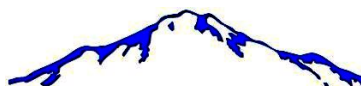




THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

PIKES PEAK CHAPTER
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



April, 2022

STEERING COMMITTEE

CHAPTER LEADER

Stewart Levett
Son, Aaron Paul Levett

MAILINGS & DATABASE

Jane & Steve Gabriel
Son, Jonathan Steven Gabriel

TREASURER

Ruby Doyle
Son, Patrick Michael Doyle

NEWSLETTER EDITOR & EMAILINGS

Stewart Levett
Son, Aaron Paul Levett

SC MEMBER/WELCOME PACKETS

Leta Levett
Son, Aaron Paul Levett

SC MEMBER/FACILITATOR

Ron Agee
Daughter, Melody Victoria Agee

SC MEMBER

Jen Sutton
Son, Austin L. Sutton

SC MEMBER

Robyn Czyz
Son, Adam James Czyz

TELEPHONE FRIENDS

CHAPTER HELP - 719-344-3216

Jen Sutton * 719-354-0057

Jane Gabriel * 719-282-1924

Ron Agee * 719-308-7473

Ruby Doyle * 970-560-9434

Stew Levett * 719-534-0350

Leta Levett * 719-531-5488

Raye Wilson 303-814-9478

*Steering Committee

Welcome

Attempting your first TCF meeting can be difficult. Feelings can be overwhelming. We have all experienced them and know how important it is to take that first step. Please attend two or three meetings before deciding if TCF is right for you. There are no dues or fees. If you choose, you need not speak a word at a meeting. We are an international, non-denominational group, offering support and information to bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents. We need not walk alone.

We understand your pain; won't you let us help you through your grief?



TCF 45th National Conference
Houston, TX • August 5-7, 2022

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTACTS

TCF National Office Address:
The Compassionate Friends
48660 Pontiac Trail #930808
Wixom, MI 48393
(877) 969-0010

Email: nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

WEBSITES:

Pikes Peak - www.TCFPikesPeakChapter.org
Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/TCFPikesPeak>
National - www.compassionatefriends.org



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

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.

\$25 up to \$50 - A picture, if available, and dedication to be listed in the newsletter.

\$0 up to \$25 - A Love Gift acknowledgement. All 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!



Grieving in Pairs

How many times have people said, "Well, thank God you have each other"? How many times have you felt "each other" to be entirely inadequate at meeting your needs?

Alarming statistics are available telling us of the rocky road parents encounter in their marriage after the death of a child. We sometimes see in ourselves a touchiness or quickness to become irritated that wasn't there before. It always seems that my "bad" day is my wife's "good" day, or the day she wakes up crying was the day I had planned on playing tennis.

Or sometimes, even more difficult, we both have a bad day and find no help from the other in pulling things back together. How can one person hold up another when he is himself facedown in the mud?

Every person grieves differently. This is a rule that even applies within a family. And the needs of every individual are different. While you may need to talk and talk and talk, your spouse may need some time alone to reflect inwardly.

You have both been through the worst experience of your life. And while at times you can face recovery as a team, sometimes you must develop the patience to be able to wait out certain needs alone or with someone else. Realize that no matter how it is shown, your partner hurts, too.

Gerry Hunt, TCF, White River Junction, VT



CHAPTER NEWS



We hold our in person monthly meetings at the First Baptist Church. We will meet in our meeting room upstairs behind the office at 7:00 pm on the third Thursday of each month. We look forward to seeing you. The **April 21st** meeting will be moderated by Steering Committee member Robyn Czyz.

TCF asks for donations in memory of our children who have died.

Our chapter is funded solely through donations; therefore we sincerely appreciate your support. Your generosity helps us purchase brochures and cover the many of the expenses that help grieving families in our community. All donations are tax deductible. You and your child's name will be noted in our next newsletter. Workplace "Matching Gift" programs can increase your donation by 50-100%. Please help us help others by making a LOVE GIFT donation today.

Refreshments Anyone?

It's been awhile since we were able to enjoy refreshments at our monthly meetings. We hope to have our coffee pot back on as well as cool drinks and other refreshments. As before, we encourage you to bring and share your child's favor snack on their birthday month or feel free to bring some treats to share just because you're a nice person!

