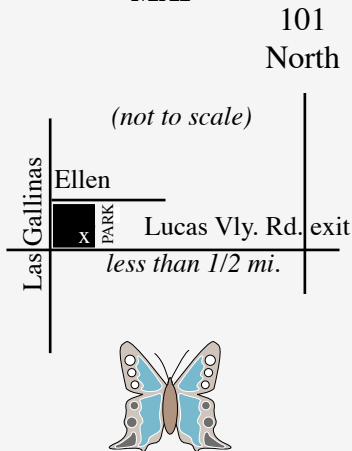
A non-profit self-help organization offering friendship and support to families who have experienced the loss of a child

Meeting Site

**Lucas Valley Community
Church Conference Room
2000 Las Gallinas at Lucas
Valley Rd. in San Rafael
3rd Tuesdays of the month
at 7:30 P.M. (7pm if first time)**

Directions Exit 101 at **Lucas Valley Rd.** and go west. Turn right onto **Las Gallinas** and make an immediate right onto **Ellen**, then a right turn into the parking lot at the signage. The Conference Room is located in the first building next to the parking lot. For more info, call our TCF Hotline 415/457-3123. Please call prior to your first meeting, so that you might meet with the facilitator before the meeting begins.

MAP



San Francisco Chapter:

Community Meeting Room/
Taravel Police Station at 2345-24th
Ave. (near Taravel) in S.F. on the
2nd Wednesday of the month at 7:
30 pm. For more information,
call Audre at 650/359-7928 or
alhallow@comcast.net.



*Georgia sporting a
"butterfly" theme shirt
for the occasion.*

The Honorees:

Georgia Alioto and Genesse Gentry

On May 17th, the TCF Marin Steering Committee recognized Georgia and Genesse at the Station House Cafe in Point Reyes for their combined years of commitment to our chapter. These two women (and their spouses) have been the "rock" for TCF Marin...

Finding no source of support for their grieving process after the death of their daughter Alana in 1978, Georgia and her husband John founded the Marin Chapter with the guidance of TCF National, other bereaved parents and community members. Sixty people attended the first meeting, indicating, unfortunately, the dire need for our Chapter. Georgia both facilitated and published the newsletter, along with help from Carol Kearns and Marianne Lino. The responsibility was tremendous, but Georgia persevered when she observed parents climb from the depth of pain to survival.

These many years later, and after the loss of a son, John, Jr. in 2005, Georgia continues her commitment to TCF Marin with outreach to newly bereaved parents. She says, "It is part of my life. When you are in something as long as I have been, it's part of you. I'm like a mother hen; I have to make sure all my little chickens are fine." When asked why our Marin chapter has succeeded while others have ceased to be, her response was - in one word - Genesse!

Genesse and Bill Gentry arrived at TCF Marin in 1991 after the death of their daughter Lori. She facilitated the meetings in Marin and SF from 1993-2000, was co-chapter leader for 2 years, and then chapter leader for 9 years. In 2000, she became the Regional Coordinator, overseeing 19 chapters in Northern CA and Brookings, OR. Out of her grief blossomed her outstanding creativity in two published poetry books: *Stars in the Deepest Night* and *Catching the Light: Coming Back to Life after the Death of a Child*.

Genesse was highly instrumental in convincing Marin Open Space to designate a small area off the path by Corte Madera creek for our Children's Memorial site.

All of the many bereaved parents who have had to navigate this minefield over the past 25+ years sincerely appreciate and admire these two dedicated and caring women who have helped bring solace, comfort and hope into our lives.



*Genesse holding a crystal
butterfly paperweight that both
honorees received.*



July's Child

Sonoma County TCF Chapter

If anyone is interested in restarting the Sonoma County TCF chapter, contact the former chapter leader, *Anne McHugh*, at 707-762-8517.

Fireworks race toward heaven
Brilliant colors in the sky.
Their splendor ends in seconds
On this evening in July.
"Her birthday is Saturday,"
I whisper with a sigh.
She was born this month,
She loved this month
And she chose this month to die.
Like the bright and beautiful fireworks
Glowing briefly in the dark
They are gone too soon, and so was she
Having been, and left her mark.
A glorious incandescent life,
A catalyst, a spark...
Her being gently lit my path
And softened all things stark.
The July birth, the July death of
my happy summer child
Marked a life too brief that ended
Without rancor, without guile.
Like the fireworks that leave images
On protected eyes...
Her lustrous life engraved my heart...
With love that never dies.

*Sally Migiacco,
TCF Babylon, Long Island, NY*

Adult Siblings Loss Group

Although this group is not presently active, Elise Noland and Caitlin Fager, past co-facilitators, are still available by phone or email for questions or concerns: eliseln@yahoo.com or cfager@gmail.com.

