



# The Compassionate Friends

## Fargo/Moorhead Area Chapter

### Supporting Family After a Child Dies

TCF's National Office  
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www.compassionatefriends.org

F-M Area Chapter  
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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

December 12th  
January 9th

**December Meeting Topic -**  
Candlelighting Ceremony, bring your child's or your favorite Christmas treat to share.

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

#### Dates to Remember

Mom's meeting - 7 pm on December 19th  
@ Fry'n Pan  
Annual Worldwide Candlelighting -  
December 8, 2019 7 p.m. local time

#### Missing You

I just can't believe it . . . The sun still rises and sets. The moon and stars still shine. The flowers still bloom. The birds still sing. I expected a change in everything. I just can't believe it . . . It still gets dark and light. The ocean still has waves. The rain still rains. The wind still blows. Is it because they do not know? I just can't believe it . . . I thought the world would stop. When in my house I found an empty chair, a missing smile. I thought it would stop for just awhile. I just can't believe it.

~Gretta Vinney, TCF/Austin, TX

#### 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 GIFTS

Neil & Kathleen Prochnow & family in memory of their son/brother, Reed  
Joel Prochnow

John & Terri Helland in memory of their daughter, Heidi Helland  
Mary & Marty Norberg in memory of their son, Thomas James Anthony Norberg  
Richard & Clare Elles in memory of their daughter, Tari Elles  
Heller  
Mary Bjerke in memory of her son, Jose Sauvageau

Pat & Denny Wateland in memory of their daughter, Tracy Ann Wateland  
Jim & Suzie Hill in memory of their son, Jonathan Poitra  
Becky Nelson in memory of her son, Ryan Dean Nelson  
Sharon Wateland and Denny Wateland in memory of their brother, Bernie  
James Wateland

Sharon Wateland in memory of her niece, Tracy Ann Wateland  
Doris Rheault in memory of her daughter, Jodie Brend

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.

Don't try to destroy a beautiful part of your life because remembering it hurts. As children of today and tomorrow, we are also children of the yesterday. The past still travels with us and what it has been, makes us what we are.

~ Rabbi Earl Grollman

## 2020 FM TCF Chapter Meeting Dates

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

## 2020 Mom's Group Meeting Dates

January 23rd	February 27th
March 26th	April 23rd
May 28th	June 25th
July 23rd	August 27th
September 24th	October 22nd
November 19th	December 17th

## ANGEL OF HOPE MEMORIAL SERVICE

The Angel of Hope will be holding an annual Candlelight Memorial on Friday, 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 near 1st Avenue South between 4th and 7th Streets in Fargo, North Dakota. Candles will be provided for all participants. Attendees are invited to bring a white flower to place at the base of the statue in memory of loved ones.



### 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday December 19th. For more information please contact Sheryl at 701-540-3287 or [sherylc13@msn.com](mailto:sherylc13@msn.com).

Starting in January of 2020 the Mom's group meeting will be meeting at Denny's at 4437 13th Ave SW, Fargo.

Sorrow makes us all children again - destroys all differences of intellect. The wisest know nothing.

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

## The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting

Join us on December 8, 2019

*...that their light may always shine.*

## Worldwide Candle Lighting

The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting held annually the second Sunday in December, this year December 8th, unites family and friends around the globe as they light candles for one hour to honor and remember children who have died at any age from any cause. As candles are lit at 7 p.m. local time, creating a virtual wave of light, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor the memories of children in a way that transcends all ethnic, cultural, religious, and political boundaries.

## LOST POTENTIAL

Last year I attended a workshop presented by a specialist in grief named Dr. Cable. Dr. Cable said many important things about the grief process, but as a bereaved parent one thing stuck in my mind.

He said that if you ask a bereaved person to describe his deceased mother, he will say, "Oh, she was so sweet. She always wore flowered dresses and loved to bake cookies." But, if you ask a bereaved parent to describe her deceased child, she will say, "Oh, he would be five this year and just starting kindergarten," or, "She would be twenty-two this year and graduating from college."

You see, we bereaved parents grieve the lost potential of our children. Our children don't stop growing in our minds. We grieve again and anew each year as our child would have been a different age.

~ Chris Anderson, TCF/Walla Walla, WA

## Holidays

Holidays have taken on a different sort of hue.  
The festive colors now just do not seem to be so true.

The reds and greens are not as bright;  
The tinsel's lost its' luster,  
To get into the mood at times takes more than  
I can muster.

The carols do not sound the same,  
But no one is to blame -  
I long to see your smiling face,  
Hear someone call your name.

I have so much for which to praise and give thanks  
to the Lord,  
And seeing you again someday is really a reward.

I need to spend my earthly time making  
memories to treasure,  
With Dad, Dan and Melly, Ben & Lily,  
true treasures without measure.

