



Upcoming Events

March 17th - General Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church
April 21st - General Meeting, Sharing Music - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church

STEERING COMMITTEE

CHAPTER LEADER

LARAINÉ ASARO-ANDERSON
Son, Michael Edward Anderson

MAILINGS & DATABASE

JANE & STEVE GABRIEL
Son, Jonathan Steven Gabriel

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/LIBRARIAN

CHAE LA CHRISTIANSON
Son, Damon Vincent Christianson

SC MEMBER/WELCOME PACKETS

LETA LEVETT
Son, Aaron Paul Levett

SC MEMBER

LEONIE CRAMER
Son, Julian Anthony King

SC MEMBER

DIANNE McLAUGHLIN
Son, Kevin Hardman

TELEPHONE FRIENDS

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

CHAPTER LEADER

LARAINÉ ASARO-ANDERSON * 351-7653

DRUG / ALCOHOL LOSS

STEWART & LETA LEVETT * 531-5488

TODDLER / YOUNG CHILD LOSS

BOB & YVETTE THOMPSON * 573-2743

LEUKEMIA

JANE & STEVE GABRIEL * 282-1924

ADULT CHILD / SUDDEN DEATH

CHAE LA CHRISTIANSON * 687-6688

SUICIDE

LARITA ARCHIBALD 596-2575

SKATEBOARD / AUTO ACCIDENT

RAYE WILSON (303) 814-9478

*Please feel free to contact any of these Steering Committee members if you can not reach our Chapter Leader. **





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 March 17, 2016.

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.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!



Chaplain

**Gene Steinkirchner
CSPD**



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



Welcome to our new families:
Sherri Albern - Daughter Kali Albern

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.

FORGIVENESS

When our child dies, most of us are angry at those who caused or had a part in the death. Sometimes we are angry at our child for leaving us this way. We did not deserve the hurt and now it is lodged deep in our memory.

As we attend Compassionate Friends meetings, we can see we are not alone in this hurting. It gives us the chance to share and try to understand the pain.

Sometimes some of us even hate, although we don't want to admit that hate. I think if we admit the hate, talk about it, bring it up in group meetings, then we can resolve it and slowly turn these feelings into forgiveness.

I feel that we must separate the thing we are angry about from the persons. In my case, I was angry at the doctors in the emergency room who I felt let my daughter die. Then I began to see that doctors do not JUST LET a sixteen-year-old die. Then I knew it was the death and not the doctors with whom I was angry. I guess they were just the scapegoats.

A lot of us are angry at God for taking our child, but then what kind of God would take such a beautiful person. Not the God I know. He would never hurt us or our child. Forgiveness is hard, but we must persist. We must not think we are letting the person we are angry with off the hook. Someone even told me forgiveness is a sign of weakness and I should be strong and not forgive. I believe vengeance does not even the score. I believe it just makes our anger deeper if we don't forgive and we just go on in a vicious circle.

Let us work on forgiving. We can survive on love, but not on hate. Let us love the child we lost, love his memory. When we turn from anger to love, the forgiveness will begin.

We must also forgive US, as some of us are angry at ourselves. Forgiveness for some of us will be hard to reach. Keep working on it, keep loving. We cannot control the future, but we can be a part in the successful outcome.

Larry Warren, TCF North GA Chapter



The Roller Coaster

As a child I enjoyed the thrill of the roller coaster: gliding up the giant track, reaching the top with a momentary anticipation and the thrill of the quick dropping roll to the bottom of the track. The deep turns, first to the right and then to the left were designed to heighten the anticipation of the next climb and drop. In my childhood mind, these curves, climbs and drops were an isolated experience, temporary and fun. The ride would end.

A few months after my son's death, I dreamed of the roller coaster. But this time it wasn't fun. It was a nightmare of fear, anxiety and pain; I was so paralyzed that I couldn't breathe. That dream was the simple symbolism of life since my son died. Now I ride a different sort of roller coaster. The climb to the top is a slow, difficult rise to normalcy. The rapid descent to the bottom is yet another terrible setback. I hang onto the bar of sanity on the curves, first one way, then another. I really want to stop this ride, but it is forever. This ride won't end. Today I recalled that roller coaster dream, in all its vivid detail, and I compare it to the roller coaster that is my life now. Are the highs lower and the lows higher? Are the curves softening? Yes, I believe they are. It's been two years and two months since Todd died. I still weep. Tiny tears still fall unexpectedly. I still have anxiety. I still feel as if the earth has dropped from under me. I still miss talking with my son. I miss seeing him. I ache for that special hug that only my child can give. Yes, I miss my only child very much. My heart has been shattered, my definition of myself has been altered and my loneliness is incomprehensible. But something has changed on the roller coaster of this life. That something is, of course, me. I work through my grief in many, many ways. I have consciously shifted the paradigms of my life.

