

January, 2012



**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS**
PIKES PEAK CHAPTER
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



Upcoming Events

January 19th - General Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church

February 16th - General Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church

March 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 January 19th, 2012.

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.**

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?

Pikes Peak Chapter Steering Committee

CHAPTER LEADER

LARAINE 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

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 - www.tcfcolorado.org
Colorado Springs - www.tcfcolorado.org/coloradosprings



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.compassionatelffriends.org](http://www.compassionatelfriends.org)

WE'RE NOW ON FACEBOOK

I have recently started a Facebook Group called The Compassionate Friends of the Pikes Peak Region.

Through this medium I hope to be able to share information, news, poems, activities, photos and stories to our parents, family & friends. You, additionally, may post your photos, comments and feelings, provide feedback to our chapter about the group, newsletter or meetings.

Once a member, you may add others to our group by clicking "Add Friend" under the member listing.

I will accept all requests as long as each member conducts themselves according to what The Compassionate Friends is about, "Supporting Family After a Child Dies."

Use the following link to view our page;
<http://www.facebook.com/groups/233806390012780/233818376678248/>



TELEPHONE FRIENDS

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

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| CHAPTER LEADER | LARAYE 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 |

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



Remembering Our Children On Their Birthdays

| Child's Name | Date of Birth | Compassionate Friend |
|-----------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| Adam Roy Hodges | Jan 3 | JoAnn Ewing |
| Jamie Jackman Spooner | Jan 5 | Sherry Jackman & Knelson |
| Nicole Megan Yagi | Jan 6 | Jackie & Dennis Yagi |
| John Daniel Bernard Ringo | Jan 8 | Angela Randle |
| Ronald Eugene Peterson | Jan 9 | Ron Peterson |
| Tyrone Binnebose | Jan 11 | Natasha Binnebose |
| Terry A. Shank | Jan 11 | Carol Vierling |
| Frankie Padilla | Jan 13 | Frances Lucero |
| Seth Fieser | Jan 17 | Megan Fieser |
| Brody Richard Cisneros | Jan 21 | Julie & Will Cisneros |
| Mallory Paulene Hendrickson | Jan 22 | Celine & Gary Hendrickson |
| Adriano Bermudez | Jan 22 | C.J. LaPointe |
| Eric Evans | Jan 23 | Linda & Dick Evans |
| Corey Reynolds | Jan 23 | Barb Reynolds |
| Jody Elizabeth Houtz | Jan 23 | Jane and Chris Houtz |
| Sarah Sunshine Wedekind | Jan 25 | Lorry Pearson |
| Stephen Lucas Tyler | Jan 25 | Catherine Tyler |
| Aaron Lee Gallob | Jan 27 | Lou & Erma Gallob |
| Kevin Michael Burns | Jan 27 | Stan & Willie Burns |
| Sean O'Connor | Jan 28 | Dennis & Tracy O'Connor |
| Joshua Cesar Menendez | Jan 28 | Dianna Castellanos & Julio Menendez |

A "New" New Year's Resolution

Instead of the old kind of New Year's resolutions we used to make and break, let's make some this year and really try to keep them.

- ◆ Try not to imagine the future; take one day at a time.
- ◆ Allow yourself time to cry, both alone and with your loved ones.
- ◆ Don't shut out other family members from your thoughts and feelings. Share these difficult times. You may all become closer for it.
- ◆ Try to be realistic about your expectations of yourself, your spouse, other family members and friends. If each of us is unique and different, how can there be perfect understanding?
- ◆ When a good day comes, relish it. Don't feel guilty and don't be discouraged because it doesn't last. They will come again and multiply.
- ◆ Take care of your health. Even though the mind might not care, a sick body will only compound your troubles. Drink lots of water, take stress-type vitamins, rest (even if you don't sleep), and get moderate exercise. Help your body to heal as well as your mind.
- ◆ Share your feelings with other compassionate friends and let them share with you. You will find that as you begin caring about the pain of others, you will start to come out of your shell - a very healthy sign.

I know that following these resolutions won't be easy, but what has been? It is worth a try. There is nothing to lose and perhaps much to gain.

Mary Ehmann, TCF, Valley Forge, PA



Remembering Our Children On Their Anniversaries

| Child's Name | Age | Date of Death | Compassionate Friend |
|------------------------|----------|---------------|------------------------|
| Patrick Clabeau | 20 years | Jan 4 | Vince & Lori Clabeau |
| Susan Gordon | 17 years | Jan 4 | Mr & Mrs Arthur Gordon |
| Paul Anthony Fischer | 32 years | Jan 6 | Stephanie Newcomb |
| Savannah L. Burke | 6 weeks | Jan 12 | Herman & April Burke |
| Judy Gambill | 17 years | Jan 12 | Andrea Gambill |
| Michelle Howie | 32 years | Jan 12 | Annette Howie |
| Fred Chavez | 32 years | Jan 14 | Annette Atchison |
| Ja-Mickeal James Lane | 5 years | Jan 18 | Lara & Kenneth Lane |
| Jim Eley | 43 years | Jan 19 | Judy Eley |
| Sara M. Losasso | 14 years | Jan 19 | Cindy Losasso |
| Joshua W. Lewis Gohlke | 20 years | Jan 19 | Karen Swank |
| Jacob Sanchez | 3 months | Jan 22 | Denise Langhorst |
| Mark Van Matre | 46 years | Jan 24 | Patricia Van Matre |
| Megan Lane | 18 years | Jan 27 | Sandra Gail Lane |
| Gregory Randall Davis | 18 years | Jan 29 | Cora Davis |
| Amy Mae Lugenbeel | 2 years | Jan 31 | Terry & Barb Lugenbeel |
| Juan Marine | 29 years | Jan 31 | Pamela Marine |