~ Judy Andres, TCF/Madison, WI

### **Her Journey's Just Begun**

Don't think of her as gone away,  
Her journey's just begun;  
Life holds so many facets,  
This Earth is only one.

Just think of her as resting,  
From the sorrow and the tears,  
In a place of warmth and comfort,  
Where there are no days and years.

Think how she must be wishing,  
That we could know today,  
How nothing but our sadness,  
Can really pass away.

And think of her as living,  
In the hearts of those she touched,  
For nothing loved, is ever lost,  
And she was loved so much.

~ Ellen Brenneman

### **In Tracy's Memory**

Even though Tracy has been gone 26 years. I think of her every day. I love her so much. I found this "Her Journey Just Begun" it says it all.

Love Mom & Dad  
In Memory of Tracy Wateland (1971 - 1993)

### **Frost**

On a cold winter's day  
Frost etches a beautiful artistry  
On everything it touches every blade of grass  
It glitters and sparkles and for moments  
Before the sun comes out and the masterpiece evaporates before  
our eyes we stand memorized cherishing the wondrous sight  
Like frost our children were only here for a brief moment  
But while they were here  
Whether it was moments in the womb  
Days, months or many years  
They etched their beautiful artistry of love  
On our hearts and lives and all of those they touched.  
Unlike frost what they etched is forever  
It is something that we can cherish and hold onto always  
We stand here tonight lighting a candle to remember children  
we will never forget  
Their light their spirits their artistry lives on  
And like the flame of the candle gives warmth on a cold  
winter's night and light in the darkness  
The love our children gave us still remains  
It keeps us warm when the cold winds of grief blow  
It lights our way through the darkness and loneliness  
That we feel  
And it gives us hope

~ Julie Short

2007 Southeastern TCF/Candle Lighting Ceremony

Much like the nature of the ocean, grief flows in waves.  
Sometimes you can predict the impact and even see the wave  
coming from a distance. Other times it can blindsides you,  
knocking you clean off your feet.

### **GIFTS FROM ABOVE**

They came from different places,  
they came from different homes.  
These gifts of children from above,  
that we claimed as our own.

These precious gifts were given  
with love from God above.  
Because He thought us worthy  
to care for these gifts with love.

These priceless gifts were welcomed  
by parents around the world.  
Celebrating the joys they brought,  
these tiny boys and girls.

It amazes us and gives us pause  
that we were chosen to receive,  
These cherished gifts from above  
-what an honor we believe.

We wonder why our gifts could not stay.  
Could it be they were much too loved?  
These precious gifts of our children -

Loved, missed and remembered  
-These precious gifts from above.

They left us much too soon, we think.  
And we continue to question, "Why?"  
It does not seem fair to us,  
That our children had to die.

We are left with empty arms and shattered dreams.  
Grief and pain now fill our lives.  
Our homes that once were filled with laughter,  
Now harbor our anguished cries.

When finally we emerge from  
the quicksand of fresh raw grief,  
We start to search for reasons left  
to live so we can find relief.

We long to hear from others like us  
with hearts that understand.  
Then someone may tell us of a place where people  
meet called The Compassionate Friends.

There we find a group of people like us  
joined by the bond of grief and love.  
Where we can share together about our children,  
These precious "Gifts From Above".

~ Faye McCord, TCF/Co-Chapter Leader, Jackson, MS

### **He Only Takes the Best**

God saw they were their happiest and someone would not let that  
be. So He put his arms around them and whispered "Come with Me".  
With tear filled eyes we watched them, suffer and fade away.  
Although we loved them deeply, we could not make them stay.  
A golden heart stopped beating, hard working hands put to rest.  
God broke our hearts to prove to us, He only takes the best.

~Author Unknown

## 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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### THE REASON FOR TCF MEETINGS

One could ask, "Why go and listen to the woes of other people when it is easier to get wrapped up in our own?" It is not to compare tragedies, nor assess the right or wrong means of grieving, nor to pressure or complicate or confuse a bereaved parent with timetables of grief. This is not the reasoning behind TCF meetings.

When a child of a family dies, the emotional pain can be intense. It is tempting at times to try to run either into solitude or avoidance. A balance is needed to survive and live more than a resigned existence. Finding a way isn't easy when the "rest of the world" rushes by, taking little notice that our life has changed.

The monthly meetings of The Compassionate Friends is a special time we can set aside to gain and maintain our balance. We need a lot of encouragement to endure and experience our emotions and to express ourselves while grieving. Coming to a meeting can help alleviate the feeling of being alone in sorrow. The environment of other bereaved parents offers a means of keeping in touch with reality, in which there can be a sharing and mutual understanding. There is sustained support knowing that others are willing to acknowledge that though a child's song might be over, the melody of memories will remain woven throughout the remainder of our lives.

