



The Compassionate Friends

Fargo/Moorhead Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

TCF's National Office
48660 Pontiac Trl #930808
Wixom MI 48393-7736
Toll-free (877) 969-0010
www.compassionatefriends.org

F-M Area Chapter
PO Box 10686
Fargo ND 58106
www.tcffargomoorhead.org
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Chapter Leaders - Paul & Kara Bailey 701-491-0364

Newsletter Editor - Nancy Teeuwen 701-730-0805

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

Meetings for 2023 will be quarterly instead of monthly.

Next Meeting & Topic

Due to the March meeting was cancelled due to weather, we are having a meeting in April.
April 13, 2023 - Bring a Memento

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

Dates to Remember

Mom's meeting - 7 pm on April 27th @ Denny's
46th TCF National Conference July 7-9, 2023 in Denver, Colorado

LOVE GIFTS

Brandon & Roberta Winge in memory of their son, Brandon Huseth
Lisa Beach & Jeff Amundson in memory of their son, Nathan Beach
Michael & Stacy Hron in memory of their son, Chase Hron
Patti Pratt in memory of her daughter, Nancy Pratt Coash
Butterflies:
Michael & Stacy Hron for Chase Hron
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.

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 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 27th. For more information, please contact Sheryl at 701-540-3287 or visit our website at www.tcffargomoorhead.org.

Words from Heaven

We weren't ready yet to say goodbye, and if only we could hold each other. Just for one more hour I would wipe all the tears from your eyes.

If I could say one thing to you it would be, Mom, Dad, Brother, please don't worry about me. I'm in a place so great I can't begin to explain. A place where I wish everyone could come and see.

Momma, when you think of me don't cry, cause you would smile so big if you saw me now. I have asked the Lord to take your pain away and give you all peace somehow.

The hardest thing was leaving that day in the room, but I was needed by God, even more than you. Know always that I will be here in this beautiful heaven, waiting on the day when I will see you.

~ John Pope

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

Not in Color

I remember a Hollywood movie called *Pleasantville*. I don't recall many details about plot or premise, but one of the techniques used in the movie was the juxtaposition of color with black and white in the same scene. People could be in color or B&W; the backdrop could be in both, too.

I know I'm definitely in black and white. No color. The grass is green, the sky is blue, the flowers may be yellow or red or purple or whatever but I am in black and white. Trying to run my errands, accomplish my tasks, walk my dog. But doing so in black and white. Muted. Grey. Definitely not in color.

I live a world where people are in "Technicolor." I can see that they are. I can remember when I was. I wish I were still one of them.

But there's no tint or paint or photo app to make me "in color" again. I suspect if and when color returns, it will be subdued. Pastel. I doubt it will ever be vivid again.

At this stage, I'd take pastel.

~ Peggi Johnson, TCF/Arlington, VA

You Are Braver

You are braver than you will ever know. You may not realize it but you are valiant, magnificent and strong in spirit. You are courageous. You have endured and somehow survived the most horrific injury that anyone in this life can suffer. Your child has died. But somehow you have miraculously found the strength to still breathe in and out. And after a while, you managed to put one foot in front of the other and have tried to the best of your ability to adapt to a strange new world; one that exists without your precious child in it. A world you must step out in to and face every day without any outward signs that you are altered for life. If you were to wear your most grievous wound displayed on the outside of your body like permanent stigmata, would people recoil from the sight or would they perhaps offer compassion and understanding for your piteous condition? That's why you are so brave. Although no one else can see how horribly injured you are, you are still doing your best to function and participate in this life. I want to challenge you to be brave just once more. If you have not been to a Compassionate Friends meeting, please muster all of the strength and courage you have and walk in the door for that first meeting. We'll help you from there. We care. We understand. We too have the same wounds as you. We need not walk alone.

~ Janet G. Reyes, TCF/Alamo Area Chapter, TX

BUTTERFLIES AND RAINBOWS

You came to me on a butterfly's wing so very long ago.
What God had in His plan for us how could we possibly know.
I watched you laugh and play and dream as you grew into a man.
How beautiful you were to me as you chased rainbows in the sand.
It's incomprehensible to think that you have gone away.
And you won't be coming back again not even for a day.
Two years have come and gone since then and the sun still rises in the sky.
Butterflies and rainbows still exist and I have stopped asking why.
Your light shines brightly in my heart and always will my dear.
You are with the rainbows there and I'm with the butterflies here.
~ Robyn Bell, TCF/Valley Forge, PA

CAN'T YOU HEAR OUR HEARTS BREAKING?

