



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS of the Pikes Peak Region

November, 2009 Newsletter

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Upcoming Events

November 19th - General Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church
December 13th - Worldwide Candle Lighting Memorial - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church

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

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 meetings will be October 15th and November 19th.

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](#)**.

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.

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.tfcolorado.org/coloradosprings



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TCF CANDLELIGHT MEMORIAL

Time is running out for you to submit your photos and dedications for our annual TCF Candlelight Memorial on December 13th.

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 (3) three and your dedication should be short 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 SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5th, 2009**

Submissions can be emailed to Stewart@Archangelgifts.com

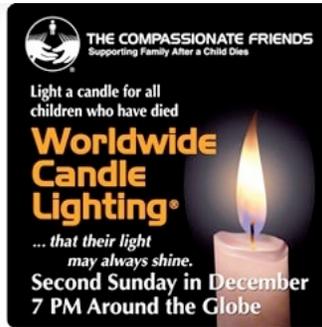
or send to

Stewart Levett

160 El Dorado Lane

Colorado Springs, CO 80919

Join us for
The Compassionate Friends
Worldwide Candle Lighting
December 13, 2009!!



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



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Remembering Our Children On Their Birthdays

<u>Child's Name</u> <u>Date of Death</u>	<u>Date of Birth</u> <u>Cause</u>	<u>Age at Death</u> <u>Compassionate Friend</u>
Rebecca Ann Reynolds Oct 16	Nov 1 Car accident	17 years Ken and Barbara Reynolds
Robert Howie Nov 12	Nov 1 Blood infection	13 days Annette Howie
Kristen Clark Feb 2	Nov 2 Drug overdose / depression	31 years Donna Krum
Patrcia Elliott Apr 11	Nov 4 Murdered	19 years Connie and Dave Elliott
Michael Keeney Nov 18	Nov 6 Heart Attack	45 years Charlotte Keeney
Matthew Sperry Jun 5	Nov 6 Bike / car accident	34 years Harriet Sperry
Kristie Diaz Apr 7	Nov 7 Cancer	26 years Julie Diaz
Kenny Lanza May 25	Nov 7 Auto accident	27 years Chuck & April Lanza
Vinnie Franz Jun 17	Nov 8 Accidental drug overdose	18 years Barb Franz
Kimberly Ann Hayes Jun 30	Nov 10 Amniotic Fluid Embolism	22 years Patty and Patrick Hayes
Judy Gambill Jan 12	Nov 13 Car/Truck Crash	17 years Andrea Gambill
Colin Peter Baerman Mar 28	Nov 14 Bi-polar illness	32 years Paul & Kerry Baerman
Eric Cowles Feb 17	Nov 15 SIDS	3 months Doug & Leah Cowles
Shannon Diane McMahon Jul 9	Nov 17 Vehicle accident	16 years Robert & Jeanette McMahon
Joshua W. Lewis Gohlke Jan 19	Nov 19 Vehicular homicide (DUI)	20 years Karen Swank
Travis Grimmer Jul 23	Nov 20 Cancer	29 years Mary Lou Grimmer
Richard "Richie" Petras Apr 16	Nov 21 Car accident	3 years Richard Petras



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<u>Child's Name</u>	<u>Date of Birth</u>	<u>Age at Death</u>
<u>Date of Death</u>	<u>Cause</u>	<u>Compassionate Friend</u>
Evan Carara Jun 2	Nov 22 Car accident	18 years Cindy & J.D. Carara
Leah Ann Trutna May 28	Nov 22 Motorcycle accident	21 years Steve & Phyllis Trutna
Patrick Roger Pennington Sep 4	Nov 24 Rock climbing accident	17 years Roger & Joan Pennington
Savannah L. Burke Jan 12	Nov 25 SIDS	1 month Herman & April Burke
Danae Lynne Marie Mannon Mar 18	Nov 26 Congenital Pulmonary Vein Stenosis	3 months Colleen and Art Mannon
Mark Van Matre Jan 24	Nov 27	46 years Patricia Van Matre
Jalynn Cameron Apr 19	Nov 28 SIDS	4 months Jessica Cameron
Michael Christopher Rushmore Oct 29	Nov 28 Suicide / mental illness	29 years Bob & Carol Rushmore
Paul A. Behr Feb 1	Nov 29 Congenital abnormalities	2 months Cynthia & Steve Behr

MEET OUR STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS



For many of us “newbies” to the grieving process and to The Compassionate Friends, it is with great relief that we have “seasoned” individuals who can help guide us down the path of recovery because they’ve “been there, done that.”

