



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS of the Pikes Peak Region

April, 2010 Newsletter

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Upcoming Events

April 15th - General Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church
May 20th - General Meeting- 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church
May 29th - Memorial Day Concert - 4:00 p.m. - Thompson Residence

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 LOSS | STEWART & LETA LEVETT | 531-5488 |
| SKATEBOARD / AUTO ACCIDENT | RAYE WILSON | (303) 814-9478 |

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

Welcome!

To those of you who are newly bereaved and receiving our newsletter for the first time, we warmly welcome 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.

OUR MEETING ROOM HAS CHANGED

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 meeting will be April 15th, 2010.

Starting in April we will be meeting in the Fellowship Hall downstairs. We will enter through the atrium doors just west of where we normally enter and, as usual, we will have our TCF sign outside in front of the door.

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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Love Gift Donations

Our chapter exists entirely through your donations which are tax deductible. 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 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.

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.



Tell us what you want. Is there something specific that you'd like to see? Perhaps more stories or articles on healing? Recommendations for books or poems written by other TCF members?

Do you have a poem or a prayer, story or picture that you would like to share? We also 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: Stewart@Archangelgifts.com

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

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

Angel Eyes: Giving Comfort, Providing Hope

Our group offers bereavement services for parents, families, friends and caregivers who have been affected by the sudden unexpected loss of an infant or toddler. This group offers you a comfortable place to heal and learn how to live with your loss. Nothing is asked of you; you do not have to speak if you choose not to.

People who have received bereavement services report that it is very helpful for them to have people to talk to who can understand the grief of losing an infant or young child. This group is a safe place where you can talk about both your grief and the precious memories you have of your child. Each month we will begin with a particular topic, talk about how you might be affected and have time for general sharing.

The group is led by an ANGEL EYES social worker whose mission is to help families and others cope with the sudden, unexpected death of an infant or toddler throughout the state by providing a range of bereavement services. For additional help and information: **Angel Eyes 1-888-285-7437**

Web site: www.angeleyes.org

Meetings are held the 3rd Monday of the Month

Location: Colorado Springs Penrose Library, 20 N. Cascade Ave

Time: 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

There is no cost and parking is free at the meters after 6:00 p.m.



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The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS MEMORIAL DAY CONCERT & PICNIC BALLOON LAUNCH

The Compassionate Friends of the Pikes Peak Region is very excited to announce a special event on Saturday, May 29th, Memorial Day Weekend. Alan Pedersen will be in concert at 4:00 p.m. singing his personal and very moving songs of love, hope and healing for members of our TCF family. For those who are not familiar with Alan or were unable to attend our concert last year, Alan is a National Singer/Songwriter who has dedicated his music in the healing of others who are on their grief journey. Alan will be doing this as part of his "Angels Across The USA Tour".



We will start the afternoon at 3 p.m. with a barbecue potluck for all in attendance. The event will be held at TCF Board Members Bob & Yvette Thompson's house with the meats and drinks being provided by The Pikes Peak Chapter of TCF. Our Memorial Day Balloon Launch honoring our children which will start immediately after the concert. We will provide additional information as we finalize the arrangements. RSVP's are suggested so we may plan seating and food. Be sure to mark your calendars now for this event which you won't want to miss.

To RSVP you may email Laraine Anderson at lason56@yahoo.com or Stew Levett at stewart@archangelgifts.com. Please let us know how many in your family will be attending. For those who continue to receive our newsletter the old fashioned way, you may RSVP directly to Laraine by leaving her a message at 719-351-7653.

Should you forget to RSVP, no worries; We would like for you to come and enjoy the concert and fellowship of the other TCF members.

Please bring a side dish or dessert, enough to feed your family and to share with a few others. We hope to see you there!

Evolution

In the beginning, I walked around wringing my hands constantly like Lady MacBeth. Now I still wring them but only on her anniversary during the hours leading up to her death and upon hearing tragic news.

In the beginning, the video tape in my heart played the events of the days before and after her death again and again. I was powerless to stop it. Now I can frequently turn it off, by consciously thinking of other things.

In the beginning I felt that my skin was too tight for my body. Compulsively, I had to move in order to make it fit. I walked for long periods in order to feel comfortable. Now I walk just for exercise.

In the beginning, on Tuesdays leading up to 12:25 p.m., I tensely counted the minutes. Now Tuesday is usually just an ordinary day.