I have learned to evaluate people from a different perspective. I have become so sensitive to the pain of other parents that I feel it as if it were my own. I have stopped anticipating how I will handle stressful events, anniversaries, birthdays, holidays. I have learned to live without being a part of my grandchildren's lives. I have learned to keep negative energy and negative people at a far distance. I have learned that a routine provides necessary structure. I have learned to live in the moment, to take joy in simple things, to talk openly about my child's life and to acknowledge the things I cannot change. As time moves forward, I will continue to accept what is given and give what I can. I know the roller coaster will level out eventually.

For as long as I live, I will keep my child with me, in my heart. That's all I can do as I ride this changing roller coaster that is now my life.

Annette Mennen Baldwin, TCF, Katy, TX ~ Written in memory of my son, Todd Mennen



Remembering Our Children On Their Birthdays - March

Child's Name	Date of Birth	Compassionate Friend
Wayne Allen Garrett	Mar 4	Joyce & Greg Garrett
Desiree D'Gornaz	Mar 4	Louie & Edna D'Gornaz
Logan Lawrence	Mar 5	Janet & Edward Lawrence
Erin Marie McCallister	Mar 7	Steve & Carol McCallister
Keith Andrew Barrett	Mar 8	Ree Barrett
Samuel Christensen	Mar 9	Stacy Christensen
Owen William Howard	Mar 10	Mike & Carol Parker
James Craig Stiegelmeier	Mar 11	Betty Stiegelmeier
Ava Rose Wolfe	Mar 12	Kristy Wolfe
Conri Lee Barber	Mar 13	Sean Barber & Cherie Barledge
Marisa Nicole Pilant	Mar 14	Stephen & Julie Pilant
Ian Vincent	Mar 16	Vicky Campbell
Cathleen Bartlett Maxwell	Mar 17	Dick & Marty Maxwell
Julian King	Mar 18	Carl Reese & Leonie Cramer
Terry "TJ" Basgall	Mar 21	Stephanie Basgall
Megan Huyge	Mar 21	Stan & Rebecca Huyge
Billy E. Hendrickson	Mar 22	Grace & Delbert Hendrickson
Christopher J. Novich	Mar 24	Susan & Joe Novich
Clayton Champion	Mar 24	Jessie & Phyllis Roark
Marc Darby	Mar 25	Lori & Steve Darby
Scott Martinson	Mar 26	JoAnn Martinson
Justin A. Clayton	Mar 26	Terry & Sharon Clayton
Jon Van Pelt	Mar 27	Claudette Van Pelt
Kira Ann Schager	Mar 28	Frank & Lori Schager
Kari Ann Kirt	Mar 28	Lon & Andrea Kirt
Michael Eck	Mar 31	Patricia Eck

Music is such an important part of our lives marking birthdays and anniversaries, first dates and conjuring up memories of loved ones, past and present. Our April 21st general meeting will be an opportunity for you to share the music that meant so much to your child. Please bring a cd or tape or some other form of music to share with the other members of our group. We will try to have players to accommodate your music source. If you'd rather, you can always bring printed lyrics to read.



Remembering Our Children On Their Anniversaries - March

Child's Name	Age	Date of Death	Compassionate Friend
Kevin Michael Burns	16 years	Mar 3	Stan & Willie Burns
Jessica Robison	17 years	Mar 3	Terri Robison
Steven James Gantz	13 years	Mar 4	Diana Gantz
Brian Michael Gregory	16 years	Mar 6	Roy & Phyllis Gregory
Terry A. Shank	28 years	Mar 6	Carol Vierling
Tiffany Maxwell	34 years	Mar 7	Diane Maxwell
Michelle Sandra Seal	3 years	Mar 7	Walter & Diana Seal
Jay William Sheridan	27 years	Mar 9	Mary & Tim Sheridan
Christopher Russell Tyson	27 years	Mar 9	Cory Lynn Tyson
Terry "TJ" Basgall	25 years	Mar 11	Stephanie Basgall
Andy Cope	27 years	Mar 14	Debbie & Kurt Adelbush
Chris Barns	32 years	Mar 14	Bonnie Barns
Adam J. Hurst	32 years	Mar 14	Kim Troeger
Kevin Edward Farley	27 years	Mar 15	Elizabeth Farley
Charlie Josh Jones	12 years	Mar 16	Sue Jones, Angie Jones
Jim Agnew	31 years	Mar 17	Tom & Bev Agnew
Jody Elizabeth Houtz	17 years	Mar 18	Jane & Chris Houtz
Danae Lynne Marie Mannon		Mar 18	Art Mannon
Keltryn Lenae Brinkman	2 years	Mar 19	Jim & Judy Brinkman
John Daniel Bernard Ringo	8 years	Mar 21	Paul Ringo, Angela Randle
Christopher Calegar	10 years	Mar 22	Kevin & Linda Calegar
Megan Huyge	2 days	Mar 22	Stan & Rebecca Huyge
Gary Michael Owens	32 years	Mar 27	Freda Maria Garcia
Colin Peter Baerman	32 years	Mar 28	Paul & Kerry Baerman
Timothy Patrick Shea	21 years	Mar 31	Joe & Paula Shea

