



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS of the Pikes Peak Region

May, 2009

Our newsletter and meetings would not be possible if it weren't for the volunteers and kindness of the folks at the **First Baptist Church of Colorado Springs**. For this we would like to thank them for continuing to provide the printing of our newsletters and their ongoing support of our group by providing a meeting place each month.

Thanks

UPCOMING EVENTS

| DATE | EVENT | WHERE |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| May 10 All Day | Mother's Day | Wherever You Are |
| May 21 7 pm | General Meeting | First Baptist Church |
| May 25 All Day | Memorial Day | Across the United States |
| June 18 7 pm | General Meeting | First Baptist Church |



HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY - May 10th

Happy Mother's Day Issue

This month we dedicate our newsletter to every mother who has lost a child. Only you know the sorrow and pain of bearing your child and then losing them so early in life. We hope that the articles and poems in this issue help bring an understanding and comfort to you on this special month. Celebrate your child; after all, you were their mother.

OUR TELEPHONE FRIENDS

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

| | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| CHAPTER LEADER | LARAIN 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 |

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.



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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:

National - www.compassionatefriends.org

Colorado Springs - www.tcfcolorado.org/coloradosprings

Do you have a poem or a prayer, story or picture that you would like to share? We 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: stewlevett@msn.com

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

They Don't Wear Purple Hearts In Heaven

**I lost my brother to a foreign land;
I was too young to even understand
There was a knock at the front door,
then Momma wasn't smiling anymore.**

**The man at the door was a Marine;
the first I've ever seen.**

**Momma told me to go out and play,
then the preacher came
and they started to pray.**

**Tears ran down Momma's eyes,
and I heard her say, "Why, Lord, Why?"
Father stood there seemingly mindless,
all he said was, "We've lost another of
America's finest."**

**The Marine handed Momma a small
velvet case, inside was a Purple Ribbon,
attached to a gold heart with
Washington's face.**

**I asked Momma if it were mine, but she
said, "It's your brother's, Sunshine."**

**"Momma can we send it to Kevin?"
She answered, "They don't wear Purple
Hearts in Heaven."**

...Author unknown

The Significance of Mother's Day

I don't think I really appreciated the significance of Mother's Day until I myself became one. My life would never be the same and the death of my child did not alter the fact that I am still a mother. I still have the intense feeling of love for my child, a love greater than any I had known before.

So as Mother's Day approached, a day on which we recognize the love and pride of motherhood, I too, want to be remembered as a mother.

By Ginny Smith, TCF Charlottesville, VA

HARDCOPY or EMAIL?

Do you prefer your newsletter hard or soft copy? Please call chapter leader Laraine Anderson at 351-7653 and leave a clear message whether you want to continue to receive a hardcopy newsletter. Please speak slowly as you know how voice messages can be! She will acknowledge your call. If you'd like to be added to our eLetter mailing list, please email Stew Levett at the above email address, stating your preference as listed below.

We have a deadline of June 1st and any name on our distribution list at that time will be removed if we don't hear back from you. Should we remove you by mistake, we will gladly add you back so you don't miss a copy.

☐ Hardcopy ☐ eLetter ☐ Both ☐ Remove from All



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REMEMBERING OUR CHILDREN ON THEIR BIRTHDAYS

On the advice of the TCF national office, we are only including the month and date – not year – of birthdays and anniversary dates.



The light of life never goes out, so we remember them on their birthdays...

