



**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS**
PIKES PEAK CHAPTER
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



NOVEMBER 2014

Upcoming Events

November 20th - General Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church
December 14th - Candle Light Memorial - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church Sanctuary
December 18th - General Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church

STEERING COMMITTEE

CHAPTER LEADER - ACTING
LARAINE 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/LIBRARIAN
CHAE LA CHRISTIANSON
Son, Damon Vincent Christianson

SC MEMBER/WELCOME PACKETS
LETA LEVETT
Son, Aaron Paul Levett

TELEPHONE FRIENDS

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

CHAPTER LEADER - ACTING

LARAINE ASARO-ANDERSON * 351-7653

DRUG / ALCOHOL LOSS
STEWART & LETA LEVETT * 531-5488

TODDLER / YOUNG CHILD LOSS

BOB & YVETTE THOMPSON * 573-2743

LEUKEMIA
JANE & STEVE GABRIEL * 282-1924

ADULT CHILD / SUDDEN DEATH

CHAE LA CHRISTIANSON * 687-6688

SUICIDE
LARITA ARCHIBALD 596-2575

SKATEBOARD / AUTO ACCIDENT
RAYE WILSON (303) 814-9478

*Please feel free to contact any of these Steering Committee members if you can not reach our Chapter Leader. **





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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 November 20, 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.

PIKES PEAK TCF CANDLELIGHT MEMORIAL SERVICE

Once again we request that you contact us to have your child's slide included in our memorial. Slides from previous years may be used again this year or you may submit new photos. Please limit your photos to (2) two along with a short dedication so everything will be viewable on the slide. Please remember, the better the photo you submit, the better your dedication will look.

Prior years' submissions will be read as a dedication if we don't hear back from you.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS IS SAT., DEC. 6th.

To see a short sample of our Candlelight Service, go to this YouTube link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8g4uTWPbGCI>



We are only a few weeks away from our annual Worldwide Candle Lighting service.

The date this year is December 14th and once again will be held in the sanctuary of the First Baptist Church at 7:00 p.m.

Now is a good time to look through your photos to submit for our slide show. Old slides may be updated or a new one created for your child. More information about this special event will be forthcoming in next months newsletter or you may write to me should you have any questions at PikesPeakTCF@gmail.com.

Stew Levett - Editor

Send to: Stew Levett
160 El Dorado Lane
Colorado Springs, CO 80919

Your Name _____
Your Address _____
Your Phone _____ Email _____
Child's Name As You'd Like it to Appear _____

Cause of Death (Optional) _____
Child's Birthdate _____
Child's Memorial Date _____
Number of Pictures Included _____
Dedication _____

Please create my slide with information and pictures provided.
Please use last year's slide. _____ Please return pictures when finished. _____



The Compassionate Friends Help the Living Live!

Fay Harden, TCF, Tuscaloosa, AL

To some it may seem that participation in The Compassionate friends is dwelling on death. It isn't. The Compassionate Friends is a positive experience that says you recognize that death is a part of life and as such must be given the necessary attention. Death comes to everyone at sometime in their life. Even after someone close to us dies we must go on living, or die, too. The Compassionate Friends wants to help you go on living. We want to help you bridge the gap that death has made in your living. When there is death, life ends for that person. And for awhile the lives of those left behind seem to end also. Our society still often isolates the dying person and, unfortunately, it also isolates the bereaved person. We want to provide a place for the bereaved. A place to heal, to grow, to "become" again. A place to be accepted and understood. A place for the living to learn to live again, to take control of their lives which seem to be out of control during bereavement. The Compassionate Friends will be there when you need them for as long as you need them. We take the "compassionate" and "friends" seriously. You Need Not Walk Alone!

MY FIRST HOLIDAY

The holidays are fast approaching. I can remember my first Thanksgiving after the death of my daughter, Christy. She had only been dead one month when this "festive occasion" arrived. I had not really given the holidays any thought because I was totally numb. I could not imagine how our family was going to get through them. I could barely put one foot in front of the other much less think of food, laughter, entertaining or being entertained. The most elaborate meal preparation I had done since Christy's death had been to call and order a pizza for delivery.

My husband and I knew that for our wonderful nine-year-old son Jason, we had to have some semblance of a holiday. Then my sister and her family said they were coming over and not to worry about dinner. A few days later, my special aunt and her daughter called to say they would not take "no" for an answer, they were coming to have Thanksgiving dinner with us and would bring a dish. And, of course, there was no question about it, Mother would be with us.

