



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS of the Pikes Peak Region

August, 2009 Newsletter

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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.

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: 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.

OUR 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 August 20th and September 17th.

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](#).

OUR TELEPHONE FRIENDS

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

CHAPTER LEADER	LARAIN 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

Upcoming Events

August 9th - Walk to Remember Fundraiser - Portland, Oregon

August 20th - General Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church

August 29th - Memorial Balloon Launch - 12:00 Noon - Monument Valley Park

September 17th - General Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church



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Choosing Life

“It will never be the same. Never.” As a bereaved parent, you have often heard or said these words to express grief’s profound feelings of sorrow and disorientation. Your life has suddenly taken an unexpected course that appears both uncharted and endless. Bewildered, you vainly search for pathways back to your former life, until you confront the reality that there is no way back. Your child is dead forever. It is then that you may say, “...never the same.” This is the aspect of grief that Simon Stephens calls “The Valley of the Shadow.” It is that very long time between the death of your child and your reinvestment in life. Between. It is



not supposed to be a permanent resting place. Although some people do take up residence in the valley, it is a transition from the death of your child to life with renewed purpose. The key to this transition is yourself. You must choose between life and the valley. You and only you can decide. And you must make that decision again and again, each day.

Giving in to the hopelessness of the valley is tempting. Choosing to move on toward life requires a great deal of work. You must struggle with the pain of grief in order to resolve it. It is a daily struggle full of tears, anger, guilt and self-doubt, but it is the only alternative to surrendering yourself to the valley.

Little by little you choose to move on. Little by little you progress toward the other side of the valley. It takes a very long time, far longer than your friends or relatives suspected. Far longer than you had believed – even prayed – that it would be.

When one day you find yourself able to do more than choose merely to live but also how to live, you will know you are leaving the valley of the shadow.

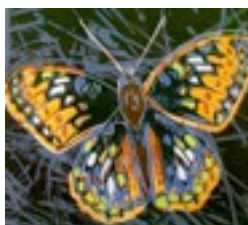
There will still be more work to do, more struggle and choosing. The valley, however, stretches behind rather than in front of you.

When you have resolved your grief by reinvesting in life, you will be able to realize that nothing is ever “the same.” Life is change. We would not have it be otherwise, for that is the valley of the shadow. Change has the promise of beginning and the excitement of discovery.

Life is never the same. Life is change. Choose life!

Marcia F. Alig

TCF, Mercer Area Chapter, New Jersey





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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</u>	<u>Compassionate Friend</u>
Eric Johnson 23 years	Aug 1 Apr 13	Hit by car	Gary Johnson
Aaron Paul Levett 26 years	Aug 2 Oct 18	Accidental drug overdose	Stewart & Leta Levett
Genevieve Sucharski 19 years	Aug 2 May 12	Car accident	Mark and Karen Sucharski
Veronika Olivia Baca 2 years	Aug 2 Jul 22	Heart defect	Sharon Baca
Emma Renee Younger 3 months	Aug 2 Nov 9	Heart complications	Adam & Mindy Younger
Nicholas Clare Cousineau 4 years	Aug 3 May 29	Obstructed airway	George & Chris Cousineau
Matthew John McCallister 23 years	Aug 4 Apr 3	House fire	Steve & Carol McCallister
James Russell Kempa 15 years	Aug 4 Sep 22	Heart attack	Russell & Gayle Kempa
Jessica Stockwell 24 years	Aug 7 Oct 12	Rare disease	Mark & Sally Stockwell
Graham Stingley 24 years	Aug 7 Feb 18		Mary Winter-Stingley
Stella Elliott 1 year	Aug 8 Feb 17	Auto accident	Donna Elliott
Clayton Neal Brehm 26 years	Aug 10 Sep 23	Accidental drug overdose	Ramona Atkinson
Kimberly Denise Patterson 16 years	Aug 11 Oct 30	Auto accident	Sigrid Patterson
Michael Williams 29 years	Aug 13 May 18	Heart rejection	Carmen Randall
Christopher Calegar 11 years	Aug 15 Mar 22	Car accident	Kevin & Linda Calegar
Gina Marie Geffre 15 years	Aug 16 May 29	Airplane crash	Joann Jahraus