DADS CRY TOO ~ I MISS YOU

I miss your morning instant messages. I miss the slippers that you always gave me for Christmas; well maybe not the slippers as much as knowing that you always thought of me and loved me, too. Whenever I needed another pair of hands, you were always there.

I miss working with you and watching you dance and even arguing with you about what songs we should play I miss your turning to me for help or to ask some question that you could easily have found out the answer, but you wanted me to feel needed.

I miss the way that you teased me and called me silly nicknames, and how you lovingly picked on me I miss your laugh and your smile and how you loved me as if my body had helped to make you. I miss you, my daughter, and love you more.

Jim Darby, Robyn's dad ~ TCF Northeast Rockville CT Chapter



As we all know, the death of our child, no matter what age or circumstance, is a shattering experience for a family. When a child dies, to whom does a family turn for the emotional support they will need during the grief journey that lies ahead? If you are reading this newsletter, you have already learned that The Compassionate Friends understands that grief for a child lasts longer & is more intense than society commonly recognizes. Together as grieving parents we can offer empathy and understanding of this loss, while also recognizing that each person's grief is unique.

Do you know someone who is in need of The Compassionate Friends? Won't you be the hand that reaches out and offers support by giving them information about our organization?

My Precious Grandchild

I waited for that moment and it arrived one special day.

My first glimpse of you nearly took my breath away.

I was apprehensive about being called a grandma it's true,
until the first time I was called grandma by you.

Being a mother was a wondrous joy for me,

I gave it all I had with great responsibility.

Then I watched my child become a father of his own,
now I could be a grandma and explore the great unknown.

You brought so much joy when you entered this world;
you were grandma's pretty angel and daddy's little girl.

I loved to take you shopping, I loved to brush your hair,
in fact I loved taking you with me almost anywhere.

All those years of joy were filled with promise of much more,
how could we have known that sadness soon would be in store.

The ringing of the telephone, a knocking at the door,
in an instant all that mattered most didn't matter anymore.

The hurt was great for me and for my child so wracked with pain,
without my pretty angel life would never be the same.

We gave each other comfort and we held each other tight,
somehow we have weathered the darkest of the night.

Today we still cry and we always ache for you,
but we also take some time remembering that you lived too.

Your smile forever sparkles and your laugh will always be,
because my precious grandchild you are still a part of me.

Connie Sheets - Lifted From TCF's ***We Need Not Walk Alone*** (Autumn/Winter 2014)





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

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.



HEALING WORDS

3 Ways to Use Spring to Help You Through Your Grief

When we're grieving, sometimes all we want is a fresh start. You can't undo your loss, so the next best thing is to move forward. Spring is a time of "Rebirth." It's the perfect time of year to get a fresh start on anything. This spring, take advantage of the changing season to help you through your grieving process.

1. Make Time for Spring Cleaning

There's something about the beautiful weather and warmer temperatures that make us want to clean in the springtime. Clean anything; a room, your car, a closet, your entire house, your mind. This is a great opportunity to organize or update your memories. Have a shoebox of photographs you've been meaning to display? Take time to put together a new memorial with the pictures. If you're feeling really ambitious, brighten up your house with new paint colors. Research shows that certain paint colors have an effect on our mood. Freshen up your living room with a sunny yellow accent wall or cover your bedroom walls with a cheery green color.

2. Plant Something

Spring is the perfect time to put your green thumb to the test. If you have room in your yard, plant a memorial garden in honor of your loved one. If planting an entire garden isn't feasible, start small with a single plant. The growth and beauty of the plants or flowers will give you inspiration each day to live life. Spending time outside will help you to clear your mind and be at peace with your thoughts.

3. Start Something New

There's always more going on during the spring and summer months. Find out what's happening in the community, or think of a new hobby to try on your own. Pick your activity and make time for it at least once a week. Your new activity will give you something to look forward to and will help take your mind off of your loss, even if it's only for an hour a week. The spring months can actually be hard on a grieving person. It's hard to watch everyone else moving forward with the changing season if you're not ready. But keep in mind, just because you're starting something new or changing things up doesn't mean you have to leave anything behind. Your loved one would want you to enjoy the relief from the cold and take advantage of the wonderful things that spring has to offer.

