



The Compassionate Friends

Marin County Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies



MARCH - APRIL 2017 ISSUE

Vol 38, No. 2

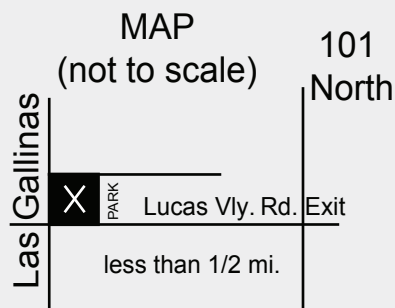
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This issue of the TCF Marin Newsletter is sponsored by love gifts from our members.

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
Third Monday of the Month:
Monday, February 20, 2017
Monday, March 20, 2017
Monday, April 17, 2017

A Remnant

I am a wretched seamstress, although there have been numerous attempts on my part over the years to remedy that. At this point, I am fairly content with my ability to sew on a button. I can also, with help, produce a pretty snazzy pillowcase.

During those previous attempts to acquire some skill, I did have to occasionally venture into a fabric store. In most fabric stores, there is a "remnant table." Leftover pieces from bolts of fabric. Often not in sufficient quantity to make much of anything. Always sold at a discount. Sometimes a very steep discount.

These scraps may be from fabric that never was anything more than cheap. It may be a design or color that has gone out of fashion. In some cases, it may be a small fragment of something that was once a fine, valuable fabric. But what does one do with such a leftover?

I sometimes think of myself now as a remnant, a trace of the person I used to be before my son died. Whether the fabric that was my former self was cheap cotton, gaudy polyester, sturdy woven wool, or a finely made silk is up for debate. But here I am a remnant, wondering what to make of what is left. Or, indeed, sometimes wondering if it is even worth the effort.

I guess one option is to sort of throw myself in the proverbial trash heap. But I try...most of the time? some of the time?...to find ways to be useful and productive and engaged. I try to stay off the trash heap. I try to make something out of what is left.

Peggi Johnson
TCF Piedmont, VA

"You care so much you feel as though you will bleed to death with the pain of it."

— J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*

Additional Support Sites

opentohope.com
bereavedparents.com
bereavedparentsusa.org
survivorsof suicide.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@hbtb.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

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Fax: (630) 990-0246
Email: nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

TCF National Website:

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

Ritual

A gaze thru blurry window
When did it start to rain?
Then realize it's just the eyes
They're crying once again

Emptiness is mighty
Deep within begins the ache
Intense, this pain that surely
Will cause a heart to break

Shoulders gently tremble
A moaning soft and low
Arms tightly wrapped about oneself
Body rocking to and fro

A ritual of comfort
A numbing of the mind
A cleansing of the tortured soul
A knowing eye made blind

Thus begins the healing process
Of this I know so well
Without you, I fall victim to
This mindless cast of spell

Donna Gerrior
TCF Pasco County, FL
In Memory of Rob

Three Grief Haikus

#1

A tear shimmers down
Looking out, late summer day
Sunshine missing you

#2

Tear down cheek slides soft
Sorrow in heart heavy pain
Pond so still, sunshine

#3

Dream broken so fast
Before and after so quick
Tear, tears, and more tears

Melissa Anne Schroeter
TCF Rockland County, NY

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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). My columns discuss topics of continuing concern in the Marin County CA newsletter. - Carol

Trapped in Pain

After my last article, "Suicide and Loss," I received this question from a mother whose 19-year-old son, "Paul" (not his name), was killed instantly when his truck rolled over:

"I can't live with the pain of losing Paul, but I feel so caught. His death is the last memory I have. If I lose the pain, will I lose a part of him also?"

This is such an important question because so many who are grieving the loss of a child feel the closeness and the constancy of pain. But here are some other things to consider.

First, remember that you will always have the pain of missing him and your future with him. That pain will find its place as you build on the legacy -- whatever made him unique and wonderful in your life -- that your child gave you.

Second, remember that when your son was born, you had the pain of birthing that was eventually replaced by the beautiful little baby you cuddled, nurtured and watched grow. You had 19 years of good and bad memories of Paul, and they will not be lost. They are all yours. No one can take them from you.

It is much harder, but not impossible, to let go of the pain associated with his death. Letting go of the pain does not mean you'll stop missing him. At times your tears will flow, as they should, but ask yourself this:

"If Paul had one wish for me now, what would he want? Would he want me to hold onto my pain as a way of holding onto him?" Only you can answer that, but I doubt the answer would be yes.

Grief is complicated, often subconscious but nonetheless real. It may cause us to hold onto our pain because of guilt. What parent doesn't feel guilt after the death of a child? Our role as a parent is to protect our child; when he or she dies, we often feel we have failed as parents, and therefore we deserve the pain and no better. Our child is dead. How dare we go on to have a happy, fulfilled life?

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I find it hard to believe that your Paul would want you to suffer for the rest of your life because he can no longer be with you. I can't believe any of our children want to be remembered in that way. In fact, I think if there is an afterlife and it's as wonderful as we've heard, their only wish is for us not to suffer now. I know our children want us to work through the pain and be happy again.

In my case I had a memorable bubble bath where I thought of just slipping under the water to lose my pain. In that same bubble bath I confronted the pain of my daughter's death only to find myself closer to her. I felt horrible outside the bath and terrible when I entered it. As I sat there, I decided to challenge the pain – face it head on. I decided to feel it, to let it envelope me -- not to deny it -- and after a few minutes I began to feel my Kristen close to me.

This was the first time after her death that I felt this way -- the first time that I realized it was the pain that kept me from the wonderful warm memories of our life together. Our relationship was anything but pain. I learned that the more I challenged my pain, the closer I felt to her. Kristen was just on the other side.

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Love Gifts

These loving donations from the Candle lighting were recorded too late for the January/February newsletter:

*In memory of Marc, Mathew, & David Seregin
Paul & Sonya Seregin*

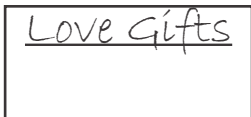
*In memory of Karl Thunstrom
Bert & Avghi Thunstrom*

*In memory of Alex Moore
Mom*

*In memory of Janet Hoch
Linda & Peter Hoch*

*In memory of Ian Jones
Nanette Biers, his mom*





We have received the following Love Gifts for the March/April newsletter.

Donor: David Clayton
Child: Zachary Andrew Clayton

Donor: Barbara J. Meislin
Child: Lori Margo Meislin
"In memory of the Purple Lady's beloved daughter, Little Lady Lori."

Donor: Bertila Garcia
Child: Renee Francesca Garcia
"To my beloved Renee, "Happy Birthday My Angel." Mama"

Donors: Stephen Bingham & Francois Blusseau
Child: Sylvia Bingham
"Sylvia, we love you always and miss you 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/June 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

MARCH - APRIL 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

