

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.

Meeting Topic - Candlelighting Ceremony

Upcoming Meetings
December 14th
January 11th

Dates to Remember

Mom's meeting - 7 pm on December 28th
@ Fry'n Pan
Annual Worldwide Candlelighting -
December 10, 2017 7 p.m. local time
41st National Conference
July 27-29, 2018 St Louis, Missouri

LOVE GIFTS

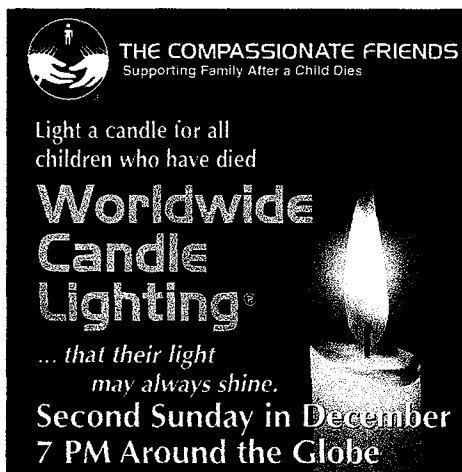
Pat & Denny Wateland in memory of their daughter, Tracy Ann Wateland
Sharon Wateland in memory of her brothers, Bernie & Roger Wateland
Jim & Suzie Hill in memory of their son, Jon Poitra
Becky Nelson in memory of her son, Ryan Nelson
Sharon Wateland in memory of her niece/goddaughter, Tracy Ann Wateland
Scott & Ruth Blilie in memory of their daughter, Nicole Anne Blilie
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



Worldwide Candle Lighting December 10th

The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor the memories of the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and grandchildren who left too soon. As candles are lit at 7 p.m. local time, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor the memory of all children gone too soon.

Now believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe, the 21st annual Worldwide Candle Lighting, a gift to the bereavement community from The Compassionate Friends, creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone. TCF's WWCL started in the United States in 1997 as a small internet observance, but has since swelled in numbers as word has spread throughout the world of the remembrance. Hundreds of formal candle lighting events are held and thousands of informal candle lightings are conducted in homes as families gather in quiet remembrance of children who have died, but will never be forgotten.

Every year you are invited to post a message in the Remembrance Book which will be available, during the event, at TCF's national website.

2018 FM TCF Chapter Meeting Dates

January 11th	February 8th
March 8th	April 12th
May 10th	June 14th
July 12th	August 9th
September 13th	October 11th
November 8th	December 13th

2018 Mom's Group Meeting Dates

January 25th	February 22nd
March 22nd	April 26th
May 24th	June 28th
July 26th	August 23rd
September 27th	October 25th
November 29th	December 27th

ANGEL OF HOPE MEMORIAL SERVICE



The Angel of Hope will be holding an annual Candlelight Memorial on Wednesday, December 6th at 7 p.m. The Angel of Hope in Fargo was dedicated in 2005, and serves as a place for healing and love for all who

have lost children. The Angel of Hope is located on the north in Island Park off of 1st Avenue South between 4th and 7th Streets. Attendees are invited to bring a white flower to place at the base of the statue in memory of loved ones. Refreshments will be served at Hanson Runsvold Funeral Home following the service.

THE STORY OF THE SNOWFLAKE

It was 1885, more than a century ago, when Wilson Bentley acquired his fascination with snow. Mr. Bentley photographed snowflakes, so delicate and fine, and he began to realize each was different in design.

But each snowflake served a purpose, in the vast sky above. Just as our precious children did— to us they gave their love. And with their love came happiness and precious memories, for us to cherish and treasure for all eternity! Although the snowflake fades away, it's memory lives on. Just like our precious children, who from this earth are gone. Each time you see a snowflake, so white that it is blue, open up your heart and smile, your angel is watching you!

Grief is not truly a process unless
There is an EXIT as well as an ENTRY.

Grief has a beginning.

Does it also have an ending?

“Footsteps Through the Valley” By Darcie D Sims

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

Sascha Wagner

Our Mom's group generally meets on the 4th Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm at the Fryn' 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 December 28th. For more information please contact Sheryl at 701-540-3287 or sherylc13@msn.com.

Winter

This winter's desolation is my desolation,
It's barrenness, my heart.
Some say spring will come
Trees will leaf,
Buds will swell, New life will emerge.
But I feel winter in my heart,
In my soul,
In my being,
I wonder if the ice will ever thaw
So I can drink from it again
To nourish my spirit.
~ Roberta Hermansen

Candles in December

My sadness seems reflected in the music that I hear..
Every young one's glowing face reminds me you're not here.
Shoppers crowd the festive stores; emotions all run high
This world I was a part of once, before that sad July.
This season's meant for happy times; for love, warm hearts, and cheer.
But grieving families 'round the world remember those not here.
We struggle through the season, lighting candles to proclaim
Our children aren't forgotten, 'round the world our candles flame.
I slowly pass through gates thrown wide one clear, cold Christmas Day.
No toys or playthings do I bring - those gifts of yesterday.
I carry with me just a polished heart of granite made
And walk with grief to where she lies in a silent, silvered glade.
“Merry Christmas, love,” I whisper — the quiet words seem so forlorn.
“I've brought my heart for you to keep, my gift this Christmas morn.
It is filled with all my love, though this one's carved of stone..
I'll place it here — it will be near — you'll never be alone.”
We parents don't forget, my love; this month we will unite
To honor all we'll light a wall of candles through the night.
The world will know our memories glow with love that's deep and true
We'll stand as one, and 'fore it's done the Heavens will know, too.
Please keep my gift, beloved child, close to where you lie,
And know my love surrounds you 'til the day I too shall die.
On the tenth of December my candle's flame will light
I pray you'll see the love we'll free into the starry night.

~ Sally Migliaccio

A HOLIDAY WREATH

A holiday wreath is a traditional part of the holidays in many homes. It can be a simple arrangement of fresh greens in which four candles are placed. As you light each candle this year you may create a new ritual which will become a lasting tradition for the holiday season. We hope that this memorial will help you include your loved one in the holiday season.

As we light these four candles in honor of you, we light one for our GRIEF, one for our COURAGE, one for our MEMORIES and one for our LOVE.

This candle represents our GRIEF. The pain of losing you is intense. It reminds us of the depth of our love for you.

This candle represents our COURAGE – to confront our sorrow, to comfort each other, to change our lives.

This light is in your MEMORY – the times we laughed, the times we cried, the times we were angry with each other, the silly things you did, the caring and joy you gave us.

This light is for the light of LOVE. As we enter this holiday season, day by day we cherish the special place in our hearts that will always be reserved for you. We thank you for the gift your living brought to each of us. We love you.

From Holiday Help: Coping for the Bereaved by Sherry Gibson, B.S., R.N. and Sandra Graves, Ph.D.



You'll Excuse Me

You'll excuse me if the bounce is gone from my step. Or the depth of my laughter has changed. Issues that were once monumental now seem so insignificant.

Please excuse me if I don't commiserate that your car needs repair or the faucet leaks; my focus on life has forever changed.

You'll excuse me if my spirit seems lost during holidays of any kind. They are now days "to hear," rather than days to share and enjoy.

You'll pardon me if I bring you down or make you feel discomfort, and I'll pardon you for not understanding that my life will never be the same; that although I'll survive, there will always be sorrow.

~ Joan Fischer, TCF/Nassau County Chapter, NY

THE SAMPLER

Carefully stitched and knitted

By our controlling hand,
a design just to our liking,
a pattern we had planned.

Comfortable, familiar,
Held up for all to see,

A source of pride and pleasure
defining who we are.

Thus doubled our consternation,
when tragedy arrives

And relentless unravels
The fabric of our lives.

POEMS by Richard A Dew, M.D. from his book of poems
"Rachel's Cry, A Journey Through Grief", 1996

Take Time to Grieve

If your child's birthday or death date is approaching, TAKE TIME TO GRIEVE. The restlessness, the endless searching, the lack of concentration, the persistent gnawing pain deep in your gut; the arms that ache in agony to hold a child—or hug him just once more; the unswallowable lump—like a silent scream, stuck in your throat—this is all a part of your grief.

You cannot run away, for it goes with you. You cannot go around it, or under it, or over it. You must go through it. TAKE TIME TO GRIEVE, to feel the pain, to relive the most important experience of your life—your child's life.

Attend to your "unfinished business." If you are "stuck," find out how to get beyond it. Do you need to go back to the hospital? The doctor? The autopsy report? Do you need to pour your feelings out on paper? Or write your final goodbye in a letter? Or tell that child all the things you never had the chance to say?

Remember, grief cannot be hurried, but it can be delayed. Time alone does not heal—it is what we do with that time! TAKE TIME TO GRIEVE. We do not measure our grief in months or years. We measure it in small steps of positive resolution!

~ Shirley Melin, TCF/Aurora, IL

SORROW IS NOT FOREVER—LOVE IS

So often one attempts to face the whole future at once. But we will not live that period all at once, only day by day. Don't try to face 20 years. Face today. When that has been achieved, face tomorrow. You will find more and more ways in which you can cope. The Chinese have a saying that a journey of a 1000 miles starts with a single step. There is no way you can take the 15th or the 200th step before you have taken the first.

It can be difficult to face going out again and resuming your regular activities. It can take more courage to face little things than the big things in life. Going out shopping for groceries for the first time can become an ordeal. Making the change more complete could help. Try a different store, a different day or time, and go with a friend. When it seems very hard what to decide to do first, maybe it's not very important where you start as long as you start. Choose a simple task and get started.

Once you've begun it will be far easier to set your priorities and you will have gained confidence for already having achieved something.

~ The Facts of Death by Michael A. Simpson

French Toast

I stand here before the stove. All the ingredients are here. The eggs, the milk, vanilla, cinnamon, and sugar. The frying pan is heating slowly, melting the butter and still I stand in my robe and slippers.

I pick up an egg to break it in the bowl, but I just can't do it. I want so much to fix french toast because my husband loves it so. Just like my son did all his life, right up until he died. I've lived this scene so many times since then, always with a tear and a sigh.

We'd had french toast at least once a week for more years than I can remember. How they ate! I'd laugh and complain because I had to cook so much.

Once, in Florida when we had french toast for breakfast in a restaurant with friends, he said. "This is ok, but you ought to taste my mom's!" I can still hear him saying it.

Now I just can't do it, I cannot cook french toast! My husband never asks, and while I stand before the stove and weep he pretends not to notice. But I know he understands. I just can't cook french toast...NOT YET.

~ Fay Harden, "Songs from the Edge"



OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED BIRTHDAYS

CHILD		PARENTS
NICOLE ANNE BLILIE	28	SCOTT & RUTH BLILIE
STEVEN DUANE COOK	49	SHARON COOK
SARAH FRANCES GUNDERSON	31	JEROME & RAMONA GUNDERSON
DAVID WILLIAM HALLMAN	29	DAVID HALLMAN
DAVID WILLIAM HALLMAN	29	LYNETTE MYROLD
LIBERTY NICOLE HAUGEN	13	KIM HAUGEN
KARL HELFTER	47	MARK & HELLA HELFTER
BENJAMIN GAFFREY KNIER	30	FRANK KNIER & MARY GAFFREY KNIER
TONY MILLER	29	SHAWN MILLER
JOSE DANIEL SAUVAGEAU	21	DANIEL SAUVAGEAU & MARY BJERKE
GARRETT JOSEPH SCHWAN	15	JENNA BJORNSTAD
GREGORY SEARS	30	LORI & JERRY BRADY
GREGORY SEARS	30	PERSYS PIERSALL (Grandmother)
SCOTT WARNECKE	49	DOUG & JOAN WARNECKE
TRACY ANN WATELAND	46	DENNIS & PAT WATELAND
TRACY ANN WATELAND	46	SHARON WATELAND (Godmother)
BRUCE ALLEN ZAESKE	55	ALAN & CHARLEEN ZAESKE

ANNIVERSARIES

CHILD		PARENTS
NICOLE ANNE BLILIE	10	SCOTT & RUTH BLILIE
KARI RAE BORGEN	11	JOHN & KELLY BORGEN
KIRSTIN ELIZABETH CANTLER-BOOKE ...	8	CHRIS & DAWN CANTLER (Grandparents)
JULIE M ERICKSON	3	JANET ERICKSON
TYLER JAY FREED	7	RANDY & DEBBIE FREED
RYAN P GOERTZ	1	JAMES & CHERI GOERTZ
SARAH FRANCES GUNDERSON	5	JEROME & RAMONA GUNDERSON
ASHLEY RAE HAINES	6	WILLIAM HAINES III
DAVID WILLIAM HALLMAN	24	DAVID HALLMAN
DAVID WILLIAM HALLMAN	24	LYNETTE MYROLD
LIBERTY NICOLE HAUGEN	13	KIM HAUGEN
NANCY DIANE HEST	13	RALPH & ETHEL HEST
TARA LEA KELLAR	6	CATHY & GREG GRONLAND
JODY ANN MAURER KNUDSON	8	JOHN & SHARON MAURER
JONATHAN LEVI POITRA	7	SUZIE & JAMES HILL
CHERYL L SAMSON	6	HENRY (DUKE) & PATRICIA SAMSON
BERNARD "BERNIE" WATELAND	8	SHARON WATELAND (sister)
PAIGE WIGHTMAN	1	DAVID & MICHELLE WIGHTMAN

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.

If you wish to receive the newsletter for The Compassionate Friends, Fargo-Moorhead Chapter by email instead of mail, please send an email to fntcfnwlr@live.com. Please include your name in the body of the email.



2017 Holiday Angels



Given By:

RALPH & CAROLYN NILLES
PAUL & KARA BAILEY
LISA BEACH

LARRY & LORI WIGER

KAREN SCHWARTZ
JORDAN & NATHAN HALL
LYLE, TAMMY, JUSTIN, STACY, HUNTER, JERSEY,
JAIME & JORDYN HELGESON

ALEX & ALICE RENDON
ANNE & JERRY BARBEE
BIRDINE GRAFSGAARD
BRENDA KLUTH
CHAD & RHONDA HOLLAND
DEWAYNE & ARLENE PETERSON
JANICE SHELDON
JIM & PHIL NELSON
LARRY & HAZEL GROOTERS
MICHAEL, KRISTIN & HAYDEN KNUDSEN
PAT & DENNY WATELAND
RHONDA & ANDY BJELLAND
ROBERT & TANYA LIVDAHL
RUSS & SHARON LALUM
SANDRA & CHARLES KLINKHAMMER
SCOTT & JAMIE OLSON
STEVEN & JOAN HALLAND
TOM & NANCY KASSMAN
DENNIS & SHIRLEY BJERKEN
SCOTT & RUTH BLILIE
CRAIG & DEANNA BRAUN
MARK & JEAN CHAFFEE
SHARON COOK
SHERYL CVIJANOVICH

BLAKE & CHRISTINA DAHLBERG
CAROL DUGGAN
THE ELLESS FAMILY
DEBBY & DAVID FACEY

LARRY & LOIS GANGNES
LARRY & MARY HANSON
JOHN & TERRI HELLAND
ELEANOR INFELD
NORMA JACKSON

RUSSELL & ANNE JOHNSON
LORETTA KEISACKER
MARLYS KESSEL
KEITH & SANDRA KISER
NORBERT & LUELLA KLEINGARTNER
B MICHAEL & GENEVA KNUDSON
LEROY & DONNA KORNELIUS
JIM & JODY KUTTER
CRAIG & BARB LARSON
NEIL & KATHLEEN PROCHNOW
TIM & PAULINE RINKE

In Memory of:

JARED NILLES
NICHOLAS LEE BAILEY
ASHLEY WIGER
NATHAN BEACH
ASHLEY WIGER
NATHAN BEACH
THERESA SCHWARTZ KLIER
HAZEL JANE HALL

JARED SCOTT HELGESON
STEVEN ALAN RENDON
MATTHEW GAFFNEY
DAVID GRAFSGAARD
BRANDON W T KLUTH
MATT HOLLAND
SHERI PETERSON BJORGAN
RANDY CYR
JANE NELSON SNYDER
GREGORY S GROOTERS
ADYSON JEAN KNUDSEN
TRACY ANN WATELAND
HALLIE BJELLAND
MICHAEL L LIVDAHL
CARMEN LALUM
ALEX B KLINKHAMMER
AUSTIN WAYNE WAGAR
COLE HALLAND
KYLE KASSMAN
BRIAN BJERKEN
NICOLE ANNE BLILIE
ANDREW BRAUN
KONNIE JEAN CHAFFEE
STEVEN DUANE COOK
MATTHEW ISAAC CVIJANOVICH
KELLY BOYES
RILEY DAHLBERG
ROBERT (BOB) DUGGAN
TARI L HELLER
DANA KEBLAR
FRED FINCH
BRENT GANGNES
MICHAEL L HANSON
HEIDI HELLAND
DARRYL ROBERT INFELD
JOHN CLAYTON JACKSON JR
HENRY NERAT
TODD ALLAN JOHNSON
CARLA RAE TRUITT
ANNIKA LORRAINE QUALLEY
CORDELL ALAN KISER
DAVID M KLEINGARTNER
DEBORAH CHERYL KYLLO
LANNIE L KORNELIUS
MICHELLE KUTTER
ERIC C LARSON
REED JOEL PROCHNOW
LOGAN F RINKE



2017 Holiday Angels



Given By:

DALE & MARILYN LARSON

SHERRY LASSLE
RICHARD & DIANE MACGREGOR
BRAD & JACKIE MOEN
RICHARD & LINDA OLSON
GLENNIS OLSON
ELLEN PAZDRO
PERSYS PIERSALL
PAUL & RENAE RONEY
CONNIE & BARRY RONGEN
JOHN & TAMMY SADEK

DUKE & PAT SAMSON

DANIEL & MARY SAUVAGEAU
BILL & LOIS SCHAFER
HAROLD & IRENE SCHENCK
DARLENE SKAR
TOMMY & LEAH TVEDT
ANTHONY & KAREL VARRIANO
DAVE & MICHELLE WIGHTMAN
CAROL & DAN WINTER
TOM & BONNIE WOLD
AL & CHAR ZAESKE
ALEXANDER & ELINAH MILLER

BECKY NELSON
DEBRA LABER
DIANE FENSKE
DON & LINDA BARTSCH
JACK & KELLY BORGEN
JEROME & RAMONA GUNDERSON
JERRY & YVONNE NELSON
JIM & SUZIE HILL
JOHN & JILL GAFFNEY
JOHN & KYLENE MILLIGAN
LYNN & DONNA MICKELSON

MARK & HELLA HELFTER

MIKE & JAN KNUDSON
PATTI PRATT
PAULETTE J HAUGEN
RHONDA & MIKE AUALLEY
SHARON WATELAND
SHAWN & JIM MILLER

SONIA WATELAND

In Memory of:

JOE LARSON
ERIC LARSON
AMY LARSON
GAIL LARSON
SUE ELLEN LARSON
JAYME LASSLE
SANDRA DIANE MACGREGOR CASELLA
JESSICA FAYE MOEN
MATTHEW ALLEN OLSON
JAMIE C OLSON
MATTHEW CVIJANOVICH
RAND PIERSALL
CARSON DENNIS RONEY
CHLOE GRACE RONGEN
NICK SADEK
ANDREW SADEK
CHERYL L SAMSON
CHRIS SAMSON
JOSE DANIEL SAUVAGEAU
ERIC JOHN SCHAFER
DOUG E SCHENCK
ALBERT "SONNY" SKAR
DANE ADAM TVEDT
CHAD VARRIANO
PAIGE WIGHTMAN
MATTHEW ALLEN WINTER
CHAD WOLD
BRUCE ALLEN ZAESKE
KELSEY GRACE MILLER
TONY MILLER
RYAN NELSON
JACOB ALLEN LABER
NATHAN ANDERSON
BRENT M BARTSCH
KARI BORGEN
SARAH FRANCES GUNDERSON
KYLE IRWIN NELSON
JON POITRA
MATTHEW GAFFNEY
MATTHEW MILLIGAN-OLSON
AARON DEUTSCHER
ALLISON DEUTSCHER
BRIELLE DEUTSCHER
BABY DEUTSCHER
DAVID HELFTER
KARL HELFTER
DEBORAH CHERYL KYLLO
NANCY (PRATT) COASH
JAYSON PAUL HAUGEN
ANNIKA L QUALLEY
TRACY ANN WATELAND
KELSEY GRACE MILLER
TONY MILLER
MARK ALAN WATELAND

KORSMO FUNERAL HOME

SIBLING PAGE

IN LOVING MEMORY OF JOEL

I sometimes sit and wonder how
Life can go on without you now
Somehow this month it will be five years
Yet many nights I still shed tears
Siblings we were that much is true
But friends as well, that's hard to do
Sometimes your missed, more now than ever
The shock's worn off, the pain forever
Although for now, our journeys apart
Forever in my mind, my soul, my heart
~ Robyn Mather, Alberni BC

THE DAY THE MUSIC DIED

On February 3, 1959, parents would lose children, siblings would lose brothers and grandchildren would die. This was the day a plane crash took the lives of singers J.P. Richardson (The Big Bopper), 28, Buddy Holly, 22 and Ritchie Valens, 17. Since all three were so prominent at the time, February 3, 1959, became known as "The Day The Music Died."

At the time of his death Ritchie Valens was a young man with superstar potential who, even though was still in his first year as a recording artist, had already made a name for himself in the music industry.

Growing up music would become a large part of my twin brother Alan's life. His interest in "The Wizard of Oz" would lead to an admiration of Judy Garland and in time Liza Minelli. He had seen many of Liza's concerts often sending her mailgrams of well wishes much to my mother's disapproval. It was her fear that he would get arrested for harassment. We would travel often to other concerts as well including Billy Joel, Bruce Springsteen, Diana Ross, Whitney Houston, Kenny G and even Yanni.

Alan's interest in music and the arts began in high school with the artistic productions. After graduation from Temple University he would become entrenched in the Philadelphia cultural scene. Much of his free time was spent volunteering for arts, dance and theatre organizations. His name would be listed in the credits of many artistic productions. He, like Ritchie Valens, was just starting to realize his dreams. Then came June 25, 1992. Alan had died of an AIDS-related brain tumor that had started not more than two months earlier. This was-for me-the day the music died.

Don McLean immortalized the February 1959 tragedy with his 1972 hit "American Pie", a song that took Alan and I years to understand and memorize. I would mark my personal tragedy by constantly changing the radio station. So much that I thought I would break the buttons. A break-up song would remind me too much of my loss. While in a friend's car I had him turn off the radio rather than risk crying.

Then one day a few years later, upon leaving the cemetery, on the radio I heard Whitney Houston's "The Greatest Love of All". Alan and I had recorded an awful rendition at a Hershey, PA amusement park recording studio. We agreed that no one else would hear the dreadful outcome. I switched stations twice only to hear the song two more times. It was my reflection that Alan was telling me to enjoy the music once again. To take pleasure in life and to do what we enjoyed doing together. I hear Alan's voice saying the words inscribed on Ritchie Valens grave "Come On, Let's Go."

Daniel Yoffee, TCF Board of Directors Sibling Representative.
Reprinted from We Need Not Walk Alone

A Journey to the "New Normal"

May 31 marked seven years since my only sibling Dave died from cancer at age 32. This June 28 we would have been celebrating Dave's 40th birthday with a big party, and I'd be kidding him about going bald, just like all the Snepp men before him. Instead, I'll be getting ready for the TCF National Conference, at which I'll share memories of his brilliance, great smile, and sense of humor with those who will never have the pleasure of meeting him in person.

At this point in my grief journey, most will be good memories of how Dave lived, rather than bad memories of how he died. I can't recall the moment when that shift of perspective occurred, but I would like to share a few memories and milestones that have marked the way:

- Months after Dave died, I went to see the movie "Big", starring Tom Hanks, and "lost it" when his mother stared out the window wondering if she'd ever see him again. I watched the movie again recently and didn't lose it.
- It was three months before I felt up to sharing with anyone the details of the day my brother died at his home in Bellevue, Washington, in the company of Mom, Dad, and me. On the way home from that emotional conversation, I drove the wrong way down a one way street in downtown Chicago – it might be smart to have a friend drive you to your first few TCF meetings!
- I discovered that the grief path is not a straight line. A few good days can be followed by several bad ones. I've heard other TCF members call this their "roller coaster ride."
- For a year, I couldn't keep the radio on if "Wind Beneath My Wings" came on. For the next year, I kept it on but cried through it. Now, I can usually make it all the way through without any tears!
- With the help of TCF, I realized that despite friends expecting it to be possible, I'd never be "back to normal." My focus instead shifted to finding my "new normal". While I can't point to a time when that happened (probably after the 1990 TCF Conference), THAT was a milestone.
- For three Christmases after Dave died, I didn't put up a tree in my condo. For Christmas, 1991, as I was getting out ornaments for my first tree since his death, I came across a bunch of ornaments that he had had in his apartment. I came totally unglued then, but now I look forward to seeing those ornaments each Christmas.
- It was three years before I felt that I had enough emotional energy to pursue a relationship. Even now, I don't have a lot of tolerance for guys I go out with that gripe about their brothers or sisters.

My most vivid "landmark" to date along my grief journey came in February 1993. Following my Dad's father's death in December, 1992, we were in Atlanta cleaning out my grandfather's apartment, and I came across a pile of post cards and letters that Dave had written to my grandparents through the years. Earlier in my journey, a "blind side" such as that would have sent me into a tailspin. In this case, though, my immediate reaction was one of happiness, for I had found a part of Dave that I didn't know I still had! I saved a few of the post cards, sent a couple to my cousin who was referenced in some of the letters, and (amazingly) threw the rest away. It was fun to share the memories, but I didn't feel the need to hang onto them. It was at that point, nearly five years after Dave's death, that I truly felt as if I was closing in on that "new normal."

~ Karen Snepp, TCF, Frisco, Texas, from the TCF Stages
Newsletter, Summer 1995

Life is a Bag of Frozen Peas

A few weeks after my first wife, Georgia, was called to heaven, I was cooking dinner for my son and myself. For a vegetable, I decided on frozen peas. As I was cutting open the bag, it slipped from my hands and crashed to the floor. The peas, like marbles, rolled everywhere. I tried to use a broom, but with each swipe the peas rolled across the kitchen, bounced off the wall on the other side and rolled in another direction.

My mental state at the time was fragile. Losing a spouse is an unbearable pain. I got on my hands and knees and pulled them into a pile to dispose of. I was half laughing and half crying as I collected them. I could see the humor in what happened, but it doesn't take much for a person dealing with grief to break down. For the next week, every time I was in the kitchen, I would find a pea that had escaped my first cleanup. In a corner, behind a table leg, in the frays at the end of a mat, or hidden under a heater, they kept turning up. Eight months later I pulled out the refrigerator to clean, and found a dozen or so petrified peas hidden underneath.

At the time I found those few remaining peas, I was in a new relationship with a wonderful woman I met in a widow/widower support group. After we married, I was reminded of those peas under the refrigerator. I realized my life had been like that bag of frozen peas. It had shattered. My wife was gone. I was in a new city with a busy job and a son having trouble adjusting to his new surroundings and the loss of his mother. I was a wreck. I was a bag of spilled, frozen peas. My life had come apart and scattered.

When life gets you down; when everything you know comes apart; when you think you can never get through the tough times, remember, it is just a bag of scattered, frozen peas. The peas can be collected and life will move on. You will find all the peas. First the easy peas come together in a pile. You pick them up and start to move on. Later you will find the bigger and harder to find peas. When you pull all the peas together, life will be whole again. The life you know can be scattered at any time. You will move on, but how fast you collect your peas depends on you. Will you keep scattering them around with a broom, or will you pick them up one-by-one and put your life back together? How will you collect your peas?

~ Michael T Smith, Fort Lee, New Jersey

THE NORMAL FAMILY

If you think you are going insane, THAT'S NORMAL.

If you can do is cry, THAT'S NORMAL.

If you have trouble with the most minor decisions, THAT'S NORMAL.

If you can't taste your food or have any semblance of an appetite, THAT'S NORMAL.

If you have feelings of rage, denial and depression, THAT'S NORMAL.

If you find yourself enjoying a funny moment and immediately feeling guilty, THAT'S NORMAL.

If your friends dwindle away and you feel like you have the plague, THAT'S NORMAL.

If your blood boils and hair in your nose curls when someone tells you, "It was God's Will," THAT'S NORMAL.

If you can share your story, your feelings with an understanding listener – another bereaved parent, THAT'S A BEGINNING.

If you can get a glimmer of your child's life rather than his/her death, THAT'S WONDERFUL.

If you can remember your child with a smile, THAT'S HEALING.

If you find your mirrors have become windows and you are able to reach out to other bereaved parents, THAT'S GROWING.

~ Edith Fraser

Ten Tips For Surviving The Difficult Holidays After Your Child Dies

With Thanksgiving and the normally festive holidays around the corner, millions of families throughout the United States that have lost a child are struggling with how they can simply survive to see the new year.

"The stress that bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents face during the hustle and bustle of the holidays can feel overwhelming," says Patricia Loder, former executive director of The Compassionate Friends. "It is difficult for those who have not gone through the death of a child to understand the depth of despair which such a loss brings."

Mrs. Loder, whose two young children died in a car crash in 1991, says there are many tips that can help a grieving family prepare for the holidays.

1) *Plan ahead.* Realize you will not be able to do everything with everyone. Decide what is truly important to you and your family.

2) *Don't be afraid to ask friends for help.* Tasks which may normally take little effort can feel overwhelming, whether it's fixing a meal, cleaning the house, or putting up decorations.

3) *No one expects you* to string rows and rows of lights just to prove you have the holiday spirit. If you don't feel up to past efforts, you may simply want to place an electric powered candle in your window in memory of your child.

4) *Just because you've hosted holiday gatherings in the past* doesn't mean you're obligated to this year. Others will understand.

5) *After a child dies, old traditions are often left behind* and new ones that incorporate the child who died can take their place. Honor the memory of your child in unique ways that have meaning to you.

6) *Surviving children should be included in your plans.* They too mourn their sibling, but need a normalcy the holidays can provide.

7) *If you don't get everything done that you plan, be easy on yourself.* Grief is tough work and you should never feel guilty for not getting everything done.

8) *If you must shop for others, find a time when the stores are not extremely busy,* like early morning, order through the internet or ask others to shop for you.

9) *Participating in a memorial service,* such as The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting, the second Sunday in December, can be very meaningful. This can be done in a formal service with others or through a short private candle lighting in the privacy of your home.

10) *Remember* that the fearful anticipation of an approaching holiday is usually worse than the day itself. "Many people believe that they can escape the holidays by leaving home on a vacation," adds Mrs. Loder. "This rarely helps because grief can never be left behind and it is important to have the support of relatives and friends. Talking with others who have also lost a child can help those facing grief to understand they are not alone. Others have survived the holidays and they will too."

LIGHT A CANDLE

Light a quiet candle, Send a quiet kiss,

Say a quiet fare-thee well, To the one you miss

Light a quiet candle, Shed a quiet tear,

Sing a quiet lullaby, and the quiet Christmas star will hear.

~ Sascha Wagner, TCF/Des Moines, IA

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

Your Name: _____

Child's Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Birth Date: _____ Death Date: _____

Date: _____

(Signature)

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



Butterfly Decals

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

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

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

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

You can see pictures of the trailer with butterflies on our website at www.tcffargomoorhead.org/ourtrailer.html.



Tracy Ann

**Tracy Ann
My Niece – My Heart**

You brought me such joy in so many ways like a warm radiant sun that brightened my days.

Your beauty, your confidence and your spirit so strong all shined from within like a wonderful song.

Your talent, your grace the gifts that you shared, with faith and with wisdom all showed the way that you cared!

Your plans and your dreams for what was yet to be...

Your ideas for the future for what was to be and the hopes you shared with me!

Tracy I'll love you forever because right from the start you filled me with love and put a smile on my heart.

You were my beautiful niece and goddaughter – a promise come true when God gave me a miracle Trace when he gave me you –

So... I'll love you forever and hope to see you soon – Rest in Peace – always with the angels and always
in our hearts.

Always & forever,
Auntie & GodMom

Happy Birthday Angel

Sharon Wateland

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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	John Milligan..... 701-491-0364	Newsletter Editor	Nancy Teeuwen 701-730-0805
Meeting Facilitator	Paul & Kara Bailey..... 701-261-0668	Newsletter Database	Daniel Sauvegeau & Mary Bjerken
Secretary	Sheryl Cvijanovich..... 701-540-3287	Website Administrator	Sheryl Cvijanovich 701-540-3287
Treasurer	Chuck Klinkhammer 701-298-2929	Initial Contact	Jamie Olson 701-219-3865
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:

- John Milligan (son, 25 - car accident) 701-491-0364
- 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.