



The Compassionate Friends

Fargo/Moorhead Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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F-M Area Chapter
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December 2021

Volume 38 Number 12

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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 9th

January 13th

Meeting Topic - Candlelighting Ceremony

We will be social distancing during our meeting. Please wear a mask when entering the building and continue to wear it during the meeting

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 23rd
@ Denny's

Annual Worldwide Candlelighting -
December 12, 2021 7 p.m. local time

"Hold tight the love our family gave us.
Hold it tight through the storms of grief
and bring it with you into TODAY."

~ 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 December 23rd for more information please contact Sheryl at 701-540-3287 or visit our website at www.tcffargomoorhead.org.

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

Joan & Steve Halland in memory of their son, Cole Halland
Shirley & Dennis Bjerken in memory of their son, Brian Bjerken
Sherry Lassle in memory of her daughter, Jayme Lassle
Becky Nelson in memory of her son, Ryan Nelson
Larry & Holley Teaff in memory of their nephew, Matthew Cvijanovich
Neil & Kathleen Prochnow in memory of their son, Reed Joel Prochnow
Sheryl Cvijanovich in memory of her son, Matthew Cvijanovich
Paty & Denny Wateland in memory of their daughter, Tracy Ann Wateland
Revenia Nelson in memory of her son, Charles D Nelson
Chanoa Fenroy-Parker & Cashondra Fenroy-Eaden in memory of their son/grandson, Liam Sammie Abraham
Wally & Carol Blomberg in memory of their daughter, Bridget Chisaka
Jim & Suzie Hill in memory of their son, Jonathan Poitra

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.

"The reality is that you will grieve forever. You will not 'get over' the loss of a loved one; you'll learn to live with it. You will heal and you will rebuild yourself around the loss you have suffered. You will be whole again but you will never be the same. Nor should you be the same nor would you want to."

~ Elisabeth Kubler-Ross and David Kessler

2022 FM TCF Chapter Meeting Dates

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

2022 Mom's Group Meeting Dates

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

ANGEL OF HOPE MEMORIAL SERVICE

The Angel of Hope will be holding an annual Candlelight Memorial on Monday, 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.



Handling Friends and Relatives

Relatives and friends can be very uncomfortable with your grief, and, therefore, may try to persuade you to do things for which you are not ready. They may tell you that you should feel better or that you shouldn't talk about it. Only you know what is good for you; consequently, you should do only what you find comfortable, even if it means not seeing some people for a while.

Other people may have set a timetable on how long your grief should last. Coping with the death of a child takes years, not weeks or months, and, unless you have had a child die, it's impossible to understand. Stick up for yourself; it is difficult when you are not sure of anything. You know how you feel, so don't let anyone tell you how to act, think, or feel.

Tell your relatives and friends what you want them to do. If you want to be remembered at anniversaries and holidays and they are remiss, let them know how it makes you feel. Also, share with them that you want your child to be mentioned in conversations. You may cry, but let them know it is normal and they are not the cause of your crying. Let them know it is better for you to cry than for them not to mention your child, which would cause you to grieve silently.

~ ALIVE ALONE, TCF/Western Australia

As we grieve the loss of our children and one another's,
We begin to find a different kind of love than we ever expected to experience.

~ Rosalie Baker, TCF/Rochester, NY

Only December

Feelings heavy,
tears and tears.
Will the darkness last?
Or is it –
only December?
Hadn't past months
brought peace and hope?
Where is the strength
of October –
and November?

Lights, carols, ornaments on trees,
cards from friends,
happy times in seasons past.
We remember.
We remember.
Will January bring
light at last?
Will we be stronger then,
for making it through
this December?
When people ask
how I'm doing I say,
Well . . . you know . . .
it's December.

~ Genesse Bourdeau Gentry
from Stars in the Deepest Night- After the Death of a Child

A Memory I Did Not Have

Many things have stepped off into half visibility
Since my son was born, but images of his handsome
Features, the smile that seemed always to be there
Even In the midst of great pain and sorrow,
The sound of his laughter that could brighten
Any day, are not numbered among them.

After he died I insisted that everything be left just as
He'd disarranged it...right down to the last conductor,
Piece of duct tape, wire and connector. I move very
Slowly within the spaces he left...if eternity should move
Even half so slowly as this day, it would be endless enough
To shadow and transform any mother's face.

Sometimes he visits me in my dreams but occasionally
He returns to me in a fragrant memory that
I did not actually have, but cherish all the same.
There are times I hear his voice so clearly I cry, and other
Times I see him standing tall and still, smiling but mute....
One minute short of telling me who he really was.

~ Sharon Peeples, TCF/Longmont, CO
In Memory of Rodney Alan Peeples

When grief is new you need not find a reason however good and
brave - to temper your despair. When grief is new, the heart
accepts no answer. However wise and kind - to ease your
mourning. When grief is new your life can only know
disintegration, overwhelming pain... My friend, try to believe
what other grievers learned: You will not always hurt as you hurt
now... Time will restore the soundness of your mind.
All other words are shadows on the wind when grief is new.
Sascha Wagner

Holiday Wish List: Peace on Earth (& No More “Closure”, Please...)

What more can be said about the past seven weeks since the nightmare of September 11th? All of us witnessed the horror and, via television, relived it over and over and over again. Much like President Kennedy’s assassination and the Challenger tragedy, I know that it will be an image ingrained in my mind forever, only with more empathy and a greater impact because of the purposeful and enormous loss of life.

