



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

September 12th
October 10th

Dates to Remember

Mom's meeting - 7 pm on September 26th @ Fry'n Pan
Annual Worldwide Candlelighting - December 8, 2019 7 p.m. local time

LOVE GIFTS

Richard & Clare Elles in memory of their daughter, Tari Elles Heller
Keith & Sandra Kiser in memory of their son, Cordell Kiser
Brenda Kluth in memory of her son, Brandon Kluth
June Hagemeister in memory of her daughter, Donna Pfeifer
Tom & Linda Henderson in memory of their son, Marc T Henderson
Peggy Bullis in memory of her daughter, Laurie Ann Sather
Jim & Jody Kutter in memory of their daughter, Michelle Kutter
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 7:00 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 September 26th. For more information please contact Sheryl at 701-540-3287 or sherylev13@msn.com.

Volunteers....

They don't necessarily have the time;
They just have the heart.
Thank you!

Thank you to everyone who helped out at the Walk to Remember. Without all of the volunteers who help set up and give a helping hand, we would not be able to have such a successful walk.

Thank you also to the businesses and individuals who donated items for our Silent Auction and Door Prizes.

Recognizing Unsuccessful Grief

All of us who have searched for healing following the death of a child, grandchild or sibling know the roller coaster of emotions that are part of our grief process. We know there is no "quick fix" that magically lets us get on with our lives, and grief can be physically exhausting. We cannot go back to what was! And time, in and of itself, does not heal.

Although there is no set schedule for grieving and there will always be a hole in our hearts, many of us in TCF have found that within a year to 18 months, we are beginning to make some progress—granted the progress may seem minute to the bereaved. Grief therapists have learned that if death is from prolonged or serious illness there is grieving during the illness. The second year of grief may be as intense or even more emotionally devastating than the first year. However, no two people have the same grief timetable. If we feel that we are not making progress, is there some way to determine whether or not we may need professional help or evaluation or at least reassurance? The following considerations may help you decide:

- Extended withdrawal from the world around you and prolonged inability to accomplish normal tasks or participate in everyday activities.
- Self-imposed isolation where you do not want to be around anyone—friends, family or others.
- Becoming too scared to be alone. You must have someone around all the time.
- Anger or guilt that (a) is out of proportion, (b) does not fit the circumstances, (c) extends for a long time without retreating, or (d) may be directed toward or imposed on others close to you.
- Depression that is exaggerated, unremitting, prolonged and occurs in original intensity years after the loss.
- Anxiety that interferes with going away from home.
- Dependence on alcohol or medications to cope or forget.
- An emotional "logjam" resulting from an accumulation of losses over the years.
- Contemplating or attempting suicide to "get away from it all" or to join your child.
- Self-caused illness or physical health problems that do not go away, or the inability to separate the real from the imagined. This kind of illness is different from the "ailments" that most of us experience during the anniversary of our loved one's death.
- Placing your child on a pedestal and forgetting his/her imperfections; or being unable to redirect your activities or to shift your focus, so that you can honor your child in a positive way.
- An absence of grief or a numbness, anxiety, sadness, or any kind of overall attitude that negatively affects others around you, including over-protectiveness of your loved ones.
- Converting all emotions into one or two favorite or "safe" emotions - like anger, boredom, or despair - which become all you are feeling, taking the place of grief.
- When talking does not seem to help or there is no one able to listen.

~ Libbyrose D. Clark, TCF/Deep East Texas
From information provided by Vera Baron, LPC,
and Ray Johnson, CSW

There is no 'answer' to the riddle of grief. But if one person, alone, cannot hold up under the crushing weight of loss, the heaviest burden can be lifted, or at least lightened, when it is shared." ~ Johann Christoph Arnold

Heeding the Call of Life

There is tremendous wisdom that is accumulated in one's encounter with grief, and it needs to be shared. Healing takes place when we turn our pain into a positive experience and we realize that helping others is the key to helping ourselves. When that happens, our problems don't look so big. We expand on newfound strengths and we discover that as one door closed, many others have opened. The road to recovery from grief, therefore, is to take time to do things which will enable us to give new meaning to our lives.

That's when our journey through grief becomes a journey of discovering ourselves, our potential, and our resources in the encounter with life. That's when we become BETTER people, rather than BITTER people. In grief, no one can take away our pain because no one can take away our love.

That call to life is to learn to love . . . again.

~ Father Arnaldo Pangrazzi, TCF/Muskegon, MI

Forgive Unto Forever

Grieving is a fierce and overwhelming expression of love thrust upon us by a deep and hurtful loss. Yet, grieving is frequently such an entanglement of feelings that we often fail to recognize that ultimately forgiveness must be an integral part of our grief and our healing. For what is love, if forgiveness is silent within us? We learn to forgive our children for dying, ourselves for not preventing it. We begin to forgive our God or the fate we see ruling our universe. We start to forgive relatives and friends for abandoning us in their own bewilderment over the onslaught of emotions they sense in our words and behavior.

I believe we must be open to the balm of forgiveness. Through its expression in our lives, be it through thought, word, or deed, we find small ways to seek life once more. Deep within us, forgiveness is capable of treading the wasteland of our souls to help us feel again the love that has not died.

