



The Compassionate Friends

Fargo/Moorhead Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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The F-M Area Chapter of The Compassionate Friends meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. at
FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH
127 2ND AVE E
WEST FARGO, ND
Please enter on the west side. Our meeting is in the Fellowship Hall - lower level, west side

December 8th
March 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 22nd @ Denny's
Annual Worldwide Candle lighting - December 11th at 7 p.m. local time
Angel Of Hope Memorial Service
December 6th at 7 pm

Mom's Meeting

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 22nd. 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

Becky Meyer Charlet in memory of her son, Casey Meyer
Joan & Steve Halland in memory of their son, Cole S Halland
Craig & Terry Klabo in memory of their son, Darin M Klabo
Cherie & Roger Jaeger in memory of their son, Jeff Jaeger
Shirley & Dennis Bjerken in memory of their son, Brian Bjerken
Edna Mae Pearson, in memory of her son, John Pearson
Mark A Gauslow in memory of his son, Joey Gauslow
Rodney Jensen in memory of his son, Jordan Aaberg
Brenda & Brad Mergens in memory of their daughter, Ashley (Mergens) Perrine

Becky Nelson in memory of her son, Ryan Nelson
Sue & Charlie Petry in memory of their son, Nate Haaland
Pat & Denny Wateland in memory of their daughter, Tracy Ann Wateland
Suzie & Jim Hill in memory of their son, Jonathan Levi 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.



2023 FM TCF Quarterly Chapter Meeting Dates

March 9th
June 8th
September 14th
December 14th

2023 Mom's Group Meeting Dates

January 26th	February 23rd
March 23rd	April 27th
May 25th	June 22nd
July 27th	August 24th
September 28th	October 26th
November 16th	December 28th

ANGEL OF HOPE MEMORIAL SERVICE

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

HOLIDAY THOUGHTS

For those who think that Christmas and Chanukah are just nice days to give and get presents, bereaved parents have another message. Mixed with the joy is the knowledge of sadness. With the hope of birth comes the threat of death. We should not try to cover up our sadness in front of people, for we have a lesson to teach them.

But the holidays have a lesson for us, too. Yes, there is death. Yes, there is great bitterness in life. There is darkness. But there is hope. There is birth. There is light.

In a society which works so hard to deny death, perhaps only bereaved parents and a few others can truly understand the depths of these holidays.

~ Dennis Klass, TCF/St. Louis, MO

In Your Heart and Mine

The year is coming to an end. Please lend an ear to my thoughts, my friend. May I really tell you how I feel about another year in which I'll deal? I won't always ask that you understand. and when you don't, just hold my hand. If I look ahead with a sense of dread, help me look again with hope instead. If on New Year's Eve I shed a tear for that precious child no longer near, Just know I need a little time to blink back tears, then I'll be fine. This hurt will last my whole life through but I can manage with god and you. I know again my child will shine because he's in your heart —and mine.

~ Nan Gurski TCF/Houston, TX



Worldwide Candle Lighting

The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting held annually the second Sunday in December, this year December 11th, 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.

The Scream

The smile you see is not all of me,
For I'm not what I seem.
I laugh and smile but all the while,
My smile holds in a scream.
For when I see a little girl,
So innocent and free,
I think about my little girl,
Who died at seventeen.
And then the scream comes welling up,
From in my soul so black,
And so my smile must block it in,
And laughter hold it back.
I saw her born and watched her grow,
from child to blooming lass,
But through the years I couldn't know,
I'd have to see her pass.
The suffering within my heart,
I hide from all the world.
I do my job, I play the part,
And miss my little girl.
A song about a father's love,
So sweet with tenderness,
Awakes in me the horror of,
My loss and loneliness.
So, if they say "He takes it well,
He'll be OK we all can tell.
How well his life continues on,
It's almost if she wasn't gone."
Remember that I'm not so sane,
Playacting, keeping up the game,
My nightmare life trapped in a dream,
You see, my smile holds in a scream.

