



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

PIKES PEAK CHAPTER
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



May 2015

Upcoming Events

May 21st - General Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church

June 18th - General Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church

STEERING COMMITTEE

CHAPTER LEADER - ACTING

LARAIN ASARO-ANDERSON
Son, Michael Edward Anderson

MAILINGS & DATABASE

JANE & STEVE GABRIEL
Son, Jonathan Steven Gabriel

SECRETARY

LEONIE CRAMER
Son, Julian Anthony King

TREASURER

YVETTE THOMPSON
Son, Ryan Barry Thompson

NEWSLETTER EDITOR & EMAILINGS

STEWART LEVETT
Son, Aaron Paul Levett

SC MEMBER/FACILITATOR

BOB THOMPSON
Son, Ryan Barry Thompson

SC MEMBER/LIBRARIAN

CHAE LA CHRISTIANSON
Son, Damon Vincent Christianson

SC MEMBER/WELCOME PACKETS

LETA LEVETT
Son, Aaron Paul Levett

TELEPHONE FRIENDS

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

CHAPTER LEADER - ACTING

LARAIN 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. **

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



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 May 21, 2015.

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!



The Compassionate Friends is pleased to announce that Dallas, Texas, will be the site of the 38th TCF National Conference on July 10-12, 2015.

"Hope Shines Bright ...Deep in the Heart" is the theme of this year's event, which promises more of last year's great national Conference experience. The 2015 Conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency Downtown Dallas. Plan to come and be a part of this heartwarming experience.





From a "Happy Mother's Day" card one year -3rd-5th grade? - written in cursive
(God bless those teachers!)

The funniest thing I remember about Mom is... "I slimed her."

The most special gift I could give my Mom would be... "a TV stand."

("SUPERMOM" drawing) I love you because... "you are the best supermom -Damon"

My Mom loves me best when... "She is watching TV."

My Mom looks prettiest when.. "it is in the morning."
(probably because I was going to work)

(A LETTER TO My Mom) Dear Mom,

"I can't wait to get to my job. I went three days ago. Love, Damon"



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





Remembering Our Children On Their Birthdays

Child's Name	Date of Birth	Compassionate Friend
Cody Darby	May 1	Lori & Steve Darby
Harvey Nicole King	May 2	Jerima King
Robyn Kulas	May 2	Patty Kulas
Susan Gordon	May 3	Mr & Mrs Arthur Gordon
Martin Joseph Lanoue	May 4	Judy Lanoue
Patrick Niedringhaus	May 5	Leah & Dave Niedringhaus
Jay Simco	May 5	Loretta Chancellor
Abbi Rose Starzynski	May 5	Sherry Starzynski
Douglas Radowski	May 7	Renee Roettger
Jose N. Camacho	May 8	William & Veronica Camacho
Gregory Randall Davis	May 9	Cora Davis
Devin John Seifert	May 11	Steve & Debbie Seifert
Henry Rael	May 13	Maria Rael, Isabelle & Ron Rael
Jacob Hunter Smathers	May 14	Patty, Becky & Renee Smathers
Malik Boykins	May 14	Matissa Dunkley
Ashley Meston	May 15	Jerry Meston
Michael Benjamin Decker	May 16	Mary & Jerry Decker
Kyle Lyon	May 16	Tami Lyon
Denise Elaine Bear	May 16	Dona & Tanya Flores
Andrew Paul Weaver	May 16	Valerie Lightbody
Reanna Maria Reedy	May 17	Carol Reedy
Rocke Lee Corley	May 18	Jeanne Corley
Kara Nichols	May 20	Julia Nichols
Jeremy Laurence	May 20	Ted & Sherrill Laurence
Jonathan Ell-Duncan	May 20	Dan & Becky Duncan
Brian Michael Gregory	May 20	Roy & Phyllis Gregory
Joshua C. Attardi	May 23	Paula Attardi
Jeffrey Russell Schumaker	May 23	John & Vera Schumaker
Skylar Lynn Boyle Ringland	May 24	Cathleen Boyle
Gary Michael Owens	May 24	Freda Maria Garcia
Erica Lynn Groat	May 25	Linda Groat
Audrina Elyse Escano	May 25	Chris & Christina Pearson
Tristan Millman Troeger	May 25	Lisa & Joel Millman
Damon Vincent Christianson	May 30	Chaela Christianson

If you would like to have an article, poem, etc. printed in our newsletter, please mail to TCF- Pikes Peak Chapter, PO Box 51345, Colorado Springs, CO 80949 OR e-mail to: pikespeaktcf@gmail.com
We will get your submission in our next publication, room permitting.



