

July, 2014



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

PIKES PEAK CHAPTER
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



Upcoming Events

July 17th - General Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church
August 21st - General Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church

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 July 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 of these Steering Committee members if you can not reach our Chapter Leader. **



I'll lend you for a little time, a child of mine He said.
For you to love there as he lives, and mourn when he is dead.
It may be six or seven years, or twenty two or three.
But will you, 'til I call him back, take care of him for me?

He'll bring his charms to gladden you, and shall his stay be brief.
You'll have his lovely memories as solace for your grief.
I cannot promise he will stay, since all from earth return.
But there are lessons taught down there, I want this child to learn.

I've searched the wide world over, in my search for teachers true.
And from the throngs that crowd life's lanes, I have selected you.
Now will you give him all your love, nor think the labor vain.
Nor hate me when I come to call, to take him back again?

I fancied that I heard them say, Dear Lord, Thy will be done.
For all the joys Thy child shall bring, the risk of grief we'll run.
We'll shelter him with tenderness, we'll love him while we may.
And for the happiness we've known, will ever grateful stay.

But shall the angels call for him, much sooner than we planned.
We'll brave the bitter grief that comes, and try to understand.

Poem by Edgar Guest-given to me by Lieut. Barbara Simmons- on 12/22/72
upon the death of my husband, Cpt. Carl A. Christianson, US Army



Chaela Christianson
in loving memory of her son
Damon Vincent Christianson
5/30/1977 ~ 7/3/2010



“There, but for the grace of G-d, go I”

By Paula Grossman, proud mother of Mitch

Sometimes a thought gets stuck in my head and I can't get it out. This statement is stuck.

It actually has been stuck in my brain since Mitch died. “There, but for the grace of G -d, go I”. I keep thinking this over and over. I'm obsessed with it.

There, but for the grace of G-d, go I.

That is what we see when we look in the eyes of our friends and acquaintances. They look at us and then quickly avert their eyes and look down- look away. They know that they very well could be in our position. It could be their child that was lost. Their child could have made a poor decision that cost him his life. Their child could have been at the wrong place at the wrong time. Their child could have been taken due to disease or illness. It could have been them, but it wasn't.

It was us.

They know, and they are so happy it isn't them suffering this overwhelming and life-altering loss. Their child is still here, so they avert their eyes from us. Maybe they shouldn't get too close to us. They certainly wouldn't want to catch this “lack of grace” thing that we have. They are “graced” and we are not. Why didn't we get graced? What did we do wrong? Why did our children have to suffer for our lack of grace? Why weren't our children graced?

Questions that can never be answered, but will always be in the back of our minds.

So, without the grace of G-d, we go on....



A Sibling's Perspective: Thirty Years And Counting

by Suzanna Juby - TCF Inner Loop Chapter, Houston, TX

April 27th of this year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the death of my six-year-old little sister, Cara, who died of viral pneumonia in 1984. I am frequently asked by the newly bereaved some version of the same question: “Does it ever get better?”

I know what they mean. I remember what it was like for me when I first learned that Cara had died. After the initial crippling shock, I felt completely lost. I was so crushed by grief, I didn't know how I was going to get through the day much less carry on with the rest of my life.

At the time, I was a senior in high school. I took one week off for the funeral and returned to school the following week. Physically, I was back to my normal routine.

Mentally and emotionally, however, I was an empty shell. A few weeks after the funeral, one of my friends asked me if I was “over it now.” I said, “Yes,” and felt more isolated than ever before.

As the weeks passed, I noticed that I wasn't feeling great, but I wasn't feeling as horribly as before. I laughed at a joke and then felt guilty that I'd laughed, but it felt so good to forget for just a few seconds how miserable I was! Then I realized that laughing was a good thing. It meant that I was beginning to heal.

With time, that gaping, jagged-edged hole inside of me that Cara left behind when she died hurt just a little bit less with each passing day. As my remaining sister, Johanna, our parents and I began the slow and painful business of picking up the pieces of our individual and collective lives and trying somehow to cobble them together into some semblance of what The Compassionate Friends calls the New Normal, that unbearable agony inside became gradually less painful over the months and years.