Once I got beyond the shocking, unbelievable images of the high jacked airplanes slamming into the World Trade Center, and beyond the fact that this was not an action flick with chillingly realistic special effects, without any hope that in a minute someone would jump up and say, “Don’t worry, this was only a movie, folks,” -- then numbing reality set in. My mind then focused on something that I could relate to all too well: the thousands of people whose lives at that very moment changed eternally; the survivors of the victims, the loved ones left behind to begin this difficult grief journey.

For most of us, what happened on that fateful Tuesday on a beautiful late summer day in New York, Washington, D.C. and Pennsylvania, brought our thoughts right back to that same “dark place” we were at when our children died. We relived that moment when we suffered the worst loss. It replayed in our minds, like videotape on everlasting rewind. I felt the same indescribable sick feeling wash over me as I contemplated what this moment would mean for the victims’ families.

It was not long before the word “closure” began cropping up in the rhetoric of newscasters, commentators, reporters and politicians. Since Nina died, to me the word “closure” is equivalent to fingernails scraping down a chalkboard. It seems to me that closure is used as a way to say, “Let’s get some closure in here so that those of us not directly affected by this tragedy can put it behind us and get on with *our* lives.” In this sense, closure is not meant for the victims of the tragedy; closure is meant for those hoping to just “make it go away.” If only it were that simple.

The far-reaching effect of the events of September 11th just might spur a quest for more grief education and how to help those who are grieving. Perhaps the general population will come to realize that for those whose precious loved one has died, there is no such thing as closure. Yes, thankfully, closure as an end to the intensity of our pain, but not in the sense that we just “get over it.” We don’t, and we *never* forget, but begin learning to live with the pain of their absence the very best way we can. It is not easy. There is a reason it is called grief work; indeed, it is the hardest work we will ever accomplish.

There are thousands joining the ranks of the newly bereaved entering their first holiday season minus their child. Although it has been six years since my Nina died, I’ll never forget those trying days. Watching the world untouched by grief as they go about their normal holiday routine of shopping and decorating, the general hustle and bustle of this time of year. You wonder, “Don’t they know the world as I knew it has stopped? How can their lives just go on as if nothing has happened?” Many bereaved parents have said that ideally they would go to sleep sometime in late October and wake up sometime after January 1, after the last remnants of the season are cleared from every corner of our existence.

Although we can’t make that happen, I can offer a few things that might help. Please don’t let anyone tell you that you should or should not do something that you just don’t feel up to this season. The number one thing to remember is that you need to take care of yourself, physically and emotionally. That might mean that you forgo buying Christmas presents, decorating, baking, and all the other normal things you used to do. This holiday season is anything but normal for those who are bereaved. Tell your family members and friends how they can help you. I know they would appreciate your honesty and guidance, as they are also at a loss of what to do. Feel free to bring your child into the holidays with you in any way that you can. Set a picture of them out with a candle alongside it to light whenever you wish. Bring it with you when you go to family celebrations. Speak your child’s name freely. Others are afraid to for fear they will bring you more pain. Explain to them that you want to hear their name spoken; that they will always be very much a part of your life even though they have died. Encourage them to share their memories of your child, grandchild, brother or sister. You can tell them that by sharing that special memory they are giving you a most valuable gift. Let them know that even though you may cry, they are tears that need shedding and are all part of the long process toward healing.

It goes without saying what would be #1 on all bereaved parents’ holiday wish lists; a wish that we know can never come true. However, we can wish, hope and pray for peace on Earth, good will to all men, that all of the occupants of this troubled world will love more and wars will cease. My wish is that you find peace in your heart again and that you remember always that you are never alone. That we, who have been there too, are here to offer you the gift of friendship, encouragement, understanding, and hope for as long as you need us.

With warm and gentle thoughts, and extra hugs to last through this holiday season and always,

~ Cathy L. Seehuetter, TCF/St. Paul, MN In Memory of my daughter, Nina

Vulnerable

I have found in the years that have passed that **I am most vulnerable at times of remembrance.** The word “Anniversary” no longer holds a promise of celebration. Instead, holidays and birthdays, family gatherings and otherwise joyous occasions contain an undertow of sorrow. If I get caught up in it, I quickly get pulled under and wind up gasping for breath. It is ironic that the presence of the absence can be so emotionally devastating.

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 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 bear”, 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

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.

"In A Split Second"

We've always had fears of family tragedy
Seemingly distant, yet always so near
We prayed our family to pass through this life
Without tragedy's heavy burdens to bear
But then, on that day so brutal
So suddenly our lives turned into pain
Normal life we knew was gone
And never again would be the same
We lost two little Grand Daughters
In a split second they were taken forever to be
This day our life just turned upside down
Yes, we lost Loral and Macy you see
Now our lives, we must continue
It hurts, and wasn't supposed to be this way
Our souls yearn to reach that great destination
While weary and worn, we trod forth each day
We still find some happiness, but more often sadness
We sometimes laugh and sometimes cry
With grief and longing for our lost girls
Yes, with our faith, we know we'll get by
PawPaw
~ Donald Moyers, TCF/Galveston County, TX
In Memory of Loral and Macy

Tabloids

The line in the grocery store was long that day, leaving plenty of time to scan the magazines positioned near the checkout counter to catch the attention of restless, impatient customers. "Flatten Your Tummy," "Lose 40 Pounds in 30 Minutes with Our Amazing New Diet," "Eat Prune Pits for a healthy Sex Life," and on and on.

