



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS of the Pikes Peak Region

July, 2011 Newsletter

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Upcoming Events

July 21st - General Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church
August 18th - 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 July 21st, 2011.

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



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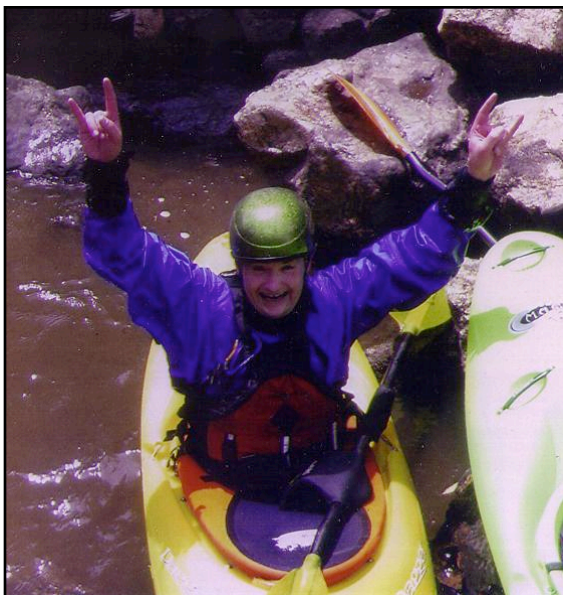
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Chaela Christianson in memory of

Damon Vincent Christianson

DOB: May 30th - Anniversary: July 3rd



Damon Christianson

May 30, 1977—July 3, 2010

Damon Christianson of Woodland Park went home to his Lord on July 3, 2010. Although ill for several years with chronic MRSA, he died from a congenital abnormality of his right coronary artery. Damon was born at Ft. Carson, Co. on May 30, 1977. He is survived by his mother, Michaela; grandparents Carl and Marjorie, and numerous aunts, uncles, and cousins.

He attended Ute Pass Elementary and Woodland Park Schools, and was graduated from WPHS in 1994 having been named to "Who's Who Among American High School Students." Damon loved to travel and learn, and attended various colleges including PPCC, UCCS, and the University of Otago in Dunedin, New Zealand. Recently, he was interested in pursuing a career in prostheses as a way of "giving back, and providing cool stuff that works."

Damon was an avid adventurer, and during his lifetime had a passion for many sports including kayaking, mountain bike riding, rock climbing, snowboarding, motocross, hockey, baseball, and Tae Kwon Do. He studied under ex-Olympic coach, Sang Lee, achieved the rank of black belt, qualified for, and participated in the National Junior Olympics when he was a youth.

Damon's choice of music was eclectic: blues, jazz, rock, country, heavy metal, Christian, reggae, and "sick 'ol hip hop." He loved playing guitar, bands, and concerts, and now is probably auditioning in heaven.

Damon has been a member of Calvary Worship Center in Colorado Springs since Christmas Day, 2005 when he felt he was "home." He was welcomed by the Men's Ministry, and Most Excellent Way fellowship where he was the recipient of unconditional love, acceptance, and support. Damon continuously strived to develop, increase, and strengthen his personal relationship with our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Damon's perseverance, tenacity, and courage, coupled with genuine humility and gratitude for his many blessings, were an inspiration to all with whom he came in contact.

Damon's family expresses its lifelong gratitude and appreciation to the myriad medical personnel, social agencies, churches, schools, businesses, fellowships, and friends who worked so tirelessly to save his life and limbs, and bring him to a place where once again, albeit a short time, he could participate in the activities he so enjoyed.



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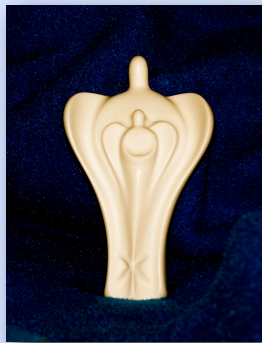
Online Support

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

Going Home Angel



This angel, sculpted by Artist Marco Grove, is now being offered for sale through Archangel Gifts. Inspired and dedicated to my son Aaron Paul Levett, this angel depicts the soul of your loved one returning to the arms of the Father. The angel is cast from crushed selenite, quartz and angelite crystals. The sculpture is 3 1/2 inches tall and is finely polished.

We will be donating 25% of the proceeds from the sale of these angels to The Compassionate Friends and one will be given away at this years Memorial Balloon Launch.

