



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



April 2017

STEERING COMMITTEE

CHAPTER LEADER

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Son, Michael Edward Anderson

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Son, Jonathan Steven Gabriel

TREASURER

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Son, Patrick Michael Doyle

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Chaela Christianson

Son, Damon Vincent Christianson

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

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STEWART & LETA LEVETT - 719-531-5488 *

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SKATEBOARD / AUTO ACCIDENT

RAYE WILSON - 303-814-9478

MOTORCYCLE DEATH

STEVE SEIFERT - 719-331-6455

*Steering Committee

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 20, 2017.

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.





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.compassiontefriends.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!



Seeking Contributors

We are always looking for material from our chapter members to include in this newsletter. It is the perfect way to share your child, grandchild or sibling with all of us. Tell us about the special things you did in their memory or simply tell us the special things you will always remember and keep close to your heart. It is a beautiful way for us to get to know more about your loved one. It unites us as a bereaved family and it will help us all to become closer. Where there is unity, there is strength, strength that we can give to and draw from one other.

We would also welcome any book reviews. If you have read a book that has helped you on your journey please tell us about it. There are many, many grief books out there. Some will be more healing than others. It is so helpful to be guided to the right ones. Please forward any writings, poems, book reviews etc. to Stew Levett PikesPeakTCF@gmail.com or you may use the U.S. Mail and send it to me at 160 El Dorado Ln., Colorado Springs, CO 80919.

A FATHER RETURNS TO WORK

After Kathy died, I, of course, went back to work. Some of my co-workers made the stop at my desk to express their sympathy. I know I turned them off, as my pain and my denial were so great. I could not talk about what had happened and how I felt. I thanked them. Although nobody ever talked to me about it, that was okay as my pain was such, I thought, I could not bear to talk. I threw myself into my work and on occasion was confused because I could not make the kind of decisions I had been making for years. I never made the connection that this inability to concentrate was part of my grief and was normal. Lunch was the worst time. My habit was to eat with my associates, but often in the middle of the meal I would just have to get up and walk away. Although nobody ever said anything to me about this odd behavior, I do thank them at least for their tolerance. Slowly I readjusted (I thought) and in time (a long time) I was able to perform well again. But I never really grieved until I found THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS and it was here that people helped me to talk. It was almost twelve years before I found TCF as there was no such organization in 1967. My friends, let The Compassionate Friends help you...don't wait twelve years to talk! ♥

Bill Errnatinger, Kathy's Dad Baltimore. MD



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Welcome New Friends.

At nearly every meeting we welcome new members to our group, always with mixed emotions. We are glad you found us, but we are so sorry for the circumstances that bring us together. We understand your pain; we hope our unconditional friendship and understanding will help you through your grief. Attending a meeting for the first two or three times takes courage, but for many it is the first real step toward healing. It may seem overwhelming, so we encourage you to come to several meetings to give yourself a chance to become comfortable.



**Chaela Christianson - In Loving Memory of
Damon Vincent Christianson**

Chaplain Eugene Steinkircher - CSPD

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

TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Coming to your first meeting is the hardest thing to do. Try not to judge your first meeting as to whether or not TCF will work for you. The second, third, or fourth meeting might be the time you will find the right person or just the right words that will help you in your grief or comfort you. Remember we have all been there and even though circumstances may be different we really do understand. You are not alone.

TO OUR SEASONED MEMBERS

We need your encouragement and support. You are the string that ties our group together. Each meeting the pain will not always be this bad it really does get better with wisdom. Show others that there is hope, from someone who has found it.

The Beautiful Name of Parent

People often ask why there is not a word for someone who has lost a child. For me the answer is quite simple; I am and always will be a parent. The death of our child does not take that precious title away from any of us. Nothing and no one can ever change the fact that we are parents. We gave life to, nurtured and raised our children, for however long or short their lives were. "Parent" is a living word. It is an eternal word.

Our children would want us to remember that we are their parents now and forever. They would want the name of "parent" that was bestowed on us at their birth to live on in our hearts. We are still actively parenting our children. We continue to bring life to our children by loving them now and forever. There is not and should never be a word to signify the endless love of a parent.

