

January, 2013



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

PIKES PEAK CHAPTER
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



Upcoming Events

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

February 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 January 17th, 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 351-7653
Mom of Michael E. Anderson

TODDLER / YOUNG CHILD LOSS

BOB & YVETTE THOMPSON ★ 573-2743

TEEN / YOUNG ADULT LOSS

BARB REYNOLDS 599-0772

SKATEBOARD / AUTO ACCIDENT

RAYE WILSON (303) 814-9478

DRUG / ALCOHOL LOSS

STEWART & LETA LEVETT ★ 531-5488

LEUKEMIA

JANE & STEVE GABRIEL ★ 282-1924

SUICIDE

LARITA ARCHIBALD 596-2575

INFANT LOSS

COLLEEN & ART MANNON 535-9868

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



THE NEW YEAR: A TIME OF HOPE

Another New Year has slipped into our lives, radically changing some things and leaving other things to evolve naturally. For bereaved parents a new year marks another year on the calendar without their precious children. It is a new year, but not much has changed since the old year. Why is that?

We act as the catalysts of change for ourselves. We choose to help our selves; we choose to stay in a specific place in our grief. We choose to reach out for hope or we choose to withdraw into the familiar and postpone facing life and hope another day. There are no set rules or specific timetables in bereavement. We are each unique in our grief.

Eventually we all find hope. We find it in different ways and in different times. There will be no one moment of epiphany for bereaved parents. Instead, there are a series of minutes, hours, weeks, months and often years until we realize that we can truly say we feel the power of hope coming alive from deep within us. This moment will come for each of us. It will come in its own time and its own way.

Even those of us who have found hope and who shine its light on the paths of newly bereaved parents, still regress and withdraw into the dark sadness of our loss. And that is as it should be. For we have lost the most precious gift of our lives...our children's presence with us and their future in this life. Our children live in our hearts and our memories and our dreams. They do not share this plane with us. It is normal and it is good to think of our children often and to shed some tears for all that has been lost. These aren't setbacks as much as sweet memories that bring cathartic tears.

The element we find in these memories is a closeness to our child and our child's life. This, too, is healthy. An often-expressed fear is that our children will be forgotten. Worry not, gentle parent, your child will be remembered for all of your days and for many days thereafter. You will never forget your child. Others who knew your child will never forget. The proof of this is in our memories...sweet memories that take us back to another time when our child was with us.

So this New Year's, whether you are a few months, a few years or many years in your grief, think about hope. You have not forsaken your child when you reach for hope. Your hope brings your child back in a positive way that will warm your heart. Reach for that hope. As you move forward in your grief in the New Year, reach for hope. Your child will still be with you. And one day you will find that your child's presence is sweeter when hope is within you.

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

WHAT DO I DO WITH MY CHILD'S THINGS?

This is a problem that faces all bereaved parents, We discuss it from time to time at our meetings.

Some of us keep the child's room just as it was before the death. We don't want anything touched or removed.

Some find solace in giving things away to close friends or relatives. Knowing someone we love is wearing our child's clothes, or playing with his or her toys, brings us comfort.

Some of us feel we can deal with only a few items at a time; clothes one month; books another; perhaps toys a few months later.

Some of us find that as time goes on we would have gotten rid of the things anyway, it becomes easier. For instance, after a while we realize that if the child were still alive, he or she would have out grown the clothes. Then it's easier to give them away.

Or your child would have graduated from college this year, and therefore would no longer use the study desk or clock radio. We can give these things away in the normal time sequence.

The important thing is not to let others rush us into doing something before we are ready, and not to let ourselves feel guilty about the amount of time it takes us to make decisions.

When the time is right, and the decision is right for us, we'll know what to do.

