



# The Compassionate Friends

## Marin County Chapter

### Supporting Family After a Child Dies



JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2017 ISSUE

Vol 38, No. 1

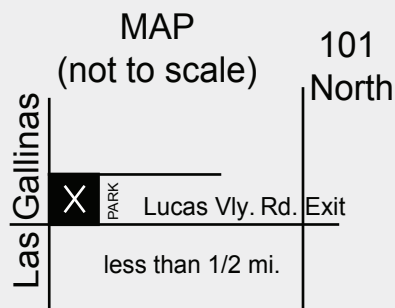
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This issue of the TCF Marin Newsletter is sponsored by love gifts from our members.

Please call the TCF Hotline (415-457-3123) if you have any questions.

**TCF Marin Email:**  
tcfmarin@gmail.com

**TCF Marin Monthly Meetings:**  
Group meetings will be held on the third Monday of the month from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Lucas Valley Community Church conference room  
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 and take as desired.



**Meeting Calendar:**  
Monday, January 16, 2017  
Monday, February 20, 2017  
Monday, March 20, 2017

## Resolutions

Every time the holiday season comes to a close, I feel as if I can hear a collective sigh of relief. This year was no different except that the sigh seemed louder and longer than in past years. Some years are like that for us. This one was certainly like that for me. No matter how difficult I thought the holidays would be to get through I was wrong. In some ways they were more difficult and in other ways, surprisingly, they were less difficult. The reality is that you and I, no matter how we anticipated the holidays, did get through them. We did survive the holidays and though it may be difficult for you to believe this now, there is no reason that this new year shouldn't be better.

Which brings me to a favorite topic for this time of year, New Year's resolutions. Resolutions that I think are most helpful are those that concern our well-being. Above all else, resolve to take better care of yourself. Try to eat right and exercise. Find ways to nurture yourself—both your body and your mind. Remember all things in moderation. Seek advice from others when you need it and above all, ask for help when you need it. You won't always get the help when you ask for it, but remember, if you don't ask for it, you surely won't get it.

Another thing you can do to have a happier new year is to become more involved in our chapter of The Compassionate Friends. If you've not come to any meetings, or if it's been a while, give it a try. Commit to attending at least three meetings. If you were to attend only one, you would not necessarily get a very good idea of what our meetings are like. Join us and make your needs known to us.

This newsletter is another way you can become more involved in our chapter. Let us know what works for you and what doesn't. Consider becoming a contributor. Tell us how we might be able to better serve your needs.

Have a happier New Year!

Originally posted to TCF National Website by  
Pat Akery  
TCF, Medford, OR

### ***Additional Support Sites***

opentohope.com  
bereavedparents.com  
bereavedparentsusa.org  
survivorsofsuicide.com  
griefspeaks.com

### ***Other Grief Counseling Resources***

Hospice by the Bay offers individual and group grief counseling.  
Marin and SF (415) 526-5699  
Sonoma (707) 931-7299  
Email: griefsupport@hbtc.org  
Website: www.hospicebythebay.org

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention  
www.afsp.org  
Ph: 415-751-0521

### ***TCF Sonoma County Chapter***

tcf.sonomacounty@gmail.com  
(707) 490-8640

### **TCF RESOURCES:**

#### ***TCF Marin County, CA Chapter***

P.O. Box 150935  
San Rafael, CA 94915  
www.tcfmarin.org

#### ***TCF Information Line***

Eileen Rusky (415) 457-3123

#### ***Northern CA Regional***

##### ***Coordinator:***

Nancy Juracka  
nancy\_juracka@yahoo.com

##### ***Newsletter Editor and Webmaster:***

Heinz Scheuenstuhl  
tcfmarin@gmail.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

##### ***TCF National Website:***

www.compassionatefriends.org  
(offers supportive services and chat rooms)

A big "Thank You" to all who attended the 2016 Annual Candle Lighting Ceremony on Sunday, December 11, 2016. Here are a few who left donations in honor of their loved ones:

Curtis & Debbie Craft in memory of Kevin Craft  
Mark Hopping/Kathryn Hopping in memory of Alexandra Michelle Hopping  
Nanette Jacobs in memory of Stefanie Helen Jacobs  
&

Additional donors who did not request newsletter acknowledgement or who donated anonymously.

Thank You!

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### **Empty Places**

I drove the old way yesterday.  
It'd been a while, you see.  
And there, without a warning,  
the pain washed over me.  
I drove the old way yesterday  
and sadness came on strong,  
taken back by so much feeling,  
since you've been gone so long.  
Places seem to lie in wait  
to summon up the tears,  
to say remember yesterday,  
those days when you were here.  
Places where you laughed and played  
are places where I cry.  
These places hold the memories  
that will live as long as I.

Genesse Gentry  
TCF Marin County, CA  
In Memory of Lori Gentry

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I have always believed, and I still believe, that whatever good or bad fortune may come our way we can always give it meaning and transform it into something of value. Hermann Hesse



# 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.compassionate-friends.org](http://www.compassionate-friends.org)). My columns discuss topics of continuing concern in the Marin County CA newsletter. - Carol

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### How Can We Care For Ourselves After The Death of Our Child?

This is a frequently asked question and most important. We all know how lonely we feel after our child's death. For others, life continues on and we can't even figure out what to buy at the grocery store. Our life must go forward as well but how? We may have other children to care for and yet we can hardly get out of bed. Just getting dressed is a struggle. I would like to offer a few suggestions that have helped me and some of my bereaved clients.