“Closure”

Do you cringe when you hear this word? I do. As I write this, Osama bin Laden has been dead for a couple days, and, in my opinion, that word is being overused.

I was pleasantly surprised when I read the May 3, 2011, South Bend Tribune article called “No closure for Katie’s father”. Dick McCloskey lost his daughter, Katie, in the 9/11/01 attacks. He states, in part: “closure has become a trite word. There is no such thing in the loss of a loved one.”

How do you feel about the word CLOSURE? I am just one person with an opinion, but I am pretty sure there are other bereaved parents who agree with me. The word “closure” implies that we are okay with what happened, that whatever happened is done, etc. Again, this is my opinion, but I have to wonder how parents who have been through a years-long trial feel after the trial. I think society can sometimes make them feel like once the trial is over and the person on trial is sentenced, they will have closure. But what happens when they wake up the next morning, expecting to feel all better?

Do they really? Maybe in some ways, but does the fact that their child is still dead come back to slap them all over again? You may have heard me say this before, but I believe when people say this, it is mostly a matter of ignorance.

And I am happy for their ignorance, because that most likely means they have not lost a child or someone very close to them. But I write this in hopes of bringing attention to this subject.

I will never have closure. I will miss my son every day until the day I die. My world is forever changed because of that one accident.

How do you feel? Drop me an email with “Closure” in the subject line –

tcf-stjoe@att.net

Deb Starkweather

TCF St. Joseph County

Mom of Kristopher Smith





THOUGHTFUL POEMS

Dreams

You were here the other night,
So alive and well it seems.
But I awoke and then I knew,
You were only in my dreams.
The tears then came so quickly,
For the time with you was brief.
You were alive and talking.
If only in my grief.
I heard your voice and touched you.
As if you were with me,
But I awoke and realized this was not reality.
So I'll take my dreams whenever they come.
And keep them close to my heart.
Cause in my dreams you are alive
And we are really never apart.
-- Joy Cummit (Jason's Mom)
TCF Savannah, GA

"EMPTY PLACES"

I drove the old way yesterday
It'd been a while, you see
And there, without a warning,
The pain washed over me
I drove the old way yesterday
And sadness came on strong,
Taken back by so much feeling,
Since you've been gone so long
Places seem to lie in wait
To summon up the tears,
To say remember yesterday,
Those days when you were here.
Places where you laughed and played
Are places where I cry.
These places hold the memories
That will live as long as I

Genessee Gentry
TCF, Marin County, CA.



My Little Boy

Author Unknown

Your little boy cries too much,
My little boy makes no sound.
Your little boy sleeps warm in his crib,
My little boy lies cold in the ground.
Your little boy woke up today,
My little boy never will.
Your little boy laughs and plays,
My little boy lays still.
Your little boy makes you proud,
just as proud as mine, cause
while your little boy learns to walk,
My little boy can fly!

Lonely, Hurting Children

"How is your Mom doing?" is the basic question asked.

Sometimes an inquiry about Dad, but so sadly seldom.

They do not ask the siblings, they must be so sad.

True, the depth of our loss brings agony and pain.

But the children, the dear children, really do hurt again and again.

They lost a brother or a sis, their pain is just as real.

Frustration, anger, and fear, they too go through such hell.

Who is there to comfort them, to give a word of care?

Everyone is more concerned about the parent's welfare.

While siblings drown in their hurt and pain.

No one to hold them near and let them know they are not to blame. To uplift and ease their minds from fear.

Linda J. Camper- Pikes Peak TCF



HEALING WORDS

The New Year

With the holidays past, we're off on another 365 now. Some of you, I know, wonder if you can make it. That's such an enormous amount of time to contemplate all at once, isn't it? You may have some of your "firsts" coming in the months ahead, and the normal impulse seems to be to lump all those days together and start dreading them concurrently, like a prisoner serving several life sentences.

It's possible to do it that way, but that's the hard way. Getting through this day may take all the energy you can muster. Why try to handle March or May or July (or whenever your special days are) now? You can't really, and you end up by the trying only defeating yourself in your effort to effectively survive this day. When this day is past, March or May or July will still be there, trying to defeat your tomorrow - but only if you let them!

Get past this day - and tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow. By the time March, May or July gets here you will have improved your coping skills. You can better handle your special days with more practice.

I encourage you to know you can and will be better. Use this New Year constructively to facilitate that end, and utilize the help that is available to you through your Compassionate Friends.

Mary Cleckly, TCF Atlanta GA



HOW MUCH MUSIC CAN YOU MAKE?

