

June, 2014



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

PIKES PEAK CHAPTER
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



Upcoming Events

June 19th - General Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church

July 17th - General Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church

August 21st - General Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church

Pikes Peak Chapter Steering Committee

Chapter Leader - Acting

LARAINÉ ASARO-ANDERSON
Son, Michael Edward Anderson

MAILINGS & DATABASE

JANE & STEVE GABRIEL
Son, Jonathan Steven Gabriel

SECRETARY

LEONIE CRAMER
Son, Julian Anthony King

TREASURER

YVETTE THOMPSON
Son, Ryan Barry Thompson

NEWSLETTER EDITOR & EMAILINGS

STEWART LEVETT
Son, Aaron Paul Levett

SC MEMBER/FACILITATOR

BOB THOMPSON
Son, Ryan Barry Thompson

SC MEMBER/FACILITATOR

CHAEAL CHRISTIANSON
Son, Damon Vincent Christianson

SC MEMBER/FACILITATOR

LETA LEVETT
Son, Aaron Paul Levett

Welcome

Our support group meets on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. Meetings are open to the parents, grandparents and older siblings of your loved one. We meet at the **First Baptist Church** downtown at 317 E. Kiowa. We understand your pain; won't you let us help you through your grief?

Our next meeting will be on June 19, 2014.

The death of your child is probably the most traumatic, life-changing event that you will ever experience. The Compassionate Friends is an organization of parents who have also lost a child to death. Each of us has experienced the deep, searing pain that you are feeling now. Each of us has turned to other parents who were farther into their grief journey for guidance, support and understanding. This is done through our monthly meetings, our newsletter, our website, our Telephone Friend program, our library and our e-mail program. Each month parents find our meeting to be a safe place where they can talk about their pain and problems with others who are uniquely qualified to understand; bereaved parents offer gentle suggestions or often simply listen. We invite you to bring a friend to your first few meetings until you feel a level of comfort with the group. Do not be surprised if we talk about the happy times with our children, the wonderful memories and the various methods we have created to keep our children close to us. It is here that many bereaved parents find hope as those who are more seasoned in their grief shine the light of experience to help illuminate each grief path. We have no dues. We are self-sustaining through donations and the generosity of so many in our community.

You Need Not Walk Alone.

TELEPHONE FRIENDS

Any of these members may be contacted to talk to you about your loss:

CHAPTER LEADER - ACTING

LARAINÉ ASARO-ANDERSON ★
Mom of Michael E. Anderson

351-7653

TODDLER / YOUNG CHILD LOSS

BOB & YVETTE THOMPSON ★

573-2743

ADULT CHILD / SUDDEN DEATH

CHAEAL CHRISTIANSON ★

687-6688

SKATEBOARD / AUTO ACCIDENT

RAYE WILSON (303) 814-9478

DRUG / ALCOHOL LOSS

STEWART & LETA LEVETT ★

531-5488

LEUKEMIA

JANE & STEVE GABRIEL ★

282-1924

SUICIDE

LARITA ARCHIBALD

596-2575

★ Please feel free to contact any Steering Committee member if you are unable to reach our Chapter Leader.



MY STORY - Kelly Farley, Used by permission

For more stories and grieving dad help, go to www.grievingdad.com

I grew up in a typical blue collar Midwest City where working hard and playing hard was a way of life. Men were expected to toughen up when times got rough and plow through them. There wasn't room for "weakness". When things became too much, you headed to the bar for a few hours. Nobody talked about what they were dealing with. My dad and every other male figure in my life lived by these rules. Since I didn't know any better, I also subscribed to this way of thinking.

I found my way out of the blue collar neighborhood and graduated from the University of Iowa in 1994. I accepted a position out of state and moved to Chicago with, my now wife, Christine. We were ready to take on the world. Climbing the corporate ladder was important to us. I was driven by my definition of success so we put off having children because we were too busy being busy.

