



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

PIKES PEAK CHAPTER
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



May 2016

Upcoming Events

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

June 16th - General Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church

STEERING COMMITTEE

CHAPTER LEADER

LARAIN ANDERSON

Son, Michael Edward Anderson

MAILINGS & DATABASE

JANE & STEVE GABRIEL

Son, Jonathan Steven Gabriel

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

SC MEMBER

LEONIE CRAMER

Son, Julian Anthony King

SC MEMBER

DIANNE McLAUGHLIN

Son, Kevin Hardman

TELEPHONE FRIENDS

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

All telephone numbers are 719 unless otherwise indicated.

CHAPTER LEADER

LARAIN 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

MULTIPLE LOSSES

LORI DARBY 464-4703

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. **

*The best and most beautiful things
in this world cannot be seen or even
heard, but must be felt with the
heart.*

- Helen Keller



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 May 19, 2016.

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!



Chaplain

**Gene Steinkirchner
CSPD**



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



Welcome to our new families:

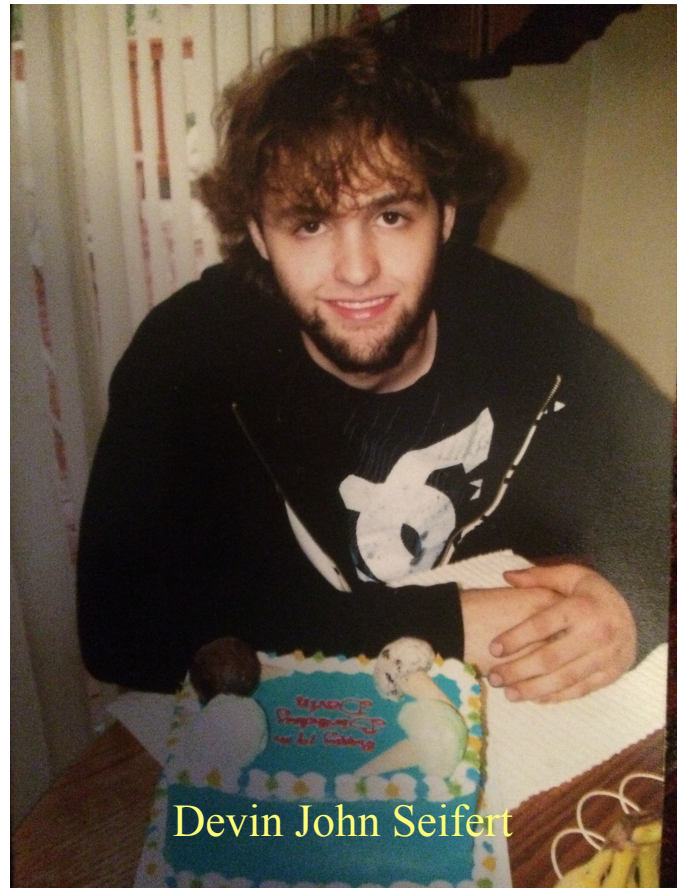
Marianne Lawless - Son, Thomas Cooper
Keith Norris - Son, Caleb Norris

Welcome New Friends.

At nearly every meeting we welcome new members to our group, always with mixed emotions. We are glad you found us, but we are so sorry for the circumstances that bring us together. We understand your pain; we hope our unconditional friendship and understanding will help you through your grief. Attending a meeting for the first two or three times takes courage, but for many it is the first real step toward healing. It may seem overwhelming, so we encourage you to come to several meetings to give yourself a chance to become comfortable.

