

November, 2001



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

PIKES PEAK CHAPTER
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



Upcoming Events

November 17th - General Meeting - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church
Sunday, December 11th - Candlelight Memorial - 7:00 p.m. - First Baptist Church
December 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 November 17th, 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

LARAIN 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

WEBSITES:

National - www.compassionatefriends.org

Colorado - www.tcfcolorado.org

Colorado Springs - www.tcfcolorado.org/coloradosprings



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

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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Common symptoms of grief

While loss affects people in different ways, many people experience the following symptoms when they're grieving. Just remember that almost anything that you experience in the early stages of grief is normal – including feeling like you're going crazy, feeling like you're in a bad dream, or questioning your religious beliefs.

- **Shock and disbelief** – Right after a loss, it can be hard to accept what happened. You may feel numb, have trouble believing that the loss really happened, or even deny the truth. If someone you love has died, you may keep expecting them to show up, even though you know they're gone.
- **Sadness** – Profound sadness is probably the most universally experienced symptom of grief. You may have feelings of emptiness, despair, yearning, or deep loneliness. You may also cry a lot or feel emotionally unstable.
- **Guilt** – You may regret or feel guilty about things you did or didn't say or do. You may also feel guilty about certain feelings (e.g. feeling relieved when the person died after a long, difficult illness). After a death, you may even feel guilty for not doing something to prevent the death, even if there was nothing more you could have done.
- **Anger** – Even if the loss was nobody's fault, you may feel angry and resentful. If you lost a loved one, you may be angry at yourself, God, the doctors, or even the person who died for abandoning you. You may feel the need to blame someone for the injustice that was done to you.
- **Fear** – A significant loss can trigger a host of worries and fears. You may feel anxious, helpless, or insecure. You may even have panic attacks. The death of a loved one can trigger fears about your own mortality, of facing life without that person, or the responsibilities you now face alone.
- **Physical symptoms** – We often think of grief as a strictly emotional process, but grief often involves physical problems, including fatigue, nausea, lowered immunity, weight loss or weight gain, aches and pains, and insomnia.



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.compasionatefriends.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	
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

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
Rebecca Ann Reynolds	Nov 1	Ken and Barbara Reynolds
Robert Howie	Nov 1	Annette Howie
Chloe Faith Gafford	Nov 3	Brian & Jocelyn Gafford
Patrcia Elliott	Nov 4	Connie and Dave Elliott
Michael Keeney	Nov 6	Charlotte Keeney
Nicole Johnson	Nov 7	Sherry Turner
Kristie Diaz	Nov 7	Julie Diaz
Kenny Lanza	Nov 7	Chuck & April Lanza
Vinnie Franz	Nov 8	Barb Franz
Kimberly Ann Hayes	Nov 10	Patty and Patrick Hayes
Judy Gambill	Nov 13	Andrea Gambill
Colin Peter Baerman	Nov 14	Paul & Kerry Baerman
Eric Cowles	Nov 15	Doug & Leah Cowles
Shannon Diane McMahon	Nov 17	Robert & Jeanette McMahon
Joshua W. Lewis Gohlke	Nov 19	Karen Swank
Travis Grimmer	Nov 20	Mary Lou Grimmer
Richard "Richie" Petras	Nov 21	Richard Petras
Evan Carara	Nov 22	Cindy & J.D. Carara
Leah Ann Trutna	Nov 22	Steve & Phyllis Trutna
Branden Howland	Nov 23	Julianne Howland
Patrick Roger Pennington	Nov 24	Roger & Joan Pennington
Savannah L. Burke	Nov 25	Herman & April Burke
Danae Lynne Marie Mannon	Nov 26	Colleen and Art Mannon
Mark Van Matre	Nov 27	Patricia Van Matre
Jalynn Cameron	Nov 28	Jessica Cameron
Michael Christopher Rushmore	Nov 28	Bob & Carol Rushmore
Paul A. Behr	Nov 29	Cynthia & Steve Behr

