



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS of the Pikes Peak Region

APRIL, 2009

OUR TELEPHONE FRIENDS

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

CHAPTER LEADER	LARAINÉ ANDERSON	351-7653
INFANT LOSS	COLLEEN & ART MANNON	535-9868
TODDLER / YOUNG CHILD LOSS	BOB & YVETTE THOMPSON	573-2743
LEUKEMIA	JANE & STEVE GABRIEL	282-1924
TEEN / YOUNG ADULT LOSS	BARB REYNOLDS	599-0772
SUICIDE	LARITA ARCHIBALD	596-2575
DRUG / ALCOHOL INDUCED DEATH	STEWART & LETA LEVETT	531-5488
SKATEBOARD / AUTO ACCIDENT	RAYE WILSON	(303) 814-9478

Welcome!

To those of you who are newly bereaved and receiving our newsletter for the first time, we warmly invite you to The Compassionate Friends of the Pikes Peak Region.

We are other parents who have experienced the death of a child at any age and offer understanding and support through our monthly meetings and activities throughout the year.

UPCOMING EVENTS

DATE	EVENT	WHERE
Apr. 16 7 pm	General Meeting	First Baptist Church
May 21 7 pm	General Meeting	First Baptist Church

Thank you to the **First Baptist Church of Colorado Springs** for continuing to provide the printing of our newsletters and their ongoing support of our group by providing a meeting place each month.



SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

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? Next meetings will be April 16th and May 21st.

It is often difficult to attend your first meeting, but those who do find an atmosphere of support from other parents who understand a parent's grief. Nothing is asked of you; there are no fees; you do not have to speak a word if you do not care to. If you are more comfortable bringing a friend or relative along with you, please do.

Many find these meetings help them to heal; and together we learn to live with our loss. We learn that **we need not walk alone.**



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ORGANIZATIONAL CONTACTS

TCF National Office
P.O. Box 3656
Oak Brook, IL 60522
630-990-0010 or toll free 877-969-0010
EMAIL: nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

WEBSITES:

National - www.compassionatefriends.org
Colorado Springs - www.tcfcolorado.org/coloradosprings

Do you have a poem or a prayer, story or picture that you would like to share? We welcome your contributions to our newsletter whether original or something you may have read. If submitting something you've read or know is copyrighted material, you must obtain written permission from the author prior to us going to publication. Please address any submissions to:

Stew Levett
160 El Dorado Lane
Colorado Springs, CO 80919

Or write to: stewlevett@msn.com

Submissions need to be received by the 10th of the month to be included in the following month's newsletter. Thank you.

Our 16th President—Did You Know?

Abraham Lincoln became a bereaved parent in 1850 when his four-year-old son Edward died. During the Civil War, his eleven-year-old son William, died. Each death had brought huge changes in our President who, besides the anguish he felt over the troubles of the Civil War, was now racked with the grief of a parent having lost his second child. Lincoln spent many of his waking hours in mourning at the mausoleum of his children. Lincoln was assassinated in 1865 and his third son, Thomas, died in 1871 at 18 years of age. Only son Robert would live into adulthood.

Mary Lincoln wrote, "And now in this world, there is nothing left to me but the deepest anguish and desolation." Each of us has periods when we are absorbed and overcome by our personal loss, as Mary Lincoln wrote.

Our choice is how to deal with the present and the future. Lincoln perhaps wrote one of the best precepts for recovery for grief. This was written in his compassion for another's loss:

*"In this sad world of ours, sorrow comes to all.
It comes with bittersweet agony.
Perfect relief is not possible, except with time.
You can not now realize that you will ever feel better.
And yet this is a mistake. You are sure to be happy again.
To know this, which is certainly true, Will make you somewhat less miserable now.
I have experienced enough to know what I say."
Abraham Lincoln*



Alan Pedersen Heals Through His Songs

No one knows the pain, hurt, anguish and all the other emotions associated with losing a child like another grieving parent. Alan Pedersen on February 7th, did just that when he sang for a mixed audience at **Pikes Perk Coffee & Tea House**. Amid the orders for lattes, kai tea and sandwiches, Alan brought his songs to the hearts of those in attendance: touching, caressing and often grabbing at our heart-strings of remembrance. For those in attendance, there were laughter and tears of joy as Alan encouraged us to remember the great moments as well as the pain of having and losing our child. For more information about Alan Pedersen, his music, his mission and his touring schedule, please visit his website at www.everashleymusic.com.