Do I still miss Cara after all this time? Of course I do. Not a day goes by that I don't think about her. The very strong emotions from years ago are still there, and I can access them if I want to, but they don't interfere with my daily life, and that is a good thing. Now, thirty years and counting.





Remembering Our Children On Their Birthdays

Child's Name	Date of Birth	Compassionate Friend
Charlie Josh Jones	Jul 1	Sue Jones & Angie Jones
Ryan Thompson	Jul 1	Yvette & Bob Thompson
Michael Jeffrey Waller	Jul 4	Jean 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 Ornelas
Jack Lincoln Farrell	Jul 13	Pamela Welch
Travis Holappa	Jul 14	Kim & Terry Packa
Eli Witcher	Jul 16	Phyllis Lallier
Cris Cruz	Jul 19	Henrietta Madrid
Dale Smith	Jul 20	Angela Smith
Tiffany Maxwell	Jul 20	Diane Maxwell
Ryan Sayers	Jul 20	Tom & Kate Sayers
Brian Patrick Adair	Jul 21	Duane & Mary Adair
Justin William Winner	Jul 21	Dale & Rosanne Winner
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
Alexander Pegler	Jul 26	Eric & Lisa Pegler
Michael Williams Greist	Jul 28	Judy Greist
Scott Michael Gerwatowski	Jul 28	Linda Gerwatowski
Mallory Jane Hooper	Jul 28	Bill & Beth Hooper
Michelle Howie	Jul 31	Annette Howie

I Find Myself

By Agnes Furey

I find myself staring at this clump of deep pink and red flowers. It reminds me of Christopher. When we drove up and down I-75 every weekend, he was fascinated by the wild flowers in the median. He would call out the colors of each section. He especially liked the red ones. We rode so much, that noticing things on the roadside became kind of a ritual. We would see cows and horses, flowers and trees. He would squeal whenever we went under an overpass. The flowers, when they were in bloom, were a special treat. He was studying the rain forest and he would say some of the flowers were like the rain forest. After he was murdered, a friend visited me. She handed me a bunch of wild flowers. She had picked them along I-10. This was very out of character for her! She said something just told her to do it. We believe it was a little boy named Christopher!



Remembering Our Children On Their Anniversaries

Child's Name	Age	Date of Death	Compassionate Friend
Kyleigh Peltzer	1 year	Jul 2	Ashleigh Peltzer
Andrew Paul Whiteman	20 years	Jul 2	Lyle Whiteman
Damon Vincent Christianson	33 years	Jul 3	Chaela Christianson
Heidi Susanne Wolfe	20 years	Jul 3	David & Karen Wolfe
Adam Roy Hodges	5 years	Jul 4	JoAnn Ewing
Ramon E.G. Lucero	26 years	Jul 5	Diana & Kimber Michael
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
Jack C. Jefferson	5 years	Jul 11	John & Dena Jefferson
Abigail Ruth Smelser	23 years	Jul 11	Robin Myers
Chance Tyler Nichols	17 years	Jul 11	Charlie Nichols
Cristoval Ornelas	1 day	Jul 13	Annette & Chris Ornelas
Christopher Skaggs	15 years	Jul 13	Ernest & Tanya Skaggs
Jack Lincoln Farrell	1 day	Jul 13	Pamela Welch
Philip Dix	24 years	Jul 14	Ann Dix
Zachary Dean Glenn	3 years	Jul 14	Kristin & Larry Glenn, Janice Bren
Kristopher Lohrmeyer	17 years	Jul 16	Dan & Lori Lohrmeyer
Eli Witcher	2 days	Jul 17	Phyllis Lallier
Blake Smith	1 year	Jul 17	Brian Smith
Jeanne Burroughs Widmar	33 years	Jul 18	Arlene & Charles Burroughs Matthew
Alan Haywood	22 years	Jul 18	Roger Haywood
Roy Polhemus		Jul 18	Kathleen Landry & Edward Pohlemu
David Scott Mueller	19 years	Jul 19	Sandy Eversole
Ryan Rickman	11 years	Jul 19	Jean Rickman
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
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
Nathan Gentry	7 years	Jul 29	Susan Gentry
Jimmy Schmidt	13 years	Jul 30	Jim & Laurie Schmidt
Jonathan Steven Gabriel	5 years	Jul 31	Steve & Jane Gabriel
Patricia Spain Boden	39 years	Jul 31	Myra Spain

