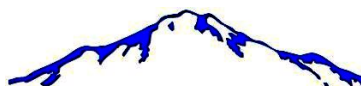




THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

PIKES PEAK CHAPTER
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



May, 2022

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Son, Aaron Paul Levett

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*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
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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!



Feeling Alone on Father's Day

When we use the name father, several thoughts automatically come to mind. Strong. Protector. Problem solver. Guardian. Wise. Open arms. Tender. Loving. Forgiving. Always there. A father takes great pride in living up to these expectations. In fact, you can watch most any father's posture change to reflect the characteristics of being the strong one, the leader, and the fixer of problems for his children.

When a child dies, a father's world is turned upside down. Losing a child is something that nobody can fix – not even a father. There is a sense of failure and guilt that washes over a father time and time again. He no longer feels like he is the glue that holds the family together. A father experiences many different emotions when his child dies, but he is very seldom able to verbally express those emotions.

Men grieve quite differently than women. This is a fact that we now acknowledge; yet in society we tend to question a father in grief if he does not openly talk about his loss and pain. Verbalization of emotions are a difficult thing to do for most men, especially for a father that has lost his child.

When Father's Day approaches, there are many feelings of loss and failure that are experienced. Pictures of fathers interacting with their happy, healthy children are found everywhere – in stores, on television, in magazines, and in the newspaper. Most churches give special lessons dedicated to fathers, but very little recognition is ever given to the father that has gone through child loss.

By planning ahead for the difficult emotions of Father's Day a father can cope much better. Plan a project such as planting a flower garden in memory of your child. Build a memorial bench and stencil your child's name on it. Write a letter to your child expressing your thoughts, then release the letter with a balloon. **Continue Next Page**



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 **May 19th** meeting will be moderated by Steering Committee member Jen Sutton.

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?

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! As usual, we will have the coffee pot on with an assortment of hot and cold drinks.

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.



Feeling Alone on Father's Day - Continued from previous

Above all else, remember that you will always be a father! Be especially kind to yourself as you prepare for the array of emotions you will experience on Father's Day. As you work through these feelings of loss, you are taking steps forward towards healing in this difficult journey we call grief!

Written by Clara Hinton - Published in The Healing Garden, TCF South Bend, IN



Remembering Our Children On Their May Birthdays

Name	Birth	Compassionate Friend	Name	Birth	Compassionate Friend
Cody Darby	1st	Lori & Steve Darby	Chris Weisenborn	1st	Gina Weisenborn
Alexander Beall	1st	Haven Stillwater	Robyn Kulas	2nd	Patty Kulas
Harvey Nicole King	2nd	Jerima King	Susan Gordon	3rd	Mr & Mrs Arthur Gordon
Martin Joseph Lanoue	4th	Judy Lanoue	Sara Hernandez	4th	Kathy Hernandez
Patrick Niedringhaus	5th	Leah & Dave Niedringhaus	Anthony Paul Gratton	5th	Luci Abrahamson
Jay Simco	5th	Loretta Chancellor	Abbi Rose Starzynski	5th	Sherry Starzynski
Douglas Radowski	7th	Renee Roettger	Jose N. Camacho	8th	William & Veronica Camacho
Gregory Randall Davis	9th	Cora Davis	Thomas Rosenkranz	11th	Carolyn Kochis
Devin John Seifert	11th	Steve & Debbie Seifert	Avery Keirse	12th	Carissa Keirse
Henry Rael	13th	Maria Rael	Malachi Mooneyham	14th	Damien Mooneyham
Jacob Hunter Smathers	14th	Patty Smathers	Malik Boykins	14th	Matissa Dunkley
Ashley Meston	15th	Jerry Meston	Liam N. McDougal Lasher	15th	Ashley Snyder
Michael Benjamin Decker	16th	Mary & Jerry Decker	Kyle Lyon	16th	Tami Lyon
Andrew Paul Weaver	16th	Valerie Lightbody	Reanna Maria Reedy	17th	Carol Reedy
Jason Fields	17th	Teresa Fields	Rocke Lee Corley	18th	Jeanne Corley
Jeremiah Martinez	18th	Lionel & Geri Martinez	Kai Milner	19th	Petra Milner
Brian Michael Gregory	20th	Roy & Phyllis Gregory	Jonathan Ell-Duncan	20th	Dan & Becky Duncan
Ryan Colgrove	20th	Theresia Colgrove	Kara Nichols	20th	Julia Nichols
Chris Keenan	21st	Julieanna Bala	Jeffrey Russell Schumaker	23rd	John & Vera Schumaker
Joshua C. Attardi	23rd	Paula Attardi	Douglas Michael Gratton	23rd	Luci Abrahamson
Patrick Michael Doyle	24th	Ruby Doyle	Skylar Lynn Boyle Ringland	24th	Cathleen Boyle
Tristan Millman Troeger	25th	Lisa & Joel Millman	Audrina Elyse Escano	25th	Chris & Christina Pearson
Erica Lynn Groat	25th	Linda Groat	Jordan James Miranda	26th	Mike & Jonette Miranda
Andrew Uveges	30th	Joe & Kisten Uveges	Damon Vincent Christianson	30th	Chaela Christianson