~ Steve Tutt, TCF/Tyler, Texas

My Hope for You.....that you will be able to find Christmas in your heart.

This Christmas has been harder for some reason, than the ones of the last two years - for a lot of different reasons. As I read this newsletter everyday, I am touched by each and every story and frequently find myself crying for all the children and for all the parents who are surviving. Reading your pain around Christmas has been particularly sad for me. I never had a Christmas with Diana so only miss what might have been. I don't have to face empty chairs, empty rooms....she never had one. I have been touched by your trials, though.

And wanted to share something out of the book "The Quotable Evans" by Richard Paul Evans that has helped me in my quest for peace. "We stand here encompassed by winter: the barren trees with their fallen leaves, the silent riverbed. Nothing is more certain in life or in nature than death. We accept it as the way of things. Perhaps we are able because we have faith in spring. Yet somehow it seems different to us when death comes early. Much as we might bemoan an early winter, we feel robbed of something due. We feel cheated.

Sometimes we rage. And sometimes we blame. And in doing so, we say to God, 'my will be done, not Thine,' and we forget about the promise of spring....In the cold of our soul's winter, we bury our hearts. And then we wonder why it is dark and why we feel so alone. And we risk spending so much of our lives occupied with our loss and what we have not, that we forget the beauty of what is and what we have still. And this is sometimes the greater loss...This I know. There are more ways to lose a child than death. Perhaps those who lose a childhood to death are more fortunate than those who let the chalice of childhood slip from their grasp without ever drinking of it." Richard Paul Evans...The Looking Glass. When I read this, I don't hear that we have to forget our children or that we should not be sad that they are gone. I hear that there is still much life to live, much love to share.

This Christmas I plan to focus on the beauty of what is and what I have still, to look at Christmas again with the wonder of a child, and to trust that the promise of spring will be fulfilled. My wish for each and every one of you is that you will find the beauty of what is and what you have still in the face of the deepest sadness - that you will be able to find Christmas in your heart.

Peace, Love and Joy to you all,
Michelle Kissman, TCF/Atlanta, GA

Learning the Hard Way

My husband, David, and I used to attend his university's semi-annual alumni meetings. There was a couple who drove in for these meetings from a town an hour and a half away. Through the years, we developed a nice friendship, often going out to dinner together after the meetings. Then one day, we heard that Fred and Jean's eleven-year-old son, Russ, had been struck and killed by a car while he was riding his bike.

Although we were terribly saddened to hear about Russ, we just never got around to doing anything to express our sympathy. Jean and Fred didn't come to the alumni meetings for a couple of years, so we simply never saw them. Finally, they came to a special function. When I saw Jean, I asked her how she was getting along, and her reply was, "I didn't know if you had heard." Typically uncomfortable, I responded by saying something like, "Yes, I knew, but I just couldn't handle it. That's why you haven't heard from us." They quit attending the meetings, so that was the last time we saw them for ten years.

In the tenth year, our daughter, Paige, died following a six-month illness. We had been told from the beginning that her brain tumor was a bad one and that she would not survive. One of the things I had time to think about during the time was the awful way we had treated Fred and Jean.

Soon after Paige's death, I felt compelled to write them a long letter of apology, explaining that we now understood better what they had experienced, and that if they could "handle" the death of their child, surely we should have been able to.

Immediately upon receiving my letter, Fred called to say they were on their way to Nashville to take us to dinner. We had a wonderful reunion with lots of talking and some tears. Dave asked Fred if he ever thought about Russ. Smiling, he replied, "I think about him every day. Do you want to see his picture?" And he proceeded to pull from his billfold not only his son's photograph, but the obituary as well. This was one of our first lessons about grief: it's okay to remember our child.

Jean and Fred, these kind, forgiving people, helped us to realize that if sometimes folks don't respond exactly the way we'd like for them to, it isn't a lack of love for us or our child, but simply an example of human frailty. Because of their wonderful attitude we were able to be more understanding when we failed to hear from two families in distant cities who had been longtime friends. We also found ourselves more tolerant when inappropriate remarks were made to us. Any small effort should be appreciated - and is!