| <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 /</u> <u>Compassionate Friend</u> |
|--|--|----------------------------|--|
| Cody Darby 21 years | May 1 Oct 27 | Accident | Lori & Steve Darby |
| Robyn Kulas 8 years | May 2 Sep 28 | Car accident | Patty Kulas |
| Susan Gordon 18 years | May 3 Jan 4 | | Mr & Mrs Arthur Gordon |
| Martin Lanoue 1 day | May 4 May 4 | Birth defect | Judy Lanoue |
| Angela Gisela Martinez 34 years | May 5 Jul 11 | | Maria Hymes |
| Patrick Niedringhaus 19 years | May 5 Dec 22 | Avalanche victim | Leah & Dave Niedringhaus |
| Douglas Radowski 42 years | May 7 Apr 8 | Heart attack | Renee Roettger & Patricia Radowski |
| Jose N. Camacho 9 years | May 8 Aug 24 | Accidental shooting | William & Veronica Camacho |
| Gregory Randall Davis 19 years | May 9 Jan 29 | Auto accident | Cora Davis |
| David Allen McGough 26 years | May 14 Feb 7 | Car accident | Lillian McGough |
| Jacob Hunter Smathers 9 years | May 14 Sep 24 | Go-cart / auto accident | Patty, Becky & Renee Smathers |
| Michael Benjamin Decker 18 years | May 16 Jul 20 | Gunshot | Mary & Jerry Decker |
| Andrew Paul Weaver 20 years | May 16 Aug 17 | Vehicle accident | Valerie Lightbody |
| Denise Elaine Bear 20 years | May 16 Oct 24 | Auto accident | Dona and Tanya Flores |
| Rocke Lee Corley 43 years | May 18 Apr 11 | Heart attack | Jeanne Corley |
| Brian Michael Gregory 17 years | May 20 Mar 6 | Muscular Dystrophy | Roy & Phyllis Gregory |
| Jeremy Laurence 26 years | May 20 Feb 26 | Suicide | Ted & Sherrill Laurence |
| Jonathan El-Duncan 18 years | May 20 Nov 25 | Car accident | Dan & Becky Duncan |
| Jeffrey Russell Schumaker 31 years | May 23 Sep 20 | Auto accident | John & Vera Schumaker |
| Gary Michael Owens 33 years | May 24 Mar 27 | Auto / pedestrian accident | Freda & Mario Garcia |
| Skylar Lynn Boyle Ringland 23 years | May 24 Apr 4 | Homicide | Cathleen Boyle |
| Josh Huston 24 years | May 27 Dec 5 | Heart failure | Rodney & Michelle Moreno |
| Konrad Ferrar 20 years | May 31 Jun 4 | | Maria Hymes |



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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 /</u> <u>Compassionate Friend</u> |
|--|--|-------------------------------|--|
| Martin Lanoue 1 day | May 4 May 4 | Birth defect | Judy Lanoue |
| Julie Bankston 25 years | Apr 13 May 4 | Suicide | Peggy Bankston |
| Kendall Ford Young | Feb 20 14 years | Aplastic anemia May 11 | Ford & Ann Young |
| Justin A. Clayton 16 years | Mar 26 May 12 | Gunshot wound | Terry & Sharon Clayton |
| Genevieve Sucharski 19 years | Aug 2 May 12 | Car accident | Mark and Karen Sucharski |
| Kaden France 15 days | Apr 30 May 14 | Respiratory Distress Syndrome | Jeremy & Sarah France |
| Jason Nathaniel Lurch 24 years | Jun 28 May 15 | Murder | Kathleen & John Lurch |
| Matthew Stockwell 25 years | Dec 11 May 15 | Rare disease | Mark & Sally Stockwell |
| Michael Williams 29 years | Aug 13 May 18 | Heart rejection | Carmen Randall |
| Kimberley Dawn Leir 6 years | Feb 8 May 18 | Respiratory failure | Adaline and Herb Leir - TCF Regina Chapter |
| Anthony Lopez 22 years | Oct 14 May 18 | Car accident | Paul & Trudy Lopez |
| Tyrone Binnebose 2 years | Jan 11 May 18 | Infection from chemo | Natasha Binnebose |
| Kira Ann Schager 5 years | Mar 28 May 19 | Accident | Frank & Lori Schager |
| Eric Evans 26 years | Jan 23 May 21 | | Linda & Dick Evans |
| Christopher J. Novich 15 years | Mar 24 May 22 | Accidental Strangulation | Susan & Joe Novich |
| Christopher Clayton Hodson 23 years | Oct 27 May 22 | Auto accident | Eric and Janice Hodson |
| Zachary Nicholas Hoke 6 years | Apr 16 May 24 | Heart defect | Debra & Steve Hoke |
| Zack Orr 13 years | Aug 16 May 25 | Train accident | Dave & Sharon Orr |
| Kenny Lanza 28 years | Nov 7 May 25 | Auto accident | Chuck & April Lanza |
| Leah Ann Trutna 22 years | Nov 22 May 28 | Motorcycle accident | Steve & Phyllis Trutna |
| Gina Marie Geffre 15 years | Aug 16 May 29 | Airplane crash | Joann Jahraus |
| Nicholas Clare Cousineau 4 years | Aug 3 May 29 | Obstructed airway | George & Chris Cousineau |
| Michael William Sarmiento 46 years | Feb 7 May 29 | Heart attack | Donna (Sarmiento) Pugh |
| Nicolas Jay Broughton 18 years | Dec 23 May 30 | Car accident | Rose Broughton |
| Mallory Paulene Hendrickson 17 months | Jan 22 May 30 | Car accident | Celine & Gary Hendrickson |



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Love Gift Donations

Our chapter exists entirely through your donations which are tax deductible. Our largest expense is the printing and mailing of this newsletter, which is distributed to over 325 readers. 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 a 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 in "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.

SUPPORT GROUP 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 meetings will be April 16th and May 21st. 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.**

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

Mother's Day

Judy Sittner, Alabama TCF Newsletter, May/June 1991

Another Mother's Day! But a different one this year.