Tissues, Tears & Treasures

A circle of chairs and boxes of tissues,
A roomful of tears and emotional issues.
Frightening at first, I did not want to enter
Into this strange group, and be in the center.

What I soon learned, as we sat side by side,
We were bound by the love of our children who died.
Each shattered heart,
desperately seeking a moment of peace,
from the pain and weeping.

So many things different, and yet all the same,
Hearts lost in a fog of loss and pain.
Those who have journeyed, much further than me,
Reached out in comfort, listened quietly.
Each shattered heart spoke, and the tissues were passed,
We never avoid speaking of the past.

This circle of friends, have found a bond,
And here I'm still known
As "Tony's Mom."
Slowly, I've found
I can reach out to others
Who are newly bereaved, fathers and mothers.
Strength I have found in this
Circle of chairs,
To grieve and to heal
And to show that we care.

*Diane Barta
TCF of Portland, OR*

Visit both
www.compassionatefriends.org
and
www.tcfmarin.org

TCF "Online Support Community" Offers Opportunity for Grief Sharing

The Compassionate Friends national website offers "virtual chapters" through an Online Support Community (live chats). This program was established to encourage connecting and sharing among parents, grandparents, and siblings (over the age of 18) grieving the death of a child. The rooms supply support, encouragement, and friendship. The friendly atmosphere encourages conversation among friends; friends who understand the emotions you're experiencing. There are general bereavement sessions as well as more specific sessions. These include "Pregnancy and Infant Loss," "Bereaved 2 Years and Under," "Bereaved 2 Years and Over," "Men Only Sharing Session," "No Surviving Children," "Survivors of Suicide." There are also sessions for surviving siblings.

The sessions last an hour and have trained moderators present. For more information, visit www.compassionatefriends.org and click "Online Support" in the "Resources" column.

Carol's Corner

To submit a question or concern, please contact: clkearns@comcast.net

Carol has a very good website for bereaved parents: www.carolkearns.com

Q. How Can I Handle An Anxious Recurring Situation?

A. A bereaved parent said, “Memorial Day weekend eight years ago was the ‘beginning of the end’ for my son who had a terminal illness. Each year, even though this weekend signifies the beginning of summer (my favorite season), I become anxious and depressed without even thinking about the time of year. How can I handle this situation in a better way?”

The death of your son was a traumatic experience that runs deep and rears its head every year, whether you are aware of it or not. This is often referred to as the “anniversary syndrome.” It is a post-traumatic stress (PTSD) reaction and a common occurrence given the death of your beloved son. I often experienced the same reaction after the death of my daughter in November. As the smells and changes in the weather from summer to fall came around, I would notice myself getting anxious and moody. I knew that this had to do with the anniversary of Krissie’s death, but even with that awareness, my feelings persisted.

Your acknowledgement of the situation is the first step. There are certain times when grief builds up and this is one of those times for you. A great way to help yourself is to take some private time to focus on your son. I have a Krissie Journal that I pull out at such times and write a letter to her about all that I’m feeling. Sometimes I write a few paragraphs and sometimes a few pages. Write as if you are having an actual conversation with your son, and tell him all the things you would if he were here. Let him hear about your sadness and frustration of not having him near and whatever other feelings you might have. You may find yourself writing about fun memories as well. Who knows, but write it all. Write until you have no more to say. Play some of his favorite music, look at his handsome pictures and let yourself go. This can be a very special time with you and your son.

Try also to imagine what your son would say back to you in your conversation with him. Would he want to wipe away your tears and take away your sadness? I think so. I think he would want you to have a good summer. You may want to do this a few times. I can assure you that this will help.

These grief emotions are very powerful, and when we bottle them up we get even more anxious and depressed. They don’t want to be stuffed down. They need an outlet. They need to be expressed. Trust yourself. Remember, there are no emotions that you can’t handle! While they may be painful, they are yours, and confronting them will make them less painful and you stronger. This may take some time but it *is* the way to heal.

UPDATE on Neonatal Death Support Services

HAND of San Francisco, Helping After Neonatal Death, is a new chapter of HAND of the Peninsula. It is a grief support group for parents who have experienced the neonatal death of their baby through

- miscarriage
- stillbirth
- interruption of a wanted pregnancy after prenatal or genetic diagnosis
- death during birth
- death in the baby’s first year of life

Many parents feel overwhelmed and confused by this devastating loss, and it can help to talk with others who understand and share a similar loss. Their goal is for parents to help other parents, in a safe place to share experiences and feelings, and to support each other through the grieving process. All bereaved parents, their family, and friends are welcome, and there is no fee for HAND services.

HAND of San Francisco support groups meet the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month from 6:30-8:30 p. m. at the Davies Campus of California Pacific Medical Center at Castro and Duboce Streets (6 blocks north of Market) in Support Services Conference Room, Level B.

