

December, 2011



**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS**
PIKES PEAK CHAPTER
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



Upcoming Events

January 19th - General Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church
February 16th - General Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church

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 January 19th, 2012.

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.**

Pikes Peak Chapter Steering Committee

CHAPTER LEADER

LARAINÉ ANDERSON
Son, Michael Edward Anderson

MAILINGS & DATABASE

JANE & STEVE GABRIEL
Son, Jonathan Steven Gabriel

TREASURER

FRANK SCHAGER
Daughter, Kira Ann Schager

NEWSLETTER EDITOR & EMAILINGS

STEWART & LETA LEVETT
Son, Aaron Paul Levett

SC MEMBER/FACILITATOR

BOB & YVETTE THOMPSON
Son, Ryan Barry Thompson

SC MEMBER/FACILITATOR

LEONIE CRAMER
Son, Julian Anthony King

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. Love Gift donations should be sent directly to our treasurer, Frank Schager 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?*

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 - www.tcfcolorado.org

Colorado Springs - www.tcfcolorado.org/coloradosprings



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.

A "New" New Year's Resolution

Instead of the old kind of New Year's resolutions we used to make and break, let's make some this year and really try to keep them.

- ◆ Try not to imagine the future; take one day at a time.
- ◆ Allow yourself time to cry, both alone and with your loved ones.
- ◆ Don't shut out other family members from your thoughts and feelings. Share these difficult times. You may all become closer for it.
- ◆ Try to be realistic about your expectations of yourself, your spouse, other family members and friends. If each of us is unique and different, how can there be perfect understanding?
- ◆ When a good day comes, relish it. Don't feel guilty and don't be discouraged because it doesn't last. They will come again and multiply.
- ◆ Take care of your health. Even though the mind might not care, a sick body will only compound your troubles. Drink lots of water, take stress-type vitamins, rest (even if you don't sleep), and get moderate exercise. Help your body to heal as well as your mind.
- ◆ Share your feelings with other compassionate friends and let them share with you. You will find that as you begin caring about the pain of others, you will start to come out of your shell - a very healthy sign.

I know that following these resolutions won't be easy, but what has been? It is worth a try. There is nothing to lose and perhaps much to gain.

Mary Ehmann, TCF, Valley Forge, PA



Online Support

The Compassionate Friends offers “virtual chapters” through an Online Support Community (live chats). This program was established to encourage connecting and sharing among parents, grandparents, and siblings (over the age of 18) grieving the death of a child. The rooms supply support, encouragement, and friendship. The friendly atmosphere encourages conversation among friends; friends who understand the emotions you're experiencing. There are general bereavement sessions as well as more specific sessions. Please check the schedule for dates and times of the sessions.

Note: Times posted on the schedule are based upon Eastern Time.

www.compassionatefriends.org

WE'RE NOW ON FACEBOOK

I have recently started a Facebook Group called The Compassionate Friends of the Pikes Peak Region.

Through this medium I hope to be able to share information, news, poems, activities, photos and stories to our parents, family & friends. You, additionally, may post your photos, comments and feelings, provide feedback to our chapter about the group, newsletter or meetings.

Once a member, you may add others to our group by clicking “Add Friend” under the member listing.

I will accept all requests as long as each member conducts themselves according to what The Compassionate Friends is about, “Supporting Family After a Child Dies.”

Use the following link to view our page;
<http://www.facebook.com/groups/233806390012780/233818376678248/>



