



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

PIKES PEAK CHAPTER
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



October 2016

Upcoming Events

October 20th - General Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church
November 17th - General Meeting - 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

CHAEAL 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:
All telephone numbers are 719 unless otherwise indicated.

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

CHAEAL CHRISTIANSON * 687-6688

SUICIDE

LARITA ARCHIBALD 596-2575

MULTIPLE LOSSES

LORI DARBY 464-4703

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 October 20, 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!



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.

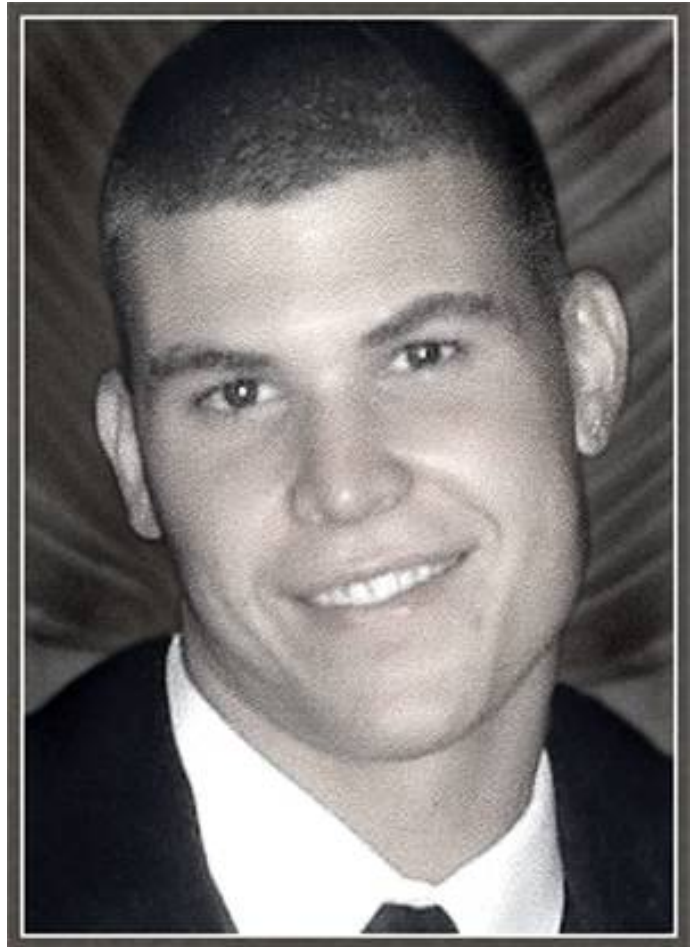
We would also welcome any book reviews. If you have read a book that has helped you on your journey please tell us about it. There are many, many grief books out there. Some will be more healing than others. It is so helpful to be guided to the right ones. Please forward any writings, poems, book reviews 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.



**THE
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Michael Anderson

October 20, 1984 ~ October 4, 2004

"Michael, I love you and you're always in my heart"





Welcome New Friends.

Julie Sanchez - Daughter Ciara Johnson

Jill Hoover - Daughter Lauren Hoover

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.



Laraine Asaro-Anderson - In Loving Memory of Michael Anderson

Chaela Christianson - In Loving Memory of Damon Vincent Christianson

Chaplain Gene Steinkirchner - CSPD

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

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.

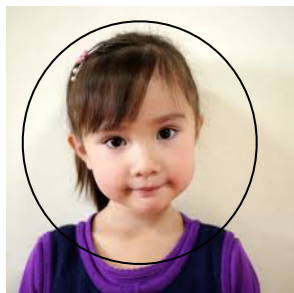


Button, Button, We'll Make Your Button!

Hey, guess what? We have purchased a photo button making machine and we are ready to start making your picture buttons. So, bring 2 copies (In case we make a mistake) of the SAME picture to your next meeting and we will have it ready for you the following months meeting.