I thought about parents in grief. And I know the response most of us have in the early weeks, months, and years of grief: What does it matter? Why should I be concerned about health? Life takes on a different meaning after a child dies. We feel like we will never again care if our tummies are flat, and our muscles are strong.

If there had been an article on the rack that day about getting up when I'm not sure if I can walk, drinking water when I cannot even swallow, breathing in and out without sighing, waking up or going to sleep without flashbacks, staying silent when my heart wants to scream... I would have bought it.

~ Alice Monroe, TCF/ CO

Hope as a Goal

Hope for a healed future and a new normal life is difficult to see in the shadow of the loss of a child. Hope is always present in our lives but must be sought, perhaps as a goal. Don't ever give up hope that your pain will subside and that someday a peaceful feeling will take its place. This attainment of peace does not happen overnight, unfortunately. Keep sight of your goal and someday it will be a reality.

~ Janet Sonnen, TCF/Salem, OR

How Many Stockings Shall I Hang?

What a torment! Funny how you worry what your friends will think. For days I worried... And finally I hung three upon the fireplace wall, and laid one gently on the mantel.

But that was last year! And this year I shall hang all four above the fireplace. For this year the confusion of the mind has found new answers - with conviction! For it does not really matter whether my oldest daughter lives in Tucson, or my youngest son David is dead - these are my children - our family - and as long as we hang the Christmas stockings, we shall hang them all...with Love.

~ Shirley Melin, TCF/Aurora, IL

Life is Like a Mobile

Someone once told me that when your family changes you need to look at it like a mobile. It is in this perfect balance until you lose one of the members. If you yanked off one strand from the mobile it would rock to and fro for some time trying to rebalance itself. When it finished rocking it would not though be level like when you started.

Over time things shift and it becomes more balanced once again. I think this is a good word picture of what it is that we experience when we lose a child. You my friend are in the hard rocking stages where the mobile is trying to right itself and balance out after the piece has been yanked from it.



~shared by Laura, TCF Online Sharing

TURNING TRAGEDY INTO POSITIVE ACTION

It has been some time now since we lost Tom, --six years. I still think of him every day, and wonder "what might have been".

I always have strong feelings that Tom was cheated. He never had a chance to do all the "growing up" things in life, drive a car, go fishing, college, marriage, children, etc.

He was a person who loved life and humor. He really enjoyed a good laugh. He was always the diplomat in our family. When there were any disruptions in our family, he was the problem solver.

We miss him . . . but know life goes on.

One thing that helps me accept his death is my work with Compassionate Friends. I know that Tom would want it this way. He loved people, young and old. He had a concern, a compassion for his fellow man.

I am proud to be associated with The Compassionate Friends because I know this is what he would want--to reach out and try to help others help them-selves.

~ Donald Bauman, TCF/Fairmont, MN

"Giving yourself time to heal and creating space for the process allows the painful memories to be replaced gradually by more pleasant ones. When the pain subsides, one remembers the whole relationship not the most recent memories of illness, accidents, and death. Eventually we need to make peace with that which will never be resolved."

~ Anne Brener



OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED BIRTHDAYS

CHILD		PARENTS
RYAN TODD AASEN	28	TODD & ADELE AASEN
LIAM SAMMIE ABRAHAM.....	2	CHANOA FENROY-PARKER
LIAM SAMMIE ABRAHAM.....	2	CASHONDRA FENROY-EADEN (Grandmother)
MEAGAN BAUER	36	SUSAN & BOB MARGHEIM
NICOLE ANNE BLILIE	32	SCOTT & RUTH BLILIE
JODIE BREND.....	52	DORIS RHEAULT
ZANE SHANNON BUCHHOLZ	24	STEPHANIE DETZEN
BRIDGET CHISAKA.....	37	WALLY & CAROL BLOMBERG
CHLOE LOVE CONN	19	JEROD & STACY CONN
STEVEN DUANE COOK	53	SHARON COOK
SARAH FRANCES GUNDERSON	35	JEROME & RAMONA GUNDERSON
DAVID WILLIAM HALLMAN.....	33	LYNETTE MYROLD
KATHRYN "KATIE" HANSON.....	39	JEANETTE & DENNIS HOLLAND
KARL HELFTER.....	51	MARK & HELLA HELFTER
JESSE ANDREW KOLNES	36	LEOBA KOLNES
TONY MILLER	33	SHAWN & JIM MILLER
CHARLES "CHUCK" NELSON	66	REVENIA NELSON
CONNER SANDER	26	KELLY SANDER
JOSE DANIEL SAUVAGEAU	25	MARY BJERKE
GREGORY SEARS.....	34	LORI & JERRY BRADY
JANESSA "JAYE" NICOLE SMITH.....	41	KEITH & MARY GOHDES
TRACY ANN WATELAND	50	PAT WATELAND
TRACY ANN WATELAND	50	SHARON WATELAND (godmother)