It is the beginning of release from the dominance of pain, not from the continual hurt of missing those we have lost, but from lacking the fullness of the love we shared with our child. That love lives with strength inside ourselves and yet our beings are so entrapped in a whirling vortex of anger, despair, frustration, abandonment, and depression that we often feel it only lightly.

Let us all heed the quiet message heard so softly in that maelstrom of the spirit. Forgive, forgive, and forgive unto forever. Let love enfold our anguish, helping us to learn to grow and strive beyond this hour to a rich tomorrow.

~ Don Hackett, TCF/Hingham, MA

It's only when we truly know and understand that we have a limited time on earth - and that we have no way of knowing when our time is up, we will then begin to live each day to the fullest, as if it was the only one we had.

~ Elisabeth Kuebler-Ross

Dancing in the Rain

The words "it is what it is" continually run through my mind. Our worlds don't often turn out as we imagined. My handsome prince didn't come and rescue me as a teen. He didn't whisk me off to a beautiful castle where he treated me like a queen. We didn't have four beautiful, healthy children or live happily ever after.

In fact, my life journey hasn't been at all like I had imagined, with the exception of one beautiful daughter, Kyra.

I was only six months into my grief when I attended The Compassionate Friends national conference in Boston. I remember grudgingly agreeing to attend a workshop titled "Another Day, Another Opportunity." I thought, I don't want to go to that one, because at the time, another day was just another opportunity to feel great pain and anguish. But something was pulling me to attend the session, so I went and was so grateful that I did, because it has helped me find a new goal. One of the most memorable things the workshop presenter said was that until we are able to let go of our child's physical death, we cannot embrace their spiritual essence. It has been four years since Kyra's death, and I can now say that the farther I walk from her death, the closer I feel to her. The pain is still evident, but to feel her presence again is wonderful. I first felt it on the beach at Cape Elizabeth in Maine. I felt her spirit cry out, "I am free! Come and dance with me."

Kyra loved to dance. The country music song, "I Hope You Dance" was released before she died. I told Kyra that I dedicated it to her and gave her a plaque with the words inscribed on wood. The words in the song speak of not giving up when life becomes hard. I thought then that I had gotten it for her, when actually I think it was meant for me and other bereaved parents.

The word, dance seems to be etched into my mind. Recently, a friend shared a quote she had come across: "Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass...It's about learning to dance in the rain."

Wow - what awesome words! The image of a storm is a good analogy in understanding our grief. Storms can come from nowhere, like a tornado, seemingly destroying everything in their path and leaving our lives in complete and utter shambles. The darkness and dreariness stay while lighting continues to flash, stabbing our hearts with pain. Thunder clamors constantly, reminding us that our children are gone. We can walk in fog for what seems like years as sleet and frigid cold freeze us in our tracks. The wind howls, imitating our screams and wailings. The rain seems to be endless. Others, who haven't lost their children, who are living in sunshine, cry out to us, "Come in out of the rain." They don't understand that often we're just not able to move. The storm has become our world, for however long we need or choose to live there. My own experience of grief tells me that our lives will always be stormier than they were before the hurricanes came and took what was most precious to us. But, we do have a choice. We can stay hunkered down under the false protection of denial. We can lock ourselves up in a protective shell and never come out. Or, we can learn to dance in the rain. However, each bereaved parent must decide what feels best to them.

I find myself thinking, It's hard to crawl, walk, or breathe without her and she wants me to dance? She must have forgotten all those times I tried and she said, Mom, you can't dance!" Then I realize that she's not referring to my ability when I hear, Dance, mom, dance! Dance in the rain. Dance because you can't change what has already been done. You have the choice to sit it out or dance. Listen for the music, keep your eyes wide open, go forward, follow the music and dance. Follow me. I am not behind you; I am in front of you. I am free and I am dancing.

She taught me to hear the music and her song continues on. Without it, I couldn't dance.

I believe if we allow our children to lead us to dance in the rain that they will eventually dance use out of the serve storms of pain and into the sunshine of peace.

~ Julie Short, TCF/Southern Illinois "in loving memory of Kyra"

COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Coming together as a unique family

Ot reach to others whose pain we share

Moving toward healing

Parents who have lost our children

Accepting the unfathomable pain

Searching for the way to recover

Initiating a new life

Our love forever

Never the same

Always remembering

Together we grow

Enlightened, different, stronger - we move onward as

COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

~ Phyllis A Sereno, TCF/Bridgeport, CT

A Day

A laugh a day keeps the heart pumping. A tear a day keeps the mind clear. A smile a day gives joy to others. A hug a day gives the hopeless hope. A thought a day brings loved ones near. A memory a day brings you closer to me. Laughs, tears, smiles, hugs stitched with thoughts and memories. They're all in my days without you.

~ Pam Burden, TCF/Augusta, GA

Secondary Losses

Secondary losses exacerbate the pain when our children die, leave us adrift, struggling to stay sane.

Secondary losses - the world, as a safe place, where they would thrive, we'd watch them grow, now fearful, desolate.

Secondary losses - a friend (or friends) shut off, can't look at death this closely - the fear is tempest tossed.

Secondary losses - the ability to cope with anything and everything in a world deprived of hope.

Secondary losses - the good things that we held have lost all their importance when misery shrouds our cells.

