

April, 2014



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



Upcoming Events

April 17th - General Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church
May 15th - General Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church
May 24th - 5th Annual Memorial Day Barbecue and Balloon Launch

Pikes Peak Chapter Steering Committee

Chapter Leader - Acting

LARAINÉ ASARO-ANDERSON
Son, Michael Edward Anderson

MAILINGS & DATABASE

JANE & STEVE GABRIEL
Son, Jonathan Steven Gabriel

SECRETARY

LEONIE CRAMER
Son, Julian Anthony King

TREASURER

YVETTE THOMPSON
Son, Ryan Barry Thompson

NEWSLETTER EDITOR & EMAILINGS

STEWART LEVETT
Son, Aaron Paul Levett

SC MEMBER/FACILITATOR

BOB THOMPSON
Son, Ryan Barry Thompson

SC MEMBER/FACILITATOR

CHAE LA CHRISTIANSON
Son, Damon Vincent Christianson

SC MEMBER/FACILITATOR

LETA LEVETT
Son, Aaron Paul Levett

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 April 17, 2014.

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

LARAINÉ ASARO-ANDERSON ★ 351-7653
Mom of Michael E. Anderson

TODDLER / YOUNG CHILD LOSS

BOB & YVETTE THOMPSON ★ 573-2743

ADULT CHILD / SUDDEN DEATH

CHAE LA CHRISTIANSON ★ 687-6688

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

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



Anticipating Mother's Day

Before we lost our children to death, mother's Day was a happy time. We each reflect back on Mother's Days past... gifts, cards, special memories and one day set aside to acknowledge the best in our relationship with our treasured children.

With the death of our child, this dynamic was forever transfigured. Now, instead of looking forward to this day, we grasp at anything that will keep our minds away from it. Yet the anxiety still creeps into our minds and hearts; our stomachs churn and tears fill our eyes at the most inopportune moments. The dreadful countdown begins in late April and lasts for nearly three weeks.

This is the fifth Mother's Day I have endured since the death of my son. Each year I have the same, desperate anxiety, yet each year the day is a bit easier to handle. Each year the anticipation is far worse than the day itself.... "borrowing trouble" as my Dad would say. Since my son is my only child, I do not have the comfort of other children nor do I have the need to put on a happy face. Instead, I am able to choose what I will do without feeling the burden of guilt.

While my first Mother's Day was filled with tears, subsequent Mother's Days have been more subdued.

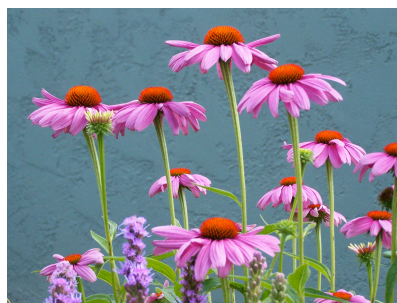
The choice to embrace or ignore Day is yours alone. Many bereaved mothers adopt a new perspective which honors their child and still gives normalcy to their family. Mother's Day is bittersweet for us. The pain is part of the love that we will feel for our children for eternity. We wouldn't trade one treasured moment for a cosmic reduction of our pain.

Some of us plan the day carefully. Some of us just "go with the flow". Some of us weep. Some of us work. Some of us read. Some of us revel in this special moment set aside just for mothers. Each of us makes a choice that is based on our truth.

The day itself is not nearly as overwhelming as the buildup of anxiety and sadness which precedes it. I have found this to be true of all holidays, birthdays, death anniversaries and special occasions. I am trying to live in the moment. When the moment of Mother's Day happens, I will decide what I should do. I refuse to let others pressure me. I refuse to become maudlin over greeting card commercials and heart-grabbing point-of purchase marketing efforts. I will not be manipulated by the agenda of others.

But on Mother's Day, as on each day of the year, I will think of my son, remembering the child he was and the man he became. I will honor his life by doing the best I can with what is left of my life. I will remain in the moment and treasure my memories. And for this mother, that is enough.