Remembering Our Children On Their Anniversaries

Child's Name	Age	Date of Death	Compassionate Friend
Julie Bankston	25 years	May 4	Peggy Bankston
Alyanna Livingston	4 months	May 4	Kirstin Klinkerman
Martin Joseph Lanoue	1 day	May 4	Judy Lanoue
Jason Lamb	32 years	May 5	Jan Lyons-Lamb
Joshua Cesar Menendez	1 year	May 10	Dianna Castellanos, Julio Melendez
Kendall Ford Young	14 years	May 11	Ford & Ann Young
Justin A. Clayton	16 years	May 12	Terry & Sharon Clayton
Genevieve Sucharski	18 years	May 12	Mark & Karen Sucharski
Branden Howland	17 years	May 13	Julianne Howland
Kaden France	2 weeks	May 14	Jeremy & Sarah France
Joshua Aaron Munkirs	25 years	May 14	Dana & Laura Munchers
Jason Nathaniel Lurch	23 years	May 15	Kathleen & John Lurch
Matthew Stockwell	25 years	May 15	Mark & Sally Stockwell
Gavin Perez	2 years	May 16	Shannon Paolini
Paul Kovacevic	29 years	May 17	Mary Kovacevic
Tyrone Binnebose	2 years	May 18	Natasha Binnebose
Kimberley Dawn Leir	6 years	May 18	Adaline & Herb Leir - TCF Regina
Anthony Lopez	21 years	May 18	Paul & Trudy Lopez
Michael Williams, Jr.	28 years	May 18	Carmen Randall
Kira Ann Schager	5 years	May 19	Frank & Lori Schager
James Wiezorek	31 years	May 20	Mary Beringer
Eric Evans	26 years	May 21	Linda & Dick Evans
Christopher Clayton Hodson	22 years	May 22	Eric & Janice Hodgson
Christopher J. Novich	15 years	May 22	Susan & Joe Novich
Zachary Nicholas Hoke	6 years	May 24	Debra & Steve Hoke
Zack Orr	12 years	May 25	Dave & Sharon Orr
Carl Simco	27 years	May 28	Loretta Chancellor
Leah Ann Trutna	21 years	May 28	Steve & Phyllis Trutna
Nicholas Clare Cousineau	3 years	May 29	George & Chris Cousineau
Gina Marie Geffre	14 years	May 29	Joann Jahraus
Michael William Sarmento	46 years	May 29	Donna (Sarmiento) Pugh
Nicolas Jay Broughton	18 years	May 30	Rose Broughton
Mallory Paulene Hendrickson	1 year	May 30	Celine & Gary Hendrickson
Kyle Hill	21 years	May 31	Ursula Hill





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 pain will not always be this bad it really does get better wisdom. Show others that there is hope, from someone who has found it.



Walking the Lonesome Valley

One of my favorite gospel songs is "You've Got to Walk That Lonesome Valley" which is attributed to various composers in the early 20th Century. Many adaptations have been made to the words, yet all seem to fit.

This gospel song is particularly poignant for bereaved parents. We must take our grief journey alone. We must take our grief journey on our own terms and in our own way. I found myself humming and then singing this gospel song after my son died over nine years ago.

I was never really alone in this lonesome valley, however; many are taking this same walk, in their own ways and on their own terms. In TCF, we learn from other parents who walk the lonesome valley. We receive hope from those who take this journey with us. Some bereaved parents choose to return to the darkest places in the lonesome valley and help our newly bereaved parents as they define their own personal journey. Gradually, after thousands of steps, the bereaved parent comes to the place of resolution and emerges from the valley into the gauzy sunlight of hope and peace.

Reach out for assuring words and thoughts and ideas and hope. Take comfort in knowing that each of us is walking the lonesome valley.

You've got to walk that lonesome valley
You've got to walk it by yourself
There's no one here can walk it for you
You've got to walk it by yourself
I must walk this lonesome valley,
I have to walk it by myself,
Oh, nobody else can walk it for me,
I have to walk it by myself.
I must go and stand my trial,
I have to stand it by myself,
O, nobody else can stand it for me,
I have to stand it by myself.

By Annette Mennen Baldwin
TCF Katy, TX

That Anniversary

All our lives we've known about anniversaries. Our parents celebrated their Anniversary. The school we attended marked its Anniversary. The company honored your Anniversary when you started your career. The Lions Club held a gala to remember its Anniversary.

But there is one Anniversary that we're never eager to recall. It's **That Anniversary**.

When a child dies we retain vivid memories of that fateful day. Time cannot rob us of the memory and the grief of that awful and confusingly sad day. Unlike your wedding date or your first day on the job or when you graduated from school, which may have become hazy over time, the circumstances and ticks of the clock of **That Anniversary** remain etched in our minds.

Some of us do special "things" on **That Anniversary**. We pray. We cry. We grieve. Some make an effort to try to distract the intense sadness that **That Anniversary** brings. Some walk on the beach or take a ride in the country. We look at old photos or other memorabilia to remember and to ward off anything that might cloud the memory of our daughters and sons.

Friends and relatives also remember **That Anniversary** and may send a card or ask you out to lunch or choose not to visit you, showing respect for your need for solitude. Regardless of how you deal with **That Anniversary**, you cannot avoid it. Sometimes even the days leading up to **That Anniversary** bring apprehension and uneasiness. That's OK. **That Anniversary** will always come (and go) as will the days before and after, too.