~ Janet G. Reyes, TCF Alamo Chapter, TX



Remembering Our Children On Their Birthdays - April '17

<u>Child's Name</u>	<u>Birthday</u>	<u>Compassionate Friend</u>
Michael Robert Pugh	Apr 2	Robert & Donna Pugh
Christie Fike	Apr 2	Shirley & Dan Emerson
John Andrew Schoen	Apr 2	Joyce Schoen
Kaitlin Bartlett	Apr 3	Kim Bartlett
Michael Zwirlein	Apr 3	Chris Zwirnlein
Steven James Gantz	Apr 4	Diana Gantz
Bernie O'Grady	Apr 5	Elizabeth Alvar
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
Patrick O'Grady	Apr 16	Elizabeth Alvar
Patricia Spain Boden	Apr 18	Myra Spain
Jonathan Steven Gabriel	Apr 19	Steve & Jane Gabriel
Caleb Norris	Apr 19	Keith Norris
Colby McCarley	Apr 19	Tami Sisneros
Bryan Michael Womeldorff	Apr 20	Shawn Brown
Beau Matthew Begier	Apr 20	Don & Gina Begier
Jake Holm	Apr 20	Eric & Kalyne Holm
Tyrone Elliott Bautista	Apr 22	Rosemary Devney
Miguel Meza	Apr 24	Susan Meza
Logan Jude Swearingen	Apr 26	Stephanie & Landon Swearingen
Steven Miller	Apr 27	Mike Miller
Juan Marine	Apr 29	Pamela Marine
Sara M. Losasso	Apr 30	Cindy Losasso
Micah David Smilser	Apr 30	Robin Myers
Kaden France	Apr 30	Jeremy & Sarah France



Remembering Our Children On Their Anniversaries - April '17

<u>Child's Name</u>	<u>Forever Age</u>	<u>Date of Death</u>	<u>Compassionate Friend</u>
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	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
Lindsey Everding	18 years	Apr 10	Trena Everding & Dave Kiefer
Kyle 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
Timothy Scott Williams	27 years	Apr 12	Lea Blanc
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
Karey Ackerman	40 years	Apr 14	Bob & Joann Zelins
Dennis Lynn Geringer	16 years	Apr 16	Kim Geringer
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
Jayden Pierce	4 months	Apr 17	Dawn Hendricks
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
Forrest Kelly	27 years	Apr 20	Cindy Bronner
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
Blaine Joseph Steele	15 years	Apr 26	Paul Petta
James Bishara	19 years	Apr 27	Phebe Bishara
John Andrew Schoen	55 years	Apr 27	Joyce Schoen
Micah David Smilser	1 day	Apr 30	Robin Myers
Clay Cline	53 years	Apr 30	Arlene Robust



“This is so Different”

Mary Pipala - South Suburban Chapter, Evergreen Park, IL

It takes a long time for the intense pain of losing someone to subside. That initial sting of pain is so overwhelming; we often believe we will never be able to go on without them. Little by little that sting becomes less intense. It doesn't mean we are doing “ok” or “over it”, it's just that we just keep waking up in the morning. And when we have the courage to look out a window; we realize that life has gone on.

And that realization in itself, can throw us back into utter despair. The recovery process from losing a child is like no other. I probably shouldn't even call it a “recovery” process. Because, do we ever really recover?

July will mark the tenth anniversary of Brad's death. How can that be? Sometimes it seems like he was just here; other times it feels like he has been gone forever. On Brad's tenth anniversary; my husband and I will bring roses to the cemetery, we will clean Brad's headstone, we will sit in lawn chairs for a couple of hours waiting for the hour of his death to arrive, and then we will hold hands and pray. It is our ritual; it is our way of honoring and remembering him. It is our way of saying “we will always love you, we will always miss you”. It's the only way we know how to get through this day.