ANNIVERSARIES

CHILD		PARENTS
LIAM SAMMIE ABRAHAM.....	1	CHANOA FENROY-PARKER
LIAM SAMMIE ABRAHAM.....	1	CASHONDRA FENROY-EADEN (Grandmother)
CALVIN JACOB ARMBRUST.....	2	KIM ARMBRUST
CALVIN JACOB ARMBRUST.....	2	DAN & SHELLY ARMBRUST
RENEE ANN BERNIER	4	KENNETH & PATRICIA BERNIER
NICOLE ANNE BLILIE	14	SCOTT & RUTH BLILIE
JULIE M ERICKSON	7	JANET ERICKSON
RYAN P GOERTZ	5	JAMES & CHERI GOERTZ
BRADLEY KARL GRABER	1	CONNIE GRABER
SARAH FRANCES GUNDERSON	9	JEROME & RAMONA GUNDERSON
DAVID WILLIAM HALLMAN.....	28	LYNETTE MYROLD
TAMARA JO "TAMMY" HINES	3	SHARON COOK
SCOTT JAGER.....	2	BEVERLY JAGER
BRANDON NILES	3	MARY & MARK TUTTLE
MICHAEL "MIKE" ROY NORBY	4	LAROY NORBY
JANZEN PETERSON	3	JULIE & JAY PETERSON
JONATHAN LEVI POITRA	11	SUZIE & JAMES HILL
KYLE ROOS.....	1	CHUCK ROOS
CHERYL L SAMSON.....	10	PATRICIA SAMSON
BERNARD "BERNIE" WATELAND	12	SHARON WATELAND (sister)
PAIGE WIGHTMAN	5	DAVID & MICHELLE WIGHTMAN
MELINDA JOY WINTERROTH	2	MONTY & JOANNE WINTERROTH



2021 Holiday Angels



Given By:

In Memory of:

PETERSON FAMILY
 RUSSELL & SHARON LALUM
 TOM & LEAH TVEDT
 LINDA & MARK MERCK
 MARGARET LIMA
 HERMAN & RENNAE WEISS
 JANICE AABERG
 SHERRY LASSLE
 MIKE & CHERYL RINNELS
 JUANITA WEBBER
 LYNETTE MYROLD
 ALVINA SPENST
 JOHN & TERRI HELLAND
 DWIGHT & MARLENE PERKINS
 JOANNE WINTERROTH
 DEAN & JEANNIE LAMB
 MARY TOBOLT
 LARRY & LOIS GANGNES
 CRAIG & BARB LARSON
 ARLEEN FRISCH
 SHARON COOK

LORETTA KEISACKER
 ELLEN PAZDRO
 NEIL & KATHLEEN PROCHNOW
 ANNE SNYDER
 JERRY & YVONNE NELSON
 EMMA HUELSMAN
 CONNIE & BARRY RONGEN (GRANDPARENTS)
 TOM & CHERYL BOYLE
 LYNN & DONNA MICKELSON

CLAYTON & GLORIA BRENNAN
 DOUGLAS HUDSON
 DARLENE SIMONSON
 JOE & VINCENT LEGGIO
 ROSEMARY FESKE

PAULINE RINKE
 BILL & LOIS SCHAFFER
 JAN ERICKSON
 KEITH & SANDRA KISER
 DAN & SHELLY ARMBRUST
 BRENDA KLUTH
 DEBBY & DAVID FACEY

LORI KOENIG

JANZEN PETERSON
 CARMEN LALUM
 DANE ADAM TVEDT
 BENJAMIN MERCK
 SCOTT A LIMA
 KRISTOPHER LEE WEISS
 JORDAN AABERG
 JAYME LASSLE
 CHAD RINNELS
 JEFFREY WEBBER
 DAVID HALLMAN
 PATRICK SPENST
 HEIDI HELLAND
 AMANDA PERKINS
 MELINDA JOY WINTERROTH
 CAITLIN JEAN POSCH
 SCOTT ANTHONY TOBOLT
 BRENT M GANGNES
 ERIC C LARSON
 JOHN FRISCH
 STEVEN DUANE COOK
 TAMARA JO "TAMMY" HINES
 CARLA TRUITT
 MATT CVIJANOVICH
 REED JOEL PROCHNOW
 ADAM SNYDER
 KYLE IRVIN NELSON
 KEVIN HUELSMAN
 CHLOE GRACE RONGEN
 RUSTY BOYLE
 AARON DEUTSCHER
 ALLISON DEUTSCHER
 BRIELLE DEUTSCHER
 UNBORN BABY DEUTSCHER
 JEFFREY BRENNAN
 DOUGLAS HUDSON II
 WANDA HAGEN
 ANNIE LEGGIO
 VICKY HOLWEGER
 STEVE (HERMAN) FESKE
 LOGAN RINKE
 ERIC SCHAFFER
 JULIE ERICKSON
 CORDELL A KISER
 CALVIN ARMBRUST
 BRANDON WT KLUTH
 DANA DAWN KEBLAR
 FRED FINCH
 TRAVIS SCOTT KOENIG



2021 Holiday Angels



Given By:

In Memory of:

DIANE FENSKE
BLAKE & CHRISTINA DAHLBERG
LUELLA KLEINGARTNER
DONALD & PAULA SELL

LEROY & DONNA KORNELIUS
SANDI & BOB ROEL
LANCE & TASHARA DITCH
CRAIG & DEANNA BRAUN
JIM & JODY KUTTER
ELLESS FAMILY
SHERYL CVIJANOVICH