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





This article was suggested to me by fellow TCF member LuAnn Walters, thank you. Ed

The Forgotten Mourners

Why a grandparent's grief can be especially devastating — and lonely

More than 160,000 American grandparents lose grandkids each year. Yet their grief is often minimized, even by family members. "Bereaved grandparents are sometimes referred to as forgotten mourners," says Polly Moore, regional coordinator for The Compassionate Friends (TCF), a nonprofit that assists bereaved families. "People think it is not 'your' child that died," so the pain must be less intense. And because grandparents have more life experience, they are often assumed to have better skills for coping with tragedy.

Frequently, though, the grandparents' pain matches the powerful bond they have with their grandchildren, who embody a family's legacy and even a kind of immortality. Just like parents who have lost a child, grieving grandparents often feel helpless, angry and frustrated, as well as heartbroken.

Here is some advice from grief experts on making this hard journey easier.

Discuss: How do you talk to your grandchildren about death and tragedy?

Express difficult feelings

Bereaved grandparents can write or talk to a friend or counselor, or find support from organizations such as TCF or the MISS Foundation.

Read up

Helpful books include *The Grief Recovery Handbook* by John W. James and Russell Friedman, and *Grandparents Cry Twice* by Mary Lou Reed. Online, try visiting the Dougy Center or Grief Watch.

Stay emotionally connected to the deceased

Prayer, contemplation and dreams can provide solace; the lost person's presence is still felt. "Love doesn't die, and therefore the relationship doesn't die," says Darcie D. Sims, director of the American Grief Academy in Seattle.

Let go of pain when possible

Some people feel guilty when their intense grief begins to ebb, fearing they're forgetting their loved one. But there's no need to cling to sorrow. Grievers should remember that the loved one lived, not only that he or she died.

Create a legacy

Family members can plant a tree, start a scholarship in the loved one's name or launch a new family ritual.

Expect a bumpy ride

Grief is unpredictable; it can revive old, forgotten pains, such as a miscarriage or the death of a parent. This is normal. The bereaved should honor these feelings as part of the process.

Take a breather

Grieving grandparents should give themselves permission to rest. They might visit a friend or a place that nourishes — a place where they don't have to be strong for the family. "Find what coping mechanisms help you most," Moore recommends. "It takes time and patience — there are no quick fixes."

Leah Dobkin is a writer and gerontologist who collects people's stories, helps harvest their wisdom and transfers that wisdom to the next generation at legacyletter.org.

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Remembering Our Children On Their Birthdays

Child's Name	Date of Birth	Compassionate Friend
Christie Fike	Apr 2	Shirley & Dan Emerson
Michael Robert Pugh	Apr 2	Robert & Donna Pugh
John Andrew Schoen	Apr 2	Joyce Schoen
Kaitlin Bartlett	Apr 3	Kim Bartlett
Michael Zwirlein	Apr 3	Chris Zwirlein
Steven James Gantz	Apr 4	Diana Gantz
Mike Mozo	Apr 5	Valerie Kirchhofer
Heidi Susanne Wolfe	Apr 6	David & Karen Wolfe
Joseph Gentry Richardson	Apr 6	Miriam Gentry
Acacia Barbara Clen	Apr 8	Cindy Santarte
Tommy Kinslow	Apr 9	Pam Kinslow
Julie Bankston	Apr 13	Peggy Bankston
Zachary Nicholas Hoke	Apr 16	Debra & Steve Hoke
Patricia Spain Boden	Apr 18	Myra Spain
Jonathan Steven Gabriel	Apr 19	Steve & Jane Gabriel
Jake Holm	Apr 20	Eric & Kalyne Holm
Tyrone Elliott Bautista	Apr 22	Rosemary Devney
Zach Joseph	Apr 22	Garry & Renee Joseph
Miguel Meza	Apr 24	Susan Meza
Steven Miller	Apr 27	Mike Miller
Juan Marine	Apr 29	Pamela Marine
Kaden France	Apr 30	Jeremy & Sarah France
Sara M. Losasso	Apr 30	Cindy Losasso
Micah David Smilser	Apr 30	Robin Myers



