



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



March 2017

STEERING COMMITTEE

CHAPTER LEADER

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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 March 16, 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.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!



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.

Seasons

The change of seasons is difficult. It reminds me that I must change if I am to live again. We can become stuck in our grief, full of self-pity and overwhelmed with pain. I do not believe our children would want us to live the rest of our lives in pain and misery. It is so easy to fall into the "black pit" and never have the strength or courage to crawl out – because crawl out we must...on our bellies.

We are different now, with different priorities and goals. We must find a new purpose for going on, and we must accept the changes in our lives – including ourselves, for we are different now. We cannot go backward, though there are times we yearn to. We must go forward. If we don't, we stay stuck at the point our world changed. I used to say "ended."

Change is difficult. To accept the loss of our child is the most difficult of all. Our comfort comes from believing that the love we share will go on for all eternity and that we will be reunited again – and each day brings us closer. We must learn to live again, love again, feel joy and peace again – or our survival will be without value to our-selves or others.

Renee Little - TCF, Fort Collins, CO



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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.

Elizabeth Alvar - Sons, Bernie O'Grady
and Patrick O'Grady

Dale Vega - Daughter, Anadelia Vega

Sandra Searles - Son, John Clayton Doggett



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

Chaplain Eugene Steinkircher - CSPD

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTACTS

TCF National Office
P.O. Box 3656
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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.

It's hard to endure the aches of aging when yours have stopped so young. - Stew Levett - Pikes Peak TCF



Remembering Our Children On Their Birthdays - March '17

<u>Child's Name</u>	<u>Birthday</u>	<u>Compassionate Friend</u>
Wayne Allen Garrett	Mar 4	Joyce and 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 Stieglmeyer	Mar 11	Betty Stieglmeyer
Ava Rose Wolfe	Mar 12	Kristy Wolfe
Conri Lee Barber	Mar 13	Sean Barber & Cherie Barledge
Marisa Nicole Pilant	Mar 14	Richard & Elizabeth Jamison, Stephen & Julie Pilant
Ian Vincent	Mar 16	Vicky Campbell
Cathleen Bartlett Maxwell	Mar 17	Dick & Marty Maxwell
Thomas Cooper	Mar 17	Marianne Lawless
Julian King	Mar 18	Carl Reese & Leonie Cramer
Megan Huyge	Mar 21	Stan & Rebecca Huyge
Terry "TJ" Basgall	Mar 21	Stephanie Basgall
Billy E. Hendrickson	Mar 22	Grace & Delbert Hendrickson
Michael Colgrove	Mar 23	Theresa Colgrove
Christopher J. Novich	Mar 24	Susan & Joe Novich
Clayton Champion	Mar 24	Jessie & Phyllis Roark
Marc Darby	Mar 25	Lori & Steve Darby
Justin A. Clayton	Mar 26	Terry & Sharon Clayton
Scott Martinson	Mar 26	JoAnn Martinson
Jon Van Pelt	Mar 27	Claudette Van Pelt
Kira Ann Schager	Mar 28	Frank & Lori Schager
Kari Ann Kirt	Mar 28	Lon and Andrea Kirt
Michael Eck	Mar 31	Patricia Eck



Remembering Our Children On Their Anniversaries - March '17

<u>Child's Name</u>	<u>Forever Age</u>	<u>Date of Death</u>	<u>Compassionate Friend</u>
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 Adel bush
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	Angie Jones, Sue Jones
Jim Agnew	31 years	Mar 17	Tom & Bev Agnew
Jody Elizabeth Houtz	17 years	Mar 18	Jane and Chris Houtz
Danae Lynne Mannon	3 months	Mar 18	Art Mannon
Keltryn Lenae Brinkman	2 years	Mar 19	Jim & Judy Brinkman
John Daniel Bernard Ringo	8 years	Mar 21	Angela Randle, Paul Ringo
Christopher Calegar	10 years	Mar 22	Kevin & Linda Calegar
Megan Huyge	2 days	Mar 22	Stan & Rebecca Huyge
Michael Colgrove	1 day	Mar 23	Theresia Colgrove
Lauren Hoover	26 years	Mar 23	Jill & Banty Hoover
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



When I Was There

When I was there with you and lived my life as your son/daughter, I knew you loved me with all your heart, I felt it from day one. I never once regretted having chosen you for my mom and although our time together was short, please don't stay sad. You see, when I was with you I learned so very much and I took with me to my other life all my memories of your love. I share it with the other kids I've met since I've arrived, we all have memories of those special times. Please never doubt that we're alive, we are busy helping others and giving of your time. I see sometimes when you think of me you are sad that I am gone, but remember that I'm still with you, you just can't see me tag along. I go with you on your travels and yes, that's me in your dreams at night, I still look the same just maybe a little more handsome/beautiful in this light. Here, there is no sadness, Mom, only joy, love and peace. Here is where I'll wait, until you can come and live with me. In my world now, there is no rush, things just happen day by day, so take your time and enjoy life, have a little fun, it really is okay and when you make your journey to this place where we're all one, remember, I'll be waiting and I'll always be your son/daughter.