You may pre-order your own angel by going to our website at www.Archangelgifts.com. Angels will be delivered at the Memorial Balloon Launch or can be shipped to any location. If you would like further information please feel free to email me at stewart@archangelgifts.com

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

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



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Remembering Our Children On Their Birthdays

Child's Name	Date of Birth	Compassionate Friend
Ryan Thompson	Jul 1	Yvette & Bob Thompson
Michael Jeffrey Waller	Jul 4	Jeanie Young
Karen Sue Crawford	Jul 4	Joy Andrews
Sean Thompson	Jul 5	Rick Korcsog & Frankie Thompson
Lisa Elaine Berns	Jul 6	Robert (R.J.) & Lynn Berns
Kyle Joe Manning	Jul 7	Carol & Don Manning
Blake Smith	Jul 8	Brian Smith
Anthony James "Tony" Pisor	Jul 10	Cynthia Pisor-Zapel
Cristoval Ornelas	Jul 13	Annette & Chris Ornela
Travis Holappa	Jul 14	Kim & Terry Packa
Sarah Katherine Stouber	Jul 18	JoAnn Labenberg
Katie Steckiel	Jul 19	Wendy Steckiel
Cris Cruz	Jul 19	Henrietta Madrid
Ryan Sayers	Jul 20	Tom & Kate Sayers
Tiffany Maxwell	Jul 20	Diane Maxwell
Justin William Winner	Jul 21	Dale & Rosanne Winner
Brian Patrick Adair	Jul 21	Duane & Mary Adair
Arthur Lipphardt Jr	Jul 23	Art & Chris Lipphardt
Amanda Stocchero	Jul 24	Sandy Stocchero
Craig Matthews	Jul 24	Cathy Genato
Keltryn Lenae Brinkman	Jul 25	Jim & Judy Brinkman
Michael Williams Greist	Jul 28	Allan & Judy Greist
Toby Ferrer	Jul 28	Maria Hymes
Scott Michael Gerwatowski	Jul 28	Helen & Walter Rakocy, Linda Gerwatowski
Michelle Howie	Jul 31	Annette Howie



Miriam Gentry in memory of

Joseph Gentry Richardson

DOB: April 6th - Anniversary: December 13th

Love to "Our Special Angel"



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Remembering Our Children On Their Anniversaries

Child's Name	Age	Date of Death	Compassionate Friend
Andrew Paul Whiteman	20 years	Jul 2	Lyle Whiteman
Heidi Susanne Wolfe	20 years	Jul 3	David & Karen Wolfe
Damon Vincent Christianson	33 years	Jul 3	Chaela Christianson
Adam Roy Hodges	5 years	Jul 4	JoAnn Ewing
Nicole Megan Yagi	9 years	Jul 5	Jackie & Dennis Yagi
Jay Aguanno	19 years	Jul 7	Jean Aguanno
Kaitlin Bartlett	17 years	Jul 8	Kim Bartlett
Shannon Diane McMahon	16 years	Jul 9	Robert & Jeanette McMahon
Chance Tyler Nichols	17 years	Jul 11	Charlie Nichols
Angela Gisela Martinez	34 years	Jul 11	Maria Hymes
Abigail Ruth Smelser	23 years	Jul 11	Robin Myers
Jack C. Jefferson	5 years	Jul 11	John & Dena Jefferson
Christopher Skaggs	15 years	Jul 13	Ernest & Tanya Skaggs
			Carl, Annette & Felicia Cordova
Cristoval Ornelas	1 day	Jul 13	Annette & Chris Ornelas
Zachary Dean Glenn	3 years	Jul 14	Kristin & Larry Glenn, Janice Bren
Philip Dix	24 years	Jul 14	Ann Dix
Kristopher Lohrmeyer	17 years	Jul 16	Dan and Lori Lohrmeyer
Blake Smith	1 year	Jul 17	Brian Smith
Jeanne Burroughs Widmar	33 years	Jul 18	Arlene & Charles Burroughs
Roy Polhemus		Jul 18	Kathleen Landry, Edward Pohlemus
Ryan Rickman	11 years	Jul 19	Jean Rickman
David Scott Mueller	19 years	Jul 19	Sandy Eversole
Amanda Stocchero	15 years	Jul 19	Sandy Stocchero
Michael Benjamin Decker	18 years	Jul 20	Mary & Jerry Decker
Veronika Olivia Baca	1 year	Jul 22	Sharon Baca
Travis Grimmer	29 years	Jul 23	Mary Lou Grimmer
Cathleen Bartlett Maxwell	6 years	Jul 24	Dick & Marty Maxwell
Sarah Katherine Stouber	6 days	Jul 24	JoAnn Labenberg
Travis Holappa	25 years	Jul 25	Kim & Terry Packa
Kari Ann Kirt	15 years	Jul 26	Lon and Andrea Kirt
Christie Fike	32 years	Jul 28	Shirley & Dan Emerson
Benjamin Stewart Easton	22 years	Jul 28	Susan Stewart
Derek Matthew Chandler	14 years	Jul 29	Billy & Cherie Chandler
Nathan Gentry	7 years	Jul 29	Susan Gentry
Jimmy Schmidt	13 years	Jul 30	Jim & Laurie Schmidt
Patricia Spain Boden	39 years	Jul 31	Margie Spain
Jonathan Steven Gabriel	5 years	Jul 31	Steve & Jane Gabriel