Giving Thanks,

We had our children for too short a time and every Thanksgiving that empty seat is so obvious to a Mom or Dad. They may not say it but at some time in the day you can see them looking out in the distance watching for the wind to bring back a true Love that will not return from their destiny. Perhaps you will notice a tear as the parent watches the children eat and play in this school free time zone that marks the calendar in only days until Santa. For the bereaved parent the parade, the Lions on TV, the smell of turkey and spices all swirling around and defining the moment, family, friends, and the children will always contain memories of Thanksgiving Days of yesterday. We think with our memories and sometimes we can't hide our loneliness and wishful thinking that yesterday's Thanksgiving was today's. And we were all together without that empty seat. We are thankful that we are getting better instead of bitter. We are thankful we know what Love is because we have lost it. Our knowledge is nothing to brag about nor pitied. It is our plight. Our gift is our child and the Love as apparent as that empty seat. We give thanks not that we hurt but that we care enough to bear the separation and to continue on in their honor, their memory, and their Love. Take care my child and today we give thanks that you were in our life and that you shall forever be in our hearts.

Pat O'Donnell - TCF Livonia, MI



Remembering Our Children On Their Anniversaries

Child's Name	Age	Date of Death	Compassionate Friend
Michael Williams Greist	12 years	Nov 1	Allan & Judy Greist
Chloe Faith Gafford	1 day	Nov 3	Brian & Jocelyn Gafford
Justin William Winner	13 years	Nov 5	Dale & Rosanne Winner
Scott David Stieglmeyer	21 years	Nov 7	Betty Stieglmeyer
Katie Steckiel	1 year	Nov 8	Wendy Steckiel
Dwayne Stoppel	45 years	Nov 8	Pearl Stoppel
Emma Renee Younger	3 months	Nov 9	Adam & Mindy Younger
Robert Howie	1 week	Nov 12	Annette Howie
Mike Mozo	27 years	Nov 12	Valerie Kirchhofer
Steven Warren	23 years	Nov 17	Linda & Mark Warren
Michael Keeney	45 years	Nov 18	Charlotte Keeney
Stephen Merle Schmoker	39 years	Nov 19	Shirley & Ralph Greer
Tyler Schmidt	23 years	Nov 20	Valerie & Jeff Schmidt
Aaron Lee Gallob	28 years	Nov 21	Lou & Erma Gallob
Susanna Jeanette Scruggs	23 years	Nov 22	Patricia Beard
Joseph Michael Chavez	29 years	Nov 22	Herman & Patty Chavez
Tommy Kinslow	20 years	Nov 22	Pam Kinslow
Conri Lee Barber	8 months	Nov 23	Sean & Cherie Barber
Kimberly Benson	16 years	Nov 24	Debbie Diekman
Wade Lehman	19 years	Nov 24	Lori Lehman
Jonathan Ell-Duncan	17 years	Nov 25	Dan & Becky Duncan
Konrad Ferrer	16 years	Nov 27	Maria Hymes
Frankie Padilla	18 years	Nov 27	Frances Lucero
Michael Ornelas	2 months	Nov 27	Annette & Chris Ornelas
Adriano Bermudez	19 years	Nov 29	C.J. LaPointe

Display Your Child

We have ordered one hundred badge holders to pass out to our TCF guests so that they may wear a name badge with a picture of their child. These badges measure 3 1/2" by 2 1/4" and can be worn horizontally or vertically. The intent is for all parents to wear a name badge whenever they come a meeting. Please bring a picture of your loved one with the above dimensions and ask for a name badge the next time you come to our meeting.





THOUGHTFUL POEMS

Let us give thanks...

I can not hold your hand today,
I can not see your smile.
I can not hear your voices now,
my children, who are gone.
But I recall your faces still,
the songs, the talks, the sighs
And story times, and winter walks,
and sharing secret things.
I know you helped my mind to live
beyond your time with me. .
You gave me clearer eyes to see,
you gave me finer ears to hear,
what living means, what dying means,
my children, who are gone.
So here it is Thanksgiving Day,
and you are not with me.
And while I weep a mother's tears,
I thank you for the gifts you were,
and all the gifts you gave to me,
my children, who are gone.