However, in 2003 we decided that it was time to have a child. We soon found out that just because you are ready for a child, it doesn't mean it will just happen. We were planners and not being able to conceive when we wanted to was not part of our plan. After a series of fertility treatments, we conceived our daughter Katie. We were excited to be parents but that excitement turned to sorrow when we lost Katie in the Fall of 2004. I did what I had been taught to do, I toughened up and pushed through this horrible event and the pain I was feeling. I did what every good "man" is supposed to do; I became focused on helping Christine through this tragic event. I buried my pain and grief somewhere deep inside and never talked about it. I submerged myself in 60-70 hour work weeks to take my mind off of the pain.

After about a year, we decided that we would try to conceive again with the help of fertility treatments. This time it was a little boy and we felt blessed that little Noah was going to be a part of our lives. I had no idea how much of an impact Noah would have on my life. Noah passed away in the summer of 2006. Again, my life would be changed forever, but this time I couldn't bury the pain.

I didn't want to get out of bed and for the most part I didn't for about 3 months. All of the pain from the loss of Noah and all of the pain I buried deep inside after the loss of Katie rushed to the surface. I couldn't cope. I called work and told them I would be gone for an extended absence. I didn't know when or if I would be back. If the job was there when I got back, great, if not, I understood. I tried to fight the grief for a short period of time, but there was no burying it this time around. The journey was extremely hard and much longer than anticipated. I eventually went back to my job after being off for several months. I would sit at my desk every morning and cry, mourning the loss of my sweet babies. I couldn't wait for the end of the day so I could escape the confines of my cubicle that continually felt more and more like a prison cell. I wanted to run away from everything, but didn't know where to go. I was too sad to actually make it happen. I would sit at my desk and search the Internet for information and clues as to what was wrong with me. My doctors told me I had depression, I didn't believe them. Something else must be wrong with me. I could control my response to every other thing that has happened to me in my life, but not this. I finally gave in and realized I needed help.

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Men Grieve Side by Side

By Pat Schwiebert, R.N.
pat@tearsoup.com

Some of the most touching statements I've heard around a child's death have come from fathers.

I remember a father telling how after his children and wife died in a house fire his buddies would come over and sit with him day after day while he drank himself unconscious only to wake up enough to crawl off to bed and repeat the process the next day. He never talked about his family. They never asked any questions.

Another father told me how he spent the final month of his daughter's life frantically calling specialists around the country and doing research searching for a cure for his daughter's rapidly progressing brain tumor while his wife memorized every smile, every joke, every tender moment their daughter shared as she bravely faced the end of her life.

Yet another father described how he didn't want to leave his wife and travel to another hospital in the ambulance with his sick newborn baby, so he told the staff he couldn't go because he couldn't find his shoes. They told him to go without his shoes.

These stories speak of how men are not encouraged to feel and so resort to numbing the devouring pain of grief. They speak of how fathers try to fix things for their kids in an effort to help them dodge death. They speak of how torn they can feel when they need to be in two places at once, and how they fear the prospect of getting into unfamiliar territory where they feel all alone and expected to make life changing decisions.

As a culture we have made inroads to understanding how differently people grieve. We have recognized that our gender, or how we have been raised, may have something to do with how we grieve, but still we are surprised when a father emotes or cries more than a mother.

Fathers still think people expect them to buck up and hold things together for the family. Men tend to agree they want that too. It gives them a sense of control when everything else around them seems out of control. But they do want people to know that they are hurting too. That just because they look okay it isn't over. That their lives have also changed. They may not talk about it as much as their partners but they feel it just the same. Men grieve side by side. Women grieve face to face. A man typically wants you to be there with him, to not be afraid of him and his pain, not to pity him, maybe to play a game of golf or have a beer with him, and to be willing to listen if he wants to talk. Men are strong, and they are also tender.

I'm in awe of how they bravely face the future while living in the present.