TELEPHONE FRIENDS

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

CHAPTER LEADER LARAINE 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

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



Remembering Our Children On Their Birthdays

Child's Name	Date of Birth	Compassionate Friend
Robbie Rickman	Dec 1	Jean Rickman
Abraham Daniel Boukhari	Dec 2	David & Deborah Woodrow
Dwayne Stoppel	Dec 3	Pearl Stoppel
Derek Matthew Chandler	Dec 4	Billy & Cherie Chandler
Steven Ellis Erickson	Dec 5	Jaque Baldwin
Konrad Ferrer	Dec 7	Maria Hymes
John Walther	Dec 8	Joseph Walther
Zachary Nathaniel James McClary	Dec 9	Gloria & James Olsen
Christopher Louis Perret	Dec 10	Jeff & Jeri Perret
Matthew Stockwell	Dec 11	Mark & Sally Stockwell
Scotty Strader	Dec 11	Kathrine Strader
Daniel J. Whisler	Dec 11	JoAnn Mowdy
Bradly Garrard	Dec 12	Sally Garrard
Rachael Samulenuk	Dec 12	Megan Samulenuk
Kristen Amanda Teran	Dec 28	Donna Loughridge
Kristopher Lohrmeyer	Dec 13	Dan and Lori Lohrmeyer
Gavin Perez	Dec 14	Shannon Paolini
Paul Anthony Fischer	Dec 14	Stephanie Newcomb
Noelle Pearl	Dec 15	Michelle Fleming
Chris Reiter	Dec 18	Sharon Reiter
Nathaniel Hughes	Dec 19	Jim Hughes
Timothy Patrick Shea	Dec 22	Joe & Paula Shea
Katie Kennedy	Dec 23	Van & Kathy Kennedy
Nicolas Jay Broughton	Dec 23	Rose Broughton
Davey Christopher Hoffman	Dec 24	Elaine Hoffman
Trevor "T.J." Franks	Dec 24	Penny Franks
Sheri Cavin	Dec 27	Susan & Alan Cavin
Dustin Bates	Dec 27	Troy Peyton
Megan Lane	Dec 28	Sandra Gail Lane
Joshua Samuel Shelton	Dec 28	Cherie Berglund
Anthony Anselmo	Dec 28	Vicki & Frank Anselmo
Chelsey Ann Kear	Dec 29	Tami Kear
Lindsay Jean Morris	Dec 30	Linda Morris



Remembering Our Children On Their Anniversaries

Child's Name	Age	Date of Death	Compassionate Friend
Mitchell Lynn Faires	39 years	Dec 2	Sammie White
Eric Sutton Skinner	19 years	Dec 4	David & Gail Skinner
Josh Huston	23 years	Dec 5	Rodney & Michelle Moreno
Lisa Marie O'Briant	22 years	Dec 5	Gary & Mary O'Briant
Renee Lee Seiberlich	1 year	Dec 5	Joe & Leda Seiberlich
Marc Darby	12 years	Dec 12	Lori & Steve Darby
Joseph Gentry Richardson	1 year	Dec 13	Jack & Miriam Gentry
Isaac Sartain	12 years	Dec 14	Gregory Sartain
Ember Maria Arthur	30 years	Dec 17	Jeanette Newville
Samuel Hesselberg	17 years	Dec 18	Steve & Leanne Hesselberg
Ethan Ford Mosman	7 years	Dec 18	Christi & Mike Mosman
Audrina Elyse Escano	18 years	Dec 20	Chris & Christina Pearson
Anthony Anselmo	22 years	Dec 21	Vicki & Frank Anselmo
Tyler Glicken	19 years	Dec 22	Ginger Jones
Patrick Niedringhaus	18 years	Dec 22	Leah & Dave Niedringhaus
Robbie Rickman	21 years	Dec 25	Jean Rickman
Henry Rael	37 years	Dec 26	Isabelle & Ron Rael, Maria Rael
Chris Reiter	28 years	Dec 27	Sharon Reiter
Kristen Amanda Teran	23 years	Dec 28	Donna Loughridge
Brian Jensen	28 years	Dec 29	Deborah Jensen
Mary Hope Burton	7 years	Dec 30	Jim & Betty Burton
Julian King	21 years	Dec 31	Carl Reese & Leonie Cramer
Matthew Flint	26 years	Dec 31	Cathy Flint
Michael Zwirlein	25 years	Dec 31	Chris Zwirlein





THOUGHTFUL POEMS

"Twas the Night Before Christmas"

~ For Bereaved Parents ~

"Twas the month before Christmas and I dreaded the days,
That I knew I was facing - the holiday craze.
The stores were all filled with holiday lights,
In hopes of drawing customers by day and by night.

As others were making their holiday plans,
My heart was breaking - I couldn't understand.
I had lost my dear child a few years before,
And I knew what my holiday had in store.

When out of nowhere, there arose such a sound,
I sprang to my feet and was looking around,
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash

The sight that I saw took my breath away,
And my tears turned to smiles in the light of the day.
When what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a cluster of butterflies fluttering near.
With beauty and grace they performed a dance,
I knew in a moment this wasn't by chance.

