

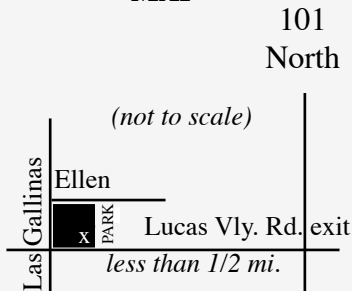
A non-profit self-help organization offering friendship and support to families who have experienced the loss of a child

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 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.

MAP



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: Audre at alhallum@comcast.net.

The Surviving Children

By Ronnie Peterson, TCF, Star Lake, NY

Being a parent is never easy. When one's child dies, it is even more difficult being parents to the children who survive. In those first days and weeks, shock may cause us to make decisions (or allow others to make them) that we will later regret. We may wish later that we had included the children more, that we had not permitted ourselves to be isolated from them, that we had explained things differently. Most of us never expect to face this situation, so we have never thought through in advance what the best course would be.

At some point in our grief, we do become more sensitive to these "forgotten grievers" who have lost a brother or sister. They are having struggles of their own. The first thing to remember is that everything going on with our other children is not caused by the death. They are still, through it all, growing up, going through the various developmental stages that have always concerned parents. Any special problems they had before will not have magically disappeared. Just as we proclaim repeatedly that there is no one way for a parent to grieve, so each child has his own style and timetable for everything, and we cannot control these. We can only try to understand and help when we can. We cannot make it "go away" any more than we can make any of the other harsh realities of life go away.

The very foundations of life has been shaken.

The home, so sheltering and safe, has been invaded by forces our surviving children do not understand and parents, who seemed all-powerful and all-wise, may have been reduced to quivering, uncertain robots. Probably for the first time, death - whatever that is - has claimed someone who is not old. Worse, if there has been the usual quota of sibling rivalry and squabbling, the child may be afraid that he has caused the death by being "bad," or by wishing there were no such bothersome person to have to share with or "take a back seat to."

Just as every child is different, every relationship is different. Feelings toward an older brother or sister who was protector, teacher, idol, and those toward a younger one who may have been a sometime responsibility, hanger-on, biggest fan, are not the same. They may have been best friends or rivals who didn't get along very well. Their responses to the death will be as varied as our own.

A child's place in the family system is changed. The second oldest finds himself suddenly the big brother. The buffer between the others may be gone. Most difficult of all, a child may have become an "only child." Any child younger than the one who died has to go through the scary years of being the same age. Similar symptoms and situations are so frightening. Brothers and sisters often do look and behave very much alike, and these resemblances can be a source of discomfort or of pride. There may be

continued on p. 2

What can we as parents do to help? Most of all, our children need reassurance and honesty. They need to know they are loved and that the family and the home will continue.

Carol's Corner will return next issue.

If you have a question or topic you would like to see addressed by Carol, email her at: clkearns@comcast.net.

Surviving Children *continued from p. 1*

efforts to exaggerate these, to replace the missing child, to make things the way they used to be. What can we as parents do to help? Most of all, our children need reassurance and honesty. They need to know they are loved and that the family and the home will continue. They need all the facts they can understand. Part of this honesty requires that they know of your grief. By your actions, you can teach them it is okay to cry (even fathers!), it is okay to admit you are angry at "life" for being this way, that you too are confused about "why." Maintaining a "stiff upper lip" in front of the children only encourages them to suppress their feelings. Try to be available when they want to talk, but be prepared for the possibility that they may not want to talk with you about their feelings. Many children hold back because they are afraid they might make you cry. You can try explaining that you are not worried about that, but they may still prefer to talk to someone else. They may be ashamed of some common reactions such as feelings of anger, guilt, jealousy, even relief. Perhaps you can help them find someone they can talk to comfortably. They may have already found such a person with out you realizing it.

Be honest in the way you remember the child who has died. It is tempting to reminisce about only the good and wonderful qualities, but was this really a saint? Surely not. Recall, and talk about, the not-so good and wonderful things too. Be sure you are remembering a real child, for everyone's sake. A saint is hard to live up to. Talking with other parents at a meeting of The Compassionate Friends can give you practical suggestions about things that have worked for other families. You will hear ideas you may not have thought of. Some will have received help from caring professionals and you may decide to consult someone too.

