



The Compassionate Friends

Fargo/Moorhead Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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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 9th
 May 14th

Meeting Subject:

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

Weather cancellations will be posted on WDAY, KVLV, KFGO and the Fargo Forum online at www.inforum.com!

If the April meeting is cancelled due to restrictions by the COVID-19, notification will be through the cancellation locations listed above.

Dates to Remember

Mom's meeting - 7 pm on April 23rd @ Denny's
 TCF National Conference July 24-26, 2020 in Atlanta, GA
 TCF FM Chapter's 14th Annual Walk to Remember - July 25, 2020

GOOD MEMORIES ARE THE PERENNIALS THAT BLOOM AGAIN AFTER THE HARD WINTER OF GRIEF BEGINS TO YIELD TO HOPE."

~ Sascha Wagner,
 TCF/Des Moines IA

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

LOVE

"...Grief is the price we pay for love. We did not lose our children. They died, taking with them our hopes and dreams for the future, but, never, never taking away their love. Though death comes, love will never go away. Hold it tight, the love our children gave us. Hold it tight through the storms of grief and bring it with you into today. Love never goes away..." ~ Darcie Sims

Our Mom's group generally meets on the 4th Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm at the Denny's restaurant, 4437 13th Ave SW, 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 23rd For more information please contact Sheryl at 701-540-3287 or sherylev13@msn.com.

LOVE GIFTS

Lisa Beach in memory of her son, Nate Beach
 Juanita Webber in memory of her son, Jeff Webber
 Lynn & Donna Mickelson in memory of their daughter, Allison Deutscher
 Jim & Jody Kutter in memory of their daughter, Michelle Kutter
 Denise Wilson, in memory of her son, Dillon Andrew Wilson
 Dean & Diane Bauck in memory of their son, Davin Bauck
 Linda Bartsch in memory of her son, Brent Michael Bartsch
 Loyse Porter in memory of her son, Kevin Dillenburg
 Pontoppidan Lutheran Church Foundation

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.

Tiny Little Footprints

Little footprints on a paper,
Tiny footprints stamped on white.
No smiling pictures of your bath time,
No running or flying a kite.
Such sparse memories I have of you,
Sweet, beautiful, babies mine.
No keepsake rattles or no bronzed shoes,
No treasures for me to find.
Just tiny little footprints,
That I look at every day,
My memories of two little boys,
That the Angels took away.
We will make a million memories,
When Daddy and I get there,
Oh wait, we'll make it two million,
After all, you are a pair.

~ Marilyn Rollins, TCF/Lake-Porter County, IN
In Memory of Reece & Andersen, sons of Mike & Kathy
Williams

HEALING VERSUS RECOVERY

I have heard the terms "recovery" and "healing" used interchangeably to refer to the goal of processing grief. I would like to propose the idea that recovery carries with it the assumption of an injury or illness and that when the necessary repair has taken place, the person will return basically to the same person he was previous to the injury or illness.

When a child dies, there is, indeed, an injury of massive proportions. All systems--physical, mental, and spiritual--are affected. There is physical pain, emotional retching, spiritual upheaval, and struggling. All this may be occurring simultaneously. Though there may not be bleeding in the physical sense, there is emotional hemorrhaging. The body and psyche are in crisis. Bereaved parents are often unable to eat; they may experience sleep disturbances and disorientation. Believe it or not, all these reactions are normal. Grief is a normal part of life. This is not a mental illness or some chemical imbalance of the brain. What is not normal is to experience the death of a child.

The major difference between recovery and healing is that the goal is not to return to who we were before our child died. That goal is impossible to achieve. To continue to try to achieve a goal of recovery is to assume that life will be basically the same with a few minor adjustments. We'll set one less place at the table, buy less food, feel sad on holidays, cry a bit more. Our lives have been permanently and irrevocably changed. Part of the healing process is accepting that not only has our life changed, but that we are, in fact, becoming different people. The becoming is the healing.

During this process, we examine every facet of our lives and our belief systems. This is a journey, not a "repair." By living through this journey, we become different people. True, we may basically look the same, but we are not the same as before our child died. We look at life in a new way. Our interests change and our priorities change. We will never look at a child the same again. We have a new and deeper level of understanding and compassion for those experiencing pain--all kinds of pain. We have a different understanding of spirituality. We ourselves feel new and different. We carry some of the old person with us through the healing process, but we emerge different. We are healed, not recovered.