*Missing You On
Your Birthday*

*As I visit your resting place
Upon this special day
Once more I feel the sadness
That will never go away.
For, ever since you've gone,
Life has never been the same
Yet, it comforts me to know
That one day we'll meet again.
Until that day arrives,
I'll relive every memory
Of the happy times we shared
Together - you and me.
For, I miss you so very much
And words never could convey
The extent of the joy
That you brought to every day.*



Devin John Seifert

Love you,
Mom, Dad , Brandon and Dean



In Loving Memory of Damon Vincent Christianson

May 30, 1977- July 3, 2010

God hath not promised skies always blue,
Flower-strewn pathways, all our lives through;
God hath not promised sun without rain,
Joy without sorrow, peace without pain.
But God hath promised strength for the day
Rest for the labor, light for the way,
Grace for the trials, help from above
Unfailing sympathy, Undying love.



Remembering Our Children On Their Birthdays - May

Child's Name	Date of Birth	Compassionate Friend
Cody Darby	May 1	Lori & Steve Darby
Robyn Kulas	May 2	Patty Kulas
Harvey Nicole King	May 2	Jerima King
Susan Gordon	May 3	Mr & Mrs Arthur Gordon
Sara Hernandez	May 4	Kayhy Hernandez
Martin Joseph Lanoue	May 4	Judy Lanoue
Patrick Niedringhaus	May 5	Leah & Dave Niedringhaus
Abbi Rose Starzynski	May 5	Sherry Starzynski
Jay Simco	May 5	Loretta Chancellor
Douglas Radowski	May 7	Renee Roettger
Jose N. Camacho	May 8	William & Veronica Camacho
Gregory Randall Davis	May 9	Cora Davis
Thomas Rosenkranz	May 11	Carolyn Kochis
Devin John Seifert	May 11	Steve & Debbie Seifert
Avery Keirse	May 12	Carissa Keirse
Henry Rael	May 13	Maria Rael
Jacob Hunter Smathers	May 14	Patty, Becky & Renee Smathers
Malachi Mooneyham	May 14	Damien Mooneyham
Malik Boykins	May 14	Matissa Dunkley
Ashley Meston	May 15	Jerry Meston
Michael Benjamin Decker	May 16	Mary & Jerry Decker
Denise Elaine Bear	May 16	Dona & Tanya Flores
Andrew Paul Weaver	May 16	Valerie Lightbody
Kyle Lyon	May 16	Tami Lyon
Reanna Maria Reedy	May 17	Carol Reedy
Rocke Lee Corley	May 18	Jeanne Corley
Jeremy Laurence	May 20	Ted & Sherrill Laurence
Jonathan Ell-Duncan	May 20	Dan & Becky Duncan
Kara Nichols	May 20	Julia Nichols
Brian Michael Gregory	May 20	Roy & Phyllis Gregory
Joshua C. Attardi	May 23	Paula Attardi
Jeffrey Russell Schumaker	May 23	John & Vera Schumaker
Gary Michael Owens	May 24	Freda Maria Garcia
Patrick Michael Doyle	May 24	Ruby Doyle
Skylar Lynn Boyle Ringland	May 24	Cathleen Boyle
Erica Lynn Groat	May 25	Linda Groat
Tristan Millman Troeger	May 25	Lisa & Joel Millman
Audrina Elyse Escano	May 25	Chris & Christina Pearson
Damon Vincent Christianson	May 30	Chaela Christianson