HARDCOPY or EMAIL?

Do you prefer your newsletter hard or soft copy? Please call chapter leader Laraine Anderson at 351-7653 and leave a clear message whether you want to continue to receive a hardcopy newsletter. Please speak slowly as you know how voice messages can be! She will acknowledge your call. If you'd like to be added to our eLetter mailing list, please email Stew Levett at the above email address, stating your preference as listed below. We have a deadline of June 1st and any name on our distribution list at that time will be removed if we don't hear back from you. Should we remove you by mistake, we will gladly add you back so you don't miss a copy.

Hardcopy eLetter Both Remove from All



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REMEMBERING OUR CHILDREN ON THEIR BIRTHDAYS

The light of life never goes out, so we remember them on their birthdays...



<u>Child's Name</u>	<u>Birth</u>	<u>Death</u>	<u>Cause of Death</u>	<u>Compassionate Friend</u>
Christie Fike	4/2/1971	7/28/2003	Leukemia	Shirley & Dan Emerson
Michael Robert Pugh	4/2/1973	4/12/1986	Car accident	Robert & Donna Pugh
Steven James Gantz	4/4/1979	3/4/1993	Gun accident	Diana Gantz
Mike Mozo	4/5/1975	11/12/2002	Auto accident	Valerie Kirchhofer
Heidi Susanne Wolfe	4/6/1984	7/3/2004	Motorcycle accident	David & Karen Wolfe
Joseph Gentry Richardson	4/6/1984	12/13/1985	Infection after liver transplant	Jack & Miriam Gentry
Angel Leah Kelley	4/7/2006	10/4/2006	Misdiagnosed illness	James Lewis Kelley / Shirley McCleary
Katherine (Katey) Divis	4/8/1984	8/12/2001	Car accident	Kitty & Dave Divis
Acacia Barbara Clen	4/8/1993	4/16/2006	Accident	Cindy Santarte
Tommy Kinslow	4/9/1985	11/22/2005	Murder	Pam Kinslow
Julie Bankston	4/13/1982	5/4/2007	Suicide	Peggy Bankston
Andrew Evan Neely	4/13/2004	6/18/2004	Spinal Muscular Atrophy	Tamara Noble
Zachary Nicholas Hoke	4/16/1989	5/24/1995	Heart defect	Debra & Steve Hoke
Patricia Spain Boden	4/18/1956	7/31/1995	Auto accident	Margie Spain
Jonathan Steven Gabriel	4/19/1986	7/31/1991	Leukemia	Steve & Jane Gabriel
Tyrone Elliott Bautista	4/22/1983	8/1/2002	Homicide	Rosemary Devney
Sean William Staat	4/23/1969	3/11/1995		Susan & William Staat
Steven Miller	4/27/1988	2/11/2006	Auto accident	Mike Miller
Sara M. Losasso	4/30/1990	1/19/2005	Car crash	Cindy Losasso
Kaden France	4/30/2004	5/14/2004	Respiratory Distress Syndrome	Jeremy & Sarah France

Each month at our support group meeting we would like to invite you to let us help celebrate the life of your child. We invite you to bring your child's favorite cake (or snack) to share and after singing 'HAPPY BIRTHDAY' you may show pictures, a slide show or anything that you'd like to share with the group to help celebrate their special day. Please contact our chair person in advance so we can plan enough time for your celebration.