Somehow dinner was prepared. Of course, I do not remember fixing or eating anything. Mostly what I remember is being surrounded by my wonderful family who helped us through the holidays by allowing us to cry, reminisce, be silent, talk, and yes, even laugh. We began our dinner with a prayer, asking God to help us deal with our grief and sorrow and to help us heal.

My heart goes out to each and every person who is grieving the loss of their child, grandchild, sibling, or any other loved one who they hold near and dear to their heart, and may this holiday be blessed with love, peace, and many understand- ing family and friends.

Cathy Bowie TCF, Southern Maryland Chapter





Remembering Our Children On Their Birthdays

| Child's Name | Date of Birth | Compassionate Friend |
|------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| Robert Howie | Nov 1 | Annette Howie |
| Rebecca Ann Reynolds | Nov 1 | Ken & Barbara Reynolds |
| Chloe Faith Gafford | Nov 3 | Brian & Jocelyn Gafford |
| Nick Naples | Nov 4 | Laurie Naples |
| Patricia Elliott | Nov 4 | Connie & Dave Elliott |
| Carlos Martinez | Nov 6 | Vicki Struckle & Marilyn Martinez |
| Michael Keeney | Nov 6 | Charlotte Keeney |
| Kristie Diaz | Nov 7 | Julie Diaz |
| Nicole Johnson | Nov 7 | Sherry Turner |
| Vinnie Franz | Nov 8 | Barb Franz |
| McKenzie Boutin | Nov 9 | Colleen Boutin |
| Kimberly Ann Hayes | Nov 10 | Patty & Patrick Hayes |
| Judy Gambill | Nov 13 | Andrea Gambill |
| Daniel Stafford Gettman | Nov 14 | Louise Gettman |
| Clay Cline | Nov 14 | Arlene Robush |
| Colin Peter Baerman | Nov 14 | Paul & Kerry Baerman |
| Eric Cowles | Nov 15 | Doug & Leah Cowles |
| Shannon Diane McMahon | Nov 17 | Robert & Jeanette McMahon |
| Joshua W. Lewis Gohlke | Nov 19 | Karen Swank |
| Travis Grimmer | Nov 20 | Mary Lou Grimmer |
| Richard "Richie" Petras | Nov 21 | Richard Petras |
| Evan Carara | Nov 22 | Cindy & J.D. Carara |
| Leah Ann Trutna | Nov 22 | Steve & Phyllis Trutna |
| Branden Howland | Nov 23 | Julianne Howland |
| Patrick Roger Pennington | Nov 24 | Roger & Joan Pennington |
| Savannah L. Burke | Nov 25 | Herman & April Burke |
| Danae Lynne Marie Mannon | Nov 26 | Art Mannon |
| Mark Van Matre | Nov 27 | Patricia Van Matre |
| Jalynn Cameron | Nov 28 | Jessica Cameron |
| Michael Christopher Rushmore | Nov 28 | Bob & Carol Rushmore |
| Paul A. Behr | Nov 29 | Cynthia & Steve Behr |



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



Chaplain
Gene Steinkirchner

When the time comes for lighting festive candles, let them remind you not only of what you lost but also of what you had. - Sascha Wagner, TCF, Des Moines, IA



