



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

PIKES PEAK CHAPTER
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



May 2017

STEERING COMMITTEE

CHAPTER LEADER

Laraine Asaro-Anderson

Son, Michael Edward Anderson

MAILINGS & DATABASE

Jane & Steve Gabriel

Son, Jonathan Steven Gabriel

TREASURER

Ruby Doyle

Son, Patrick Michael Doyle

NEWSLETTER EDITOR & EMAILINGS

Stewart Levett

Son, Aaron Paul Levett

SC MEMBER/FACILITATOR

Chaela 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

LARAIN ASARO-ANDERSON - 719-344-3216 *

DRUG / ALCOHOL LOSS

STEWART & LETA LEVETT - 719-531-5488 *

LEUKEMIA

JANE & STEVE GABRIEL - 719-282-1924 *

ADULT CHILD / SUDDEN DEATH

CHAE LA CHRISTIANSON - 719-687-6688 *

SKATEBOARD / AUTO ACCIDENT

RAYE WILSON - 303-814-9478

MOTORCYCLE DEATH

STEVE SEIFERT - 719-331-6455

*Steering Committee

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 18, 2017.

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!



Seeking Contributors

We are always looking for material from our chapter members to include in this newsletter. It is the perfect way to share your child, grandchild or sibling with all of us. Tell us about the special things you did in their memory or simply tell us the special things you will always remember and keep close to your heart. It is a beautiful way for us to get to know more about your loved one. It unites us as a bereaved family and it will help us all to become closer. Where there is unity, there is strength, strength that we can give to and draw from one other.

We would also welcome any book reviews. If you have read a book that has helped you on your journey please tell us about it. There are many, many grief books out there. Some will be more healing than others. It is so helpful to be guided to the right ones. Please forward any writings, poems, book reviews etc. to Stew Levett PikesPeakTCF@gmail.com or you may use the U.S. Mail and send it to me at 160 El Dorado Ln., Colorado Springs, CO 80919.

Button, Button, We'll Make You A Button!

We have purchased a photo button machine and we are ready to start making your picture buttons. Bring 2 copies of the SAME picture to your next meeting and we will have it ready for you the following month. THIS IS A FREE SERVICE TO YOU.

Please bring your pictures to any of our monthly meetings. We will need a 3"x5" or 4"x6" photo of your child but would prefer NOT using the original photo. We suggest using Walgreens who can quickly make good 4"x6" copies from your original.

For best results make sure the photo of your child is centered and not too close to the edge or the results may not turn out as expected.

We are requesting one photo button per family to get started. Thereafter we will be able to make additional buttons for each member of the family as time and labor allows. Also, for those who have lost more than one child, we will gladly make a button for each child.



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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.

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

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.

Digital Picture Frame - If you've been to one of our monthly meeting then you've noticed our large digital picture frame displaying picture of our children. Should you be interested in adding your child's picture to our display, please bring a picture to scan to our meeting or (preferred) email the picture, along with child information to Stew Levett at PikesPeakTCF@gmail.com

Pictures will be returned after they have been scanned and your child's slide completed.

Graduation Time

By Peggy Gibson, TCF Nashville, TN

It's June and graduation time again. Your child would have been among those wearing the cap and gown, walking down the aisle to the ever stirring "Pomp and Circumstance." Now there is a vacant spot in the line. Should you attend? Can you stand the pain? Will people think you are strange?

As always you must follow your heart. So, go if you'd like to and don't hide your tears. It's quite all right to miss your own child while celebrating the achievements of others.

Just remember: That your instincts are the most important ones; that no one else can make this decision for you, and that it doesn't really matter what other people think.

It was your child who died. This is your pain and you have the right to feel it and deal with it in your own way - and may a bit more healing take place in the doing.