This newsletter is sponsored by
Bob & Donna Pugh
In Loving Memory of Our Beloved Son
Michael Robert Pugh
April 2, 1973 ~ April 12, 1986

There are things that we don't want to happen but have to accept, things we don't want to know but have to learn, and people we can't live without but have to let go.
~Author Unknown



Remembering Our Children On Their Anniversaries

Child's Name	Age	Date of Death	Compassionate Friend
Richard McShan	23 years	Apr 1	Paul & Angelika McShan
Erin Marie McCallister	3 weeks	Apr 2	Steve & Carol McCallister
Matthew John McCallister	22 years	Apr 3	Steve & Carol McCallister
Brian Patrick Adair	13 years	Apr 4	Duane & Mary Adair
Skylar Lynn Boyle Ringland	22 years	Apr 4	Cathleen Boyle
Abraham Daniel Boukhari	18 years	Apr 4	David & Deborah Woodrow
Ronald Eugene Peterson	15 years	Apr 5	Ron Peterson
Kristie Diaz	26 years	Apr 7	Julie Diaz
Douglas Radowski	41 years	Apr 8	Renee Roettger
Dustin Bates	9 years	Apr 9	Troy Peyton
Lindsey Everding	18 years	Apr 10	Trena Everding & Dave Kiefer
Kyle J. Snyder	24 years	Apr 10	LuAnn Walters
Rocke Lee Corley	42 years	Apr 11	Jeanne Corley
Patrcia Elliott	19 years	Apr 11	Connie & Dave Elliott
Lindsay Jean Morris	20 years	Apr 12	Linda Morris
Michael Robert Pugh	13 years	Apr 12	Robert & Donna Pugh
Eric Johnson	22 years	Apr 13	Gary Johnson
Michael Eck	15 days	Apr 14	Patricia Eck
Dennis Lynn Gerringer	16 years	Apr 16	Kim Gerringer
Sarah Sunshine Wedekind	30 years	Apr 16	Lorry Pearson
Richard "Richie" Petras	3 years	Apr 16	Richard Petras
Acacia Barbara Clen	13 years	Apr 16	Cindy Santarte
Naomi Katherine Schwartz	1 year	Apr 16	Tim & Sonoko Schwartz
Dawn Michelle Wiley	21 years	Apr 18	Luanne Wiley
Jalynn Cameron	4 months	Apr 19	Jessica Cameron
Miguel Meza	20 years	Apr 19	Susan Meza
Leah Rae Wiley	23 years	Apr 21	Russ & Kelly Wiley
McKenzie Boutin	17 years	Apr 25	Colleen Boutin
Gary Carlson	44 years	Apr 25	Phil & Rose Carlson
James Bishara	19 years	Apr 27	Phebe Bishara
John Andrew Schoen	55 years	Apr 27	Joyce Schoen
Micah David Smilser	Stillborn	Apr 30	Robin Myers



Chaela Christianson
in loving memory of her son
Damon Vincent Christianson



Chaplain
Gene Steinkirchner



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:

Pikes Peak - www.TCFPikesPeakChapter.org
Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/TCFPikesPeak>
National - www.compassionatefriends.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, Yvette Thompson 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 Yvette Thompson, 5012 Rocking R Dr., Colorado Springs, CO 80915** ⇐
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: Yvette Thompson – 5012 Rocking R Dr. – Colorado Springs, CO 80915