For more information, contact Chris Lehr, LCSW, at (415) 282-7330. View the website at www.HANDsupport.org.

CHAPTER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Interim Chapter Leader:

Diana deRegnier
healing.spirit@comcast.net
415/897-5494

No. CA Regional Coordinator:

Genesse Gentry
21 Shemran Ct.
Fairfax, CA 94930
415/457-2862

Marin TCF website:

www.tcfmarin.org

Talk with a Friend:

When you want someone to talk with, the following people will welcome your call:
Judith Billings 707/452-1116 (afternoons)
Ed Garvey 650/756/8010 (suicide loss)
Sallee Kiilerich.... 415/897-6849
Natalie Meyring .. 415/385-1008 (sibling loss)

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

TCF National Website:

www.compassionatefriends.org offers supportive services and chat rooms

Additional Support Sites

friendsforsurvival.org
opentohope.com
groww.org
Healingafterloss.org
Bereavedparents.com
childloss.com
survivorsofsuicide.com
inlovingmemoryonline.org

Hospice by the Bay offers individual and group grief counseling.

Marin (415) 927-2273
SF (415) 626-5900
Sonoma (707) 935-7504

Marin TCF Meeting Calendar

Tues., July 21st We'll be discussing moments of memories, both difficult and joyous. We will share how to embrace the moments as a way to experience our children and how those moments help move us along in our journey of grief and healing.

Tues., August 18th Please bring a poignant, inspirational and/or healing reading or thought. Let's share how these messages have brought camaraderie with other bereaved parents and/or nuggets of wisdom or tools that helped us on our path toward a "new normal".

Coming to a TCF meeting for the first time???

We recognize all too well that it takes courage to come to the first meeting, whether you are a bereaved parent of one month or 5 years. You are welcome to bring a friend or relative for moral support if you wish. You will find that it is all right to cry or to laugh, to share how you feel or just listen. You are welcome to come late and leave early. We recommend that you attend 2-3 meetings before deciding if TCF is not for you. Each meeting is as varied as the attendees and the topic.

You will meet parents in both early and late stages of the grief process. Longtime members are present at meetings to help new members process their tremendous losses in their lives, and to show that some time down the road of grief, they too will be able to function and grow and learn how to live with these losses. It is best if you contact TCF prior to your first meeting at 415-457-3123 so we can meet with you at 7pm before the meeting begins.

Walk and Talk Group

All walks begin at 10 am on the 1st Saturday of the month (rain or shine) unless otherwise noted. Bring water, appropriate clothing, and snacks/lunch if so desired; sometimes we "dine-out" and will notify you in advance. Unless noted otherwise, please **RSVP** to Marcie so she will be on the lookout for you: **marcieleach@aol.com**.



Sat., July 4th: No walk planned since it is a holiday. However, phone Marcie if you are interested in a walk this day. It just might happen!

Sat., August 1st: China Camp State Park. Take North San Pedro Rd. exit off 101 and follow it into the park. Watch for Miwok Meadows Picnic area sign. **RSVP to Sue Potter: spotter12@hotmail.com or 892-5569.**

Sat., Sept. 12th: Due to lack of RSVPs and miscommunication, the Walk and Picnic in the Mt. Burdell area did not occur. We have set a new date, but please note that it will be the **SECOND Sat of the month** because of Labor Day Weekend. Meet at 254 Butterfield Dr. in Novato (101 to Atherton/San Marin; west over the freeway; immediate right on Redwood; left on Woodhollow; left on Sundance; right on Butterfield to the end.) Bring sack lunch for picnic following the walk at Sandy's house. Desserts and drinks provided. **For this walk...please RSVP to Sandy at tcfed@comcast.net.**

Do you want to be added to the Walk Group Email list so you can get up-to-date information??? Email: **marcieleach@aol.com**



Children's Memorial Children who have gone too soon can be included on our new plaque at the Greenbrae Memorial Site if their parents, grandparents, or siblings live/or lived in this county or if they attend TCF Marin meetings here or in San Francisco. For an application form and information to have your child's name memorialized, contact Karen Klingel at: kklingel@sbcglobal.net . Directions for the memorial are on this page.

In Memoriam TCF Marin's main source of funding the newsletters, the meetings, the Candle Lighting and other TCF expenses has always been the Love Gifts sent in by TCF members, their friends and families in memory of our children. We think it's possible that people might like to donate money in memory of friends and family members (other than our children). These will be mentioned in the newsletter under the title *In Memoriam*. (This is separate from a Love Gift donation.) Send *In Memoriam* donation information (with check payable to TCF/Marin) to: TCF, 254 Butterfield Dr., Novato, CA 94945.