Remembering Our Children On Their Birthdays - May '17

<u>Child's Name</u>	<u>Birthday</u>	<u>Compassionate Friend</u>
Alexander Beall	May 1	Haven Stillwater
Cody Darby	May 1	Lori & Steve Darby
Harvey Nicole King	May 2	Jerima King
Robyn Kulas	May 2	Patty Kulas
Susan Gordon	May 3	Mr & Mrs Arthur Gordon
Martin Joseph Lanoue	May 4	Judy Lanoue
Sara Hernandez	May 4	Kathy Hernandez
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
Devin John Seifert	May 11	Steve & Debbie Seifert
Thomas Rosenkranz	May 11	Carolyn Kochis
Avery Keirse	May 12	Carissa Keirse
Henry Rael	May 13	Maria Rael
Malik Boykins	May 14	Matissa Dunkley
Malachi Mooneyham	May 14	Damien Mooneyham
Jacob Hunter Smathers	May 14	Patty, Becky & Renee Smathers
Liam N. McDougal Lasher	May 15	Ashley Snyder
Ashley Meston	May 15	Jerry Meston
Andrew Paul Weaver	May 16	Valerie Lightbody
Michael Benjamin Decker	May 16	Mary & Jerry Decker
Denise Elaine Bear	May 16	Dona & Tanya Flores
Kyle Lyon	May 16	Tami Lyon
Reanna Maria Reedy	May 17	Carol Reedy
Jason Fields	May 17	Teresa Fields
Rocke Lee Corley	May 18	Jeanne Corley
Kara Nichols	May 20	Julia Nichols
Brian Michael Gregory	May 20	Roy & Phyllis Gregory
Jeremy Laurence	May 20	Ted & Sherrill Laurence
Jonathan Ell-Duncan	May 20	Dan & Becky Duncan
Ryan Colgrove	May 20	Theresia Colgrove
Joshua C. Attardi	May 23	Paula Attardi
Jeffrey Russell Schumaker	May 23	John & Vera Schumaker
Gary Michael Owens	May 24	Freda Maria Garcia
Skylar Lynn Boyle Ringland	May 24	Cathleen Boyle
Patrick Michael Doyle	May 24	Ruby Doyle
Audrina Elyse Escano	May 25	Chris & Christina Pearson
Erica Lynn Groat	May 25	Linda Groat
Tristan Millman Troeger	May 25	Lisa & Joel Millman
Andrew Uveges	May 30	Joe & Kisten Uveges
Damon Vincent Christianson	May 30	Chaela Christianson



Remembering Our Children On Their Anniversaries - May '17

<u>Child's Name</u>	<u>Forever Age</u>	<u>Date of Death</u>	<u>Compassionate Friend</u>
Dylan Sagraves	30 years	May 1	Lance & Terri Hill
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
Jacob Foreman	10 years	May 8	Jan Foreman
Daniel Foreman	7 years	May 8	Jan Foreman
Andrew Talley II	27 years	May 8	Jackie Talley
Joshua Cesar Menendez	1 year	May 10	Dianna Castellanos, Julio Melendez
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	15 days	May 14	Jeremy & Sarah France
Joshua Aaron Munkirs	25 years	May 14	Dana & Laura Munchers
Jason Nathaniel Lurch	23 years	May 15	Kathleen & John Lurch
Matthew Stockwell	25 years	May 15	Sally Stockwell
Gavin Perez	2 years	May 16	Shannon Paolini
Brandon Naymik	18 years	May 16	Megan Riley
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
Andrew Uveges	15 years	May 19	Joe & Kisten Uveges
James Wiezorek	31 years	May 20	Mary Beringer
Eric Evans	26 years	May 21	Linda & Dick Evans
Christopher Clayton	22 years	May 22	Eric & Janice Hudson
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
Carl Simco	27 years	May 28	Loretta Chancellor
Leah Ann Trutna	21 years	May 28	Steve & Phyllis Trutna
Nicholas Clare Cousineau	3 years	May 29	George & Chris Cousineau
Gina Marie Geffre	14 years	May 29	Joann Jahraus
Michael William Sarmento	46 years	May 29	Donna (Sarmento) Pugh
Nicolas Jay Broughton	18 years	May 30	Rose Broughton
Mallory Paulene	1 year	May 30	Celine & Gary Hendrickson
Kyle Curtis Hill	21 years	May 31	Ursula Hill



