

February, 2013



**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS**

PIKES PEAK CHAPTER
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



Upcoming Events

February 21st - General Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church

March 21st- General Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church

Pikes Peak Chapter Steering Committee

Chapter Leader

Laraine Asaro-Boyd - Acting
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

LEONIE CRAMER
Son, Julian Anthony King

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 February 21, 2013.

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.

TELEPHONE FRIENDS

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

CHAPTER LEADER - ACTING

LARAIN ASARO-BOYD
Mom of Michael E. Anderson

★ 351-7653

TODDLER / YOUNG CHILD LOSS

BOB & YVETTE THOMPSON

★ 573-2743

SUICIDE

LARITA ARCHIBALD

596-2575

DRUG / ALCOHOL LOSS

STEWART & LETA LEVETT

★ 531-5488

LEUKEMIA

JANE & STEVE GABRIEL

★ 282-1924

TEEN / YOUNG ADULT LOSS

BARB REYNOLDS

599-0772

SKATEBOARD / AUTO ACCIDENT

RAYE WILSON

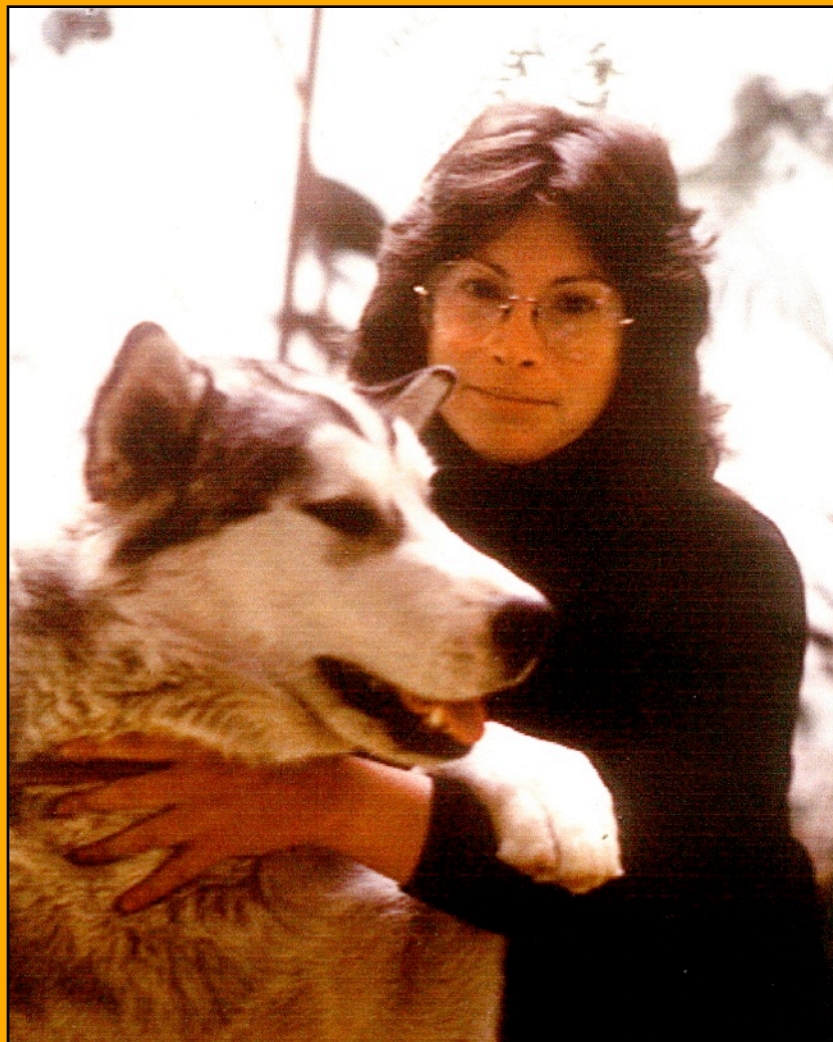
(303) 814-9478

★ Please feel free to contact any Steering Committee member if you are unable to reach our Chapter Leader.