Secondary losses - our laughter, free from care. The times we see its reason, delightful, now so rare.

Secondary losses - the ability to deny that terrible things do happen - invulnerability, a lie

Secondary losses - the self confidence we knew. Our world view so shattered, can any part be true?

Secondary losses - the lovely lives we had. The sunshine that could fill our days, when rarely we were sad.

Secondary losses may, transformed in time come back. But our children aren't returning. Nothing, no one, can change that.

~ Genesee Gentry - "Stars In The Deepest Night After the Death of a Child"

THOUGHTS ON SUICIDE CONCERNING GUILT

Many survivors feel guilt, blame, anger, shame and sometimes relief. It is important to realize that although you can do a good deal to help the person who is not entirely certain he wants to seek death, no one can prevent someone else from killing himself if he has firmly decided to do so. You may have been able to prevent the preventable; don't berate yourself for failure to prevent the unpreventable.

None of us in any of our relationships with anybody, could bear the sort of scrutiny that the survivor-victims turn on their relationships. We have all done and said things that are regrettable, especially with the pernicious wisdom of hindsight, once someone had died. But we have not killed anyone by so doing. We must forgive ourselves for having had a normal human relationship and look also at the constructive and creative aspects of it.

From "The Facts of Death" by Michael A Simpson

BROKEN DREAMS

As children bring their broken toys with tears for us to mend,
I brought my broken dreams to God because He was my
Friend.

But then instead of leaving Him in peace to work alone,
I hung around and tried to help with ways that were my own.
As last I snatched them back and cried, "How can you be so
slow?"
"My child," He said, "What could I do? You never did let
go."

- Author Unknown

Promises of Rainbows

I promise not to offer
Rainbows after storms
Or silver linings beyond the clouds,
But if you have tears of sorrow,
I will share them.
If you have words of anger,
I will hear them.
If you have moments of confusion,
I will help you through them.

Perhaps
Your tears of sorrow today
Will water the seeds
Of tomorrow's garden
Of spiritual growth, of worthy priorities,
Of loving relationships and genuine
Understanding and compassion.

My sad friend, your weeping is not fruitless.

~ Nancy Williams, TCF/Marlboro, NJ

FOR FATHERS

"I am glad I wasn't too proud, too macho, too blind, to go to the TCF meetings. I still have that hole in my guts, my eyes still fill at odd times, but I know that I am not crazy, I know that I am not alone. I know that others have gone through the same things and for some dumb reason, that helps! Fellow Dads, what is your excuse for not coming to a TCF meeting?"

- Tom Crouthamel, TCF/Sarasota, FL

The Roller Coaster

As a child I enjoyed the thrill of the roller coaster: gliding up the giant track, reaching the top with a momentary anticipation and the thrill of the quick dropping roll to the bottom of the track. The deep turns, first to the right and then to the left were designed to heighten the anticipation of the next climb and drop. In my childhood mind, these curves, climbs and drops were an isolated experience, temporary and fun. The ride would end.

A few months after my son's death, I dreamed of the roller coaster. But this time it wasn't fun. It was a nightmare of fear, anxiety and pain; I was so paralyzed that I couldn't breathe. That dream was the simple symbolism of life since my son died. Now I ride a different sort of roller coaster. The climb to the top is a slow, difficult rise to normalcy. The rapid descent to the bottom is yet another terrible setback. I hang onto the bar of sanity on the curves, first one way, then another. I really want to stop this ride, but it is forever. This ride won't end.

Today I recalled that roller coaster dream, in all its vivid detail, and I compare it to the roller coaster that is my life now. Are the highs lower and the lows higher? Are the curves softening? Yes, I believe they are. It's been two years and two months since Todd died. I still weep. Tiny tears still fall unexpectedly. I still have anxiety. I still feel as if the earth has dropped from under me. I still miss talking with my son. I miss seeing him. I ache for that special hug that only my child can give. Yes, I miss my only child very much. My heart has been shattered, my definition of myself has been altered and my loneliness is incomprehensible. But something has changed on the roller coaster of this life.

That something is, of course, me. I work through my grief in many, many ways. I have consciously shifted the paradigms of my life. I have learned to evaluate people from a different perspective. I have become so sensitive to the pain of other parents that I feel it as if it were my own. I have stopped anticipating how I will handle stressful events, anniversaries, birthdays, holidays. I have learned to live without being a part of my grandchildren's lives. I have learned to keep negative energy and negative people at a far distance. I have learned that a routine provides necessary structure. I have learned to live in the moment, to take joy in simple things, to talk openly about my child's life and to acknowledge the things I cannot change.

As time moves forward, I will continue to accept what is given and give what I can. I know the roller coaster will level out eventually. For as long as I live, I will keep my child with me, in my heart. That's all I can do as I ride this changing roller coaster that is now my life.

Written in memory of my son, Todd Mennen

~ Annette Mennen Baldwin, TCF/ Katy, TX

OPENNESS

I cannot survive my grief with a closed mind, a closed heart, or a closed fist. I must open my ears, my thoughts, my feelings of all kinds, and speak and listen to sharing and caring compassionate friends and my arms to comfort and HUG the grieving and newly bereaved. For it is not possible to heal and help yourself to survive the loss of a child if you cannot receive ... For a clenched fist is not able to give or receive.