When you recognize your family in what others are saying, you may decide that you and your children are really doing pretty well - hurting and healing together - and that it just takes longer than you thought it would.

AS FALL APPROACHES...



As I type this newsletter, there is a suggestion of fall in the air. If this is your first fall without your child, and you have been having a few "good" days, but now you seem to be slipping, know that it is normal. If this is your first seasonal change, this expected mood swing may seem frightening. Change of seasons can be very difficult; even before the tragedy, our bodies reacted to seasonal change.

The psychiatrists call it "seasonal blues." Add grief, and it compounds it.

If it is not your first, but you are still affected, don't be discouraged. That, too, is normal. It takes quite a few years before they can be handled better. In addition to how our body is affected, each season has its own set of memories with which we have to deal. With fall, there is the beginning of school. No matter what the age of our child, our thoughts can turn to the start of school. If they were very young, we may think about missing the fun of picking out clothes, lunch box, notebooks, etc. If they were still in school, a pattern is broken in mid-sentence. If they were older, and the school years were finished, the memory of those years are still there, and we are taken wistfully back to those days.

Fall also means the holidays are coming closer and it is easy to slip into anticipating them. Try your best not to. Take it one day at a time; don't look ahead, particularly if you are in your first year. **Today** is what you should try to handle at this time. The **tomorrows** you *will* handle when they get here.

Mary Ehmann, TCF, Valley Forge, PA



Our Children's Legacy

MY LEGACY TO LANI

Penny Carver chronicles the path to her daughter's legacy before and after her daughter's passing in 2003:

What was to become my legacy to Lani, unknowingly began three years prior to her eternal life. It was my first visit to Bali, Indonesia, **2000**. Lani and her brother Dana had been there prior for a ceremonial marriage of their best friend.

October, 2002: insurgents bombed a restaurant in Kuta and hundreds were killed and wounded, thus YKIP (Yayasan Kemanusiaan Ibu Pertiwi) was established as the Humanitarian Foundation of Mother Earth. Due to the economic impact, thousands of children from poverty were unable to attend school. The KEMBALI (to return) program became the focus of my special friend, Heidi Hornberger. During her yearly visits

to Ubud as a sculptress, the "Heidi Circle" was established with American and International sponsors.

October, 2005: another similar bombing occurred in Jimbaran and again my son and I returned together to be with Ni Putu Elindawati and Ni Kadek Vikidiawati. Along with their studies, the special project was giving each student a disposable camera to photograph the daily lives of their families. Scrapbooks were made and given to each elated sponsor. We now have 64 students from families living in harmony on \$2 a day or less!

In **2006**, the creative project away from the classroom was "Learning from our Feathered Friends" which involved visiting the Bali Bird Park and Puri Lukisan Art Museum.

Last year in **2007**, Dana and I once again returned to be with our Balinese family. This time we wanted to establish and build "Lani's Library" as a lasting memory and legacy. Time and work move ever so slowly as another idea evolved...buying a pig for each family so the piglets can be sold to support the families until the economy improves. The doors open wider and wider as the need becomes greater and greater. We brought t-shirts to artistically decorate with permanent colored pens and glitter along with sun visors. A new and fun project makes their learning studios and fun!

Current cost per child for the elementary school is \$160 per year and up to \$612 for high school level. We include a uniform, shoes, backpack, lunch money and books. University level is a dream we share with all our children!

My pain is Lani's legacy to me. Not that she or I would have wanted it that way, but there it is. As it burns its way to completion, something in me dies as something in me lives through my beloved Lani. It is in this place that I prepare to see as God sees and to let my grief find expression in YKIP and the children of Bali.

If you would like to speak with Heidi, please do not hesitate to call: 415-388-0132.

Forever letting Lani's life live on for generations to come in a perpetual ceremony of love, peace and forgiveness, I will always remain Lani's mother,

Penny Carver.
TCF Marin

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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.



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

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

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

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 .. 415/383-4084 (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 (415) 331-6161, ext. 106.

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., September 16th Just prior to our September meeting, our facilitator will have returned from a business trip re: the non-profit org. began in memory of her children. With that in mind, our discussions will consider two relative topics. First, how to 'keep in check' our grief process when we become very busy. Secondly, examples and ideas of the tools, experiences and choices related to our children's deaths that have enriched our lives.