For you see I am a mother, but my child isn't here.

**I am a mother who is hurting for this child who was so dear,
As I face this and every other occasion, Each and every year.**

**I am a mother who feels emptiness, Over and over again,
Because I miss THIS child and all that could have been.**

**I am a mother who cared as I watched my child grow,
And truly loved her more than anyone will ever know.**

**I am a mother who has memories and many tears to cry
Over regrets I'll have to live with, Until the day I die.**

**I am a mother who is thankful for the miracle of birth,
And all my child has taught me about life and my own self-worth.**

**I just can't stop being a mother
Just because my child isn't here, Because the love we had for
each other**

Will continue for years and years.

And so..... On this special "Mother's Day",

I will feel within my heart,

**All the pride, love and joy which are the parts
That make me: who I am, And what I'll always be -
A MOTHER Just remember that..... Please?**



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Mother's Day: A Father's View

In our house, as in other bereaved parents' households, Mother's Day comes with mixed emotions. Setting aside a day to honor motherhood is only right: mothers do tend to be taken for granted. I remember the childhood joy of getting my mother a special gift, even if the gift was nothing more than a crayon drawing. As an adult, buying gifts for your mother and the mother of your children still brings back those happy memories. But this all changed after Erin died.

Looking through all the cards at the gift shop only reminds me of the irony. Cute, humorous, and sweetly sentimental cards await the bereaved father shopping for his bereaved wife. I can't find the card that will comfort my wife on this day, and even worse, I'm afraid that I'll buy a card that will bring back only painful memories of the child she lost.

I realize this day, perhaps because it is so widely celebrated, can even, years later, take my wife back to grieving she thought she was "through with." I can never do enough on Mother's Day; maybe I try to do too much. I know, of course, that all the cards, gifts, flowers, and messy breakfasts in the world, can't make up for the loss of our child. But I still do all these things; she deserves them. The unfairness of our daughter's death will always be there. I know I can't change that with a card. But I can remind her she is a great

mother, a loving mother, and most importantly, she is still the mother of the child we lost. If she's happy on Mother's Day, I will try my best to keep her there. If she's depressed, I try to cheer her up as best I can, even though I feel I'm not very good at it. This, then, is the wish I have for all other bereaved mothers today: Please be as happy (and proud) as every other mother today; no one can dispute the fact you

brought your child into the world. Although that child is no longer with you, the love you had for her or him remains and can never be taken away from you. If you should be depressed, may there be family and friends there to remind you of this and comfort you.

To all of you: HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY.

--Al Bots, TCF, Cleveland, OH, SW Suburbs

We're Sorry!

Last month we inadvertently left out the following name from our birthday list. We try very hard to have correct and up to date information in our database but on occasion a name is misspelled or left out completely. Please let us know of a correction or omission so we may keep your information as accurate as possible.

| <u>CHILDS NAME</u> | <u>DATE OF BIRTH</u> | <u>DATE OF DEATH</u> |
|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Scott Martinson | March 26 | August 21 |
| <u>CAUSE</u> | <u>PARENT</u> | |
| Leukemia | JoAnn Martinson | |

M is for Mother

For Leta, from Dad - TCF Pikes Peak Chapter

M is for just how much we Miss them
O is 'cause they're never growing Old
T is for the Tears that we shed daily
H is for the Heartbreak since they've gone
E is for Every day we miss them
R is for we Really, Really care

You may be gone but I am still your Mother,
wishing every day that you were here.



Bent But Not Broken

~Donna Frechec, TCF Enid Chapter

To the Mother who has lost her only child, or has no surviving children, the thought of Mother's Day sends a stabbing pain that only the ones of us who are in this situation can understand. We begin to notice Mother's Day cards slipped in right after Valentine's Day along with the Easter cards. Even before Easter the TV advertising starts. We try to blot this all out but our subconscious keeps reminding us, the day is coming closer. For the first two years we celebrated Mother's Day for my mother and sister very quietly. The third year after my daughter Shawna's death, we decided to go to a local restaurant featuring a nice buffet. We arrived early hoping to avoid the crowd. A very flustered hostess greeted us and found a table for us. The tables had been pushed close together to accommodate more people. It was already becoming very crowded. She asked the question, "How many Mothers?" It was then we noticed the flowers she was carrying. Someone managed to stammer out, three, three-Mothers. She handed us each a flower, while glancing around to find a table for the next group of people. She didn't notice the one she handed me was pretty battered.

My sister wanted to give me hers or get another. "No, it's ok," I said. The stem was bent, but not broken completely. A wilted tired flower was hanging from the stem. I brought it home and propped it up in a glass of water to revive it. You see, I could identify with that flower. As a Mother without my child, I have felt so bruised and battered. Somehow through all the pain, tears, and loneliness, like the flower, I have been bent but never quite broken.