I recently became a bereaved sibling. My only sibling, my brother Danny, passed away unexpectedly in April. My mother, at 92 years old, is now a bereaved parent. It breaks my heart to watch her grieve. But there is something about her words that confirm what the loss of a child truly is. My mom has survived many losses in her life; her husband, her parents, her grandson (my Brad), several siblings and many friends. But this, the death of her child, has shattered her heart. She tells me things like “I never felt this way before when someone died” and “this is so different, I know I shouldn't question our Lord, but, I do; why did he have to take Danny?” I tell her I know her pain but, she is so overwhelmed by her own grief; my words are not a comfort to her. I totally understand that because, when Brad died, I convinced myself that no one could ever feel as sad and defeated as I did. So, I will walk this journey with my mom now, and do my best to comfort her. As for myself, I will

mourn for my brother and I will miss him, but, this is very different. It's different because he wasn't my child. It is my child that I think about every single day. It is my child that will hold this special place in my heart forever. Yes mom, this is so very different.

From My Heart . . . To Yours

The newly bereaved parents looked around the group at the meeting and hoped and prayed they wouldn't still be attending TCF meetings 20, 30, and 40 years from now.

Well actually, we at TCF hope you will be. You see, the bereaved parents who answered the call in their hearts to continue to open the door for monthly meetings and to go each and every month with arms open for hugs and tissue boxes passed around, are the one reason why you had a place to go and pour your hearts out, cry your eyes out, and feel justified in what you were experiencing since your child died.

If it were not for these bereaved parents who buried a child decades ago, there might not be anyone there to sit around and take the time to care about you, to listen with understanding, to offer support, to know what you are going through. It might have been many years ago, but those shoulders were dragging at one time, too. Forty years ago, burying a child hurt just as much as it does for you today. Twenty years ago, the pain of loss was no different than it is for you today. These parents know. They understand. That's why they are still here. It is not because they can't move on with their own grief. It is because they want to help you move on with yours. Thank goodness someone in your area listened to the voice in their heart to start a TCF group, to organize meetings, to put out a newsletter, to answer your phone call, to share their own story. Because of that, you feel safe to share your pain. And every time you share your feelings, every time you cry with someone, every time you work through your pain, healing is slowly and silently creeping into your heart. One day you might feel you don't need to attend any more TCF meetings. We know that time will come. We will be happy for you. But if it should happen that a little voice in your heart continues to whisper . . . “Now it's your turn to help someone else,” be sure and listen, because someone else is going to have to take the place of those who have been there for so many years before you arrived. So, look around at those who have opened the doors for you and helped you.

Then listen to your heart . . . always listen to your heart.

Cathy Heider - TCF North Central Iowa Chapter



MOTHER'S DAY

Last year on my first birthday without my daughter an understanding and kind friend send me a card on which she had written that she wisied that it was my worst birthday ever....She knew how much it was going to hurt and hoped that after that first birthday without my daughter, that the pain could only lessen.

Last year was my First Mother's Day without my daughter. The year before Robbie had taken me to see MENOPAUSE THE MUSICAL and it was one of The Best Days Ever. I had anticipated that my first without her would be The Worst. My son, thoughtfully understanding the challenges of the day, took me away to Boston for brunch, the Aquarium, then out for Chinese Food where I was surprised by my daughter-in-law and my husband joining us. After that it was a trip to Fenway where Boston didn't have the courtesy to win! At the end of the day that I had so dreaded I was surprised that I had not only survived but had actually had experienced many pleasant moments during the day.

But none of it stopped me from missing my daughter and wishing that she, too, had been with us. None of it cut off the tears on the drive home where my heart ached from missing her. I saw glimpses of The Forest, but I also felt THE BARK.

This year, I will re-read the poems that my Robbie wrote to me every year for Mother's Day and 'pretend' that if even for a moment, that there will be another poem forthcoming this year.

I wish for you, that the worst Mother's Day you'll ever have passes you by. And hope that as you hug your memories close that you will have a moment of peace.

~ Bettie-Jeanne Rivard-Darby,
TCF Northeastern Connecticut

Men Grieve Side by Side

by Pat Schwiebert, R.N.

Some of the most touching statements I've heard around a child's death have come from fathers.

I remember a father telling how after his children and wife died in a house fire his buddies would come over and sit with him day after day while he drank himself unconscious only to wake up enough to crawl off to bed and repeat the process the next day. He never talked about his family. They never asked any questions.

