

Compassion & Choices Northern California Newsletter

Summer 2014



3701 Sacramento Street #439
San Francisco, CA 94118
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CompassionAndChoices.org/
California



Turning Losses Into Wins

by Toni Broaddus, California Campaign Director



Toni Broaddus

I think of my generation as the “Lost Generation.” Sandwiched between the Baby Boomers and Generation X, I spent three decades of my life watching people I loved dying from AIDS. I attended funerals while my friends attended weddings.

Now I am attending plenty of weddings and not so many funerals. But both have indelibly shaped me. And both bring me to my new role at Compassion & Choices. As

the new California campaign director, I am leading a statewide effort to make death with dignity accessible, open and legitimate in our state.

As an attorney and social justice advocate, I have been working for the past 15 years in the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights movement, much of that time on marriage equality. I worked on ballot measures, state and federal legislation, and litigation. I learned a tremendous amount about shifting public opinion on controversial issues. I saw the educational and organizing possibilities of constantly evolving social media. I listened to people tell heart-wrenching personal stories, and I watched those stories change people’s minds.

I know what it takes to harness the energy of movements and translate that passion into change. This is exactly what we need to do in California to improve end-of-life choices for those who are terminally ill.

Continued on page 2

My Life. My Death. My Choice. Spread the Word About Our Movement!

Circulating the enclosed petition is one thing you can do to help grow our movement. Compassion & Choices is compiling petitions and will deliver them to elected officials and others in California working to make aid in dying for terminally ill patients an open, accessible and legitimate practice in the state within five years.

When you speak with people, explain why you support aid in dying from your own personal background and what drew you to this issue. Then ask for a signature on the petition so others can voice their support too.

Petitions can be mailed to:

Compassion & Choices
3701 Sacramento Street #439
San Francisco, CA 94118

If you would like to receive a packet of petitions, please call 866.825.8967.

Donor Profile: "It's All About Love"



Barbara Meislin

Barbara Meislin, affectionately known as "The Purple Lady," has been involved in the movement for compassionate dying for decades. After meeting Barbara Coombs Lee, C&C's president, Ms. Meislin found a kindred spirit working tirelessly for end-of-life liberty.

She has varied experiences with death. Her beloved seven-year-old daughter became gravely ill and died the next day, and there was no support available for her grief. Her brother's life partner had breast cancer and died a painful and horrific death. When, two

years later, her brother became seriously ill, his biggest fear was the prospect of having to endure an agonizing death. Barbara was with him for the last two years of his life. Her mother had excellent hospice care and was able to die with dignity and grace, and most of her pain was well controlled. What she learned from these experiences is that it is essential to say "thank you to life in every way!"

Barbara is grateful for the work we do to advance the right of people to die with dignity. She has taken great care to make sure her end-of-life wishes are known by her children, life partner and physician. Barbara is a writer, and is actively engaged in politics and philanthropy. "She who gives while she lives knows where it goes" sums up why she supports Compassion & Choices. She wants to see our work expand in California and nationwide so we can leave life with dignity and minimize the suffering of the loved ones we leave behind. "It's all about love."

Turning Losses Into Wins

Continued from Page 1

A majority of Californians support death with dignity. It is far past time for our laws to reflect that. We have the passion, we have the support, and now we have the plan.

This does not mean it will be an easy campaign - or a cheap one. Our opponents have significant resources and political power. They will attempt to block our path to victory at every turn. They will exploit fears around death to scare our supporters into opposing our campaign.

To win, we need to be ready. To be ready, we must grow our movement. This is Compassion & Choices' focus in California for 2014.

Together, we can and will make The Golden State a place where death with dignity is legal and accepted. More importantly, we will ensure that all Californians can make the end-of-life choices that express their own values, and bring peace and solace to themselves and their families.

In Our Community

Please visit CompassionAndChoices.org/California to stay informed about upcoming presentations and senior health fairs where we'll have a booth. We also make presentations to local community groups. If you would like to schedule a presentation with a knowledgeable representative of Compassion & Choices Northern California call 866.825.8967 or send an e-mail to: nca@compassionandchoices.org.