Karen - Jean Slade

Birthday - February 2, 1950



Died - February 7, 1980



Remembering Our Children On Their Birthdays

Child's Name	Date of Birth	Compassionate Friend
James R. Hurst	Feb 1	Kim Troeger
Ian Matthew Anderson	Feb 2	Joann & David Butler
Karen-Jean Slade	Feb 2	Sheila Slade
Kent Curtis Junglen	Feb 3	James Junglen
Cynthia Claypool Martin	Feb 4	Steve & Ann Claypool
Stephen Merle Schmoker	Feb 5	Shirley & Ralph Greer
Michael William Sarmento	Feb 7	Donna (Sarmento) Pugh
Kimberley Dawn Leir	Feb 8	Adaline and Herb Leir
Tyler Glicken	Feb 8	Ginger Jones
Samuel Hesselberg	Feb 9	Steve & Leanne Hesselberg
Ryan Rickman	Feb 11	Jean Rickman
Jay Aguanno	Feb 12	Jean Aguanno
Claire Palmer	Feb 12	Jo & Lawrence Palmer
Kevin Edward Farley	Feb 15	Elizabeth Farley
Gary Carlson	Feb 15	Phil & Rose Carlson
Ember Maria Arthur	Feb 16	Jeanette Newville
Aaron Steffens	Feb 16	Lynn Nickel
Alyssa Eck	Feb 17	Patricia Eck
Zachary Dean Glenn	Feb 18	Janice Bren, Kristin & Larry Glenn
Chance Tyler Nichols	Feb 19	Charlie Nichols
Kendall Ford Young	Feb 20	Ford & Ann Young
Nikolas Chunn	Feb 21	Monica Chunn
Michelle Sandra Seal	Feb 23	Walter & Diana Seal
Jade Skye Baxter	Feb 24	Steven Baxter
Mari Lilline Ferrara	Feb 25	Carol & Andrew Ferrara
Darrell Lewis Mitchell	Feb 27	George & Freda Mitchell
Michael Ramirez	Feb 27	Jennie Ramirez
Fred Chavez	Feb 27	Annette Atchison
Jason Lamb	Feb 28	Jan Lyons-Lamb



Sheila Slade in Loving Memory of
Karen - Jean Slade
February 2, 1950 ~ February 7, 1980



A Love Gift Donation from
Police Chaplain
Gene Steinkirchner
"A Blessed New Year to All"



Remembering Our Children On Their Anniversaries

Child's Name	Age	Date of Death	Compassionate Friend
Paul A. Behr	2 months	Feb 1	Cynthia & Steve Behr
James Craig Stiegmeyer	25 years	Feb 2	Betty Stiegmeyer
Craig Matthews	30 years	Feb 4	Cathy Genato
Scott Michael Gerwatowski	21 years	Feb 4	Linda Gerwatowski, Helen & Walter Rakocy
James R. Hurst	4 days	Feb 5	Kim Troeger
David Allen McGough	25 years	Feb 7	Lillian McGough
Tristan Millman Troeger	25 years	Feb 7	Lisa & Joel Millman
Karen-Jean Slade	30 years	Feb 7	Sheila Slade
Jade Skye Baxter	1 years	Feb 9	Steven Baxter
Patrick Casey Hildebrand	21 year	Feb 9	Dr. Jan & Judi Hildebrand
Darrell Lewis Mitchell	20 years	Feb 9	George & Freda Mitchell
Yancy Hufford	26 years	Feb 11	Patty & Larry Hufford
Steven Miller	17 years	Feb 11	Mike Miller
Amy Feight	30 years	Feb 12	Patty & Bill Feight
Noelle Pearl	17 years	Feb 13	Michelle Fleming
Peter Joseph Noel	20 years	Feb 16	Janet Noel Starritt
Eric Cowles	3 months	Feb 17	Doug & Leah Cowles
Alyssa Eck	1 day	Feb 17	Patricia Eck
Stella Elliott	6 months	Feb 17	Donna Elliott
Kent Curtis Junglen	31 years	Feb 18	James Junglen
Graham Stingley	23 years	Feb 18	Mary Winter-Stingley
Logan Lawrence	23 years	Feb 22	Janet & Edward Lawrence
Kirsten Evelyn Cornell	9 years	Feb 23	Will & Marion Cornell
Marisa Nicole Pilant	2 years	Feb 23	Richard & Elizabeth Jamison Stephen & Julie Pilant
Joshua Samuel Shelton	1 month	Feb 24	Cherie Berglund
Reanna Maria Reedy	21 years	Feb 25	Carol Reedy
Jeremy Laurence	25 years	Feb 26	Ted & Sherrill Laurence
Sean Thompson	24 years	Feb 26	Rick Korcsog & Frankie Thompson
Richard Joseph Armstrong	4 years	Feb 27	Chuck & Helen Armstrong