JOAN & STEVE HALLAND
SHIRLEY & DENNIS BJERKEN
BECKY NELSON
JOHN & NANCY TEEUWEN
DEB WAYMAN
CONNIE GRABER
RICHARD & LINDA OLSON
PATTI PRATT
LISA BEACH & JEFF AMUNDSON
JERRY & AMY NOESKE
TONIA KING & LUKE WEBER
PAT & DENNY WATELAND
GLENNIS OLSON
EDNA MAE PEARSON
MARK & HELLA HELFTER

CHUCK & SANDY KLINKHAMMER
DAN & CAROL WINTER
WALTER & KARIE COWDEN

DEWAYNE PETERSON

KELLY SANDER
MARY & KEITH GOHDES
KIM ARMBRUST
PAT & ERIC MONSON
LINDA BARTSCH
JIM & SUZIE HILL

NATHAN ANDERSON
RILEY DAHLBERG
DAVID KLEINGARTNER
MATHEW SELL
MICHAEL STROM
LANNIE LEE KORNELIUS
JOSEPH PETER ROEL
WHYLIX EDWIN DITCH
ANDREW HOWARD BRAUN
MICHELLE KUTTER
TARI ELLESS HELLER
MATT CVIJANOVICH
KELLY BOYES
COLE HALLAND
BRIAN BJERKEN
RYAN NELSON
BRANDI ROSE IRENE TEEUWEN
HEATHER WREN
BRADLEY GRABER
MATTHEW ALLEN OLSON
NANCY PRATT COASH
NATHAN KEITH BEACH
SAMUEL NOESKE
AVA MARIE WEBER
TRACY ANN WATELAND
JAMIE OLSON
JOHN PEARSON
DAVID HELFTER
KARL HELFTER
ALEXANDER BRENT KLINKHAMMER
MATTHEW ALLEN WINTER
WILLIAM "BILL" COWDEN
KEVIN SCOTT COWDEN
ROBIN VIGDAL-HOSLER
KENT PETERSON
SHERI PETERSON BJORGAN
CONNER SANDER
JANESSA SMITH
CALVIN ARMBRUST
RACHEL ELIZABETH ELLINGSON
BRENT MICHAEL BARTSCH
JONATHAN POITRA

HANSON-RUNSVOLD FUNERAL HOME
KORSMO FUNERAL & CREMATION SERVICE

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM THE FARGO/MOORHEAD CHAPTER
OF THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

SIBLING PAGE

A SIBLING SPEAKS OUT

What happens to the children when a Brother or sister dies?

In some ways it is a very different experience from that which parents go through, while in others it is very much the same. Part of the reason for the difference is that the child who has died has a unique relationship with each family member. Part of the reason for the similarity is that all have suffered a loss.

One of the strongest desires expressed by siblings is that they are much more likely to want to return to a normal routine. They want to return to school fairly quickly and to go out with their friends. They want their parents to stop crying, not because they don't care but because they do care and want to see the hurt stop. Just because a child wants to go to a movie doesn't mean he isn't grieving. I think that children are much less exposed to socially "appropriate" behavior after someone has died and may do things that do not fit into an "appropriate" role.

Another strong feeling I see is that of guilt. As much as parents know about their children, there are some things they will never know. A child's private thoughts, or an exchange between children, may never come to the parents attention. The source of child's guilt is frequently the result of an argument, a hastily shouted "drop dead," or a similar fleeting thought. These incidents come back to haunt children, as though one such incident had something to do with the death.

There are a few more concerns that may develop. One is how to take over for the dead child--for example, the household chores that were always done by him or her, but that now have to be done by someone else. Related to this concern is a situation in which a child always shared a particular activity simply because the sibling did it too. After the death, the surviving sibling may feel compelled to continue the activity, because to give it up would be to take away a reminder of the dead sibling. Another concern is that whatever happened to the brother or sister may happen to the survivor. This is particularly acute if the sibling who died was older. As the child approaches the age of the sibling when he or she died, a feeling of anxiety may develop. Many children realize this fear to be groundless, but find themselves wondering if they will survive. Consequently, birthdays are often occasions with unexpressed conflicts.

Children also share some of their parents' feelings: the loneliness, the looking for comfort, the feeling that no one else really knows what they're going through. They also share unanswerable questions "If I could have. . . ?" and "What if...?"

A child's life is changed forever when a brother or sister dies. If I could advise parents, it would be to say, "Children do not grieve the same way as parents do because of different relationships. Keeping these differences in perspective will help you understand why children sometimes do the things they do. It helps to consider a child's point of view when you are hurting so much.

During such an emotionally draining time as grieving, don't leave anything to chance; don't assume anything. Making sure you and your children are aware of each other's feelings will mean less confusion, less tension, more sharing, and more growing together as a family."

~ Julie Peterson, TCF/Pawtucket, RI

"The highest privilege there is, is the privilege of being allowed to share another's pain. You talk about your pleasures to your acquaintances; you talk about your troubles to your friends."

~ Fr. Andrew SDC - Seven Words from the Cross

What Candice Would Say

I'm sorry big sister, I can't play with you.

I'm sorry grandpa, I can't go to the zoo.

I'm sorry daddy, you can't kiss me goodnight.

I'm sorry mommy, you can't hold me tight.

