



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

PIKES PEAK CHAPTER
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



March 2015

Upcoming Events

April 23rd - 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
CHAELE 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

CHAELE 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 23, 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.





THE WOUNDED HEART

Children have preceded their parents in death for eons of time. We are not the first, nor will we be the last, to enter the realm of Bereaved Parents. But for now...right now, it is OUR HEARTS that are freshly wounded and OUR HEARTS are in need of mending.

Wounded hearts must be allowed to mourn and lament their loss; to pour out their pain, agony, sadness, hurt, and anger; and to release their well of tears. Wounded hearts need to be wrapped in quietness, gentleness, and compassion, away from the turmoil of daily life.

A wounded heart, not allowed to mend from the depth of its agony, will be an abscess to swell and undermine, erupting at a distant time. Or, suppressed, will slowly choke the spirit of its host. Only the bearer will know when his/her heart has healed.

The wounded heart, encouraged and given the time and freedom to mend, will carry in its chambers the memory and shared love of a precious child.

-Nancy Green, The Compassionate Friends, Livonia, MI

Ask Dr. Paulson - Sibling Loss

Mary A. Paulson, PhD, is a bereaved sibling as well as a child and adolescent psychologist at Harding Hospital in Worthington, Ohio. Her question and answer column, aimed at bereaved siblings and the family that loves them, appears in the quarterly TCF national magazine, *We Need Not Walk Alone*.

Q. I am 35 years old and my only brother passed away this past May at age 27. It was a sudden death—he wasn't physically sick—he was found by my mom in his room on the floor. I haven't had any bereavement counseling for the loss of my brother, but I have been reading lots of books. I have lost others close to me—grandparents, friends—but the loss of my brother has just crushed my whole world. I have good days when I can talk about him without breaking down, but on other days I think of him and can't control my tears. The loss of my brother was very devastating to all of us, my parents as well as me. Since I'm the oldest and now the only child, I feel it is my duty to take care of my parents, and if I don't, then I'm a bad daughter. However, I've been scolded by my best friend that I need to take care of myself as well. How do I continue to do that without feeling selfish and disloyal to my parents or my brother?

A. Once tragedy strikes, the family unit begins to function differently. Although you have always been the oldest child, your world has now made a big shift to being an only child. Your tears demonstrate the depth of relationship you shared with your brother, and that relationship doesn't end. As time passes, you'll notice you have more "good days," when you think of the good times and smile at your memories. You can't share the day-to-day experiences with him, but he will always be your brother. You will always be the person who grew up as his older sister—the person you became by knowing him, caring for him, playing with him, and loving him. That doesn't ever stop or end. You are not being disloyal to him for having good days. I believe he would still want you to have as much comfort, joy, and laughter in your life as possible—even though he cannot be the source now. Part of caring for yourself is allowing yourself to experience the good days as well as those days when you realize how much you miss him. At the same time, it sounds like you have a desire to share time with your parents too. This doesn't mean you need to become responsible for their moods or emotional well-being. Instead, take the opportunity to share yourself, your love, and your family connections with your parents. Establish a new, stronger, more supportive, and loving relationship with the family that has loved you and grown with you through all the ups and downs thus far in your life.

Author—Mary A. Paulson, Ph.D. and *We Need Not Walk Alone*, the national magazine of The Compassionate Friends, Copyright © 2009



Remembering Our Children On Their Birthdays

Child's Name	Date of Birth	Compassionate Friend
Desiree D'Gornaz	Mar 4	Louie & Edna D'Gornaz
Wayne Allen Garrett	Mar 4	Joyce and Greg Garrett
Logan Lawrence	Mar 5	Janet & Edward Lawrence
Erin Marie McCallister	Mar 7	Steve & Carol McCallister
Keith Andrew Barrett	Mar 8	Ree Barrett
Samuel Christensen	Mar 9	Stacy Christensen
Owen William Howard	Mar 10	Mike & Carol Parker
James Craig Stieglmeyer	Mar 11	Betty Stieglmeyer
Ava Rose Wolfe	Mar 12	Kristy Wolfe
Conri Lee Barber	Mar 13	Sean Barber & Cherie Barledge
Marisa Nicole Pilant	Mar 14	Stephen & Julie Pilant, Richard & Elizabeth Jamison
Cathleen Bartlett Maxwell	Mar 17	Dick & Marty Maxwell
Julian King	Mar 18	Carl Reese & Leonie Cramer
Megan Huyge	Mar 21	Stan & Rebecca Huyge
Terry "TJ" Basgall	Mar 21	Stephanie Basgall
Billy E. Hendrickson	Mar 22	Grace & Delbert Hendrickson
Clayton Champion	Mar 24	Jessie & Phyllis Roark
Christopher J. Novich	Mar 24	Susan & Joe Novich
Marc Darby	Mar 25	Lori & Steve Darby
Scott Martinson	Mar 26	JoAnn Martinson
Justin A. Clayton	Mar 26	Terry & Sharon Clayton
Jon Van Pelt	Mar 27	Claudette Van Pelt
Kira Ann Schager	Mar 28	Frank & Lori Schager
Kari Ann Kirt	Mar 28	Lon & Andrea Kirt
Michael Eck	Mar 31	Patricia Eck