~ Ed Kuzela, TCF/Atlanta, GA

SIBLING PAGE

The Aftermath of Suicide

(A Sibling's Viewpoint)

I had never experienced the death of a close loved one before my brother died. When David died, my world came crashing down around me, shattering me into a million pieces. My brother and I were close, but I had no suspicion that he was contemplating suicide and had been for a long time. The night my sister called to tell me he was dead is etched into my memory forever. If I shut my eyes, I can go back to that time and place almost three years ago and still hear her voice. It is a very painful memory and one that I don't call up, but it is there, nonetheless. The overwhelming feelings of shock, disbelief, numbness, despair and sadness are very vivid. At the same time, I was outraged at what he had done to us, to me. How dare he do this? I couldn't even begin to guess how many times I said, I can't believe this is happening. The first six months was a confusing and emotionally draining period for me. I was obsessed with wanting to have answers, especially from him. I read many books on suicide and finally, after reading Iris Bolton's book, "My Son, My Son", I came to realize that what she said was true: You can ask why a million times, but you finally have to let it go, because the person you need the answers from is not here to give them to you. If only for the sake of your own sanity, you have to stop asking, "Why?"

"I couldn't even begin to guess how many times I said, I can't believe this is happening".

Our family drew closer together from this tragedy, and it made me more aware of how much I value and love them. I also had the support of a good friend who was willing to spend hours talking and crying with me. I still get very angry at my brother for changing our lives so irrevocably. That anger inevitably turns to sadness. I cannot see his smiling face, or hear his laughter, or watch him grow into adulthood. Yes, I had dreams of him too. He was an intelligent, warm, sensitive and caring young man, and I was eager to see what direction his life would take. I can't help but wonder what he would be like today. I miss him very much. I will never agree with his solution, but it was his choice to make and I have to learn to live with it. I am absolutely certain beyond a shadow of a doubt that I will be with him again. Only then will I get answers to my questions. I have no choice but to wait until that time.

~ Nicki Wright, TCF/ MO-DAN, KS
Reprinted from ICE, Orange Coast, Oct. 1998

ON YOUR BIRTHDAY

I wrote the date this morning,
Paused,
And felt the room grow cold.
It always does
When I remember
All of it –
Down to the last petal
Tossed by winds
Above the upturned earth.
This time the child
Does not leave so easily.
It would have been your birthday.
Soon, I shall be
As old as you will ever be.

~ Wanda Trawick, TCF/Acme, PA

FOREVER ON MY MIND

When I attended my first meeting of the Bergen-Passaic Compassionate Friends, it was the day after my fifth birthday without my twin brother Alan. Up to then I was working nights and unable to attend meetings. Nine months later, May 1998 at a chapter meeting someone in the circle spoke of the tenth anniversary of his or her child's death. They said they no longer think of their child everyday and it didn't bother them. This was shocking to me, not to mention upsetting. I couldn't imagine living a day without thoughts of him - both happy and sad. I went home very upset.

Even after five years I always thought of him each and everyday. To this day I will lick the bowl of frosting and think of the times we fought over the bowl. After a snowstorm I write his initials in the snow. When I hear something funny I think of him. But I also think of all that he has missed. He would have gotten to know his six, soon to be seven nieces and nephews. We would have been able to enjoy many vacations together.

This June will be the ninth anniversary of his death. With the passing of time I have adjusted to not talking to him everyday (we both had 800#'s at work). I do think of what he would say when I have a problem to work out. I think the part of the old me is returning. I have started to exercise again. This is something I used to love to do before Alan got sick. I have taken steps to advance my career, something I was planning at the time of his death. I also think I took on some of his traits like becoming a better writer and not emptying the laundry basket after each wash.

There are now many more good days than bad. But almost nine years after Alan's death, I am probably the only adult male to cry at a children's movie. In "Rugrats in Paris" Chucky's father remarries sometime after his mother's death. Tommy is thrilled that he will have two mommies, one on earth and one in heaven. I am forced to remember that I can't have another Alan.

I have given myself a job that I love: The job of keeping Alan's memory alive. I do this by putting this newsletter together, collecting license plates, with his name, for each new state that I visit, donating to his scholarship fund and in many other ways.

When "Phantom of the Opera" opened on Broadway I had no desire to see it. That was until it opened in Philadelphia, after Alan's death. Alan was a publicist in Philly and the show was playing at the only theatre where I had not seen something Alan had publicized. One of the songs has a line "There will never be a day in which I won't think of you." I think this will be true for a long time to come.

~ Daniel Yoffee Reprinted by permission of author

I CAN'T REMEMBER

I don't remember his face, although I have seen many pictures. I don't remember his eyes, although I've heard about them. I don't remember his laugh, although they tell me I heard it a lot. I don't remember much; I was only thirteen months old.

I do remember his love. I still feel his love. I know he is always with me, watching over me and protecting me. He is my big brother, the one that died eleven years ago.

But I don't remember much. That is what hurts more than anything, not knowing a big part of me. They say I act and talk like him - but I don't remember. I know some day I will remember - it will be a glorious day. The day I will meet my big brother.