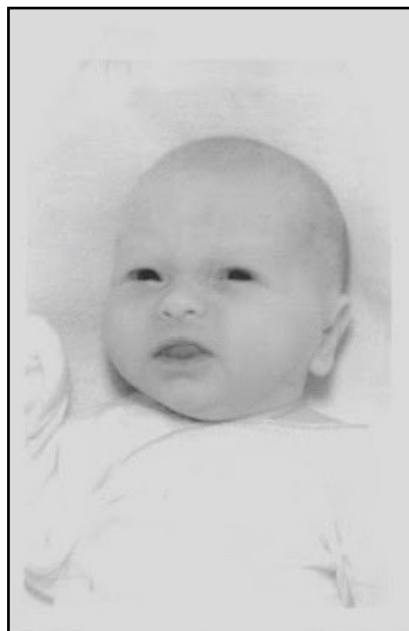
Damon Vincent Christianson

5/30/77- 7/4/10

I thought of you with love today,
but that is nothing new
I thought of you yesterday,
and days before that too.
I think of you in silence,
I often speak your name
All I have are memories,
and pictures in a frame.
Your memory is my keepsake
with which I'll never part.
God has you in His keeping,
I have you in my heart.

TCF Conference - 2016

(written in memory of Tara Beth Taylor 2/19/79 - 12/18/04)





ALEXANDER WADE BEALL

My son, Alex, was born on May 1, 1983 and died on February 15, 2014. This year, on the anniversary of my son's death, I again returned to the spot on the Arkansas River where we mingled his ashes with the rushing water. My very cerebral boy was also a lover of the outdoors. He skied and boarded in the winter; mountain biked and hiked almost year round. He ran the trails in the hills near town and kayaked and rafted wherever he could.

If there was something "right" about that foggy time after he died it was that his ashes were taken to the top of the mountains he loved and that we also let them go in waters he enjoyed beneath those mountains there in the heart of Colorado.

And so this year I sat on the frigid boulders where the ice limned the rocks at the river's edge. One by one I dropped bright and beautiful flowers into the dark, gray water. Each blossom swirled in the current and finally was pulled under where the river plunges over boulders. But as I watched, each bright flower rose to the surface and finally floated on to where the water had become placid.

Every flower, though pulled beneath and tumbled and beaten by the current, made it through the turbulent waters. And each flower made its reappearance in a different spot downstream. Some popped up and drifted to the eddies at the side of the river, swirling there before moving on. Some bobbed up mid-stream where the water still frothed and others didn't surface until the water had quieted.

At this spot in the river I could look upstream for perhaps a mile and downstream quite a ways as well. But my focus each year has been on this spot - on the loss, on the grief, on the pain. I have known there is a whole length of river. The waters rush from the Continental Divide above and continue beyond this point to finally join the Mississippi in its journey to the Gulf of Mexico. But it is this spot that has held my thoughts. I know there is more to look at but I haven't been able to put my attention on anything but this place of loss and pain.

Now, after three years, I am beginning to look beyond this spot. I can more easily look upstream to the beauty of the river as it approaches this heartbreaking place. Before my son left me here I had all watched and enjoyed him, seen him change and become not only a son but a friend. I can think about that now. And I am beginning to see that the river moves on beyond this painfully beautiful place. I am beginning to see that those blossoms rise to the surface.

For some of us who have lost a child we spend a very long time in the swirling depths of the undertow. We are pounded, beaten by the pain and the dark waters close over us. We stay in that place and then somehow, as the river moves on, we are brought to the surface. Perhaps we linger in the eddies for a time - not fully ready to join with the river's flow. Others of us emerge in the midst of the swirling waters and though we are above the darkness we are still tossed and tumbled. Some of us do not emerge until much farther down the river where the waters have smoothed and calmed. But we each make it to the surface at some point. We are pulled by the river of life to keep moving on.