TCF, Honolulu; Hawaii,



Remembering Our Children On Their Birthdays

Child's Name	Date of Birth	Compassionate Friend
Adam Roy Hodges	Jan 3	JoAnn Ewing
Jamie Jackman	Jan 5	Sherry Jackman & Knelson Spooner
Ramon E.G. Lucero	Jan 6	Diana & Kimber Michael
Nicole Megan Yagi	Jan 6	Jackie & Dennis Yagi
John Daniel Bernard Ringo	Jan 8	Angela Randle, Paul Ringo
Ronald Eugene Peterson	Jan 9	Ron Peterson
Terry A. Shank	Jan 11	Carol Vierling
Tyrone Binnebose	Jan 11	Natasha Binnebose
Frankie Padilla	Jan 13	Frances Lucero
Seth Fieser	Jan 17	Megan Fieser
Brody Richard Cisneros	Jan 21	Julie & Will Cisneros
Adriano Bermudez	Jan 22	C.J. LaPointe
Mallory Paulene Hendrickson	Jan 22	Celine & Gary Hendrickson
Jody Elizabeth Houtz	Jan 23	Jane and Chris Houtz
Corey Reynolds	Jan 23	Barb Reynolds
Eric Evans	Jan 23	Linda & Dick Evans
Kade Riefenberg	Jan 24	Andy Gibson
Sarah Sunshine Wedekind	Jan 25	Lorry Pearson
Stephen Lucas Tyler	Jan 25	Catherine Tyler
Aaron Lee Gallob	Jan 27	Lou & Erma Gallob
Kevin Michael Burns	Jan 27	Stan & Willie Burns
Sean O'Connor	Jan 28	Dennis & Tracy O'Connor
Joshua Cesar Menendez	Jan 28	Dianna Castellanos, Julio Menendez

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?

Even the seasons form a great circle in their
changing, and always come back again to where they
were. The life of a person is a circle from
childhood to childhood, and so it is in everything
where power moves.
~ Black Elk ~



Remembering Our Children On Their Anniversaries

Child's Name	Age	Date of Death	Compassionate Friend
Susan Gordon	17 years	Jan 4	Mr & Mrs Arthur Gordon
Savannah L. Burke	1 month	Jan 12	Herman & April Burke
Judy Gambill	17 years	Jan 12	Andrea Gambill
Michelle Howie	32 years	Jan 12	Annette Howie
Fred Chavez	32 years	Jan 14	Annette Atchison
Jim Eley	43 years	Jan 19	Judy Eley
Sara M. Losasso	14 years	Jan 19	Cindy Losasso
Joshua W. Lewis Gohlke	20 years	Jan 19	Karen Swank
Jacob Sanchez	3 months	Jan 22	Denise Langhorst, Janine McDonough
Mark Van Matre	46 years	Jan 24	Patricia Van Matre
Megan Lane	18 years	Jan 27	Sandra Gail Lane
Gregory Randall Davis	18 years	Jan 29	Cora Davis
Amy Mae Lugenbeel	2 years	Jan 31	Terry & Barb Lugenbeel
Juan Marine	29 years	Jan 31	Pamela Marine



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.

1. Try not to imagine the future; take one day at a time.
2. Allow yourself time to cry, both alone and with your loved ones.
3. Don't shut out other family members from your thoughts and feelings. Share these difficult times. You may all become closer for it.
4. 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?
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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



NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS FOR BEREAVED PARENTS

I resolve:

- That I will grieve as much and for as long as I feel like grieving, and that I will not let others put a time table on my grief.
- That I will grieve in whatever way I feel like grieving, and I will ignore those who try to tell me what I should or should not be feeling and how I should or should not be behaving.
- That I will cry whenever and wherever I feel like crying, and that I will not hold back my tears just because someone else feels I should be "brave" or "getting better" or "healing by now."
- That I will talk about my child as often as I want to, and that I will not let others turn me off just because they can't deal with their own feelings.
- That I will not expect family and friends to know how I feel, understanding that one who has not lost a child cannot possibly know how I feel.
- That I will not blame myself for my child's death, and I will constantly remind myself that I did the best job of parenting I could possibly have done. But when feelings of guilt are overwhelming, I will remind myself that this is a normal part of the grief process and it will pass.
- That I will not be afraid or ashamed to seek professional help if I feel it is necessary.
- That I will commune with my child at least once a day in whatever way feels comfortable and natural to me, and that I won't feel compelled to explain this communion to others or to justify or even discuss it with them.