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Am I Still A Parent?

by Pat Akery, TCF Medford, MA

With Mother's Day and Father's Day just around the corner, we are again facing some days that may be difficult for some of us. The reminders of these two special days are everywhere so we couldn't avoid them even if we wanted to. It may be my imagination, but it seems as well that during this time of year we are more likely to be asked questions like: "Do you have any children?" or, "How many children do you have?" What happens in the pit of your stomach when someone you have recently met asks you these questions - the same questions that gave you such feelings of pride to answer before your child died? Do you stumble over your words as most of us have (or still do from time to time)? Do you feel as if you have to say more than you want to? Or do you feel as if you aren't saying enough? If you have another child he may ask you, as he works through his own grief, "Am I still a brother?" Does this kind of question prompt you to ask, "Am I still a parent?" How do we make it through Mother's Day and Father's Day with difficult questions such as these and all the emotions we are feeling in our grief? All I can suggest are a few things that have worked for me. I think that it helps to realize that many of us have strong feelings we have attached to Mother's Day and Father's Day stemming from our past experiences - some perhaps even bittersweet - that were created well before our children died. Many of us have also established some traditions associated with these days that we may feel we must continue. Things are different now. We are doing critically important work. We are - even when it doesn't feel like it - doing the most difficult work we will ever do - grief recovery work. At times it takes all the energy we have and goes wanting for more. Pay attention to your energy levels. Make sure you get enough sleep and not too much. If you are not sleeping enough try to take naps as you need them if possible. If you are sleeping too much, try to increase your physical activity. Make changes slowly and carefully in both your amount of exercise and your diet if necessary. Many of us don't eat healthfully early in our grief recovery. We usually eat too little early on and many of us tend to eat too much later. Be sure to seek advice of a doctor regularly, especially if you have any health concerns. But even if you don't, you should still seek advice because we tend to neglect our health more than we think we do when we grieve. Even small changes in our health can make a noticeable difference in our mental state. Beyond your physical well-being you should look critically at the traditions and obligations you have established. Obviously, the ones you truly want to do you should do, but others you may want to change or eliminate. Your healing and recovery is the most important work you have to do. Do only what makes sense and don't hesitate to ask others for help when you need it. Also, ask other TCF members who may be further into their grief recovery how they handle specific situations that might be troublesome for you. Prepare ahead of time for the questions that might trip you up. Know that it is perfectly okay to give different answers to different people to the same question. Even a question as

simple as "How many children do you have?" results in my answering differently depending on who asks. Frankly, some people matter more in my life than others. Those that matter more, get more complete answers, those that matter less, get less complete answers. The most important thing is that I decide ahead of time how I will answer. It makes the answering much easier. I give varying answers to these kinds of questions without any feelings of guilt, or any sense that I am not telling the truth. The important thing is that I am telling the truth. It's just that I don't feel an obligation to share with everyone I meet that my son, Bobby, has died. Even if Bobby were my only son, I would answer the question "Am I still a parent?" the same way I would answer my son Jimmy's question "Am I still a brother?" Yes, of course! I come to this answer quite easily by thinking of how I view my relationship to my father. Though my father died some years ago, I am still my father's daughter and I always will be. I will always be the parent of both my sons - Bobby and Jimmy. And Jimmy will always be Bobby's brother. Death does not, no matter what else we may think, change our precious relationship to our parents, our children, or even to any of those who we love. I am still a parent!

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SUIDS Family Support Group



Time: 6:30-8:30pm

**Day: 3rd Monday of
each month
beginning 3/16/09**

**Location: St. Francis
825 E. Pikes Peak
5th Floor
Summit Room**

This group offers
grief support for
parents, families,
friends &
caregivers who
have been
affected by the
sudden,
unexpected loss of
an infant or
toddler.

Angel Eyes: (888) 285-7437

Tena@angeleyes.com

St. Francis: Leslie Schwender (719) 776-5855

**The meeting will be facilitated
by Susan Backus Ph.D.
This meeting is for adults only.
No child care will be provided.**



Zel Hester
TCF Atlanta, GA

A BEREAVED MOTHER IS...
A Bereaved Mother is someone who thinks she will spend the rest of her life with this horrendous feeling inside.
A Bereaved Mother is someone who has to learn how to live all over again.
A Bereaved Mother is someone who wishes they would take Mother's Day out of the calendar.
A Bereaved Mother is someone who has to learn to accept the loss of her beloved child and uses what she has learned to help others.
A Bereaved Mother is someone who can again learn to smile, to look forward to the future and get excited again because her Compassionate Friends were there when she needed them.

The Compassionate Friends
Pikes Peak Chapter
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Colorado Springs, CO 80936

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