Are You Interested?

Would you like to become more involved in the Pikes Peak Chapter of The Compassionate Friends?
We'd love to have you contact us and sit in on a Steering Committee meeting to see what we do.

Many of our regular meeting members are just the type of people we're looking for to help us move our chapter forward with new and exciting ideas. Are you interested?



OPENING GRIEF AS A GIFT - By Alice Wisler

TCF Manhattan, NY

Some view grief as a dirty word.

It's associated with pain, hardship, suffering, endless days of crying and never seeing the sun. It's hard - tough on the body, spirit and mind, No one wants to have to go through grief. All hope to avoid it.

The Oxford dictionary defines "grief" as the media does - intense mourning. I know that's true because when Daniel first died, the agonizing pain was intense. It colored every aspect of every breath I took. To walk into a store was painful. Seeing my surviving children and knowing that from now on Daniel would not be with us on earth again crushed every nerve.

But the dictionary, like the media, fails to take the meaning of this word a step further. Grief is defined as though it is a process with an ending. This leads our society to believe that one day, you lose your grief, as you have lost your child. As the years have gone on, I am under the impression that my grief, and that of fellow bereaved parents, will hold no ending. As long as we live on this earth without our children, we will miss them, love them, mourn for what might have been and therefore, grieve.

Granted, grief may not be as intense. For this, we are grateful. If the rest of our lives would entail the fierceness of fresh grief, how could we ever breath normally again or function as civilized members of society? No one can live on a wild out-of-control roller coaster of emotions for all of life.

"I'm functioning on my guts right now. Whatever I feel like doing, I do it. I'm in a no-nonsense frame of mind, and I like it. It's empowering, and I can feel it's a direct result of loss and grief." Nan Tanner, editor of Inspired to Journal and who has suffered the loss of her father, put it quite well. I know that feeling of boldness that new grief can give you. Nan says she feels like steel. It's amazing to me that while we are crushed by grief, we are also empowered by how it can make us determined to stand up more for what we believe in, not take any slack from anyone and be in that no-nonsense frame of mind.

Is this a gift? Could it be that grief, with its endless component, is really a gift to be opened and dealt with and used for our benefit?

People establish funds, scholarships, start newsletters, write books and plant trees - all in honor of some loved one who has died. Mourners put their grief to work in order to honor and carry on the love they hold for the one they can no longer embrace. Grief is not always in the obvious and expected form of tears. Some might think that a person no longer with tears is no longer in grief. Many tears do not reach the eyes but are forever present in the heart.

So what is grief? It is a mixture, a hodge-podge, a collection of emotions that range from one end of the scale of human feelings to the other end. Grief causes us to act and react.

As I listen to the crickets and bullfrogs near Daniel's memorial tree, I pen some of my thoughts on what grief has been for me:

Grief is laughing with your children and wishing for the absent one to make the circle complete.

Grief is crying in your car at stoplights. Some days grief makes you brutally honest; other days, grief muzzles you.

Grief reconstructs your heart.

Grief is sadness, hope, smiles and tears - rolled tightly like a snowball.

Grief makes you search past the stars and the moon for Heaven.

Grief strips you of everything you were pretending to be.