~ Kelly Castellon, Walnut Creek CA



OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED
AUGUST
BIRTHDAYS

CHILD	PARENTS
HALLIE CLARE BJELLAND	15 ANDY & RHONDA BJELLAND
ROBERT DEAN HANSON	43 STEVE & DIANE HANSON
HEIDI HELLAND	32 JOHN & TERRI HELLAND
TARI L HELLER.....	64 RICHARD & CLARE ELLESS
CORDELL ALAN KISER.....	47 KEITH & SANDRA KISER
ERIC C LARSON.....	39 CRAIG & BARB LARSON
KELSEY GRACE MILLER.....	26 SHAWN & JIM MILLER
KYLE NELSON	25 JERRY & YVONNE NELSON
MICHAEL "MIKE" ROY NORBY.....	60 LAROY NORBY
CAITLIN JEAN POSCH.....	31 DEAN & JEANNIE LAMB
BRANDI ROSE IRENE TEEUWEN	17 JOHN & NANCY TEEUWEN
DANE TVEDT	31 TOMMY & LEAH TVEDT

ANNIVERSARIES

CHILD	PARENTS
MICAH J CROSBY.....	1 CRAIG & GLORIA CROSBY
CORDELL ALAN KISER.....	7 KEITH & SANDRA KISER
JACOB LABER.....	3 DEBRA LABER
KELSEY GRACE MILLER.....	26 SHAWN & JIM MILLER
TONY MILLER.....	4 SHAWN & JIM MILLER
DONNA L PFEIFER.....	1 JUNE L HAGEMEISTER
GREGORY SEARS.....	10 PERSYS PIERSALL (Grandmother)
GREGORY SEARS.....	10 LORI & JERRY BRADY
BRANDI ROSE IRENE TEEUWEN.....	17 JOHN & NANCY TEEUWEN
SCOTT ANTHONY TOBOLT.....	16 JOHN & MARY TOBOLT
ROBIN VIGDAL-HOSLER.....	14 WALTER & KARIE COWDEN
AUSTIN WAYNE WAGAR.....	7 JAMIE & SCOTT OLSON
JASMINE ROSE WILSON.....	8 KAREN WILSON

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 tcfl313@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

Hope is not an easy word for grievers.
 But we, more than most others,
 need to understand
 what hope can mean for us.
 Hope means finding the strength
 to live with grief.
 Hope means nurturing with grace
 the joy of remembrance.
 Hope means embracing
 with tenderness and pride
 our own life and the gifts left to us
 by those we have lost.♥

OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED
SEPTEMBER
BIRTHDAYS

CHILD		PARENTS
NATHAN ANDERSON	42	DIANE & JAY FENSKE
REAGAN NICOLE COLLINS	2	NICOLE UHLICH & JACOB COLLINS
MICAH J CROSBY	39	CRAIG & GLORIA CROSBY
MATTHEW JOHN GAFFNEY	37	JOHN & JILL GAFFNEY
KENT ALAN HANSEN	30	DOUGLAS HANSEN
JAYSON P HAUGEN	37	PAULETTE HAUGEN
ADYSON JEAN KNUDSEN	5	KRISTIN & MICHAELKNUDSEN
ANNIE PAGE LEGGIO	21	JOSEPH LEGGIO
PAUL A OLSON	45	SHIRLEY OLSON
RONALD ROBERT POEHLER	50	ROBERT POEHLER
DYLAN ROMAINE	8	AARON & TRICIA ROMAINE
ALBERT C "SONNY" SKAR	66	DARLENE SKAR
SCOTT ANTHONY TOBOLT	43	JOHN & MARY TOBOLT
JEFFREY M WEBBER	48	JUANITA WEBBER

ANNIVERSARIES

CHILD		PARENTS
NICHOLAS LEE BAILEY	10	PAUL & KARA BAILEY
DAVIN BAUCK	1	DEAN & DIANE BAUCK
PAMELA KAYE BJERKE	1	DARLENE SKAR
KELLY ANN BOYES	11	KAREN BOYES
REAGAN NICOLE COLLINS	2	NICOLE UHLICH & JACOB COLLINS
BRANDON WILLIAM THOMAS KLUTH	4	BRENDA KLUTH
ADYSON JEAN KNUDSEN	5	KRISTIN & MICHAELKNUDSEN
DAVID R KOSAK	2	BRUCE & MYRA KOSAK
BENJAMIN KOTTA	17	ARLEN & JULIE KOTTA
MICHELLE KUTTER	14	JIM & JODY KUTTER
JAMIE C OLSON	7	GLENNIS OLSON
JOHN T PEARSON	1	EDNA MAE PEARSON
ASHLEY PERRINE	3	BRAD & BRENDA MERGENS
RONALD ROBERT POEHLER	5	ROBERT POEHLER
JOSE DANIEL SAUVAGEAU	3	MARY BJERKE

REMEMBERING

Go ahead and mention My child,
 The one that died, you know.
 Don't worry about hurting me further.
 The depth of my pain doesn't show.
 Don't worry about making me cry.
 I'm already crying inside.
 Help me to heal by releasing
 The tears that I try to hide.
 I'm hurting when you just keep silent,

Pretending she didn't exist.
 I'd rather you mention my child,
 Knowing that she has been missed.
 You asked me how I was doing.
 I said 'pretty good' or 'fine'.
 But healing is something ongoing.
 I feel it will take a lifetime.
 By Elizabeth Dent

Time...