We've all endured a tough two years and now we look forward to meeting and seeing each other once again in the coziness of the church and certainly want to thank those people at the First Baptist Church who have made our meetings once again possible.

EASTER THOUGHTS

One more winter overcome,
One more darkness turned to light and promise.
Winter is the price for spring. Struggle is the price for life.
Even in sorrow, remember to prepare your heart for celebration... Next spring perhaps...
Or the spring after that...

Sascha Wagner, TCF Des Moines IA



Remembering Our Children On Their Birthdays

Name	Birth	Compassionate Friend	Name	Birth	Compassionate Friend
Sarah Ness	Apr 2	Mary Ness	Sabrina Stanard	Apr 17	Ramah Stanard
Michael Robert Pugh	Apr 2	Robert & Donna Pugh	Jonathan Steven Gabriel	Apr 19	Steve & Jane Gabriel
Christie Fike	Apr 2	Shirley & Dan Emerson	Colby McCarley	Apr 19	Tami Sisneros
John Andrew Schoen	Apr 2	Joyce Schoen	Caleb Norris	Apr 19	Keith Norris
Michael Zwirlein	Apr 3	Chris Zwirlein	Beau Matthew Begier	Apr 20	Don & Gina Begier
Kaitlin Bartlett	Apr 3	Kim Bartlett	Bryan Michael Womeldorff	Apr 20	Shawn Brown
Gabriel King Mixon	Apr 3	Rhonda Wilson	Jake Holm	Apr 20	Eric & Kalynne Holm
Steven James Gantz	Apr 4	Diana Gantz	William Murphy	Apr 21	Deb Murphy
Mike Mozo	Apr 5	Valerie Kirchhofer	Ka'Quanthony Sutton/Glover	Apr 22	Shirley Ann LaCour
Colin Robert Spangenberg	Apr 5	Lois Spangenberg	Tyrone Elliott Bautista	Apr 22	Rosemary Devney
Joseph Richardson	Apr 6	Marcia Richardson	Miguel Meza	Apr 24	Susan Meza
Heidi Susanne Wolfe	Apr 6	David & Karen Wolfe	Logan Jude Swearingen	Apr 26	Stephanie & Landon Swearingen
Acacia Barbara Clen	Apr 8	Cindy Santarte	Steven Miller	Apr 27	Mike Miller
Tommy Kinslow	Apr 9	Pam Kinslow	Juan Marine	Apr 29	Pamela Marine
Julie Bankston	Apr 13	Peggy & Obie Bankston	Michael Stump	Apr 29	Polly Kelley
David Bankston	Apr 13	Peggy & Obie Bankston	Kaden France	Apr 30	Jeremy & Sarah France
Jared Todd LeFevre	Apr 16	Susan Reed	Sara M. Losasso	Apr 30	Cindy Losasso
Zachary Nicholas Hoke	Apr 16	Debra & Steve Hoke	Micah David Smilser	Apr 30	Robin Myers

THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

There's an elephant in the room.
It is large and squatting, so it is hard to get around it.
Yet we squeeze by with, "How are you?" and, "I'm fine"... And a thousand other forms of trivial chatter.
We talk about the weather. We talk about work.
We talk about everything else - except - the elephant in the room.
There's an elephant in the room. We all know it is there. We are thinking about the elephant as we talk together. It is constantly on our minds.
For, you see, it is a very big elephant. It has hurt us all. But we do not talk about the elephant in the room.
Oh, please, say her name. Oh, please, say "Barbara" again.
Oh, please, let's talk about the elephant in the room.
For if we talk about her death, perhaps we can talk about her life. Can I say "Barbara" to you and not have you look away?
For if I cannot - then you are leaving me... alone... in a room... With an elephant.