By Steve Goodier © 2002

On Nov. 18, 1995, violinist Itzhak Perlman, performed a concert at Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center in New York City. Stricken with polio as a child, Perlman painfully walked with the aid of two crutches to a chair in the middle of the stage. He carefully laid the crutches on the floor, loosened the clasps of his leg braces, extended one leg forward and the other underneath his chair, picked up his instrument and nodded to the conductor to begin.

But something went wrong. After only seconds of playing, one of the strings on his violin broke. The snap was a gunfire reverberating in the auditorium. The audience immediately knew what happened and fully expected the concert to be suspended until another string or even another instrument could be found.

But Perlman surprised them. He quietly composed himself, closed his eyes and then signaled the conductor to begin again. The orchestra resumed where they had left off and Perlman played -- on three strings. He played with passion and power. All the time he worked out new fingering in his mind to compensate for the missing string. A work that few people could play well on four strings Perlman accomplished on three.

When he finished, an awesome silence hung in the room. And then as one, the crowd rose to their feet and cheered wildly. Applause burst forth from every corner of the auditorium as fans showed deep appreciation for his talent and his courage.

Perlman smiled and wiped the sweat from this brow. Then he raised his bow to quiet the crowd and said, not boastfully, but in a quiet, pensive, reverent tone, "You know, sometimes it is the artist's task to find out how much music you can still make with what you have left."

Perlman should know. Polio left him with less stamina than he had before, yet he went on. Playing a concert on three strings is not unlike his philosophy of life -- he persevered with what he had left and still made music.

And isn't that true with us? Our task is to find out how much music we can still make with what we have left. How much good we can still do. How much joy we can still share. For I'm convinced that the world, more than ever, needs the music only you and I can make. And if it takes extra courage to make the music, many will applaud your effort. For some people have lost more than others, and these brave souls inspire the rest of us to greater heights. So I want to ask, "How much music can you make with what you have left?"

From: TCF Atlanta Online



WHAT DO I DO WITH MY CHILD'S THINGS?

This is a problem that faces all bereaved parents. We discuss it from time to time at our meetings. Some of us keep the child's room just as it was before the death. We don't want anything touched or removed. Some find solace in giving things away to close friends or relatives. Knowing someone we love is wearing our child's clothes, or playing with his or her toys, brings us comfort. Some of us feel we can deal with only a few items at a time; clothes one month; books another; perhaps toys a few months later. Some of us find that as time goes on we would have gotten rid of the things anyway, it becomes easier. For instance, after a while we realize that if the child were still alive, he or she would have out grown the clothes. Then it's easier to give them away. Or your child would have graduated from college this year, and therefore would no longer use the study desk or clock radio. We can give these things away in the normal time sequence. The important thing is not to let others rush us into doing something before we are ready, and not to let ourselves feel guilty about the amount of time it takes us to make decisions. When the time is right, and the decision is right for us, we'll know what to do.

TCF - Honolulu, Hawaii



Now, 15 Years Later

My husband Cameron and I became eligible to join ranks with other unwilling members of The Compassionate Friends 15 years ago, on July 1, 1996.

On March 26, 2006 our wonderful son Cameron "W" Deal III, aka Cam, or Cammyboy, would have celebrated his 37th birthday surrounded by friends, his two nephews, his brother and sister, his daughter and, of course, his parents. However, one night when the sky was lit by what weathermen called a "blue moon" my son's life came to an end.

Whether it was caused by suicide to end his tortuous ordeal with bipolar disorder or a freakish accident caused by an overindulgence of alcohol in an attempt to self-medicate, the outcome was the same..he's gone. I will never hear his voice again. I will never feel his arms around me. I will never see him scrunch his face and throw his head back when he laughs.

I miss our long talks, our lunches together and his presence at our Saturday night barbecues at our home. On March 26 we will wish him a happy birthday at his graveside with an arm full of flowers for his present.

A year after his death I wrote, "One year ago I did not think I could possibly make it to this day...but I did. It's like putting one foot in front of the other to learn to walk again, only I'm putting one day in front of the other to learn to live again." What a long walk it has been in the 10 years since we lost Cammy. Those years have taken us so many different places both personally and professionally.

The most positive impact on our life has been getting involved with The Compassionate Friends. At first it was difficult opening up and being transparent about our pain. After a few meetings I was able to grasp that common thread woven between us of not only our loss, but our love for our children.

What have I learned after 15 years with TCF? I've learned that in time the pain will eventually ease and you will be able to function again. That everyone grieves in their own way and on their own timetable. There are no hard, fast rules. A hug goes a long way, much longer than a lot of words. The most rewarding for me is that after being the recipient of the hugs, you learn to give back and help others, the newly bereaved, through their grief.

As the Chapter Leader of TCF Honolulu, I continue my journey of grief and of awareness. Although it's been 15 years I still grieve for my son. That will never change; but I can turn my energy and experience to something positive and help others through their walk, one day in front of the other, to live again.

Michele Deal, Chapter Leader
Cammy's Mom

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January, 2012

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Pikes Peak Chapter

The Compassionate Friends



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