



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS of the Pikes Peak Region

August, 2011 Newsletter

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## Upcoming Events

August 18th - General Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church  
September 15th - General Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church

## 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 August 18th, 2011.

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.**

## Pikes Peak Chapter Steering Committee

### CHAPTER LEADER

LARAINÉ ANDERSON

Son, Michael Edward Anderson

### MAILINGS & DATABASE

JANE & STEVE GABRIEL

Son, Jonathan Steven Gabriel

### TREASURER

FRANK SCHAGER

Daughter, Kira Ann Schager

### NEWSLETTER EDITOR & EMAILINGS

STEWART & LETA LEVETT

Son, Aaron Paul Levett

### SC MEMBER/FACILITATOR

BOB & YVETTE THOMPSON

Son, Ryan Barry Thompson

### SC MEMBER/FACILITATOR

LEONIE CRAMER

Son, Julian Anthony King

## 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. Love Gift donations should be sent directly to our treasurer, Frank Schager 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?*

## 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 - [www.tcfcolorado.org](http://www.tcfcolorado.org)

Colorado Springs - [www.tcfcolorado.org/coloradosprings](http://www.tcfcolorado.org/coloradosprings)



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### **You Are My Sunshine**

As a child, I learned to sing on road trips in the family car. We sang “She’ll be Coming, Round the Mountain”, “Row, Row, Row Your Boat” and my favorite: “You are my sunshine, my only sunshine. You make me happy when skies are gray. You’ll never know dear, how much I love you. Please, don’t take my sunshine away.”

Since my son’s death, whenever I hear this song, I mentally change the spelling to “son-shine”. When he left, skies surely turned gray. Gray skies continue to visit me in random moments of grief to the point that at times, it’s impossible to see the sun. And when summer brings sunny days, it breaks my heart that he can’t be here with me to light up my life.

Grief enhances our sense to that the absence of light allows us to perceive our need for light. A good example came one dark and dismal day as I sat reading, a part of me dwelling on my missing child. Ever so softly, warmth crept across my outstretched leg. I shot a glance in its direction and discovered a stream of golden sunshine. In my preoccupation, I hadn’t noticed the parting clouds outside—the transformation from gloom to gleam. If I had not been sitting quietly, thinking of my child, I would have missed the gift—missed an opportunity to find joy in that brief moment when “son-shine” paid an unexpected visit. What a blessed gift it is to remember my child with joy.

There’s scientific reason that a sunny day brings some joy and energy to our lives. Bright light makes a difference to the brain chemistry. Lack of light causes a condition called Seasonal Affective Disorder. SAD doesn’t occur only in the dark winter months. If you work the night shift or you spend all day in an office, wear sunglasses outside, spend your days off in a dimly lit home you may not be getting adequate light. All the more reason to grasp at every golden moment that comes our way. The true lifesavers in my grief journey are those small surprising occurrences that often go unnoticed. When memories arrive on beams of joyous sunlight, I’m learning to take notice, to savor, then stockpile the simple pleasures that somehow appear in spite of heavy days. Sometimes light comes from deep within our hearts. Sometimes friends arrive with small rays of hope, guiding us through the darkest hours. Summer brings moonlit evenings, the flash of lightening across an endless sky, fireflies in a Mason jar, the beam of a flashlight piercing the darkness, yellow butterflies at the break of day; all reminders that our children were bright and full of life.

We are on a dark journey. At the same time, we are on a righteous search for light, grasping at hope wherever we find it. When gray days return and winter seems endless, remember—it’s not. As grief changes, we learn to survive the darkness, believing that light lies ahead. May sunshine bless you with small, precious moments of hope and joy in the coming summer days.



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## Online Support

The Compassionate Friends offers "virtual chapters" through an Online Support Community (live chats). This program was established to encourage connecting and sharing among parents, grandparents, and siblings (over the age of 18) grieving the death of a child. The rooms supply support, encouragement, and friendship. The friendly atmosphere encourages conversation among friends; friends who understand the emotions you're experiencing. There are general bereavement sessions as well as more specific sessions. Please check the schedule for dates and times of the sessions.

