



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS of the Pikes Peak Region

March, 2010 Newsletter

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## Upcoming Events

March 18th - General Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church  
April 15th - General Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church  
May 29th - Memorial Day Concert - 4:00 p.m. - Thompson Residence

## OUR TELEPHONE FRIENDS

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

CHAPTER LEADER	LARAINÉ ANDERSON	351-7653
INFANT LOSS	COLLEEN & ART MANNON	535-9868
TODDLER / YOUNG CHILD LOSS	BOB & YVETTE THOMPSON	573-2743
LEUKEMIA	JANE & STEVE GABRIEL	282-1924
TEEN / YOUNG ADULT LOSS	BARB REYNOLDS	599-0772
SUICIDE	LARITA ARCHIBALD	596-2575
DRUG / ALCOHOL LOSS	STEWART & LETA LEVETT	531-5488
SKATEBOARD / AUTO ACCIDENT	RAYE WILSON	(303) 814-9478

## 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](mailto:nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org)  
WEBSITES: National - [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)  
Colorado Springs - [www.tcfcolorado.org/coloradosprings](http://www.tcfcolorado.org/coloradosprings)

## *Welcome!*

*To those of you who are newly bereaved and receiving our newsletter for the first time, we warmly welcome you to The Compassionate Friends of the Pikes Peak Region.*

*We are other parents who have experienced the death of a child at any age and offer understanding and support through our monthly meetings and activities throughout the year:*

## OUR MEETINGS

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?  
Next meeting will be March 18th, 2010.

It is often difficult to attend your first meeting, but those who do find an atmosphere of support from other parents who understand a parent's grief. Nothing is asked of you; there are no fees; you do not have to speak a word if you do not care to. If you are more comfortable bringing a friend or relative along with you, please do.

Many find these meetings help them to heal; and together we learn to live with our loss. We learn that ***we need not walk alone.***



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## Love Gift Donations

*Our chapter exists entirely through your donations which are tax deductible. Love Gifts enable us to continue our outreach to bereaved parents through our many chapter activities. 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.

**These items must be received by the 10th of the month preceding the issue in which you would like them to appear. Love Gift donations should be sent directly to our treasurer, Frank Schager whose address is listed on the Love Gift Donation Form.**



**Tell us what you want. Is there something specific that you'd like to see? Perhaps more stories or articles on healing? Recommendations for books or poems written by other TCF members?**

**Do you have a poem or a prayer, story or picture that you would like to share? We also welcome your contributions to our newsletter whether original or something you may have read. If submitting something you've read or know is copyrighted material, you must obtain written permission from the author prior to us going to publication.**

**Please address any submissions to:**

**Stew Levett  
160 El Dorado Lane  
Colorado Springs, CO 80919**

**Or write to: [Stewart@Archangelgifts.com](mailto:Stewart@Archangelgifts.com)**

**Submissions need to be received by the 10th of the month to be included in the following month's newsletter. Thank you.**

## LOVE GIFT DONATION

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Anniversary Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dedication \_\_\_\_\_

Picture Enclosed: YES  NO

Mail to:  
Frank Schager  
2235 McArthur Ave.  
Colorado Springs, CO 80909

## Angel Eyes: Giving Comfort, Providing Hope

Our group offers bereavement services for parents, families, friends and caregivers who have been affected by the sudden unexpected loss of an infant or toddler. This group offers you a comfortable place to heal and learn how to live with your loss. Nothing is asked of you; you do not have to speak if you choose not to.

People who have received bereavement services report that it is very helpful for them to have people to talk to who can understand the grief of losing an infant or young child. This group is a safe place where you can talk about both your grief and the precious memories you have of your child. Each month we will begin with a particular topic, talk about how you might be affected and have time for general sharing.