In the beginning, time was counted in days and weeks. Now it's numbered in years.

In the beginning, everything that belonged or related to her was sacred. When the earrings she had given me fell out, I was frantic. Now if they were lost, I would be very sad but I could cope. I have also reached the point where I am able to donate many of the things she owned.

In the beginning, it was hard to think or talk about anything but her death. Now I have reinvested in life, have other topics of conversation, and actually find much of life enjoyable.

In the beginning I cried when I passed her favorite foods in the supermarket. Now there is a pang but the tears no longer flow.

In the beginning, after the first TCF memorial service, the words to "Wind Beneath My Wings" and "Somewhere Out There" echoed painfully in my head for months. Now when I hear those songs there is sadness, but it is softer and ends quickly.

In the beginning, I was sure that I was crazy. Now although I still question my sanity at times, I usually accept the fact that my thoughts and feelings are normal for bereaved parents, even if the rest of the world does not agree.

In the beginning there were many things I wouldn't do. Now I do some of them but still avoid others. Perhaps in my continued evolution, I will decide that those things are possible too.

If you are at the beginning, take heart. Someday when the time is right and you have worked through much of your grief, you too will look back to the beginning and realize that life, even without your child, is bearable. There is evolution.

Stephanie Hesse
TCF Rockland County, NY



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In Loving Memory of Steven J. Miller

4/27/88 - 2/11/06

“He was, despite the few years of his life,
no brief candle.

He was a Splendid Torch, vital,
charismatic, magnetic, attractive.

Full of the attributes that all of us wish
we had in greater abundance”!

By: Bob Buford

Steven's Rocks

I found some rocks today at Grammy's house. Yeah, they were yours; neatly tucked away in a zip-lock bag. Just plain old ordinary rocks in my view, But not to you!

In your eyes they were treasures. Items of great value; pearls of great price. You were always on the lookout for these treasures wherever you were at.

I remember your birthday when I bought you the rock polishing kit. You eagerly brought in several ordinary, dull rocks from your collection.

I remember the gleam in your eye as you carefully placed them in the round tub. In a few short days you took them out and admired your work. Those dull rocks had changed; they were now beautiful!

I remember the fun we had making key chains and jewelry out of them. They had become something useful and beautiful.

I remember thinking that you were not surprised about this wonderful transformation. It was almost like you knew it all along; Like you could see the true beauty that was hidden inside each and every one of them.

It occurs to me that you were like that with people too.

Steven, one thing that has become crystal clear since your passing has been your love for people.

You helped so many of them each day to smile and to laugh. You were there for them whenever they needed you.

And it didn't matter who they were, what they looked like, or what they had done. It was like you could see each one's true inner-beauty. All they needed was a bit of polishing, which you provided by your love.

Over the past years I have come into contact with many of those "Rocks". They all tell me the same story, about how you reached out to them, and helped them to be happy; To live life to the fullest each day.

One even told me that because of you, he was able to become more outgoing. And he was no longer afraid to make new friends.

Each story, a testament to the wonderful "polishing" that you gave them.

I realize now that I was also one of your "rocks", That I too have benefited from your "polishing". I am a better person simply because you believed in me and loved me!

Thank you for seeing through my drab exterior to find the inner-beauty. Thank you for polishing so many "rocks" in your brief time on earth.

Thank you for your love. It shall never be forgotten!

Dad



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Mike Miller in memory of

Steven J. Miller

DOB: April 27th - Anniversary: February 11th

Holding Onto Love

Trees and flowers seem suddenly reborn,
As another spring arrives fresh and new,
Surrounded by such beauty,
My thoughts turn to you.
As another college graduation looms,
Great excitement fills the air,
Glancing at the smiling students,
I still search for strawberry blonde hair,
No matter what I do in life
You are always there,
I feel your presence constantly,
As each new experience we share.
Though physically, you have left us,
Your love remains here to stay,
A bond so strong and nourishing,
It gets us through another day.

*By Chuck Collins
Burke/Springfield/Fairfax Chapter TCF*

SHARE

Everybody has SOMETHING.
Some call it faith. Some refer to fate, destiny...religion...
God... a belief. It does not matter what you call it; but in
your moments of deepest sorrow, KNOW that it is there.
Don't be afraid to question it. Hate it. Curse it. Hide it.
Scream at it. Test it. But KEEP it. One day your grief will
be resolved. Then you will be able to acknowledge it, accept
it, be grateful for it, understand it, and SHARE it. Only then
can you LIVE it. I call mine FAITH: what do you call
YOURS?