Note: Times posted on the schedule are based upon Eastern Time.

[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

## *Going Home Angel*



This angel, sculpted by Artist Marco Grove, is now being offered for sale through Archangel Gifts. Inspired and dedicated to my son Aaron Paul Levett, this angel depicts the soul of your loved one returning to the arms of the Father. The angel is cast from crushed selenite, quartz and angelite crystals. The sculpture is 3 1/2 inches tall and is finely polished.

We will be donating 25% of the proceeds from the sale of these angels to The Compassionate Friends and one will be given away at this years Memorial Balloon Launch.

You may pre-order your own angel by going to our website at [www.Archangelgifts.com](http://www.Archangelgifts.com). Angels will be delivered at the Memorial Balloon Launch or can be shipped to any location. If you would like further information please feel free to email me at [stewart@archangelgifts.com](mailto:stewart@archangelgifts.com)

## TELEPHONE FRIENDS

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

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

## 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



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## Remembering Our Children On Their Birthdays

Child's Name	Date of Birth	Compassionate Friend
Eric Johnson	Aug 1	Gary Johnson
Genevieve Sucharski	Aug 2	Mark and Karen Sucharski
Emma Renee Younger	Aug 2	Adam & Mindy Younger
Aaron Paul Levett	Aug 2	Stewart & Leta Levett
Veronika Olivia Baca	Aug 2	Sharon Baca
Nicholas Clare Cousineau	Aug 3	George & Chris Cousineau
James Russell Kempa	Aug 4	Russell & Gayle Kempa
Matthew John McCallister	Aug 4	Steve & Carol McCallister
Rebekah Cano Moore	Aug 6	Janis Cano
Graham Stingley	Aug 7	Mary Winter-Stingley
Jessica Stockwell	Aug 7	Mark & Sally Stockwell
Stella Elliott	Aug 8	Donna Elliott
Clayton Neal Brehm	Aug 10	Ramona Atkinson
Lisa Marie O'Briant	Aug 11	Gary & Mary O'Briant
Kimberly Denise Patterson	Aug 11	Sigrid Patterson
Michael Williams, Jr.	Aug 13	Carmen Randall
Christopher Calegar	Aug 15	Kevin & Linda Calegar
Gina Marie Geffre	Aug 16	Joann Jahraus
Zack Orr	Aug 16	Dave & Sharon Orr
Suzanne Bethany Thomas	Aug 20	Arnie & Mary Thomas
Raul Garcia	Aug 21	Rena Gonzalez
Susanna Jeanette Scruggs	Aug 21	Patricia Beard
Mia Allyson Gardiner	Aug 22	Peri Gardiner
Abigail Ruth Smelser	Aug 23	Robin Myers
Lance Alan Rigby	Aug 25	Deborah Rigby
Sayge Frisco	Aug 26	Renai Frisco
Sheldon Pasca	Aug 26	Norma Watkins
Patrick Casey Hildebrand	Aug 26	Dr. Jan and Judi Hildebrand
Mary Hope Burton	Aug 27	Jim & Betty Burton
Andrew Paul Whiteman	Aug 27	Lyle Whiteman
Kevin Hardman	Aug 28	Dianne McLaughlin
Matthew Medina	Aug 29	Vicki Schwindt
Nolan Edward Stites	Aug 31	Richard & Marilyn Stites





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## Remembering Our Children On Their Anniversaries