The group is led by an ANGEL EYES social worker whose mission is to help families and others cope with the sudden, unexpected death of an infant or toddler throughout the state by providing a range of bereavement services. For additional help and information: **Angel Eyes 1-888-285-7437**

**Web site: [www.angeleyes.org](http://www.angeleyes.org)**

**Meetings are held the 3rd Monday of the Month**

**Location:** Colorado Springs Penrose Library, 20 N. Cascade Ave  
**Time:** 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

There is no cost and parking is free at the meters after 6:00 p.m.



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## Pikes Peak TCF Looking for Future Leaders

Would you like to get more involved with our local chapter of The Compassionate Friends? Would you like to help facilitate meetings or put your energies to use helping others in their grief journey? If you are 18 or more months out since you lost your child and are interested in helping our local chapter, please contact Laraine Anderson at 351-7653 to find out more on how you can help. We will be looking for new Steering Committee members to replace those who have stepped down over the past year. Time commitment is minimal but enthusiasm to help others is a must. Please call Laraine for more information.

## The COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS MEMORIAL DAY CONCERT & PICNIC BALLOON LAUNCH

The Compassionate Friends of the Pikes Peak Region is very excited to announce a special event on Saturday, May 29th, Memorial Day Weekend. Alan Pedersen will be in concert at 4:00 p.m. singing his personal and very moving songs of love, hope and healing for members of our TCF family. For those who are not familiar with Alan or were unable to attend our concert last year, Alan is a National Singer/Songwriter who has dedicated his music in the healing of others who are on their grief journey. Alan will be doing this as part of his "Angels Across The USA Tour (see below for more information).

We will start the afternoon at 3 p.m. with a barbecue potluck for all in attendance. The event will be held at TCF Board Members Bob & Yvette Thompson's house with the meats Peak Chapter of TCF. Our Memorial Day which will start immediately after the concert. we finalize the arrangements. RSVP's are food. Should you forget to RSVP, we'd like to anyway. We do suggest you bring a lawn chair contact information and ask for RSVP's at a calendars now for this event which you won't



and drinks being provided by The Pikes Balloon Launch honoring our children We will provide additional information as suggested so we may plan seating and have you there for this great event or you may sit on the lawn. We will provide later date, but, be sure to mark your want to miss.

### Alan Pedersen's Angels Across The USA Tour - 2010

Next year will be my biggest event ever as I reach out to the smallest and most rural of grief organizations throughout the United States regardless of the size of concert they can put together or their ability to pay my travel expenses. It is a special journey I am calling the Angels Across the USA Tour. Those of you who know me know this work has always been a ministry to me...next year I really want to expand that part of the outreach...but I truly need your help to accomplish this. The expenses of this tour are nearly \$50,000.00

To help cover the costs of the tour, I will be carrying the names and home towns of hundreds of our children hand lettered on to beautiful butterfly decals which will adorn the Angel Caravan and be displayed at each of the 120+ events including at least one concert in 48 states. Pictures of each of my sponsoring angels will be displayed at each event as well.

Your support by sponsoring a decal for \$100 will allow me to do what I have always wanted to do, and that is to be able to speak/play for any group, anywhere, regardless of their ability to pay or organize an event. Go to the tour website and join Ashley and the nearly 300 others who have sponsored the tour already...you can register your child today or send me an email and I will respond with a signup sheet.

We will blog each week with pictures and stories of the road so that you can follow along on this unique and special journey. I have been blessed and honored to touch the lives of so many bereaved families with my music and message in the past, thanks for your continued support in allowing me to continue in this work in the future.

Please let me know if you want the Tour to stop in your town...we will play events in private homes and other small venues as part of our regular schedule this year as we truly carry our beautiful Angels Across the USA.

[www.angelsacrosstheusa.com](http://www.angelsacrosstheusa.com)



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## Reflections of March

by Dayton Robinson, Jr. Tuscaloosa, AL TCF

March is a month of renewal. The dormant trees begin to stir; the birds optimistically sing of Spring; the winds, sometimes violent, wake us up; perhaps we need a "shake" out of our winter lethargy; an awakening.