~ Bridie Tracy, TCF/Shoreline Chapter, CT

WE ARE THE CHILDLESS PARENTS

I am the childless mother
lost between loving and pain
lost to the promise of children
searching for answers in vain.
I am the childless mother
caught between courage and fears
left without bridge to the future
finding no sound for my tears.
I am the childless father
caught between courage and fears
left without bridge to the future
finding no sound for my tears.
I am the childless father
lost between loving and pain
lost to the promise of children
searching for answers in vain.
We are the Childless Parents
sharing the grief and the night
sharing the darkness together
waiting to walk in the light

~ Sascha Wagner, Wintersun

Sometimes We Have To Let Go

How many times did I tell you that you could not die before I did? Because I could not live if you died. SO MANY TIMES. Did I hold you here too long to suffer more than you should? I could not bear the thought of life without you. Children should not die before their parents.

How many times has my heart cried "I lied, I lied, I didn't mean it," since that last afternoon when I knew it was time to let you go. You told me that you loved me more than anything but you wanted to go home to Heaven. I told you it was Okay, that I wanted you to go and not have to suffer anymore.

I told you that when a child is born the cord that binds a mother and child together is cut, but there is an invisible cord that binds us that can never be broken. That wherever you go I will always be with you, and no matter where I am you would always be with me. Because I loved you more than life itself I had to let you go. But my heart still cries, "I didn't mean it, it was a lie, I didn't want you to die."

But I will always carry you in my heart, and part of my heart and soul went with you that day. I know that you are waiting for me in Heaven. ONLY THEN WILL I BE WHOLE AGAIN.

~ Hattie Pridgen, TCF/Wilmington, NC (Cape Fear Chapter)

~reprinted from TCF Atlanta Newsletter July/August 2002

Fleeting pictures cross my mind

Fleeting pictures cross my mind
Your smile imprinted on my heart
So very long since I heard your voice...
You would be 21 today.
What would you do, where would we celebrate?
The early piercing agony of losing you is different
Replaced by a yearning so deep, and a longing so strong
To hold you in my arms,
Cradle your head on my chest
And whisper
"Happy birthday my darlin',
I miss you."

~Charisse Smith, TCF/Tyler, TX

Searching for Her Smile

Twice a week she walked to the corner grocery store for warm donuts and coffee. She loved their donuts; none better in the whole city. She started walking on the advice of a friend who thought it might help her feel better. Her loneliness was beginning to consume her. Her life was dark and empty.

Heading home one day, she noticed an old man sitting on a park bench. She slowed and studied him, not remembering ever seeing him in her neighborhood. His expression was inviting; his skin aged and wrinkled; while his eyes were spirited, and a lively smile graced his face. Whatever he was thinking, was bringing him great pleasure.

Sitting next to him on the bench, the lady asked, "Old man, may I buy your smile? Whatever you're feeling is what I want to be feeling too."

Turning to the lady, he said, "Why do you want my smile? Where has yours gone?"

"My heart is broken. I doubt I will ever smile again," she answered with a sigh, as she leaned back, closing her eyes.

"This smile you see on me can't be sold, so it can't be bought either. A smile must be earned," the old man said. "A broken heart is very sad. Your smile must be far away."

Opening her heavy eyes, and looking into his, she said, "Yes, old man, my smile is far away. I lost it when my son died. He was just a little boy when a car went off the road and hit him while he was playing in our front yard. He died instantly. The last thing I remember is the horror on his face as the car crushed him."

A tear rolled down her cheek.

"I'm very sorry to hear that," the old man said, placing his hand on hers. "Life must be very difficult for you. How long has it been since your son died?"

Her voice shaking, she said, "My beautiful boy was taken from me 5 years ago. Sometimes it seems like just yesterday I saw him take his last breath. At other times, it feels like it's been years. I can still feel his hugs when he headed off to school. His joyful voice continues to play in my mind. I miss him so, so much. His death has at times overwhelmed me." The lady leaned forward, placing her head in her hands. More tears came.

"I can see your pain is deep. Weren't you once happy enough to smile?" the old man asked.

"Oh yes," the lady said, as she sat up. "When my son was alive, my smiles were broad and many. He was a wonderful son, handsome and bright. I miss smiling. I want to smile again, but I don't know how."