No one knows why, no one can guess.

But I can't play right now,

I've gone to rest.

~ Mary Lingle, TCF/Tyler, TX

The Sibling Prayer

Beneath the amber glow of the newly rising sun,

Or standing on the hillside when the day is done,

Riding down the highway when my work day is at an end,

or sitting on a park bench, talking to a friend -

No matter where I am in life, no matter what my task,

Please give me peace of mind, dear

Lord, that is all I ask.

And when those haunting memories of the

night have passed away,

Please come rushing in my broken heart, please do not delay.

Remind me that he is in a far, far better place.

And grant me a glimpse of his hazel eyes and sweet angelic face.

Please grant me reassurance that we'll someday

meet again in Heaven's bright tomorrow.

In Your Name, I pray.

Amen.

~ Laura Carpenter, TCF/Onancock, VA

The Sibling Newsletter, Summer 1993

GRIEF IS LONELY

Grief is lonely. When my sister died two years ago, everyone knew about it and talked about it. Everyone was in shock – but now, two years later, the anniversary of her death came and went without even a card in the mail. No one at work remembered the day. No one called to say, "I am thinking of you." No one asked, "How are you feeling?" My family has stayed in close contact and we talk about Susan all the time. But when it comes to grieving over Susan, everyone grieves alone. No one knows how I feel about my little sister and how it hurts me so deeply to know she is not here. Everything else in life can be shared with someone else, but not grieving. No one can fully understand the pain because everyone's pain is different. When the pain is the greatest, the loneliness is the greatest too. I never thought I could feel this much pain and still survive. I am alone in my grief. There is no one else here with me.

Susan was born when I was almost 11. She died by suicide when she was 16. The baby of the family, the youngest of four kids; our hearts are broken forever.

~ Cherie Bagadiong, TCF/St. Mary's County

For A Moment

I thought I saw you today he looked just like you, for a moment I pray but no - as he turned around it wasn't you, I found.

I felt like I was losing my mind.

He had the same build, he had the same hair.

I hope no one noticed, when I looked over his way the tears I cried, the confusion I felt while I continued to stand there and stare.

~Judy Prather to Glen, age 14 Atlanta, GA

THE GIFT OF THE TCF WORLD WIDE CANDLE LIGHTING

May 11, 1995: 45 years after I had taken my first breath of life would now sadly and incomprehensibly mark my precious daughter's last. Blisteringly hot day six of our family vacation in Orlando on a freeway many hundreds of miles from our home in Minnesota, an alcohol-impaired driver fell asleep at the wheel crashing into the side of the car where Nina was seated thereby ending the promising life of my vibrantly beautiful 15-year-old daughter, killing her instantly. A week that began in joyful family togetherness ended in unspeakable tragedy.

Brokenhearted, we returned home to begin the daunting task of learning to live without Nina. We catatonically walked through the mind-numbing chore of making arrangements for our daughter's funeral, our house filled with people aiding us however they could. But soon after the service, the silence in our home was deafening. My son wondered aloud where everyone had gone. Though hard to conceive that the sun still rose and set every day; that people continued to work, breathe, laugh and love, I undoubtedly knew the answer to his question; they had returned to the normalcy of their untainted existence while our lives felt irreparably shattered.

While others had gone back to the "real world", even in the midst of my cavernous grief I knew I had to preserve Nina's memory; I needed to find others who also desired their loved ones not be forgotten, realizing that it had to be another bereaved parent. I also needed reassurance there was hope that the raw pain of my loss would not continue forever, and that I was not alone on this most difficult of journeys. Thankfully, the funeral director in our city led me to The Compassionate Friends (TCF), a self-help group for bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents. There I found the support and understanding that I so desperately craved, along with many distinctive, creative ways from seasoned grievers to ensure that Nina would be forever remembered.

This became particularly important as I neared the first Christmas without Nina. They showed me I could bring her into the holiday season she loved so much by attending our chapter's annual holiday candle lighting. A few short years later, I became involved in chapter leadership. During that time, the TCF Worldwide Candle Lighting (WCL) came into existence and culminated into what is believed to be the world's largest candle lighting. Held the second Sunday of December at 7:00 p.m. in each time zone around the world candles are lit for one hour. As the candles burn down in one time zone, they are lit in the next, creating a virtual 24-hour wave of light around the globe.

The past few years I have been the MC for our chapter's program in conjunction with the WCL. From my vantage point, I clearly see each tear-stained face. Though the room is dimly lit in the beginning, as each flame is lit for a child gone too soon, the room gradually becomes bathed in a warm and peaceful glow. The candles are held proudly aloft in a show of fortitude and solidarity, with the belief that our children look down and see our lights of love and hope lifted heavenward, signifying that though gone is the life, never is their light.

The TCF Worldwide Candle Lighting is the gift I give myself (and Nina) each holiday season, and many family members and friends gift me with their presence at the chapter event or light a candle at 7 p.m. in remembrance of Nina. For all of us whose precious children have died it is a beautiful and special way to ensure forevermore "...that their light may always shine."