By Sascha Wagner - from Wintersun



WHAT IS FALL WITHOUT YOU?

It is trees full of color
and leaves on the ground,
It is morning air, crisp and cool
with frost all around.
It is so beautiful,
but it doesn't mean anything
without you.
It is beautiful skies of blue
and talk of winter, too.
But it is still not the same
because I can't share it with you.
It doesn't seem to matter
what the season we're in...
All I can do is wonder
how can I enjoy the fall
without...
you...
again...

Jon Yeager, TCF, Pioneer, Ohio

Days of Thanks

In a year when much was given,
Much was taken, too.
So we pause and give our
Thanks for what now is.
Think, too, of what once was,
And we are grateful for
The threads of lives gone by.
Threads that enrich the fabric
Of this, the life we know.

Lois Wyse, TCF St. Paul, MN



you were so alive
so present
so intensely here
that i never dreamed you could be gone
in a second
one heartbeat
one breath
but you left
and what is here now
your spirit
your soul
is more alive
more present
and more intensely here
than i could ever dream.
do i wish the old you back?
of course i do
but only to touch
and to see for a bit
because the you i have now
will never leave.

Sandy Goodman - Riverton, WY

THANKSGIVING

Our time together was too brief,
Your life on earth numbered in but days.
Yet, how could I have loved you more if I had
Held you through the seasons of your life?
When does love begin?
For me the day you first moved within me
Wrapped me in such warmth that it can still keep
Out the cold as here I stand missing you and all
That we could have shared.
Death has robbed me of your softness and of all
The dreams I had for you,
But not of my love.
Not even death can take that from me – from us.
And for that, I am thankful.

*Karen Nelson
TCF Box Elder County; Brigham City, UT*

I do not need to stay busy,
I need to talk about my child.
I need to talk about the good times, and the bad.
I need to remember, and not to forget. I can not forget.
I need to cry, I do not need to stay strong.
I need to have you listen, and not to change the subject.
I need you to support me, not to say that you understand..
I know you can not understand, unless you have lost a child.
I need you to help me with things in life that are simple tasks.
Cleaning, cooking, errands, babysitting.
I just need you to be there for me.
I just need to talk about my child.

~Author Unknown



HEALING WORDS

When an Adopted Child Dies

Many issues in bereavement are not unique to those of us who have had an only child or all our children die. Among these are the perceptions the world at large often holds regarding the depth or quality of parental grief following the death of an adopted child.

There are moments when adoptive parents feel the weight of these misperceptions. Sometimes it comes through an ill chosen word, an overheard comment, or in the perplexed eyes of others in the days and weeks following death. There are times when others even say, "Well, you can always adopt another one, can't you?" And in certain situations, it can even be heard in the tentative voices of adoptive parents, momentarily intimidated or confused by attitudes completely in variance with their own torn lives, their own unrelenting agony.

It is time to remind society that parenting is not a biological function. Certainly conception, pregnancy, and birth are biological, but the love involved in parenting and nurturing lies on an emotional plane quite apart from the body. Indeed, it has long been apparent socially that childbirth and successful parenting have little, if anything, in common.

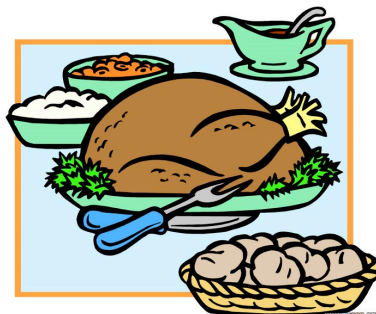
We adopted Olin when he was ten, several months short of his eleventh birthday. The decision for adoption was made among the three of us and we often discussed it in the years to follow. We concluded that adopted children are the only youngsters who can be absolutely certain that they were sincerely and lovingly wanted. This did not imply that other children were always in doubt. But we felt that it remained fact that only the adopted could know for sure, particularly when that child was old enough to be involved in the decision.

Another little known fact is that psychological studies have time and again determined that the bonding between adopted children and adoptive parents is the same as in biological families, and it is not uncommon for the bonding to be even deeper. But we who have adopted have always been aware of this. In bereavement, let us never surrender to doubt.