"Why did you say your son 'was' wonderful?" he questioned. "Because he's no longer here, does that mean he's no longer wonderful?"

"I've never thought of it like that, old man," she said, her voice a bit brighter. "I guess you're right. Even though his body isn't here, he *is* still a wonderful son."

"With that in mind," the old man said, "do you think of your son as forever dead or forever living?"

I don't know," she sighed. "That's a question I've never been able to answer."

"Yes, that's one to ponder," he said. "Let me see if I can help you find that answer. I want you to close your eyes, think of your son, and tell me what you see."

The lady leaned back on the bench, closed her eyes, and folded her hands in her lap. The old man saw her shoulders relax, and hoped a good thing would happen. A minute passed, and a small smile came alive on her face. "I see him running down the beach," she said, "his blond hair flying in the wind as he chases our dog. He's running very hard. I can hear his laughter and see the sand flying."

"How does that make you feel?" the old man asked.

"It makes me feel both sad and happy," the lady answered. "I want him back so we can make more memories. I want to touch him, hold him; and I'm sad I can't do these things. But memories like that make me happy."

"My friend," the old man said, "I think you know your son will never be with you in the way you had him before he died. His body can't come back, and nothing can change that. I know that's a hard thing to acknowledge, so you must decide how you want to carry your son with you now. Which way will your memories take you — to a tear, or to a smile? Your son's death has certainly earned you a tear, but your son's life has given you a smile."

Sitting quietly, the lady stared deeply into the old man's eyes, trying to understand what he was saying — trying to decide which will rule her life: the tear because of her son's death, or the smile because of his life. The tear was easier, because it had become normal and familiar. To smile again would take work. "Old man," she finally said, "which should I choose? You have lived long and learned many lessons. Counsel me."

"Dear sad lady, your son's physical death cannot be changed. Time moves forward, not back," he said. "I can see your love for him, and feel your broken heart. Your love 'is' strong, not 'was' strong. When you closed your eyes, you saw your son's life, not his death. Do you prefer his life or his death to be more powerful in you?"

It was then that the lady realized what the old man had done. He had shown her that even though a part of her would always be sad because of her son's death, she could also smile because of his life. In that instant, she made the decision to begin to live again and work at finding her smile — the smile that can return because of the life of her child; a life that will live forever through her memories.

Hugging the old man, she said, "Thank you, my new friend. I will now work at letting go of my son's death and seeing his life more clearly. I want the wonderfulness of him back with me, and back in my heart." She stood to leave, but turned, put her hand on the old man's shoulder, and asked, "How is it you came upon such wisdom? How did you know it's possible for me to get my smile back?"

Reaching into his coat pocket, the old man pulled out an envelope. As he did so, the lady thought she saw the glint of a tear in his eye, but also a gentle smile on his face. He carefully withdrew a photo from the envelope. Cupping it tenderly in his hands, he showed it to the lady. "You see, my beautiful angel daughter brought my smile back to me, so I know it's possible for you also."

The lady never saw the old man again, but in those few short minutes he taught her that the beauty and power of her son's life will never leave her, if she won't let it leave.

**OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED
BIRTHDAYS**

CHILD

PARENTS

JESSICA MARIE BALSTER	31	CARRIE BALSTER
NATHAN BEACH.....	29	LISA BEACH
RENEE ANN BERNIER.....	53	KENNETH & PATRICIA BERNIER
ANDREW HOWARD BRAUN.....	31	CRAIG & DEANNA BRAUN
JAMES DANIEL DEPLAZES	18.....	DAVID DEPLAZES
ALLISON DEUTSCHER.....	44.....	LYNN & DONNA MICKELSON
DAVID GRAFSGAARD	60.....	BERDINE GRAFSGAARD
THERESA VICTORIA KLIER	31.....	KAREN SCHWARTZ
LANNIE LEE KORNELIUS.....	60.....	LEROY & DONNA KORNELIUS
DAVID R KOSAK.....	28.....	BRUCE & MYRA KOSAK
DEBORAH CHERYL KYLLO.....	67.....	B MICHAEL & GENEVA KNUDSON
AMELIA MARIE PRATT	9.....	TANDY PRATT
MARY-ALICE MARIE PRATT.....	12.....	TANDY PRATT
CARSON DENNIS RONEY.....	23.....	PAUL & RENAE RONEY
JENNIFER SCHUMACHER	41.....	ANTHONY & LORETTA SCHUMACHER
BRUCE C THORNBY	59.....	JANET & HOWARD GALLAGHER
HEATHER WREN.....	44.....	DEB WAYMAN