*Shirley Melin
TCF ~ Aurora, IL*

Still Here Without You

I'll search far and wide
for a better tomorrow.
Yet, the more I look,
the less I seem to know.
'Cause I am still here without you.

Just wish I had the time,
time to say good-bye.
I can't seem to change that,
no matter how hard I try.
'Cause I am still here without you.

So I'll pick up the pieces
and carry on with your name.
But the more I move forward,
the more things stay the same.
'Cause I am still here without you.

I will love you and
you will always be in my heart.
And though we are not together,
we will never be far apart.
Even though, I am still here without you.

*By David Rothman
Toms River, NJ TCF*

Spring Cleaning

As the seasons change, and we become aware of the stirrings of nature, our thoughts turn to "spring cleaning". This prepares us for the new season by getting our "house" in order.

Let's dust off our memory chests, take and examine each item we've folded away in our hearts and minds. Dig into the corners and bring light and air into the darkness.

Deep in the closet, we have accumulated all the things we couldn't face or needed time to think about. We must go through these. As we sort through, we will discard some unnecessary, unwanted feelings — hurt, anger and other emotions.

Now we can count our treasures and carefully fold and put them back in fresh containers, smaller and easier to find, more in time for now, and in good order.

A day spent doing these tasks will no doubt leave you exhausted, but the effort will bring a deep sense of contentment. For me, it brought a special plus — memories and joys of Jim and Scott.

*~Betty Stieglmeyer
TCF Pikes Peak, CO*



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Remembering Our Children On Their Birthdays

| <u>Child's Name</u> | <u>Date of Birth</u> | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| <u>Age at Death</u> | <u>Date of Death</u> | <u>Cause of Death</u> | <u>Parent / Friend</u> |
| Christie Fike | Apr 2 | Leukemia | Shirley & Dan Emerson |
| 32 years | Jul 28 | | |
| Michael Robert Pugh | Apr 2 | Car accident | Robert & Donna Pugh |
| 13 years | Apr 12 | | |
| Michael Zwirlein | Apr 3 | ADEM - Brain infection | Chris Zwirlein |
| 25 years | Dec 31 | | |
| Steven James Gantz | Apr 4 | Gun accident | Diana Gantz |
| 13 years | Mar 4 | | |
| Mike Mozo | Apr 5 | Auto accident | Valerie Kirchhofer |
| 27 years | Nov 12 | | |
| Heidi Susanne Wolfe | Apr 6 | Motorcycle accident | David & Karen Wolfe |
| 20 years | Jul 3 | | |
| Joseph Gentry Richardson | Apr 6 | Liver transplant infection | Jack & Miriam Gentry |
| 1 year | Dec 13 | | |
| Angel Leah Kelley | Apr 7 | Misdiagnosed illness | James L. Kelley |
| 5 months | Oct 4 | | Shirley McCleary |
| Mitchell Lynn Faires | Apr 8 | Sudden illness | Sammie White |
| 39 years | Dec 2 | | |
| Acacia Barbara Clen | Apr 8 | Accident | Cindy Santarte |
| 13 years | Apr 16 | | |
| Tommy Kinslow | Apr 9 | Murder | Pam Kinslow |
| 20 years | Nov 22 | | |
| Jonathan Argo | Apr 9 | Murdered | Kimberly & Michael Argo |
| 21 years | Mar 28 | | |
| Julie Bankston | Apr 13 | Suicide | Peggy Bankston |
| 25 years | May 4 | | |
| Andrew Evan Neely | Apr 13 | Spinal Muscular Atrophy | Tamara Noble |
| 2 months | Jun 18 | | |
| Zachary Nicholas Hoke | Apr 16 | Heart defect | Debra & Steve Hoke |
| 6 years | May 24 | | |
| Patricia Spain Boden | Apr 18 | Auto accident | Margie Spain |
| 39 years | Jul 31 | | |
| Jonathan Steven Gabriel | Apr 19 | Leukemia | Steve & Jane Gabriel |
| 5 years | Jul 31 | | |
| Tyrone Elliott Bautista | Apr 22 | Homicide | Rosemary Devney |
| 19 years | Aug 1 | | |