Contributor Name & Address: _____

Relationship: Son Daughter Grandson Granddaughter Friend Other

Photo Enclosed: Yes No

Photo To Be Returned: Yes No



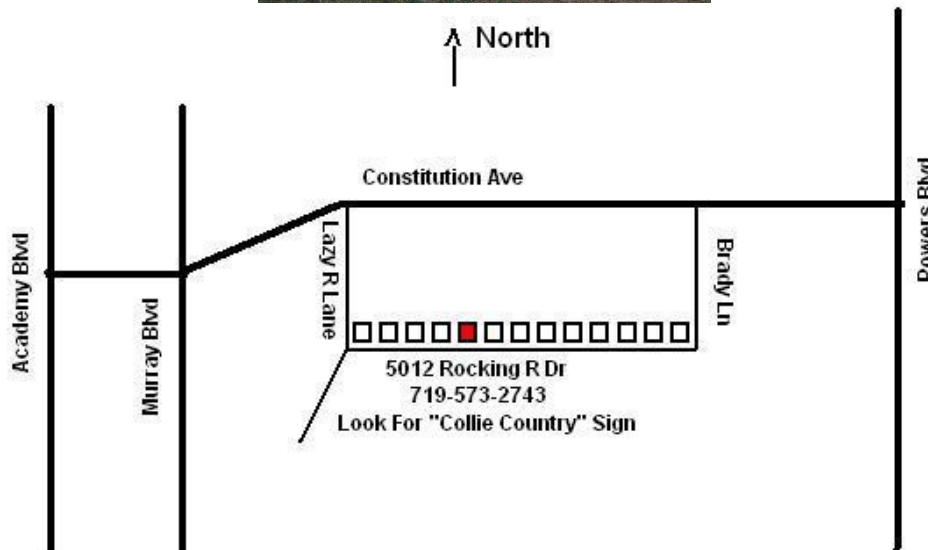
5th ANNUAL COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS MEMORIAL DAY & PICNIC BALLOON LAUNCH

The Compassionate Friends of the Pikes Peak Region is very excited to once again host our annual barbecue picnic and balloon launch on Saturday, May 24th, Memorial Day Weekend. We will start the afternoon at 1 p.m. with our barbecue potluck for all in attendance. The event will be held once again at TCF Steering Committee Members Bob & Yvette Thompson's house with the meats and drinks being provided by The Pikes Peak Chapter of TCF. Our Memorial Day Balloon Launch honoring our children which will start following our lunch with time to socialize. RSVP's are suggested so we may plan seating and food. Be sure to mark your calendars now for this annual event.

To RSVP you may email Laraine Anderson at lason56@yahoo.com or Stew Levett at pikespeaktcf@gmail.com. Please let us know how many in your family will be attending. For those who continue to receive our newsletter the old fashioned way, you may RSVP directly to Laraine by leaving her a message at 719-351-7653. Should you forget to RSVP, no worries; We would like for you to come and enjoy the food and fellowship of the other TCF members anyway.

Last years picnic and was a huge success so don't miss this years opportunity to have a nice picnic lunch, talk with friends and help memorialize your child with our balloon launch.

Please bring a side dish or dessert, enough to feed your family and to share with a few others. We hope to see you there!





HEALING WORDS

One evening at the kitchen table my four-year-old daughter Barbara watched with interest as I was preparing to mail out some letters concerning *The Compassionate Friends*.

She showed a keen interest in the logo sticker I attached to the corner of a large brown envelope. Her big blue eyes took on a seriousness I had never seen before as she asked, "Mommy, why is the 'kid' so far away from his hands?"

I replied as honestly as I could "Because the 'kid' has died and the hands are a mommy's and a daddy's reaching for the child." She turned those blue eyes to meet mine and said "I think you're wrong, Mom. I think the hands are letting him go."

How remarkably perceptive children are!

I sat there astounded by what she had suggested: then I grabbed a pen to write down what she had said. This was, I thought a sage piece of wisdom from someone who believes in old Santa and the Tooth Fairy and wishing on stars.

In her innocent way, she made me see I was still reaching. It has been two years since BJ. was still-born. But I continue to reach for something. Just what that some-thing is, I don't know, but I'll know what it is when I find it. Perhaps then part of me can let go.

Part of me will never let go. Barbara's comment made me wonder though. Do children sense that death is a process of letting go, that let-ting go is okay for those whose time it is to let go?