IN MEMORIAM

Joyce Thomas

We will always remember your smiles and friendship.
John and Georgia Alioto

More Grief Support Opportunities

Children's Grief and Loss Program is Reinvigorated

CorStone (formerly The Center for Attitudinal Healing) has re-launched its internationally lauded program for children and youth dealing with grief and bereavement due to loss of a loved one or divorce. Our new groups of kids and parents share dinner every week followed by separate meetings of children, bereaved parents, and divorced adults. Careful facilitation helps participants examine, heal and strengthen their attitudes and connections in the face of devastating loss. Good teen volunteers are always needed for the children's sessions!

Dinners and support sessions are free, although donations are strongly encouraged. For more information please contact Melissa Mullin at MelissaM@corstone.org or 415.331.6161 x108.

Loss & Grief Workshop

August 8, 2009 / 9:30am - 4:30pm

Through group sharing, facilitated discussion, and guided visualization participants open to their grieving process in a warm and supportive atmosphere. The workshop offers tools for coping with everyday life while honoring the natural ebb and flow of the grieving process. This workshop is provided free-of-charge four times a year.

Camp Erin (Oakland/Bay Area)

Hospice by the Bay is offering a Grief Support Weekend on Aug. 21-23 for children ages 6-17 who are coping with the loss of a parent, loved one or friend. For more information, contact www.hospicebythebay.com or 415-526-5699, ext. 8501.

Directions to the Children's Memorial

Take Sir Francis Drake Boulevard to Bon Air Road in Greenbrae. Park on Bon Air Road across from Marin General Hospital. Take the path across the marsh and footbridge towards Corte Madera Creek. Turn right at the multi-use path and walk 1/8 mile or less to a bench. Just before the bench is a dirt path going off to the right. Take the path into the site. Be sure to take a moment to sit on the bench or look up at Mt. Tam and enjoy the solitude, beauty and solace of this site.

2008 "Our Children Remembered" DVD

Ordering Information

Price per copy: \$20.00 includes postage, handling, sales tax, and a \$5.00 contribution to the Marin TCF Chapter for each copy purchased.

Make checks payable to: Digital Video Dimensions

Send Your Payment to:
Digital Video Dimensions
Attn: 2008 TCF DVD
273 Crest Road
Novato, CA 94945

Please be sure to include your mailing address for the DVD along with your payment.

Shipping: DVDs will be shipped via First Class Mail within 5 days of receipt of payment.

Questions: Alan Kolsky
(415) 893-9070

TCF 2009 National Conference Approaching Soon

Members of The Compassionate Friends family are making reservations in preparation for the 32nd TCF National Conference in Portland, Oregon August 7-9.

Keynote speakers at the conference will be: Candy Lightner, the dynamic founder of Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD) now 3 million members strong and continuing to grow; the ever-popular Darcie Sims, who uses her own unique brand of humor as a special type of grief therapy; Reg and Maggie Green whose son Nicholas' death at the hands of highway bandits in Italy jump started organ donations in that country and around the world saving thousands of lives; and Michele Longo Eder, author of Salt in our Blood-The memoir of a Fisherman's Wife based on a journal she wrote that detailed an account of personal tragedy that struck just before Christmas 2001.

There will be nearly 100 workshops covering many areas related to the death of a child, sibling, or grandchild. There will also be a complete sibling program, with special events including ice skating on Friday evening and a sibling banquet on Saturday.

Lots of activities are planned for the 2009 conference. They include a special Friday evening performance of the Rabbit Hole, the Pulitzer Prize winning play about a couple's struggle with grief after the sudden death of their four year-old son; the Butterfly Boutique (store); sharing sessions on different topics every evening; memory boards; Reflection Room; Hospitality Rooms; a complete bookstore, and a silent auction and raffle to benefit The Compassionate Friends.

The Tenth annual Walk to Remember® Sunday morning is a much awaited highlight of every national conference. Visit the national website and submit the form If you are unable to attend the Walk to Remember, but wish to have a special child's name carried in the Walk by a volunteer,.

Please check The Compassionate Friends national website at www.compassionatefriends.org for full information about the conference, which is being held at the Doubletree Hotel Lloyd Center. You can register online for the conference through July 17 although early registration discounts are only available through June 26 (you can also mail in your registration).

Latest information regarding discounted room rates for those attending the conference can be found on the national website. Or, you can also call The Compassionate Friends National Office toll-free at 877-969-0010.

Grief Support After the Death of a Child

The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.

The Compassionate Friends is a national nonprofit, self-help support organization that offers friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved parents, grandparents & siblings. There is no religious affiliation & there are no membership dues or fees.

The secret of TCF's success is simple: As seasoned grievers reach out to the newly bereaved, energy that has been directed inward begins to flow outward and both are helped to heal. The vision of The Compassionate Friends is that everyone who needs us will find us and everyone who finds us will be helped.

Check out our website at www.tcfmarin.org.



Marin County, California Chapter
P. O. Box 150935
San Rafael, CA 94915

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