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<u>Child's Name</u> <u>Age at Death</u>	<u>Date of Birth</u> <u>Date of Death</u>	<u>Cause</u>	<u>Compassionate Friend</u>
Zack Orr 13 years	Aug 16 May 25	Train accident	Dave & Sharon Orr
Suzanne Bethany Thomas 4 years	Aug 20 Oct 3	Leukemia	Arnie & Mary Thomas
Susanna Jeanette Scruggs 23 years	Aug 21 Nov 22	Friedrich's Ataxia	Patricia Beard
Raul Garcia 19 years	Aug 21 Sep 17	Hit by Drunk Driver	Rena Gonzalez
Mia Allyson Gardiner 16 years	Aug 22 Dec 4	Car accident	Peri Gardiner
Lance Alan Rigby 21 years	Aug 25 Sep 1	Car accident	Deborah Rigby
Patrick Casey Hildebrand 21 years	Aug 26 Feb 9	Auto / pedestrian accident	Dr. Jan & Judi Hildebrand
Sayge Frisco 1 day	Aug 26 Aug 26	Stillborn	Renai Frisco
Andrew Paul Whiteman 21 years	Aug 27 Jul 2	Motorcycle accident	Lyle Whiteman
Mary Hope Burton 7 years	Aug 27 Dec 30	Perforated gastric ulcer	Jim & Betty Burton
Nolan Edward Stites 19 years	Aug 31 Aug 29	Psychological homicide	Richard & Marilyn Stites

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



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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</u>	<u>Compassionate Friend</u>
Bradly Garrard 19 years	Dec 12 Aug 1	Unknown	Sally Garrard
Jason Bradford Pfeif 18 years	Jun 17 Aug 1	Drowning	Chris and Brad Pfeif
Tyrone Elliott Bautista 19 years	Apr 22 Aug 1	Homicide	Rosemary Devney
Chelsey Ann Kear 16 years	Dec 29 Aug 5	Suicide	Tami Kear
Keith Andrew Barrett 24 years	Mar 8 Aug 9	Auto Accident	Ree Barrett
Cynthia Claypool Martin 40 years	Feb 4 Aug 9	Sudden death	Steve & Ann Claypool
Katherine (Katey) Divis 17 years	Apr 8 Aug 12	Car accident	Kitty & Dave Divis
Laura Dean 30 years	Jun 17 Aug 16	Birth defect	Barbara Dean
Andrew Paul Weaver 20 years	May 16 Aug 17	Vehicle accident	Valerie Lightbody
Nikolas Chunn 5 years	Feb 21 Aug 18	Drowning	Monica & Doug Chunn
Derrick Shane Moore 12 years	Sep 28 Aug 20	Electrocution	Ray & Deanna Moore
Scott Martinson 6 years	Mar 26 Aug 21	Leukemia	JoAnn Martinson
Nathaniel Hughes 19 years	Dec 19 Aug 21	Homicide	Jim Hughes
Clayton Champion 29 years	Mar 24 Aug 22	Sudden death	Jessie & Phyllis Roark
Jose N. Camacho 9 years	May 8 Aug 24	Accidental shooting	William & Veronica Camacho
Sayge Frisco 1 day	Aug 26 Aug 26	Stillborn	Renai Frisco
Kimberly Elizabeth Pratt 18 years	Sep 12 Aug 27	Diabetes/epilepsy	Pam Bilberry



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Remembering Our Children On Their Anniversaries

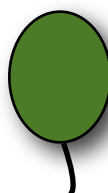
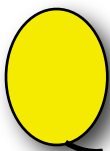
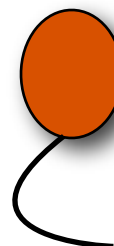
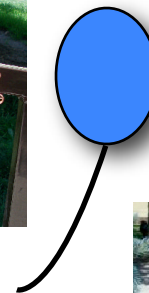
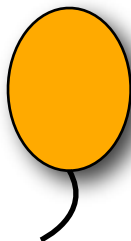
<u>Child's Name</u> <u>Age at Death</u>	<u>Date of Birth</u> <u>Date of Death</u>	<u>Cause</u>	<u>Compassionate Friend</u>
Nicole Maria Kelley 5 years	Dec 8 Aug 28	Anesthesia complications	John & Lois Kelley
Nolan Edward Stites 19 years	Aug 31 Aug 29	Psychological homicide	Richard & Marilyn Stites
Ian Matthew Anderson 19 years	Feb 2 Aug 29	Rare fibrousing disease	Joann & David Butler