~ Peggy Gibson, TCF/Nashville, TN
In loving memory of my daughter, Paige

We Can Make It

During the holiday season, both Christians and Jews light candles in celebration of their respective faiths. As they do so, even the darkest rooms become warm and bright from the glow of a candle. Then we can ask ourselves, how powerful or sinister can the darkness be if it can be overcome by the light of one little candle?

There is then a message in this for all of us. When the darkness seems to overwhelm us--and it can be a mental and spiritual darkness as well as the darkness of a winter night --we need to be reminded that it is powerless to withstand the smallest bit of illumination.

So, as the world grows colder and darker during these winter months, we as bereaved parents must do what people of many faiths have been taught to do at this season. Light a candle in someone's life to make the darkness and fears flee. A little bit of light is all that most of us need, but oh we need that little bit so badly.

~ Bettye & Sam Rosenberg, Louisville, KY

"Grief is a choppy 'two steps forward, one step backward' experience".

~ Theresa Rando: How to Go on Living When Someone you Loves Dies

I WISH YOU ENOUGH...

Recently, I overheard a Mother and daughter in their last moments together at a regional airport. They had announced her departure and standing near the security gate, they hugged and she said, "I love you. I wish you enough." She in turn said, "Mom, our life together has been more than enough. Your love is all I ever needed. I wish you enough, too, Mom." They kissed and she left. The elder woman walked over toward the window where I was seated. Standing there, I could see she wanted and needed to cry. I tried not to intrude on her privacy, but she welcomed me in by asking, "Did you ever say good-bye to someone knowing it would be forever?" "Yes, I have," I replied. "Forgive me for asking, but why is this a forever good-bye?" I asked. "I am old and she lives much too far away. I have challenges ahead and the reality is, the next trip back will be for my funeral," she said. "When you were saying good-bye I heard you say, "I wish you enough. May I ask what that means?" She began to smile. "That's a wish that has been handed down from other generations. My parents used to say it to everyone." She paused for a moment and looked up as if trying to remember it in detail, and she smiled even more. "When we said 'I wish you enough,' we were wanting the other person to have a life filled with just enough good things to sustain them," she continued. Then, turning toward me, she shared the following as if she were reciting it from memory: I wish you enough sun to keep your attitude bright. I wish you enough rain to appreciate the sun more. I wish you enough happiness to keep your spirit alive. I wish you enough pain so that the smallest joys in life appear much bigger. I wish you enough gain to satisfy your wanting. I wish you enough loss to appreciate all that you possess. I wish you enough hellos to get you through the final good-bye." She then began to sob and walked away. My friends and loved ones, I wish you ENOUGH!

Author, UNKNOWN

I LIGHT THIS CANDLE

I light this candle in memory of you,
My life, my child, my heart,
May it shine bright and true,
As you did from the start.
In it's flickering flame I see,
The life we shared together,
the love and wonderful memories,
That I'll carry with me forever.
I light this candle in memory of you,
I look up to the Heavens where you are,
I see the lights of heaven shining bright too,
But your candle shines brighter than the brightest star.
My child you are still so much a part of me,
Even though you are no longer here,
You live on in my heart where you will always be,
No matter what, I will always keep you there.
On this special night,
I light this candle for you,
And I hope everyone who sees it will know,
How very special you are,
how much you are loved and missed too,
And will remember you with me when they see it's golden glow.