Grief gives you new priorities.

Grief opens hidden treasures from deep within your soul.

Grief allows you to empathize more deeply with others who ache.

Grief makes you unapologetically bold.

Grief is a daily companion, best dealt with by admitting you do walk with it, even after all these years.

Grief is the price of love; grief is a gift.

Allow yourself time to listen to the sounds of the night and write what grief is to you.



A Letter From the Editor

Why Do I Do It?

I think the answer is simple, really. I do it for me. Plain and simple. My work with the local chapter of The Compassionate Friends has helped me connect to myself and to come to terms with my own grief. In the end I share what I have learned with you so I guess what you are reading is my “public” journal of thoughts and feelings, healing words, beautiful meaningful poems, pictures, occasionally a funny thought or two all meant to help heal my soul.

Since Aaron died in 2005 I keep looking for the answers I know I will never find. I am not a writer. My spelling is ok but my grammar is less than perfect. I write as I think and have often been accused of writing in “Stew Speak.” Becoming the editor of the newsletter gave me the excuse to search all over the world through that www.com thing for stories, articles, pictures and of course answers, though my articles, poems, and writings are, peppered with, way too many commas.

I am amazed at how many TCF chapters there are, how many online newsletters are published and how many stories from grieving parents are told. Yet they are so similar in their message regardless of where the writer resides (check out this TCF website from Australia).

<http://www.thecompassionatefriends.org.au/Documents/Archive/March2012PublicFocus.pdf>

By searching for articles and poems, remembrances and memorials I keep the memory of Aaron alive and, I hope, become a more loving and yes, compassionate person then I was prior to his passing. I also believe that by sharing I also am doing work that was perhaps destined for me and certainly a way in which I can give back to the organization which has given me so much.

Our chapter is in need of some new volunteers for its Steering Committee and even a new Chapter Leader which is why I have to put this question out to you; Have you been reading from the side lines? Have we helped you? Do you believe in our cause? Would you like the opportunity to give back?

The opportunity is now and it only requires a few hours a month. The pay-back is the satisfaction of knowing you’ve helped countless of bereaved parents like yourself step through another day of the grief process to see a brighter day.

Should you’d like more information about helping out our local chapter you can contact our current Chapter Leader Laraine at 719-351-7653 or give me a call at 719-531-5488. We’d love to hear from you and would love to have you consider becoming a member of our committee.

We Need Not Walk Alone...
Stew Levett - Editor



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

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

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 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?*

⇒ **Send Love Gifts to Frank Schager, 2235 McArthur Ave., Colorado Springs, CO 80909** ⇒
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: Frank Schager – 2235 McArthur Ave – Colorado Springs, CO 80909

Contributor Name & Address: _____

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

Photo Enclosed: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Photo To Be Returned: ☐ Yes ☐ No



THOUGHTFUL POEMS

A Special Valentine

A touch of your hand
a smile on your face
another time, another place.
You were my girl
I was your mom
together we met
the world head on.
Death cannot dim
the memories so fine
your place is there
this world is mine.

But you will always be
MY SPECIAL VALENTINE

Arlene Burroughs, TCF Pikes Peak, CO

Valentine Message

I send this message to my child
Who no longer walks tis plane,
A message filled with love
Yet also filled with pain.

My heart continues to skip a beat
When I ponder your early death,
As I think of times we'll never share
I must stop to catch my breath.

Valentine's Day is for those who love
And for those who receive love, too.
For a parent the perfect love in life
Is the love I've given you.

I'm thinking of you this day, my child,
With a sadness that is unspoken
As I mark another Valentine's Day
With a heart that is forever broken.