Upcoming events include:

- *Senior Showcase Information Fair on Saturday, August 23 at Little House, Menlo Park, 9 AM to 1 PM*
- *Marin Senior Fair on Wednesday, October 22 at The Marin Exhibit Hall, San Rafael, 9 AM to 3 PM*

Yes! I support aid in dying!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

E-mail _____ Phone _____

This is important because: _____

I'd like to help...

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Send more petitions | <input type="checkbox"/> Testify at a public hearing | <input type="checkbox"/> Input information |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Make phone calls | <input type="checkbox"/> Work on the campaign | <input type="checkbox"/> Table at events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Knock on doors | <input type="checkbox"/> Write a letter to the editor | <input type="checkbox"/> Host a house party |

Thinking Ahead: My Questions, My Choices and My Life!

by Marlene Tumlin, Northern California End-of-Life Care Manager

In today's world people have the right to make important decisions regarding how they want to live. And most people want to have that same control at the end of life. Unfortunately, the important questions surrounding end-of-life issues are frequently not considered until a life-challenging event occurs. Then people feel out of control and like they don't have the answers they need to make informed choices.

The very best way to remain in control is to prepare in advance. Have conversations with your loved ones and complete important documents such as advance healthcare directives, Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST) for people with serious illness, and appoint a durable power of attorney who can speak for you if and when you cannot. People are so often afraid to raise the issue of dying. This is exactly where Compassion & Choices' professional staff and trained volunteers can help. We answer a wide range of questions so that your end-of-life care is consistent with your personal values and beliefs.

Here are a few examples of the many questions we can answer when you call us:

- How can I bring up difficult topics with my family and doctor about what I want at the end of life?
- I have a terminal disease, but my doctor keeps



proposing more procedures. Do I have a right to say "no more"?

- Will hospice support me if I choose to stop eating and drinking?
- How can I find the "right" hospice? Do I have to die in a hospital?

Everyone has the right to die with dignity and respect, and to feel at peace that their particular wishes will be honored. Our goal is to provide you with information and support you in having your choices respected. If you have questions now or in the future about end-of-life planning, our End-of-Life Consultation (EOLC) team is here to help. Please call us at 800.247.7421.

End-of-Life Volunteer Spotlight: Carole van Aelstyn

Carole has devoted herself to providing comfort and support to people facing the end of life for more than 25 years. Carole's first role with end-of-life issues was as a hospice nurse and later as the board chair for Compassion in Dying of Northern California. Two years ago, Carole retired as the client support coordinator for Compassion & Choices Northern California, but her commitment to end-of-life choice continues into retirement as she now volunteers with our EOLC Program.

Carole continues her efforts because "Compassion & Choices' clients are wonderful people who love life and want to have a peaceful and graceful end when they are dying." She also enjoys working



Carole van Aelstyn

with other volunteers and meeting people at senior fairs, where she provides information and advance-planning tools. "I want people to have the information and support they need to take charge of their end-of-life planning. It's such an empowering act people can do for themselves and their loved ones."

Carole also volunteers each week with the advocacy group Women in Black. She has traveled extensively and just before turning 70, trekked to Machu Picchu. When time allows, she is delighted to be at home with her cat and outside tending to her large year-round garden. Most of all, she loves spending every moment she can with her three new grandbabies. "They are the light of my life."

California Petitions Enclosed!

Announcement: Launch of Compassion & Choices California's New Website

Announcing the release of our brand-new website for Compassion & Choices California. Visit CompassionAndChoices.org/California to see the new design, user-friendly navigation, and to stay informed of current happenings and events for the entire state. Some of the new features include:

- Calendar of upcoming events and senior fairs Compassion & Choices will attend;
- Breaking news and blog posts on topics relating to the end of life and California;
- Quick access to sign and download the California petition, and
- Opportunities to get involved and volunteer directly for the California campaign.

Please check out CompassionAndChoices.org/California to find out more.