MEMORIAL BALLOON LAUNCH

Our Memorial Balloon Launch will be held at Monument Valley Park which is located at 170 W. Cache La Poudre Blvd. (Intersection of Cache La Poudre & Mesa Road. You can enter the park either by taking Glen Ave. south off of West Uintah St. (just off I-25) or taking Cache La Poudre west where it meets Mesa Road. Continue on Mesa until it converges with Glen Ave. and the parking lot is where the two streets merge. Once inside the park go south of the tennis courts to the far side of the kids' playground, just west of the swimming pool. Balloons will mark the way, and The Compassionate Friends Memorial Park Bench will mark our meeting spot.

Join us for refreshments and our balloon launch at noon on August 29th.

We've got a balloon waiting for you.





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A Revelation from God

The canvas of my life had been adorned with such a variety of brilliant color and vibrant hue.

There in the canvas was evidence of a life, full and rich, alive both to God and man.

Then came the change in a sudden deluge.

The drenching pain has blanched the color from the canvas of my life.

Gone are the colors of my life, all drained away by the consuming sorrow.

The anguish of my affliction has penetrated to the depths of my soul.

Colors pale and turn to so many shades of gray at the harshness of my grief.

The utter devastation of my life is now revealed in the pale and desiccated landscape.

I would have perished from the face of the earth *if it were not for the revelation of your promises.*

The canvas of my life has been robbed of its brilliance. But your promise refreshes me.

Gone is the vibrancy of my life.

Yet your promise renews me.

Dry is the landscape of my life.

Still your promise transforms me.

Drained away is the color of my life.

And it is your promise that restores me.

And it is your promise that will finally redeem my life from an otherwise nondescript existence.

The color will return to the canvas of my life, rich and deep.

For that is your promise.

As my life is forever changed,

So are the colors as they have become muted now.

They reflect the deep, abiding faith in God,
of one who has been tested and found to be faithful.

The colors now give evidence of your promise

Which forever sustains me.

Carol Saucedo, May 2005 (www.carolsauceda.com) Used by Permission

Reference pp. 309-310 from the book: Saucedo, C. T. (2009). *My Journey with Grief: A mother's grief revealed in her journals*. Salt Lake City, Utah: American Book Publishing.



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Happy 30th Birthday Aaron Paul Levett



**We love you and
miss you every
day.**



August 2, 1979

Wishing you were here.

Mom & Dad



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Leta & Stewart Levett in memory of

Aaron Paul Levett

DOB: August 2nd - Anniversary: October 18th

Wishing you were here. Happy 30th Birthday!

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.

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

SUIDS Family Support Group



Time: 6:30-8:30pm
Day: 3rd Monday of each month beginning 3/16/09
Location: St. Francis
825 E. Pikes Peak
5th Floor
Summit Room

This group offers grief support for parents, families, friends & caregivers who have been affected by the sudden, unexpected loss of an infant or toddler.

Angel Eyes: (888) 285-7437

Tena@angelyes.com

St. Francis: Leslie Schwender (719) 376-5855

The meeting will be facilitated by Susan Backus Ph.D. This meeting is for adults only. No child care will be provided.



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Change and Challenge

As I look back over the past 6 years since our son died, I realize how much I have changed.

When we talk about grieving, we often forget to mention that we grieve, too, for the person we were before our child died.

We might have been energetic and fun loving, but now are serious and absorbed.

Our friends and family miss the “old us” too, and their comments show it:

“Don’t you think it’s time to return to normal?” or, “You don’t laugh as much as you used to.”

They are grieving for the person who will never be the same again.

Like the caterpillar that shrouds itself in a cocoon, we shroud ourselves in grief when our child dies.

We wonder, our families wonder, our friends wonder – when will they come out of it? Will they make it through the long sleep? What hues will show when they emerge?

If you’ve ever watched a butterfly struggle from the safety of a cocoon, you’ll know that the change is not quick or easy – but worth the effort!

We begin to mark our struggle from the cocoon of grief when we begin to like the “new us.”

When our priorities become different and people become more important than things - when we grasp a hand that reaches and reach in turn to pull another from his own cocoon, when we embrace the change and turn the change into a challenge.