Remembering Our Children On Their Anniversaries - May

Child's Name	Age	Date of Death	Compassionate Friend
Shawn Adelgren	20 years	May 2	Russ & Dee Adelgren
Julie Bankston	25 years	May 4	Peggy Bankston
Alyanna Livingston	4 months	May 4	Kirstin Klinkerman
Martin Joseph Lanoue	1 day	May 4	Judy Lanoue
Malachi Mooneyham	18 years	May 4	Damien Mooneyham
Jason Lamb	32 years	May 5	Jan Lyons-Lamb
Douglas Chadwick, Jr.	26 years	May 6	Deborah Chadwick
Andrew Talley II	27 years	May 8	Jackie Talley
Joshua Cesar Menendez	1 year	May 10	Dianna Castellanos, Julio Menendez
Kendall Ford Young	14 years	May 11	Ford & Ann Young
Justin A. Clayton	16 years	May 12	Terry & Sharon Clayton
Genevieve Sucharski	18 years	May 12	Mark & Karen Sucharski
Branden Howland	17 years	May 13	Julianne Howland
Kaden France	2 weeks	May 14	Jeremy & Sarah France
Joshua Aaron Munkirs	25 years	May 14	Dana & Laura Munkirs
Jason Nathaniel Lurch	23 years	May 15	Kathleen & John Lurch
Matthew Stockwell	25 years	May 15	Mark & Sally Stockwell
Gavin Perez	2 years	May 16	Shannon Paolini
Paul Kovacevic	29 years	May 17	Mary Kovacevic
Tyrone Binnebose	2 years	May 18	Natasha Binnebose
Kimberley Dawn Leir	6 years	May 18	Adaline & Herb Leir
Michael Williams, Jr.	28 years	May 18	Carmen Randall
Kira Ann Schager	5 years	May 19	Frank & Lori Schager
James Wiezorek	31 years	May 19	Mary Beringer
Eric Evans	26 years	May 21	Linda & Dick Evans
Christopher Clayton Hodson	22 years	May 22	Eric & Janice Hodson
Christopher J. Novich	15 years	May 22	Susan & Joe Novich
Mark Anthony Hickman	22 years	May 23	Aundria & Dennis Casey
Zachary Nicholas Hoke	6 years	May 24	Debra & Steve Hoke
Zack Orr	12 years	May 25	Dave & Sharon Orr
Leah Ann Trutna	21 years	May 28	Steve & Phyllis Trutna
Carl Simco	27 years	May 29	Loretta Chancellor
Nicholas Clare Cousineau	3 years	May 29	George & Chris Cousineau
Gina Marie Geffre	14 years	May 29	Joann Jahraus
Michael William Sarmiento	46 years	May 30	Donna (Sarmiento) Pugh
Nicolas Jay Broughton	18 years	May 30	Rose Broughton
Mallory Paulene Hendrickson	1 year	May 30	Celine & Gary Hendrickson
Kyle Hill	21 years	May 31	Ursula Hill



As we all know, the death of our child, no matter what age or circumstance, is a shattering experience for a family. When a child dies, to whom does a family turn for the emotional support they will need during the grief journey that lies ahead? If you are reading this newsletter, you have already learned that The Compassionate Friends understands that grief for a child lasts longer & is more intense than society commonly recognizes. Together as grieving parents we can offer empathy and understanding of this loss, while also recognizing that each person's grief is unique.

Do you know someone who is in need of The Compassionate Friends? Won't you be the hand that reaches out and offers support by giving them information about our organization?

Often times, after the death of a child, we find the grief after the loss overwhelming. Groups like ours, The Compassionate Friends, falls short of the in depth counseling a therapist can provide especially when circumstances are unplanned, unexpected and tragic. If any of our members have a therapist that they have found particularly useful could you please share that information with us so we might pass along to others that are in need?

Information can be shared privately by contacting any of our Steering Committee members or responding back via our website or email. Thank You,

OLDER GRIEF

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 I'm 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, rarer longing, less engulfing fire. Older grief is about searing pain wrought into tenderness.

~Linda Zelenka TCF, Jacksonville, FL

My Mom is a Survivor

My Mom is a survivor, or so I've heard it said. But I can hear her crying at night when all others are in bed. I watch her lay awake at night and go to hold her hand. She doesn't know I'm with her to help her understand. But like the sands on the beach that never wash away... I watch over my surviving mom, who thinks of me each day.

She wears a smile for others...a smile of disguise! But through Heaven's door I see tears flowing from her eyes. My mom tries to cope with death to keep my memory alive. But anyone who knows her knows it is her way to survive.

As I watch over my surviving mom through Heaven's open door... I try to tell her that angels protect me forevermore.

I know that doesn't help her... or ease the burden she bears. So if you get a chance, go visit her...and show her that you care.