Time for me
Has no destination...
Time
Stands still...
You left me as I stand
alone not knowing
what direction to go...
I ask you Jayme
to give me strength
through Time...
Time
Left me wondering
What could have been...
Time for me;
The reality is my Heavy Heart
of Another year
of Another month
of Another day
of Another moment
Time without a destination...
Time without direction...
But...
Time for me
is filled
with Love and
Memories of
the Time
we shared...

Sending Love to my Beautiful Angel
Lots of Hugs, Mom (Sherry Lasse)

A MOTHER'S THOUGHTS

YESTERDAY.....

We dreamed of how our future would be,
Of times we'd share, my child and me.
Whether joy or pain, laughter or tears,
We'd stand together throughout the years.
A promise of what life should always be,
Of a child so dear, ever loving me.

TODAY.....

My heart sobs with uncontrollable grief.
I search for answers, but find nor relief.
The skies have darkened, no longer bright,
For my child is gone, forever from sight.
The dreams we shared never can be,
They're left to linger in my memory.

TOMORROW.....

My heart will push aside this cloud
That darkens my life like a heavy shroud.
Once again I'll see the dawning light
And know my child's love still burns bright.
I'll remember the moments we both shared;
I'll remember our love and how we cared.
I'll remember my child now lives in me,
And his YESTERDAYS shall always be.

~ Carol Cichella, TCF/Rockford, IL

THE MASK

People say, "Oh my, oh my.
It's amazing how you're getting by.
I don't think that I could be
So strong if such a thing happened to me."

But how come such persons are never around
When I remove the face of a clown,
And there for all the world to see
Is a person destroyed by a tragedy?

So I look at these people and give a grin,
Hiding the sickness, I feel within,
And hope that I will find a way
To get through another day.

~ Laraine Rodriquez, TCF/Gainesville, CA

THE FIRST YEAR

WOW!

A year has passed already.
It seems so long, yet so short a while.
This time last year I was pregnant;
The feel of your kicks made me smile.

Then came that horrible night -
A month before Christmas, to be exact.
The grief I went through in those moments
Left me wondering if I'd come through intact.

That Christmas passed oh, so painfully
My pillow soaked with tears every night.
My family wanted to forget, they didn't understand.
For the honor of your memory I had to fight.

Now it's the holidays once again.
It feels strange, sorrow and joy are mixed.
I'll do things different this year, too,
Knowing my heart will never be "all fixed".

Even if others choose not to remember you
I will, in my own quiet way.
I'll buy you a little present
And light a candle for you on Christmas day.

I know now I can make it
Though this past year has often left me crazy.
The grief subsides, the courage rises
To get me through, though my memory turns hazy.

I miss you and love you Rebecca
Yet I push on into the new year.
My memories and love are contained
In the falling of each silent tear.

I do not deny my sadness,
Neither will I deny myself some fun
As my second year without you
Starts with the rising of this morning's sun.

~ Angel Neufeld, TCF/Regina, SK

PARTING IS NOT ALWAYS SUCH SWEET SORROW

~ Louise Marie Gaskin TCF/East Aurora NY

lovingly lifted from "We Need Not Walk Alone" TCF Newsletter Oak Brook IL. Vol 18, #3

In February of 1990 my 14 year old daughter, Brigitte, died suddenly. One situation I found very difficult was sorting through her personal belongings. Knowing that we all grieve in our own way, you should never feel that you have to go through your child's belongings if you do not want to. You will know when and if the time is right. If you do decide that the time is right, the following suggestions are some that you might find helpful:

Golden Rules/Getting Started

1. DO NOT PUSH YOURSELF

When my daughter first passed away, I never thought I would touch anything in her room. Three months later I found myself going through her personal items. My normal spring cleaning and rearranging a room or two helped get me in the mood.

2. TAKE ONE STEP AT A TIME

Do not expect to do it all at once. As you begin sorting through your child's possessions, do not get upset if you cannot part with any of his or her belongings. It took me three attempts to just be able to stop crying long enough to go through them.

3. ASK FAMILY MEMBERS OR CLOSE FRIENDS FOR HELP

Having someone there to help is a good idea. I invited a friend to help me go through my daughter's hat and t-shirt collections. She sat and listened to the stories about how and where we acquired each hat and t-shirt. It was so much fun talking about my daughter and having someone there to listen. After it was all over, she thanked me for letting her help!

4. THE DECISION ON WHAT YOU WANT TO KEEP SHOULD BE YOURS

Do not feel guilty about what you want to do. I sold my home approximately a year and a half after my daughter passed away and once I began packing, I found that there were many items that I did not want to move. If you decide you want to part with some of your child's belongings, I suggest that you get them out of the house on the same day or very soon after. I found that if I left the items in my home more than two days after I had initially gone through them, I was going through them again and again. Remember, letting go is very difficult.

5. SET A PLAN FOR ACTION

Set up a schedule and write down the items that you would like to go through. It gives you something to start with. Be sure to note your progress! It will make you feel better.