Michaela Christianson
in memory of Damon Vincent Christianson



REMEMBERING OUR CHILDREN ON THEIR MAY ANNIVERSARY

Name	Age	Passed	Compassionate Friend	Name	Age	Passed	Compassionate Friend
Dylan Sagraves	30	1st	Lance & Terri Hill	Shawn Adelgren	20	2nd	Russ & Dee Adelgren
Julie Bankston	25	4th	Peggy & Obie Bankston	Alyanna Livingston	4 mo	4th	Kirstin Klinkerman
Martin Joseph Lanoue	1 day	4th	Judy Lanoue	Malachi Mooneyham	18	4th	Damien Mooneyham
Jason Lamb	32	5th	Jan Lyons-Lamb	Douglas Chadwick, Jr.	26	6th	Deborah Chadwick
Daniel Foreman	7	8th	Jan Foreman	Jacob Foreman	10	8th	Jan Foreman
Andrew Talley II	27	8th	Jackie Talley	Joshua Cesar Menendez	1	10th	Dianna Castellanos
Marcus Richards	38	10th	Martha Williams	Justin A. Clayton	16	12th	Terry & Sharon Clayton
Genevieve Sucharski	18	12th	Mark and Karen Sucharski	Branden Howland	17	13th	Julianne Howland
Kaden France	15	14th	Jeremy & Sarah France	Joshua Aaron Munkirs	25	14th	Dana & Laura Munkirs
Jason Nathaniel Lurch	23	15th	Kathleen & John Lurch	Riley Calen Winters	15	15th	Lucrecia & Joel Sjoerdsma
Gavin Perez	2	16th	Shannon Paolini	Brandon Naymik	18	16th	Megan Riley
Paul Kovacevic	29	17th	Mary Kovacevic	Tyrone Binnebose	2	18th	Natasha Binnebose
Kimberley Dawn Leir	6	18th	Adaline and Herb Leir	Jeremiah Martinez	1 day	18th	Lionel & Geri Martinez
Michael Williams Jr.	28	18th	Carmen Randall	Kai Milner	16	19th	Petra Milner
Kira Ann Schager	5	19th	Frank & Lori Schager	Andrew Uveges	15	19th	Joe & Kisten Uveges
James Wiezorek	31	20th	Mary Beringer	Eric Evans	26	21st	Linda & Dick Evans
Christopher Clayton	22	22nd	Eric and Janice Hodson	Christopher J. Novich	15	22nd	Susan & Joe Novich
Mark Anthony Hickman	22	23rd	Aundria & Dennis Casey	Zachary Nicholas Hoke	6	24th	Debra & Steve Hoke
Alexa Liddie	31	24th	Eddie & Tammie Liddie	Zack Orr	12	25th	Dave & Sharon Orr
Carl Simco	27	28th	Loretta Chancellor	Leah Ann Trutna	21	28th	Steve & Phyllis Trutna
Nicholas Clare Cousineau	3	29th	George & Chris Cousineau	Gina Marie Geffre	14	29th	Joann Jahraus
Michael William Sarmento	46	29th	Donna (Sarmento) Pugh	Nicolas Jay Broughton	18	30th	Rose Broughton
Mallory Paulene	1	30th	Celine & Gary Hendrickson	Kyle Curtis Hill	21	31st	Ursula Hill