Terry Kettering - TCF Wake County, Raleigh, NC



REMEMBERING OUR CHILDREN ON THEIR ANNIVERSARY

Name	Age	Passed	Compassionate Friend	Name	Age	Passed	Compassionate Friend
Richard McShan	23 years	Apr 1	Paul & Angelika McShan	Acacia Barbara Clen	13 years	Apr 16	Cindy Santarte
Erin Marie McCallister	3 weeks	Apr 2	Steve & Carol McCallister	Naomi K. Schwartz	1 year	Apr 16	Tim and Sonoko Schwartz
Matthew J. McCallister	22 years	Apr 3	Steve & Carol McCallister	Jayden Pierce	4 mo	Apr 17	Dawn Hendricks
Brian Patrick Adair	13 years	Apr 4	Duane & Mary Adair	Dawn Michelle Wiley	21 years	Apr 18	Luanne Wiley
Skylar Lynn Boyle	22 years	Apr 4	Cathleen Boyle	Jalynn Cameron	4 mo	Apr 19	Jessica Cameron
Abraham D. Boukhari	18 years	Apr 4	Deborah Woodrow	Miguel Meza	20 years	Apr 19	Susan Meza
Kristie Diaz	26 years	Apr 7	Julie Diaz	Forrest Kelly	27 years	Apr 20	Cindy Bronner
Douglas Radowski	41 years	Apr 8	Renee Roettger	Leah Rae Wiley	23 years	Apr 21	Russ & Kelly Wiley
Lindsey Everding	18 years	Apr 10	Trena Everding	Ka'Quanthony Sutton	5 years	Apr 24	Shirley Ann LaCour
Rocke Lee Corley	42 years	Apr 11	Jeanne Corley	McKenzie Boutin	17 years	Apr 25	Colleen Boutin
Patrcia Elliott	19 years	Apr 11	Connie and Dave Elliott	Gary Carlson	44 years	Apr 25	Phil & Rose Carlson
Timothy Scott Williams	27 years	Apr 12	Lea Blanc	Blaine Joseph Steele	15 years	Apr 26	Paul Petta
Lindsay Jean Morris	20 years	Apr 12	Linda Morris	Philip Schlenoff	24 years	Apr 26	Natasha Schlenoff
Michael Robert Pugh	13 years	Apr 12	Robert & Donna Pugh	James Bishara	19 years	Apr 27	Phebe Bishara
Eric Johnson	22 years	Apr 13	Gary Johnson	Bill Radcliffe	48 years	Apr 27	Jane Radcliffe
Michael Eck	15 days	Apr 14	Patricia Eck	John Andrew Schoen	55 years	Apr 27	Joyce Schoen
Karey Ackerman	40 years	Apr 14	Bob & Joann Zelins	David Bankston	37 years	Apr 28	Peggy & Obie Bankston
Dennis Lynn Gerringer	16 years	Apr 16	Kim Gerringer	Rachel Rafferty	24 years	Apr 28	Gary & Kris Rafferty
Sarah Sunshine Wedekind	30 years	Apr 16	Lorry Pearson	Sarah Robertson	43 years	Apr 29	Barbara Ball
Richard "Richie" Petras	3 years	Apr 16	Richard Petras	Micah David Smilser	1 day	Apr 30	Robin Myers



Michaela Christianson
in memory of Damon Vincent Christianson

Bereaved Parents

Different ages Different stages Different
issues Same pain
Daily strain Occasional tissues Our children
have died Often is all we know
A fact we fear to hide Despite our ever-
present woe We live with pride Though
broken-hearted
To love, remember, and grow

Victor Montemurro ~ TCF, Medford, NY



Grief and Marriage

When our son was killed, I remember thinking through the haze of pain that this most horrifying of life experiences would somehow bring us closer. Sharing the loss of a child created and loved by both of us for twenty years would surely deepen the bond between us. I was in for a surprise.

We clung almost blindly to each other until the shock began to give way to ugly reality. As we each moved to our individual pattern of grieving, differences began to emerge. I felt like a time bomb about to explode. I needed desperately to talk about our son. My husband refused to verbalize his feelings and became angry at my overtures. I stopped trying to communicate. This was beyond my comprehension. Where was my helpmate, my best friend? I felt rejected, unloved and terribly alone. Anger overwhelmed me as I literally realized that I wasn't going to be able to share my grieving with the person who meant the most to me in the world. I knew that many marriages fail after the death of a child. Dear God, how could we possibly survive an additional tragedy?

We attended a few Compassionate Friends meetings, and then I continued alone. The gentle acceptance of others who had lost children permitted me to talk or cry without guilt. Our problem was definitely not unique; many other parents expressed similar frustrations. So many couples experience marital difficulties after the death of a child that it is now considered the norm. We weren't going crazy; and just because our grieving styles were different didn't mean that our whole marriage would fall apart. My anger began to dissipate as I slowly faced the fact that I had been placing unrealistic expectations on my husband. Hurting at least as much as I, he simply could not meet my needs for support.