ANNIVERSARIES

CHILD

PARENTS

ANNE CLEMENSON.....	4.....	MARVIN & DOROTHY CLEMENSON
STEVEN DUANE COOK.....	9.....	SHARON COOK
MATTHEW TYLER HARRIS	4.....	RACHEL BODIN
MATTHEW TYLER HARRIS	4.....	WILLIAM & RACHAEL BODIN
ALEXANDER DANIEL HIRN	3.....	BEVERLY HIRN
VICKY HOLWEGER	3.....	ROSEMARY FESKE
KYLE KASSMAN	6.....	TOM & NANCY KASSMAN
ALEXANDER BRENT KLINKHAMMER	8.....	CHARLES & SANDY KLINKHAMMER
CARMEN LALUM	5.....	RUSSELL & SHARON LALUM
AMY CHRISTINE LARSON	21.....	DALE & MARILYN LARSON (Grandparents)
ERIC LARSON	21.....	DALE & MARILYN LARSON (Grandparents)
GAIL DIANE LARSON	21.....	DALE & MARILYN LARSON
JOSEPH CHRIS LARSON	21.....	DALE & MARILYN LARSON
JESSICA ANNE NORBY	3.....	LAROY NORBY (Grandmother)
CAITLIN JEAN POSCH.....	1.....	DEAN & JEANNIE LAMB
AMELIA MARIE PRATT	9.....	TANDY PRATT
MARY-ALICE MARIE PRATT.....	12.....	TANDY PRATT
WESLEY SCHREINER.....	2.....	NETTIE SCHREINER
NICHOLAS JOSEPH SWANSON	2.....	GREG & ALICE SWANSON
DANE TVEDT	10.....	TOMMY & LEAH TVEDT

Please check out our Chapter website's page for 'Our Beloved Children'
(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 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

Why Can't I Let Go

You were always my hero.
I always wanted to be like you.
You were my younger brother,
Still, I always looked up to you.
You were always there for me,
Even when things were at their worst.
You helped me through my hardest trials,
And we always made it through.
Now as I sit here, writing these words,
Remembering you and times gone by, I'm
Trying to say good-bye.
Nineteen years are just too many,
To just let you go,
I can't believe you're gone, you died,
And left me here alone.
Some days I'm fine, some days I'm low,
But most days, I just miss you so.
It was you and me,
But now, what do I do?
Each night I ask why?
Why I'm so angry?
Why I can't cry?
Why I can't let you go?
I know we'll see each other again,
But the years seem so long.
I long for the day I'll see you again.
Waiting for me with open arms.
Brother, I love you and miss you so.
But now I need you most.
This time in my life is oh so hard,
I just can't let you go.
~ Stephen Welch, TCF/St Louis, MO

ALL THE THINGS I MISS

I sometimes think about all the things I miss about my brother.
There are a lot—some painful, some I never would have
believed at the time that I would miss. And I find that what I miss
the most are the things that should have been.
I bought my first car the year he would have turned sixteen. He
should have been here to ask to borrow the keys—not that I would
have given them to him—but he
should have been here to ask.
He should have been a senior this year, getting ready to face a
world with no more summer vacations and deciding what to do
with his life.
All the things that should be:
He should be here when I fall in love to tease me and give his
opinion of the man I choose.
He should be here when I have a child to be godparent and uncle,
friend and confidant.
He should be here to get married and have kids of his own so that I
can be an aunt and a sister-in-law.
He should be here to celebrate when things are good and to
commiserate when things are bad.
My brother was my friend and my foe in a way that only little
brothers can be. And as I sit here and think about my brother, what
I think the most is he should be here.
I love and miss you little brother.
~ Shannon Odessa Stiener, Lowell, IN

