



# The Compassionate Friends

## Fargo/Moorhead Area Chapter

### Supporting Family After a Child Dies

TCF's National Office  
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F-M Area Chapter  
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The F-M Area Chapter of The Compassionate Friends meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. at  
**FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
127 2ND AVE E  
WEST FARGO, ND  
Please enter on the West side. Our meeting is in the Fellowship Hall - lower level, west side.

#### Upcoming Meetings

April 12th  
May 10th

#### Meeting Subject:

April - Bring a memento of your child to share with the group  
June - Balloon Release, everyone is welcome.

#### Dates to Remember

Mom's meeting - 7 pm on April 26th @ Fry'n Pan  
41st National Conference  
July 27-29, 2018 St Louis, Missouri

#### LOVE GIFTS

Lisa Beach in memory of her son,  
Nathan Beach  
Charles & Sandy Klinkhammer in memory of their son, Alexander Brent Klinkhammer  
We are deeply grateful for the LOVE GIFTS given this month.  
Our chapter and all chapters, are financed solely through your Love Gifts.  
Donations make this newsletter, postage, books, tapes, etc. possible.  
Thank you for your tax deductible gifts.

*Hope is like a bird that senses the dawn and carefully starts to sing while it is still dark.*

~ unknown

#### OUR CREDO

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope. The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites 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, creeds, and relationships. 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 they feel helpless and see no hope. Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength, while some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression, while others radiate an 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 for the children who have died. We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building a future together. We reach out to each other in love to 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. ©2007

"When our special sadness comes to call, when we remember more than we can bear, when courage falters – shadows everywhere: Then let us reach and touch and share, we, who are friends." ~ Sascha Wagner

Our Mom's group generally meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm at the Fry'n Pan restaurant, 300 Main Avenue, Fargo. Our gatherings are very informal as we meet to talk about our children, books, recipes, jobs and whatever else comes up in conversation. We all have times when we need the listening heart of another mom or grandma. Please join us this month on Thursday April 26th. For more information please contact Sheryl at 701-540-3287 or sherylc13@msn.com.

#### Spring Thaws The Wounded Heart

That first spring came too soon  
why did daffodils show sunny faces  
around the grave stone  
why did warm breezes blow clouds away  
my world, a gray dismal had no room  
for this season.  
Now years later the blossoms of love,  
hope and healing have broken through  
grounds of utter despair  
warmed by memories of you  
I join the daffodils  
bringing my own smile.

~ Alice J. Wisler

Inspired by the life of Daniel Paul Wisler 1992 ~ 1997

### My Life Forever Changed

Sometimes my mind sails to yonder days  
Seeking only times so mild  
And living the wonders of life  
As if I were still a child

Happy memories of all the good days  
Gave me the will to make a plan  
To live a fruitful life  
With the help God's mighty hand

Those days also had hardships  
Sadness, misfortune, and failure as well  
With burdens so heavy to carry  
Are the stories I'll someday tell

I've had many good things in life  
Also the burdens I've carried to and fro  
They've made it quite clear to me  
That life is not a picture show

I wanted to travel and find adventure  
So with the Navy I sailed the high seas  
Growing to manhood with my shipmates  
I found life's ways were not of ease

I've had a married life so pure  
I've experienced the birth of babies  
And changed dirty diapers  
I've even been bitten by a dog with rabies

I am a man who follows Christ My Savior  
To live and follow his way is my thirst  
I depend on his guidance  
As I travel this rough road on earth.

I made my career with intense dedication  
Working hard with a forward lean  
Always giving an honest days work  
With only a little rest in between

For adventure I earned my pilot's license  
With my own challenge into the air I flew  
To soar high up into the clouds  
It was for personal confidence I knew

Great days, my grandchildren started arriving  
They are all miracles that fill me with pride  
They are purely the blessing of life  
With their youth, always companions at my side

My wonderful grandchildren  
They're right in the center of my world  
They make me happy and full of joy  
Watching them grow and seeing their lives unfurl

I've had fears of family tragedy  
Seemingly distant, yet always so near  
I prayed my family to pass through this life  
Without tragedy's heavy burdens to bear

But then, on that day so brutal  
So suddenly my life turned into pain  
Normal life I knew was gone  
And never again would be the same

I lost two little Grand Daughters  
In a split second they were taken from me  
This day my life just turned upside down  
Yes, I lost Loral and Macy you see

Now my life, I must continue  
It hurts, and wasn't supposed to be this way  
My soul yearns to reach that great destination  
While weary and worn, I trod forth each day

I still find some happiness, but more often sadness  
I sometimes laugh and sometimes cry  
With grief and longing for my lost girls  
Yes, with my faith, I know I'll get by

I've yet to reach my Golden years  
And those years may never come  
I'll just walk my road and play the part  
Hopefully, I'll be an inspiration to some.