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
Kevin Michael Burns	16 years	Mar 3	Stan & Willie Burns
Jessica Robison	17 years	Mar 3	Terri Robison
Steven James Gantz	13 years	Mar 4	Diana Gantz
Brian Michael Gregory	16 years	Mar 6	Roy & Phyllis Gregory
Terry A. Shank	28 years	Mar 6	Carol Vierling
Tiffany Maxwell	34 years	Mar 7	Diane Maxwell
Michelle Sandra Seal	3 years	Mar 7	Walter & Diana Seal
Jay William Sheridan	27 years	Mar 9	Mary & Tim Sheridan
Christopher Russell Tyson	27 years	Mar 9	Cory Lynn Tyson
Terry "TJ" Basgall	25 years	Mar 11	Stephanie Basgall
Andy Cope	27 years	Mar 14	Debbie & Kurt Adelbush
Adam J. Hurst	32 years	Mar 14	Kim Troeger
Kevin Edward Farley	27 years	Mar 15	Elizabeth Farley
Charlie Josh Jones	12 years	Mar 16	Angie Jones, Sue Jones
Jim Agnew	31 years	Mar 17	Tom Agnew
Jody Elizabeth Houtz	17 years	Mar 18	Jane & Chris Houtz
Danae Lynne Marie Mannon	3 months	Mar 18	Art Mannon
Keltryn Lenae Brinkman	2 years	Mar 19	Jim & Judy Brinkman
John Daniel Ringo	8 years	Mar 21	Paul Ringo, Angela Randle
Christopher Calegar	10 years	Mar 22	Kevin & Linda Calegar
Megan Huyge	2 days	Mar 22	Stan & Rebecca Huyge
Gary Michael Owens	32 years	Mar 27	Freda Maria Garcia
Colin Peter Baerman	32 years	Mar 28	Paul & Kerry Baerman
Timothy Patrick Shea	21 years	Mar 31	Joe & Paula Shea

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.



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

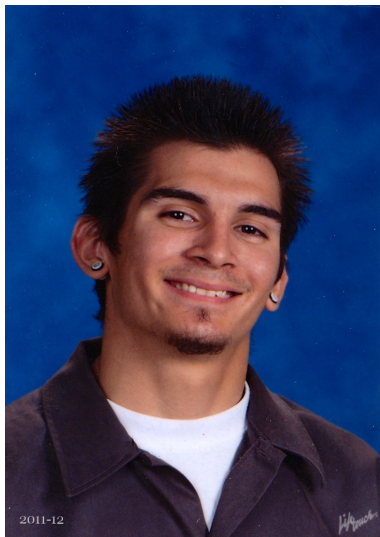
Cut and mail this form with your Love Gift to: Yvette Thompson – 5012 Rocking R Dr. – Colorado Springs, CO 80915

Contributor Name & Address: _____

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

Photo Enclosed: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Photo To Be Returned: ☐ Yes ☐ No



**Mark & Ursula Hill
in loving memory of their son & grandson.**

Kyle Curtis Hill

12/28/1992 ~ 5/31/2014

We miss you so much! Your smile and daily hugs.

We love you.

Dad, Grandma & Papa



The Anticipation of Spring Pat Loder, TCF Lakes Area Chapter, MI

Spring is a time for growth and renewal. As a child, teen, and then an adult, I always looked forward to spring with anticipation. The thoughts of green grass, budding trees, and blooming flowers of all varieties and colors were a welcome change from the long cold, dreary Michigan winter.

It was a magical time of year. When I was a child, each member of my family watched anxiously to lay claim to being the first to spot the familiar hop-hop of the returning robin, the first sign that spring was actually here. We could finally take off the gloves, shed our heavy winter coats and boots, and roll down the windows on the car to hear the laughter of children playing outside and smell the fresh mown grass as we'd drive down the road.

That's the way it was for me on the first day of spring 12 years ago. I remarked how beautiful the tulips looked as they danced in the wind. The trees were budding, and there was magic in the air. My kids and I shed our heavy winter coats, flinging them in the backseat, rolled down the windows of the car, and started singing in celebration of the beautiful day we were experiencing. And then . . . IT happened.

Suddenly, undeniably, horrifically—my world, my spring, my life changed.

My 5-year-old son, Stephen, died that first spring day. His 8-year-old sister, Stephanie, my firstborn, died a few hours later, enough past midnight to list the next day on the death certificate. Gone was the laughter, the magic, the beauty of my world.

The springs that followed were no longer filled with anticipation or magic. They were dark and ugly and filled with memories too painful to talk about. I wanted nothing to do with "spring." If H.G. Wells's time machine had existed, I would have entered it at the end of winter and fast-forwarded through spring.