My son would want me to see the whole of the river. From his present vantage point that place of sadness at the river's edge is just a tiny spot on the length of the ever-flowing waters. I am beginning to see that there is more than this sad place. The blossom is beginning to rise.





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 electronically scanned and added to our electronic Child Remembered "Picture Frame" displayed at monthly meetings and then returned to you.

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, Ruby Doyle 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 Ruby Doyle, 6552 Lange Drive Colorado Springs, Co 80918 ⇒
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: Ruby Doyle – 6552 Lange Dr. – Colorado Springs, CO 80918

Contributor Name & Address: _____

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

Photo Enclosed: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Photo To Be Returned: ☐ Yes ☐ No



THOUGHTFUL POEMS

Mother's Day

Judy Sittner, Alabama TCF

Another Mother's Day! But a different one this year.
For you see I am a mother, but my child isn't here.
I am a mother who is hurting
for this child who was so dear,
As I face this and every other occasion,
Each and every year.
I am a mother who feels emptiness,
Over and over again,
Because I miss THIS child
and all that could have been.
I am a mother who cared
as I watched my child grow,
And truly loved her more
than anyone will ever know.
I am a mother who has memories
and many tears to cry
Over regrets I'll have to live with,
Until the day I die.
I am a mother who is thankful
for the miracle of birth,
And all my child has taught me
about life and my own self worth.
I just can't stop being a mother
Just because my child isn't here,
Because the love we had for each other
Will continue for years and years.
And so..... On this special "Mother's Day",
I will feel within my heart,
All the pride, love and joy which are the parts
That make me: who I am,
And what I'll always be -
A MOTHER Just remember that..... Please?

HEALING WORDS

Mother's Day: A Father's View

In our house, as in other bereaved parents' households, Mother's Day comes with mixed emotions. Setting aside a day to honor motherhood is only right: mothers do tend to be taken for granted. I remember the childhood joy of getting my mother a special gift, even if the gift was nothing more than a crayon drawing. As an adult, buying gifts for your mother and the mother of your children still brings back those happy memories. But this all changed after Erin died.

Looking through all the cards at the gift shop only reminds me of the irony. Cute, humorous, and sweetly sentimental cards await the bereaved father shopping for his bereaved wife. I can't find the card that will comfort my wife on this day, and even worse, I'm afraid that I'll buy a card that will bring back only painful memories of the child she lost. I realize this day, perhaps because it is so widely celebrated, can even, years later, take my wife back to grieving she thought she was "through with." I can never do enough on Mother's Day; maybe I try to do too much. I know, of course, that all the cards, gifts, flowers, and messy breakfasts in the world, can't make up for the loss of our child. But I still do all these things; she deserves them. The unfairness of our daughter's death will always be there. I know I can't change that with a card. But I can remind her she is a great mother, a loving mother, and most importantly, she is still the mother of the child we lost. If she's happy on Mother's Day, I will try my best to keep her there. If she's depressed, I try to cheer her up as best I can, even though I feel I'm not very good at it. This, then, is the wish I have for all other bereaved mothers today: Please be as happy (and proud) as every other mother today; no one can dispute the fact you brought your child into the world. Although that child is no longer with you, the love you had for her or him remains and can never be taken away from you. If you should be depressed, may there be family and friends there to remind you of this and comfort you.

To all of you: HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY.

--Al Bots, TCF, Cleveland, OH, SW Suburbs



Loretta Simco (Chancellor)
In Loving Memory of Her Sons
Carl ("Bub") and Jay Simco

Michaela R. Christianson
In Loving Memory of Her Son
Dameon Vincent Christianson

Haven Stillwater
In Loving Memory of Her Son
Alexander Wade Beall

Chaplain Gene Steinkirchner - CSPD
Chapter Gift

May 2017

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