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REMEMBERING OUR CHILDREN ON THEIR ANNIVERSARIES

That their lives will always shine, our children are remembered.

Our special thoughts go out to you on the anniversary of your child's death...



<u>Child's Name</u>	<u>Birth</u>	<u>Death</u>	<u>Cause of Death</u>	<u>Compassionate Friend</u>
Douglas Radowski	5/7/1961	4/1/2002	Heart attack	Patricia Radowski / Renee Roettger
Erin Marie McCallister	3/7/1979	4/2/1979	Heart defect	Steve & Carol McCallister
Matthew John McCallister	8/4/1975	4/3/1998	House fire	Steve & Carol McCallister
Skylar Lynn Boyle Ringland	5/24/1976	4/4/1999	Homicide	Cathleen Boyle
Brian Patrick Adair	7/21/1989	4/4/2003	Celiac disease	Duane & Mary Adair
Abraham Daniel Boukhari	12/2/1986	4/4/2005	Auto accident	David & Deborah Woodrow
Ronald Eugene Peterson	1/9/1967	4/5/1982	Motorcycle accident	Ron Peterson
Kristie Diaz	11/7/1972	4/7/1999	Cancer	Julie Diaz
Toby Ferrer	7/28/1967	4/8/1972		Maria Hymes
Patrcia Elliott	11/4/1981	4/11/2001	Murdered	Connie and Dave Elliott
Rocke Lee Corley	5/18/1960	4/11/2003	Heart attack	Jeanne Corley
Michael Robert Pugh	4/2/1973	4/12/1986	Car accident	Robert & Donna Pugh
Eric Johnson	8/1/1973	4/13/1996	Hit by car	Gary Johnson
Dennis Lynn Geringer	6/21/1966	4/16/1983	Car crash - drunk driver	Kim Geringer
Richard "Richie" Petras	11/21/1981	4/16/1985	Car accident	Richard Petras
Naomi Katherine Schwartz	9/18/1996	4/16/1998	Leukemia	Tim and Sonoko Schwartz
Acacia Barbara Clen	4/8/1993	4/16/2006	Accident	Cindy Santarte
Sarah Sunshine Wedekind	1/25/1977	4/16/2007	Accidental drug overdose	Lorry Pearson
Jalynn Cameron	11/28/2003	4/19/2004	SIDS	Jessica Cameron
Leah Rae Wiley	9/22/1982	4/21/2006	Accidental drug overdose	Russ & Kelly Wiley
Gary Carlson	2/15/1961	4/25/2005		Phil & Rose Carlson
James Bishara	6/28/1983	4/27/2003	Lymphoma	Phebe Bishara

The best way to keep your child's memory alive is to share them with others. Won't you join us at our monthly meeting to share your grief experience with those newly bereaved?



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Love Gift Donations

Our chapter exists entirely through your donations which are tax deductible. Our largest expense is the printing and mailing of this newsletter, which is distributed to over 325 readers. Love Gifts enable us to continue our outreach to bereaved parents through our many chapter activities. A Love Gift is money donated to the chapter in memory of a 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 in "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.

These items must be received by the 10th of the month preceding the issue in which you would like them to appear. Love Gift donations should be sent directly to our treasurer, Frank Schager whose address is listed on the Love Gift Donation form.

To Our Members Who are Further Down the 'Grief Road'

We need your encouragement and your support. Each meeting we have new parents. THINK BACK—what would it have been like for you at your first meeting if there had not been any TCF "veterans" to welcome you, share your grief, encourage you and tell you, "your pain will not always be this bad, it really does get better!"