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Musings

Isn't it strange that things we once took for granted, have changed so much?

Things like the soft wings of a brilliant colored butterfly, or the radiant colors in the sky at dawn and sunset or perhaps a song we heard in passing or a movie, we once took for granted. But now, these very same things can bring on tears and leave us feeling a deep sense of longing. Why? Are these not the same as before? What changed? We did. The things we once took for granted are now viewed with much more than human eyes. We now experience these things through the eyes of a broken heart.

Sheila Simmons ~ TCF, Atlanta

HEALING VERSUS RECOVERY

By: Birdie Tracy, TCF Shoreline Chapter, CT

I have heard the term "recovery" and "healing" used interchangeably to refer to the goal of processing grief. I would like to propose the idea that recovery carries with it the assumption of an injury or illness and that when the necessary repair has taken place, the person will return basically to the same person he was previous to the injury or illness.

When a child dies, there is, indeed, an injury of massive proportions. All systems - physical, mental, and spiritual - are affected. There is physical pain, emotional retching, spiritual upheaval, and struggling.

All this may be occurring simultaneously. Though there may not be bleeding in the physical sense, there is emotional hemorrhaging. The body and psyche are in crisis. Bereaved parents are often unable to eat; they may experience sleep disturbances and disorientation. Believe it or not, all these reactions are normal.

Grief is a normal part of life. This is not a mental illness or some chemical imbalance of the brain. What is not normal is to experience the death of a child. The major difference between recovery and healing is that the goal is not to return to who we were before our child died.

That goal is impossible to achieve. To continue to try to achieve a goal of recovery is to assume that life will be basically the same with a few minor adjustments. We'll set one less place at the table, buy less food, feel sad on holidays, cry a bit more. Our lives have been permanently and irrevocably changed, but that we are, in fact, becoming different people. The becoming is the healing.

During this process, we examine every facet of our lives and our belief systems. This is a journey, not a "repair". By living through this journey, we become different people. True, we may basically look the same, but we are not the same as before our child died. We look at life in a new way. Our interests change and our priorities change. We will never look at a child the same way again. We will have a new and deeper level of understanding and compassion for those experiencing pain -- all kinds of pain. We have a different understanding of spirituality.

We ourselves feel new and different. We carry some of the old person with us through the healing process, but we emerge different. We are healed, not recovered.



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THOUGHTFUL POEMS

As Time Passes

As time passes
And others forget
Day by day
I enter my lonely
Room of memories
And broken dreams
And I cry.
And each day
As I push forward
I move a step ahead
And then back
But still gaining
If even but a little.

Mary Rapke ~ TCF, Grand Junction, CO



The Dream

You came to me this morning in a dream just before I woke. I recognized you as you turned the corner. I looked at you; waiting for the transience of dream forms and saw it was not to be. You stayed together, the same age, with the same smile.

We both knew this was just a visit. You and I both knew this was special. We both knew that my dream was where our two worlds could meet.

I looked at you waiting for the transition, waiting for the change but it did not come. This dream was not of my own making but was shared by you and inhabited by you.

I kissed your cheek and felt your skin and felt my arm around your neck. But that's where it ended. I closed my eyes and felt the distance grow as I rose to awareness and you retreated to longing.

June O'Connor ~ TCF, Central Connecticut Chapter

Grief

Grief is a series of ever widening circles.

It starts with suddenness of the death of someone you love more than life itself.

And the circles spread out.

You are drawn down with the death, taken under the water, struggling for breath.

You slowly rise back to the surface, starting to take in life again.

But the circles catch you unawares at times, slamming you with the loss all over again,
dragging you back to the very bottom.

You never know when you might run into one of the circles' edges,
or when they will pass right through you.