PawPaw

~ Donald Moyers, TCF/Galveston County, TX  
In Memory of Macy and Loral

### EACH SPRING GOD RENEWS HIS PROMISE

Long, long ago in a land far away,  
There came the dawn of the first Easter Day,  
And each year we see that promise reborn  
That God gave the world on that first Easter Morn. . .

For in each waking flower and each singing bird,  
The Promise of Easter is witnessed and heard,  
And Spring is God's way of speaking to men  
And renewing the promise of Easter again,  
For death is a season that man must pass through  
And, just like the flowers, God wakens him, too. . .  
So why should we grieve when our loved ones die,  
For we'll meet them again in a "cloudless sky"--  
for Easter is more than a beautiful story,  
It's the promise of life and Eternal Glory

~ Helen Steiner Rice

### Happy Birthday in Heaven

Today we remember the day we were blessed with your birth.  
How wonderful to have your life to share upon this earth.  
Too few birthdays you spent with us, now another in heaven.  
We wonder what our lives would be if you were still here in them.  
But sadly it is not our fate to spend our days with you.  
So we will cherish our memories to help see us through.  
Our memories of your smile, compassionate, generous ways,  
The joy you brought to all you saw each and every day.  
Oh Son how we wish so bad we could be together,  
But always know we love you today, tomorrow and forever.  
Happy Birthday precious angel, may your spirit soar above,  
Mom, Dad, Sister, family and friends sending all our love.

~ Cindy McClain, TCF/Wabash Valley, IN  
In Memory of my son Dylan

## Grief and Marriage

When our son was killed, I remember thinking through the haze of pain that this most horrifying of life experiences would somehow bring us closer. Sharing the loss of a child created and loved by both of us for twenty years would surely deepen the bond between us. I was in for a surprise.

We clung almost blindly to each other until the shock began to give way to ugly reality. As we each moved to our individual pattern of grieving, differences began to emerge. I felt like a time bomb about to explode. I needed desperately to talk about our son. My husband refused to verbalize his feelings and became angry at my overtures. I stopped trying to communicate.

This was beyond my comprehension. Where was my helpmate, my best friend? I felt rejected, unloved and terribly alone. Anger overwhelmed me as I bitterly realized that I wasn't going to be able to share my grieving with the person who meant the most to me in the world. I knew that many marriages fail after the death of a child. Dear God, how could we possibly survive an additional tragedy?

We attended a few Compassionate Friends meetings, and then I continued alone. The gentle acceptance of others who had lost children permitted me to talk or cry without guilt. Our problem was definitely not unique; many other parents expressed similar frustrations. So many couples experience marital difficulties after the death of a child that it is now considered the norm. We weren't going crazy; and just because our grieving styles were different didn't mean that our whole marriage would fall apart. My anger began to dissipate as I slowly faced the fact that I had been placing unrealistic expectations on my husband. Hurting at least as much as I, he simply could not meet my needs for support.

Much later, the knowledge that support had been there all along from my friends—if I had only asked for it—saddened me. I had to admit that I simply had been too proud to reveal myself as a suffering person in need of help. I will be forever grateful to Compassionate Friends for being there with loving, open arms.

We began to have some honest discussions, agreeing that we needed each other's nurturing in order to survive and find meaning in life. We learned to respect each other's feelings. We tried to please each other in little ways: a hug, a special meal, anything that expressed caring. Patience with each other smoothed over many rough moments. Time spent alone together was very healing. It took a conscious decision from both of us to try harder. Some days, we didn't have any energy left when grief was particularly painful. It wasn't always easy as we couldn't talk about our son for a long time.

As I look back, I see that ignorance of grief and the impact it can have on a marriage was the basis for our problems. But in retrospect, how could we possibly have been prepared for the onslaught of paralyzing emotions that overwhelmed us? Anguish of this intensity can reveal a spouse you've never seen before. Deeply wounded, both of you will be inevitably changed from the experience of losing a child. Back then, understanding these simple facts would have immeasurably helped us.