With gentle thoughts over the holiday season, and always,
~ Cathy L. Seehuetter, TCF/St. Paul, MN

Twas the Night Before Christmas (For Bereaved Parents)

'Twas the month before Christmas and I dreaded the days,
That I knew I was facing - the holiday craze.
The stores were all filled with holiday lights,
In hopes of drawing customers by day and by night.
As others were making their holiday plans,
My heart was breaking - I couldn't understand.
I had lost my dear child a few years before,
And I knew what my holiday had in store.
When out of nowhere, there arose such a sound,
I sprang to my feet and was looking around,
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash
The sight that I saw took my breath away,
And my tears turned to smiles in the light of the day.
When what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a cluster of butterflies fluttering near.
With beauty and grace they performed a dance,
I knew in a moment this wasn't by chance.
The hope that they gave me was a sign from above,
That my child was still near me and that I was loved.
The message they brought was my holiday gift,
And I cried when I saw them in spite of myself.
As I knelt closer to get a better view,
One allowed me to pet it - as if it knew -
That I needed the touch of its fragile wings,
To help me get through the holiday scene.
In the days that followed I carried the thought,
Of the message the butterflies left in my heart -
That no matter what happens or what days lie ahead,
Our children are with us - they're not really dead.
Yes, the message of the butterflies still rings in my ears,
A message of hope - a message so dear.
And I imagined they sang as they flew out of sight,
"To all bereaved parents - We love you, goodnight!"
~ Faye McCord, TCF/ Jackson, MS

A Mother's Christmas Prayer to Her Heavenly Child

I know you're spending Christmas with Jesus this year,
however, could you do one thing for your mother down
here? Would you send down some of your love, from
heaven above?
To release some of my pain, so I may have emotional gain.
That I may bear your loss - it is such a heavy cross.
Send down some of the joy you feel from up there. Help
me to feel some of the joy on this day,
Even though you are not here, in the same way. Help me to
feel your presence and your love, even though you're
spending Christmas with the Christ Child above.
Help the extended family to understand my grief, and not
to be afraid to offer me relief.
Let them say your name, and the memories that follow, to
give me something to grasp onto until tomorrow.
I know that you're spending Christmas with Jesus this
year, but oh, how I wish that you were here!!
~ Peggy Pohlen

Grief is like a long valley, a winding valley where any
bend may reveal a totally new landscape.
~ from A Grief Observed by C. S. Lewis

A Tree Full of Memories

Christmas was my absolute favorite time of the entire year. Every nook and cranny was filled with Yule adornment. Not a corner of the house was safe from this self-proclaimed Christmas Freak! One year we even hung assorted ornaments on a fake palm tree, lovingly dubbing it the "Bahama-Mama" tree, because in our family one Christmas tree was never enough. The kids even had small tabletop trees in their rooms. Our upstairs tree was the decorator tree, the one with the fancy, color coordinated ornaments, to be handled by no one but me. The downstairs tree was the family favorite and trimmed by the children. Hanging from its branches were the ornaments that I had purchased every year for each of them from the time they were born. I always looked forward to finding just the right one that would represent their individual interests at that particular time in their lives. But as each of us knows, the holidays, as we knew them, forever changed after our precious children died. And so it was for us the Christmas of 1995, our first without Nina's shining presence. I was quite positive that I would never decorate again. It was far too painful.

Yet, something happened three Christmases ago. One night I lay in Nina's daybed, staring at the ceiling thinking Scrooge-like thoughts, wishing it was January 2nd and I could put the holidays behind me for another year. Suddenly, I found myself rise from her bed and walk to the closet where all the holiday paraphernalia was stored. I searched furiously until I found what I was looking for--a box marked "Nina's Xmas Ornaments." I brushed away the collected dust and carried it up the stairs to the corner of the living room where a forlorn and neglected-appearing 2-foot tree stood. I recall sitting on the floor in front of the tree, sighing deeply, and gingerly opening the box, I was afraid what the depth of my emotions would be when I saw those long untouched ornaments of Christmases past; afraid of the feelings that I had learned to hide so well from the rest of the world; afraid the floodgates would open and the tears would never stop.

I carefully lifted the cover and tenderly held each one in my hands. I found myself recalling the beautiful memories of previous Christmases when my beloved daughter was alive. There was the pink and white checked fabric baby buggy with pipe cleaner handles of her first Xmas, followed by Teddy bears with Santa hats, and crocheted Sesame Street characters from her toddler days. There were the priceless picture ornaments taken by her nursery school teacher showing 4-year old Nina with the then-blond, wispy hair and blunt cut bangs grinning back at me. There were the handmade ones from early grade school that she affectionately created with felt and glitter; the violin and piano ornaments symbolizing her musical attempts; the self-explanatory Shop-til-You-Drop ornament; the more sophisticated ornaments for a teenage Nina, and finally the last one before her death at 15-years old commemorating her reign as our city's Miss Teen. I gently held them, reliving the stories behind each one and savoring the precious memories they brought with them as I placed them on the tiny tree. I then unearthed from hiding the ornaments bought after her death. Even then, I couldn't bear to stop buying them for her. There I found dark-haired angels and butterflies of every shape and color, now symbolizing her new and eternal life, and appropriately hung them alongside the others.

Though tears fell as I cautiously placed them on the bare branches of the tiny tree, I felt familiar warmth radiate throughout my body, thawing the coldness in my heart and soul. I smiled, knowing in my heart that this was a Christmas gift coming directly from Nina. I felt it was her way of telling me that perhaps it was time to find some peace and hope again in the holiday season. Not that it would or could ever be the same as it was before 1995, or that I would ever stop missing her presence, but perhaps now begin to remember some of the joy found in priceless memories of holiday's past.