Marty and Dick Maxwell turned to the Pikes Peak TCF chapter in August of 1987, the month after their six year-old daughter Cathy was killed by a drunk driver. As the numbness began to ease, they realized that hearing, talking with, and just being with others who had suffered similar devastating losses was playing a significant role in helping them cope and move on into their new and very different life.

The Maxwells spent a year in Lexington, KY, attending TCF meetings while they lived there, and then moved back to Colorado Springs. After spending some time also working with the local MADD chapter, the Maxwells became chapter leaders in 1992. They created the steering committee and over the years have also edited the newsletter and occasionally facilitated meetings.

Cathy’s sisters are Jennifer, now living in Denver and working for the Colorado Federation of the Blind, and Kelly, a recent graduate of the University of Notre Dame.

We are glad that Marty and Dick continue to share their services with us and provide direction for our chapter.



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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>Compassionate Friend</u>
Michael Williams Greist 12 years	Jul 28 Nov 1	Car/bike accident Allan & Judy Greist
Justin William Winner 13 years	Jul 21 Nov 5	Gunshot wound Dale & Rosanne Winner
Scott David Stiegelmeier 21 years	Jun 27 Nov 7	Cystic fibrosis Betty Stiegelmeier
Dwayne Stoppel 45 years	Dec 3 Nov 8	Pearl Stoppel
Katie Steckiel 1 years	Jul 19 Nov 8	Croup Wendy Steckiel
Emma Renee Younger 3 months	Aug 2 Nov 9	Heart complications Adam & Mindy Younger
Robert Howie 13 days	Nov 1 Nov 12	Blood infection Annette Howie
Mike Mozo 27 years	Apr 5 Nov 12	Auto accident Valerie Kirchhofer
Steven Warren 23 years	Mar 6 Nov 17	Cancer Linda & Mark Warren
Michael Keeney 45 years	Nov 6 Nov 18	Heart Attack Charlotte Keeney
Stephen Merle Schmoker 39 years	Feb 5 Nov 19	Brain tumor Shirley & Ralph Greer
Tyler Schmidt 23 years	Jun 6 Nov 20	Fentanyl Intoxication Valerie & Jeff Schmidt
Aaron Lee Gallob 28 years	Jan 27 Nov 21	Leukemia Lou & Erma Gallob
Tommy Kinslow 20 years	Apr 9 Nov 22	Murder Pam Kinslow
Joseph Michael Chavez 29 years	Sep 20 Nov 22	Pedestrian/motor vehicle accident Herman & Patty Chavez
Susanna Jeanette Scruggs 23 years	Aug 21 Nov 22	Friedrich's Ataxia Patricia Beard



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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>Compassionate Friend</u>
Conri Lee Barber 8 months	Mar 13 Nov 23	Mitochondrial DNA depletion Sean & Cherie Barber
Wade Lehman 19 years	Sep 17 Nov 24	Auto accident Lori Lehman
Kimberly Benson 16 years	Oct 22 Nov 24	Car accident Debbie Diekman
Jonathan Ell-Duncan 17 years	May 20 Nov 25	Car accident Dan & Becky Duncan
Frankie Padilla 18 years	Jan 13 Nov 27	Murdered Frances Lucero
Michael Ornelas 2 months	Sep 17 Nov 27	Heart Defect Annette & Chris Ornelas
Konrad Ferrer 16 years	Dec 7 Nov 27	Car accident Maria Hymes
Adriano Bermudez 19 years	Jan 22 Nov 29	Car accident C.J. LaPointe

TCF Unconditional Caring

by Kitty Reeve TCF, Marin & San Francisco, CA

My Son Philip died in August 1994, when he was 26 years-old. He died by suicide, influenced by a genetic illness, bipolar mood disorder (manic depression). I well remember how I flinched inwardly when people began referring to Philip's having "committed suicide." It seemed to diminish my wonderful son, to make him into what he never was: a kind of criminal. I wanted people to remember the beauty of his soul, yet what they focused on was the shocking way in which he died.

So it has been personally important to me to learn that TCF has made a change in the language it uses related to suicide. TCF now uses the terms "died of suicide" or "died by suicide" in all publications and presentations. The new, emotionally neutral language helps to lift the burden of stigma from all of us whose children or siblings died by suicide. It gives us strength and helps us heal.

If your child or sibling has died in one of society's less "acceptable" ways-by suicide, murder, alcoholism, from a drug overdose, AIDS or sexually transmitted diseases or in prison-do know that TCF does not accept society's stigmas. There is no room for blame or condemnation when all our hearts are aching for the children we no longer have. We honor your child and your grief, no matter the cause of death.

