

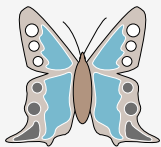
A non-profit self-help organization offering friendship and support to families who have experienced the loss of a child

MONTHLY MEETING INFORMATION

**555 Northgate Dr. in Terra
Linda across the street
from Sears at 7:30 P.M.**

Directions exit Freitas Parkway west from 101. Make 1st available left turn, then another immediate left. Follow past Northgate Shopping Center to a right on Northgate Dr. For more info, call Genesse Gentry at 415/457-3123.

Please call prior to your first meeting, so that you might meet with the facilitator before the meeting begins.



Alternate site in San Francisco:

Parents: 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 information, call Audre at alhallum@comcast.net.

Adult Siblings: Not meeting as a group at this time. Co-facilitators Elise Noland elise1n@yahoo.com and Caitlin Fager or cfager@gmail.com are available for your questions and concerns.

Messages from your Chapter Leader – Genesse Gentry

Thank You

I would like to take this time to introduce and thank our steering committee. Many of you might not even know we have one, but we do. And because of them, our chapter runs along smoothly, its members making decisions at steering committee meetings and sometimes via e-mail, running the monthly meetings, getting the newsletter out, reporting all the things the national organization and IRS require of us, sending packets out to the newly bereaved, sending birthday and anniversary notes to meeting attendees, organizing and running the Candle Lighting service each December. These wonderful people deserve our thanks.

The current members are: Georgia Alioto, Mark Beam, Diana de Regnier, Louise Hubal, Nanette Jacobs, Karen Klingel, Marcie Leach, Merilee Rossi, Michelle Miller, Cecile Noland, Bob and Gunilla Portnoy, Sandy Williams, Audre Hallum (S.F. Facilitator) and yours truly, moi. We'd like to give a special thank you to Sandy McEowen, who is leaving the committee after many years of service, three of those as facilitator of our monthly meetings. Louise Hubal was thanked previously for facilitating the monthly meeting for three years, but I would like to do so again as well as thank Michelle Miller for taking over that role. Thank you both. And thanks to everyone for all you do. You are very much appreciated.

NOTE: Please see page 7 for volunteer opportunities!

Thanks

Kudos and Congratulations

I would also like to let everyone know about our own Barbara Meislin, who blesses this world by living her life in honor of her sweet Lori, who was seven years old when she died in 1967. Besides being very generous to our local chapter, Barbara has been involved over the years in many philanthropic projects, one of which was sponsoring the building of a playground in a bicultural Palestinian and Jewish village in Israel in memory of Lori. Barbara has also written and published a book that inspires healing and hope called, *No One Can Ever Steal Your Rainbow*. In 2005, her book won the Best Inspirational Children's Book award from Bay Area Independent Publisher's Association and in 2006 it was a finalist in the Ben Franklin Awards, Best New Voice (Children's Young Adults category). This summer the Marin Dance Theater will be choreographing it into a ballet. The Compassionate Friends National Organization has also honored Barbara in an article written about her by Catherine Patillo in the winter 2006-2007 issue of its national magazine, *We Need Not Walk Alone*. The article is titled, "Thank You, Little Lady Lori", and we echo those sentiments. Thank you for inspiring your mother to be such a light in this world. And congratulations, dear Purple Lady, for the recognition you so richly deserve and thank you for all you are doing, and will always do, in Lori's name.

**When Fathers
Weep at Graves**

I see them weep
the fathers at the stones
taking off the brave armor
forced to wear in the
work place
clearing away the debris
with gentle fingers
inhaling the sorrow
diminished by anguish
their hearts desiring
what they cannot have—
to walk hand in hand
with children no longer held—
to all the fathers who leave
a part of their hearts
at the stones

may breezes underneath
trees of time
ease their pain
as they receive healing tears
...the gift the children give.

—Alice J. Wisler
For David, in memory
of our son Daniel
(Aug. 25, 1992—Feb. 2, 1997)

I don't know why.
I'll never know why.
I don't have to know why. **I DON'T KNOW WHY...**
I don't like it.
I don't have to like it.
What I have to do is make a choice about my living.
What I do want to do is accept it and go on living.
The choice is mine.
I can go on living, valuing every moment
in a way I never did before,
or I can be destroyed by it and,
in turn, destroy others.
I thought I was immortal.
That my family and my children were also.
That tragedy happened only to others.
But I know now that life is tenuous
and valuable.
So I am choosing to go on living,
making the most of the time I have,
valuing my family and friends
in a way never possible before.
..... from the book, *My Son, My Son*, by Iris Bolton, whose son
Mitch died by suicide



Creating Sacred Space Altar Workshop - Sun., May 27
11:00 am - 5:30 pm • Woodacre
FREE • Space is limited to 8 participants

Each participant will build a small altar (no prior experience) and create a meaningful collage screen. Together, we will explore the art of preparation, selecting icons, intention, advantageous locations for altar placement and the celebration of ritual. By understanding the language of sacred space, you can create a powerful altar. Emphasis will be placed on creativity, color, healing, inner wisdom and self-discovery.