Tues., October 21st During this month, we'll discuss preparing ourselves for the several celebrated days/dates in October, November & December. Our newly bereaved members can speak of their apprehensions while seasoned members share some helpful hints. We'll also set some positive goals that might help us enjoy and/or experience our children who have died while we move through these upcoming events and family gatherings.

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 before the meeting begins.

Walking Group

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

Sat., September 6th China Beach to Cliff House, San Francisco

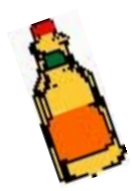
A walk in SF with SF/TCF members Kathy Bodnar and Gloria Cevallos. Meet at 10am at 428 Sea Cliff Ave. Directions: Take immediate 25th Ave. exit past toll gates. Follow 25th to a right on Lincoln (which then becomes El Camino del Mar after 1.2 miles.) At the T intersection (.3 mi.), make a right at Sea Cliff Ave. and then a sharp left to stay on Sea Cliff. The parking lot is ahead. Check with marcieleach@aol.com.

Sat., October 4th

Cecile Noland will be leading us on a walk near Rodeo Beach. Meet at 10 at the parking lot near the restrooms. Directions: Take the last Marin exit before the GG Bridge and either go up over the headlands or through the tunnel to Fort Cronkhite and Rodeo Beach. We'll walk to the top of the bluff (a short steep climb, but challenged knees can handle it). The path is relatively flat once we reach the top, and then walk along the bluff as far as desired. We can use the picnic tables near the parking lot when we return. RSVP: cecile_noland@yahoo.com.

Sat., November 1st

Let's revisit Samuel P. Taylor Park - beautiful any time of the year. We can park and meet on SFD near the entrance and picnic afterwards in the Park. Contact: marcieleach@aol.com or Nancy, nke1@juno.com.





Children's Memorial Karen Klingel is chairing the committee for the new plaque at the Greenbrae Memorial Site. Children who have gone too soon can be included on the plaque 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 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/Marin Newsletter Editor, 254 Butterfield Dr., Novato, CA 94945.

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 and siblings. There is no religious affiliation and 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.

"Out of the Darkness" Community Walk

Please join TCF/SF members Kathy Bodnar and Gloria Cevallos and about 5,000 other walkers in the annual "Out of the Darkness" Community Walk at Crissy Field in SF on Saturday morning, September 27. It's a fundraising walk sponsored by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, a national organization dedicated to funding suicide research and education and to support those affected by suicide. For more information on the walk, visit the walk website at: www.outofthedarkness.org.

Newsletter Editor Position Open Here's a special niche for someone interested in keeping chapter members not only informed, but supported and encouraged. It is also a great way to process your own personal grief. The current newsletter editor will work with you to get started. Please contact the editor (Sandy Williams) at tcfed@comcast.net or Genesse at 457-3123 or gbgentry@aol.com.

Other Volunteer Opportunities available! Contact Genesse at above information.

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.

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. Elise: eliseln@yahoo.com or Caitlin: cfager@gmail.com.

Her Promise

Fourteen years since you've been gone,
and you're still here.
We'll take flowers to your grave today,
and sense that you are near.

You're here when egrets fly o'er head;
You're here with heart's recall
all you were, all you did,
how much you loved us all.

I feared that time'd erase your face
and still the memories,
but your life and you are with me yet.
We're tied eternally.

The sun goes up; the sun goes down
and you, dear child, it's true,
find ways to say, "Hey, mom, I'm here!
I'll always be with you."

*When you go to the graveyard,
please smile amidst the tears,
my body, yes, is buried there,
but now I'm everywhere.*

*I'm with you when I'm needed;
I'm always checking in.
Watch and listen for my voice;
feel touches that I send.*

*I'm here when egrets fly o'er head;
I'm here when heart's recall
all I was, all I still am.
How much I love you all!*

*Yes, fourteen years have come and gone . . .
But I am always near.
Your life will e'er be touched by mine,
in ways not always clear . . .*

*See me in the mornings . . .
see me all day through . . .
In day's end and darkest night,
I'll be here loving you.*

by Genesse Bourdeau Gentry
(and Lori - 2/2/70 ~ 6/28/91)
TCF Marin Chapter Leader, No CA Regional Coordinator
written 28 June 2005 and to be included in her forthcoming new book.



Check out our website at www.tcfmarin.org for more information.



Marin County, California Chapter
Newsletter Editor: Sandy Williams
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September/October 2008

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