Grieving Sucks



Remembering Our Children On Their Birthdays

Child's Name	Date of Birth	Compassionate Friend
Madalynn Ann Bergevin	Jun 3	Mollie Bergevin
Benjamin Stewart Easton	Jun 3	Susan Stewart
Renee Lee Seiberlich	Jun 6	Joe & Leda Seiberlich
John Doles	Jun 6	James & Susan Appleman
Tyler Schmidt	Jun 6	Valerie & Jeff Schmidt
Sandra Steckiel	Jun 10	Beth Steckiel
Yancy Hufford	Jun 13	Patty & Larry Hufford
Jessica Robison	Jun 14	Terri Robison
Matthew Flint	Jun 14	Cathy Flint
Andrea Mischel	Jun 14	Gary & Jerri Zimmerman
Gryphen Barber	Jun 16	Sean Barber & Cherie Barledge
Giorgiana Elizabeth Gordillo	Jun 16	Jennifer Gordillo
Nathan Gentry	Jun 16	Susan Gentry
Laura Dean	Jun 17	Barbara Dean
Jason Bradford Pfeif	Jun 17	Chris & Brad Pfeif
Jay William Sheridan	Jun 18	Mary & Tim Sheridan
Michael Jeffery Micke	Jun 18	Alice Micke
Jim Eley	Jun 19	Judy Eley
Richard McShan	Jun 20	Paul & Angelika McShan
Jeanne Burroughs Widmar	Jun 20	Arlene & Charles Burroughs
Dennis Lynn Gerringer	Jun 21	Kim Gerringer
Robert Beynon	Jun 25	Donna Beynon
Adam J. Hurst	Jun 25	Kim Troeger
Noah R. Wilkerson	Jun 26	Sarah Wilkerson
Kirsten Evelyn Cornell	Jun 26	Will & Marion Cornell
Kyleigh Peltzer	Jun 26	Ashleigh Peltzer
Amy Feight	Jun 27	Patty & Bill Fright
Scott David Stieglmeyer	Jun 27	Betty Stieglmeyer
Jimmy Schmidt	Jun 28	Jim & Laurie Schmidt
Jason Nathaniel Lurch	Jun 28	Kathleen & John Lurch
James Bishara	Jun 28	Phebe Bishara



Chaela Christianson
in loving memory of her son
Damon Vincent Christianson
5/30/1977 ~ 7/3/2010



Charles & Arlene Burroughs
in loving memory of their children
Jeanne Burroughs Widmar
6/20/50 ~ 7/18/83
James Michael Burroughs
9/29/51 ~ 6/24/95



Remembering Our Children On Their Anniversaries

Child's Name	Age	Date of Death	Compassionate Friend
Evan Carara	18 years	Jun 2	Cindy & J.D. Carara
Madalynn Ann Bergevin	1 day	Jun 3	Mollie Bergevin
Billy E. Hendrickson	19 years	Jun 3	Grace & Delbert Hendrickson
Aaron Steffens	36 years	Jun 5	Lynn Nickel
Sean O'Connor	20 years	Jun 5	Dennis & Tracy O'Connor
Anton "Andy" George Horn	13 years	Jun 6	Levi & Emma Horn
Ashley Meston	14 years	Jun 7	Jerry Meston
Jon Van Pelt	21 years	Jun 8	Claudette Van Pelt
Nicole Johnson	34 years	Jun 10	Sherry Turner
Sandra Steckiel	4 days	Jun 13	Beth Steckiel
Arthur Lipphardt Jr	24 years	Jun 15	Art & Chris Lipphardt
Gryphen Barber	1 day	Jun 16	Sean Barber & Cherie Barledge
Erica Lynn Groat	26 years	Jun 16	Linda Groat
Ryan Sayers	20 years	Jun 16	Tom & Kate Sayers
Vinnie Franz	18 years	Jun 17	Barb Franz
Michael Jeffery Micke	1 day	Jun 18	Alice Micke
Giorgiana Elizabeth Gordillo	4 days	Jun 19	Jennifer Gordillo
Kyle Joe Manning	11 years	Jun 19	Carol & Don Manning
Abbi Rose Starzynski	2 years	Jun 20	Sherry Starzynski
Tucker Ray Graef	14 years	Jun 21	Kathy Graef
Nicholle Guy	14 years	Jun 22	Lezlee Guy
Karen Sue Crawford	16 years	Jun 23	Joy Andrews
James Michael Burroughs	43 years	Jun 24	Arlene & Charles Burroughs
Andrea Mischel	30 years	Jun 25	Gary & Jerri Zimmerman
Dale Smith	9 years	Jun 26	Angela Smith
Daniel J. Whisler	38 years	Jun 27	JoAnn Mowdy
Tyler Joseph Budfuloski	2 years	Jun 28	Rob & Alice Budfuloski
Anthony James "Tony" Pisor	25 years	Jun 28	Cynthia Pisor-Zapel
Stephen Lucas Tyler	19 years	Jun 28	Catherine Tyler
Kade Riefenberg	19 years	Jun 29	Andy Gibson
Kimberly Ann Hayes	22 years	Jun 30	Patty & Patrick Hayes
Nick Naples	17 years	Jun 30	Laurie Naples
Noah R. Wilkerson	5 days	Jun 30	Sarah Wilkerson