For Those Items You Decide to Keep:

1. FIND NEW USES AND PLACES

My daughter's red wagon was converted into an indoor garden. A favorite worn-out sweatshirt of hers became a pillow cover. I had some of her gold jewelry melted down and made into a pendant that I wear often. A shelf in the guest room proudly displays her doll collection, her shell collection is in the family room, and one wall of my study proudly displays her pictures.

2. KEEP THEM NEAR AND DEAR

I bought a cedar chest that is filled with many little remembrances from my daughter. I organized some of the remembrances in clear storage boxes that I labeled so that they are easy to get to. The cedar chest is a beautiful addition to my home and it keeps many loving memories secure and near.

3. PACK THEM AWAY

There were some items that I needed to keep, if only for the comfort of knowing that I still had them. For the items, I packed them securely in boxes and then stored the boxes in a safe, dry place.

4. RECYCLE ITEMS

By recycling, I mean changing which items I leave out. My daughter collected small boxes, teddy bears, sea shells and other items. Sometimes I will have the teddy bears out on my bed or maybe her little boxes arranged nicely on my dresser. I find it comforting when I get to go through one of her collections.

NOTE: I keep a 3" x 5" card catalog with cards listing all of her items and where they are. This saves time and panic when I need to locate something of hers.

For Those Items You Decide To Give Away:

1. KEEP THE MEMORY.

Parting with many of my daughter's possessions was extremely difficult. I knew that once they were given away, I might not ever see or remember them again. Prior to giving some of her things away, I wrote down my thoughts and notes about the items in the 3x5 card catalog. Now, whenever I want or need a memory, I just go to my file and pick one.

2. SPECIAL OCCASIONS AND HOLIDAYS

Holidays and family affairs are always so difficult to get through without your child. Some of her handmade Halloween costumes were given away as presents along with a picture of her in the costume. They made for very special and unexpected presents. The children loved receiving the costumes and it helped me to get through Halloween. Her pearl earrings were given to my best friend's daughter for her First Holy Communion. It is still very difficult to attend these events without my daughter. As the little girl went around and showed everyone her earrings, I felt my daughter's presence there with us. My mother received her birthstone ring. It was over 12 years old and had been resized at least five times. I wrote a story to accompany the ring and gave it to my mom for Christmas. Although it was difficult to part with this ring, my mother takes great pride in wearing it and that has helped her to deal with the loss.

3. RETURN ITEMS TO THOSE THAT GAVE THEM.

Whenever I gave any items back to the people who originally gave them to her, they were overjoyed. Over the years some of my daughter's school friends had given her little stuffed animals, posters and other gifts. I asked the children if they would like to have these items back. They were so appreciative of my kindness. I know it helped them with their grief.

4. NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

There are many not-for-profit organizations that help others. You may have some organizations that you are fond of or maybe one that your child chose to acknowledge. Whichever agency you choose, most are very grateful for any donated items. All donations to nonprofit organizations are tax deductible. Remember, there is no right way or wrong way when it comes to dealing with the loss of a child. Each person is unique and so is each person's grief. Maintain a network of honest friends and/or family members to whom you can talk. Above all, remember to be patient with yourself. You have been through a very difficult experience.

The Golden Gate Bridge: Still Beautiful

On May 23rd, 1995 my son jumped off the Golden Gate Bridge [in San Francisco]. Tempting as it is to believe he'd still be alive had there been a barrier, I think it would be naive. In my despair I wanted to blame the psychiatrist who refused to see him because he'd missed some appointments, the girlfriend who'd ended their relationship just two days prior to his jump, the crisis center at the hospital where he'd gone for help and who could have kept him had they read the signs right, but didn't; myself, (especially myself), for flawed parenting. But never did I blame the bridge! In the end it was his decision. In his farewell note, he said he was going to electrocute himself. What made him change his mind? I don't know, but I believe it was the deed, not the method, that he was determined to execute. People who really want to die find a way. So while a barrier would deter suicides on the bridge, it would hardly deter suicides. Should we eliminate tall buildings, parking structures, automobile exhaust pipes, ropes?

In spite of very sad memories, I still appreciate the beauty of the bridge. People from all over the world enjoy the vistas from this compelling structure. Is it fair to impair the visibility in a futile effort to control deaths from the bridge? The bridge is for the living, too.

~ Carol Sheldon, TCF/Marin County, California

A Season of Mercy

To love is to risk losing. To lose is to risk finding something new. The cycle of the heart; birth, death, rebirth. Therefore, before my heart turns to stone, I will re-enter the cycle, and make up my mind again to risk living.

What is it that I have left to do with you?

I must gather up our memories and divide them into two boxes.

In the first I will lovingly set all those things that are gone and can never be replaced. These are the secret signs of our unique understanding. I will mourn these lost treasures as I have mourned you, and then I will give the box away. In the other I will collect all those things that remain to be shared again in another time and place. Each of these joys you have left to me, with a blessing, to be recreated with other, yet undiscovered loves. I will celebrate these gifts as I have celebrated you, and then this box, I will keep.

