



Upcoming Events

April 16th - General Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church
May 21st - General Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church

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/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

LARAINÉ 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. **

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

Watch for upcoming news about our chapters annual barbecue and memorial balloon launch to be held in May.



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 April 16, 2015.

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.

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!



The Compassionate Friends is pleased to announce that Dallas, Texas, will be the site of the 38th TCF National Conference on July 10-12, 2015. "Hope Shines Bright ...Deep in the Heart" is the theme of this year's event, which promises more of last year's great national Conference experience. The 2015 Conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency Downtown Dallas. Plan to come and be a part of this heartwarming experience.





Anticipating Mother's Day

As Mother's Day approaches, I think of our newly bereaved parents who will be facing their first or possibly second Mother's Day without their child. I remember my first Mother's Day without my son. It was, quite frankly, a sad day for me. But I got through it and a few days later, I got through his birthday as well. In our first year of grief each milestone seems to mark distance from our children.....we count that distance in minutes, hours, days, weeks and months.

How we spend Mother's Day is strictly a unique decision made by each parent, each Mother. There are no rules. While we all walk this grief road together, we each walk it in our unique way. No two people grieve in the same way, because no two people are alike. Several years ago I wrote an article about Mother's Day. Some of you have seen it and some of you won't remember reading it. I hope it gives each of you some measure of peace this week and on Sunday.

Anticipating Mother's Day

Before we lost our children to death, Mother's Day was a happy time. We each reflect back on Mother's Days past.....gifts, cards, special memories and one day set aside to acknowledge the best in our relationship with our treasured children.

With the death of our child, this dynamic was forever transfigured. Now, instead of looking forward to this day, we grasp at anything that will keep our minds away from it. Yet the anxiety still creeps into our minds and hearts; our stomachs churn and tears fill our eyes at the most inopportune moments. The dreadful countdown begins in late April and lasts for nearly three weeks.

This is the eighth Mother's Day I have endured since the death of my son. Each year I have the same, desperate anxiety, yet each year the day is a bit easier to handle. Each year the anticipation is far worse than the day itself.... "borrowing trouble" as my dad would say. Since my son is my only child, I do not have the comfort of other children nor do I have the need to put on a happy face. Instead, I am able to choose what I will do without feeling the burden of guilt.

While my first Mother's Day was filled with tears, subsequent Mother's Days have been more subdued.

The choice to embrace or ignore Mother's Day is yours alone. Many bereaved mothers adopt a new perspective which honors their child and still gives normalcy to their family. Mother's Day is bittersweet for us. The pain is part of the love that we will feel for our children for eternity. We wouldn't trade one treasured moment for a cosmic reduction of our pain.

Some of us plan the day carefully. Some of us just "go with the flow." Some of us weep; some of us work. Some of us read, some of us revel in this special moment set aside just for mothers. Each of us makes a choice that is based on our own truth.

The day itself is not nearly as overwhelming as the buildup of anxiety and sadness which precedes it. I have found this to be true of all holidays, birthdays, death anniversaries and special occasions. I am trying to live in the moment. When the moment of Mother's Day happens, I will decide what I should do. I refuse to let others pressure me. I refuse to become maudlin over greeting card commercials and heart-grabbing point-of-purchase marketing efforts. I will not be manipulated by the agenda of others.

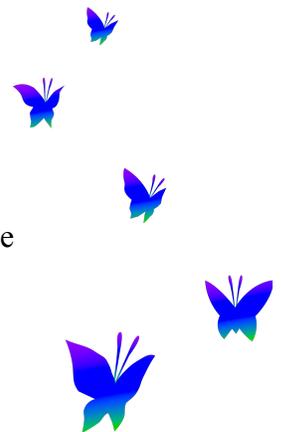
But on Mother's Day, as on each day of the year, I will think of my son, remembering the child he was and the man he became. I will honor his life by doing the best I can with what is left of my life. I will remain in the moment and treasure my memories. And for this mother, that is enough.