First, we must break things down. All we need to think about is what must be done -- getting children off to school, paying bills or making meals. We can step back from our volunteer or social commitments. We probably cannot step back from work. Hopefully, you are in a supportive environment where work can be a refuge from the chaos of your personal life.

Second, pamper yourself as much as you can given inescapable commitments. This can be as simple as a bubble bath, a walk with a friend, massage, nap or curling up with a good book. Appreciate that you may not feel like doing any of these but it is important to try. Our energy is low when grieving, even if we've had eight hours of sleep. Grief is exhausting!

Third, just because people ask questions about our child's death, we don't have to answer them. Some people mean well and some are just curious. This is especially true after the death of our child due to murder or suicide. We can simply say, "I'm sorry, I just don't feel like talking about it." Or, "It's too painful for me to talk about my child's death." If they persist, and friends won't, they are asking for themselves not you, and I would simply walk away.

Fourth, the holidays are just around the corner and we may be already dreading them. Appreciate that you can do something different and meaningful. Please go to my web site, [www.carolkearns.com](http://www.carolkearns.com), and search for the "Carol's Columns" link. There are a few articles on grief and the holidays that I hope will help.

Fifth, do not turn to drugs or alcohol. We want to do anything to lessen the pain, but this is not the answer! I can't stress this enough. In my practice I have seen too many people add even more pain to themselves and the family already in pain, because of complications from alcohol and drugs. Seek help from a therapist experienced in grief issues instead.

Sixth, it's okay to say "no." This is one important way to reduce stress, even if our child hasn't died. How many times do we do things we don't want to do because we don't know how to say no? This gets tricky after our child's death, because we may have a tendency to isolate and that's not good either. Finding the balance that works is important.

Seventh, keep a journal. Initially, when our child dies, the pain is so great we feel we can hardly breathe. With time and some serious grief work, we have better days but when a dark day again hits us, we feel like we've not made progress, and no matter how hard we try, are only going backwards. The journal can remind us of all the days in between when we did feel better.

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Eighth, be careful about sanctifying your deceased child. This can complicate the grief of siblings who end up with jealousy on top of their grief. My son once said to me, "Mommy, why do our friends all have pictures of Krissie and not me?" I was shocked but relieved that he addressed this. I answered, "Sweetie, that's because we have you, but we don't have Krissie anymore. If you had died, they would have your picture and not her's."

Ninth, if your spirituality is important, now is the time to turn to it. Some find great comfort in their beliefs and others are so angry at God, they have no comfort at all. I was reminded by a very spiritual woman after Krissie's death that it was okay to get angry at God. He may be running the show but you don't have to like it!

Tenth, if you have a creative outlet, please turn to it. So much of our pain is ineffable. Our creative side, whether it's painting, music or poetry can be a way of facilitating healing. Having always been a painter, I went into my studio and found myself crying more than at any other time. Through my creativity, I was able to reach levels of pain that I couldn't through words alone.

These are only a few suggestions. You may have ideas of your own that have helped you. If you would like to share them with others or if you have any questions, please contact me at: [carol@carolkearns.com](mailto:carol@carolkearns.com). Take good care of yourselves.

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### **To Start a New Year**

If I can concentrate on the  
moral and spiritual side of  
the holidays  
I can make it through.

If I can absorb the love and  
warmth that was the  
beginning  
I can give love back.

If I can share the grief and  
love that is in me  
through these holidays  
I can start a new year.

by Tom Spray  
TCF Ventura, CA



Love Gifts

*In Loving Memory*

**Joey Ciatti**  
*by Becky Oken*

*“In loving memory of my son Joey. A short life, well-lived. And always in my heart.”*

*In Loving Memory*

**Richard Mannheimer, Jr.**  
*by Shirlee Newman*

*“Your love light shines always.”*

*In Loving Memory*

**Robert Craig Wilson**  
*by Mary Fishman*

*“With love forever, mom.”*

*In Loving Memory*

**Justin Daniel Reynolds**  
*by Gary and Carole (Reynolds) Bonnici,  
Jay Reynolds*

*“In memory of our son, whom we love, miss and remember every day”*

**LOVE GIFT FORM**

Love Gifts are “messages” published in our newsletter that honor children who have died. We are grateful to parents, grandparents and others who, by their Love Gifts donations, allow us to offer resources such as the Annual Candle Lighting Event, the newsletter, books, brochures and pamphlets at no cost to assist bereaved families. They also allow us to provide information to professionals and others who impact the lives and feelings of the bereaved. The donation amount is your choice.

Deadlines for Love Gift information for Newsletters:

Jan/Feb issue -- Dec. 15  
Mar/Apr issue – Feb. 15  
May/Jun issue – Apr. 15

Jul/Aug issue – Jun. 15  
Sep/Oct issue - Aug. 15  
Nov/Dec issue - Oct. 15

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 Newsletter Editor, 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 of Marin County  
P. O. Box 150935  
San Rafael, CA 94915

**JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2017**

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**Dated Material - Please Deliver Promptly**



### **Crisis Hotline Information**

Suicide Hotline

1-800-Suicide

Depression & Crisis Hotline

1-800-784-2433

The National Institute for Trauma & Loss in Children (TLC)

1-877-306-5256

National Center for Victims of Crime (local assistance Connect Directory)

1-202-467-8700

National Hispanic Resource Hotline

1-800-473-3003

Families Anonymous (Addiction/Recovery)

1-800-736-9805

Al-Anon Family Groups (Addiction/Recovery)

1-888-425-2666

Post Partum Depression

1-800-944-4773