~ Pat Retzlaff, TCF/Oshkosh, WI

## Chicago New Friend

Sixty-four Minnesotans attended the 2014 Compassionate Friends Annual Conference in Chicago, including me. Sixteen hundred attended all in all. It was my 4<sup>th</sup> national conference in 10 years in the club nobody wants to join. I wondered what I would gain by attending another conference.

I felt unsettled. July is my son's birthday month. On Day two of the conference I walked out of the first choice workshop after five minutes, found another, walked out, and found yet another group already deep in session. The topic was sibling grief and how parents respond. I was looking for the nugget, the essence of comfort or new information, or at least some help in identifying why I was so restless.

A woman next to me stood up to comment. I recognized her. We met four years earlier at a TCF conference. Her words suddenly resonated and I engaged with the group, listened to the facilitator, who was so down to earth and so full of wisdom. I had found where I should be!

That evening at the Candlelight ceremony I sat with my old friend Carol Hawk who had invited me years ago to attend a TCF conference with her. We now co-share the Minneapolis chapter leadership.

Eight of us were seated at the Candlelight dinner table. Carol was conversing with someone on her right so I turned to my left and struck up a conversation with someone I did not know.

It took a while to find our common ground. She was brand new to the conference and new in her grief journey. I asked how many from her chapter meeting were attending the conference. She answered "No one." There was no TCF chapter in her city that was so far away from where I live. Years ago her friend lost a child. My dinner companion knew about TCF through her work and she took her friend to her first TCF meeting to get her started. The two of them were now attending this annual conference together. Who knew that three years later, she herself would look for a TCF meeting.

I asked about her child. Suddenly the conversation turned deeply intimate. We discovered that we had both raised smart, tall, skinny six foot six inch boys. We had both lost those boys as they approached adulthood.

Weeks later, I still thought of her. I can't imagine going through early grief years without a TCF chapter. I have her email. I have her photo from the candlelight ceremony. Carol and I always take a photo of us at the ceremony. I introduced my new friend to that tradition. I plan to keep in touch with her. Perhaps one day she may step forward to lead a TCF group in her city.

A 10 year mile marker is a good time to assess your grief. Everything in your support system tool box, even an annual conference, is fair game for review. For me, the value of this gathering proved to be the time and space provided for people to share their powerful stories and for me to listen. We are a social resource like no other. There are plenty of stories to hear. Those random connects at a TCF conference are counterpower stepping stones that balance the depths of grief on our healing journeys.

Next year, Dallas. Bring it on!

~ Monica Colberg, TCF/Minneapolis, MN  
In Memory of my son Art



## OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED BIRTHDAYS

CHILD	PARENTS
JESSICA MARIE BALSTER.....29	CARRIE BALSTER
NATHAN BEACH .....27	LISA BEACH
ANDREW HOWARD BRAUN .....29	CRAIG & DEANNA BRAUN
ALLISON DEUTSCHER .....42	LYNN & DONNA MICKELSON
TRAVIS FREED.....36	RANDY & DEBBIE FREED
TYLER JAY FREED .....36	RANDY & DEBBIE FREED
DAVID GRAFSGAARD.....58	BERDINE GRAFSGAARD
THERESA KLIER.....29	KAREN SCHWARTZ
LANNIE LEE KORNELIUS.....58	LEROY & DONNA KORNELIUS
DEBORAH CHERYL KYLLO.....65	B MICHAEL & GENEVA KNUDSON
JAMIE BETH MERCIER.....42	TERRY & CAROL MERCIER
JEFF MUNIGHAN .....52	JERALD & ARLENE MUNIGHAN
CASANDRA (CASY) PERRHUS .....57	RAYMOND & JAN MILLER
AMELIA MARIE PRATT.....7	JASON & TANDY PRATT
MARY-ALICE MARIE PRATT .....10	JASON & TANDY PRATT
CARSON DENNIS RONEY .....21	PAUL & RENAE RONEY
JERIMIAH PAUL "JP" SOLHJEM.....12	JANA SOLHJEM
BRUCE C THORNBY .....57	JANET & HOWARD GALLAGHER
HEATHER WREN .....42	DEB WAYMAN