Child's Name	Age	Date of Death	Compassionate Friend
Tyrone Elliott Bautista	19 years	Aug 1	Rosemary Devney
Bradly Garrard	18 years	Aug 1	Sally Garrard
Jason Bradford Pfeif	18 years	Aug 1	Chris and Brad Pfeif
Chelsey Ann Kear	15 years	Aug 5	Tami Kear
Kevin Hardman	21 years	Aug 6	Dianne McLaughlin
Keith Andrew Barrett	24 years	Aug 9	Ree Barrett
Cynthia Claypool Martin	39 years	Aug 9	Steve & Ann Claypool
Laura Dean	30 years	Aug 16	Barbara Dean
Andrew Paul Weaver	20 years	Aug 17	Valerie Lightbody
Nikolas Chunn	5 years	Aug 18	Monica Chunn
Derrick Shane Moore	11 years	Aug 20	Ray & Deanna Moore
Scott Martinson	6 years	Aug 21	JoAnn Martinson
Nathaniel Hughes	18 years	Aug 21	Jim Hughes
Clayton Champion	29 years	Aug 22	Jessie & Phyllis Roark
Jose N. Camacho	9 years	Aug 24	Bill & Veronica Camacho
Sayge Frisco	1 day	Aug 26	Renai Frisco
Kimberly Elizabeth Pratt	17 years	Aug 27	Pam Bilberry
Zach Joseph	24 years	Aug 28	Garry & Renee Joseph
Nicole Maria Kelley	4 years	Aug 28	John & Lois Kelley
Nolan Edward Stites	19 years	Aug 29	Richard & Marilyn Stites
Ian Matthew Anderson	18 years	Aug 29	Joann & David Butler

### *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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## THOUGHTFUL POEMS

### A LOVE SONG

The mention of my child's name  
May bring tears to my eyes  
But it never fails to bring  
Music to my ears.  
If you really are my friend,  
Please, don't keep me  
From hearing  
The beautiful music.  
It soothes my broken heart  
And fills my soul with love.  
**Nancy Williams,**  
**TCF Marlboro, NJ**

### I Wish You Enough

I wish you enough sun  
to keep your attitude bright no  
matter how gray the day may  
appear.  
I wish you enough rain  
to appreciate the sun even more.  
I wish you enough happiness  
to keep your spirit alive and  
everlasting.  
I wish you enough pain  
so that even the smallest of joys  
may appear larger.  
I wish you enough gain  
to satisfy your wanting.  
I wish you enough loss  
to appreciate all that you  
possess.  
I wish you enough hellos  
to get you through your final  
good-bye.

**Pamela Amo**  
**Sacramento Valley TCF**  
**Chapter**

### PICTURES OF YOU

*Pictures of baby  
On my wall  
With Mommy & Daddy  
Down the hall  
Your first day of school  
In a silver frame  
Hugging with Grammy  
Us playing a game  
There's Christmas, Easter,  
Thanksgiving too  
I just can't count  
All the pictures of you*

*You laughing and crying  
Some old & some young  
With snowmen in winter  
In the summers hot sun  
Playing the piano and  
Reading a book  
Just look at all the  
Pictures I took  
Got you fishing & eating  
Both sleeping and awake  
With puppies & Bunkey  
And your first Birthday Cake*

*But the camera's stopped clicking  
And the pictures have stopped  
Since that horrible day  
When our world was rocked  
No pictures of weddings  
Or Grandkids to be  
I long for new pictures  
Of you I could see.*

**Stew Levett - Pikes Peak TCF**



### School Days

The summer is mellowing as the days  
grow shorter . . . the green on the trees  
seem to droop and look a little duller.

The lazy days of summer take on a  
busy hustle . . . as families shop for  
school, each gets a new book satchel.

Soon the quiet streets will be filled as  
children gather waiting . . . the yellow  
bus to pick them up, oh the anticipating.

Another teachers face that greets upon  
their arrival . . . but the same old lessons  
to be learned, to them seems so trivial.

New friends to make, and old ones too,  
make their days fly past too soon.

But back at home a mother weeps for  
the child that this year misses . . . no  
new clothes to buy, no more good-bye  
hugs and kisses.

For her this joyful time just brings on  
more heartache . . . another school year  
starts, another milestone the child  
cannot make.

So she dries her eyes and tries to go on  
for the children that remain . . . but each  
new start, breaks her heart, it's hard to  
see the gain.

So if the yellow school bus brings on  
tears for you this year . . . don't forget  
your Compassionate Friends, we are  
always standing near.