If you are in the early years of your grief, you believe you will never again feel any amount of enjoyment in the holidays. However, allow myself and other seasoned grievers to be the bearers of hope. At one time we felt just like you. When you feel ready for even a spark of pleasure in the holidays, let it return to your heart again. I sincerely believe our children want us, in time, to accept their spirit gifts of renewed joy, peace, and hope sent to us from them with love.

With peace and gentle thoughts through this holiday season and always,

~ Cathy L. Seehuetter, TCF/St. Paul, MN In Memory of my daughter, Nina

THE GRIEVER'S HOLIDAY BILL OF RIGHTS

1. You have a right to say TIME OUT! anytime you need to. Time out to let up, blow off a little steam, step away from the holidays, have a "huddle", and start over.
2. You have a right to TELL IT LIKE IT IS. When people ask, "How are you?" you have the right to tell them how you really feel, not just what they want to hear. (P.S. You also have the right to smile and say you're fine, because telling them how you really feel isn't worth your time---some people will never understand anyway.)
3. You have the right to some "BAH HUM BUG" DAYS. You are not a bad person just because you don't feel like singing Christmas carols all day.
4. You have the right to DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY. There is no law that says you must always do Christmas the same way. You can do 10 cards instead of 100--or no cards at all! You can open your presents at somebody else's house. You can do without a tree. You can have pizza instead of turkey--the list is endless.
5. You have the right to be WHERE YOU WANT TO BE. Be at home or at the relatives. Be in any city, any state you chose! NOBODY SAID YOU HAVE TO HAVE SNOW TO HAVE CHRISTMAS. There's no law that says you must stay at home.
6. You have a right to SOME FUN. When you have a day that isn't so bad and you feel like doing something just for fun, then do it! Don't be afraid of what someone else will say if they see you laughing and having a good time. Laughter is every bit as important as tears!

~ Bruce Conley

Hold tight the love our family gave us. Hold it tight through the storms of grief and bring it with you into TODAY.

~ Darcie D Sims

"Footsteps Through the Valley"

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

Your Name: _____

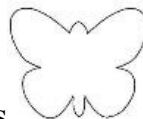
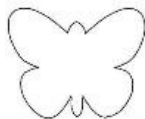
Child's Name: _____ Relationship: _____

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

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

Preparing is The Hardest Part

By the time Christmas Day arrives, we have survived the hardest part of the holiday season. Actually, by the time the day arrives, the hard work is almost finished.

Even before our child died, we frequently felt let down on Christmas Day. Many times the day didn't turn out to be as enjoyable as we had anticipated. Could it be that before our child died the real joy of Christmas was not in the day itself, but in the shopping, planning and preparing that went on for weeks before? Could it also be that now the pain is in that same shopping and planning and preparing?

Before Arthur died I so enjoyed the holidays! The excitement in the little one's eyes, the secrets the older children shared with each other, choosing just the right gift for each brother and sister, putting up the tree, decorating, party planning, all created excitement and happiness. How painful these same activities were after he died.

The real torment of the holidays is in the preparations. Shopping for the children and family members is hard when we can't buy for our child. Just the right sweater or that special toy screams at us in the stores. His favorite Christmas song seems to be played over and over again on the radio. You don't want to take her favorite cookies, but you have to because the rest of the family loves them too. As you pull out the decorations that have been packed away since last year, the first one you find is the scruffy but beautiful wreath he made in kindergarten. Every day of the week, everywhere you turn, there are reminders that he/she isn't going to be there this Christmas.

Most of us have to go through these actions to make the holidays good for the rest of the family. But in these preparations is the pain—it is the loss of the very thing that

caused us joy before—our child and his/her presence—that causes us so much pain now.

Christmas day itself, outside the significance of the birth of the Christ child, is just another day to get through, just 24 hours like any other day. It too will be over. So in the next few weeks when the dread of Christmas hits you, remind yourself that you are doing the hardest part right now.

EVERY DAY of the holiday season is painful. Ask yourself if getting through Christmas Day can be any worse than what you are “getting through” today.

~ Margaret Gerner, TCF\Carrollton-Farmers Branch, TX



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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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Treasurer	Chuck Klinkhammer.....701-298-2929	Initial Contact	Sheryl Cvijanovich
Mailing Committee	Contact Us to Join	Librarian	Contact Us to Volunteer

LIBRARY INFORMATION: We have an extensive library available. Please feel free to check materials at our next meeting.

TELEPHONE FRIENDS

HAVING A BAD DAY OR NIGHT? Feel free to call and talk to any of the following:

- Sheryl Cvijanovich (son, 23 - illness)..... 701-540-3287
- Lois Gangnes (son, 24 - accident) 701-282-4083
- Nancy Teeuwen (daughter, 15 hours - illness) 701-730-0805
- Mark & Hella Helfter (miscarriage, son, 35-accident & son, 45-cancer)... 701-235-9622

Love gifts must be received by the 15th to be included in the next month's newsletter. If you wish to give a love gift, please complete:

Love gift given in Memory/Honor of _____

Name _____

Address _____

Relationship _____ Born _____ Died _____

NOTE: By giving a love gift, you are giving us permission to include your child(ren) in our monthly birthdays and anniversaries.