You Say:

- You look great - Time will heal
- He is in a better place - You have so many good memories
- You are so strong

We think you lie.

How can we look great when we get no sleep, cry easily almost constantly?

Time is not healing - it may dull but never heal.

He is in a better place? - Where is the best place for any mother's child? Of course! In the mother's arms. Eventually we will all go to that better place but with all my heart I pray you go before your child.

It was God's will? - No, it was not God's will! It was David's will, David's anguish, David's despair. Oh, Davey! Why didn't you call me or just come home?

You have so many good memories. - We can't talk to a memory, hug a memory, or kiss a memory. A memory is just that - a memory.

You are so strong! - How dare you! Our insides crawl. Our minds explode, our memories haunt and you say "You are so strong." Listen closely, friends -

CAN'T YOU HEAR OUR HEARTS BREAKING?

~ Jeanne M. Barker, TCF/Chapter unknown
Mother of David who died from suicide in 1988

BILL OF RIGHTS FOR THE BEREAVED

1. Do not make me do anything I do not wish to do.
2. Let me cry.
3. Allow me to talk about the deceased.
4. Do not force me to make quick decisions.
5. Let me act strange sometimes.
6. Let me see that you are grieving too.
7. When I am angry, do not discount it.
8. Do not speak to me in platitudes.
9. Listen to me, **please**.
10. Forgive me my trespasses, my rudeness

THE EXISTENCE OF LOVE

I had thought that your death was a waste and a destruction, a pain of grief hardly to be endured. I am only beginning to learn that your life was a gift and a growing and a loving left with me. The desperation of death destroyed the existence of love, but the fact of death cannot destroy what has been given. I am learning to look at your life again instead of your death and your departing.

~ Marjorie Pizer

The Pit of Grief

The day my child died, I fell into the pit of grief. My friends watched me struggle through daily life, waiting for the person I once was to arise from the pit, not realizing she is gone forever. The pit is full of darkness, heartache and despair; it paralyzes your thoughts, movements and ability to think. The pit leaves you forever changed, unable to surface the person you once were.

Some of my pre-grief friends gather around the top of the pit, waiting for the old me to appear before their eyes, not understanding what's taking me so long to emerge. After all...in their eyes, I've been in the pit for quite some time. Yet, in my eyes, it seems as if I fell in only yesterday.

Not all of my pre-grief friends gathered at the top of the pit. Some are helping me with the climb out of the darkness. They climb side by side with me from time to time, but mostly, they climb ahead of me, waiting patiently at each plateau. Even with these friends I sometimes wonder if they are also waiting for the pre-grief me to magically appear before their eyes. Then there are the casual acquaintances (or maybe even family members), you know, the ones who say, "Hi, how are you?" when they really don't care or really don't want to know. These people are the people who sighed in relief that it was my child who died and not theirs. You know, the "better you, not me" attitude.

My post-grief friends are the ones who climb with me, side by side, inch by inch, out of the pit of grief. They have no way of comparing the pit climber to the pre-grief person I once was. You see, they started at the bottom of the pit with me. They are able to reassure me when I need strength. They have no expectations, no memories, and no recollections of how I "should" be. They want me to heal, to smile more often and find joy in life. But they've also accepted the person I've become: the "Person" who is emerging from the pit.

~ Cindy Early, TCF/Seattle-King County, WA

"A SIGN OF HOPE"

Since the times, the butterfly has symbolized renewed life. The caterpillar signifies life here on earth; the cocoon, death; and the butterfly, the emergence of the dead into a new, beautiful and freer existence. Frequently, the butterfly is seen with the word "Nika," which means victory. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross movingly tells of seeing butterflies drawn all over the walls of the children's dormitories in the World War II concentration camps. Since Elisabeth believes in the innate intuitiveness of children, she concludes that these children knew their fate and were leaving us a message. Many members of The Compassionate Friends embrace the butterfly as a symbol--a sign of hope to them that their children are living in another dimension with greater beauty and freedom-- a comforting thought to many.

The Learning of Love

Love lives - continually gives ~ LOVE NEVER FAILS. Love never leaves & never deceives. Love always remembers, Love sometimes grieves. Love establishes, Love includes, Love understands, Love honors, Love forgives, Love waits...