*By: Sheila Simmons, TCF Atlanta*



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## HEALING WORDS

### Grandparents Remembrance

*By Susan Mackey TCF Rutland, Vermont*

We are the grieving grandparents, the shepherds of our children and grandchildren's lives. Our grief is two-fold and at times, we feel powerless to help. We seek to comfort our children in the depths of their grief and yet we need the time and space to face our own broken hearts. We have been robbed of the special tender touch a grandparent shares with a grandchild, and we have lost a symbol of our immortality. As we walk by our child's side, we both give and draw strength. We reach into their hearts to comfort them, and when they reach out to us in their distress, we begin the journey to heal together. We continue to be their guardians. We allow traditions to change to accommodate their loss. We support the new ones, which symbolize the small steps on their journey. It is in their healing that our hearts find comfort.

### Re-entering school

Going back to school after the death of your brother or sister is a hard thing to go through. At first, there are three groups of people to deal with: people who give you a lot of support, people who don't know what to say, and those who give you weird looks and stay away from you. This lasts for a little while.

After a short time, changes with each group occur.

Those who didn't know what to say start to speak or begin to talk. The group who kept away stops ignoring you. The people who gave you a lot of support slowly return to their own affairs.

After about a month and a half, everything goes back to normal and is over to everyone except you. This is very difficult and makes you feel all the more alone.

After a long while the shock for you goes away and it is then when you need the support from your friends, peers and teachers. This month is the first anniversary of the death of my brother. Most people will have forgotten and everything is right with the world. But it is not! Certainly not to my mother and me.

~Jordan Ely

TCF Albany/Delmar, NY

### THE BACK TO SCHOOL PRESSURE COOKER

Labor Day can put siblings into their own back to school pressure cooker. Whether this is the first year, or later, our kids may be dealing with questions and comments from peers, teachers, and/or counselors about their brother or sister. Or perhaps no one is talking, because no one knows what to say. Feelings of loneliness, being different, being left out, can surface, and sibling rivalry? Remember if you will how intense it could get between all your children. What kind of competition existed between them during the school year, or what comparisons were made: athletics, grades, friendships, extra activities? That kind of emotion is often forgotten when a child dies. But as your children go back to the classroom, to the athletic field, they may see those reminders each day. When they bring home these feelings, positive and negative, they need a place to express them without being judged, or compared to their sibling.

We want to remember good. But we have to remember that no child was always good! To forget that is to make a martyr of our dead child—possibly at the expense of our living children. Our surviving children need special support at this time of year, too. They need to be reassured that they are still lovable—that they can be forgiven for any anger or resentment they may feel toward their brother or sister...that perfection is not a requirement for loving.

They need to be reassured that they are separate, unique individuals, not imperfect replacements for the child who died. They need a safe place to talk, to let out their own concerns and anxieties and fears. They too are grieving and need a lot of support, especially during this back to school rush.

*Cindy Cooper, TCF St. Louis*



## Ideas for Writing Your Story or Journal

Recently, several new TCF members have asked me for suggestions about what they can do at the early stages of grief and what helped me in my experience in those earlier days of grief when my son, Bobby, died. In thinking about that, I remember my journal and what a meaningful and effective way of venting that was for me.

As you may know, very often our close friends think we should be moving on with life or letting go, etc. Unfortunately, for me, they just didn't get it. So, I looked back through some past newsletter issues and found an article on ideas for writing your story or journal – I hope you find it helpful:

Bereaved parents who have written about their loss unanimously agree that writing unleashes enormous stress and pain. In my own experience, I recall one night when I locked myself in the bathroom and wrote a long letter to my son, Bobby. It was my chance to express my feelings without having them diminished by well meaning and caring people around me trying to be helpful. I will never forget the pressure that letter released for me. Although the letter was not saved, the positive result was everlasting.

Have you ever thought of writing your story or keeping a journal? You may find it helpful to clarify your thoughts about your child by recording your feelings in the form of a letter. Write a letter to your child, expressing your thoughts and feelings about the following:

- A special memory that I have about you.
- What I miss the most about you and our relationship.
- What I wish I'd said or hadn't said.
- What I've had the hardest time dealing with.
- What I wish we'd done or hadn't done.
- Ways in which you will continue to live on in me.
- What I'd like to ask you.
- Special ways I have for keeping my memories of you alive.