- I will keep the truth in my heart--the truth that my child is always with me in spirit.
- That I will try to eat, sleep, and exercise every day in order to give my body the strength it will need to help me cope with my grief.
- To know that I am not losing my mind and I will remind myself that loss of memory, feelings of disorientation, lack of energy, and a sense of vulnerability are all a normal part of the grief process.
- To know that I will heal, even though it will take a long time.
- To let myself heal and not feel guilty about not feeling better sooner.
- To remind myself that the grief process is circuitous--that is, I will not make steady upward progress. And when I find myself slipping back into the old moods of despair and depression, I will tell my-self that "slipping backward" is also a normal part of the mourning process, and that these moods, too, will pass.
- To try to be happy about something for some part of every day, knowing that at first, I may have to force myself to think cheerful thoughts so eventually they can become a habit.
- That I will reach out at times and try to help someone else, knowing that helping others will help me to get over my depression.
- That even though my child is dead, I will opt for life, knowing that is what my child would want me to do.

~From the Brooksville/Spring Hill FL
TCF Newsletter

Every snow flake is unique and has its own individual design. There are beautiful patterns in each flake and even the tiniest of flakes have their own markings. These patterns change again and again—even after the flake touches the ground. Each snowflake is a cause for wonder; each flake is one of a kind. No two are exactly alike. Like the snow-flake, our beautiful children were each unique and special; some we only dreamed about and some danced upon the earth. They filled our lives with wonder and transformed our world. We held them too briefly, but we will hold them in our hearts forever. We shall remember them always. At this time of remembering, it may help to reflect upon how our lives have been enriched by the love we have given and the love we have received from our children. Our children leave treasures behind that time will never take away.

Denise Falzone
TCF, Lakes Area MI



Is It Really About Gun Control?

All of my friends have discussed it ad nauseum and my family members don't seem to agree on a solution, but we all collectively agree that the senseless killings must stop.

Is it simply a matter of gun control or lack of it, or does it lie in our inability to recognize a mental health problem early enough before our loving sons and daughters spin out of control?

Can arming our teachers or allowing the "good" citizens of our community to conceal and carry prevent such tragedies as Sandy Hook Elementary? Will outlawing "assault" rifles keep these weapons out of the hands of some twisted individual bent on making the front page? Doubtful.

It seems however, that regardless of the number of people killed we can't figure out a way to curtail the shootings; all we do is finger point. "We need better gun control laws." "Cars kill people too, are you gonna outlaw cars?" "Look at the murder rate in other countries." "The only way to stop a bad guy with a gun is with a good guy with a gun." In the meantime we bury 20 children the week before Christmas.

Look at all the people who have needlessly been shot, and they're all someone's child and they will all grieve. I can assure you nothing will be done this time around just as nothing has been done in the past.

I want to believe that after losing my son I'm a tiny bit smarter, more sensitive and enlightened than I was prior to his passing. I hurt for the loss of someone's loved one and absolutely ache over the tragedies in Aurora and Sandy Hook. I seem to cry much more frequently now days.

I don't have the answer and I'm not advocating a ban on guns. Certainly there are intelligent people on both sides that can come up with a solution. Not a bandaid but a solution. While we're at it, good luck with that Fiscal Cliff.

Stew Levett - Editor
TCF - Pikes Peak 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

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

BECAUSE

Because you can't feel me,
Doesn't mean I'm not there.

Because you can't see me,
doesn't mean I'm not near.

Because you can't hear me,
doesn't mean I don't speak.

Because you can't see me,
doesn't mean I'm out of reach.

Because I am dead,
doesn't mean I'm gone.

Beth Oldani -
TCF, Arlington Heights, IL

First Encounter

~ by Sascha

When grief first enters our life,
it tends to invade us –
completely and relentlessly.
We are without comfort, we do not feel
pleasure,
we find no joy.

We ache in mind and body.
We feel weak and numb.
in the deepest core of our being,
we are ready to accept
that we will never know happiness
again.