Please bring your pictures to any of our monthly meetings. We will need a 3"x5" or 4"x6" photo of your child but would prefer NOT using the original photo. We suggest using Walgreens who can quickly make good 4"x6" copies from your original.

For best results make sure the photo of your child is centered and not too close to the edge or the results may not turn out as expected.



We are initially requesting one photo button per family to get us started. Thereafter we will be able to make additional buttons for each member of the family as time and labor allows. This is still new to us so we request that you bring two pictures just in case we make a mistake with the first one. Also, for those who have lost more than one child, we will gladly make a button for each child.

As the Holidays Approach

When the holidays are fast approaching, we who are bereaved always have mixed emotions about having a nice holiday when our child or loved one is no longer with us. We wonder if we will ever be as happy and if we can ever again celebrate the holidays or any meaningful family occasion, especially the first birthday, first Thanksgiving, or first Christmas since our loss. We try to look ahead to how we are going to feel when the time arrives, but it is usually not as hard as we had anticipated. Still, the occasion may not be as enjoyable as we'd like it to be or as we remember it from the past.

I would like to offer a few ideas for what we can do to make our holidays a little better. Consider buying gifts for less fortunate children, adopting a child/family at Christmas time, or inviting a lonely person to share your holiday meal. Make your child's favorite foods and discuss your loved one as you share the meal. Some people like to volunteer to serve holiday dinners for the homeless. Some bereaved parents want to visit familiar places their child loved to go, while others want to travel where their child had never been.

Several of our Compassionate Friends members put a small Christmas tree at the cemetery and decorate the graves with Christmas flowers and/or a grave blanket. Making a grave blanket is very fulfilling; we did that for 10 years after our daughter Teresa died. Attending a candle lighting program is a wonderful way to honor your child or loved one. These suggestions are things we feel we can still do for our child, but they are not reserved for bereaved parents only. All of them can be done for any member of a family or a friend who has died. After someone dies we must keep going and doing things that lift us up. We can't always try to please any people who feel we should act in a certain manner.

Jackie Wesley TCF, East Central Indiana and Miami-Whitewater Chapters



Remembering Our Children On Their Birthdays - October

Child's Name	Date of Birth	Compassionate Friend
Jaden Alexander Founds	Oct 3	Kimberly Founds
Jim Agnew	Oct 4	Tom & Bev Agnew
Adam Herzog	Oct 5	Nancy Saltzman
Andy Cope	Oct 7	Debbie & Kurt Adelbush
Jack C. Jefferson	Oct 8	John & Dena Jefferson
Eric Sutton Skinner	Oct 9	David & Gail Skinner
Tucker Ray Graef	Oct 10	Kathy Graef
Isaac Sartain	Oct 10	Gregory Sartain
Westly Cox	Oct 11	Karen Talbott
David Scott Mueller	Oct 16	Sandy Eversole
Mandi Eads	Oct 17	Lucy Butcher
Brent Eads	Oct 18	Lucy Butcher
Margaret McKean	Oct 18	Lilo McKean
Brian Hartzell	Oct 18	Fawn Batista
Jacob Sanchez	Oct 18	Denise Langhorst, Janine McDonough
Richard Joseph Armstrong	Oct 19	Chuck & Helen Armstrong
Michael Edward Anderson	Oct 20	Laraine Anderson
Kimberly Benson	Oct 22	Debbie Diekman
Wyatt Travis Wilson	Oct 23	Elizabeth & Lance Wilson
Tyler Joseph Budfuloski	Oct 23	Rob & Alice Budfuloski
Cody Austin Wilson	Oct 23	Elizabeth & Lance Wilson
Dawn Michelle Wiley	Oct 24	Luanne Wiley
Stephen James Benjamin	Oct 24	Kathy Benjamin
Matthew Alan Haywood	Oct 26	Roger Haywood
Christopher Clayton Hodson	Oct 27	Eric & Janice Hodson
Christopher Skaggs	Oct 28	Ernest & Tanya Skaggs
Christopher Russell Tyson	Oct 30	Cory Lynn Tyson