-Judi Walker

In memory of her son, Shane 2003
BPUSA, Western NY Chapter
Autumn 2013 newsletter

Suicide: Changing the Language

Once in a while I write a post regarding the language of suicide. I really hope that people will read it because it is very important for us to spread the word on how we speak of suicide. I've been thinking about it a lot again lately, especially since the two-year anniversary of my stepson's suicide was just on June 2nd, and wanted to share my thoughts in the hope that someone will read it and that that someone will also educate someone, when given the chance, to help us with the mission to change how we say it:

SUICIDE: It is a death that has so many layers and agendas that it adds another whole level of difficulty to an already terrible loss. Using the word "committed" before suicide is like fingernails down a chalkboard to someone who has lost a loved one to suicide. We are trying to change the language around suicide and no longer say "committed", and I don't care for "completed" suicide myself (we wouldn't say that someone "completed" cancer or "completed" a car accident). The reason that "committed" is a difficult term for the survivors left behind after a suicide has occurred is that "committed" generally indicates that what happened was a crime...from back in the Dark Ages when families were even imprisoned when a family member died of suicide (the stigma that still remains following a death by suicide is difficult enough and I pray one day there will be more understanding and education surrounding that as well).

Death by suicide occurs usually by a person who is in so much pain emotionally and sometimes physically that they see that as the only option left to end that unbearable pain. And they truly believe in their heart that they are helping their families by leaving this world, that their loved ones are better off without them. It is not the "coward's way out", it is a pain that those of us without that level of hopelessness and darkness cannot begin to comprehend.

Died "by" suicide. Died "of" suicide. Died "as a result of" suicide. Died "from" suicide. "Lost to" suicide; and even "took their own life" (because that is a reality) but, please, never "committed". Help those who have suffered this unthinkable loss by changing the way you and others say it. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for reading this.

~ Cathy Seehuetter, TCF/St. Paul, MN

Ring Your Bell as One

Bells ring for endings and beginnings,
But a "heart bell" is never ending.
This bell will in us forever ring,
A tender sound only love can bring.
If your heart bears the weight of this bell,
It rings within but you may not tell.
Others hear your "ring" but don't discuss,
Compassionate Friends rings hope for us.
We are ONE not different entities,
All searching for broken heart remedies.
Ring hope's story and never be done,
Together we'll help those yet to come.
Some have lost loved ones but yet don't know,
We're here to teach how to make hope grow.
Some have no loss but life soon will spin
To a club that we were all thrown in.
Never stop ringing your bell of love,
For those with a loved one deprived of.
Now let's all ring our bells together as one!

~ Debbie Rambis



OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED BIRTHDAYS

CHILD		PARENTS
LIAM SAMMIE ABRAHAM.....	3.....	CHANOA FENROY-PARKER
LIAM SAMMIE ABRAHAM.....	3.....	CASHONDRA FENROY-EADEN (Grandmother)
MEAGAN (MARGHEIM) BAUER.....	37.....	SUSAN & BOB MARGHEIM
NICOLE ANNE BLILIE.....	33.....	SCOTT & RUTH BLILIE
JODIE BREND.....	53.....	DORIS RHEAULT
ZANE SHANNON BUCHHOLZ.....	25.....	STEPHANIE DETZEN
BRIDGET CHISAKA.....	38.....	WALLY & CAROL BLOMBERG
CHLOE LOVE CONN.....	20.....	JEROD & STACY CONN
STEVEN DUANE COOK.....	54.....	SHARON COOK
JOEY GAUSLOW.....	36.....	MARK GAUSLOW
SARAH FRANCES GUNDERSON.....	36.....	JEROME & RAMONA GUNDERSON
DAVID WILLIAM HALLMAN.....	34.....	LYNETTE MYROLD
KATHRYN "KATIE" HANSON.....	40.....	JEANETTE & DENNIS HOLLAND
KARL HELFTER.....	52.....	MARK & HELLA HELFTER
JEFFREY ANTHONY JAEGER.....	43.....	ROGER & CHERIE JAEGER
JESSE ANDREW KOLNES.....	37.....	LEOBA KOLNES
TONY MILLER.....	34.....	SHAWN & JIM MILLER
CHARLES "CHUCK" NELSON.....	67.....	REVENIA NELSON
NICHOLAS ORVIK.....	28.....	KIRSTEN ORVIK
CONNER SANDER.....	27.....	KELLY SANDER
JOSE DANIEL SAUVAGEAU.....	26.....	MARY BJERKE
GREGORY SEARS.....	35.....	LORI & JERRY BRADY
JANESSA "JAYE" NICOLE SMITH.....	42.....	KEITH & MARY GOHDES
TRACY ANN WATELAND.....	51.....	PAT WATELAND