Borrowed from TCF Bluegrass - Nicholasville, KY

When Will The Pain End?

When I look back over my grief journey, I marvel at how far I have come and yet at how poignant and permanent the loss of my son will always be for me. How can this dichotomy exist within one person's mind?

The horror of the news of my son's death, the shock that slammed my mind into numbness, the unremembered conversations, the platitudes that followed the memorial service and the first two months of living in a complete fog of disbelief are very vivid in my mind. The horror is too real to forget. The next six months of melancholy, miserable mourning are forever locked in my mind. The pure physical pain, the piercing jolts when I momentarily thought of something beyond my child's death and was mercilessly slammed back into the finality of death's amputation of my son's smile, laughter and physical presence on this earth are etched for eternity in my soul.

My mind simply couldn't accept that Todd was gone from this plane. The first anniversary of his death was a horrifying day worsened by a very bleak and foreshadowing conversation with my son's widow. Life would be much different for my husband and me from this point forward. There were no bridges to the past. She made that clear. I was inconsolable from the impact of her wicked words.

But I made it through the first and second years with help from my Compassionate Friends Chapter. I could cry and scream about the injustice of my loss and all that followed, and each parent understood. Eventually I had told my story enough times to enough people that I subconsciously accepted Todd's death and all the changes in my life that followed.

At some point in my second year of grief I began reaching out to others. Helping others, seeing their pain, hearing their tearful words, had become cathartic for me. The more I helped, the more I was helped.

Yes, my son is still with me in my heart and in my memories. The movies of his life play in my mind almost daily. I have made new friends. I have walked away from old acquaintances. I have learned to separate the meaningful from the meaningless. And I have learned that I will always feel the pain of my son's death, yet I must always move forward into hope. Each day brings more hope as I accomplish another piece of my lifelong grief work.

So the dichotomy exists within me. In my heart, mind and soul my child will live forever. The memories of the full measure of each day of his life are there to give me peace and solace. Yet, the brutal pain of my son's death is there, too. Unlike any other love in life, a parent's love is unconditional and transcends all. There is a peace in knowing that. The pain doesn't end. It simply reshapes itself into a quiet, soft ache that gives us a gentle, often tearful, reminder that our child will always be with us. And perhaps that is as it should be.

Annette Mennen Baldwin - TCF, Katy, TX



THE BARK AND THE TREE

My first night at our Compassionate Friends meeting, after the meeting had ended, a few of us sat, talking. It had been only about a month since my daughter's tragic accident and I was that combination of foggily numb, angry, cloudy and very depressed that most of you know so very well from your own journey. In my heart I knew that my life could never be anything but what it was at that moment.

An analogy was shared with me that evening that I absorbed as much as I could absorb anything in that foggy night. My daughter used to call me, not necessarily with great fondness, The Queen of Analogies. I had used them, often to her annoyance, so frequently as she was growing up to illustrate points and teach lessons. They didn't always make sense to her, but being The Analogy Queen, I coveted any good one that I heard and make up scores of others on my own.

Over the course of the following months after that night, I found myself drawn back to the Tree and Bark Analogy when people would ask how I was doing. "Today I only know THE BARK", I might reply, or "There may be a vague sighting of something that could be a tree", I might say at another time. And then I would have to explain what I meant, having turned THE BARK of the Tree into an analogy that spoke to my emotions.

In the very beginning following the death of our loved one, it is as if we are standing in a forest, but with our faces pressed up against THE BARK of a single tree. It is all that we can see. It blocks out the sun and obscures everything else. All we know, all we are, everything that exists for us is that blurred bark of the single tree.

As time passes, we might, some days, notice that there may be a butterfly lit upon that patch of bark, or a bit of life sustaining sap trickling upon the grain. Maybe, on one particularly day, we might notice that the patch of bark is actually part of a tree. And as some time passes, we might begin to notice that the tree has another that stands next to it; and another and another and that there is actually green grass making up their bed and blue sky welcoming their out-reaching branches. On a particular day we might notice that THE BARK on The Tree is actually part of a forest and that other life, other animals weave among the trees and fly among the branches. Our ears may hear the babbling of a distant brook or the songs of the birds. We might actually feel the warmth of sun or a cool breeze tickling our skin. And, then, some days, again and again, all we can see is THE BARK.

THE BARK never goes away. It is always part of our picture. Some days, especially in the beginning of what is now our Lifetime Journey, THE BARK is all that we can handle, all we can see, all we know exists. Sometimes, even on that same day, we might get a glimpse of the trees or feel the sun, but then are pulled back to seeing only THE BARK. Yet the forest

remains, too, even if some times it is out of our ability to comprehend its existence.

Mostly, in the first year of the past 495 days, I've had my face pressed up against THE BARK and was often aware of little else. Occasionally I would surprise myself, when someone asked, to admit that there were times, when I might believe in the possibility that I could see other trees someday. And once in a rare while, now, I do catch a blurred glimpse of The Entire Forest. Yet some days, especially the days that Robyn's Void screams so loudly that I can hear nothing but how deeply I miss her and grieve for the absence of our daily teasing, talking and friendship, that there exists only the fogged coarseness of THE BARK.