Father's Day...not a big holiday like Christmas or Thanksgiving, but one that holds a lot of meaning for those to whom it applies. For first-time fathers, that Sunday in June brings a feeling of joy and pride. For a longtime dad, it's a reminder of the fulfillment which children may have brought into his life. For those men who have lost a child, it can be a very painful time. For those who must endure their pain in secret and silence, either through their own desire for that approach, or through society's expectations that they must be strong and controlled, it can become a horror. But we in TCF wish to acknowledge the day, because we noted in preparations for Mother's Day, the death of a child does not negate the parenthood of the mom and dad who loved him or her. Love for one's offspring does not die when the body dies, and death does not succeed in robbing us of our parental identity. We wish all bereaved fathers a day of peace. In the midst of our grief and loss, may you experience a taste of good memories and remembered love for your child. TCF Elgin Area



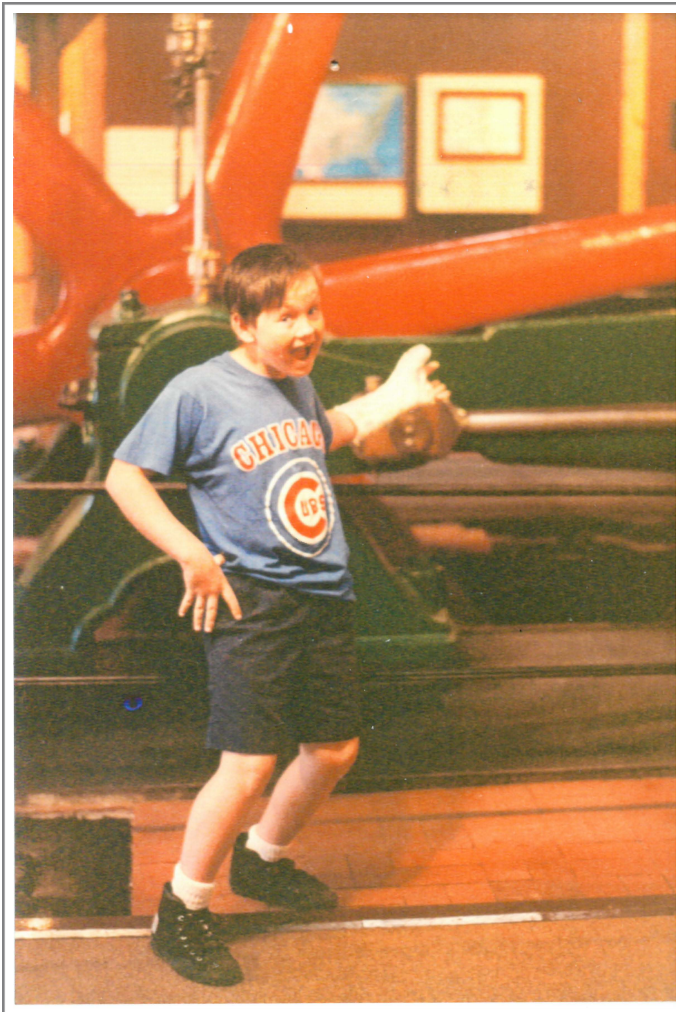
Damon Vincent Christianson

May 30, 1977- July 3, 2010

**From Memorial Card of Damon's Friend,
Jesse Paul: 11-11-'76 / 10-14-'21**

Remember Me

Remember me with smiles not tears,
for all the joy through all the years.
Recall the closeness that was ours,
A love as "sweet" as fragrant flowers.
Don't dwell on thoughts that cause you pain,
We'll see each other once again.
I am at peace... try to believe,
It was my time... I had to leave.
But "what a view" I have from here,
I see your face, I feel you near.
I follow you throughout the day,
You're not alone along the way.
And when God calls you...you will be,
Right by my side... right here with me.
Till then, I'll wait by heaven's door,
We'll be united... evermore.



"CLOSURE"

Do you cringe when you hear this word? I do. As I write this, Osama bin Laden has been dead for a couple days, and, in my opinion, that word is being overused.

I was pleasantly surprised when I read the May 3, 2011, South Bend Tribune article called "No closure for Katie's father". Dick McCloskey lost his daughter, Katie, in the 9/11/01 attacks. He states, in part: "closure has become a trite word. There is no such thing in the loss of a loved one."

How do you feel about the word CLOSURE? I am just one person with an opinion, but I am pretty sure there are other bereaved parents who agree with me. The word "closure" implies that we are okay with what happened, that whatever happened is done, etc. Again, this is my opinion, but I have to wonder how parents who have been through a years-long trial feel after the trial. I think society can sometimes make them feel like

once the trial is over and the person on trial is sentenced, they will have closure. But what happens when they wake up the next morning, expecting to feel all better? Do they really? Maybe in some ways, but does the fact that their child is still dead come back to slap them all over again?