There is that urge to plant, to nourish, to grow a tree or a flower. There is the primordial urge to feel your hands digging in the warming earth. Perhaps we plant because we know that someone will see the results, as we have enjoyed the results of others' work. It could be called a debt of renewal, a repayment for that which we have enjoyed. As we nourish small seedlings, we visualize the end results. That tree may die, as our children did. That tree may flourish beautifully, or it may meet ultimate disaster, but if that tree does well, it could be a source of great pleasure and of beauty for many coming years. We can believe that a seedling will be a glorious tree enjoyed by many. It's a nice dream.

"To all things there is a season" and as life goes by, we simply cannot afford to miss the seasons, the renewals, the changes for new growth. Regardless of our griefs and regrets, life goes on, and we must try not to miss a season. Life simply will be, whether we participate or not. Someone will benefit from constructive growth, if we can find the energy to make the effort.

Severe grief, for a time, reduces our interest and our ability to participate fully in life. With a low energy level and little initiative and with our hopes for the future severely damaged, it requires great effort for the bereaved to learn to again enjoy the small things that make up most of our lives. Our hopes for the future are so damaged that there is little incentive to work today for the future. The things that exist today comprise the basics of our future. We run a risk and a danger of missing the good things that are to be, because we do not have the wish to participate in the things that are today.

Although we need a time of some withdrawal, some time to ponder the unanswered questions, some time to heal, we also need to be aware of the lives that are passing. Regardless of our grief, life simply goes on, and there is much good that we risk losing if we stay too long in a state of suspense of the present and a sad review of the past.

A part of learning to "accept the unacceptable" is to learn to make the effort to sort out the good memories and take them with us into a future that will be happy again.

There comes a time when the harsh winter of our damaging grief will give way to some awakening; a time when we, like nature, can shake off some of the lethargy and see and feel the renewals life offers. Our choice is to remember that we could not control the advent of disaster. We can only control our response. Our choice is now only in the way in which we respond to the necessity to pick up the threads of our life and go on.

We owe it to ourselves, Compassionate Friends, to make a positive effort. We can hope that those buffeting winds of March can help us awaken to the renewals of Spring and put the "winter of our disaster" in its place, now a part of our ongoing lives.





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A boy was flying his kite.

He kept adding more spools of string to make it go higher. A woman walked by and said, "You have that kite flying high," and the boy agreed. The woman left and went about her business. On her way back she looked up toward the kite and said, "I don't see your kite." The boy agreed. She asked, "Then, why don't you let go of it?" The boy answered, "**I can't ... I can still feel it tugging.**"

**This is the plight of bereaved parents.**  
TCF, Pensacola, FL

## Easter and Passover

The Easter and Passover season are upon us. They are special family times that make it more obvious that our loved one/ones are missing. Some parents are struggling with what they will do. The Easter baskets, colored eggs, pretty dresses and hats don't seem to matter as much as they did. There are more important things on our minds now. We are facing the renewal of life all around us-and yet the missing child/children is not renewable. We hurt because life is going on and his or hers is not.

These are normal reactions for some when grief is fresh, for the changing of seasons is a poignant time for many. Those of us who have had the necessary time [grieving] wish to convey to those who have not that it won't always be this painful. When your grief softens (and it will), so will many of the hurtful responses. Get out in the sunshine, go for a walk, smell the fragrance of the flowers and allow the warmth and beauty of the season to permeate your being. It just may make your day a little lighter and a lighter day is worth trying for.

Excerpt from "Spring has Sprung" Mary Cleckley,  
TCF, Atlanta, (



## Daffodils

In the spring, I will bring daffodils to you with a prayer, after the cold, snowy winter is over and gone.

I will sit on the grass and sing the songs that we shared, knowing that your boundless spirit still lives on.

I've walked the path of sorrow. It's helped me to grow. Through the tears have come my strength and my healing.

My heart, once wounded and broken, is mended and filled with deep love for everyone in all that I do.

And every warm, sunny spring, I will bring yellow daffodils and cherish the memories of you.