Then we can proudly say, “I have survived against overwhelming odds. Even though my child’s death is not worth the change in and of itself, the changes and challenges give me hope that I can feel fulfilled again. I can love again.”

TCF – Appleton, WI

Ask Dr. Paulson

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

Q: My 8 year-old sister died almost 8 years ago. I think that I have worked through my grief quite well, but I still can’t stop thinking about her. Her birthday is coming up shortly and I feel the need to celebrate it just as if she were with us. I’d like to have a party, cake and candles. My parents have never suggested anything like this before, so I don’t know what their feelings would be. It’s just that I want to do something to show that she has not been forgotten. Should I suggest this to my parents or forget the whole thing?

A: Celebrating your sister—her life, your relationship, the terrific person she was—sounds like a great idea. It’s difficult to let her birthday go unnoticed. It might be a good idea to talk to the rest of your family and ask them how (and when) they might want to celebrate. We celebrate my brother’s birthday every year by having RTTFG Day on that day—Refuse to Take For Granted Day. This is a day we not only celebrate him, but also each other. We take this day to remind each other how special we think they are and how much we love each other. We give each other gifts that are especially meaningful - favorite books, favorite activities, wishes, etc. I whole-heartedly recommend choosing a special day to remember her and celebrate her!



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Fifty Year Vigil of the Grave

Ten years ago, a grave in the cemetery caught my wife's attention; it was close to the grave we visited. My wife read the inscription; it was the grave of a little girl named Marjorie; she was only three years old when she died in 1935. My wife's name is Marjorie also, and that may have been a small reason for our interest, but it was the date that struck us. Although the child had died in 1935, forty-two years later there were still lovely tended flowers growing there. A three year old girl was still alive in someone's memory. Whenever we went to the cemetery we visited this little grave. We saw flowers growing there every summer for the next eight years. We never saw the person who tended them, but we guessed it was her Mom, whose date of death was yet unwritten on the family stone. The flowers appeared until 1985, fifty years after the child had died. That summer there were no flowers and a date of death appeared on the Mother's headstone.

Anthony Von Eisen - TCF, Memphis, TN

Birthday Celebration

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 we sing "Happy Birthday" you may show pictures, a slide show or anything that you'd like to share with the group to help you celebrate your child's special day. Please contact our chair person in advance so we can plan enough time for your celebration.



THE CHILD WHO WASN'T PERFECT

I cannot say, as I have heard other parents say, "My child has always been a joy and pleasure; never gave me a minute's trouble." I cannot say that. I had a son who was always trouble. He was born cross and irritable, real trials from the word go. He seemed to be in protest at having been born, from his very first breath and outcry, through the rest of his life. His thirty seven years of life were one long outcry of protest, misery and unhappiness. He expressed his tormented spirit through music, poetry and a beautiful American Indian spirituality. But in spite of the pain that was in his heart, he had a wide smile and a hearty big laugh for everyone that belied the torment that raged inside him. He had a strange, mysterious wild charm, to which all who met him fell victim. He seemed to be born in the wrong time, wrong culture, with a crippled spirit, and a body that carried a fatal flaw: the fatal flaw of addiction. He put himself and his family through the agony of the damned. Step by step, he destroyed himself, as we watched with grieving hearts. He rejected every effort to save him. Then came that fateful week; some mystery reached out for him; his body, his spirit defied every weapon at science's disposal to diagnose and save him. One by one his vital functions failed and he was gone. The word "forever" suddenly had a new and terrible meaning. So, he was hard to love; but we loved him every step of the way. We had him because we wanted him and we loved him every minute of his life. Our grief has been no less because he was not a perfect child. It has just been an extension of the agony that we were helpless against the monster called addiction that destroyed him. Yesterday was his birthday; I longed for the sight and sound of him and that wild melancholy charm that vanished a year and a half ago. My heart stays full of tears; they are always just beneath the surface. I struggle daily to keep them out of sight and hidden from my fellow man, who does not want to share my pain. So, I come home and sit on my porch in the dark; listen to the night sounds; stare into space, and I cry for my child who wasn't perfect.

Jane Miller - TCF Atlanta, GA

August 2009

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The Compassionate Friends
Pikes Peak Chapter
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Colorado Springs, CO 80936



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