It was more than a year after my first meeting that I discovered who had presented the analogy to the women who had shared it so kindly with me that first night. She is Toni Wood, Barry's mom, and had long been a Compassionate Friend to the members of This Ugly Club that we all, so deeply against our will, were forced to become part of. I was able to talk with Toni about the origin of The Trees and she shared this with me:

"...To tell you the truth I have no clue where I got that from... but I used it because it worked for me. I can see the tree now more clearly and the memories don't always make me cry now ~ most of the time, but not all. When I first thought about this analogy all I could see was the ugly knot of Barry's death. I could not see the good memories, the wonderful things he did and said. I had to step back and get my nose away from the knot in the tree so I could see more of the tree ~ his life. The roots of the tree ~ the family. The branches ~ his son and wife and friends. The leaves and flowers are the good and the bad things he did in his life. Even bad things are good memories now." Toni Wood, Barry's mom

What I do know now to be true, is that THE BARK will never completely go away for me, though, someday, it might become 'the bark'. And I have found that sometimes I might be having a "Forest Moment"; like the day I officiated my son and my daughter-in-law's outdoor Vermont winter wedding. Their vows were shared next to a gorge, a shivering waterfall and among the birds and trees. I was in "The Forest" when all of the sudden a painful spasm of Robyn's Absence, hurled me back toward THE BARK. I know that even at a time when I might feel the sun, that I can suddenly crash right back into THE BARK of the Tree. That is The Reality of Missing My Child.

Perhaps the irony is that, as a family, we bought 30 acres of forest that we built our family home on together. We used to play among the trees and go "tree hunting" for games of hide and seek and scrap wood for our cozy fire circles. Trees always used to make me smile and feel comforted. Perhaps, some day, again, I will see them and appreciate their beauty. For right now, I am still all too well aware of THE BARK. ♥

Bettie-Jeanne Rivard-Darby, TCF, Ellington, CT



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

Angels Among Us

Our Angels are among us
We see them everyday
In all the forms that God created...
They are with us along life's way.
We see them in the sunrise,
That brightens and warms our soul.
We feel them in the summer breeze
That chases away our cold.
They are there among the flowers...
Their sweet scent a memory of love.
They soar with the eagles,
As they fly so high above.
The night will find them in the stars,
Lighting our path below.
And even in our dreams,
Their presence we'll still know.
As the snow melts with the sun,
And spring flowers peek through their beds,
They come on the wings of butterflies,
And flutter about our heads.
They are telling us they are with us,
And will be forever more...
Until it's time for us to meet again,
As we pass through heaven's door.

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HEALING WORDS

OLDER GRIEF

Older grief is gentler. It's about sudden tears swept in by a strand of music. It's about haunting echoes of first pain at Anniversaries. It's about feeling his presence for an instant one day while I'm dusting his room. It's about early pictures that invite me to fold him in my arms again. It's about memories blown in on wisps of wood smoke and sea scents.

Older grief is about aching in gentler ways, rarer longing, less engulfing fire. Older grief is about searing pain wrought into tenderness.

~Linda Zelenka TCF, Jacksonville, FL

My Old Friend Grief

By Adolfo Quesda - TCF, Colorado

My old friend Grief is back. He comes to visit me once in awhile to remind me that I am still a broken man. Surely, there has been much healing since my son died six years ago, and surely, I have adjusted to a world without him. However, the truth is we never completely heal and we never totally adjust. Such is the nature of the loss that no matter how much life has been experienced, the heart of the bereaved will never be the same. It is as though a part of us dies with the person we lose through death.

And so my old friend Grief drops in to say "Hello." Sometimes he enters through the door of my memory. I will hear a song or smell a fragrance. I will look at a picture and I will remember how it used to be. Sometimes it brings a smile to my face ... sometimes a tear.

One may say that remembrance is unhealthy ... that we should not dwell on thoughts that make us sad. Yet the opposite is true. Grief revisited is Grief acknowledged and Grief confronted is Grief resolved. But if Grief is resolved, why do we feel a sense of loss when we least expect it? Because healing does not mean forgetting and moving on with life does not mean that we do not take a part of our lost love with us. Of course, the intensity of the pain decreases over time if we allow Grief to visit from time to time.

Sometimes my old friend Grief sneaks up on me. It is as though the ones we have lost are determined not to be forgotten. My old friend Grief does not get in the way of living. He just wants to come along and chat sometimes. Grief has taught me a few things about living I would not have learned on my own. He has taught me that if I try to deny the reality of loss, I end up having to deny life altogether. Old Grief has taught me that I can survive great loss and although my world is different, it is still my world and I must live in it.

My old friend Grief has taught me that the loss of a loved one does not mean the permanence of death. My friend will be back repeatedly to remind me to confront my new reality and to gain through loss and pain.



The Compassionate Friends
Pikes Peak Chapter
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