The circles go out as far as you can possibly imagine ... for the rest of your life here.
Perhaps their strength diminishes, I'm not sure - but you know they will never, ever end.

Becky Price
TCF Rochester Chapter



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HEALING WORDS

4TH OF JULY

As our country celebrates Independence Day we are reminded of a nation which stood strong through many a crisis; which refused to give up or in; and today stands tall and strong because of her convictions.

As Americans we know the truth in the motto-- "No gain without pain." Those of us who are not newly bereaved know that this motto also applies to our suffering for many of us have found a deeper appreciation of life through our tragic experience. Priorities have also been rearranged for we have learned what things are most important.

It did not come easy, my friend, but with the courage and determination that being an American has taught us. So, my newly bereaved friends, stand tall and do not give up.

You can claim YOUR "Independence" from grief, too. TCF Camden County Chapter Audubon, NJ newsletter

VACATION

Vacation time is upon us again.

You may be having trouble with that very thought. My only advice is to go where it is the most comfortable for you. Large places with many people may not be the answer this year. The family oriented spots may make it more obvious that one of your blessings is missing. It may be that you are locked into plans that were made before the tragedy of your child's death. You may hesitate to change these plans if they involve other people. I personally could only be with people who understood my feelings in the beginning.

If the other people involved are not sensitive and understanding, you may want to reconsider your plans. Good, warm, caring friends who will allow you to be wherever it is that you are can be a great comfort. Keeping it simple with a backdoor through which you can escape if necessary, can be the best answer. Going away and coming home can be a problem in the beginning; know that it's normal. Whatever it is that you do and wherever it is that you go, I hope you will keep in mind that it won't always be this painful. It will be better; be patient. If you can find any peace and enjoyment, do it. You deserve it and it doesn't mean you don't care.

Mary Cleckly TCF, Atlanta, GA

Summer Thoughts

By Libby Gonzalez, TCF Huntsville, AL

Summer is a time when things naturally slow down, a time when many are waiting for the orderly routine of their lives to begin again. For those of us in grief whose lives are already in limbo, it can seem endless if we let it. Seeing children, babies, and teenagers is not easy for us, and we see them everywhere from shopping centers to beaches. Everyone is out living, loving, enjoying carefree activities with their children, and we want to scream, "It's not fair!" I was sitting on my patio one evening at dusk recently listening to the shouts of children playing, and I was crying as I remembered the sounds that my child used to make. I became very depressed as I thought what a long summer this was going to be.

In my reverie, I was reminded of a recent comment that I had heard at a TCF meeting: "My child was such a loving, giving person. He would not want me to waste my life being bitter." I also remembered a good friend telling me to "count my blessings" and naming all the things I had to be grateful for. I was furious at that time. Nothing I had to be grateful for could compensate for the fact that my child was dead.

Now, sitting in the twilight of this early summer evening, I began to see things differently. I was determined that this summer would not be an eternity: I would not let it be. I decided first of all to stay busy. I know I can find plenty to do if I only take the time to look. I am also going to try to enjoy the simple things that used to give me so much pleasure, like flowers, and working in my garden. It was then that I decided to try to be truly grateful for the blessings that I have, like my husband, my surviving children, my job, friends, etc.

It has been almost five years for me, and I know that last year this would not have worked. Of course I still have times of sadness; I know I always will. But I have decided that in the process of grieving we close so many doors, the only way to recovery is to reopen them gradually at our own pace.

I know I will never be the same person I was before the death of my child, but I hope eventually in some ways I will be a better person because suffering can be beneficial if we learn and grow through it. A year ago I didn't feel that way, and I know I still have a long way to go, but in the meantime, I know the greatest tribute to my child will be to enjoy this summer as he would have done.



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Longtime TCF members Cherie and Sean Barber lost their second child after 39 wks in uterus.

In Remembrance of

Gryphen Barber

entered life
June 16,2011

entered eternal life
June 16,2011

Parents: Cherie & Sean Barber

Here is the poem written on the Memorial Service program;

The butterfly emerges
from its silken shell---
Reborn, it arises,
no longer bound to earth.
Free at last, the butterfly glides
to heights unknown before.
So do our loved ones find
a beautiful release
as, earthbound no more,
they leave our sight and joyfully rise
to a garden of matchless beauty,
a place of light and peace.
-Evelyn Phillips_

Our hearts go out to them during this very difficult time and our deepest condolences from the Steering Committee and members of The Compassionate Friends.

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.



July 2011

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