There are secret things with Love - mysteries, moments, memories. The secret things belong to One higher, sovereign, & wiser. But the things that inspire LOVE & the things that are revealed about LOVE; Belong to us - to our sons & daughters, to our siblings & grandparents, family & friends. ~THE THINGS REVEALED ABOUT LOVE BELONG TO US~ That we may observe, honor, & remember ALWAYS & FOREVER

~ Pamela Hagens



OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED BIRTHDAYS

CHILD		PARENTS
JESSICA MARIE BALSTER.....	34.....	CARRIE BALSTER
NATHAN KEITH BEACH.....	32.....	LISA BEACH
RENEE ANN BERNIER.....	56.....	KENNETH & PATRICIA BERNIER
ANDREW HOWARD BRAUN	34.....	CRAIG & DEANNA BRAUN
ALLISON DEUTSCHER.....	47.....	LYNN & DONNA MICKELSON
KATIE JEAN JOHNSON	43.....	STAN & PAM JOHNSON
CLEO CAROL JORGENSEN.....	67.....	FRAN LEINGANG
LANNIE LEE KORNELIUS.....	63.....	LEROY & DONNA KORNELIUS
MARY-ALICE MARIE PRATT	15.....	TANDY PRATT
AMELIA MARIE PRATT	12.....	TANDY PRATT
KYLE KEVIN QUITTSCHREIBER	31.....	KEVIN & KATHY QUITTSCHREIBER
CARSON DENNIS RONEY.....	26.....	PAUL & RENAE RONEY
MASON ROTH	23.....	PATRICK & BARBARA ROTH
JENNIFER SCHUMACHER	44.....	ANTHONY & LORETTA SCHUMACHER
DANIEL SCHUTZ.....	59.....	JERRY & MARY SCHUTZ
PATRICK SPENST	30.....	ALVINA SPENST
KRISTOPHER WEISS.....	45.....	HERMAN & RENNAE WEISS
HEATHER WREN.....	47.....	DEB WAYMAN

ANNIVERSARIES

CHILD		PARENTS
ANNE CLEMENSON.....	7.....	MARVIN & DOROTHY CLEMENSON
STEVEN DUANE COOK.....	12.....	SHARON COOK
AARON JOSEPH DIEDRICH	3.....	RICHARD & PATTI DIEDRICH
JOEY GAUSLOW	1.....	MARK GAUSLOW
BRODIE GILBERTSON.....	1.....	VANESSA GILBERTSON
MATTHEW TYLER HARRIS.....	7.....	WILLIAM & RACHAEL BODIN
VICKY HOLWEGER	6.....	ROSEMARY FESKE
KYLE KASSMAN.....	9.....	TOM & NANCY KASSMAN
ALEXANDER BRENT KLINKHAMMER.....	11.....	CHARLES & SANDY KLINKHAMMER
CARMEN LALUM.....	8.....	RUSSELL & SHARON LALUM
AMY CHRISTINE LARSON.....	24.....	DALE & MARILYN LARSON (Grandparents)
ERIC LARSON.....	24.....	DALE & MARILYN LARSON (Grandparents)
GAIL DIANE LARSON	24.....	DALE & MARILYN LARSON
JOSEPH CHRIS LARSON.....	24.....	DALE & MARILYN LARSON
AHNA MEHUS	1.....	WENDY & JAMES MEHUS
CAITLIN JEAN POSCH.....	4.....	DEAN & JEANNIE LAMB
AMELIA MARIE PRATT	12.....	TANDY PRATT
MARY-ALICE MARIE PRATT	15.....	TANDY PRATT
DANE TVEDT	13.....	TOMMY & LEAH TVEDT

Please check out our Chapter website's page for 'Our Beloved Children'
(tcffargomoorhead.org/?page_id=577). 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

EVERYTHING IS A FIRST

Everything is a first. Many moments must be faced. There are the first holidays, the first anniversary, and the first birthday. Thoughts about my brother Dave will always be with us. It's never more than a sentence away from me...NEVER.

The ordinary cannot be ordinary. A certain phrase, a look or an article of clothing can trigger thoughts and emotions. The joy of my senior year in college was interrupted by sad reality.

Forget? How is this possible? The days and months following my brother's death were filled with grief. Flowers and food were everywhere—love and concern were translated into strength that kept me moving one step at a time. People don't know what to say—nothing is NORMAL.

Tragedy has brought a seriousness to my life. Thoughts about the meaning of life and the unimportance of a lot of things I have previously found important are circulating in my mind. I think about my own funeral now. When will it be: Tomorrow, next week, next year, before or after my parents? There are good days and bad days. I am learning to deal with all of this.