Annette Mennen Baldwin
In memory of my son, Todd Mennen
TCF, Katy, TX



Remembering Our Children On Their Birthdays

Child's Name	Date of Birth	Compassionate Friend
Christie Fike	Apr 2	Shirley & Dan Emerson
Michael Robert Pugh	Apr 2	Robert & Donna Pugh
John Andrew Schoen	Apr 2	Joyce Schoen
Michael Zwirlein	Apr 3	Chris Zwirlein
Kaitlin Bartlett	Apr 3	Kim Bartlett
Steven James Gantz	Apr 4	Diana Gantz
Mike Mozo	Apr 5	Valerie Kirchhofer
Joseph Gentry Richardson	Apr 6	Miriam Gentry
Heidi Susanne Wolfe	Apr 6	David & Karen Wolfe
Acacia Barbara Clen	Apr 8	Cindy Santarte
Tommy Kinslow	Apr 9	Pam Kinslow
Julie Bankston	Apr 13	Peggy Bankston
Zachary Nicholas Hoke	Apr 16	Debra & Steve Hoke
Patricia Spain Boden	Apr 18	Myra Spain
Jonathan Steven Gabriel	Apr 19	Steve & Jane Gabriel
Colby McCarley	Apr 19	Tami Sisneros
Beau Matthew Begier	Apr 20	Don & Gina Begier
Jake Holm	Apr 20	Eric & Kalyne Holm
Tyrone Elliott Bautista	Apr 22	Rosemary Devney
Miguel Meza	Apr 24	Susan Meza
Steven Miller	Apr 27	Mike Miller
Juan Marine	Apr 29	Pamela Marine
Kaden France	Apr 30	Jeremy & Sarah France
Sara M. Losasso	Apr 30	Cindy Losasso
Micah David Smilser	Apr 30	Robin Myers



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



Chaplain
Gene Steinkirchner
CSPD



Remembering Our Children On Their Anniversaries

Child's Name	Age	Date of Death	Compassionate Friend
Richard McShan	23 years	Apr 1	Paul & Angelika McShan
Erin Marie McCallister	3 weeks	Apr 2	Steve & Carol McCallister
Matthew John McCallister	22 years	Apr 3	Steve & Carol McCallister
Brian Patrick Adair	13 years	Apr 4	Duane & Mary Adair
Skylar Lynn Boyle Ringland	22 years	Apr 4	Cathleen Boyle
Abraham Daniel Boukhari	18 years	Apr 4	David & Deborah Woodrow
Ronald Eugene Peterson	15 years	Apr 5	Ron Peterson
Kristie Diaz	26 years	Apr 7	Julie Diaz
Douglas Radowski	41 years	Apr 8	Renee Roettger
Lindsey Everding	18 years	Apr 10	Trena Everding & Dave Kiefer
Kyle Snyder	24 years	Apr 10	LuAnn Walters
Rocke Lee Corley	42 years	Apr 11	Jeanne Corley
Patrcia Elliott	19 years	Apr 11	Connie & Dave Elliott
Lindsay Jean Morris	20 years	Apr 12	Linda Morris
Michael Robert Pugh	13 years	Apr 12	Robert & Donna Pugh
Eric Johnson	22 years	Apr 13	Gary Johnson
Michael Eck	2 weeks	Apr 14	Patricia Eck
Dennis Lynn Gerringe	16 years	Apr 16	Kim Gerringe
Sarah Sunshine Wedekind	30 years	Apr 16	Lorry Pearson
Richard "Richie" Petras	3 years	Apr 16	Richard Petras
Acacia Barbara Clen	13 years	Apr 16	Cindy Santarte
Naomi Katherine Schwartz	1 year	Apr 16	Tim & Sonoko Schwartz
Dawn Michelle Wiley	21 years	Apr 18	Luanne Wiley
Jalynn Cameron	4 months	Apr 19	Jessica Cameron
Miguel Meza	20 years	Apr 19	Susan Meza
Forrest Kelly	27 years	Apr 20	Cindy Bronner
Leah Rae Wiley	23 years	Apr 21	Russ & Kelly Wiley
McKenzie Boutin	17 years	Apr 25	Colleen Boutin
Gary Carlson	44 years	Apr 25	Phil & Rose Carlson
James Bishara	19 years	Apr 27	Phebe Bishara
John Andrew Schoen	55 years	Apr 27	Joyce Schoen
Micah David Smilser	1 day	Apr 30	Robin Myers
Clay Cline	53 years	Apr 30	Arlene Robush