If you are an adoptive parent, and your child has died, please be assured that The Compassionate Friends and other groups within the bereavement community know that your grief is as true and as deeply rooted as that of other parents.

Your joy in parenting and your agony in devastation is the same. In deep love you chose to parent. From the wellsprings of that same love, you walk a lonely and shadowed road to healing.

Don Hackett
TCF, Kingston, MA



THANKSGIVING WAS...

Thanksgiving was always an easy holiday. Unlike Christmas, there was no pressure of giving just the right gift. Thanksgiving Day was a day of family gatherings and good food. Late that afternoon, we would return home full from over eating and satisfied that our family relationships were intact. It is also a day that we are reminded of all that we have to be thankful for.

We are supposed to be thankful for our health, our families, our comfortable life, etc. The death of a child changes our perceptions. When the family gathers around the Thanksgiving dinner table, I now see a missing plate that no one else sees. (Of course, when I say "no one", I exclude Bren and Kim. I'm sure they see, hear and wish what I do, although probably at different times.) When the nieces and nephews are laughing or crying, I hear a voice that no one else hears. When a family member recounts a story about something his or her child did last week, I wish I had a story to tell.

We still have much to be thankful for, and we should remember that. But, now, Thanksgiving Day has an additional observance for those of us who are bereaved. It is a day of forgiveness also. We must forgive others who cannot acknowledge the missing child, for whatever reasons. If family and friends cannot understand us, then we must try to understand them, especially on holidays. If we can exhibit tolerance, forgiveness and understanding on a day on which we offer thanks, we can climb another step on our ladder to recovery.

Hope you have a forgiving Thanksgiving.

Jim Hobbs
BP/USA Denton TX
~reprinted from East Central Indiana,
Miami - Whitewater TCF



HANDLING THE HOLIDAYS

*The following guidelines are shared in the hope that they will be helpful to you in thinking about and planning for the holidays ahead and other special family times throughout the year. They were prepared by Shirley Melin of The Compassionate Friends, Fox Valley Chapter, Aurora IL with some additions from the Montgomery, AL Chapter, and from the booklet, *Handling the Holidays*, edited by Bruce Conley, a funeral director in Elburn IL and a member of the Advisory Board of the Fox Valley Chapter. We are most grateful to all of these people for sharing with us.*

Holidays, birthdays, and other special days are usually times for family gatherings and celebrations. When we come together for the first time after the death of our child, it can be really difficult. Our families try to protect us in the best way they can, but it can still hurt. How can we cope? How can we as grieving parents handle these times in a realistic and effective way?

First, acknowledge and accept your feelings. Tears, depression, and loneliness are all natural reactions to a loss, months, even a year or more after the loss. At the same time, do not feel as though you are betraying your child if you are able to enjoy some of the festivities.

If the thought of preparing for these special days seems overwhelming, one helpful first step may be to make a list of things to be done in planning for the holiday. Have a family conference and together decide what is really important: what traditions do you want to carry on? What would some members find meaningful, or what things might be too painful? What changes, if any, would you want to make? Consider whether a task can be shared, whether someone else can take it on, or whether it should be eliminated. Whatever decisions are reached, this sharing can demonstrate recognition and respect for each person's values.

In setting priorities, good guidelines to use are: Would the holiday or special day be the same without it? What gave meaning to our holidays in the past? If you have family traditions, decide together whether you want to carry them on this year or if this is a good time to begin new ones. Consider and discuss ways of keeping traditions while trying to lessen the pain of loss, perhaps by making some changes in the usual way of doing things. Remember that although we may decide to do some things differently this year, we can decide to return to earlier customs another year if we wish.