Similarly, if you are a parent or sibling who may feel "other" in our oft-judgmental society, please know that you will not be "other" in TCF. We welcome you with understanding and compassion, whatever your age, your race, your ethnicity, whether you are rich or poor, married or single, gay or straight, whatever your religion or lack of religion. We welcome you. And if you have endured the most terrible tragedy, if you have had more than one child or sibling die or have lost all your children or siblings, you are welcome. Many people are terrified that we are "contagious" because the worst nightmare has become a reality in our lives. They don't want to believe what we know: that neither we, nor they, can keep our children safe and alive. So they avoid us. And they especially may avoid you who have had more than one child or sibling or all your children die, because the horror of what has happened in your lives terrifies them. We welcome you, and we honor your courage and want to be helpful to you in your healing. We offer our compassion and understanding to all parents and siblings and other family members who are on this very difficult journey into healing. May the unconditional acceptance one finds in TCF someday be mirrored in a wiser and more tolerant society.



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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

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

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 that 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 the ANGEL EYES social worker. Their 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

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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FEED THE CAT???????

My son is dead - and you expect me to feed the cat??? Isn't it amazing how society is so rigid in their expectations? "There are rules you know...Steps we must all take..."

Whoever set these standards obviously has never lost a child, the core of your heart and soul. It just doesn't work that way.

Simple every day tasks are impossible to complete. The only constant in your upside down world is pain, unlike any pain you have ever known. Shortly after your child's death, you are expected to return to your job, take care of your household, pay the bills, and yes, feed the cat! It has been a year for me, since I lost my son, and I still go blank mid act. I stand in a store with no idea what I came in for, or I cry over bananas, because Lee loved them. I can go from laughter to tears in 1.1 seconds.

The Compassionate Friends has been a life saver (or perhaps a heart saver) for me. Only those who have experienced the same heartache will understand when you say I need to be alone - but I can't stand to be alone! Each grieving parent must heal in his or her own way, in his or her own time. One step forward, 15 back, spin around and start over, only to repeat the same progress, one step forward, 15 back, spin around...You get the picture. But you don't have to heal alone. You need not walk alone. Join us, we know you're not crazy - just a grieving parent. We do care.

by Ann - TCF Roseburg, OR

The Reason for TCF Meetings

One could ask, "Why go and listen to the woes of other people when it is easier to get wrapped up in our own?" It is not to compare tragedies, nor assess the right or wrong means of grieving, nor to pressure or complicate or confuse a bereaved parent with timetables of grief. This not the reasoning behind TCF meetings.

When a child of a family dies, the emotional pain can be intense. It is tempting at times to try to run either into solitude or avoidance. A balance is needed to survive and live more than a resigned existence. Finding a way isn't easy when the "rest of the world" rushes by, taking little notice that our life has changed.

The monthly meetings, of *The Compassionate Friends*, is a special time we can set aside to gain and maintain our balance. We need a lot of encouragement to endure and experience our emotions and to express ourselves while grieving. Coming to a meeting can help alleviate the feeling of being alone in sorrow. The environment of other bereaved parents offers a means of keeping in touch with reality, in which there can be a sharing and mutual understanding. There is sustained support knowing that others are willing to acknowledge that though a child's song might be over, the melody of memories will remain woven throughout the remainder of our lives.

N. Hunt
TCF, Sious Falls, SD

On your child's birthday month, we invite you to come to our monthly meeting and share their story! (Even if you don't come to meetings regularly, we would love to meet you and honor your child.)

Birthdays hold treasured memories and are especially difficult for surviving parents and siblings; TCF offers a wonderful venue to honor and celebrate the precious life-story of your loved one. Taking a few minutes to share a picture, memento, award or even their favorite toy is a gentle reminder to all that *love continues and grows with each passing year*. Parents will often bring their child's favorite cake to share as we sing Happy Birthday in their remembrance.

The Birthday Table

Frankie Wilford - TCF Portland, OR

No rustling tissue paper
Scattered ribbons or burst balloons
No shouts of Happy Birthday
Break the silence in this room.

Nonetheless

A birthday has rolled round again
Though the beloved children
Who reveled in the cheer
No longer blow the candles out
At the turning of the year.

Loving hands may bring
A photograph or that precious live to share
And place it on the Birthday Table
With utmost tenderness and care.

For though the world may not recall
The laughter or the joy
We treasure every memory
Of our birthday girls and boys.