The hope that they gave me was a sign from above,
That my child was still near me and that I was loved.
The message they brought was my holiday gift,
And I cried when I saw them in spite of myself.

As I knelt closer to get a better view,
One allowed me to pet it - as if it knew -
That I needed the touch of its fragile wings,
To help me get through the holiday scene.

In the days that followed I carried the thought,
Of the message the butterflies left in my heart -
That no matter what happens or what days lie ahead,
Our children are with us - they're not really dead.

Yes, the message of the butterflies still rings in my ears,
A message of hope - a message so dear.
And I imagined they sang as they flew out of sight,
"To all bereaved parents - We love you tonight!"

-By Faye McCord - TCF, Jackson, MS



HEALING WORDS

Where Bereaved Parents Don't Feel So Alone

by [LINTON WEEKS](#)

The following article excerpt was taken from a National Public Radio article written about Chuck & Kathy Collins.

The full article can be read at the following link: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=125342204>

The Compassionate Friends is often described as the type of organization that nobody really wants to belong to. But more than 1,200 people are expected to attend the group's annual convention over the July 4 weekend. Though the name sounds innocuous, The Compassionate Friends is a lifeline for grieving parents and other relatives. It's a network of support groups for those whose children have died.

Losing a child is not like other losses of loved ones. Folded into the death of a child is the death of the future — your child's future, that you have dreamed of and nurtured, and your own future, including the pride of parenthood, the possibilities of grandparenthood and the excruciating knowledge that all your child's potential has been destroyed.

Eventually, as life moves on, the pain can actually deepen for the bereaved parents. Friends and family expect them to be moving on, to be getting better, to be healing. But for many people, losing a child just doesn't work like that. The spirit of the child is still vital in the broken hearts of the parents. And the parents struggle constantly to stay connected to the child and to keep the child's memory alive in their strange, new, childless world.

At a Compassionate Friends meeting, parents are not only allowed to brag and tell stories about their dead children as if they were still alive — they are encouraged to do so.

The organization "won't take away your pain. And it won't bring your child back," says Chuck Collins, a national board member of Compassionate Friends. "You know there is nothing that can do those two things. All it can really do is to help you learn ... how to live life, having suffered this terrible tragedy. And find a way to still have purpose in your life."

Chuck and his wife, Kathy, lost their oldest child, Tiffanie, in 1996, when she was a student at Clemson University. Shortly after Tiffanie's death, Chuck and Kathy became active in their local Northern Virginia chapter of Compassionate Friends. They became chapter leaders, then regional coordinators. This summer they will be running the national convention in Arlington, Va.

Chuck Collins is friendly-eyed and bearded, and his voice is surprisingly soft for a man who was a Washington, D.C., cop for 25 years. After retiring from the police force, he became an attorney. He took off a year or so to write a book about losing Tiffanie, *Holding Onto Love: Searching for Hope When a Child Dies*. He published it himself. All proceeds go to The Compassionate Friends.

Chuck says he first heard about Compassionate Friends when Tiffanie died but didn't want to take part. "I knew Kathy really needed to go," Chuck recalls during an interview at the couple's home in Fairfax, Va. "But I had been a cop for 25 years and we weren't big on sharing our feelings and emotions. We were kind of taught to suck it up. You know, if we were in pain, or we had any kind of emotion, that we try not to show it. So for me it was difficult to consider going to what I thought was a 'support group.' "

About three weeks after Tiffanie's funeral, Chuck and Kathy decided to attend a Compassionate Friends gathering. "It was really tough," Chuck says. "We went to that first meeting and I even put the car in reverse and was going to back out of the parking lot. Some chapter leader that was there got me and tapped on the window and said, 'Are you here for the meeting?' So I was stuck. I had to go in."

He points to Kathy. "I was looking for something that could help her. But in the process it turned out to be something that could help me."

"It's too devastating to ever expect you to ever get over the loss of a child who you cherish and love," Chuck says. "Regardless of whether they are 3 days old. Or 48 years old. They are still your child and it goes against the natural order of life that they should die before their parents. This group helps you immensely."

The Compassionate Friends
Pikes Peak Chapter
PO Box 51345
Colorado Springs, CO 80949-1345



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The Compassionate Friends**