“I was unsure of what to expect from the workshop. I found I was able to process my loss in a different way...- Louise Hubal

“...you set us at ease with your nurturing, accepting manner, enabling us to go within to find our unique way to honor ourselves and our children...” Genesse Gentry

For Registration, call Michele Rivers at 415-488-1714

Creating Sacred Space is funded by The Mental Health Institute
and supported by The Rose Foundation

Mother and Child Reunion

No I would not give you false hope
On this strange and mournful day
But the mother and child reunion
Is only a motion away.

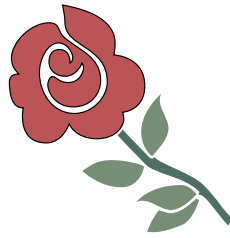
Oh, little darling of mine
I can't for the life of me
Remember a sadder day
I know they say let it be
But it just don't work out that way
And the course of a lifetime runs
Over and over again.

No I would not give you false hope
On this strange and mournful day
But the mother and child reunion
Is only a motion away.

Oh, little darling of mine
I just can't believe it's so
And though it seems strange to say
I never been laid so low
In such a mysterious way
And the course of a lifetime runs
Over and over again.

But i would not give you false hope
On this strange and mournful day
When the mother and child reunion
Is only a motion away.

Oh, the mother and child reunion
Is only a motion away
Oh, the mother and child reunion
Is only a moment away.
- Paul Simon



Editor's Note: This verse was sung at my church recently and I felt such sentiment from it that I wanted to share it, especially this month.

Dealing with the Anniversary of Death

Many bereaved find themselves apprehensive as the anniversary of their loved one's death approaches. Painful memories may become more intense. Recognize that this is normal, but also know that it will become easier as time passes and as we work through our grief.

Many find it helpful to do something special in memory of their loved one. Make a donation to a charity, donate a book to a library, plant a tree, place flowers on his/her grave or on the altar of your church.

Those who have some distance from their grief report that they have found it helpful to think of the anniversary of the death not as a "death day", but as a second "birthday" into a new and beautiful life, which one day they will again share.

- The Compassionate Friends Newsletter, Birmingham, Alabama chapter



Footfall

Your shoes,
Your summer sandals,
Your high-heeled Italians,
Your little blue Adidas,
Your furry bear-faced slippers.

Nothing,
Not this closet night,
Not this need
To count them all.

No, nothing
Not even this writing time,
Can fill your shoes,
Your soundless steps
Walk this house
Without you.

- Charles Ghigna;
reprinted from TCF
St. Paul, MN newsletter

**Chapter Leader/No. CA
Regional Coordinator:**

Genesse Gentry
21 Shemran Ct.
Fairfax, CA 94930
415/457-3123

Marin TCF website:

<http://members.aol.com/neeppster>

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 .. 415/383-4084 (sibling loss)
Diana deRegnier.. 415/383-1703 (suicide loss/call 9am-8pm)

TCF National Website

www.compassionatefriends.org

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

Additional Support Sites

Inlovingmemoryonline.org
Healingafterloss.org
Bereavedparents.com
childloss.com
survivorsofsuicide.com

Men's Chat Room

TCF website on Mondays from 9-10 central time.

Other Bereaved Parent Resources

The Center for Attitudinal Healing in Sausalito offers meetings for bereaved parents. If you are interested in their programs, please contact the Center at: (415) 331-6161, ext. 106.

• • • • • **CHAPTER ANNOUNCEMENTS** • • • • •

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 TCF is not for you. Each meeting is as varied as the attendees & the topic.

You will meet parents in both early and late stages of grief. 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 will know you are coming.

Marin TCF Meeting Calendar

Tuesday, May 15th - "Am I Going Crazy?": Normalizing the Grief Process.

Tuesday, June 19th - "Anger and Other 'Unmentionable' Emotions in Grief" Let's talk about the feelings that those close to us may not be comfortable hearing about, and we also may not fully understand, when we are grieving.

Meeting Note: While meeting topics are outlined in the newsletter, they are simply a guideline. Just as grief is unpredictable, so are our emotions on any given day. Our discussions are also open to the current needs of the members in attendance.

Join TCF Members for a Social Walk

TCF walks occur on the **first Saturday of the month** and begin at 10 A.M. Bring water, hats, sunscreen and snacks/lunch (if desired.) We often picnic after the walk. See below. **Contact Genesse Gentry at 457-3123 or gbgentry@aol.com or Louise Hubal mlhubal@yahoo.com.** We do appreciate knowing who and how many are coming.