DREAMY MEMORIES

Beckoning, dreamy memories
Call softly out to me,
Taking me back through the years
To the way it used to be.
Carefree and happy was our Brad,
The world was his shining toy,
Sunny days and summer nights
Two favorites of his joy.
He floated, drifting with the tide,
Never knowing care or sorrow,
Living each day as it came,
With no thoughts of tomorrow.
I shed a tear for him today,
My heart called out his name.
I longed to hold him in my arms
For a touch that never came.
I closed my eyes to see his face
And hoped to see his smile.
I waited to hear him say to me,
"I'll be back in just a while."
And then my eyes, so filled with fear,
My heart, so filled with pain,
Came back to see he wasn't here—
My wishes were in vain.
Wistfully my mind returns
To the present day again.
I find in pleasant sweet surprise,
His soul still lives within.
Though he may not be here now
In a body we can touch,
His memory will grow each day—
In our hearts that means so much.
So now I'll say the time will come
When we will be together again.
Until that day no good-byes we'll say,
Just "We love you. God bless."
~ Debbie Sadler Brown, TCF/ Nashville, TN

A Wish

I wish upon a rainbow
In every single dream,
And hope with my entire heart
You will be here again.
I wish upon its colors
That together we will be,
For you are my brother
And I want you here with me.
It's the way the color blends
That gets in hopes so high.
I know you didn't mean it
When you left without a good-bye.
We didn't understand your feelings
Or how sad you were inside.
You drank until it killed you
And your friend right by your side.
If only the world could be a rainbow
Maybe they would see,
But even though you're gone
You're forever a part of me.
~ Chasitie Sharp Marion, OH

Will I Get Better

The worst hurt you'll ever have is to have a child taken away
All the pain in your heart will be with you each day
But you will go on because you'll find so many really care
Your good friends and family will always be there.

So many people ask me does it get better in time
I tell them each person is different your own way you must find
You find that as you go on some of your grief will end
But we do know that your heart will never mend.

In time you'll do all the things that you used to do
But you'll feel in your heart it's not the same to you
Do things get better that is up to each one
Some day you will laugh again and even have some fun.

But that does not mean you have forgotten your child
All their memories you keep of their beautiful smile
Some people may hurt you with the stupid things they say
You have to just listen to the ones who love you each day.

So try to keep up your spirit for your day will arrive
And you'll be thankful to all who helped you survive
The people who remember your child as if they were here
Those are the loved ones that you'll always hold dear.

Now you say will I ever get better how long will it take me
When you start to help others then you will see
That you have changed so much since that first day
Now I say to you that you have found your own way.

~ Dee and Jack Heil, TCF/Northeast Philadelphia, PA

MOST PEOPLE WHO SUFFER A LOSS EXPERIENCE ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING:

- * Feel tightness in the throat or heaviness in the chest.
- * Have an empty feeling in their stomach and lose their appetite.
- * Feel guilty at times and angry at other times.
- * Feel restless and look for activity but find it difficult to concentrate.
- * Sense the loved one's presence, as in finding themselves expecting the person to walk in the door at the usual time, hearing their voice, or seeing their face.
- * Wander aimlessly, forget, and don't finish things they have started.
- * Have difficulty sleeping; dream of their loved one.
- * Experience an intense preoccupation with the life of the deceased.
- * Assume mannerisms or traits of their loved one.
- * Feel guilty or angry over things that happened or didn't happen in the relationship with the deceased .
- * Feel their mood change over the slightest things.
- * Cry at unexpected times.

All of these are natural and normal grief responses. It is important to cry and talk with people when you need to do so. By learning about the process of grief and learning also to express our feelings concerning our experience, we are helped to arrive at a healthy readjustment of our lives and a reinvestment of our emotional energy.

~ Irma Escue - Hospice Bereavement Team /Boulder, CO

Who You'd be Today

Sunny days seem to hurt the most
Wear the pain like a heavy coat
I feel you everywhere I go
See your smile, I see your face
I hear you laughing in the rain
Still can't believe your gone
It ain't fair you died to young
Like a story that had just begun
But death tore the pages all away

God knows how I miss you
All the hell that I've been through
Just knowing, no one could take your place
Sometimes I wonder, who you'd be today

Would you see the world
Would you chase your dreams
Settle down with a family
I wonder what would you name your babies

Someday's the sky's so blue
I feel like I can talk to you
And I know it might sound crazy

It ain't fair you died to young
Like a story that had just begun
But death tore the pages all away

God knows how I miss you
All the hell that I've been through
Just knowing, no one could take your place
Sometimes I wonder, who you'd be today

Sunny days seem to hurt the most
I wear the pain like a heavy coat
The only thing that gives me hope