Miriam Gentry
in loving memory of her son
Joseph Gentry Richardson



Chaplain
Gene Steinkirchner



ORGANIZATIONAL CONTACTS

TCF National Office

P.O. Box 3656

Oak Brook, IL 60522

630-990-0010 or toll free 877-969-0010



EMAIL: nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

WEBSITES:

Pikes Peak - www.TCFPikesPeakChapter.org

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/TCFPikesPeak>

National - www.compassionatefriends.org

Online Support

The Compassionate Friends offers "virtual chapters" through an Online Support Community (live chats). This program was established to encourage connecting and sharing among parents, grandparents, and siblings (over the age of 18) grieving the death of a child. The rooms supply support, encouragement, and friendship.

The friendly atmosphere encourages conversation among friends; friends who understand the emotions you're experiencing. There are general bereavement sessions as well as more specific sessions. Please check the schedule for dates and times of the sessions.

Note: Times posted on the schedule are based upon Eastern Time.

www.compassionatefriends.org

Love Gift Donations

A "Love Gift" is a wonderful way to remember your child, while also helping our TCF chapter "reach out" to bereaved families. There is no charge to attend meetings, use the library, or receive the newsletter. We depend solely upon these gifts, monetary or gifts-in-kind, to support our chapter. You may choose to donate a tax deductible "Love Gift" at any time. Let us be here for the families who do not know today that they will need us tomorrow.

Our chapter exists entirely through your donations which are tax deductible. A Love Gift is money donated to the chapter in memory of your child who has died. If you feel a Love Gift is an appropriate way to honor the memory of your child, please consider a donation, large or small. Please fill out the form located in this newsletter and mail it to the address listed. All pictures submitted will be returned unless you specify for us to keep them and place them on our Child Remembered board displayed at monthly meetings.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

\$50 or more - Newsletter Sponsor. May include a full page for printing. Please remember to send your page "Copy Ready" as you would like to see it printed in the newsletter.

\$0 to \$50 - A picture, if available, and dedication to be listed in the newsletter. Love Gift donations should be sent directly to our treasurer, Yvette Thompson whose address is listed on the Love Gift Donation Form. *Wouldn't you like to make a dedication to your child and help our chapter?*

⇒ **Send Love Gifts to Yvette Thompson, 5012 Rocking R Dr., Colorado Springs, CO 80915** ⇒

Thank you for contributing and supporting the work of our local chapter!

LOVE GIFT DONATION



Costs are rising. We need your Love Gift to support our chapter & newsletter! If you can, please help.

I would like to make a donation ☐ in Memory of

☐ a Chapter Gift

In loving memory of: _____

Love Gift Donation: \$ _____ Please make check payable to: The Compassionate Friends

Cut and mail this form with your Love Gift to: Yvette Thompson – 5012 Rocking R Dr. – Colorado Springs, CO 80915

Contributor Name & Address: _____

Relationship: ☐ Son ☐ Daughter ☐ Grandson ☐ Granddaughter ☐ Friend ☐ Other

Photo Enclosed: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Photo To Be Returned: ☐ Yes ☐ No



MY STORY - Continued from Page 2

I met with counselors and finally admitted that I was dealing with depression that was a result of suppressed grief. I refused to give in and was determined not to let this define me. There were days I could have easily thrown in the towel. For the first time in my life there were days I didn't care if I died. I wasn't suicidal, I just didn't care.