Sat., May 5th Palomarin - Take Sir Francis Drake Blvd. to Fairfax. Meet at Albertson's (closed) parking lot near the coffee drive-thru, **or** meet in Olema in the parking lot across from the stop sign for Hwy. 1 around 10:30 or at the Palomarin trailhead north of Bolinas around 11 a.m. We'll be seeing more of nature in bloom and hopefully mother and baby whales (migrating north) close to shore. Bring a lunch for picnic afterwards.

Sat., June 2nd Rush Creek - We'll take the flat walk around the lake to see what nature is offering us. From the south, take Atherton/San Marin exit from 101 and turn right onto Atherton. Make the immediate first left and either park in the Park'n Ride or on the frontage road. Meet at the trailhead which is just north of the Park'n Ride. For this walk, email Sandy Williams tcfed@comcast.net. We'll picnic in Sandy's backyard just minutes from the trailhead.

July 7th Abbott's Lagoon - same directions as May 5th walk. More info next issue.

We encourage you to consider not only the beauty of Marin but the health benefits of walking and the company of other TCF parents. Walks will be chosen to accommodate all. With different walk leaders, we are finding more new paths in Marin. Do YOU have a location you want to share with other walkers? If you are only interested in leading one walk, we're interested! Email mlhubal@yahoo.com or gbgentry@aol.com. Siblings are encouraged to join us. Please RSVP as this allows the group to know who to look for on the walks. **Contact Genesse Gentry at 457-3123 or gbgentry@aol.com.**

N E W O P P O R T U N I T I E S

OUR MARIN CHAPTER HAS TWO OPENINGS FOR PARTICIPATION:

Newsletter Editor: Express your creativity and interest in print! This opportunity not only helps others in their grief process, but will help the editor as well.

Webmaster: Do you have the talent and/or interest in keeping our website up and current?

Both the newsletter and the website are essential tools to help the bereaved parent. If you think either of these opportunities would be the way you could "give back" to TCF Marin, please contact Genesse Gentry at **457-3123** or **gbgentry@aol.com**

In Memoriam Program 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. Once in a while we've received donations from our members in memory of friends and family members who have died (other than our children). We have decided that more people might like to donate money in this way and that from now on we will also mention these donations 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: Sandy Williams, TCF/Marin Newsletter Editor, 254 Butterfield Dr., Novato, CA 94945.

Candle Lighting DVDs Info

The DVD of the **2006 Candle Lighting Service** will be available for a \$10 donation at the TCF meetings or by contacting Diana DeRegnier by email: healing_spirit@comcast.net (be sure to include the "." between healing and spirit.) The DVD does NOT INCLUDE the wonderful DVD of our children created by Alan Kolsky. (See article at right.)

The DVD is also now viewable at www.spiritlinksnewsletter.org/CLDVD.htm. The recording is a huge gift thanks to Constance Beutel, Ed D, who recorded, edited and processed the DVD and flash for the website and duplication.

If you want a copy of the **2006 DVD of Our Children**, send a check for \$20 (which covers postage, handling and sales tax) to the address below. Include your address along with your payment. DVDs will be shipped via USPS First Class Mail within 5 days of receipt of payment.

Digital Video Dimensions
attn: 2006 TCF DVD
273 Crest Rd., Novato, CA 94945
Questions: Alan Kolsky

Adult Siblings Loss Group No Longer Meeting

Elise Noland and Caitlin Fager, past co-facilitators, are still available by phone or email for questions or concerns. Elise: eliseln@yahoo.com or Caitlin cfager@gmail.com.



**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS**

Marin County, California Chapter

Newsletter Editor: Sandy Williams
254 Butterfield Dr. **NOTE NEW ADDRESS**
Novato, CA 94945

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May/June 2007

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Dated Material - Please Deliver Promptly

Trails of Tears to Healing Hearts is the theme of The Compassionate Friends 30th National Conference being held at the Cox Convention Center in Oklahoma City, OK July 20-22. A pre-conference Professionals Day program will be presented Thursday, July 19 and the 8th annual Walk to Remember will be held Sunday, July 22. ((The conference will feature nearly 100 workshops covering many grief areas for families that have experienced the death of a child. There will be workshops for bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents as well as a complete track for families that have no surviving children. ((Making his way from his current home in Russia, Simon Stephens, founder of The Compassionate Friends more than 35 years ago, will be a featured keynote speaker at the conference. (This is a great opportunity to meet the man who started what has today become the largest self-help bereavement organization in the world. Additional keynote speakers will be announced as information becomes available. (Mark your calendars now and look for registration forms available online in early 2007. (Interested in getting a jump on registering for the conference? Rooms have been blocked and special rates negotiated at two hotels an extremely short walk from the Cox Convention Center, where the conference will be held. The Renaissance Oklahoma City has a covered walkway into the Convention Center while the Courtyard by Marriott is across the street.