Remembering Our Children On Their Anniversaries

| Child's Name | Age | Date of Death | Compassionate Friend |
|--------------------------|----------|---------------|-------------------------------|
| Michael Williams Greist | 12 years | Nov 1 | Judy Greist |
| Jaden Alexander Founds | 1 month | Nov 3 | Kimberly Founds |
| Chloe Faith Gafford | 1 day | Nov 3 | Brian & Jocelyn Gafford |
| Justin William Winner | 13 years | Nov 5 | Dale & Rosanne Winner |
| Ayla Amaya Sanchez | 5 years | Nov 7 | Jennifer Sanchez |
| Scott David Stieglmeyer | 21 years | Nov 7 | Betty Stieglmeyer |
| Seth Fieser | 9 months | Nov 8 | Megan Fieser |
| Dwayne Stoppel | 45 years | Nov 8 | Pearl Stoppel |
| Alexander Pegler | 3 years | Nov 9 | Eric & Lisa Pegler |
| Emma Renee Younger | 3 months | Nov 9 | Adam & Mindy Younger |
| Robert Howie | 12 days | Nov 12 | Annette Howie |
| Mike Mozo | 27 years | Nov 12 | Valerie Kirchhofer |
| Lindsay Yvonne Davis | 26 years | Nov 18 | Susan & Jerry Davis |
| Michael Keeney | 45 years | Nov 18 | Charlotte Keeney |
| Stephen Merle Schmoker | 39 years | Nov 19 | Shirley & Ralph Greer |
| Sean Michael Benjamin | 34 years | Nov 20 | Kathy Benjamin |
| Tyler Schmidt | 23 years | Nov 20 | Valerie & Jeff Schmidt |
| Omar Amaya | 21 years | Nov 21 | Oscar & Juana Amaya |
| Aaron Lee Gallob | 28 years | Nov 21 | Lou & Erma Gallob |
| Susanna Jeanette Scruggs | 23 years | Nov 22 | Patricia Beard |
| Joseph Michael Chavez | 29 years | Nov 22 | Herman & Patty Chavez |
| Tommy Kinslow | 20 years | Nov 22 | Pam Kinslow |
| Conri Lee Barber | 8 months | Nov 23 | Sean Barber & Cherie Barledge |
| Sid Shell | | Nov 23 | James Selvig |
| Kimberly Benson | 16 years | Nov 24 | Debbie Diekman |
| Wade Lehman | 19 years | Nov 24 | Lori Lehman |
| Jonathan Ell-Duncan | 17 years | Nov 25 | Dan & Becky Duncan |
| Michael Ornelas | 2 months | Nov 27 | Annette & Chris Ornelas |
| Adriano Bermudez | 19 years | Nov 29 | C.J. LaPointe |
| Sheldon Pasca | 20 years | Nov 30 | Norma Watkins |

A PROMISE

The colors of life change as we go through grief. We begin black and white;
Then gray settles over us, seeping into our pores, surrounding us,
Smothering us for a long period of time; then slowly the colors change.
We may not even be aware of their changing 'til one day we see a rainbow.
And know it was meant for us.
Faye Harden TCF, Tuscaloosa, Alabama



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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



Support Resources

TCF Online Chat Groups:

www.compassionatefriends.org/resources/online_Support.aspx

- For questions, please contact Diana Jorden, 925-432-3854, who moderates the general grief and suicide loss rooms on Friday nights and Sunday. TCF online offers several specialized chat rooms, all moderated by moms who have been in chat for at least 2 years or more. We offer a sibling-only chat, loss under 1 year, loss over 2 years, loss of only child, suicide survivor, infant/pregnancy loss, and every night (and Monday mornings) there is a general loss room open to parents, step and grand, and siblings.
- You can sign up for the online TCF National newsletter at www.compassionatefriends.org
- You can reach our TCF National Facebook page through the link on the same home page of our national website. You will be asked to join Facebook if you are not already a member, and we hope you'll find our Facebook page as interesting as do the more than 11,000 fans who have already found us!



Thoughts About Progress

One thing that is frequently discussed at our meetings is the despair of thinking you are on the road to "recovery," when all of a sudden you seem to be back at square one. But are you really?

Let's keep in mind that most of us have had no previous experience in "recovering" from the loss of a child. Therefore, we have no point of reference—it's all new to us. Actually the "roller coaster" of emotions is perfectly normal. In the very beginning, most of us seem to vacillate between dead numbness and excruciating pain. Constant crying—until not a tear is left—just dried up and limp. We actually are living minute to minute.

After a couple of months we might actually have a few hours when we have not cried or felt that deep overwhelming despair. Then—wham!—back to where we started. We tend to panic and think something is wrong with us. Let's be realistic! There is something wrong—terribly wrong—we have each lost a child.

Let's be fair to ourselves. We have started to play roles in the outside world. Like the old song says, "laughing on the outside— crying on the inside." We want to be acceptable to society. "You are doing so well," we hear. If only they knew! We may feel we have to fool others, but let us be really honest with our feelings. To deny our feelings, particularly to ourselves, is to block the road to recovery. Remember that recovery, in this case, does not mean "getting over it"; it means gaining control of our lives again.

So let's not worry about what other people think, say or expect. Our friends (well-meaning as they are), members of our families, even someone else who has lost a child, should not sit in judgment. Each person grieves differently due to that person's general make-up and the relationship with the dead child. Unless someone has withdrawn totally from everything and everybody over a long period of time, the chances are that all is in the realm of normalcy.

Only after we have walked down the long road of grief and can look back, remembering those early days and weeks, can we see that we really are not on square one again. We have just slipped backwards for a time. That is all. Allow yourself that, and then strive forward again. It takes time, a lot of time! We tend to expect too much from others, others expect too much from us, and therefore we tend to expect too much from ourselves.

Mary Ehmann TCF, Valley Forge, PA



HEALING WORDS

LIFTS TO THE HEART PREPARING FOR THANKSGIVING

By: Elaine Stillwell - Bereaved mother, Rockville Centre, NY

Many of us who are grieving feel that Thanksgiving is a useless and painful holiday because we do not feel very thankful with our terribly hurting hearts. Maybe we could prepare our hearts for Thanksgiving by peeking into them to find at least one and maybe even more blessings that we could count at this special time of the year.

After I lost my two oldest children, 19 year old Peggy and 21 year old Denis, in the same car accident, I learned that the tiniest thing that could ease my heart's burden was indeed a blessing! Discovering these "lifts to the heart" may help you prepare your heart for Thanksgiving. Sometimes amid all the pain, we forget what we could be grateful for.

Take an "inventory" of your heart. Perhaps you could be thankful for:

THE STRENGTH TO GET UP EACH DAY

--even if it is not fun. Grieving takes 10 times the energy to get through a day.

Exhaustion can be one of the hardest parts of grieving.

THE LOVE OF ONE SPECIAL PERSON

--whether it be spouse, child or friend giving us encouragement and support. I call my husband "my blotter" because he picks up all my tears and says, "It's okay."

SOMEONE NEEDING OUR LOVE

--a person giving us reason to live, to nurture, to plan for, to hug.

A SPECIAL HOBBY OR INTEREST

--an activity that consumes our time and keeps our mind busy. It could be reading grief books to survive, writing our thoughts in a journal, making crafts, playing the piano, listening to music, planting a garden, walking along the beach.

A JOB

--that keeps our attention and makes hours, days, weeks, and month pass by quickly.

PICTURES

--that make special moments treasures and keep our happy memories very much alive.

A Sibling's Feelings

The pain of a sibling is so real we sometimes hide it deep inside of ourselves. As we watch our parents hurting we see the pain in their eyes. We are also hurting not only for the loss of our brother or sister but also for our own parents. We need to reach out to each other to let each other know we are hurting inside.

Our lives have all changed forever. I know they lost a son but I lost my younger brother I loved, and as siblings we share a special bond that will never have anymore for he no longer lives...my brother, my friend.

I will always miss you and I will never forget you for you will always live in my heart, and I have wonderful memories no one can ever take away from me. In my heart you will stay, love your forever.

Your sister, Marie Porreca - TCF Rockland County, NY



THOUGHTFUL POEMS

I'm thankful, Lord, for loving care;
I'm thankful, too, for something more.
I'm thankful, Lord, that I can bear
the things that I'm not thankful for.

Clair Sanford, TCF, Logansport, IN

A Thanksgiving Prayer

I'm thankful this Thanksgiving
That my grief is not so new.
Last year it was so painful
To think of losing you.
Death can't claim my love for you.
Though we are far apart,
Sweet memories will always be
Engraved upon my heart.
Time can never bring you back,
But it can help me be thankful for the years of joy
You brought in our family.
To all parents with grief so new,
I share your loss and sorrow.
I pray you find with faith and time
The blessings of each tomorrow.

Charlotte Wick, TCF Idaho Falls, ID

THE EMPTY CHAIR

The table is set and ready
With food to delight the eye.
Everyone is waiting
With anticipation high.
But one place is empty
Void of a loved one dear
And as we pause to remember
We wipe away the tear.
Your chair may be empty
And your presence no longer here
But your memory is with us
As we gather around this fare.
Someone recalls something you once said,
And the memories start to flow
And in this magic moment
Your spirit upon us glows.
Gone but never forgotten
As with us you'll always be
And if I look close, your presence,
In the empty chair I see.

Sheila Simmons
Written in memory of her son,
Steve Simons 3/24/70 – 10/19/99

GIVING THANKS

I cannot hold your hands today,
I cannot see your smile,
I cannot hear your voices now,
My children, who are gone.
But I recall your faces still,
The songs, the talks, the sighs.
And story times, and winter walks,
And sharing secret things.
I know you helped my mind to live
Beyond your time with me.

You gave me clearer eyes to see –
You gave me finer ears to hear –
What living means, what dying means,
My children, who are gone.
So here it is Thanksgiving Day,
And you are not with me.
And while I weep a mother's tears,
I thank you for the gift you were,
And all the gifts you gave to me,
My children, who are gone.

Sascha



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

November 2014

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