Another father told me how he spent the final month of his daughter's life frantically calling specialists around the country and doing research searching for a cure for his daughter's rapidly progressing brain tumor while his wife memorized every smile, every joke, every tender moment their daughter shared as she bravely faced the end of her life.

Yet another father described how he didn't want to leave his wife and travel to another hospital in the ambulance with his sick newborn baby, so he told the staff he couldn't go because he couldn't find his shoes. They told him to go without his shoes.

These stories speak of how men are not encouraged to feel and so resort to numbing the devouring pain of grief. They speak of how fathers try to fix things for their kids in an effort to help them dodge death. They speak of how torn they can feel when they need to be in two places at once, and how they fear the prospect of getting into unfamiliar territory where they feel all alone and expected to make life changing decisions.

As a culture we have made inroads to understanding how differently people grieve. We have recognized that our gender, or how we have been raised, may have something to do with how we grieve, but still we are surprised when a father emotes or cries more than a mother. Fathers still think people expect them to buck up and hold things together for the family. Men tend to agree they want that too. It gives them a sense of control when everything else around them seems out of control. But they do want people to know that they are hurting too. That just because they look okay it isn't over. That their lives have also changed. They may not talk about it as much as their partners but they feel it just the same. Men grieve side by side. Women grieve face to face. A man typically wants you to be there with him, to not be afraid of him and his pain, not to pity him, maybe to play a game of golf or have a beer with him, and to be willing to listen if he wants to talk. Men are strong, and they are also tender.

I'm in awe of how bravely they face the future while living in the present.



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 electronically scanned and added to our electronic Child Remembered "Picture Frame" displayed at monthly meetings and then returned to you.

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, Ruby Doyle 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 Ruby Doyle, 6552 Lange Drive Colorado Springs, Co 80918 ⇐
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: Ruby Doyle – 6552 Lange Dr. – Colorado Springs, CO 80918

Contributor Name & Address: _____

Relationship: Son Daughter Grandson Granddaughter Friend Other

Photo Enclosed: Yes No

Photo To Be Returned: Yes No



THOUGHTFUL POEMS

"I wish you gentle days and quiet nights.
I wish you memories to keep you strong.
I wish you time to smile and time for song.
And then I wish you friends to give you love,
when you are hurt and lost and life is blind.
I wish you friends and love and peace of
mind."

~ Sascha Wagner !

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Where Do I Go?

Now that you're gone, where do I go
to see your fair smile
to hear your tingling giggle
to smell your dank hair after a swim
to listen to your questions
to touch your gentle cheek
to feel your bear hug?
Where do I go
to share all my years of wisdom
to find someone who'll tell me truth
to answer the phone that won't ring
to tell you I'm sorry
to know that I am loved and
to pour out my love and my tears?
I shall go
to the pictures that hold you forever
to the books we shared
to the music you taught me to love
to the woods we explored as one
to the memories that never fail
to the innermost reaches of my heart
to where we are always together.♥
Marcia Alig TCF, Mercer Area Chapter, NJ

HEALING WORDS

Bits and Pieces of Grief

"I can only bite off chunks of grief in bits and pieces.
How else would I manage to get out of bed?"

~Desire' Aguirre

As with a four-course dinner, we must take our grief in small bites. The totality of our loss, the shattering of our psyche and the horrific blow to our brains is just too much to absorb at one time. Shock is nature's cushion. When shock subsides, our reality is a physical pain, an ache from deep inside that radiates throughout our bodies. Once this subsides, we endure the emotional agony and the kick in the gut that comes unannounced.

This quotation is very profound for both the newly bereaved and those of us who are much farther down the road of grief. The loss of our child will be the single most defining factor in our lives. However, if we do our grief work and all that this entails, we will eventually arrive at something akin to a new normal. Life will never be the same. We will never be the same. But we carry our children forward with us in our hearts and minds, imagining all that could have been and accepting that these things are no longer meant to be.

I have managed to find a serenity and a purpose in my life, yet the thrill of living is not the peaks, the sadness is not the valleys. Life now is "steady as you go." My compassion for others is almost automatic now, my understanding of the macro perspective of life is deeper and wider than ever before. I acknowledge that there is much to be learned on this journey. But it is a painful education.

Annette Mennen Baldwin - TCF Katy, TX

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