## ANNIVERSARIES

CHILD	PARENTS
TODD TIMOTHY CLARK.....2	JEFFREY & ANNA MARIE CLARK
ANNE CLEMENSON .....2	MARVIN & DOROTHY CLEMENSON
STEVEN DUANE COOK .....7	SHARON COOK
TRAVIS FREED.....36	RANDY & DEBBIE FREED
ALEXANDER DANIEL HIRN.....1	BEVERLY HIRN
KYLE KASSMAN .....4	TOM & NANCY KASSMAN
ALEXANDER BRENT KLINKHAMMER.....6	CHARLES & SANDY KLINKHAMMER
CARMEN LALUM .....3	RUSSELL & SHARON LALUM
AMY CHRISTINE LARSON.....19	DALE & MARILYN LARSON (Grandparents)
ERIC LARSON.....19	DALE & MARILYN LARSON (Grandparents)
GAIL DIANE LARSON.....19	DALE & MARILYN LARSON
JOSEPH CHRIS LARSON.....19	DALE & MARILYN LARSON
JAMIE BETH MERCIER.....6	TERRY & CAROL MERCIER
AMELIA MARIE PRATT.....7	JASON & TANDY PRATT
MARY-ALICE MARIE PRATT .....10	JASON & TANDY PRATT
STEVEN RENDON.....2	ALEX & ALICE RENDON
DANE TVEDT .....8	TOMMY & LEAH TVEDT
MICHELLE WARNECKE.....6	DOUG & JOAN WARNECKE
ANGELA MARIE WENTZ .....5	DAVID WENTZ

Please check out our Chapter website's page for 'Our Beloved Children'  
([www.tcffargomoorhead.org/ourchildren.html](http://www.tcffargomoorhead.org/ourchildren.html)). If you would like your child's picture and a poem or story posted on this page, please submit them to us at [tcf1313@hotmail.com](mailto:tcf1313@hotmail.com) or mail them to our PO Box (listed on the back of the newsletter). Photos and poems/stories sent to the PO Box will be electronically scanned and then returned to you so please remember to include a return address.

## SIBLING PAGE

### WHAT WAS HE REALLY LIKE?

After meeting a friend that I had not seen for quite some time and exchanging catch-up information, something wonderful happened to me. This beloved friend expressed the usual condolences over the loss of my brother but went on to post the question "What was he really like?" My eyes must have sparkled like fire. The question itself ignited an unbelievable response. Unleashing all my memories, I began immediately bursting at the seams.

Oh, he was so kind and gentle. He was so seldom angry that you remembered the exact moment when he lost his temper—because it just didn't happen that often. And he was so good at telling stories. Believe me, he could embellish a story. His left eye would wink, and he'd get a silly grin on his face as if he weren't going to tell you the ending. By then he'd spout out the ending, knowing that he had teased you once more.

And oh, he was so respectful to Mom and Dad that I wanted to slug him sometimes. He would always tell me that I wouldn't get into trouble if I'd just keep my mouth shut! And never, never could I outlast him at night. He would come in from a date at midnight and still have enough energy to watch the late movie. Brilliant -- why he never had to crack one book in high school.

And I could have gone on and on. I told my friend that I didn't want to keep her and that I certainly didn't mean to get so carried away, but so few people ask me that question. She told me that she would have liked to have known him. This instance may be a rarity with friends who have not experienced the death of a loved one. But may we, in the Compassionate Friends, keep asking each other over and over, "*What was he really like?*"

~ Julie Cameron, TCF/Louisville, KY

### Twin Rainbows

Yesterday, I saw a glorious sight, a true vision of nature. I saw a double rainbow. The first rainbow, closest to earth, was very bright, colors clearly defined. The second rainbow, the one closer to heaven, was misty and loosely formed.

My dear brother, I thought of you. You represented the second rainbow. You were sent down to show me your presence, to show your closeness to me. I was told in a dream that you are never far away from me.

My life has changed. I have had to redefine and challenge myself - to make strong my weakness, because you always "took up the slack" for me. You always did for me what I could not do for myself.

This past year, one of our friends finally let go of his sorrow. He was able to talk and hug me, without breaking down or weeping over the memories of us. It has been difficult for our friends and family to separate you and me. They still say our names together. They have commented: "Where you see one, you'll soon see the other."

It has been hard for me to help all of these folks to heal; to let them know that they can still love me. I am the same person, but without you. At times, it has seemed an overwhelming task, but I can only try and be the friend that you taught me to be. Then, maybe, they'll see you are still here. All that you are - your spirit, love, and friendship - live through me.