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Tips for Creative Coping

Darcy Simms - TCF Greater Manchester, NH

Identify specific feelings; do not generalize. Acknowledge your thoughts; accept both the positive and the negative. Together we'll share it, together we'll bear it, and together we'll see it through. Make a conscious attempt to regain a sense of humor; a zest for living. Figure out exactly what you want to do and do it! Become as informed and knowledgeable as possible; knowledge is power. Assert yourself; ask for what you need. Believe in yourself; listen to yourself. Engage in whatever exercise and activity as possible. Set small goals first; accomplish them; set bigger goals. Set specific dates with yourself to do something you like. Reach out to others. Focus on only one worry at a time; pick your worries; don't worry about worrying. Search for joy every day; insist on it! Try to retain a sense of perspective. Remember that life requires effort on your part; work at lifting depression one day at a time; know some days all you can manage is one minute at a time. Don't wait for happiness; make it happen now; this is it! Realize that love isn't enough, but nothing works without it. Don't forget to dream; practice it often. Be kind to yourself; learn to forgive yourself. Laugh at least once a day. Listen to everyone, but follow your own music. Hug someone often; hug yourself.

To Our Surviving Children

And you were with us when the darkness came; you stood and grieved and kept our self alive, we thank you now. We have not always honored who you are and often did not tend to your hidden sorrows, forgive us now. Because you loved us well enough to wait until we could return to you and know with joy and hope and love, you are our tomorrow, we celebrate your life. And while we will remember always the one, the many souls that did not live; we see you once again for what you are, the wealth you are, the comfort and the promise, we thank you now.

Sascha Wagner

But Norman Rockwell Never Painted Me

At this time of year, it always seems that I see the families of other people's dreams. Everywhere I look, every ad I see shows the joyful reunions of family. With the table laden, good times abound while families reunite and gather around. But Rockwell never painted an empty chair and a family mourning the one who's not there. A season that once was celebrated now makes us feel more isolated. I need TCF so that I can see that there are others just like me whose feelings about holidays are mixed, at best, whose strength of will is put to the test. We love those whom we still hold near but, a thought of one out of reach brings us to tears. Even now, amidst the love and gladness, this time of year brings certain sadness. I no longer have the "Average" family, so that's why Rockwell never painted me.

Kathy Hahn TCF, Lower Buck County, PA

New Traditions

New traditions are now permanently woven into the fabric of our lives. The catalyst for these traditions is not a happy addition to our lives; indeed, the catalyst marks a traumatic loss in our lives. That subtraction comes in the form of the death of our child. The finality is crushing. This overwhelming loss has redefined each of us, changed our perspective forever and brought us close to the abyss of insanity. The new traditions gradually pull us back from the abyss and may eventually provide a sense of comfort, serenity and peace. And so we remember our children. We communicate with them, via a note from our hearts, written on a butterfly shaped paper and tied to balloon. We, the parents of the dead, gather and listen to a poem about our collective and individual loss. We the parents of the dead experience the haunting bagpipe as it fills our senses with the sound and the meaning of Amazing Grace. We, the parents of the dead, once again stand together and remember our children. We speak to them. Our butterfly messages become kisses on the wind as our balloons ascend into the sky, floating southward, floating higher and higher until, we imagine, our children can reach out and grab each message and read it and know that we love them deeply and miss them every day and every night. This is our tradition. Each of us views it from the depth of our souls; our love of our children is demonstrated openly as we weep without shame for the loss we have experienced. A significant part of each parent died when our children died. Yet, a crucial part of each child lives in the hearts of every mother and father. Neither time nor death will erase that bond. It is solid, it is pure and it is forever.

We hope that one day we will each make some sort of peace with this monster, this nightmare, this void, this pain. We hope one day to heal our open wound but know we will always carry an invisible yet deep scar. The worst loss a person can ever experience has been thrust upon us. The only change will come from within each of us. We may one day feel a serenity that comes only through pure love, pure kindness and pure understanding.

We will learn to remember yesterday, live today and anticipate tomorrow. And we will always have our new traditions—traditions that are now part of who we are, where we have been and where we are going in this life. Our traditions remind us that our children lived, laughed and loved. We linger in the moment for that is all we have.

Annette Mennen Baldwin - TCF, Tyler, TX

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



The Compassionate Friends Credo

We need not walk alone. We are the Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with love, with understanding and with hope. Our children have died at all ages and from different causes, but our love for our children united us. Your pain becomes my pain just as your hope becomes my hope. We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances. We are a unique family because we represent many races and creeds. We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief, but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that we feel helpless and see no hope. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression; others radiate inner peace. But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share just as we share with each other our love of our children. We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building that future together as we reach out to each other in love and share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts and help each other to grieve as well as to grow.

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends!