



The Compassionate Friends

Fargo/Moorhead Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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www.compassionatefriends.org

F-M Area Chapter
PO Box 10686
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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

Upcoming Meetings

August 11th
September 8th

Dates to Remember

Mom's meeting - 7 pm on August 25th @
Denny's
45th TCF National Conference
August 5-7, 2022 in Houston, TX

LOVE GIFTS

Carol & Dan Winter in memory of their son, Matthew Winter
Keith & Sandra Kiser in memory of their son, Cordell Alan Kiser
Pat & Denny Wateland in memory of their daughter, Tracy Ann Wateland
Clare & Richard Elless Family in memory of their daughter, Tari Elless Heller

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.

"When you come to the edge of all the light you know, and are about to step off into the darkness of the unknown, faith is knowing one of two things will happen: There will be something solid to stand on, or you will be taught how to fly."

-Barbara J. Winter

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 August 25th. For more information, please contact Sheryl at 701-540-3287 or visit our website at www.tcffargomoorhead.org.

Remembrance

There is a journey called remembrance, I take from time to time.
Its pathway winds through my heart And sweet memories I always find.
Yes, memory is a journey, Our minds can travel through.
Its pathway leads into my heart, When I am missing you.
If you travel far inside, You'll walk down memory lane;
It's filled with precious moments, Some of pleasure, some of pain.
Years can't destroy the beauty, As long as memory lives.
Time can't erase the pleasure, That our memory gives.
Yes, memory paints a picture, Of time I shared with you;
A journey called remembrance, I'll travel my whole life through.

~ Judy O. Chapman, TCF/Greenville, SC

Suicide: How Do We Say It?

From the moment we learned of our daughter's death, I knew that the word "suicide" had the power to erase her life while emblazoning her death in neon letters in the minds of her friends and colleagues. During the unremitting misery of those early days, I even toyed with the idea of telling no one she was gone, willing her to stay alive in the thoughts of those who knew her, forgetting that I'd already notified our family and closest friends. It was a fairy tale wish I contrived as a way of allowing myself a momentary escape from the unthinkable reality of her death. If her death were never acknowledged, would she still be here?

My fantasy vanished in the cold light of the days that followed. I knew that we could never dishonor Rhonda's memory by concealing her suicide. I wrote a letter to friends and relatives, informing them of the events leading up to her death. I hoped my letter would quell the inevitable whispers by openly acknowledging her depression and her decision to end her own life. I implored them to speak often and openly about her to us; to do otherwise would deny her existence.

I never intended to embark on a campaign to confront, let alone eradicate, the stigma of suicide. What mattered most was that we who loved Rhonda must not let the circumstances of her death diminish her memory or her accomplishments. I explained that she had "taken her own life" or that "she died of suicide." An expression I refused to use then and refuse to use to this day, is the despicable "committed suicide," with its implications of criminality. Historically, that term was an instrument of retaliation against the survivors, and it has no place in today's enlightened society.

Many people prefer to say, "completed suicide," but as a parent who witnessed my child's 20-year struggle against the demons of clinical depression, I don't care much for that, either. "Died of suicide" or "died by suicide" are accurate, emotionally-neutral ways to explain my child's death.

My first encounter with suicide occurred many years ago when my dentist, a gentle family man in his mid 30's, took his own life. Since that time, I have known neighbors, relatives, friends and other hardworking, highly respected individuals who died this way. I've facilitated meetings in which grieving parents declined to speak about their children because they couldn't handle the group's reactions to the dreaded "s" word. I've known parents who never returned to a chapter meeting because of negative comments about the way that their child died.

Rhonda was a gifted scholar, writer and archaeologist who, like my mother, suffered from adult-onset manic depression (also called bipolar disorder). She made a lasting contribution in her field, and a wonderful tribute to her life and her work appeared in *American Antiquity, Journal of the Society for American Archaeology* (October, 1994).

Both my daughter and my mother suffered tremendously in their struggles to conquer and conceal their illness. Neither of them won that battle, but my mother responded to medications that minimized the highs and lows, and she died of cancer at 87. Sadly, doctors never discovered a magic formula that could offer Rhonda the same relief. She ended her own life at age 36, after a year of severe depression that was triggered by life stresses beyond her control. I saw her battle firsthand, and I witnessed her valiant struggle to survive. She wanted desperately to live; she died because she thought she had no alternative.

In his revealing book, *Telling Secrets*, the great theologian Frederick Buechner describes his father's suicide, which occurred when Buechner was just a boy. The conspiracy of silence that was imposed on Buechner and his brother had a profound effect on their development and their relationships with other family members. "We are as sick as our secrets," he concludes.

We whose children have taken their own lives must do all that we can to help eradicate the secrecy and stigma that surround their deaths. If we allow these to persist, we allow their lives to be diminished. We owe our children more than that.

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Love's Lasting Touch

Don't weep for me when I'm gone,
Because I'll always be there.
My spirit will exist in all the earth,
In the water, trees, and air.
You'll hear me say, "I love you,"
In the whisper of a breeze.
You'll know that I'm beside you,
With the rustling of the leaves.
You'll feel my arms caress you,
In the warmth of each sunrise.

The moon will be my goodnight kiss,
The stars my watchful eyes,
Your life will be my legacy,
Your memories my epitaph.
These ties will bind us together,
Till we meet on heaven's path.
I'll not ever desert you,
We'll never be far apart.
I'll live within you always
Nestled deep inside your heart.

~ Jacquelyn M. Comeaux

The "Veteran" Bereaved Parent

Have you ever attended a TCF meeting to see a "veteran" bereaved parent shed a tear or openly show grief, and have wondered why after all that time?
Please don't get the wrong idea—the wrong idea being:

1. You won't ever cry after ten years.
2. You won't feel a need to still attend TCF meetings.
3. You won't feel like sticking with TCF in case a newly bereaved parent needs you.
4. You won't care enough to stay and help organize future meetings.
5. You won't feel compassionate enough to hear a newly bereaved parent talk of their grief.

Yes, some veteran bereaved parents move on and I wish them peace. But I am personally grateful for veteran bereaved parents who stay with TCF. What would newly bereaved parents do if they attended their first meeting and no one was there?

~ Sandy Smith, TCF/, Greater Cincinnati Area, OH

Memories are like threads of gold,
they never tarnish or grow old.

To Know Me

To know me, is to know I worry. I worry even though I know I shouldn't. I worry even though I know it is completely unproductive. I worry, as I breathe.

I was faced with raising four sons as a single mom. Sons that seemed to get into every kind of scrape imaginable, and I found myself facing emergency room visits for stitches & broken arm or two. I began to restrict their activity, fearful that when they rode their bikes something "bad" could happen, or when they roller skated, or when they just played rough as boys often do. I became the over-protective mom I didn't want to be. I saw other mom's letting their kids build skate board ramps, and taking them dirt bike riding...but I was too fearful. Sports? Oh heavens, you know they could get hurt don't you? So, to a degree I sheltered them from the experiences that they should have enjoyed. Fear robbed them of some of their childhood experiences.

The thing I worried about more than any other was that one day, I would have to bury one of my children. I was so fearful that when they went out, I would literally make myself sick with the "what ifs". Go to sleep before they got home? Never happen. Fear would paralyze me at times.

"You'll break the worry habit the day you decide you can meet and master the worst that can happen to you." Arnold Glasgow. God knows, I DID NOT want to have to meet and master this fear...but it happened and I had no choice but to deal with it.

Shane was a safe, cautious driver who took it so very seriously. He would readily volunteer to be the designated driver so that everyone would safely return from a night out. Shane's life ended on a stretch of road that is flat and clear for miles and miles. Flat everywhere except for the tiny spot that took his life...an overpass. Shane's life ended when at the top of this tiny hill, he was met head-on with a drunk driver who got on the freeway going the wrong direction. A minute or two later, or a minute or two earlier, and he would had the opportunity to see it and react. BUT, he was killed instantly and I was faced with my worst fear.

In the six years since Shane's death, I have learned that what everyone said about worry was true. WORRY is such a waste of time. I spent hours, hours and hours fretting about something that happened anyway. Did any of that worry make it not so? Absolutely not. Did any of that worry make it easier to bear when it did happen? Absolutely not. Did any of my protective measures stop it from happening? Absolutely not.

I coped. I believe it was God and a band of angels that saw me through, but I coped better than all those worries I had conjured up in my brain. It was then I realized I would not live the rest of my life worrying about every little thing. A worrier will never stop worrying completely, let's be realistic. BUT, I don't restrict myself, or my boys, from enjoying life out of fear. If it's going to happen, it will happen whether I worry about it or not. The only thing that worry does is rob us of today's joy, while it instills a fear of something that may or may not happen tomorrow. I wish I never had to face this fear. I wish more than anything Shane was still here, however, from this day forward, instead of living by fear and worry, I remind myself of a better motto...Carpe Diem (Seize the day).

~ Judi Barkman, TCF/Redland, CA

Look at yourself in the mirror. Say to yourself, "It is hard to lose a child." Say to yourself, "It is reasonable to hurt." Say to yourself, "Healing takes time." Be good to yourself

~ Sascha Wagner, TCF/Des Moines, IA

REACHING OUT . . .

Each of us has lost a child. We know the hopelessness, the feeling of unworthiness that comes from being unable to help the child we loved. We feel hurt, we need help, and we feel the need to help others.

The death of a child often brings about a loss of self-esteem. We must be reminded that we each have God-given worth and beauty. We, too, are of value. This sense of being somebody is important to the young and the aging, male or female.

As Compassionate Friends, we must commit ourselves to reach out and help others. Giving this help is not without pain. However, there is so much brokenness where we can bring healing. There is no much coldness where warmth is needed. There is so much loneliness and emptiness. There is so little understanding.

As Compassionate Friends, we do understand. We are committed to suffer and rejoice with each other. In making this commitment and in sharing another's grief, we find our own selves beginning to heal.

- Audrey Hoyt, TCF/Kansas City MO
- 1984 MO-KAN Region Newsletter

Am I Healing?

Am I healing? I'm able to gaze at her photograph without that tourniquet tightening around my throat, clamping memory...

I'm beginning to see her in her life, and not only myself bereft of her life...

Piece by piece, I re-enter the world. A new phase. A new body, a new voice. Birds console me by flying, trees by growing, dogs by the warm patch they leave behind on the sofa. Unknown people merely by performing their motions. It's like a slow recovery from a sickness, this recovery of one's self...

Toby Talbot, TCF/Volusia/Flagler, FL

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 & green). The cost is as follows: \$25 for 1, \$50 for 2, \$65 for 3 and \$80 for 4. 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.

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

OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED *BIRTHDAYS*

CHILD	.....	.....	PARENTS
KASIE JOANN BERG.....	42.....	.....	KIMBERLY FOLSTROM
HALLIE CLARE BJELLAND	18.....	.....	ANDY & RHONDA BJELLAND
RUSS T BOYLE.....	48.....	.....	TOM & CHERYL BOYLE
DEREK R CHURCH	25.....	.....	KELLY CHURCH
JAKE EDMUND DAVIS.....	31.....	.....	ED DAVIS
AARON JOSEPH DIEDRICH	47.....	.....	RICHARD & PATTI DIEDRICH
DARREN FORSBERG.....	52.....	.....	LINDA FORSBERG
NATHANIEL "NATE" HAALAND	35.....	.....	SUSAN PETRY
ROBERT DEAN HANSON	46.....	.....	STEVE & DIANE HANSON
HEIDI HELLAND	35.....	.....	JOHN & TERRI HELLAND
TARI ELLESS HELLER.....	67.....	.....	RICHARD & CLARE ELLESS
KEVIN GENE HUELSMAN	51.....	.....	EMMA HUELSMAN
CORDELL ALAN KISER	50.....	.....	KEITH & SANDRA KISER
TRAVIS SCOTT KOENIG	35.....	.....	LAUREL KOENIG
ERIC C LARSON	42.....	.....	CRAIG & BARB LARSON
KELSEY GRACE MILLER.....	29.....	.....	SHAWN & JIM MILLER
KYLE NELSON	28.....	.....	JERRY & YVONNE NELSON
MICHAEL "MIKE" ROY NORBY	63.....	.....	LAROY NORBY
CAITLIN JEAN POSCH.....	34.....	.....	DEAN & JEANNIE LAMB
BRANDI ROSE IRENE TEEUWEN.....	20.....	.....	JOHN & NANCY TEEUWEN
ERIK ANTHONY TORTORICE	47.....	.....	ANTHONY & EILEEN TORTORICE
DANE TVEDT	34.....	.....	TOMMY & LEAH TVEDT
CORA WAGNER	22.....	.....	DONNA J WAGNER
DILLON ANDREW WILSON.....	29.....	.....	DENISE WILSON

ANNIVERSARIES

CHILD	.....	.....	PARENTS
MICAH J CROSBY.....	4.....	.....	CRAIG & GLORIA CROSBY
WHYLIX EDWIN DITCH	3.....	.....	LANCE & TASHARA DITCH
DOUGLAS C HUDSON II.....	2.....	.....	DOUG & SUE HUDSON
CORDELL ALAN KISER.....	10.....	.....	KEITH & SANDRA KISER
JACOB LABER	6.....	.....	DEBRA LABER
GREGORY MICKELSON	3.....	.....	ROSELLA MICKELSON
KELSEY GRACE MILLER	29.....	.....	SHAWN & JIM MILLER
TONY MILLER	7.....	.....	SHAWN & JIM MILLER
SAMUEL JEROME NOESKE.....	5.....	.....	JERRY & AMY NOESKE
DONNA L PFEIFER.....	4.....	.....	JUNE L HAGEMEISTER
KYLE KEVIN QUITTSCHREIBER.....	4.....	.....	KEVIN & KATHY QUITTSCHREIBER
GREGORY SEARS.....	13.....	.....	PERSYS PIERSALL (Grandparent)
GREGORY SEARS.....	13.....	.....	LORI & JERRY BRADY
BRANDI ROSE IRENE TEEUWEN	20.....	.....	JOHN & NANCY TEEUWEN
SCOTT ANTHONY TOBOLT	19.....	.....	JOHN & MARY TOBOLT
ROBIN VIGDAL-HOSLER.....	17.....	.....	WALTER & KARIE COWDEN
AUSTIN WAYNE WAGAR.....	10.....	.....	JAMIE & SCOTT OLSON
KRISTOPHER WEISS	4.....	.....	HERMAN & RENNAE WEISS

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

Twin Rainbows

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

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

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

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

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

Love. your sister,
~ Meria Rae Martin, Swinomish, WA

The Unfinished Path

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

SHE'S HERE...BUT NOT

She's here but she's there.
She's with us, but she's not.
She's right around the bend,
But then she's gone again.
She's far away but so near.
It's like she's gone but here again.
~ Stacy Sharp, TCF/Defiance, OH

REST, MY BROTHER

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

~ Sandra Evans, TCF/Kearsarge, NH

WHAT WAS HE REALLY LIKE?

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

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

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

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

~ Julie Cameron, TCF/Louisville, KY

There Are Times

There are times
When I see a fiery sunset
Or the silver glow of the moon,
And I see my brother and
feel the peace, as if he still exists.
But these times are few,
And most of what I see is -
What he is missing.
Cry now, my silent tears,
Quietly, so no one hears.
They don't know the pain I go through
Day after day,
And through the years.
~ Alissa Roeder, TCF/Pikes Peak, CO

GIVING BACK TO FRIENDS WHO HELPED YOU GRIEVE

Grief is isolating. You may become so isolated that you are barely aware of your friends' help. Sure, you remember their phone calls and sympathy cards; but, you may not see the scope of their caring. As I discovered, the support of friends is necessary for grief reconciliations.

On a Friday night in February of 2007, my elder daughter died from the injuries she received in a car crash. On Sunday, just two days later, my father-in-law succumbed to pneumonia. I sobbed when I saw their photos on the same page of the newspaper. Friends saw the photos, read the obituaries, and were ringing the door bell an hour after they received the paper.

Eight weeks later, my brother had a heart attack and died. Again, my friends rallied to help. Nine months after the dual death weekend, my former son-in-law died from the injuries he received in another car crash. His death made our twin grandchildren orphans and my husband and me their legal guardians. Tragedy after tragedy, my friends provided a foundation of support, a foundation strong as steel, and it has never faltered.

According to the article, "Trauma, Loss and Traumatic Grief," posted on The International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies Website, survivors need to find a support system. This system may include friends, clergy, or others who have experienced traumatic loss. "It may take some time to identify friends who can be good listeners," the article notes. All of my friends were good listeners, thank goodness.

Judith Viorst writes about the values of friendship in her book, **Necessary Losses**. She thinks close friends contribute to our personal growth. "We will frequently turn – for reassurance, for comfort, for come-and-save me help – not to our blood relations; but, to friends," writes Viorst. With the support of family and friends, I've created a new and happy life. It was time to return their kindness.

I'm giving back by listening. Listening was the greatest gift my friends gave me. More important, they listened without judging. Instead of my friends listening to me, I am now listening to them. I hear stories about family relationships, wedding plans, and grandchildren. These stories remind me of the similarity of our lives.

I'm giving back by speaking. When a church friend called and asked if I would be willing to give a sermon, I agreed. My sermon was about saying "yes" to life after loved ones die. After the service, many church members thanked me for sharing my story. One said, "I wanted to stand up and applaud." Others described the memorials they had established in honor of their deceased loved ones.

I'm giving back by volunteering. When I agreed to serve as secretary of a state organization, my husband was concerned. He didn't think I had time to raise our grandchildren, manage the household, maintain a writing career, and carry out the duties of the office. "I only need to take minutes eight times," I explained. "Besides, they need me." The president was relieved to fill the office and I was glad to help out.

I'm giving back by comforting. Experience with grief has increased my sensitivity. When I meet someone who is grieving, I encourage them to talk about their deceased loved one. Also, I ask their permission to give them a hug. Sending friends copies of my grief books is another way I offer comfort.

Are you emerging from the darkness of grief? If so, maybe it's time to give back. According to certified psychotherapist Derek P. Scott, giving back can be a form of personal growth. In his article, "Understanding and Working with Multiple Loss," Scott says mourners may move from meaninglessness to "a sense of reconnection to the soul's purpose." Giving back has enriched my soul and it can do the same for you.

Harriet Hodgson, From the Open to Hope Foundation

Does the Pain Ever End?

No, I don't think the pain ever ends. I don't even think it gets less. But I DO believe that our capacity to absorb, submerge, manage, and breathe through the pain expands until it lays over our grief like a comforting quilt. Sometimes we lift the corners and peek underneath, and are overwhelmed that the same pain is still there, but we learn that gently putting the quilt back down and resting our hands on it lets us know that we are in control of our grief, not the other way around.

It takes a long, long time. It takes a lot of very hard work.

But we are the ones to make our grief-covering quilt, and we do it in our own way, on our own time, and in our own pattern.

And the quilt grows bigger with time, too, covering all those "new" things we discover bring us grief...like cleaning out our kid's bedroom, or finding a diary that was hidden in a drawer, or hearing from our child's best friend years later, saying that he or she still misses and thinks about our kid.

May your quilt cover your grief softly today, and may you feel its warmth and weight and know that love made every stitch.

Love and blessings,
~ Vicki W, TCF/Miles City, MT

Butterfly Decals

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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)

GIVING BACK TO FRIENDS WHO HELPED YOU GRIEVE

Grief is isolating. You may become so isolated that you are barely aware of your friends' help. Sure, you remember their phone calls and sympathy cards; but, you may not see the scope of their caring. As I discovered, the support of friends is necessary for grief reconciliations.

On a Friday night in February of 2007, my elder daughter died from the injuries she received in a car crash. On Sunday, just two days later, my father-in-law succumbed to pneumonia. I sobbed when I saw their photos on the same page of the newspaper. Friends saw the photos, read the obituaries, and were ringing the door bell an hour after they received the paper.

Eight weeks later, my brother had a heart attack and died. Again, my friends rallied to help. Nine months after the dual death weekend, my former son-in-law died from the injuries he received in another car crash. His death made our twin grandchildren orphans and my husband and me their legal guardians. Tragedy after tragedy, my friends provided a foundation of support, a foundation strong as steel, and it has never faltered.

According to the article, "Trauma, Loss and Traumatic Grief," posted on The International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies Website, survivors need to find a support system. This system may include friends, clergy, or others who have experienced traumatic loss. "It may take some time to identify friends who can be good listeners," the article notes. All of my friends were good listeners, thank goodness.

Judith Viorst writes about the values of friendship in her book, **Necessary Losses**. She thinks close friends contribute to our personal growth. "We will frequently turn – for reassurance, for comfort, for come-and-save me help – not to our blood relations; but, to friends," writes Viorst. With the support of family and friends, I've created a new and happy life. It was time to return their kindness.

I'm giving back by listening. Listening was the greatest gift my friends gave me. More important, they listened without judging. Instead of my friends listening to me, I am now listening to them. I hear stories about family relationships, wedding plans, and grandchildren. These stories remind me of the similarity of our lives.

I'm giving back by speaking. When a church friend called and asked if I would be willing to give a sermon, I agreed. My sermon was about saying "yes" to life after loved ones die. After the service, many church members thanked me for sharing my story. One said, "I wanted to stand up and applaud." Others described the memorials they had established in honor of their deceased loved ones.

I'm giving back by volunteering. When I agreed to serve as secretary of a state organization, my husband was concerned. He didn't think I had time to raise our grandchildren, manage the household, maintain a writing career, and carry out the duties of the office. "I only need to take minutes eight times," I explained. "Besides, they need me." The president was relieved to fill the office and I was glad to help out.

I'm giving back by comforting. Experience with grief has increased my sensitivity. When I meet someone who is grieving, I encourage them to talk about their deceased loved one. Also, I ask their permission to give them a hug. Sending friends copies of my grief books is another way I offer comfort.

Are you emerging from the darkness of grief? If so, maybe it's time to give back. According to certified psychotherapist Derek P. Scott, giving back can be a form of personal growth. In his article, "Understanding and Working with Multiple Loss," Scott says mourners may move from meaninglessness to "a sense of reconnection to the soul's purpose." Giving back has enriched my soul and it can do the same for you.

Harriet Hodgson, From the Open to Hope Foundation

BUTTERFLY

Butterfly flutter by.
Butterfly hear me cry.
Butterfly hear me sigh.
Butterfly say good-bye.
Good-bye, Butterfly.
Goodbye.

~ Katrina Krauss, TCF/Anne Arundel Cty, MD

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
Newsletter Database	Sheryl Cvijanovich .....701-540-3287	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
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.