Sharon Coder - TCF Inland Empire, CA

### Remember Me

Remember me in quiet days  
When raindrops whisper on your pane,  
But in your memories have not grief  
Let just the joy we knew remain.

Remember me when evening stars  
Look down on you with steadfast eyes;  
And when your thoughts do turn to me,  
Know that I would not have you cry;  
But live for me and laugh for me —  
When you are happy, so am I.

Remember an old joke we shared;  
Remember me when spring walks by;  
Think of me when you are glad,  
And while you live, I shall not die.

by Sibling: Lyn Bryant - TCF, Baytown. Texas



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## Remembering Our Children On Their Birthdays

<u>Child's Name</u>	<u>Date of Birth</u>		
<u>Age at Death</u>	<u>Date of Death</u>	<u>Cause of Death</u>	<u>Parent / Friend</u>
Wayne Allen Garrett 17 years	Mar 4 Sep 12	Airplane crash	Joyce and Greg Garrett
Logan Lawrence 23 years	Mar 5 Feb 22	Surgery complications	Janet & Edward Lawrence
Steven Warren 23 years	Mar 6 Nov 17	Cancer	Linda & Mark Warren
Erin Marie McCallister 3 weeks	Mar 7 Apr 2	Heart defect	Steve & Carol McCallister
Keith Andrew Barrett 24 years	Mar 8 Aug 9	Auto Accident	Ree Barrett
Owen William Howard 34 years	Mar 10 Oct 25	Crohn disease	Mike & Carol Parker
James Craig Stieglmeyer 25 years	Mar 11 Feb 2	Cystic fibrosis	Wally & Betty Stieglmeyer
Conri Lee Barber 8 months	Mar 13 Nov 23	Mitochondrial DNA depletion	Sean & Cherie Barber
Marisa Nicole Pilant 2 years	Mar 14 Feb 23	Viral infection	Richard & Elizabeth Jamison Stephen & Julie Pilant
Cathleen Bartlett Maxwell 6 years	Mar 17 Jul 24	Auto / ped accident	Dick & Marty Maxwell
Julian King 21 years	Mar 18 Dec 31	Murdered	Leonie Cramer
Megan Huyge 1 day	Mar 21 Mar 22	Birth Asphyxia	Stan & Rebecca Huyge
Billy E. Hendrickson 19 years	Mar 22 Jun 3	Cancer	Grace & Delbert Hendrickson
Christopher J. Novich 15 years	Mar 24 May 22	Accidental Strangulation	Susan & Joe Novich
Clayton Champion 29 years	Mar 24 Aug 22	Sudden death	Jessie & Phyllis Roark
Marc Darby 12 years	Mar 25 Dec 12	Respiratory failure	Lori & Steve Darby
Scott Martinson 6 years	Mar 26 Aug 21	Leukemia	JoAnn Martinson
Justin A. Clayton 16 years	Mar 26 May 12	Gunshot wound	Terry & Sharon Clayton
Kari Ann Kirt 15 years	Mar 28 Jul 26	Car accident	Lon and Andrea Kirt
Kira Ann Schager 5 years	Mar 28 May 19	Accident	Frank & Lori Schager



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## Remembering Our Children On Their Anniversaries

<u>Child's Name</u> <u>Age at Death</u>	<u>Date of Birth</u> <u>Date of Death</u>	<u>Cause of Death</u>	<u>Parent / Friend</u>
Kevin Michael Burns 16 years	Jan 27 Mar 3	Auto accident	Stan & Willie Burns
Jessica Robison 17 years	Jun 14 Mar 3	Car accident	Terri Robison
Steven James Gantz 13 years	Apr 4 Mar 4	Gun accident	Diana Gantz
Brian Michael Gregory 16 years	May 20 Mar 6	Muscular Dystrophy	Roy & Phyllis Gregory
Terry A. Shank 28 years	Jan 11 Mar 6	Drunk driver	Carol Vierling
Michelle Sandra Seal 3 years	Feb 23 Mar 7	Metabolic disorder	Walter & Diana Seal
Tiffany Maxwell 34 years	Jul 20 Mar 7	Lung & heart failure	Diane Maxwell
Jillian Overly 1 month	Feb 9 Mar 10	SIDS	Dauna Overly
Michael Jeffrey Waller 25 years	Jul 4 Mar 10	Army accident	Jeanie Young
Sean William Staat 25 years	Apr 23 Mar 11		Susan & William Staat
Andy Cope 27 years	Oct 7 Mar 14	Drug overdose	Debbie & Kurt Adelbush
Jim Agnew 31 years	Oct 4 Mar 17	Eating Disorder	Tom Agnew
Danae Lynne Marie Mannon 3months	Nov 26 Mar 18	Congenital pulmonary vein	Colleen and Art Mannon
Jody Elizabeth Houtz 17 years	Jan 23 Mar 18	Heart attack	Jane and Chris Houtz
Keltryn Lenae Brinkman 2 years	Jul 25 Mar 19	Cancer	Jim & Judy Brinkman
Christopher Calegar 10 years	Aug 15 Mar 22	Car accident	Kevin & Linda Calegar
Megan Huyge 1 day	Mar 21 Mar 22	Birth Asphyxia	Stan & Rebecca Huyge
Gary Michael Owens 32 years	May 24 Mar 27	Auto / pedestrian accident	Freda & Mario Garcia
Colin Peter Baerman 32 years	Nov 14 Mar 28	Bi-polar illness	Paul & Kerry Baerman



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## Remembering Our Children On Their Anniversaries

<u>Child's Name</u>	<u>Date of Birth</u>	<u>Cause of Death</u>	<u>Parent / Friend</u>
<u>Age at Death</u> Jonathan Argo	Apr 9	Murdered	Kimberly & Michael Argo
21 years	Mar 28		
Timothy Patrick Shea	Dec 22	Suicide	Joe & Paula Shea
21 years	Mar 31		

### Mother's Day...Father's Day... Graduations...Proms

Spring comes – and with it comes the uneasy awareness of difficult days ahead. For those who are still going through all the “firsts” without your child, we share with you some special ways other parents have coped and managed.

Mother's Day...Father's Day...graduations...vacations... these are special family times which often catch us unaware and bring unexpected tears and painful memories of young lives cut short. It does get better! And you can make these special days better with some planning and with encouragement from those who have already been there.

Whatever the “special day” that lies ahead for your family, try to focus on doing something meaningful and tangible in remembrance of your child. Share as a family thoughts and suggestions about planting a tree or starting a rose garden, donating a book to the library or school, putting flowers on the altar, lighting a special candle or taking that long talked-of vacation. Tears and moments of sadness are okay, for they are expressions of love.



#### Remember:

- Take one day at a time.
- Keep things simple by playing down the holidays and special days while they are so painful.
- Change your routine from past years.
- Make plans to be “busy” during at least part of the day (go out to lunch or to a movie, or visit friends).
- Give your older children some “space.” They not only feel your extreme sadness at these times; they also have their own feelings to deal with.

The anticipation is often worse than the day itself!

*From Fox Valley TCF Chapter, Aurora, Illinois*



#### The Magic of You

*What can I do to get better?*

This is the question most asked by newly bereaved parents, as if the right actions could work a miracle. They are seeking easy rules, methods or steps of healing.

But there are none. There are no special words, no special miraculous system, no magic wand to take the pain away. There is only time, hard work and compassionate support. Grief is a process which must be allowed to function thoroughly in order for healing to take place. There are no shortcuts. Attempts to ease the process, such as taking alcohol or drugs often end either in disaster or in complicating the process.

There is no magic. There is only you, the bereaved person, who must decide yourself to work within the process to resolve your grief.

No one else can do it for you, but others can help by supporting your grief rather than searching for magic words to wish it away. Others can help within The Compassionate Friends by providing models of healed parents who are willing to listen and share.