~Author Unknown

THE BEDROOM DILEMMA

There are many dilemmas affecting the life of a bereaved parent, but one that seems to cause one of the greatest amounts of stress and hand wringing is what we do with our children's (or siblings or grandchild's) bedroom. My daughter Nina's room was her sanctuary--a very messy one at that. Much to my chagrin, the more clutter surrounding her the better! However, as a teenager, that is where she could be found most often; lying on her daybed chatting on the phone with her friends, homework and soda cans scattered around her, clothes and shoes thrown every which way. Laughter emanated from her bedroom, my daughter's intermingled with her friends' shrieks of delight. Many evenings I sat on her bed as she told me of her adventures as a freshman at Park High, her latest crush, and regaled me with her tales of a day in the life of a typical 15-year-old girl. Much of my memories are to be found in that room, and the realization I would never have those experiences again with Nina were almost unbearable. Therefore, what I would do with her bedroom now that she was no longer here was of utmost importance to me.

Over the 12 plus years since Nina left this planet, and I have been a part of TCF sharing groups, I have heard various ways others have dealt with this issue. Interestingly, what seems to come into play again and again is what friends and family thought should be done with the child's room. More often than not, their school of thought is that we should empty it completely, give away their possessions, and change it into an office or guest bedroom just as quickly as possible. They believe keeping things as is are only constant reminders of our children's absence. In reality, we are thinking of them 24/7 anyway. Truly, they mean well and are only trying to find ways to help us. However, in the early stages of our grief most of us are not capable of making such an important decision, which is one that should be made only by us. With our loved ones gone, once we change something, there is no going back. To clear away her things and depersonalize her room felt to me as if I was somehow removing her from my life. What I learned from seasoned bereaved parents was that what are perceived as painful memories of their absence, while in early grief, will, in time, become cherished memories we will want to hold onto. When the numbing brain fog lifts we will more clearly begin to realize that, and only then make more rational decisions that are right for our situation.

I decided to leave Nina's room as it was, mostly from advice I received at a TCF meeting. I told myself that I would know when I was ready to tackle that decision. This is not always possible for everyone--maybe they had previously crowded conditions and needed that room for someone else or a variety of other reasons. What we need to remember again is that handling something like this is so personal; what feels right for one person may be entirely wrong for another. I think the key thing to remember is that if we are able to take our time that we try not to make a snap decision. We had no control over the fact that our child died; this might be something that we can make a choice about when we are ready and able to do so.

In my case, I waited for seven years before redoing Nina's room. I tried to do it at one and a half years and then again at five years, and found that I just could not. When I finally did at seven years, I took my time and spent many weeks sifting through her life. I cried a ton of tears, but at that stage I spent the majority of time smiling and laughing. I found things she wrote, what I call 'buried treasures', that in the early stages would have set me back weeks because of its emotional impact, but years later brought me peace, and a deep personal understanding of Nina's thoughts that rekindled our close relationship. I acknowledge that most people do not wait seven years to undertake the bedroom project; however, that is what worked for me. I made her room into a guest room that still included her daybed and many of her personal belongings. At that later stage, it became my private place where I would wrap myself in her handmade afghan, lie on her bed, look at the glow-in-the-dark stars on her ceiling (that are still there today), and I felt close to my daughter. The point here is that seven months or seven years, we must try not to let someone else force the issue, as well meaning as they may be, with something as important as what to do with our child's room. Everyone has different timetables. Only we will know what and when it is right for us. With gentle thoughts,

~Cathy L. Seehuetter, TCF/St. Paul Chapter

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)



"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.

Stepping Out of the Cycle of Chaos

For the first few years of our son's active use, we were bound and determined that we were going to control it and stop it. He was very young and both my husband and I believed that we still could parent our way out of this mess.

So we yelled, we screamed, we got angry. At times we even physically restrained our son (thankfully he only weight about 110 pounds at the time).

Eventually we figured out that none of that was working. The more we tried to control the mess, the bigger the mess got.

Our home had become a war zone.

And the more we battled, the more the members of the family became objects, pawns in the chess game.

Our son had become the enemy to conquer rather than the valued child of God that he was. There were times when I could not find one thing to love about him in the middle of this ugliness.

And someone said to me, "do you want to be right for the sake of justice or do you want to love for the sake of relationship.

At that moment I determined that I was going to step out of the cycle of chaos and simply, radically love my son, not for what he did or didn't do, but because of WHOSE he was.

My responses changed. My way of being around my son was different.

I recognized that my son was not the enemy, addiction was.

I stopped worrying about what other people thought.

I began to affirm him in the occasional things that he did right.

I practiced the pause, understanding that I don't have to say everything that is on my mind.

I went to my spouse and processed what to do and even practiced my responses

And I waited until the next day to react. Almost everything looks different after a night of sleep.

I can't say that I've been perfect in this and that I don't sometimes relapse into my old ways of control and manipulation. I do that less and less these days.

And the relationship I have with my son had changed. Whether he uses or not, I will purpose to love him right where he is at.

I can only change myself.

Pam Lanhart Director Thrive! Family Support (612)554-1644
<http://thrivefamilysupport.org/> Copyright@2017

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 Bailey 701-491-0364	Newsletter Editor	Nancy Teeuwen.....701-730-0805
Co-Chapter Leader	Lori Wiger 701-781-3931	Newsletter Database	Sheryl Cvijanovich..... 701-540-3287
Secretary	Sheryl Cvijanovich 701-540-3287	Website Administrator	Sheryl Cvijanovich..... 701-540-3287
Treasurer	Chuck Klinkhammer..... 701-298-2929	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.