As time marched on and one spring followed another, I learned an important lesson in my journey through grief: As much as I wanted to, I couldn't fast-forward through the hard spots. I couldn't go around them. I had to go through them slowly, like a dog paddling through water, so I could get to the other side. Somehow doing this taught me to cope, to endure, to face tomorrow and all the first days of spring that followed. It's much like the transformation that takes place when a butterfly emerges from a dark, cold, seemingly lifeless chrysalis.

A few years ago, as winter was drawing to a close and the first day of spring was quickly approaching, I looked out the kitchen window toward the budding pear tree in the backyard and discovered it was full of chirping robins. I smiled and knew that spring somehow wasn't going to be so bad. It was once again time to enjoy the smells of the season, the beauty of the budding trees, and the magic that the season had to offer. And I knew Stef and Steve would have wanted that for me.

In Memory of Stephanie and Stephen Loder

Reprinted from We Need Not Walk Alone, the national magazine of The Compassionate Friends.©2003



HEALING WORDS

A Trajectory

When our daughter was struggling her way through adolescence, a psychologist we consulted used to say, "What is her trajectory?" Her implication was that there would be setbacks and stumbles and spinoffs, but overall, was the trajectory moving upward?

I thought my life was "moving upward." I thought my trajectory was headed in the right direction. Yes, there were frustrations and disappointments but overall it was moving upward.

And then my son died. My trajectory now resembles the Challenger shuttle disaster.

I watched that tragedy live in 1986 when seven astronauts lost their lives. I was at home in front of a television because I was recovering from major surgery I opted to have hoping to address my infertility issues. I was more than ready to start a family.

I was touched especially by Christa Corrigan McAuliffe, the first teacher to be sent into space. I wept along with the nation. Now I can imagine the difference in the tears her parents wept.

Do you remember the images of that space shuttle? It looked as though it were headed straight to space. Then it veered off in an alarming way. It still took time – maybe even minutes - to process that something was not right.

When our children died, regardless of the circumstances, it took time to process. In the beginning, we may have been zombies going through the hours and days as though on some weird automatic pilot. Then, we began to understand that things had gone terribly, terribly wrong. Our trajectory was interrupted. It had veered off in an alarming way.

Our "trajectory interruption" is catastrophic. There is no way to right the course. There is no getting back on track.

If we can find the strength to engage, if we can find the courage to go on, we have to launch a completely different shuttle. This is no "Plan B." It is a whole new thing.

Peggi Johnson Piedmont, VA TCF Chapter

The Old Yellow Truck

Several weeks ago I sold my old, rusty yellow pickup truck. I placed an ad in the Baltimore Sunday paper which read:

For Sale—1978 Toyota pickup truck, 119 K miles—as is \$450. Call.

Someone called, paid me \$400, and drove away—all in the same day. I should have been happy to get rid of it; but instead I ended up feeling depressed. If I could have advertised the truck in our TCF Newsletter, the ad would have read:

For sale (regretfully) 1978 Toyota pickup truck used by college student when he was home for weekends or semester breaks. Provided safe transportation through a snowstorm on his last New Year's Eve. Four-speaker stereo radio with rock music stations preselected. Ashtray clean except for old bank receipts. Truck used by father for hauling things while thinking about son. Priceless. Don't call.

It has been 18 months since my son died, and yet it is still difficult to part with certain things—even things that did not belong to him. This is a problem with which we are all faced. What to keep? What to let go? The practical side of us says these things are no longer needed, so we should get rid of them. The heart says my son owned these things or used them; they bring back memories, so we should keep them.

There is not a right or wrong answer as to what we keep or what we let go. I reassure myself by noting that these memories of my son didn't leave with that old yellow truck. They will remain locked in my heart forever.

Gary Piepenbring TCF, Penn-Maryland Line Chapter, Maryland



THOUGHTFUL POEMS

STANDING

People say
"Oh you are doing so well,
You are so strong,
You are an inspiration!"
We do not feel strong.
We feel shaken to the core,
Saddened beyond belief,
Pain beyond comprehension,
Forever changed.
What do they see that we cannot see?
"That a horrible storm
Unexpectedly ripped through
Our lives and we are still standing."
They are amazed We are paralyzed
Still Standing.

~Julie Short TCF SE Illinois Chapter
in memory of Kyra

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 In
Memory of my son, Todd Mennen

Some Thoughts About My Journey

By Allen Roth, TCF, Mason County Chapter, WA

Some thoughts about my journey:
At first I thought...
...I would not survive her death.
At first I thought...
...I would never care about my living.
At first I thought...
...I would never have life goals (dreams)
again.
At first I thought...
...the cycle of pain and numbness would
never end.
At first I thought...
...I would never enjoy nature again. At first I
thought...
...I would never feel the beauty of a
caring hug.
At first I thought...
...I would never love again.
I was wrong about
all of these things and others.

I wish all of you the resolve and strength to
continue on your path to your future. There is a
future worth living, be patient, be gentle, you will
make it.

Mystery

I bought toys for my baby after she died
And I opened the cedar chest and put them inside
And nobody ever knew but me
The meaning of the mystery
Of brand new toys hidden here and there
And not one baby anywhere.

Andy Cipriano TCF Tallahassee, FL



The Compassionate Friends
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