~ N. Hunt, TCF/Sioux Falls, SD



## OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED BIRTHDAYS

CHILD		PARENTS
NICOLE ANNE BLILIE .....	30	SCOTT & RUTH BLILIE
JODIE BREND .....	50	DORIS RHEAULT
ZANE SHANNON BUCHHOLZ .....	22	STEPHANIE DETZEN
CHLOE LOVE CONN .....	17	JEROD & STACY CONN
STEVEN DUANE COOK .....	51	SHARON COOK
SARAH FRANCES GUNDERSON .....	33	JEROME & RAMONA GUNDERSON
DAVID WILLIAM HALLMAN .....	31	LYNETTE MYROLD
KARL HELFTER .....	49	MARK & HELLA HELFTER
JESSE ANDREW KOLNES .....	34	LEOBA KOLNES
TONY MILLER .....	31	SHAWN & JIM MILLER
CHARLES "CHUCK" NELSON .....	64	REVENIA NELSON
CONNER SANDER .....	24	KELLY SANDER
JOSE DANIEL SAUVAGEAU .....	23	MARY BJERKE
GREGORY SEARS .....	32	LORI & JERRY BRADY
GREGORY SEARS .....	32	PERSYS PIERSALL (Grandmother)
TRACY ANN WATELAND .....	48	DENNIS & PAT WATELAND
TRACY ANN WATELAND .....	48	SHARON WATELAND (godmother)

## ANNIVERSARIES

CHILD		PARENTS
RENEE ANN BERNIER .....	2	KENNETH & PATRICIA BERNIER
NICOLE ANNE BLILIE .....	12	SCOTT & RUTH BLILIE
KARI RAE BORGEN .....	13	JOHN & KELLY BORGEN
KIRSTIN ELIZABETH CANTLER-BOOKE ..	10	CHRIS & DAWN CANTLER (Grandparents)
JULIE M ERICKSON .....	5	JANET ERICKSON
RYAN P GOERTZ .....	3	JAMES & CHERI GOERTZ
SARAH FRANCES GUNDERSON .....	7	JEROME & RAMONA GUNDERSON
DAVID WILLIAM HALLMAN .....	26	LYNETTE MYROLD
TAMARA JO "TAMMY" HINES .....	1	SHARON D COOK
MICHAEL "MIKE" ROY NORBY .....	2	LAROY NORBY
JONATHAN LEVI POITRA .....	9	SUZIE & JAMES HILL
CHERYL L SAMSON .....	8	HENRY (DUKE) & PATRICIA SAMSON
BERNARD "BERNIE" WATELAND .....	10	SHARON WATELAND (sister)
PAIGE WIGHTMAN .....	3	DAVID & MICHELLE WIGHTMAN

Please check out our Chapter website's page for 'Our Beloved Children'  
([www.tcffargomoorhead.org/ourchildren.html](http://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](mailto: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

When the sun sits down on the mountains and the clouds turn purple and pink  
And golden rays send fingers out to touch me,  
I stop breathing and inhale with my heart  
Because I know that along those glittering strands of light  
Lies my connection to you.  
~ Sandy Goodman, TCF/Wind River WI



2019 Holiday Angels



Given By:

In Memory of:

BILLIE JEAN HOKANSON  
RICHARD & CLARE ELLESS  
JANET ERICKSON  
LYNETTE MYROLD  
JOE & VINCENT LEGGIO  
DENNIS & SHIRLEY BJERKEN  
MARK & HELLA HELFTER

MICHAEL HOKANSON  
TARI ELLESS HELLER  
JULIE ERICKSON  
DAVID WILLIAM HALLMAN  
ANNIE PAGE LEGGIO  
BRIAN BJERKEN  
DAVID HELFTER  
KARL HELFTER

SHARON COOK

STEVEN DUANE COOK

BRENDA KLUTH  
MARY TOBOLT  
LORETTA & ANTHONY SCHUMACHER  
CRAIG & DEANNA BRAUN  
LEROY & DONNA KORNELIUS  
NEIL & KATHLEEN PROCHNOW  
JOAN & STEVE HALLAND  
DEAN & DIANE BAUCK  
BLAKE & CHRISTINA DAHLBERG  
CONNIE & BARRY RONGEN  
TOM & LEAH TVEDT  
DAVE & MICHELLE WIGHTMAN  
RUSS & SHARRON LALUM  
RICHARD & LINDA OLSON  
BILL & LOIS SCHAFFER  
CRAIG & BARB LARSON  
SCOTT & RUTH BLILIE  
JEROME & ROMONA GUNDERSON  
DAN & CAROL WINTER  
LARRY & LOIS GANGNES  
LORETTA KEISACKER  
NORBERT & LUELLE KLEINGARTNER  
DICK & DIANE MACGREGOR  
JIM & JODY KUTTER  
PERSYS PIERSALL  
SHERRY LASSLE  
DEAN & JEANNIE LAMB  
LYNN & DONNA MICKELSON

TAMMY JO HINES  
BRANDON KLUTH  
SCOTT A. TOBOLT  
JENNIFER SCHUMACHER  
ANDREW BRAUN  
LANNIE LEE KORNELIUS  
REED JOEL PROCHNOW  
COLE HALLAND  
DAVIN BAUCK  
RILEY DAHLBERG  
CHLOE GRACE RONGEN  
DANE ADAM TVEDT  
PAIGE WIGHTMAN  
CARMEN LALUM  
MATTHEW OLSON  
ERIC JOHN SCHAFFER  
ERIC C LARSON  
NICOLE A BLILIE  
SARAH F GUNDERSON  
MATTHEW ALLEN WINTER  
BRENT M GANGNES  
CARLA RAE TRUITT  
DAVID KLEINGARTNER  
SANDRA MACGREGOR CASELLA  
MICHELLE KUTTER  
RAND L PIERSALL  
JAYME LASSLE  
CAITLIN POSCH  
AARON DEUTSCHER  
ALLISON DEUTSCHER  
BRIELLE DEUTSCHER  
UNBORN BABY DEUTSCHER  
DANA KEBLAR  
FRED FINCH

DEBBY & DAVID FACEY

SVEN & LYNDA MICKELS, CORT LELAND, ASHLEY  
BECKER, TAYLOR LELAND, KONNOR LELAND,  
GRACY LELAND, MARK THORLAKSON, BYRON  
VELANDER, KRISTEN LOOK & FAMILY  
SCOTT & JAMIE OLSON  
MARY BJERKE  
CHAD & RHONDA HOLLAND

KAMMI SUE THORLAKSON LELAND  
AUSTIN WAYNE WAGAR  
JOSE SAUVAGEAU  
MATT HOLLAND



## 2019 Holiday Angels



### Given By:

TOM & NANCY KASSMAN  
 JERRY & AMY NOESKE  
 REVENIA NELSON  
 MARLYS KESSEL  
 KEITH & SANDRA KISER  
 GRANDMA & GRANDPA FREICHELS  
 CHUCK & SANDY KLINKHAMMER  
 PAUL & KARA BAILEY  
 DALE & MARILYN LARSON

LARRY & MARY LEE ROBINSON  
 ELLEN PAZDRO  
 LARRY & HOLLEY TEAFF  
 SHERYL CVIJANOVICH

PAT & DENNY WATELAND  
 ANN & BOB WAGNER  
 JIM & SUZIE HILL  
 PAT & ERIC MONSON & REBECCA ELLINGSON  
 DIANE FENSKE  
 DEWAYNE PETERSON  
 KELLY SANDER  
 EDNA MAE PEARSON  
 MICHAEL & RHONDA QUALLEY  
 ALICE, GREG, TIFFANY SWANSON & LEVI BLINN  
 LEOBA KOLNES  
 JERRY & YVONNE NELSON  
 LISA BEACH & JEFF AMUNDSON  
 ANNE & JERRY BARBEE  
 BECKY NELSON  
 PAUL & RENAE RONEY  
 LINDA BARTSCH

### In Memory of:

KYLE KASSMAN  
 SAMUEL NOESKE  
 CHARLES D. NELSON  
 ANNIKA LORRIANE QUALLEY  
 CORDELL JEAN KISER  
 ADYSON JEAN KNUDSEN  
 ALEXANDER BRENT KLINKHAMMER  
 NICHOLAS LEE BAILEY  
 SUE ELLEN LARSON  
 JOE LARSON  
 GAIL LARSON  
 ELIZABETH LARSON  
 AMY LARSON  
 ERIC LARSON  
 TRAVIS JON MICHAEL ROBINSON  
 MATTHEW CVIJANOVICH  
 MATTHEW CVIJANOVICH  
 MATTHEW CVIJANOVICH  
 KELLY BOYES  
 TRACY ANN WATELAND  
 SUZETTE A PARKOS  
 JONATHAN POITRA  
 RACHEL ELIZABETH ELLINGSON  
 NATHAN ANDERSON  
 KENT PETERSON  
 CONNER L SANDER  
 JOHN THORVAL PEARSON  
 ANNIKA LORRAINE QUALLEY  
 NICHOLAS JOSEPH SWANSON "SWANNY"  
 JESSE KOLNES  
 KYLE IRVIN NELSON  
 NATHAN KEITH BEACH  
 MATTHEW J GAFFNEY  
 RYAN DEAN NELSON  
 CARSON RONEY  
 BRENT BARTSCH

KORSMO FUNERAL SERVICE, INC  
 HANSON-RUNSVOLD FUNERAL HOME

### The Sharing of Grief

I cannot carry this burden alone, the road is too steep and the pain too great. I shall only get to the top of the hill if I am able to lean on a firm shoulder whose strength lies in the reality of the feet which bear its weight. The sharing of grief is the only solution to the crisis that surrounds bereavement in our age. To share a person's sorrow is to accept their reality and to acknowledge the fact that none of us is immune from death.

~ Rev. Dr. Simon Stephens, Founder of Compassionate Friends

Each of us has a self-regulated time clock inside. Don't rush or push yourself or others. Go at your own pace.

"Footsteps Through the Valley" By Darcie D Sims

## SIBLING PAGE

### BELIEVE

In the rising of the sun  
and in its going down,  
We remember them.  
In the blowing of the wind  
and in the chill of winter,  
We remember them.  
In the opening of the buds  
and in the warmth of summer,  
We remember them.  
In the rustling of the leaves  
and the beauty of autumn.  
We remember them.  
In the beginning of the year  
and when it ends,  
We remember them.  
When we are weary  
and in need of strength,  
We remember them.  
When we are lost  
and sick at heart,  
We remember them.  
When we have joys  
we yearn to share,  
We remember them.  
So long as we live,  
they too shall live,  
for they are now a part of us  
We remember them.

from *GATES of PRAYER*  
Reform Judaism Prayer book

### ALIKE

As I look in the mirror,  
I wonder if it's true,  
Is it true when people say,  
I look like you?  
I know I have the pictures,  
And I have movies, too,  
But these do not help much,  
So do I look like you?  
I never got to know you,  
I wonder if it's true,  
When my friends and family say,  
I look like you.  
~ Kelly Maxwell, TCF/Pikes Peak, CO

### Gifts I Would Leave for You

The gifts I would leave beneath your tree  
Aren't those you could touch or see  
Not wrapped in Christmas tissue gay  
But a gift of life to live each day.  
The fit of love, warm and true  
And health your whole life through  
Smiles, and happiness and cheer  
To keep us happy through the year.  
These are the gifts I'd leave for you  
Though I know your life is through.

~ Jeffrey E. Meredith, TCF/Phoenix, AZ  
December 2002 Sibling Corner

### SAMMIE

By Chelsea Gordon

My name is Chelsea Carlson. I am 11 years old and in the 5th grade. My sister, Samantha, died in 1998 from being hurt in a riding accident. Sammie was 8 years old when she died. She was not only my sister, but my best friend. Sammie and I loved to play secret agents and house. It's six years later and a part of me feels terrible every day because she died and my life will be completely different. I wish I had more time with her.

Before Christmas this past year, my classmate's brother died. His brother was 8 years old, just like my sister. When I went to school, everybody was saying, "I know exactly how he feels." I said, "No you don't, because you haven't lost a brother or a sister." It made me very, very mad to hear this. After I came home from school, I cried, because I was remembering how I felt when my sister died. My mom and dad hugged me and that made me feel better. I told them that I wanted to help my friend. We talked about ways we could do that.

I thought it would be a good idea to talk to my class about what they could do or say that would help our friend and classmate. My mom talked with my teacher, and she said she would give me some time during the day to talk with my class. I made a list of things I thought were important to share. I sat on my desk and told them what was said that helped me when Sammie died, like, "I'm sorry," "You can talk to me about it," "It's okay to share your memories." I also told them what didn't help at all, like, "I know exactly how you feel," "I don't want to talk about it," "Aren't you over it by now?" I explained how Sammie died and how I felt at the time. That when I went back to school and no one talked about Sammie, it scared me. I thought everyone had forgotten her. I didn't want our friend to feel that way. I wanted my classmates to know that it was okay to talk about our friend's brother. I passed Sammie's picture around the classroom so my friends would get to know her. It made me feel like they were remembering her even though they had never met her. That felt great.

I've been sitting next to my friend in class. He feels a lot better because he knows we can talk about his brother anytime. He knows I really understand. I gave my friend books to read about dealing with death and grief that were given to me. I'm always talking to him to see how he is doing and personally, I think I am helping him a lot. It makes me so happy to help him.

*My sister, Sammie, would be pleased with what I'm doing.*

My big brother was so good to me  
When we were kids, he always let me go first.  
The night he died, he looked up at me,  
smiled his little crooked smile, and said,  
"Sis, this time let me go first."  
Connie Danson,  
eulogy for her brother, Frank Darnell  
from the book "Forever Remembered"

### A PART OF ME

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

I know that we argued and seemed to disagree, but  
I could always count on you to be there for me.  
YOU may be gone from this world I see, but you will  
always be a part of me.

~ Donna Montville, TCF/Gardner, MA



## Grandparents' Grief -- A Two Tined Fork

Grandparents' grief is like a fork with two tines -- one tine represents the loss of a grandchild and the other represents the pain of seeing your child suffer. Therefore, you have two tasks. The first is to work through your own grief and the other is to feel helpful to your bereaved child. There may be two parts, but you actually deal with them at the same time.

Many things determine how you grieve. We are all individuals in our personalities, experiences, ways of coping, and grief timetables. Your feelings will be the same as many other grandparents. At the same time, your grief and feelings will be uniquely and singularly yours. You may also experience some of these as well:

**Sleep Problems** - Most bereaved grandparents find sleep difficult for a time. Warm milk or a bath before bed, reading or using relaxation techniques or relaxation tapes, keeping a notebook by the bed to write out feelings and thoughts when you can't sleep may help. *Don't fight sleeplessness.* Accept the fact that this is normal and temporary, and that the rest you get by lying quietly can be almost as helpful as sleep. Be careful of drugs or alcohol. Neither produces normal sleep, and they may even delay your healing.

**Appetite** - A grieving person is seldom concerned with nutrition or a well-balanced diet, but proper nutrition is more important now than ever before. The quantity of food is not vital, but the quality is. Include something from the four food groups in each meal. Water, too, is important. You may want to pour eight glasses into a pitcher and be sure you drink it all during the day. Avoid caffeine and alcohol. It's a good idea to take a good, general vitamin daily.

Adequate sleep and good nutrition are especially important for us because we're older. We don't have the physical resilience that our bereaved children have.

**Constant Thoughts** - In the early weeks, you may think about your grandchild and the death almost constantly. This is not unusual. It's your mind's way of sorting out what happened. Let yourself think. Contrary to what people might tell you, you are not "dwelling" on painful thoughts, you are processing. This will lessen as you begin to heal.

**Constant Talk** - You need to hear yourself say, out loud, what you are thinking and feeling. This helps you see the reality of the death. Talking about your grandchild, your feelings and the death is the most healing thing you can do. The problem is finding someone to listen to you. Your friends are likely to tell you it's not good to talk about these things. Others may simply be uncomfortable listening to your pain. No matter! Find someone who will let you talk. Talking with your bereaved child helps both of you. Some find that talking into a tape recorder helps. One grandfather, when told he was talking to himself replied, "Right! It's good to have a conversation with an intelligent person." Others find it helpful to write to their grandchild who died, saying goodbye and sharing their feelings. However you do it, remember, *talking is essential.*

**Inability to Concentrate** - This part of grief can be very disconcerting and uncomfortable. You may feel confused or as if your thinking processes have slowed down. You may find yourself in the grocery store staring for 5 minutes at the peas and carrots, forgetting which you were going to get. Some people feel this confusion for many months, while others experience little of it. Again, we are all different. You can handle the inability to concentrate in different ways. Muddle through it, write yourself detailed instructions or reminder notes, and eliminate as many jobs as you can. If you can accept this reaction as normal and temporary, you will be less bothered by it.

**Your Body Grieves Too** - Physical problems such as weakness, fatigue, infections, colds, stomach problems, increased blood pressure, headaches, are common to bereaved grandparents. Any chronic physical ailments you already have can be aggravated now. It's important to have a check-up but be sure your physician knows you are grieving and understands that grief is normal. It's a part of life, not a pathological or emotional illness. Unfortunately, many doctors still see grief as "sick" and will prescribe medication for "nerves". Hopefully, your doctor can prescribe medication that will lessen your physical problems. Just be extremely careful of allowing any doctor to try to alleviate the stress of your grief with mind or mood-altering chemicals.

Your reaction to your grandchild's death is likely to be different from that of your spouse or the other set of grandparents. Don't compare yourself with them or think something is wrong with you if you grieve differently. Many things in our personalities, cultures, religions, and our lives contribute to how we grieve.

We hope you take the suggestions here and allow yourself to openly express your emotions. It isn't easy to change old patterns, but try. You can't avoid or bury grief. You must *go through it.* Sadness must be expressed through tears. Anger and guilt must be talked out and looked at honestly. Lean into the pain and *allow yourself to experience it. In other words, allow yourself to be miserable when you need to be.* This is what working through grief means.

*From www.healing heart.net*

## The Seven "T"'s of Grief

1. **Truth:** Tell it, regardless of how terrible the facts may be and how hard it is to talk about. Don't hide the truth about how you lost the person you loved. This generally applies to all kinds of tragedy.
2. **Trust:** Allow it. Don't let the painful circumstances surrounding the death of your child prevent you from talking with friends about your loss. It's very important to find people to trust to whom we can talk about what's going on in our lives.
3. **Therapy:** Which some completely believe in—not only traditional therapy of the talking kind, but also body therapy, massage, art therapy, music therapy, physical therapy, which can be therapy without even having the tag on it. Because loss can be a physical shock as well as a mental and emotional shock.
4. **Treasure:** Hold on. Don't stop treasuring your child.
5. **Thrive:** Keep looking at life with your eyes wide open. Don't give in to the temptation to use alcohol or other addictive substances to blunt or blur your sadness. Tremendous loss is also the opportunity for a fill in your life. It could be learning compassion for other people. It could be learning compassion for yourself.
6. **Treat:** nurture yourself. Give yourself the gift of kind understanding, and taking care of ourselves when we're in a fragile circumstance and when we have miles to go, because these things don't end in a week. They stay with us.
7. **Transcend:** The work always reminds me of spring because the earth transcends from the apparently dead circumstances. The spring comes and the sun comes and the flowers start to bloom, and the world really transcends death.

MEMORIES ARE TREASURES NO ONE CAN STEAL  
DEATH IS A HEARTACHE NOTHING CAN HEAL  
SOME MAY FORGET YOU,  
NOW THAT YOU ARE GONE  
BUT WE WILL REMEMBER NO MATTER HOW LONG!  
Lovingly Lifted from Pekin Chapter Newsletter Sept. '96

## Christmas is the Hardest Holiday!

Why is Christmas the hardest holiday? Is it because of all those traditions that mean so much but NOW lie broken and empty in my heart? Is it especially hard NOW . . . because of all the tinsel and tissue? Because of all the crowds dashing madly in and out of stores, buying something wonderful for someone wonderful? Is Christmas hard NOW because I don't need to shop or bake or decorate anymore?

It's been a long time since I endured my first bereaved holiday season. But even NOW, my heart sometimes still echoes with emptiness as I roll out the cookie dough or hang his special ornament on our treasure tree. I think that hurt will always be with me, but now I know it only as a momentary ache . . . not like the first year when grief washed over me in waves, each new wave hurling me deeper and deeper into despair.

And it's not like the second year's hurt when I found myself both surprised and angry that IT hadn't gone away YET. I grew anxious about my sanity in the third year when my hands shook as I unwrapped the precious ornaments. When was I going to get better?!! When was the grief going to end?!! Was I doomed to suffer miserably at every holiday for the rest of my life?!!

The year the little satin balls wouldn't stay on the tree, I gave up. Even the Christmas tree died! As my daughter and I dragged the brittle (and shedding) mess out into the snow drift on Christmas morning, I knew we had reached the bottom. He had died, but we were alive. Had our grief so permeated our house, our lives that even a Christmas tree could not survive? His death was more than enough . . . had we lost love, too?

That was the year we began to understand. And that was the year we decided to keep Christmas any-way. So what if our new completely bare tree was stuck in the snowdrift, already waiting for the garbage men? So what if the cookies were still a bit too salty with tears?

So, in the middle of that Christmas day, we returned to that forlorn, frozen stick of a tree. Carefully, we hung the bare branches with popcorn strings and suet balls (not quite the same as satin!). I'm sure we were a strange sight that afternoon, but with a mixture of tears and snowflakes, we began to let the hurt out and make room for the healing to begin.

With each kernel strung, we found ourselves remembering. Some memories came with pain. Others began to grow with us . . . warming heart — places we thought had frozen long ago. By the time we were finished, we were exhausted. Memories take a lot of work! At last WE had a tree, although it was not the one we were expecting. But we had one, decorated with tears and memories, sadness and remembered laughter.

And now we've grown older (and maybe a little wiser) and we've learned that love isn't something that you toss out, bury, pack away or forget. Love isn't something that ends with death. Life can become good and whole and complete once again . . . not when we try to fill up the empty spaces left by loved ones no longer within a hug's reach, but when we realize that love creates new spaces in the heart and expands the spirit and deepens the joy of simply being alive.

We saved a tiny twig from that frozen tree . . . to remind us of what we almost lost. That was the year we chose to let Christmas come back. Now we don't have to wait for joy to return. For now we know it lives with us . . . where Christmas is EVERY DAY.

~ Darcie Sims

## MISCARRIAGE - The Unrecognized Tragedy

Though it's been almost three years since I experienced a miscarriage, it still evokes painful memories. My husband and I had two healthy daughters at the time and were eagerly anticipating the arrival of our third child. The little one was to complete our family.

But at 18 weeks gestation, things went awry, and we lost our wee son. I remember experiencing an overwhelming feeling of emptiness as I left the hospital without our baby. Denial, then shock, sadness and anger caused anguish over the "whys?" and "what ifs?" It wasn't long before I found out how miscarriage may be trivialized as an insignificant occurrence.

My physician, who had not been present when I delivered the baby, confronted me a few hours later. "It was a boy," I sobbed. "Oh," she remarked in an offhanded way, "I didn't see it." I vividly remember my anger toward her nonchalant manner and the way she referred to him as an "it." *Don't you know that was our baby, our little son?* I thought. *Please don't minimize our loss.*

"You have other children at home, don't you?" she continued. *Yes*, I was screaming inside, *but don't you realize that each child is unique and special in his or her own right? Having two at home doesn't in any way lessen the sorrow I feel for this baby.* "Go home and enjoy your summer," she added later. "You can start trying again in another three months." Enjoy my summer?!! This miscarriage had literally knocked me off my feet. There I was, an adult mother of two, reduced to tears whenever I saw a pregnant woman or new baby. (They seemed to be everywhere I went!) There was no denying the intense emotions I felt. My husband and daughters, as well, were trying to deal with the loss in their individual ways. Even though I tried, it was not an enjoyable summer. Life didn't automatically revert back to normal.

Yet my heartache was misunderstood not only by my physician, but by others as well. I was given the impression that it was inappropriate and even abnormal to be mourning. There was a conflict between the way I actually felt and the way society expected me to feel. I began to think I must be losing it.

Fortunately, I had a deep need to find out all I could about miscarriage. I read avidly, attended support group meetings and talked to other women who had been through a similar experience. I was relieved to find out that my reactions were healthy and normal. Until then, I didn't know that I was going through the grieving process.

The tears, along with the questioning, the heart-to-heart talks with my family and friends, and the memorial service to say goodbye to our baby all helped me to heal.

A loss is a loss. Just because it's named "miscarriage" doesn't mean that it's insignificant. Nothing has ever affected me so deeply.... Though the deep sorrow I felt has since subsided, I realize that I'll never completely "get over" him. There are still times that I long to hold our son, to watch him grow, to love him.... I know I'll never forget.

~Sara Winslow, Bereavement Magazine, Colorado Springs, CO, [grief@bereavementmag.com](mailto:grief@bereavementmag.com)

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

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Death Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Signature)

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

### Butterfly Decals

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

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

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

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

### New Traditions

New traditions are now permanently woven into the fabric of our lives. The catalyst for these traditions is not a happy addition to our lives; indeed, the catalyst marks a traumatic loss in our lives. That subtraction comes in the form of the death of our child. The finality is crushing. This overwhelming loss has redefined each of us, changed our perspective forever and brought us close to the abyss of insanity. The new traditions gradually pull us back from the abyss and may eventually provide a sense of comfort, serenity and peace.

And so in June we remember our children. We communicate with them, via a note from our hearts, written on a butterfly shaped paper and tied to balloon. We, the parents of the dead, gather and listen to a poem about our collective and individual loss. We the parents of the dead experience the haunting bagpipe as it fills our senses with the sound and the meaning of Amazing Grace. We, the parents of the dead, once again stand together and remember our children. We speak to them. Our butterfly messages become kisses on the wind as our balloons ascend into the sky, floating southward, floating higher and higher until, we imagine, our children can reach out and grab each message and read it and know that we love them deeply and miss them every day and every night. This is our tradition. Each of us views it from the depth of our souls; our love of our children is demonstrated openly as we weep without shame for the loss we have experienced.

A significant part of each parent died when our children died. Yet, a crucial part of each child lives in the hearts of every mother and father. Neither time nor death will erase that bond. It is solid, it is pure and it is forever.

We hope that one day we will each make some sort of peace with this monster, this nightmare, this void, this pain. We hope one day to heal our open wound but know we will always carry an invisible yet deep scar. The worst loss a person can ever experience has been thrust upon us. The only change will come from within each of us. We may one day feel a serenity that comes only through pure love, pure kindness and pure understanding. We will learn to remember yesterday, live today and anticipate tomorrow.

And we will always have our new traditions – traditions that are now part of who we are, where we have been and where we are going in this life. Our traditions remind us that our children lived, laughed and loved. We linger in the moment for that is all we have.

~ Annette Mennen Baldwin, TCF, Katy/TX

### "...a bear wedged in great tightness."

"In a tape called, 'To Touch a Grieving Heart' there is a wonderful little reminder of the *Winnie the Pooh* story by A. A. Milne. You may recall that Winnie goes to visit Rabbit and eats too much honey. Coming out of Rabbit's hole, he gets stuck tight – so tight he can't even sigh. He asks his friends to stay with him, read him a story, and offer words of comfort...and thus to help 'a bear wedged in great tightness.'

Notice that Pooh does not ask to be pulled out of the hole, he asks only for company so he is not alone. I think Grief is like being 'a bear wedged in great tightness.' And, while we cannot make the grief go away for each other, The Compassionate Friends starts and stops with the core idea that we will be there for each other; that 'we need not walk alone.'

Opening remarks of the late  
Richard Edler's keynote speech at the 1996 TCF National Conference

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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
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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 15<sup>th</sup> 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.