I don't have an answer yet, but maybe my blue-eyed Barbara does. Maybe, just maybe, all children do!
Edith Fraser TCF. Winnipeg, Canada

A Couples Grief

He told me that he had called because he was concerned about his wife. It had been five months since their child had died and she wasn't doing well. I asked him what she was doing that bothered

him and he told me that she was crying a great deal, wanted to talk about their child much of the time, wasn't sleeping well, was up a good part of the night wandering around as a matter of fact, wanted to go to the cemetery almost every day, spent a lot of time looking at the child's pictures, and didn't want to change anything in "the room".

And when I asked how he was doing, he told me that he was doing fine. Been working 13 or 14 hours a day. Hadn't always worked that much, but had been for the past two or three months. Said he didn't need to talk about their child, or look at the pictures because he had put it all behind

him; he had accepted it and he thought she would be better if she would do the same. Sleep? Well, he sleeps fine. He'd found a few drinks before he went to bed, plus a tranquilizer when he awakened in the middle of the night and more of each on the weekend helped him quite a bit. Now, if she's doing "poorly" and he's doing so "fine", why is it, do you suppose, that I keep worrying about him?

Mary Cleckley, TCF, Atlanta, GA



We all struggle - Questions and thoughts posted on The Compassionate Friends discussion forum

I am typically very open about the loss of my 11 year old daughter who died 2 1/2 years ago but I still have a hard time answering the question about how old my children are. When I am sitting in the hairdresser chair and the dreaded question comes up about my children I will say I have two but then they will go on to ask how old they are? I lie about my daughter and tell them that she is 14. I feel that I don't want to share my tragic and sad story with a stranger for my own sake but also for theirs. I dread that thousand mile stare and I know they regret asking the question because it is such a painful subject, but I also feel that I am dishonoring my daughter by lying to strangers about her. I just want the haircut and I don't want to feel trapped in an uncomfortable situation so therefore I lie. I know others might say they tell the truth no matter what.

It hit, the thinking of "I can't believe she is gone" has turned into, "my daughter is dead." I'm broken, I'm young...so much life left until I get to heaven to see her again. What do I do now? In one moment my life was torn apart and my family cut in half. Help.

Our 28 yr old son Loren died in a car accident on January 4th 2009 from injuries sustained in a drunk driving accident on New Year's Eve. His brother and 2 sisters were all adults at the time of his death My with only the youngest sister still living at home. Obviously we love our surviving children very much, but we seem to be having a difficult time communicating with them. I think some of it is certainly that my husband and I are different people now than prior to our son's death and we are not able to manage their expectations. Our oldest son has become hostile towards us because we are not moving forward as quickly as he would like. We are trying to reshape our holiday traditions and there seems to be some resentment about that, but I think the bigger issue is that we are no longer responding to them in a way in which they have grown accustomed. How are some of you managing your relationships with your surviving children and what are some of the challenges that you are facing?

It's been 12 years since Christian has been gone and almost 7 for Jason. The only time I have had a dream of either of them was when I was wearing a nicotine patch and they were vivid but very odd dreams and just a couple of them. I have tried lucid dreaming which involves repeating over and over at bedtime, "I will dream about my boys tonight" and nothing. Their friends and their sister dream of them and share those with me. I am just so sad at dreaming vicariously through others dream/visits. Anyone have any suggestions? I have had so many "signs" from them but so desperately want dreams of them. Thanks

We lost our 21 yr old son 5 years ago to an auto accident. He was the oldest of 4. Initially our marriage seemed strong - but my husband has struggled - the first born son and his namesake was gone. I think he thinks I didn't grieve enough because I had to pick up and be there for our other 3 kids. We've been struggling to keep our marriage together for at least a year now. But recently at an awards celebration for our youngest son (which he almost didn't attend) he actually said that he died 5 years ago and nothing else matters. He refuses therapy - I just don't know if I should let our marriage go or continue to fight. It's affected our kids (although two are adults now)...he is so incredibly overprotective that it even affects their relationships with friends and girlfriends/boyfriends. Has anyone experienced anything similar and how did you cope? The thought of divorce when I'm almost 50 is terrifying - especially since I still love my husband...

April, 2014

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