ANNIVERSARIES

CHILD		PARENTS
LIAM SAMMIE ABRAHAM.....	2.....	CHANOA FENROY-PARKER
LIAM SAMMIE ABRAHAM.....	2.....	CASHONDRA FENROY-EADEN (Grandmother)
CALVIN JACOB ARMBRUST.....	3.....	KIM ARMBRUST
CALVIN JACOB ARMBRUST.....	3.....	DAN & SHELLY ARMBRUST
RENEE ANN BERNIER.....	5.....	KENNETH & PATRICIA BERNIER
NICOLE ANNE BLILIE.....	15.....	SCOTT & RUTH BLILIE
JULIE M ERICKSON.....	8.....	JANET ERICKSON
RYAN P GOERTZ.....	6.....	JAMES & CHERI GOERTZ
BRADLEY KARL GRABER.....	2.....	CONNIE GRABER
SARAH FRANCES GUNDERSON.....	10.....	JEROME & RAMONA GUNDERSON
DAVID WILLIAM HALLMAN.....	29.....	LYNETTE MYROLD
TAMARA JO "TAMMY" HINES.....	4.....	SHARON COOK
BRANDON NILES.....	4.....	MARY & MARK TUTTLE
MICHAEL "MIKE" ROY NORBY.....	5.....	LAROY NORBY
JANZEN PETERSON.....	4.....	JULIE & JAY PETERSON
JONATHAN LEVI POITRA.....	12.....	SUZIE & JAMES HILL
KYLE ROOS.....	2.....	CHUCK ROOS
CHERYL L SAMSON.....	11.....	PATRICIA SAMSON
MICHAEL ROBERT WAGNER.....	2.....	ROBERT WAGNER
PAIGE WIGHTMAN.....	6.....	DAVID & MICHELLE WIGHTMAN
MELINDA JOY WINTERROTH.....	3.....	MONTY & JOANNE WINTERROTH



2022 Holiday Angels



Given By:

ANNE SNYDER
SHERYL CVIJANOVICH

SHARON COOK

DIANE FENSKE
JIM & JODY KUTTER
CRAIG & DEANNA BRAUN
SHERRY LASSLE
JUANITA WEBBER
LUELLA KLEINGARTNER
DORLA HANSON
HERMAN & RENNAE WEISS
SCOTT & RUTH BLILIE
CHRIS & CHRISTINE HAMRE
STAN & PAM JOHNSON
MARK & HELLA HELFTER, LORAIN FLEEMAN

JOE & VINCENT LEGGIO
DAN & SHELLY ARMBRUST
DOUG HUDSON
BRENDA & BRAD MERGENS
JOHN & TERRI HELLAND
MAZY STEINWEHR
LARRY & LOIS GANGNES
CRAIG & BARB LARSON
JERRY & YVONNE NELSON
LYNETTE MYROLD
LYNN & DONNA MICKELSON

GLENNIS OLSON
GERTRUDE LOIBL
ANONYMOUS
CAROL SCHMITZ
RICHARD & LINDA OLSON
LEROY & DONNA KORNELIUS
NEIL & KATHLEEN PROCHNOW & FAMILY
JANICE AABERG
DEBBY & DAVID FACEY

LORETTA KEISACKER
CLAYTON & GLORIA BRENNAN
DEAN & DIANE BAUCK
BRENDA KLUTH
BETTY KARAIM

In Memory of:

ADAM SNYDER
MATTHEW CVIJANOVICH
KELLY BOYES
TAMMY JO HINES
STEVEN DUANE COOK
NATHAN ANDERSON
MICHELLE KUTTER
ANDREW BRAUN
JAYME LASSLE
JEFFREY M WEBBER
DAVID KLEINGARTNER
RONDA LO SMITH
KRISTOPHER WEISS
NICOLE ANNE BLILIE
MASON HAMRE
KATIE JOHNSON
DAVID HELFTER
KARL HELFTER
ANNIE PAGE LEGGIO
CALVIN ARMBRUST
DOUG HUDSON II
ASHLEY (MERGENS) PERRINE
HEIDI HELLAND
KORBIN STEINWEHR
BRENT M GANGNES
ERIC CRAIG LARSON
KYLE IRVIN NELSON
DAVID WILLIAM HALLMAN
AARON DEUTSCHER
ALLISON DEUTSCHER
BRIELLE FAITH DEUTSCHER
UNBORN BABY DEUTSCHER
JAMIE CLIFFORD OLSON
KEVIN LOIBL

TOM SCHMITZ
MATTHEW OLSON
LANNIE LEE KORNELIUS
REED JOEL PROCHNOW
JORDAN AABERG
DANA KEBLAR
FRED FINCH
CARLA RAE TRUITT
JEFFREY BRENNAN
DAVIN LOREN STERLING BAUCK
BRANDON KLUTH
LISA KARAIM KNUDSON
RACHEL KARAIM PAYNE



2022 Holiday Angels



Given By:

PAUL & RENAE RONEY
 KEVIN & CHERYL LARSON
 JEANETTE HOLLAND
 JEROME & RAMONA GUNDERSON
 CONNIE JOHNSON
 SAMSON FAMILY
 BECKY NELSON
 RUSS & SHARON LALUM
 MIKE & CHERYL RINNELS
 MARY GOHDES
 PAULETTE J HAUGEN & FAMILY
 CONNIE & BARRY RONGEN
 SANDY & CHUCK KLINKHAMMER
 PAUL & KARA BAILEY
 JOHN & NANCY TEEUWEN
 PAT & DENNY WATELAND
 KEITH & SANDRA KISER
 DEB WAYMAN
 WALT & KARIE COWDEN

EMMA HUELSMAN
 KIRSTEN ORVIK

LINDA & MARK MERCK

LEANN RINDT
 LISA BEACH & JEFF AMUNDSON
 SUZIE & JIM HILL

In Memory of:

CARSON RONEY
 TYLER JAMES LARSON
 KATIE HANSON
 SARAH F GUNDERSON
 JARED FALLER
 CHERYL, CHRIS & DUKE SAMSON
 RYAN NELSON
 CARMEN LALUM
 CHAD RINNELS
 JANESSA GOHDES SMITH
 JAYSON PAUL HAUGEN
 CHLOE GRACE RONGEN
 ALEX B KLINKHAMMER
 NICHOLAS BAILEY
 BRANDI TEEUWEN
 TRACY ANN WATELAND
 CORDELL A KISER
 HEATHER WREN
 WILLIAM (BILL) COWDEN
 KEVIN SCOTT COWDEN
 ROBIN VIGDAL HOSLER
 KEVIN HUELSMAN
 TANNER ORVIK
 NICHOLAS ORVIK
 ELIJAH ORVIK
 BENJAMIN MERCK
 ZACHARY COLE
 ERIK HINZPETER
 NATHAN BEACH
 JONATHAN LEVI POITRA

BOULGER FUNERAL HOME

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

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.

THE SEAL

A small seal glides effortlessly across the water.
 Divinely, perfectly there, then gone.
 My eyes search for another glimpse.
 I'm sad to lose my joyful moment.
 Then calm as I reflect that the seal swims on,
 Only beyond my sight, away from my senses
 She swims.

SIBLING PAGE

NAMASTE - THE LIGHT IN ME SALUTES THE LIGHT IN YOU

I believe that we are here on this planet to experience what it means to be a Spirit in a physical body. The greater the experience, the deeper it touches our soul. This includes pleasure and pain, happiness and sadness, hope and despair, lightness and darkness. For we cannot know one without the other. This is a time to experience our grief. I pray that we all give ourselves that right and honor our grieving process.

