



## Stephen A. Kinser

October 31, 2024

Stephen (Steve) Andrew Kinser of Fort Collins, CO passed away October 31, 2024. He was born December 23, 1986 in Rock Island, IL to John and Diane Kinser. Friends and family describe him as kind, generous, hard-working, and always ready to help, with a sharp wit and an ability to connect with anyone. At any time, he might surprise you with a phone call and a funny story.

Stephen graduated with honors from Rock Island High School before continuing his education at the University of Illinois, where his passion for cooking was sparked while working in a family-owned Italian restaurant. Continuing with this new curiosity, he attended Scott Community College to sharpen his culinary arts. After a myriad of restaurants, experience, and stories, he set off for Colorado in 2017. Working in Vail and Keystone at several restaurants and ski resorts, he eventually moved to Fort Collins to join the Ciao! Mobile Pizzeria team in 2023.

This passion consumed him and Stephen was often found helping out fellow food truck business in his spare time. Special thanks to Joe Zeppy's, Steamy Weiners, and Shells on Wheels for allowing him to provide insight, laughs, hard work, and memories to share. Whether it be sourcing, prepping, cooking, creating, burning, botching, experimenting, serving, and of course, eating-- Stephen loved all aspects of the culinary field.

Stephen is survived by his parents John and Diane, sister Sonja (Alex Henry), grandma Jeanette Akin, uncle Doug (Cheryl) Akin, cousins Brooke (Derrick) Hendrickx (second cousins Zach and Josh), Rob Akin, and Kari (Tyler) Anderson (second cousins Kai and Eli). Stephen was preceded in death by his grandparents Ruth and Lonnie Kinser, and Bob Akin.

Stephen is also survived by his Fort Collins family: Dan, Jenn, Ann, Fitts, Joy, Nick, Emily, and Squeakers the cat.

Memorials may be made to NEST Cafe, (<https://www.nestcafeqc.org/donate>) a pay-what-you-can cafe in Stephen's hometown:

1524 4th Ave

Rock Island, IL 61201

[nestcafeqc.org \(https://www.nestcafeqc.org/\)](https://www.nestcafeqc.org/)

A Celebration of Life gathering will be held on Saturday, November 9th 2:00-7:00pm at Group Publishing,  
1515 Cascade Ave,  
Loveland, CO 80538

# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life

NOV 9. 2:00 PM - 7:00 PM (MT)

Group Publishing  
1515 Cascade Ave  
Loveland, CO 80538  
info@group.com  
<https://www.group.com/>

# Tribute Wall

DG

“ I hadn't seen Stephen in person since the mid-90s when we were friends in the Quad Cities. Back in those days, we mostly ran around in the street, watched and re-watched the Simpsons, and played hours and hours of video games, with John's muffled drumming reverberating from the basement. We reconnected recently and I was glad to find that he was still the same sweet, funny, hyper kid -- now obsessed with cooking and artisanal hot sauces. I'm glad to have known him, he was a friend and a big part of my childhood. My deepest condolences to John, Diane, and Sonja.

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**Django Gold** - November 10, 2024 at 10:41 AM

AG

“ John, Diane, & I drove out to Co. in 2017 & enjoyed a late evening dinner with Stephen & my son Courtney. We really enjoyed a nice visit. Bonfires out at the farm when Stephen was little were special and lots of fun!

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**Allene Gregory** - November 09, 2024 at 07:22 PM

AT

“ We are Alice and Kevin Traylor from Rock Island, Illinois. We had the privilege of knowing Stephen since his early grade school years. We met Stephen and his parents through Stephen and our sons participation in Tiger Cub Scout activities. Though scouting didn't last all that long, his good friendship with our two sons did, continuing through high school, college and beyond. And Stephen's friendship with our sons fostered our friendship with Stephen's parents, John and Diane.

*Kevin: I well remember Stephen's terrific, intelligent and dry sense of humor. Beside being the father of two of Stephen's friends, I was also Stephen's high school librarian. I recall Stephen often coming to the library, politely greeting me with a facial expression saying something like, "yeah I'm here to work and I'll follow the rules as best I can but I'm gonna have fun while I'm at it." Stephen was very smart and I remember wondering how he put up with all of the constraints of attending high school. (Sonja, I was then and still am certain you chose wisely to finish high school early).*

*Alice: My first memory of Stephen was with our sons at a picnic, probably one of the early scouting events. Diane and I became friends and our sons attended the same schools and eventually the same church. I recall the high school years best. Stephen and friends were frequently at our house playing video games, eating, and making movies with camcorders! One such movie was called "Ted Knows" and Stephen played Ted. It became one of their often returned to mementos of those years. Stephen holds a place in my heart for his enduring friendship with our sons.*

*Alice and Kevin: When we were married our vows included supporting each other through the best and worst of times, and indeed we have been through both. An unspoken vow, we have discovered, is we would also support our families and friends through their best and worst of times. Losing Stephen is one of those very worst of times. We miss Stephen terribly.*





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**Alice and Kevin Traylor** - November 07, 2024 at 08:22 PM

KR

*John and Diane I want to know that I'm thinking of you at this time and sending love and prayers and hugs to you and your daughter*

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**kathy regal** - December 10, 2024 at 07:34 PM

TB

*Wow, what a shocker. I remember Stephen from elementary school. Kindergarten til high school. Stephen was always chill but would get really excited about his interests. He was kind, patient, and an all around cool guy growing up. I'm saddened to read this. Ms. Diane and family are in my thoughts. She truly is the sweetest lady and I hope she's coping well. T. Blamah*

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**T. Blamah** - June 09, 2025 at 02:15 PM

JH

“ *Sending much love and a huge hug to the Kinser and Akin family. The food in heaven is much better today.* ”

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**John Hopper** - November 07, 2024 at 07:00 PM