For no matter what she says...no matter what she feels. My surviving mom has a broken heart that time won't ever heal.

by Kaye Des'Ormeaux, TCF - Tiffin, OH



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 the pain will not always be this bad it really does get better with wisdom. Show others that there is hope, from someone who has found it.



HEALING WORDS

A Surprise On Mother's Day - Veronica Douglas - TCF Granite City, IL

I have always loved butterflies, but ever since we lost our beautiful and only daughter Emily Anne, these lovely winged creatures have taken on a different meaning for me. (I know many of you share this very same thought.) I don't know if it is because I am more aware of my surroundings now, but many more of these fascinating beauties —fly in and out of my life!!

Our precious daughter, Emily, and her sweet boyfriend Dan were taken from us forever on October 6, 2002, in a car accident. Ever since then, I have had delightful monarch butterflies fall sizes follow me everywhere! I have seen them landing on my coneflowers in the garden, fly around the front porch (they were not out there at first) and even land right on the top of the lamppost.

Two years ago, my husband and I went to Key West and had a rental home with a swimming pool. After we had been swimming for a short time, a dazzling monarch butterfly started circling the pool. The best butterfly story happened on Mother's Day, 2005.

Our family was having a double celebration (my nephew's birthday is around Mother's Day) at my brother's home. Our family is —picture-taking crazy!! (I am so thankful for that!) So when it was the Douglas family's turn to get their picture (my husband Dave, our son Josh, my nephew Chip and me) guess what landed right on my shoulder!!

You guessed it...a small monarch butterfly! And it stayed there until after the picture had been taken! I know Emily is with us all the time because she is a part of the universe now. I also know how much her family meant to her and how much she loved each one of us in her own special way...Thank you, darling daughter for my Mother's Day gift!!!

A Bear Hug for Father's Day

As Father's Day approaches, we are reminded of the significant contributions and unique love of fathers and stepfathers. Their defined role, after the death of their children, is to support their wives and surviving children. But their pain is deep.

Men, by their nature and in response to our society's expectations, do not usually grieve as openly as women. They do not talk as candidly about their loss. They generally do not reach out to others for comfort. They are, after all, the rock, the solid center of the family. Their wife's pain supersedes their pain because women are fragile. Or so we are told. Yes, as I look into the eyes of so many bereaved fathers, I see a deep, gripping pain. The tears left unshed, the words that are never spoken, the anger, guilt and agony ... all remain in the eyes of a bereaved father.

What can a father do? Talk with other bereaved fathers. Read books written by bereaved fathers. Talk with spouses, private counselors and close friends who are not as structured as their "male" societal roles. Try to attend three meetings of Compassionate Friends. You don't have to talk. But you might decide to express a single thought or idea, logically presented, to the small group. You might find peace in this place, and then again, you might not. But, as my own dad often said, "Step up to the plate and see what happens." He was a pretty wise man ... a child of the depression, a football player, Greatest Generation, WW II Marine, a fighter, a provider, a protector ... a man's man. He endured much in his 78 years, and I only saw him cry a few times.

But when his friend lost a child, my tough dad was the first one to reach out with a bear hug that wouldn't let go until the tears began to flow. They both cried. They both knew that the agony of losing a child was far worse than the horrors of war. Together, they cried.

Happy Father's Day ... May your bear hugs be many and your memories become sweeter with each passing year. May your child live forever in your heart so that peace embraces you always.

Annette Mennen Baldwin, TCF, Katy, TX



THOUGHTFUL POEMS

Now I Know...