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



A VALENTINE TO ALL MY COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

We who have had our hearts so badly broken
know each other.
We have lost a child, grandchild, a sister or brother.
It matters not if we've seen each other's faces.
We share mending hearts full of aching places.
At first our hearts feel shredded and torn,
We might even wish that we'd never been born.
We don't understand how our lives went so wrong,
Everyone tells us they're glad that we are strong.
All we know is that we hurt to the core,
Because a child dearly loved is with us no more.
With time, patience and understanding we begin to heal,
We begin to accept what is, and life starts to seem real.
Each time we tell our tale, each hug we receive,
Puts a band-aid on the hurting spots, giving us reason to believe,
That we will feel joy again, that life does go on,
Though we're never quite the same, since our child is gone.
Compassionate Friends teach us ways we can cope,
Until we can live again and face life with hope.
So to TCF friends, whether we have met or not,
Thank you for all the band-aids on that bruised, healing spot.

Kathy Hahn

TCF, Lower Bucks, PA

A Valentine for Tess

I'm sending you a Valentine,
all red with lace and bows,
I'm sending it to you, my kiss its stamp,
with the wind and sun as its deliveryman.
My thoughts are laced with love,
with silken memories of all the happiness
We wove in quiet moments
and in boisterous laughter.
How wonderful it felt to be warm,
wrapped in your ferocious hugs.

I'm sending Valentines to others, too –
they're sent with ordinary stamps,
Delivered by quite ordinary postmen.

This special one's for you,
and, yes, my own dear girl,
There is a stain of tears upon this Valentine.
I miss you still...
I think I always will.

*By Shirley Ottman
TCF, Coeur d'Alene, ID*



HEALING WORDS

Valentines Day

With Valentines Day quickly approaching it is not hard to notice the little heart shaped candies and packs of cards on display in the stores. For some it takes us back to our children and how they signed each card for every kid in their class. Much like we did when we were young and the celebration was thrust upon us at a young age. All we knew is that is was for sweethearts and the candy sure tasted good. So even though Valentines Day is for lovers and its not a big holiday like Christmas, it can still creep up on us and take us back to a happier time, when our children made those cards in school and brought them home to us with such pride.

Since Valentines Day is supposed to be about love, it is appropriate for us to think of it in a way that exemplifies our love for our child. After all, aside from heaven, where will you find unconditional love but in the heart of a parent?

We loved- we lost, but it will be that love that will carry us till we see our children again, and hold them in our arms and kiss their cheek, and tell them how much we love them. Some Valentines Day that will be!

Taken from the the Brevard, North Carolina newsletter of The Compassionate Friends.

To my little sweetheart:

I will never forget the very first Valentine I gave to you when you were just 6 days old. I thought I held the world in my arms now that I had you and your brother.

It is a shame that sometimes our greatest treasures are what we are only allowed to have for such a short time. I realize God only loans us our children and I am grateful that I was able to be your mother. Carrying you next to my heart for 9 months and then watching you grow for almost 5 years have made enough memories to last a lifetime. Although, you surely know had I been given a choice I would never have let you go. Your birthday is coming on February 8th and once again I will wish we were having a party, instead of my usual trip to the cemetery. But I will have the faith to know that you will be having your party in heaven with the angels and someday your Mommy will be there with you, God willing.

I love you very much and you will never be forgotten as long as your brother and I are alive to remember you.

Happy Birthday and Happy Valentines, my sweetheart.

Your Mommy forever

Charlene Kvech

TCF, Anne Arundel Co., Md.

MY FIRST DAY

The first time I walked into a TCF meeting I asked myself "what are you doing here"? You should just go to a bar where you know you'll feel better after a few drinks." A few drinks. Ha! It was three years and many, many drinks later that I tried again. What a mess I was. Nothing could change how I felt or could help, so I thought. But in time I learned that it was my TCF family that ultimately gave me the strength I needed. They let me know I was not alone.

It's been 18 years and I have somehow survived this nightmare. I never thought I would or could get this far. The friends I've made at TCF are now my family. Now it's my turn to sit at the welcoming table and greet those newly bereaved parents coming to our meeting for the first time. I hope when they meet me they will think, "Wow! he's here 18 years and still living. There must be hope." Thanks to my TCF family.

John Mitchell, TCF Manhattan
in loving memory of his sons
Kareem and Kevin

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February, 2013

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



**Pikes Peak Chapter
The Compassionate Friends**