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Remembering Our Children On Their Birthdays

| <u>Child's Name</u> <u>Age at Death</u> | <u>Date of Birth</u> <u>Date of Death</u> | <u>Cause of Death</u> | <u>Parent / Friend</u> |
|--|--|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| Sean William Staat 25 years | Apr 23 Mar 11 | | Susan & William Staat |
| Ja-Mickeal James Lane 5 years | Apr 23 Jan 18 | Asthma attack in her sleep | Lara & Kenneth Lane |
| Miguel Meza 20 years | Apr 24 Apr 19 | Gunshot wound | Susan Meza |
| Steven Miller 17 years | Apr 27 Feb 11 | Auto accident | Mike Miller |
| Kaden France 2 weeks | Apr 30 May 14 | Respiratory Distress Syndrome | Jeremy & Sarah France |
| Sara M. Losasso 14 years | Apr 30 Jan 19 | Car crash | Cindy Losasso |

Remembering Our Children On Their Anniversaries

| <u>Child's Name</u> <u>Age at Death</u> | <u>Date of Birth</u> <u>Date of Death</u> | <u>Cause of Death</u> | <u>Parent / Friend</u> |
|--|--|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Douglas Radowski 40 years | May 7 Apr 1 | Heart attack | Patricia Radowski |
| Richard McShan 23 years | Jun 20 Apr 1 | Suicide | Paul & Angelika McShan |
| Erin Marie McCallister 3 weeks | Mar 7 Apr 2 | Heart defect | Steve & Carol McCallister |
| Matthew John McCallister 22 years | Aug 4 Apr 3 | House fire | Steve & Carol McCallister |
| Skylar Lynn Boyle Ringland 22 years | May 24 Apr 4 | Homicide | Cathleen Boyle |
| Brian Patrick Adair 13 years | Jul 21 Apr 4 | Celiac disease | Duane & Mary Adair |
| Abraham Daniel Boukhari 18 years | Dec 2 Apr 4 | Auto accident | David & Deborah Woodrow |
| Ronald Eugene Peterson 15 years | Jan 9 Apr 5 | Motorcycle accident | Ron Peterson |
| Kristie Diaz 26 years | Nov 7 Apr 7 | Cancer | Julie Diaz |
| Toby Ferrer 4 years | Jul 28 Apr 8 | | Maria Hymes |



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Remembering Our Children On Their Anniversaries

| <u>Child's Name</u> <u>Age at Death</u> | <u>Date of Birth</u> <u>Date of Death</u> | <u>Cause of Death</u> | <u>Parent / Friend</u> |
|--|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Angel Leah Kelley 3 years | Apr 7 Apr 8 | Mis-diagnosis | Shirley McCleary |
| Lindsey Everding 18years | Sep 14 Apr 10 | Car accident | Trena Everding Dave Kiefer |
| Patrcia Elliott 19 years | Nov 4 Apr 11 | Murdered | Connie and Dave Elliott |
| Rocke Lee Corley 42 years | May 18 Apr 11 | Heart attack | Jeanne Corley |
| Michael Robert Pugh 13 years | Apr 2 Apr 12 | Car accident | Robert & Donna Pugh |
| Eric Johnson 22 years | Aug 1 Apr 13 | Hit by car | Gary Johnson |
| Naomi Katherine Schwartz 1 year | Sep 18 Apr 16 | Leukemia | Tim & Sonoko Schwartz |
| Dennis Lynn Gerringe 16 years | Jun 21 Apr 16 | Drunk driver | Kim Gerringe |
| Richard "Richie" Petras 3 years | Nov 21 Apr 16 | Car accident | Richard Petras |
| Sarah Sunshine Wedekind 30 years | Jan 25 Apr 16 | Accidental drug overdose | Lorry Pearson |
| Acacia Barbara Clen 13 years | Apr 8 Apr 16 | Accident | Cindy Santarte |
| Dawn Michelle Wiley 21 years | Oct 24 Apr 18 | Drunk driver | Luanne Wiley |
| Jalynn Cameron 5 months | Nov 28 Apr 19 | SIDS | Jessica Cameron |
| Miguel Meza 20 years | Apr 24 Apr 19 | Gunshot wound | Susan Meza |
| Leah Rae Wiley 23 years | Sep 22 Apr 21 | Accidental drug overdose | Russ & Kelly Wiley |
| Gary Carlson 44 years | Feb 15 Apr 25 | | Phil & Rose Carlson |
| James Bishara 19 years | Jun 28 Apr 27 | Lymphoma | Phebe Bishara |