Once I started talking about my losses, the pain and the sadness I carried around with me, people started to reach out to help me. However, it wasn't the same people or friends that I had always associated with. These were people that I probably would have never met. They were people that have gone through other difficult things in their lives. They were people that didn't judge you or feel uncomfortable when you started to cry while telling them your story. They embraced you and checked in with you on a regular basis. They would take your calls regardless of what they were doing at the time. They provided me compassion, sympathy and hope. They never told me to toughen up and plow through it. They taught me perseverance and how to handle the loss in a healthy way. By acknowledging my losses it allowed me to release the pain, grief, depression and despair ever so slowly.

I made a promise to Katie, Noah and myself that once I was strong enough, I would reach out to other dads that have lost a child and help them find their way back from the brink. After you lose a child, it is virtually impossible to continue on through life as if nothing happened. You can't run from it, nor can you hide from it. Society expects men to do these things, to be strong, but it's not realistic or fair to ask a father to do this. The best thing any father can do for himself and for others around him is to reach out for help and to know it is not a sign of "weakness"; it's a sign of courage, courage to face these feelings head on. There is no time frame for healing after such a loss. Some days your emotions will win, but gradually over time it will dawn on you that you are winning this battle and a new you is starting to emerge. Maybe the new you will be someone you don't recognize, but in time you will realize this is the new you and you will learn to live with this person.

I look and feel different now. The stress of their deaths has sprinkled some gray into my hair and lines on my face. It has taken a part of me that I know I will never get back. My definition of success has changed. I no longer feel like I am rushing around all of the time trying to prove myself to the world. I am no longer the go-to guy at work. I do my job, but I don't do it as if I want to run the company someday. I could easily be persuaded to run off to a simpler way of life. I know Katie and Noah would want me to make a positive impact on other's lives, which this project has allowed me to do. The idea of helping others helps me. Material things do not hold much meaning to me anymore. Spending time with my wife and my dog Buddy is much more satisfying than working long hours to acquire material items that do not provide happiness. I now know that it's okay to show emotions and that it's not a sign of weakness. I prefer a quiet and peaceful life. To be quite honest, I am fairly confident that even if I wanted to, I couldn't maintain the same pace as before the losses, but I now know that's okay.



HEALING WORDS

CHANNELING OUR CAMELOT

by Nora Yood

Lifted from the TCF Manhattan Newsletter

When a child dies, life as it was known by the parents ends. Their job, home, physical appearance, breakfast cereal might have remained the same, but in essence, their entire existence unravels into an incomprehensible, frightening plot. The mundane casualness of daily routines is gone. Simple activities and ordinary events become a challenge. The pain of the loss may no longer be acute, morphing into a persistent throbbing ache—a sensitive scar rather than an open festering wound. Whatever I do, my son is never completely gone from my consciousness, and I am always missing him. I feel I no longer operate in the present tense.

When a child dies, life as it was imagined by the parents ends. They may get a new job, decorate their home, lose weight, eat another brand of breakfast cereal, but the hopes and dreams for the future, are undeniably, unequivocally, irreversibly over. What is left is only a lament. Holiday celebrations and special occasions become a challenge. The grieving is quieter and more controlled – attending weddings and graduations require less time in the ladies' room crying. Wherever I go, I feel my son's absence, and I am always missing him. I feel I can no assume what the future will bring.