You can help yourself by being patient with grief instead of searching for easy methods. You can help yourself by learning about the grief process.

You can help yourself by sharing your story with others and by listening to their stories. You can help yourself by reaching out to others – for helping others is the source of your own healing.

Magic pills or incantations? There are none. Look to yourself. The Compassionate Friends can help, but you alone determine the progress of your grief. The magic of healing is within yourself.

*-Marcia Alig, TCF, Mercer Area, NJ*



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## Saying Your Name

Dear Friends, I think one of the hardest things to get use to after the death of a child it not hearing your child's name being said by anyone. After the initial shock of the first couple of weeks where everyone is reminiscing there seems to come the silence. That terrible, painful, silence where no one is saying your child's name.

It is as though people have forgotten them immediately after they have gone. It is the worst feeling in the world. You want to shout to the world, "Why can't you talk about my child, why won't you say my child's name!?" It is something that I have never gotten use to and never will. How do you tell everyone that it is ok to talk about your child? When Kirk died I asked the counselor at our high school if he would help me get the kids to write stories about Kirk at his web site. He did take a letter around to the senior class, but failed to tell them what was going on.

He passed it out without explanation because at the time our high school was of the impression that to talk about death, to mention our child's name, would not be good for the kids. Here was a class that had faced the death of 3 kids whom they knew in a short amount of time and no one wanted to talk about it. I have since made it clear that I would not let that happen again and am working toward having a written policy in our school district that would address the death of a child and try to help comfort the parents. It hasn't been easy, but not being able to mention my child's name has been a hard thing to accept. So accept it I won't.

There are so many ways to keep your child's memory alive. Here are a few suggestions that have been given to me that I would like to pass on to you. I will not say that some of these will be easy to do. Some of these will be harder to do than others, but most are doable.

1. Donate books to your local library or your school library with the name of you child inside.
2. Plant a tree with a plaque. Many parks and schools will allow you to plant trees in memory of loved ones.
3. Give a scholarship to a group or organization that your child was involved in.

There are so many ways to keep your child's name out in the real world. Don't be afraid to try different ways of doing it. Don't feel like you are pathetic or crazy. When famous people die, we find all kinds of ways to keep their names on peoples' lips. Why shouldn't we be able to do it for the people we love?

Jim Balthazor, Kirk's Dad  
TCF Phoenix, AZ

## VULNERABLE

I have found in the years that have passed that I am most vulnerable at times of remembrance.

The word "Anniversary" no longer holds a promise of celebration. Instead, holidays and birthdays, family gatherings and otherwise joyous occasions contain an undertow of sorrow. If I get caught up in it, I quickly get pulled under and wind up gasping for breath. It is ironic that the presence of the absence can be so emotionally devastating.

You'll excuse me if the bounce is gone from my step. Or the depth of my laughter has changed.

Issues that were once monumental, now seem insignificant. Please excuse me if I don't commiserate that your car needs repair or the faucet leaks. My focus on life has forever changed.

You'll excuse me if my spirit seems lost during holidays of any kind. They are now days "to bear," rather than days to share and enjoy.

You'll pardon me if I bring you down or make you feel discomfort, and I'll pardon you for not understanding that my life will never be the same; that although I'll survive, there will always be sorrow.

- Joan Fischer, TCF - Nassau County Chapter, NY

March 2010

The Compassionate Friends  
Pikes Peak Chapter  
P.O. Box 26239  
Colorado Springs, CO 80936



## TCF National Conference -- July 2-4, 2010

"Reflections of Love, Visions of Hope" is the theme of The Compassionate Friends 33rd National Conference which will be held in Arlington, Virginia, July 2-4, 2010. The event will be held at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City promising a beautiful venue for the 33rd TCF National Conference. Independence Day will not only feature our Walk to Remember, but will include a world-class display of fireworks over the National Mall, visible from Arlington.



<http://www.compassionatefriends.org/home.aspx>