Love, your sister,

~ Meria Rae Martin, Swinomish, WA

### MOTHER OF SORROW

I hate to look at my mother  
To see her in so much pain  
Wrinkles hiding her countless tears  
That would otherwise pour like rain.

I hate to see her hurt so much  
But silently hold it in  
Struggling to beat the heartbreak  
When she knows that she can't win.

I hate to listen to her cries  
Which she tries so hard not to show  
Grasping on to everything  
I wish she could let go.

I hate to watch her smile so bright  
And know that it's all fake  
Sure she's "Happy" every day  
But she's acting for our sake.

I hate competing with the sorrow  
And I can't bring back my brother  
Drew is up there watching you  
He living, loving and laughing--  
Mother.

~ Kristy Sheldon, TCF/Ashtabula, OH

### The Unfinished Path

When we were young, under your wing I was kept.  
As I grew older, on your shoulder I wept.  
With a problem I could come to you, day or night.  
Just knowing your answers would always be right.  
You joined the Marines and "*Semper Fidelis*" you barked.  
I could see right then my path was marked.  
It was a path to perfection or so I thought.  
To be like you is what I sought.  
Since your prints have ended, I don't know where to go.  
I've asked Mom and Dad, but they don't quite know.  
So I ask your advice just one more time.

Because your prints have ended,  
The rest must be mine.

~ Tim Maloney, USMC, TCF/Hingham, MA

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### WHEN....

when we finally realize that you  
are always going to be smiling  
and dancing in our hearts,  
then, our pain shall turn to joy.

~ Bob Walters, TCF/South Lake Tahoe, CA

### REST, MY BROTHER

Rest, my brother, you now have peace.  
The wars within you all have ceased,  
And with the rising sun each day,  
Upon the heaven you will play.  
Until that day we meet again,  
Know I love you, my brother, my friend.

~ Sandra Evans, TCF/Kearsarge, NH

## *The Hurricane of Addiction*

My name is Nancy and I work as a para-professional with special education children in Long Beach, New York. Each day I walk in my classroom and feel sad for those children whose lives may be taken away by the wrong choices. Once, my child, Jesse, was so full of life too. How I wish I could go back!

Not a day goes by that I don't wonder what my son would be doing if he were still on this earth. He was a talented wrestler for his high school, a talented drummer from a very early age, and had a gift of making people laugh.

Jesse was diagnosed as ADHD very early in life. His energy and wit were contagious, but in school it was an issue. He felt different even during the short period of time where he took his medicine as prescribed.

Jesse stopped his ADHD medicine and, I believe, started self medicating with Xanax and Valium. I searched and searched for a rehab that took 15-year olds, but after 10 days in the facility I found, our insurance refused to pay. I had to bring him home. I didn't have the financial capability to keep him there for a month. I believe that was his one his chance at life, before his addiction progressed.

He tried again and again, and the ups and downs went on and on. My hope of him being able to stop was diminishing. I used to fear that I would get a phone call every time the phone rang. His brothers tried to talk to him, but he hid his ongoing addiction from everyone.

When Jesse was 19, Hurricane Sandy hit our town. At that time, he was in recovery for two years. Within minutes, our house was 75-percent destroyed. All our possessions on the first floor were destroyed and our cars were gone. I spent the next year trying to find ways to fix my house back up and make sure all my sons had transportation to get to college.

I was also looking for a job, as the hospital I worked in at that time was destroyed and condemned. In the middle of it all, Jesse relapsed. Jesse confided in me that his addiction to OxyContin had turned into a heroin addiction: it was easier to find and cheaper. Once again, I found myself writing letters to rehabs. I tried everyone, even the President of the United States and Eric Clapton, who owns a rehab. I was desperate and Jesse was too. My bank account was wiped out, between the rehabs and the storm. All I wanted was my son back!

After a short stay at a rehab in Florida, he remained in recovery for about four months. He was so happy to be home. He rode his bike on the boardwalk, played his drums, hung out with his brothers and friends, and even praised my home cooked meals. Life seemed normal again.

But on Thursday, December 12, 2013, Jesse came to talk to me. He was noticeably high. My heart sank. I decided for once not to talk with him or nag him in any way, and just keep the peace. I had every intention of having a talk with him the next morning. But on Friday, I was still upset so I went straight to work instead.

My phone kept vibrating in my pocket and I walked into a hallway to look at it. It was a text from my son, Zach. Mom, pick up your phone. Mom, Jesse is dead in his bed!