Thinking about the present and the future differently after the death of a child is understandable even rational. Who could even pretend that life goes on as it did before, or will go on as it had been planned? But what sometimes gets lost in the rubble of our coping is that our past has been tainted and bruised as well. Often we recall a nasty argument, or a careless joke, or a thoughtless remark—something that might not even enter our minds, or might be regarded with minor annoyance, relief or even humor were our child still alive —can become a source of guilt or regret. Shortly before his death, I refused to give my son the i-pod he wanted for his birthday. I believed he hadn't earned it, and needed to show more responsibility in preparation for the years ahead, never considering there would be none.

We may beat ourselves up for behaving as regular people not prophets. Every one of our children died too young. If we saw they would be taken from us so soon, we may not have squandered precious time on things that ultimately seemed to have little significance. Whatever faults they had, our children did not deserve to die. We might have told them how awesome they were and how much we loved more often. We may also be tempted to idolize our sons and daughters as behaving like saints not regular people. Memories may be beautiful and yet, what is too painful to remember, we chose to reinvent. We paint the canvas of the time before our children died with Camelot as the background; our children well and happy and us protecting them. And we are right to channel our inner Camelot because that time did exist and always will.





THOUGHTFUL POEMS

I can tell by that look friend, that you need to talk,...
So come take my hand and let's go for a walk.
See, I'm not like the others – I won't shy away,
because I want to hear what you've got to say.
Your child has died and you need to be heard,
but they don't want to hear a single word.
They tell you your child's "with God", so be strong.
They say all the "right" things that somehow seem
wrong.
They're just hurting for you and trying to say,
they'd give anything to help take your pain away.
But they're struggling with feelings they can't understand
so forgive them for not offering a helping hand.
I'll walk in your shoes for more than a mile.
I'll wait while you cry and be glad if you smile.
I won't criticize you or judge you or scorn,
I'll just stay and listen 'til your night turns to morn.
Yes, the journey is hard and unbearably long,
and I know that you think that you're not quite that
strong.
So just take my hand 'cause I've got time to spare,
and I know how it hurts, friend, for I have been there.
See, I owe a debt you can help me repay;
for not long ago, I was helped the same way.
As I stumbled and fell thru a world so unreal,
so believe when I say that I know how you feel.
I don't look for praise or financial gain,
and I'm sure not the kind who gets joy out of pain.
I'm just a strong shoulder who'll be here 'til the end-
I'll be your Compassionate Friend.

~with permission
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The Compassionate Friends
Winnipeg, Canada



In 1961, an unknown Oakland woman named Elma Dean was suddenly thrust into world recognition with a poem she had written during World War II, honoring the fallen soldiers. "A Letter to St. Peter" has been transcribed on an American cemetery wall in England, recited by a U.S. Senator at another European cemetery, posted in National Geographic and found in the Congressional Record.

Appearing in the Oakland Tribune on December 17, 1961, is the following excerpt: "It was the summer of 1942, and things were not going well for us in the war," said Elma Dean in her quiet voice, "and so many of our sons, some of my friend's sons, were being killed. I was going around with tears in my eyes." She shared her tears with the tears of mothers across the country when she wrote the poem, "Letter to St. Peter" in November 1942.

The poem was rewritten and made into a song by John Gorka with the new title "Let Them In"

Let Them In

Let them in, Peter, they are very tired
Give them couches where the angels sleep, and light
those fires
Let them wake whole again, to brand new dawns
Fired by the sun not wartime's bloody guns
May their peace be deep, remember where the broken
bodies lie
God knows how young they were to have to die
God knows how young they were to have to die

So give them things they like, let them make some noise
Give dance hall bands not golden harps, to these our
boys
And let them love, Peter. For they've had no time,
They should have trees and bird songs and hills to climb
The taste of summer, in a ripened pear,
And girls sweet as meadow wind, with flowing hair
And tell them how they are missed, but say not to fear
It's gonna be alright, with us down here.

Let them in, Peter

Let them in, Peter

Let them in, Peter

June, 2014

The Compassionate Friends
Pikes Peak Chapter
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Colorado Springs, CO 80949-1345



[http://www.compassionatefriends.org/News Events/Conferences/National Conferences.aspx](http://www.compassionatefriends.org/News%20Events/Conferences/National_Conferences.aspx)