The Compassionate Friends understands that on **That Anniversary**, as when it occurred, your heart is heavy yet empty at the same time. It can be a confusing time. There may be guilt or remorse or simply confusion. But it is up to you to sort it out and move ahead because after **That Anniversary** there will be another and another. Surely your heart may not feel as heavy or as empty as time passes, but **That Anniversary** will always be there. How you face it, how you mark it, how you remember it and how you caress it is the key to moving forward and conditioning yourself for the next time **That Anniversary** occurs.

Michael Tyler TCF Lighthouse Chapter Lewes, DE



HEALING WORDS

A Mother's Touch

My husband Jeff grew up in a family of hugging, kissing, foot-rubbing, back scratchers. Affectionate folks! In my family, on the other hand, we only scratched mosquito bites, and certainly not each other's. Although we loved one another fiercely, we weren't very demonstrative. A wink, a squeeze, a peck on the cheek, a poke in the ribs – that was mushy stuff for us. Touching another person was not something that came easily to me; that is, until my first child was born. When the nurse placed that chubby cherub in my arms, the floodgates of my heart opened, and a torrent of overwhelming love poured out. I couldn't keep my hands off the little dumpling! I learned first-hand what it means to "smother with kisses." Caressing my precious baby came as naturally as breathing.

Other children came along, and I was reborn a certified, card-carrying cuddler. I learned how many of a mother's day-to-day interactions with her children require her touch. Touching became a way of life for me as I fed, bathed, dressed, tamed cowlicks, and kissed ouchies.

It's funny, but one of the things I missed most after my son Blake died was tying his shoes. When he was alive, that chore was the bane of my existence. Blake's shoes were perpetually untied or hopelessly tangled in knots that would have defied Houdini himself. I rejoiced when the shoe designers came up with Velcro closures, seeing an end to my nemesis. But would Blake wear those simple, convenient shoes? No way! Big boys wore shoes with laces, and most of all, he wanted to be like the big boys. So I armed my teeth, and kept tying and bending every fork in the house de-knotting. After Blake died, how my fingers ached to tie those little shoes one more time!

For most bereaved mothers I know, not being able to touch, to hold, to embrace our child is the most painful reality we have to face. The emptiness of our arms, the indescribable longing to have those arms filled again with our precious child, are almost more than we can bear.

At first, when our grief is fresh, it may be hard, for us to touch anyone. We may close ourselves off emotionally, willing to touch or be touched, or to run the risk of being hurt so badly again. But mothers are touchers. With time, when the pain isn't so intense, we may want to reach out once more.

None of us ever outgrows the need to be touched, no matter how old we are. And what can be so comforting as a mother's touch! Today, if you can, touch someone. Do it in the memory of your beloved child.

By Patricia Dyson TCF, Beaumont, TX In memory of Blake





THOUGHTFUL POEMS

What I Need

A lot of time!
A little space,
A kind of quiet
Resting place,
Are what I need
At times like these
A special spot
Where I can grieve.

Beth Pinion, TCF Andalusia, AL

Father's Love

Father weighed us once a month
And totaled up the pounds
Then he weighed the dog and cat
(As silly as that sounds)
He then included their weight, too,
And with pride and joy he'd say,
"Hmm. Yes. I do believe
Here's what we have today"
There's thirty-five and forty-eight
And Jim weighs eighty-nine,
Spot and Puss weigh twenty-four
And all these pounds are mine!"
Father loved us not by age
Nor virtues that he found
He gathered all his children in
And loved us by the pound.

Dee L. McCollum, TCF Atlanta, GA



SOMETIMES...

"Sometimes, I still don't believe it,"
My husband said to me.
We had gone to bed, said our goodnights And
were resting comfortably.
My reply was short and to the point.
I simply said, "I know."
Though it's been eight years since you have
died, Chip, we miss you so.
The memories of our life with you
Are treasures that we share.
For nineteen years we loved you well While you
were in our care.
So once again we said goodnight.
But before this we did pray.
This was a very poignant night.
This night was Father's Day.

Nancy McKeaney, TCF North Penn Chapter, PA

Washing the Family Car

As the water began to bead
across the hard black surface,
my mind slipped into a memory.
Back to a time when a smile could fix the pain
and mortality was not questioned.
You and I played during the dreary task
of washing the family car.
Rinsing turned into a water fight.
Soapy sponges became weapons,
and upside down buckets served as our fortress.
This dull chore became an adventure,
a game shared only by you and I.
Drenched, the giggles slowly subsided
and we turned to complete the more
serious side of our labor.
We began to dry off the car.
As the memory faded, so did my smile.
With forlorn my mind came back to the present.
I had my own serious task to complete
So I picked up a towel to dry off your headstone.

Adele Rosales TCF Ventura, CA

MAY 2015

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The Compassionate Friends
Pikes Peak Chapter

PO Box 51345

Colorado Springs, CO 80949-1345