Remembering Our Children On Their Anniversaries - October

Child's Name	Forever Age	Date of Death	Compassionate Friend
John Walther	31 years	Oct 1	Joseph Walther
Joshua C. Attardi	12 years	Oct 2	Paula Attardi
Suzanne Bethany Thomas	4 years	Oct 3	Arnie & Mary Thomas
Michael Edward Anderson	20 years	Oct 4	Laraine Anderson
Casey Olivia-Dyan Siegel	5 days	Oct 4	Lawrence & Shonda Siegel
Vadah Lynne Blocker	1 year	Oct 6	Sterling Blocker
Chris Hatfield	28 years	Oct 6	Cathy Hatfield
Fermin A. Vialpando	17 years	Oct 6	Sundae F. Vialpando
Thomas Cooper	24 years	Oct 8	Marianne Lawless
Sheri Cavin	21 years	Oct 9	Susan & Alan Cavin
Jessica Stockwell	24 years	Oct 12	Mark & Sally Stockwell
Sam Bracchi	20 years	Oct 13	Michael & Colleen Bracchi
Caleb Norris	13 years	Oct 13	Keith Norris
Cody Austin Wilson	5 years	Oct 13	Elizabeth & Lance Wilson
Emma Riley	0 years	Oct 16	Heather Claypool
Rebecca Ann Reynolds	17 years	Oct 16	Ken & Barbara Reynolds
Melissa Sue Micke	19 years	Oct 17	Alice Micke
Aaron Paul Levett	26 years	Oct 18	Stewart & Leta Levett
Bryan Michael Womeldorf	27 years	Oct 19	Shawn Brown
Carlos Martinez	20 years	Oct 21	Marilyn Martinez
Mandi Eads	6 days	Oct 22	Lucy Butcher
Denise Elaine Bear	20 years	Oct 24	Dona & Tanya Flores
Trevor "T.J." Franks	17 years	Oct 24	Penny Franks
Owen William Howard	34 years	Oct 25	Mike & Carol Parker
Cody Darby	20 years	Oct 27	Lori & Steve Darby
Daniel Stafford Gettman	31 years	Oct 28	Louise Gettman
Matthew Dale Wilson	14 years	Oct 28	Raye & Rick Wilson
Cris Cruz	23 years	Oct 29	Henrietta Madrid
Michael Christopher	29 years	Oct 29	Bob & Carol Rushmore
Kimberly Denise Patterson	16 years	Oct 30	Sigrid Patterson



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

Changing of the Seasons

The summer heat is fading and the evenings begin to cool: autumn whispers in the wind. Labor Day often signals the last "hoorah" of days-off as school buses resume their familiar routes and leaf-gathering chores are added to our days.

In our journey towards recovery, there are also seasons. For many, autumn is a reflective time, when nature begins its own cycle of shutting down and dying. A time of quiet melancholy may fill your heart. Distant shadows of the approaching holidays begin to creep into your mind.

But if you look closely, you will notice autumn signs loudly her song of beauty and rebirth. She puts on her finest wardrobe, filled with colors of warmth and comfort. Different are these colors than bright spring and summer florals, but how beautiful and peaceful. I see autumn as a season of inner strength, with roots reaching deep into the heart of the earth for nurturing. So as we gather leaves and find long-forgotten jackets, my wish is that the harsh edges of pain will begin to recede and your memories bring you warmth and comfort.

~~D. Barts, TCF Portland~~



HEALING WORDS

What I Wish More People Understood About Losing A Child

by Paula Stephens from Mindbodygreen.com

Four and half years after the death of my oldest son, I finally went to a grief support group for parents who have lost children. I went to support a friend who recently lost her son. I'm not sure I would've gone except that when I was in her shoes, four years ago, I wish I would've had a friend to go with me. Losing a child is the loneliest, most desolate journey a person can take and the only people who can come close to appreciating it are those who share the experience.