People ask me, "How are you?" Here is my answer. "I am mad. Dave died at the age of 17. I'm angry that my parents have to go through this. I'm confused about my role in the family. I am jealous of other families. I am sad. I'm fearful about the future. I am hopeful things will get better. I am courageous. I think about my brother every day. I will be STRONG."

~ Lisa Ann Jones, TCF/Avoca, PA

A PART OF ME

YOU were not just my brother, but YOU were my friend.
YOU were supposed to be here always, or till the world came to an end.

I know that we argued and seemed to disagree, but

I could always count on you to be there for me.

YOU may be gone from this world I see, but you will always be a part of me.

~ Donna Montville, TCF/Gardner, MA

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know:

You need to rip up sheets to make a kite that flies.

That you cannot build a fort without a tree with Y's.

That matchbox cars run better when they are full of paint.

Or, if you hold your breath too long, you probably will faint.

Did you know:

A baseball bat makes a terrific gun.

And, yes, an egg can really fry when left out in the sun.

And cardboard boxes seem to make the most terrific trains.

And you can swim in puddles after gentle summer rains.

Did you know:

That baseball cards clipped upon your bike will make the awful clicking noise that parents never like.

A crab trap can be used to catch the most exquisite birds.

And pig Latin serves to provide a private world of words.

And did you know my brothers?

They died a few years back.

They taught me all these marvelous things

That sometimes sisters lack.

~ Kathi Guthrie, TCF/Cape May County, NJ

When You Stop Asking Why

All these emotions, change by the moment.

Stuck in time, inside my mind.

Shifting tides changed my life.

Tore me apart, and broke my heart.

But when you stop asking why,

Then you can start to say goodbye.

The pain will only hold you there,

And never get you anywhere.

And so I must go on with life.

That I cannot sacrifice.

And I will hold you in my heart,

As I make this brand-new start.

Precious memories,

Can I take them with me?

Oh, they hurt, oh so deeply.

But they were true, and they were mine.

And I can't erase time.

Can't change the past to ease the pain,

And so they must always remain.

And when you stop asking why,

Then you can start to say goodbye.

The pain will only hold you there,

And never get you anywhere.

And so I must go on with life.

That I cannot sacrifice.

And I will hold you in my heart,

As I make this brand-new start.

Curtains open, I step forward.

Take a breath, to see what's left.

Arms wide open, No more trembling.

Brace my heart, for this new start.

And when you stop asking why,

Then you can start to say goodbye.

The pain will only hold you there,

And never get you anywhere.

And so I must go on with life.

That I cannot sacrifice.

And I will hold you in my heart,

As I make this brand-new start.

~ Tonya Thompson

We Need Not Walk Alone Winter 2011/Spring 2012

I Felt I Was Healed

I felt I was healed, felt I was ok

Ten years had passed to make me this way.

Worked with others who were feeling the pain

So tears and the heartache would soon go away.

I make the newsletter and work on the slides

That we watch as we remember the better times.

But life has a way of throwing a curve

That rocks to the core and shatters the nerves.

My brother has died and though he was ill

A hole has re-opened once again I must fill.

I know all the steps that take me through grief

Of the traps to watch out for, oh what a relief.

Though same it is different, the hurt is still there

I miss my little brother and wish he were here.

~ Stew Levett, TCF/Pikes Peak Chapter

Helping Yourself by Helping Others

“Is it ever over?” I asked myself. It’s been twenty-two years since “forever” began. “Forever” being when six people came into my home to inform my husband and me that our seventeen-year-old son, Jimmy was dead; killed in an alcohol-related car crash. Just like that! In the blink of an eye, our lives were changed forever. But you know about that, don’t you; for you lost a child to death also. Know that my heart grieves for you too.

Being forced into a journey never anticipated, I realized I needed the support and encouragement of people who could understand the depth of my pain. I also needed to borrow their courage, for I didn’t want to, nor did I think I could live the rest of my life without Jimmy. After six months, my husband, my priest, and I formed a self-help group for grieving parents. It grew and I evolved with it. In order to be taken serious by professionals in the helping fields, I went to undergrad and grad school. My degrees are in human services and counseling. My reputation as a wounded healer grew, and I was asked to run a weekly support group for The Bereavement Center of Westchester. Their dedication to grieving people offers a warm light for the darkness of the soul.