I never knew, when you lost your child,
What you were going through.
I wasn't there, I stayed away,
I just deserted you.
I didn't know the words to say,
I didn't know the things to do.
I think your pain so frightened me,
I didn't know how to comfort you.
And then one day my child died.
You were the first one there.
You quietly stayed by my side,
Listened, and held me as I cried.
You didn't leave, you didn't go.
The lesson learned is... NOW I KNOW!
~Alice Kerr TCF Lower Bucks, PA

Playing in the Shadows
We grew up together,
Big sister, little brother.
I took care of you
Until you were old enough to care for yourself.
Though you didn't say it,
I knew you loved me.
We played in the sunlight, you and I;
Remember the games of "Mother-May-I" and
"Hide-and-Seek"? Sure we had our fights
As all siblings do,
But through it all we never lost
Our love for each other.
Now you're gone. I'll never see you again
except in the memories of those sunny days.
You will forever be sixteen--
Far too young to die.
You had your whole life to live.
I'll always grieve, but I must go on.
Still, without you,
I play alone in the shadows.
~Cheryl Larson TCF Pikes Peak, CO

The Gifts You've Given Me

I left the need to know Why behind years ago.
Instead,
I practice finding peace with the inner turmoil,
accepting the unacceptable,
living my truth.
You have given me the gift of uncertainty
and thus, taught me to live in the Now.
The fingers of your loss have quietly shaped
me,
molding away the sharp edges,
my judgment of others,
my innocence.
You have given me the gift of Humility.
You were a child,
my child.
Now you parent.
Invisibly, quietly, from behind the veil, you
show me the meaning
of Life.
You have given me the gift of Awareness.
I am not the same.
In losing you,
I found my strength, my sorrow,
my compassion, my
Self.
You have given me the gift of Suffering.
These tears carry knowledge
that through suffering came Understanding,
and through understanding came
Forgiveness,
and through forgiveness came Love.
You fluttered in my womb like a butterfly,
and now you flutter in my soul,
eternally a part of me.
Eternally giving.
Sara Therese TCF Tucson, AZ



The Legend of the Tear Jar

In the dry climate of ancient Greece, water was prized above all. Giving up water from one's own body, when crying tears for the dead, was considered a sacrifice. They caught their precious tears in tiny pitchers or "tear jars."

These captured tears were considered to be "holy" water and were sprinkled on doorways to keep out evil, or used to cool the brow of a sick child.

The tear jars themselves were kept unpainted until the owner had experienced the death of a parent, sibling, child, or spouse. After that, the grieving person decorated the tear jar with intricate designs, and examples of these can still be seen throughout modern Greece.

This ancient custom symbolizes the transformation that takes place in people who have grieved deeply. They have not "gotten over" their grief, but rather "grown through" it. They appreciate relationships more. They appreciate life more. They find meaning in little things.

Those whom grief has transformed are not threatened by the grief of other people in pain. They have been in the depths of pain themselves, and returned.

Sibling Grief: Healing After the Death of a Sister or Brother by P. Gill White, PhD,
Director of The Sibling Connection, www.siblingconnection.net. *Reprinted with the author's permission.*

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

"Our grief journeys are not about closure; they are about adjustment and staying connected."

"The Compassionate Friends is about transforming the pain of grief into the elixir of hope. It takes people out of the isolation society imposes on the bereaved and lets them express their grief naturally. With the shedding of tears, healing comes. And the newly bereaved get to see people who have survived and are learning to live and love again."

– **Simon Stephens,**
founder of The Compassionate Friends

Shaggy dog story – Charlotte Roberts TFC/Montgomery

An older, tired looking dog wandered into my yard. I could tell from his collar and well fed belly that he had a home and was well taken care of. He calmly came over to me, I gave him a few pats on his head; he then followed me into my house, slowly walked down the hall, curled up in the corner and fell asleep.

An hour later he woke up and went to the door. I let him out. The next day he was back, greeted me in my year, walked inside and resumed his spot in the hall and again slept for almost an hour.

This continued off and on for several weeks. Curious, I pinned a note to his collar: "I would like to find out who the owner of this wonderful sweet dog is and ask if you are aware that almost every afternoon your dog comes to my house for a nap." The next day he arrived for his nap with a different note pinned to his collar: "He lives in a house with 6 children, 2 under the age of 3 – He's trying to catch up on his sleep. Can I come with him tomorrow?"



The Compassionate Friends
Pikes Peak Chapter
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May 2016

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