That is the day my heart broke forever. I am still broken and miss my child more and more each day that passes. I am still angry with our health insurance system and the lack of rehabs for all ages.

It will be four years this December that I lost my sweet, kind, funny boy. I am crying right now at the thought of never seeing him again. His addiction killed him and affected everyone in my family. His addiction wiped us out financially.

But I would do it all again, for him. I love you, Jesse Mark Barnett: always and forever.

~ Nancy Rossetti

*Blog, People Facing Addiction* Oct. 16, 2017

## **WHAT? TEN YEARS AND YOU AREN'T OVER IT YET**

To this statement I reply, "I've gotten over the death of my child, but I haven't gone over it all yet. Perhaps I won't ever." There are still deep places in my heart that need to be touched. And sometimes my newly bereaved compassionate friends touch these recesses of my soul. I'm glad when they do because one more thread of my torn tapestry is thus whetted; one more thread can be woven again. This is what I still get from Compassionate Friends meetings. What do I give back? My fellow participants tell me it is important for me to be there beside them, to listen, to speak their child's name, to connect one experience to another. It is being alive; it is sharing stories which by themselves may not make sense, but which, in the context of the meeting, carry our children right back here among us. When I say I, or my, I really mean us-the veteran bereaved parents who still participate and facilitate TCF meetings. We represent hope and love to the newly bereaved. To the newly bereaved, hope can be insult. Our most significant hopes have been savagely shattered. We are advised by well-meaning family and friends to have hope for the future. How, I ask you? When the veteran bereaved parent comes to a meeting, he is the hope for the newly bereaved. He has survived!

One of the things that happens. To us as we experience grief and participate in The Compassionate Friends sharing groups is that we become more philosophical. We are forced by the grief we experience to examine all aspects of life. And by choice and need we listen to and learn about our fellow bereaved participants. We begin to understand more about life. When we share these insights with the newly bereaved, their tunnel of darkness and their confusion is lightened. Come on, participate!

~ Marcel Kopp, TCF/Boston, MA

### **Like the Butterfly**

It fluttered above my head  
Weightless in the soft breeze.  
I reached up my hand  
It lit on my finger.  
Waving glistening wings gently,  
It looked at me for timeless moments.  
I smiled, reaching deep and  
Finding all those cherished memories.  
As it flitted off through the sunlit morn,  
I knew we had said hello once more.

~ Leslie Langford, TCF/North Platte, NE

### **The Price**

It is not really a question  
of whether I could have wanted  
never to have you with me,  
if I had known  
how deeply your dying  
would break my life today.  
There is only one certain truth:  
Even if I had known  
That there would come to me  
The cruel grief I suffer today,  
I would endure it all again  
For the wonder of  
Having had you in my life.

By Sascha

**We must have your written permission on file to use your child's name in the newsletter.** Permission may be withdrawn at any time by written request. This information is used to maintain our Chapter Database. It is confidential and is only utilized for Chapter activities such as the newsletter.

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Death Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Signature)

Please return to: The Compassionate Friends of F-M Area, P.O. Box 10686, Fargo ND 58106  
(Please note that if you have already submitted a permission slip, you do not need to submit another one)



### Butterfly Decals



"Butterflies are the heaven sent kisses of an angel." ~ Author Unknown

Butterfly decals are available to help personalize our trailer. The trailer is used to carry items to and from our Walk to Remember and other chapter events. It has also given us some visibility in the Fargo/Moorhead community. Each butterfly decal holds the first and last name of one of our beloved children.

Butterflies are available in five colors (yellow, pink, red, blue and green). The cost is as follows: \$25 for 1 butterfly, \$50 for 2 butterflies, \$65 for 3 butterflies and \$80 for 4 butterflies. If you wish to purchase more than 4 butterflies please contact Paul and Kara Bailey at 701-491-0364.

Butterfly orders should include the child's first and last name (middle name is optional) and the color of the butterfly. Checks should be made payable to TCF of Fargo-Moorhead and the order mailed to PO Box 10686, Fargo, ND 58106.

You can see pictures of the trailer with butterflies on our website at [www.tcffargomoorhead.org/ourtrailer.html](http://www.tcffargomoorhead.org/ourtrailer.html).

### The Best Kind of Friend

*When your child dies, this is what the best kind of friend says to herself. This is her inner dialogue.*

"It's too huge. It's too awful. It's too terrible. She doesn't deserve this. It should never have happened to her."