Their programs benefit children and adults who have experienced grief. They have a school outreach program and offer individual bereavement counseling as well. My painful journey also affected my spiritual dimension. I questioned all my beliefs about God and the afterlife. I felt abandoned by God; I was angry and felt like I was broken in pieces. Looking back, I can see how I wasn’t abandoned. In fact, to help me, God sent many people who filtered in and out of my life. Three years after Jimmy died, I hit bottom both spiritually and emotionally. I think for the whole first year I was numb and the second year I began to “defrost” and get in touch with my anger.

Luckily, or as I think of it now, God placed a gift in front of me in the form of a wonderful Capuchin priest and counselor. Father Ray allowed and encouraged me to express all my negative thoughts and feelings about God, life, and anyone who could not understand the depth of my pain and the profound grieving process I was experiencing. There were so many people who couldn’t understand the length of time it takes a grieving parent to go through the process.

From my personal and professional experience, I would say it takes anywhere from seven to nine years before a bereaved parent can say, “OK, I know how to handle the bad days now, and I can live with this pain.” This is not to say that a grieving parent is in constant emotional pain for all those years. A healthy response to grief will initially include intense pain, which will eventually diminish over the years. It will never go away completely; I promise. Birthdays, holidays, and the yearly anniversary of the death will always be a reminder of the loss and will rekindle sadness and a sense of longing for what could have been; what should have been. One of the things that blest me was for me to help others. Somehow, my emptiness helped to fill up their emptiness and their emptiness filled up mine.

That wonderful priest and I developed a spiritual retreat for bereaved parents. I’ve heard it said that grief shared is grief diminished, and the weekend spent at the retreat helped do that for many people over the years. During the retreats, we would

do “The Angels Walk.” It was a very healing visualization and meditation on what happened at the moment of death and how the angels carried the child into the arms of a loving God. The evaluations received afterward spoke to how consoling and healing that experience was.

Looking back, I can see I reached out in many different ways to help myself. If I read about a child who died, I wrote a note to the parents. I shared with them that there were many other bereaved parents who knew what they were going through and would keep them in their thoughts and prayers.

I also made myself available to speak with anyone who needed encouragement and support. I even wrote a book called, *Healing Broken Hearts: A Book of Signs*. It is a collection of letters from bereaved parents who received signs from God and/or their deceased children, as well as chapters written by me and other professionals in the field. Writing was very cathartic for me.

If I could leave you with a thought, it would be this: you will help yourself by helping others. That was the lesson I learned from my painful journey. We are all here to help one another; try it.

~ Anne Byrnes

After

After all the pain
We still can feel the sun.
Not without pain though,
Not without recrimination.

After all the sorrow
The sun still shines.
Not without sorrow though,
Not without repercussions.

For nothing is the same
And everything is different

After

My eyes open each morning

But not to you.

Sun shines,
Rain falls,

The earth revolves,
The moon shines full each month.

But you’re still gone.

After.

The years go by,

On and on,

Milestones pass, but I can’t share with you,

After.

When death happens

There is an illusion of time stopping

Just an illusion

For the living go on

After all.

~ Melissa Anne Schroeter, TCF/Rockland County, NY
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Don't block a BAD MOMENT. When you feel a BAD MOMENT coming, just let it come. Accept it for what it is -- a BAD MOMENT. Deal with it and LET IT PASS.

~ Darcie Sims, Footsteps Through the Valley



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. A submitted permission slip is valid for four years from the month received.

Your Name: _____

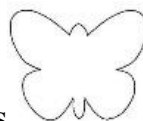
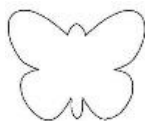
Child's Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Birth Date: _____ Death Date: _____

Date: _____

(Signature)

Please return to: The Compassionate Friends of F-M Area, PO Box 10686, Fargo ND 58106
(If you have already submitted a permission slip within the past 4 years, 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 four colors (yellow, pink, red 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.

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 immeasurable helped us.

~ Pat Retzloff, TCF/Oshkosh, WI

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

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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
Newsletter Database	Sheryl Cvijanovich701-540-3287	Secretary	Sheryl Cvijanovich..... 701-540-3287
Treasurer	Chuck Klinkhammer.....701-298-2929	Website Administrator	Sheryl Cvijanovich..... 701-540-3287
Initial Contact	Sheryl Cvijanovich	Mailing Committee	Contact Us to Join

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 for a period of 18 months.