Last month we inadvertently left off Keith Barrett from our birthday list. Please accept our sincere apologies.
 Keith A.S. Barrett March 8 Auto Accident Ree Barrett
 24 years Aug 9



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MY SECRET

Within days of my son's tragic death in a helicopter crash, it became my sad duty to remove his belongings from his apartment. In the numbing fog of shock and denial, I sifted through every drawer, cabinet, and closet. The wrenching decisions of what to do with his clothes, his video tapes – even his toothbrush – made my head swim.

Although I gave away many of the things to his roommate, other friends and family, and to “Goodwill,” I kept the “special” things for myself – school yearbooks, pictures, certain articles of clothing, and his collection of crazy T-shirts. I put this strange assortment of things in his footlocker, a remnant of his boarding school days.

What I didn't tell anyone was that I never laundered the T-shirts I found in the dirty clothes hamper. I just folded them and put them in the footlocker with my other memories. And from time to time during those first months of agonizing pain, I would sit on the floor, open the footlocker and sort through the treasured remnants of a life that had been such a large part of mine.

Then I would take the unwashed T-shirts and bury my face in them, inhaling the combined scents of his cologne, deodorant, and perspiration, mixed with the wetness of my tears. It made me feel, for just a moment, that he wasn't really so far away. “What a perverse thing to do!” I thought, “I'm sure no one else would understand my doing such a thing – they would surely think I'd gone off the deep end.” So I never told anyone about this strange behavior and the odd comfort it gave to me.

Months later at a national conference, I heard a speaker tell hundreds of bereaved parents assembled about a mother whose son had died suddenly and how she had refused to wash the soiled shirt he had been wearing, but found comfort in holding it close to her and smelling it. “My gosh,” I thought, “maybe I'm not so crazy after all.”

Since this experience I have discovered this is not as uncommon as I had once thought. The scents of a loved one are as much a part of them as the sound of a voice, the touch of a hand, or the tenderness of a kiss.

There is nothing “perverse” in wanting to cling to these precious memories. Memories are what remain after the death of our child, and there is comfort to be found in them.

Carole Ragland
TCF/Houston West Chapter

Mourning Is My Mode

Today I realized that I have become a shell of the person I once was. What would my child think of this? I am alone, my only child is gone, yet I know he would not be pleased with the way I have isolated myself, wrapped in invisible crepe, sheltered by a mental wall. This is not the mom he knew. I am someone different now.

What am I to do with this? I feel like a lonely, mourning swan, swimming endlessly from shore to shore. I have no direction, I want no direction, I just keep moving with no purpose. I must get a grip on myself.

I know my motions must take on some meaning. I look to others for help. Yet I realize that if I do not reach out and help myself, I will crash on the rocks with the raging tide.

I decide I will add one new thing, one new event, one new person or one new writing to each day. I will reach out to others. I will force myself to move slowly back into life.

I will spend some time with my family. I will enjoy their children. I will mentor a child. I will start putting my thoughts into a written form. I begin to do these things. I feel better. I attend another meeting of the parents who have lost their children. I feel as if I do belong here. It has been four months since my son died. I am overwhelmed.

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

April 2010

The Compassionate Friends
Pikes Peak Chapter
P.O. Box 26239
Colorado Springs, CO 80936



TCF National Conference -- July 2-4, 2010

"Reflections of Love, Visions of Hope" is the theme of The Compassionate Friends 33rd National Conference which will be held in Arlington, Virginia July 2-4, 2010. The event will be held at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City promising a beautiful venue for the 33rd TCF National Conference.

Independence Day will not only feature our Walk to Remember, but will include a world-class display of fireworks over the National Mall, visible from Arlington.

Reserve your accommodations on-line at Hyatt Regency Crystal City. Room rates are \$129 for single or double occupancy, \$154 for triple and \$179 for quad. These are specially negotiated rates available only to those attending the national conference. For those wishing to make reservations by telephone, please call 1-800-233-1234 and specify you are with The Compassionate Friends.



<http://www.compassionatefriends.org/home.aspx>