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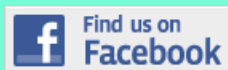
ORGANIZATIONAL CONTACTS

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



Support Resources

TCF Online Chat Groups:

www.compassionatefriends.org/resources/online_Support.aspx

- For questions, please contact Diana Jorden, 925-432-3854, who moderates the general grief and suicide loss rooms on Friday nights and Sunday. TCF online offers several specialized chat rooms, all moderated by moms who have been in chat for at least 2 years or more. We offer a sibling-only chat, loss under 1 year, loss over 2 years, loss of only child, suicide survivor, infant/pregnancy loss, and every night (and Monday mornings) there is a general loss room open to parents, step and grand, and siblings.
- You can sign up for the online TCF National newsletter at www.compassionatefriends.org
- You can reach our TCF National Facebook page through the link on the same home page of our national website. You will be asked to join Facebook if you are not already a member, and we hope you'll find our Facebook page as interesting as do the more than 11,000 fans who have already found us!

Other Grief Support Websites

- www.agast.org - for grandparents
- www.alivealone.org
- www.aliveinmemory.org
- www.angelmoms.com
- www.babysteps.com
- www.bereavedparents.org
- www.beyondindigo.com
- www.childloss.com
- www.goodgriefresources.com
- www.griefwatch.com
- www.GriefNet.org
- www.healingafterloss.org
- www.opentohope.com
- www.pomc.com - families of murder victims
- www.save.org
- www.survivorsofsuicide.com
- www.Taps.org - military death
- www.webhealing.com



Do you know?

Do you know what I've learned, that the deepest, truest healing offered by The Compassionate Friends comes not in the first few years, but later?

Do you know that just when you think there is no more to gain by coming to meetings, something you will say or do will help another and another....and exponentially, through your opened heart, there can flow riches, gifts beyond imagining?

Do you know that TCF's truest alchemy lies not in what we can get but what we can give? That by turning grief's dark energy and inner absorption outwards towards the Hope of helping others we can regain a sense of purpose, honor our beloved children, and take them with us as we do?

All this...if only you stay on...or come back...to help those more newly bereaved, sharing your own unique path through grief and learning, along with others, what you did not know you know.

---Genesse Bourdeau Gentry, TCF - Marin County, CA

IN THIS UNIVERSE
NOTHING IS EVER
WHOLLY LOST.
THAT WHICH IS
EXCELLENT REMAINS
FOREVER A PART OF
THIS UNIVERSE. HUMAN
HEARTS ARE DUST. BUT
THE LOVE
WHICH MOVES THE
HUMAN HEART, ABIDES TO
BLESS THE
LAST GENERATION ~~
RALPH WALDO EMERSON



HEALING WORDS

Some Thoughts on Rebuilt Engines By Joan Page, TCF, Miami, FL.

All of us who receive this newsletter have experienced something in common—the shattering of our human machinery upon impact with a son or daughter's death. Whatever helped us keep moving before, nothing works for us now. Our lives ground to a halt.

In the stillness of grief's long night, I felt despair over trying to repair something that would always lack a vital part. How could I ever rebuild the machinery of my life without that precious part? Any repair work would require my permission and participation. Looking at the tangled, damaged parts of myself, I questioned how to salvage anything workable from the wreckage.

Eventually, blessedly, the desire to move again, to get back into life's traffic, got me doing something. At first it was tinkering, experimenting with the broken parts, imagining them whole again. Then I tried to learn by watching others who were rebuilding. It helped to read repair manuals, painfully written by people like me. The process was tedious and exhausting; there were setbacks, hidden costs, and false starts.