The meeting was a local chapter of **The Compassionate Friends**, an organization solely dedicated to providing support for those who have lost children, grandchildren or siblings. The facilitator was a tall gentleman who had lost his 17 year old son eight years ago. He opened the meeting by saying that dues to belong to the club are more than anyone would ever want to pay. Well, he couldn't be more correct: no one *wants* to belong to this group.

The group of incredible survivors included parents whose children had been killed by drunk drivers, murdered, accidental overdose, alcoholism, suicide and freak accidents. The children's ages ranged from 6-38 years old. When hearing the stories, I had a visceral reaction to being part of this "club," but was also humbled by the greatness of these mothers and fathers.

Most of what I share in this article came from this meeting, but also from my own experience of having lost a child and being four years into that lifelong journey of healing from deep grief. The following five tips can be your compass to help you navigate how to give support to grieving parents on a sacred journey they never wanted to take.

1. Remember our children.

The loss of children is a pain all bereaved parents share, and it is a degree of suffering that is impossible to grasp without experiencing it first hand. Often, when we know someone else is experiencing grief, our discomfort keeps us from approaching it head on. But we want the world to remember our child or children, no matter how young or old our child was.

If you see something that reminds you of my child, tell me. If you are reminded at the holidays or on his birthday that I am missing my son, please tell me you remember him. And when I speak his name or relive memories relive them with me, don't shrink away. If you never met my son, don't be afraid to ask about him. One of my greatest joys is talking about Brandon.

2. Accept that you can't "fix" us.

An out-of-order death such as child loss breaks a person (especially a parent) in a way that is not fixable or solvable — ever! We will learn to pick up the pieces and move forward, but our lives will never be the same.

Every grieving parent must find a way to continue to live with loss, and it's a solitary journey. We appreciate your support and hope you can be patient with us as we find our way.

Please: don't tell us it's time to get back to life, that's it's been long enough, or that time heals all wounds. We welcome your support and love, and we know sometimes it hard to watch, but our sense of

brokenness isn't going to go away. It is something to observe, recognize, accept.

3. Know that there are at least two days a year we need a time out.

We still count birthdays and fantasize what our child would be like if he/she were still living. Birthdays are especially hard for us. Our hearts ache to celebrate our child's arrival into this world, but we are left becoming intensely aware of the hole in our hearts instead. Some parents create rituals or have parties while others prefer solitude. Either way, we are likely going to need time to process the marking of another year without our child.

Then there's the anniversary of the date our child became an angel. This is a remarkable process similar to a parent of a newborn, first counting the days, then months then the one year anniversary, marking the time on the other side of that crevasse in our lives.

No matter how many years go by, the anniversary date of when our child died brings back deeply emotional memories and painful feelings (particularly if there is trauma associated with the child's death). The days leading up to that day can feel like impending doom or like it's hard to breathe. We may or may not share with you what's happening.

This is where the process of remembrance will help. If you have heard me speak of my child or supported me in remembering him/her, you will be able to put the pieces together and know when these tough days are approaching.

4. Realize that we struggle every day with happiness.

It's an ongoing battle to balance the pain and guilt of outliving your child with the desire to live in a way that honors them and their time on this earth.

I remember going on a family cruise eighteen months after Brandon died. On the first day, I stood at the back of the ship and bawled that I wasn't sharing this experience with him. Then I had to steady myself, and recognize that I was also creating memories with my surviving sons, and enjoying the time with them in the present moment.

As bereaved parents, we are constantly balancing holding grief in one hand and a happy life after loss in the other. You might observe this when you are with us at a wedding, graduation or other milestone celebration. Don't walk away — witness it with us and be part of our process.

5. Accept the fact that our loss might make you uncomfortable.

Our loss is unnatural, out-of-order; it challenges your sense of safety. You may not know what to say or do, and you're afraid you might make us lose it. We've learned all of this as part of what we're learning about grief.