Choose one or several ideas that have significance for you or start at the top of the list and work your way down. These topics may serve to help you come up with your own ideas, specific to your situation and relationship. Give yourself this exercise as a gift. If you would like to share your writing at a TCF meeting, please do. You never know how many other parents will be touched and benefit from your experience.



by Pat Akery, Chapter Leader, TCF, Medford, Oregon





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## You Are Not Going Crazy

One of the most common things we hear from bereaved parents is that they think that they are going crazy. If you feel this way, let us assure you that you are not. Grief and the resultant depression, fits of crying, and the feeling you are going to pieces may lead you to these feelings or often to the feeling you no longer want to continue living. It is not uncommon to have these feelings.

But most grief-stricken people do not go crazy or commit suicide. It is most important at these times for you to have someone to talk to – to share your feelings – and for you to be able to verbalize your pain. We of The Compassionate Friends want to help. We encourage you to call on us. We have all been where you are now, and we understand your pain.

Fay Harden TCF, Tuscaloosa, FL

## PONDERINGS ALONG THE PATH

by Nadine Boyd

## Beginning to Live Again

The facts surrounding the death of my daughter are painful to recall. Early in my grief, my world was in a shambles. I lived with doubts, became careless about money, my general health. . . everything. I refused to make plans to improve my lot. How long did this phase last? I think a change began about two years later, in 1980. I began to see other things in the world and decided to try to pick up the pieces of my life. Would a move to new surroundings help? I proceeded slowly on this idea and did not leave my old home until early 1982. Yes, it did help. I busied myself with my new home. I began to have entire days or entire nights without that awful statement, "gunshot wound to the head," echoing in my mind. Last year a favorite sister died and that was after I had begun to enjoy life again. Sometimes I feel that I can't take any more sadness, but as long as I live and care about people something painful will happen. Something else will happen. But here I am. I am a survivor. I try to roll with the punches, look for new experiences and search diligently for cheerful situations. People I know only casually may also have a pain, an agony, they have not shared with me. I try to avoid saying or doing anything that may hurt others.

Losing my daughter will not get any easier. I miss her as much today as I did when she first went away to North Carolina to finish her graduate degree. Some days I am extremely depressed, but other days I am almost happy. Can this be? Is it possible for me to be happy? Yes. I must enjoy the moment: a delicious meal, the pleasure of conversation with friends, the joy of dancing, singing, walking, traveling. I must, for I do not know what is in my tomorrow.

Florence Godfrey  
TCF, Camden Co., NJ

Dear Compassionate Friends:

It hardly seems possible that the summer is over and our children will head back to school in just a few days. This summer, again, has been one of pain for far too many families. We have lost far too many wonderful young people in car accidents, accidental falls, drownings -the list goes on and on. We anguish with these families, whose hopes and dreams for the future were lost in an instant along with their child, and it takes us right back to that terrible time when we were told our child was gone. The disbelief and shock and then the terrible pain was overwhelming. Our hearts ache for these families.

It is so difficult, having gone through this pain and knowing how your world can end in an instant, not to be fearful and hold back your other children or family members from experiencing the joys and "growing pains" of growing up and making their own decisions. Our older son leaves for college in a couple of days, and I know we drive him crazy with "be carefals" and "remember to..." We send up constant prayers to keep our loved ones safe before they go off with their friends. I know our children think we are completely out of touch and overprotective, but no one can understand this fear until you have gone what we have gone through, and our children will not understand the depth and vastness of our love for them until they become parents themselves.

Let us strive to keep our fear from controlling our lives and the lives of those we love. Our children are anxious to experience the joys of growing up, and we can't let our fear pin their wings down, but let us remember how fragile life can be and live and love each other the best we can each day, because we don't know what tomorrow will bring. This is the legacy of our children- that life may end, but love is eternal and never dies.

I wish you comfort and healing, the courage to go on, and strength and love from your faith, your families and friends. We need not walk alone. We are the Compassionate Friends.

In friendship,

*Nadine*



**Pikes Peak Chapter  
The Compassionate Friends**



**The Compassionate Friends  
Pikes Peak Chapter  
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Colorado Springs, CO 80949-1345**

**August 2011**

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