If you would like to have an article, poem, etc. printed in our newsletter, please mail to TCF- Pikes Peak Chapter, PO Box 51345, Colorado Springs, CO 80949 OR e-mail to: pikespeaktcf@gmail.com
We will get your submission in our next publication, room permitting.



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

TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Coming to your first meeting is the hardest thing to do. Try not to judge your first meeting as to whether or not TCF will work for you. The second, third, or fourth meeting might be the time you will find the right person or just the right words that will help you in your grief or comfort you. Remember we have all been there and even though circumstances may be different we really do understand. You are not alone

TO OUR SEASONED MEMBERS

We need your encouragement and support. You are the string that ties our group together. Each meeting pain will not always be this bad it really does get better wisdom. Show others that there is hope, from someone who has found it.



On Grief and Laughter

After the death of a child, how many of us, as bereaved parents, might say to ourselves, "How can I ever smile again?" I know I felt that way following the death of my son. I have heard bereaved parents, especially during the early days after the loss, say, "I suddenly found myself laughing at work. How could I have done that?" After my son died, I went back to work one week after the funeral, and one of the first things I had to do was attend a department meeting. At one point, someone made a humorous remark. Everyone laughed, except me. One of my coworkers, seeing my poker face, called across the table, "Come on, don't look so sad." There were other times, too, when people thought I shouldn't be so glum, that I should be smiling or laughing. Once, while riding in my carpool, the driver turned around to me after observing my mask-like expression in the rear-view mirror, and exclaimed, "Smile!" I remember retorting with some acerbity, "You smile." But in time I did smile. I did laugh. It must be the subconscious guilt within ourselves that denies us the right to smile or laugh. It happened—I don't remember how long it was—at least several months, I think. I have seen parents at a TCF meeting, whose loss is recent, with tear-stained faces, smile when someone at the meeting says something that tickles the funny bone. How many of us have heard our non-bereaved friends say to us, "How can you go to that support group? It's all sadness and gloom." How wrong they are! Of course, we cry at TCF, but there are moments of laughter, too. Crying and laughter, after all, are often interchangeable, such as crying at weddings or graduations and giggling inappropriately at the sight of someone taking an unceremonious pratfall on a slippery sidewalk. Perhaps laughter is also the beginning of Nature's way of mending, of healing us.

Dave Ziv ~ TCF, Southampton, PA

What Did Your Child Leave You?

I recently attended a workshop called "Living with Loss". One exercise was to write an "ethical will" which is an accounting of the "intangibles" a loved one has left behind. I'd like to share what I believe my infant son left to me.

He proved to me that life truly is fragile, and I will handle it now more carefully. My children left to come will benefit from my having had and lost Michael.

He taught me that not all problems in life are monumental, and that I must remember to put things into perspective.

He allowed me to reassess my spiritual beliefs. I may need to do this from time to time in my life, and that is all right because there is a loving and caring God, and He is with me no matter what.

He showed me that each individual, in some way, leaves a mark in this world, or moves someone just so, regardless of how long his life is, or how short.

He gave me a reason and a "need to help other people.

He reminded me to show - and tell - the people I love how I feel about them as often and as openly as I can.

Linda Worth, TCF, Bremerton, WA





HEALING WORDS

Use the following suggestions to guide yourself or another mother who has lost a child to try to find ways to celebrate on Mother's Day.

Step 1 - Remind yourself that you are a mother even if your child has died. Especially if it was your only child, the loss of a child, no matter what age, is devastating. Concentrate on the good times you had with your child or baby and not on the death. Plan ahead of time what you want to accomplish on Mother's Day to honor your child. Don't wait until the day as it will be too emotional. Planning ahead is the key to getting through the day and feeling better about it each time you do it.

Step 2 - Put some photos together to hang or display in your home. Select photos that bring a smile to your face. Go a step further and compile a scrapbook of all the special times and memories with your child. This may be difficult at first to get started, but as you move along with the project, it should give you a sense of joy and comfort to honor your child this way.

Step 3 - Join support groups that specialize in parents that have lost a child. You will meet other parents and mothers that have lost a child or baby. No one understands better than someone who knows the pain that you feel. Plan to celebrate Mother's Day as a group to support each other.

Step 4 - Make a donation to an organization that helped your child while they were still alive, maybe a hospital, a library or a church that offered support. Do something positive for another child as a remembrance for your deceased child, especially if it is a child who has lost its mother.

Step 5 - Plant a tree on Mother's Day to watch it grow through the years. Take your photo with the tree each year on Mother's Day as a remembrance of your child. Maybe you would prefer to grow a flower garden that would have many colorful blooms that would represent your child's favorite colors. Add a new plant to the garden each Mother's Day in remembrance.

Step 6 - Talk to a mother who has lost her child. Many times, people don't talk about the child that died and this makes the mother or parents very sad as they know that their child did exist. Just simply ask them if they would like to talk about their child. Some mothers may really want to talk about their children and others may not. Take the mother a plant or a Mother's Day card.

Step 7 - Concentrate on your other children on Mother's Day if you have other children. Write a poem together or plant a flower together and talk to them about their sibling as, no matter how young they are, they may feel the loss as well.





THOUGHTFUL POEMS

FOR BILLY WHO LIVES

I remember the ride in the car that day,
I was talking about Brian who'd just gone away.
He was all I talked about it seemed to me
But then in those days he was all I could see.
I was wondering aloud just how it would be
When we saw him in heaven, what would we see?
Would he still be a small boy of four or so then
Or is heaven full of boys who grow up to be men?
My passenger said, "Let's just wait and see"
With all of the wisdom of a boy who is three.
Then he asked me something that started me crying
"Will you ever love me as much as you love Brian?"
I want to thank my precious son
For waking me up to what I had done
For making me see beyond my loss
That life is worth living - whatever the cost.

Written by his mom, Jane Daulton,
TCF, Virginia Beach, VA

Benchmarks

Good bye would be too difficult,
Although I know you are gone.
Instead, I keep you in my heart
And your memory lives on.
I have redefined my purpose, son,
Since you are no longer here.
With your death I faced a choice
To die, exist or to live free.
My life has changed forever, child,
I'm redefined each week,
You would call these "benchmarks"
Of goals set and then achieved.
And so I set my benchmarks,
Achieving many, reshaping some...
But everything is different now
Except your mother's love.

Annette Mennen Baldwin TCF Katy, TX

OLDER GRIEF IS GENTLER

It's about sudden tears swept
in by a strand of music.
It's about haunting echoes of
first pain at anniversaries.
It's about feeling his presence
for an instant one day while
dusting his room.
It's about early pictures that
invite me to fold him in my arms again.
It's about memories blown in on wisps
of wood smoke and sea scents.
Older grief is about aching in gentler ways,
rare longing, less engulfing fire.
Older grief is about searing pain wrought
into tenderness.

Linda Zalenk TCF Orange Park, FL

The Gift of Someone Who Listens

Those of us who have traveled a while
Along this path called grief
Need to stop and remember that mile,
The first mile of no relief.
It wasn't the person with answers
Who told us the ways to deal,
It wasn't the one who talked and talked
That helped us start to heal.
Think of the friends who quietly sat
And held our hands in theirs,
The ones who let us talk and talk
And hugged away our tears.
We need to remember
That, more than the words we speak,
It's the gift of someone who listens
That most of us desperately seek.
- By Nancy Myerholts, TCF Waterville/Teledo

April 2015

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The Compassionate Friends
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