It is important to realize that while holidays and special days are traditionally a time of festivity, they can also be a time of frantic busyness and resultant fatigue. Don't set unrealistic expectations for yourself to be joyful. As grieving persons we must recognize that we may simply be unable to function at our usual pace. We may need to break things down into smaller, more manageable chunks, goals we can achieve. Fatigue can be deadly and lead to feelings of depression under the best of circumstances. Don't overextend, don't over commit. Eliminate the unnecessary and reduce the pressure on yourself and others. By talking over what is really important with family members, priorities can be set, tasks shared, and plans made to accomplish those things considered essential. Decide what you can handle comfortably and let your needs be known to friends and relatives.

If your faith has been an important part of your life, allow time for its expression during these holidays and special days. If it has not, this may be a fitting time to approach the clergy person or church of your choice. In either case, you may find that by enriching and deepening your religious experience, you have added a new dimension to your life.

Our lives have changed. Our holidays will be different. It's not a choice of pain or no pain, but how we manage the pain we feel. The important thing to remember is to do what is comfortable for you and your family. It may help to know what those of us who have been through these holidays and special days before have found: Anticipation is frequently worse than the day itself.

SOME SUGGESTIONS:

Know when your holidays are

Holidays are not just at Thanksgiving, Chanukah, Christmas, or New Year's.

Holidays are those times when family and friends get together for fun. It may or may not be associated with one of the traditional days of celebration.

Mark on your calendar the months during which your family's holidays occur. . Begin early to plan your coping strategies.



Worldwide Candle Lighting Ceremony Pikes Peak Chapter

6:30 p.m. - First candle lit promptly at 7:00 p.m.

First Baptist Church, 317 E. Kiowa St. - Downtown

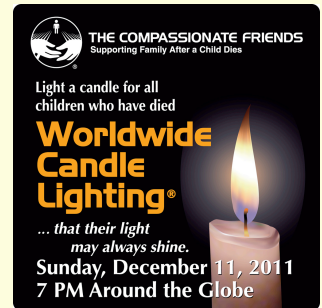
We invite all families and friends to take a short break from the hectic holiday rush and join us as we remember and honor our children with an evening of music, inspirational readings, memorial slideshow and the soft glow of candle light.

Throughout the evening, each child's picture and dedication will be shown amidst touching music in a very private moment honoring their absence.

The Compassionate Friends of the Pikes Peak Region are proud to put together this evening of remembrance.

As we put together our slide show of our children, please use the form below and include your favorite photo of your loved one along with a brief dedication if you wish. These can also be emailed as well. All photos will be returned to you. *Prior years' submissions will be read as a dedication if we don't hear back from you.*

Share this evening with us—as we remember with pride, tears, and hugs that the love for our child endures and grows. Refreshments will be served immediately following our program.



TCF CANDLELIGHT MEMORIAL

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 _____ (no more than 3 please)

Dedication _____

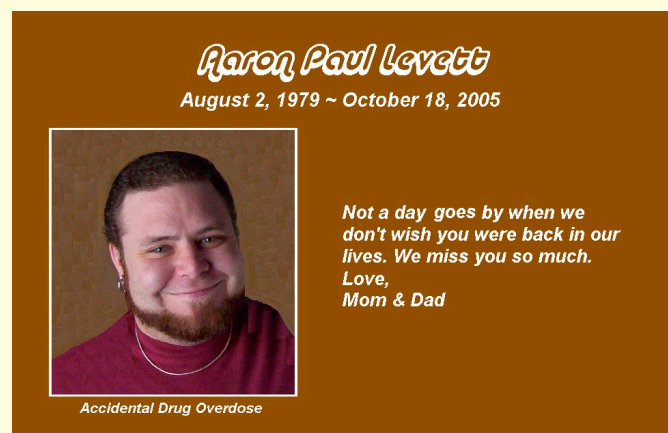
Create my slide with information & pictures provided. ☐

Please use last year's slide. ☐

Please return pictures when finished. ☐

Email information to stewart@archangelgifts.com or send to:

Stew Levett, 160 El Dorado Lane, C.S. CO 80919



Example of Memorial Slide

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION IS
NOVEMBER 26th**

**Pikes Peak Chapter
The Compassionate Friends**



**The Compassionate Friends
Pikes Peak Chapter
PO Box 51345
Colorado Springs, CO 80949-1345**

November 2011

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