We have been fortunate to have had seasoned members attend and help facilitate our meetings and we all value the knowledge and experience they bring to the group. If a few seasons have passed since you last attended one of our meetings, won't you join us once again so we can all know the meaning of

**YOU NEED NOT WALK ALONE
WE ARE THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS**

LOVE GIFT DONATION

Your Name _____

Child's Name _____

Date of Birth _____

Anniversary Date _____

Dedication _____

Picture Enclosed: YES NO

Mail to:
Frank Schager
2235 McArthur Ave.
Colorado Springs, CO 80909

Thanks

Thanks to the friend who 'did' know the right words to say: "There is a group in town that might help you."
Thanks to the parent who somehow found the courage to call that phone number and find out about "that group."
Thanks to the mother who went to that first meeting knowing it would really hurt to talk — and talked.
Thanks to the dad who said after the first meeting that he could never come back— but did.
Thanks to the parent who, at the fifth meeting, put her arms around a "new one" and said: "They really can help."
Thanks to the mom who, for the first time, was again able to bake cookies—for her "Compassionate Friends."
Thanks to the homemaker who could never talk in front of people—who became a facilitator.
Thanks to the six-foot father who cried in front of the other men—and didn't say he was sorry. Because of you, we will be able to help someone we don't even know—next month.

John DeBoer ~ TCF, Greater Omaha, NE



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I Said I Could Not Do It, *But I Did!*

Exactly 8:05 a.m., Friday, July 9, 1971, was the last time I looked at my eight year old daughter with her eyes open. I walked beside her as they rolled her down the hall to the elevator that would take her down to the operating room for her simple, routine tonsillectomy.

At exactly 1:30 that afternoon, I was told she was dead. I said then I could not live a day without her. I just could not do it.

BUT I DID

During the drive home, I said I would never be able to walk in that house without her.

BUT I DID

As I walked in that empty house, someone quickly ran and shut her door—the door to her room where she kept all the things she loved. The room where she played and slept. I said I could never go in there again. I said I could not do it.

BUT I DID

When they said, “Come, let’s go to the funeral, the Rosary, the Mass,” I said I could not do it.

BUT I DID

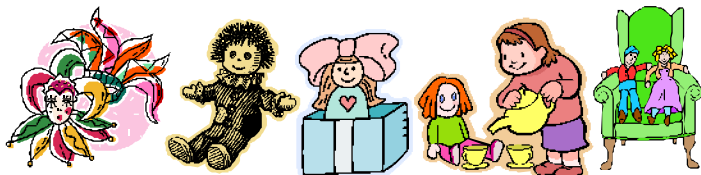
For months that followed, I just knew my life would never be the same, and it wasn’t. All the things I said I could not do did get done. All the life I said I could not live did get lived. Differently, but I did live. Now comes today—16 years later. I have to admit, I had to look it up to be sure. Sixteen years! Palmer Ann would have been 24 years old. I had to stop and think about that, too. I stood before her portrait today and stared a long, long time, and yes, I remembered the pain with total recall of July 9, 1971. I reached out, touching what’s left of my memory of her and I offered up a prayer of Thanksgiving to God—a prayer of gratitude, for giving me such a beautiful eight years with a lovely daughter, and most of all, the opportunity to be able to stand there and realize that I had said I could not do it, but I did.

YES, I DID

And each month when I come to a Compassionate Friends meeting with you, the new member, I share the pain that I know you are feeling—that hopelessness of the future. I smile to myself, because inside I know a secret—you will be okay. You will touch again, love again, laugh again, and live again. After all, I said I could not do it, but I did and...

YOU WILL, TOO!

Betz Crump
TCF, Ft. Lauderdale, FL



A Grandparent’s Point of View

The death of a child is the most tragic thing that can happen to anyone. It affects so many lives—family, friends, and even strangers.

I lost my grandchild through death, and only a grandparent can understand the special love we have for our grandchildren and the loss we feel when the child dies. For grandparents, it is a double loss. Not only is your grandchild gone, but you also watch your child die each day.

The smile that was always on my daughter’s face is no longer there. The hurt is so deep and there are so many questions. You feel helpless as a parent. You can’t kiss the hurt away as you did when they were a child. You have no answers for their questions, for you can barely understand your own feelings.