One surprising day my engine actually turned over—I moved a little. Before long, the motor sounded stronger. IT almost seemed to hum, as I remembered it could. With persistence, I worked up to a decent speed, regained my sense of direction, and even began appreciating some sights along the way. I discovered that a rebuilt engine could carry me, despite the missing part. Occasionally it sputters, misfires, or floods, being sensitive to road hazards other drivers don't see. Some hills always seem too steep, certain roads have too many memories. Sometimes the fog is too thick to drive through. When necessary, I slow down, make adjustments, or pull off the road temporarily.

I wanted to write about my experience out of gratitude. Each of us has our own long night of grief and our own reawakening from it. The mystery of healing defies simple explanation. Do invisible hands help us in the healing process? I don't have an answer, just astonishment at the process which moved me from the tangled wreckage of myself to a sturdy rebuilt that appears whole, even through it isn't.

In closing, I lovingly acknowledge my daughter, Beth, who believed deeply in the possibility of rebuilding her own life.

THE AFFECT OF THE DEATH OF A CHILD ON A MARRIAGE

Grief is unique to each person, much like a fingerprint. Even though the two parents are grieving the death of the same child, their relationship with their child and grieving styles are different. It is important to avoid judging the other parent for grieving in their own unique way. Parents should also recognize that they are both now different people than they were before the death of their child and it is natural that their relationship will change. Generally it will change in one of two ways: either the parents will find their bond strengthened by having journeyed through this tragedy together, or they will find themselves so different following the death that they no longer know how to relate to each other. Openness and honesty between spouses is essential to maintaining a marriage, especially in times of crisis. Make time to talk and to really listen to each other. Also, recognize that, while it is important to grieve together, it is also vital that each partner have additional support outside of their marriage to find share with and find comfort in.



From "When A Child Dies" - Used by Permission -
www.griefwatch.com



THOUGHTFUL POEMS

IT'S MUSIC THAT BONDS THE SOUL

The room you once lived in doesn't look the same.
The people, who used to call you, never mention your name.
The car you used to drive, they may not make any more.
All the things you once treasured are boxed behind closed doors.
The clothes you set the trends by, are surely out of date.
The people you owed money to have wiped away the slate.
Things have changed and changed, again since you went away.
But some things remained the same each and every day.
Like this aching in my heart...a scar that just won't heal,
Or the way a special song can change the way you feel.
Brother, you must know that the music bonds us and will always keep us close.
Because secretly, I know deep in my heart, it's the music you miss the most.
So, let the world keep on turning and time can take its toll.
For as long as the music keeps playing, you'll be alive and dancing in my soul.



By Stacie Gilliam, TCF - Oklahoma City, OK

July's Child

Fireworks race toward heaven
Brilliant colors in the sky.
Their splendor ends in seconds
On this evening in July.
"Her birthday is this Saturday,"
I whisper with a sigh.
She was born this month,
She loved this month
And she chose this month to die.
Like the bright and beautiful fireworks
Glowing briefly in the dark
They are gone too soon, and so was she
Having been, and left her mark.
A glorious incandescent life,
A catalyst, a spark...
Her being gently lit my path
And softened all things stark.
The July birth, the July death of
my happy summer child
Marked a life too brief that ended
Without rancor, without guile.
Like the fireworks that leave images
On unprotected eyes...
Her lustrous life engraved my heart...
With love that never dies.
Sally Migliaccio
TCF Babylon, Long Island, NY

"Men and Grief"

It must be very difficult
To be a man in grief,
Since "Men Don't Cry" and "Men Are Strong"
No tears can bring relief
It must be very difficult
To stand up to the test
And field calls and visitors
So she can get some rest
They always ask if she's all right
And what she's going through
But seldom take his hand and ask
"My friend, but how are you?"
He hears her crying in the night
And thinks his heart will break
And dries her tears and comforts her
But "stays strong" for her sake
It must be very difficult
To start each day anew
And try to be so very brave~
He lost his baby, too....
Author: Eileen Knight Hagemeister

Taken from TCF National Website



The Compassionate Friends
Pikes Peak Chapter
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