"I don't know what to say. I don't know what to do. I don't know how to help her."

"But, I will be here for her. I will be here. I will be present. That is my resolve. Whatever the storm, whatever she thinks, whatever she says, however she behaves, I will be here."

"I will hear her. I will learn. I will not judge. I will just be present."

"When I make a mistake and say something the wrong way or do something inappropriate because I don't yet understand these newly discovered rules of grief etiquette, I will not get discouraged."

"And I will stay. I will stay for as long as she has breath. I will stay."

"When she cries, I will honor her tears. When she screams, I will listen. When she rejects all that I knew she once believed in, I will respect it. When she tries to explain, I will endeavor to understand."

"When – and if - she can smile, I will smile with her. When –and if - she ventures out, I will be by her side. When – and if – she strives to accomplish something meaningful, I will encourage her."

"I will protect her. I will defend her. She is my friend, she needs me, and she is worth it."

"I will be here."

*I am the best kind of friend. I am what she needs. I am what she must have to survive.*

~ Peggi Johnson, TCF/Piedmont, VA

### A Jumble of Thoughts on How I Am Today

How do you explain the constant physical ache of loss to someone who has not experienced a significant loss? It's been almost ten months, and I still feel Tom's absence in our home and in our lives. This gnawing darkness in my chest will not go away. It is impossible to move on when your body and heart are still searching for him here on earth.

I am a different person now. I feel more grounded in some ways. Closer somehow to the universe and its plan for me. But I feel chaotic, too. Unable to focus and drifting. There are moments when I am absolutely struck all over again with the knowledge my son is gone. And yet I have not forgotten it either. Grief is such a paradox.

Something funny happened in class today which Tom would have appreciated. I wanted so much to share it with him. I can see him rolling his eyes and shaking his head along with me. I miss him so much. There are not words to describe how I yearn for him.

This is the hardest thing. Ever.

~ Kimberly Starr, TCF Facebook Loss to Suicide Group  
In Memory of my son Tom

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS  
 OF THE F-M AREA  
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 FARGO ND 58106

NON-PROFIT  
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**The  
 Compassionate  
 Friends**  
 Fargo/Moorhead Area Chapter  
 Supporting Family After a Child Dies

**MISSION STATEMENT:** When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

A SINCERE WELCOME TO ALL COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS...We are a nonprofit self-help organization offering friendship and support to families who have experienced the death of a child. We offer group support, understanding and friendship. Our purpose is to promote and aid parents and siblings in the positive resolution of the grief they are experiencing and to foster physical and emotional health. If you have questions or wish to talk directly to a member of the Fargo-Moorhead Compassionate Friends, please call any of the numbers listed.

**FARGO-MOORHEAD COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS BOARD**

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN THE BOARD AT ANY TIME!

Chapter Leader	Paul & Kara Bailey ..... 701-491-0364	Newsletter Editor	Nancy Teeuwen.....701-730-0805
Co-Chapter Leader	Lori Wiger ..... 701-446-7504	Newsletter Database	Mary Bjerke
Secretary	Sheryl Cvijanovich ..... 701-540-3287	Website Administrator	Sheryl Cvijanovich.....701-540-3287
Treasurer	Chuck Klinkhammer..... 701-298-2929	Initial Contact	Mary Bjerke
Mailing Committee	Contact Us to Join	Librarian	Contact Us to Volunteer

LIBRARY INFORMATION: We have an extensive library available. Please feel free to check materials at our next meeting.

**TELEPHONE FRIENDS**

HAVING A BAD DAY OR NIGHT? Feel free to call and talk to any of the following:

- Sheryl Cvijanovich (son, 23 - illness)..... 701-540-3287
- Lois Gangnes (son, 24 - accident)..... 701-282-4083
- Nancy Teeuwen (daughter, 15 hours - illness)..... 701-730-0805
- Mark & Hella Helfter (miscarriage, son, 35-accident & son, 45-cancer) ... 701-235-9622

Love gifts must be received by the 15<sup>th</sup> to be included in the next month's newsletter. If you wish to give a love gift please complete:

Love gift given in Memory/Honor of \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Relationship \_\_\_\_\_ Born \_\_\_\_\_ Died \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: By giving a love gift, you are giving us permission to include your child(ren) in our monthly birthdays and anniversaries.