Each day I hope and pray for a little ray of sunshine to show on my daughter’s face. I search for a little something to say or do that will comfort her. It seems that there is no end to the suffering.

As time has slowly gone by, I have seen the healing process begin. In time a ray of hope will shine on my daughter’s face and a smile will make her eyes light up again. She will turn to me for what little comfort I can give her. There will always be a part of me that is gone, but in time I will learn to live with the part that is still there.

--Ruth Eaton
TCF-- Savannah, GA



Awkward Silence

a poem by Richard Dew, M.D.,
TCF, Knoxville, TN

I wish that someone would say his name.
I know my feelings they're trying to spare,
And so we go through the charade, the game,
Of dancing around the ghost that is there,
Trying to avoid evoking a tear,
Or stirring emotions too painful to bear.
That he be forgotten is what I fear,
That no one will even his presence miss,
As if there were no trace that he was here.
By referring to him, my purpose is
Not to stir pity or keep things the same,
But my heart will simply break if his
Memory will die like a flickering flame.
I just wish someone would say his name.





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Shards of Grief Linger After Murder

On a dreary night in December, a knock came at our door with news that would forever alter our lives. The news was that Anne, our only daughter, had been kidnapped and brutally murdered by persons or a person unknown. The shock, disbelief, anguish and anxieties over the next several months, a small piece of the grieving process, were extraordinary, and I have often wondered how we survived?

There was the extreme rage at the person who was responsible for taking Anne's life for no reason except for the pure pleasure of destroying good. But we survived. There was the awful anger against the legal system for being so callous and insensitive to the needs of the family and friends. The wounds from Anne's death were already deep and unhealing, but listening to and reading about the insinuations and innuendoes by the lawyers made the wounds grow deeper and deeper. The impression was given the family must endure punishment for allowing our daughter to be in the wrong place. This caused a feeling of guilt. But we survived.

There was the fear that Anne would become just another statistic, and the person responsible would go unpunished. Now the fear exists that the person will be released from prison to repeat his acts of violence. I am afraid that fears are addictive and one replaces another. Perhaps the worst fear is, when your faith in God is at its lowest ebb, that you will never be able to respond to normal stimuli again and regain all that faith. All the fears are real; but so far we have survived.

These, I suppose, are normal reactions as the result of a violent act. I believe these anxieties delay a normal (so-called) grieving period until after the culprit has been found, tried and sentenced. After these three things happened, I do know a terrible burden was lifted from our shoulders, and we could restart living our lives.

Somehow we survived. How did we survive? After much reflecting, I firmly believe we survived by recalling the positive aspects of Anne's life and character. Each individual is endowed with certain instruments, and we hear the music of their lives long after they are gone.

Anne's instrument of love of life was a blessing, and we still can hear the melodies of her song in the night. These melodies cannot be taken away, and they are more valuable than diamonds to us.

Anne's instrument of hope for a future in which to achieve her goals and have some effect on society was the backbone of her dream. The songs of hope in work, in life and the goodness of heart cannot be destroyed by evil or circumstances. Today is gone, but we still hear the songs of hope for tomorrow. These songs of hope, heard in the night, sustain us.

Anne's instrument of faith that she would lead a productive life and achieve both her spiritual and material goals was music in her heart. The faith she had in herself, her family and her friends transmits to us, urging us to proceed with our lives. The music of her faith is still a beacon in the night.

We will not believe Anne's dreams have ended, but we believe they will find their place in the world to come. The music that was set in motion by her love, hope and faith will move, everlasting, in sweet memories forever. The wounds from the loss of a loved one cannot be healed by words or deeds. These terrible burdens are borne by each of us in our own way and, hopefully, we survive.



Bill Boggs ~ TCF, Atlanta, Georgia



The Compassionate Friends



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