Much later, the knowledge that support had been there all along from my friends if I had only asked for it saddened me. I had to admit that I simply had been too proud to reveal myself as a suffering person in need of help.

I will be forever grateful to Compassionate Friends for being there with loving, open arms. We began to have some honest discussions, agreeing that we needed each other's nurturing in order to survive and find meaning in life. We learned to respect each other's feelings. We tried to please each other in little ways: a hug, a special meal, anything that expressed caring. Patience with each other smoothed over many rough moments.

Time spent alone or together was very healing. It took a conscious decision from both of us to try. Some days, we didn't have any energy left when grief was particularly painful. It wasn't always easy as we couldn't talk about our son for a long time.

As I look back, I see that ignorance of grief and the impact it can have on a marriage was the basis for our problems. But in retrospect, how could we possibly have been prepared for the onslaught of paralyzing emotions that overwhelmed us? Anguish of this intensity can reveal a spouse you've never seen before. Deeply wounded, both of you will be inevitably changed from the experience of losing a child. Back then, understanding these simple facts would have immeasurably helped us.

Pat Retzliff, TCF Oshkosh, WI



A Stepparent's Thoughts

I am a bereaved stepparent—stepfather to be exact. Robin Ann Craney, my stepdaughter, was killed at the hands of a drunk driver on June 8, 2001. She was 17 years old.

I have a son named Greg. His Mom remarried so I saw him on weekends, did the trips, and long summer visits as many divorced parents do. I did not get the chance to be a part of his life and see him every day. I got to hear about his activities and accomplishments all after the fact. When you marry someone with kids, you get another chance.

After several months of dating my (now) wife Cindy, I finally met her kids, Chris and Robin. Robin was almost 7 years old at the time. I remember that first meeting clearly because she wasn't feeling so good. She ended up getting sick and had to go home. What a first meeting that was! After that, I became totally involved in the lives and activities of both of the children. I remember one of those nights well! Cindy and I attended parent-teacher conferences for both kids, a Cub Scout Pack meeting and a Girl Scout Brownie meeting—not bad for a single guy, who had been unmarried for 13 years!

Over the years, I got to know Robin's likes, dislikes and all of her friends—and she had a lot of friends! I attended and participated in all of Robin's activities, supporting her in her many endeavors—including gymnastics (her favorite). I was there when she had migraine headaches, running her to the doctor when her mother couldn't, encouraging her, supporting her—all the things Dads do for their kids. I want to tell you in no uncertain terms, being a stepparent is so much harder. You get the responsibility and, often times it seems, none of the respect. "Mom said I could so I don't have to listen to you" or "You can't tell me what to do, you are not my dad" and so forth. I tolerated and dealt with her emotional outbursts when she became incensed at

anything (sometimes it seemed everything) during the teen years. All Dads know how trying those times can be!

Now I am a bereaved stepparent—the one in a kind of "no man's land." I am not biologically connected to Robin; I sometimes feel like an outsider around people who were once a family—mother, father, son and daughter. Many of our friends have worried about Cindy and Chris. They often ask me "How is Cindy doing?" or "Is Chris OK?" Although I knew and lived with Robin for 10 years, very few ask, "How are you doing?" I am only the stepparent. The idea that this tragedy cannot be as devastating to me as it is to Robin's "real family" is incomprehensible.

One definition for the word father is "father figure: one often of particular power or influence who serves as an emotional substitute for a father." This is what I was for Robin. She loved to push my buttons—but that was part of our relationship—as frustrating as it could be. Robin is the only daughter I will ever have. I was every bit a father to her. I love her and I miss her. We, the stepparents of children who have died, grieve for our children too. Only society puts the "step" in the name. Parent is still the biggest part of who we are. We hurt because they were our children too—often without the support and understanding that is demonstrated towards the biologically connected parents. These beautiful children with whom we developed emotional bonds are now gone out of our lives; and we, too, endure the same feelings of loss and sadness.

Tony Cinocco ~ TCF, Denver, CO

April, 2022

Copyright © 2022 - All Rights Reserved
The Compassionate Friends, Inc.

Dated Material - Please Deliver Promptly - Return Service Requested

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