What's more, we feel that this state
is entirely appropriate, natural and
irreversible.

Nothing can convince us that,
given time,
we can learn to live again.

But we will.

© The Compassionate Friends

You Will

You will live. Although you feel like you are dying. You will
laugh once again. Although you feel that emotion is lost forever.
You will think clearly again. Although you feel very confused
most of the time.

You will celebrate your child's life. Although now you are
enveloped in the whys and if onlys of your child's death. You will
somehow work your way through this rough work called grieving.

Although today you feel you are slipping backwards. You will find
love, understanding and caring with **The Compassionate Friends**.

Although today you are lonely, isolated and withdrawn.

Choose the **You Will**. I did, and it is helping with that large hole in
my heart.

~Carol Joyce, TCF, Fort Lauderdale, FL~

HOW DO YOU BEAR IT ALL?

How do you bear it all? The cry came from a mother whose
son had died only weeks before. We were in a circle looking
at her, looking around, looking away. Tears in our hearts, in
our eyes. How do we bear it? I don't know, but the circle
helps.

~Eva Lager, TCF, West Australia~

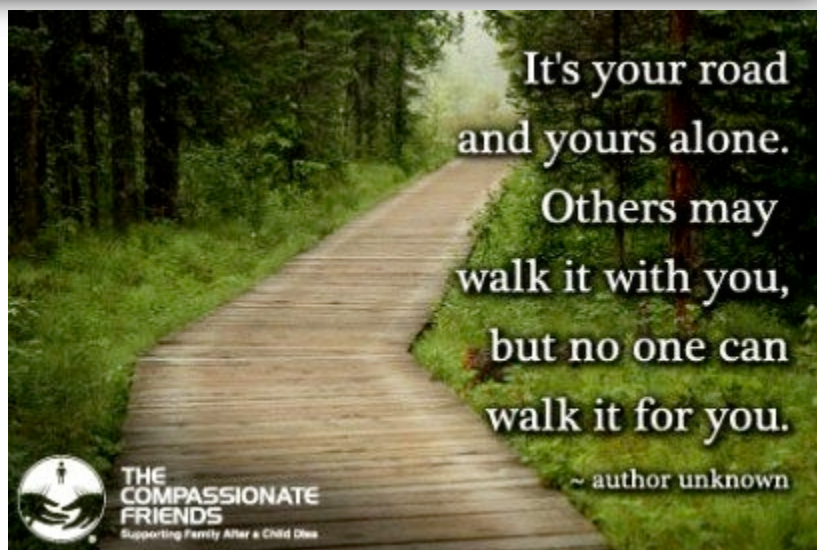
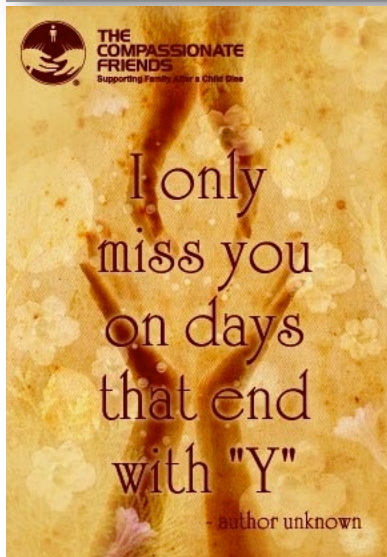
Gone Too Soon

Like a comet blazing across the evening sky--gone too soon.
Like a rainbow fading in the twinkling of an eye--gone too soon.
Shiny and sparkly and splendidly bright, here one day, gone one night.
Like the loss of sunlight on a cloudy afternoon--gone too soon.
Like a castle built upon a sandy beach--gone too soon.
Like a perfect flower that is just beyond your reach--gone too soon.
Born to amuse, to inspire, to delight, here one day, gone one night.
Like a sunset dying with the rising of the moon--gone too soon.
Gone too soon.

--Buz Kohan - Greenville, N.C. TCF



HEALING WORDS



*Happy
New Year!*

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January, 2013

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Pikes Peak Chapter
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**Pikes Peak Chapter
The Compassionate Friends**