Is I know, I'll see you again someday

Recorded by Kenny Chesney

Disenfranchised Grief

There is a particular type of grief that sadly more and more parents are suffering from today called "disenfranchised grief." Counselors and therapists also refer to it as "stigmatized grief." The children of these parents died from suicide, drug related overdose, and aids. These bereaved parents are often scorned, ostracized and denigrated. Many receive little or no support from family, friends, co-workers and society in general. With unspoken words, the world casts a pall of blame and shame on these individuals with the unspoken implication that if they had been better parents they could have somehow prevented such a tragedy from occurring. Many people never hear their friends or loved ones mention their precious child's name again. They generally do not receive the same level of support that accidental and natural cause deaths do. This exacerbates the grief process. This ever increasing phenomenon has very little literature or research available at this time to aid these parents in their journey through grief. As members of TCF we need to be especially tender with these parents. We can embrace them and welcome them to share the stories about their children. The heartbreaking circumstances under which these children died do not define their lives as a whole. We all loved our children dearly and were the best parents that we knew how to be. If it were otherwise we would not need TCF and the support it gives.

~Janet Reyes, TCF/AAC

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: _____

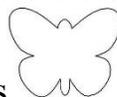
Date: _____

(Signature)

Please return to: The Compassionate Friends of F-M Area, PO 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.

Another Death - How Much Can a Family Take?

After three family members died in a row I thought I knew a lot about multiple losses. I never suspected, even for a second, that life had more to teach me. Last week my former son-in-law, the father of my twin grandchildren, died in a car crash. I can hardly believe he died the same way my daughter died.

When I heard about the fourth death in the family my mind zapped back to the first stage of grief -- shock and disbelief. I was overcome with grief and sobbed for my daughter, father-in-law, brother, former son-in-law, my grandkids, and myself. Then I stopped sobbing. In fact, my mind raced forward to the final stage of grief -- acceptance.

Judith R. Bernstein, PhD, writes about the stages of grief in her book, "When A Bough Breaks." Many researchers believe the stages of grief that Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross identified, she notes, but "all agree that these stages are completely flexible and there is no such thing as orderly progression." I understand her point, indeed, I lived it.

To go from disbelief to acceptance in two days was amazing. How did I do this? I may never fully understand the process, but I think it happened because I have studied grief, have the experience that comes with age, and good coping skills. One coping skill is sticking to a routine as much as possible.

I am trying to get my grandkids to stick to their routine. We had planned to have Thanksgiving dinner with the extended family and the kids wanted to do this. Twenty-three family members gathered around various tables and I saw them "close ranks" to help the kids. But the kids wonder, friends wonder, and we wonder why both of their parents died.

As I have done before, I turned to Rabbi Harold Kushner's book, "When Bad Things Happen to Good People." Nobody knows why four family members died in nine months, but if you believe Rabbi Kushner, bad things happen randomly. "They do not happen for any good reason which would cause us to accept them willingly," he writes. " But we can give them a meaning."

I am giving new meaning to life by caring for my grandkids. This care includes healthy meals, clean laundry, shopping service, taxi service, attending concerts and sports events, and listening. When my grandkids share their thoughts with me I listen as though their lives depend on each word.

I am giving new meaning to life by writing about my losses. During the last week I discovered something important about myself. One of the reasons writers do what they do is to gain understanding. I thought I was writing about multiple losses to recover. Now I realize I am writing about multiple losses to survive.

If you have suffered multiple losses I hope you give new meaning to your life. You may find meaning in caring for children, grandkids, or a remaining parent. Donating to a religious community or a health organization may also give your life new meaning. I have been humbled by the kindness of family, friends, and strangers. Their kindness has brought new meaning to my life.

This moment in time -- my grandkids' high school and college years -- will define my life. I will care for my grandkids until I take my last breath. Despite the pain of multiple losses I feel blessed. Multiple losses have taught me that every moment is precious and I will not waste a single one.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
OF THE F-M AREA
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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 Bailey701-491-0364	Newsletter Editor	Nancy Teeuwen..... 701-730-0805
Co-Chapter Leader	Lori Wiger.....701-781-3931	Newsletter Database	Sheryl Cvijanovich 701-540-3287
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Treasurer	Chuck Klinkhammer701-298-2929	Initial Contact	Sheryl Cvijanovich
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 15th 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.