You may have heard me say this before, but I believe when people say this, it is mostly a matter of ignorance. And I am happy for their ignorance, because that most likely means they have not lost a child or someone very close to them. But I write this in hopes of bringing attention to this subject.

I will never have closure. I will miss my son every day until the day I die. My world is forever changed because of that one accident. How do you feel?

Deb Starkweather - TCF St. Joseph County



MOTHER'S DAY: "BEFORE" AND "AFTER"

While sorting through boxes and bags, it is not unusual for me to find something unexpected. It happened just the other day. Shifting through a box, I came across a wrinkled, somewhat yellowed piece of lined school paper. I carefully unfolded it only to find a drawing of a stick-Mom and stick-daughter standing alongside a mammoth daisy. The mom and little girl were holding hands with huge lop-sided grins on their faces. In her little girl just-learning-to-print handwriting were the words, "Happy Mother's Day, Mommy. I love you, Kristina."

Even six years later, little "gifts" such as these can bring fresh tears. It is times like these that I am glad that I was an incredible pack rat, especially when it came to saving things that my children have made. I can picture my then-blond, petite little Nina (her nickname), with the wispy hair, bent over the kitchen table, crayon in hand, creating that handmade card filled with love. Memories of breakfasts in bed, only to return to the kitchen after finishing the "gourmet" meal served with tender care, to find it in such disarray that it took hours to clean up! Even through the tears, these are the sweetest memories.

As I type this, I look at another gift from a Mother's Day past; a little statue of a harried mom, surrounded by mop, broom and bucket, that says, "World's Greatest Mom", chosen for me at a neighborhood garage sale. I came across it accidentally shortly after Nina's death, unearthing it from its hiding place. I wondered to myself, why had I packed it away. Did Nina know that I did and did she think that, by doing so, I hadn't appreciated her gift? Did I ever thank her for it along with the other garage sale items that she proudly brought home to me, or did it show on my face that I really didn't need any more "junk" around the house? Sometimes resurrecting these treasures can bring unpleasant feelings of guilt as we wonder if our children knew how much their little gestures of love meant to us. When our child dies, it becomes easy to second-guess ourselves, trapped in our fixations and exaggerations of the negative things that may have occurred during our child's life.

The first Mother's Day after Nina died was a grief numbing blur, as it occurred only three days following her death. Unlike previous joyful dinners out with my four children pampering their mom, we spent the day making funeral arrangements and choosing a casket for one of them. In the early evening, I overheard it said to someone else, "Happy Mother's Day." I turned to my own mother and apologized for having forgotten.

I could not imagine ever celebrating another Mother's Day again. I am sure the dads have these same feelings on Father's Day. My heart goes out to them, because I think we forget that they, just like us, grieve and hurt, too.

For those mothers and fathers who have lost their only child, I have been saddened by stories told to me by them of attending church on Mother's Day Sunday and when the pastor asked the mothers in the church to please stand, they were undecided on whether they should stand or not. I hope that they will always remember, and the fathers as well, "Once a mother, always a mother; once a father, always a father." We are forever their parents.

If we are fortunate to have surviving children, they are often forgotten as well. In the early days, we become obsessed with the one who is missing. My own children showed quiet patience with this. I often wonder if they thought "What about us? We're still here!" Now with almost seven Mother's Days behind me, I try to accentuate what I do have. This does not happen overnight. I found that in celebrating my surviving children, I could still honor Nina's memory and find ways to include her as well. I have developed a ritual where I get up early on that morning and bring flowers out to the cemetery. I bring a flower and a note to some of the mothers that I know who have buried children there to tell them I am thinking of them and their child. There is something very healing when reaching out to others. I then sit by my daughter's grave-site on the spring-green grass listening to the sweet call of a robin. I bring her a flower and write in her journal telling her how thankful I am to be her mother, how much I love and miss her. That is our private time together; the rest of the day is spent honoring my other children.

Mother's Day and Father's Day are holidays especially created for us. Try to get through them the best that you can, in whatever way feels right for you. Truly, only you know what that is.

Whether it is alone those first few years or with people that you love and who understand, do something that you find comforting. It is your day, for you were the giver of a precious life – you held a miracle in your arms. Even as powerfully destructive as death is, even that cannot take those memories away from you – they are your child's gift to you.

Cathy Seehuetter - TCF National

May, 2022

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