By Chelsea Hanson - TCF North Shore, Boston



THOUGHTFUL POEMS

Playing in the Shadows

We grew up together,
Big sister, little brother.
I took care of you
Until you were old enough to care for
yourself.
Though you didn't say it,
I knew you loved me.
We played in the sunlight, you and I;
Remember the games of "Mother-May-I" and
"Hide-and-Seek"? Sure we had our fights
As all siblings do,
But through it all we never lost
Our love for each other.
Now you're gone.
I'll never see you again
except in the memories
of those sunny days.
You will forever be sixteen--
Far too young to die.
You had your whole life to live.
I'll always grieve, but I must go on.
Still, without you,
I play alone in the shadows.
~Cheryl Larson TCF Pikes Peak, CO

Mother's Memories

Across the field of yesterday He sometimes
comes to me
A little lad just back from play The lad he used
to be.
Yet as he smiles so sweetly
As his memories are held within I wonder if I
can see
The man he might have been.
By Yvonne Butler - TCF Covington County, AL

I Am Spring

I am the beginning.
I am budding promise.
I spill cleansing tears of life
from cloudy vessels creating muddy puddles
where single cell creatures abide
and splashing children play.
I am new green growth.
I softly flow from winter's barren hand.
On gentle breeze I fly – embracing sorrow.
With compassion, we feather nests where
winged voices sing winter-spring duets.
As frozen ice transforms to playful stream
I whisper truth – life is change.
I am spring.
I bless long, dark wintry days.
I crown mankind's pain
with starry skies
in deepest night
lighting solitary paths from sorrow to joy
as the wheel of life turns 'round and 'round.
By Carol Clum
Atlanta, GA TCF

A TRIBUTE

*I think of you in silence,
But my feelings seldom show,
But how it hurts to lose you
No one will ever know.*

*I hope there is eternal life,
So we can meet again.
I not only lost my brother,
I lost my very best friend.*

*The reason you left so early
I'll never understand why.
I just wish I'd known you were never coming
back,
Cause I would have said good-bye.*

*Marta King
TCF, Concorde, NH*



HOW MANY CHILDREN DO YOU HAVE?

"How many children do you have?" they ask. Oh, that dreaded question. "How much time do you have?" I wonder silently to myself. Do you really want to know? And do you really care? Am I up to going through the entire crazy, confusing tale? If you have the time, my friend, here's the answer I will give....

I have children who dance and children who sing, children with freckles and dimples and bows, children who run through the sprinkler and hose, children who color (on paper and walls), one who loves stomping and jumping puddles, children who ask "What is that for?" and spill glasses and glasses of milk on the floor, children who laugh and children who cry, constantly asking Mommy and Daddy, "Why?"

But I have one who is different, set apart from the rest, one I've never known the joy of nursing at my breast, one we cannot cuddle, one we cannot hold, though we will in our hearts, as we grow old. She, I cannot rock when stormy is the night, or tuck snugly into bed with the fading of day's light. Though here with me now, four is all that you see. "I have five children," I'd say, with a glance towards the sky. "Four that can run and one that can fly."

Val Minihan, TCF Sioux Falls, SD

Winter Into Spring In Grief's Garden

by Genesse Bourdeau Gentry

February's rainy days — March's lions and lambs — spring's new beginnings dance across the land. And how are you doing? Is your heart full or sad? How much of life's renewal is your soul allowed to have? As spring comes creeping towards you, does the darkness sweep in too? Does pain engulf the beauty with its bleakness and ruin your life which is now in shambles. So much is lost of your dreams — they are lifeless, empty. But all around you life is growing. Can you feel it too? Do you know that inside you there is growth? Yes — in you. Your child's death has left a hole in you so deep that you feel hollow. But this growth will fill it with new life, new dreams amidst the sorrow. And within that new and growing life, is your ever living child — with all the love and memories of that laugh and that smile! All of your growth from now until your death will contain seeds of your child's life, will hold their love's breath. You may feel that this growing would be a betrayal, but the bond with your child will get stronger, not weaker. As their spirit surrounds you or their love soaks you through, you could try new ways of living, honoring them, honoring you. And where once only ruin covered all that you knew, you will find new life budding, new meanings for you. It may take many years before you see it as gain, but know it is happening even now, midst the pain. You will spring upward growing tall towards the sun and within your new beauty is your daughter or your son.

Compassion, faithfulness and mercy require us to get beyond self and sense the needs of others.

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