We will never forget our child. And in fact, our loss is always right under the surface of other emotions, even happiness. We would rather lose it because you spoke his/her name and remembered our child, than try and shield ourselves from the pain and live in denial.

Grief is the pendulum swing of love. The stronger and deeper the love the more grief will be created on the other side. Consider it a sacred opportunity to stand shoulder to shoulder with someone who have endured one of life's most frightening events. Rise up with us.



THOUGHTFUL POEMS

INCONGRUITIES

Thoughts of you can
bring a smile to my face
...and tears to my eyes.
Memories of you tug at my heart
filling it with love
...and longing.
I feel so thankful
for having had you in my life
...and yet so sad that you are gone.
I'm comforted by the sense of your
presence surrounding me at times
...while loneliness overwhelms me.
My life is filled with incongruities;
they assure me I am healing
...and that I never will.
~Gayle Block TCF - Baytown, Texas

Winter Dreaming

Winter sun slants down, no warmth in its rays
Warm spring is sleeping, under the snow she lays.
Barren tree branches dance
in time to the cold winds song
Nights are dark and oh so long.
But your memories are my blanket of warmth
And I pull them close to me,
waiting for spring to come forth.
A time of warm breeze, to chase away the cold
But now in the winter, warm memories I hold.
by Sheila Simmons TCF Atlanta Sharing Line

The Same

The ninety year old whose sixty-two year old son has died
Suffers the same.
The young couple whose child died in infancy or was yet to be born
Suffers the same.
The man and woman who lost their twenty-nine year old son
Suffer the same.
They all suffer the same!
Only those who have not lost children place a value system on it.
We "experts" - we know different.
We know that when you bring a child into your world
The indelible stamp of love makes it your child -
Forever!
Our feelings do not diminish with their age nor ours.
One year or sixty-five - it's the same love.
Ten years or twenty-one - it's the same pain.
One child, or one of many, it's the same loss.
It's the same grief, it's the same struggle.
Only "civilians" measure it in numbers.
So let us hug the ninety year old parent
Let us caress the grieving young couple
Let us comfort the man and woman
They all walk the same path - Together!
~TCF Babylon, Long Island, NY January 1990





PIKES PEAK TCF CANDLELIGHT MEMORIAL SERVICE

Once again we request that you contact us to have your child's slide included in our memorial. Slides from previous years may be used again this year or you may submit new photos. Please limit your photos to (2) two along with a short dedication so everything will be viewable on the slide. Please remember, the better the photo you submit, the better your dedication will look.

Prior years' submissions will be read as a dedication if we don't hear back from you.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS IS SAT., DEC. 3rd.
To see a short sample of our Candlelight Service, go to this YouTube link:<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8g4uTWPbGCI>

We are quickly approaching December and with it our annual Worldwide Candle Lighting. The date this year is December 11th and once again will be held in the sanctuary of the First Baptist Church at 7:00 p.m.

Now is a good time to look through your photos to submit for our slide show. Old slides may be updated or a new one created for your child. More information about this special event will be forthcoming in next months newsletter or you may write to me should you have any questions at PikesPeakTCF@gmail.com.

Stew Levett - Editor

Send to: Stew Levett
160 El Dorado Lane
Colorado Springs, CO 80919

Your Name _____
Your Address _____
Your Phone _____ Email _____
Child's Name As You'd Like it to Appear _____

Cause of Death (Optional) _____
Child's Birthdate _____
Child's Memorial Date _____
Number of Pictures Included _____
Dedication _____

Please create my slide with information and pictures provided.
Please use last year's slide. _____ Please return pictures when finished. _____

Dated Material - Please Deliver Promptly - Return Service Requested

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October 2016

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





The Compassionate Friends

Worldwide Candle Lighting

Join us on December 11, 2016

"...that their light may always shine."