Through grief we heal. These are the things that I grieve for:

- I grieve for the loss of my only brother.
- I grieve that I will never come home to see him sitting in the living room to say hello.
- I grieve that we will never laugh together again, that I will never again experience that rich and unique humor that only he and I shared.
- I grieve that this world will no longer get to enjoy his humanness and his many gifts.
- I grieve that I will never see my brother in love, that I will never see him as a father or with a family of his own.
- I grieve that we will no longer share and inspire each other with the music that we love.
- I grieve that we will never get to work on a creative multi-media project together. This was a vision I held for the future.
- I grieve that I didn't share enough of my life experiences with my brother, and that I could have opened my heart even more.
- I grieve for all the people that Jason touched and the feelings of pain and loss that they are experiencing.

This is what I grieve for. Through death new life is birthed and though we cannot see it now, from Jason's death we will all experience new life. If we allow ourselves to grieve fully, this new life will become apparent. I love the spirit who gave me the privilege and pleasure of being my brother and I am grateful to experience 24 years of his beauty on this planet.

~ Jeff Curnutt

The Room Across The Hall

The room across the hall is dark and empty now. All of the things that once filled it have been removed somehow. The clothes that were once in the closet have all been given away. The occupant won't be needing them, for he died in the month of May.

The room across the hall was filled with a young man's things; gun, and knives, and video games and rocks from any springs. All of these have been locked away inside a small square chest. Just like the room's occupant, they have been laid to rest.

The room across the hall aroused feeling such as pain. The fact that it is Empty can make tears fall like rain. I cry because the occupant was very much like me. The occupant was my brother, whom now I cannot see.

The room across the hall belonged to a normal boy. He could bring you heartache and lots of sorrow, but he could also bring you joy. He was not another Socrates, for he wasn't quite that clever. But the memories he left me will be with me forever.

~ Melissa B., TCF/Atlanta, GA

Alone in the
Night sky,
God bless that child,
Everyone loved him, I will
Love you too, Nathan, forever.

~ Written by Madeline Schewe, age 8
In memory of my brother, Nathan Moyer Schewe

A Holiday To Do List:

As a reflection back on the past 13 (Wow! has it really been that long?!) Christmases, I would like to share some ways that I have handled the holidays, as well as some additional thoughts. This time of the year is bittersweet for me now, as opposed to the first Christmas without my older brother, David. That was the worst.

At any rate, I can handle November and December much better now. I suppose I've learned a little along the way, and gained strength each year. Nonetheless, the anniversary of his death always gets to me. Unfortunately, it falls between Thanksgiving and Christmas on December 9th. Here's my list of suggestions for honoring a sibling whom you have lost, and on simply making it through yourself:

1. Hang that stocking. Go ahead. Put up your sibling's stocking. It isn't as though your brother or sister never existed, and isn't still a part of your life.

2. Write a poem or letter to your sibling and put it in the stocking.

3. Put up a tree, or continue with your holiday traditions. Yes, this is VERY difficult. But for most of our siblings, this was their favorite time of year. Celebrate how blessed you have been to have had your sister or brother for holidays past. Decorate the way THEY would have wanted to, instead of the way you would do it.

4. Create a "memory" box. This is simply a box of belongings from your sibling, or pictures of your sibling, etc. Wrap it in festive holiday paper, and put it under your tree if you have one.

5. Buy a gift for your sibling. Maybe it is something they truly would have wanted for the holidays, maybe it's something the two of you would have enjoyed together or gotten a good laugh out of. This can be VERY therapeutic.

6. Go somewhere that your sibling would have wanted to go-- the beach, a movie they would have liked, a favorite restaurant, wherever. "Share" this time with your sibling. This is also good on their birthday. Celebrate that they had a life and that they are a part of yours!

7. Bake a favorite holiday goody of your sibling's.

8. Get together with your family and cry (and LAUGH – it's OK to do this) at some great family memories from years past that involved your sibling. Share thoughts on great places you may have visited for the holidays, or anecdotes of you and your sibling trying to peek at what your gifts were ahead of time.

9. Put together a photo album of your sibling. This could be of your sibling's life in general, or of a specific subject, like the sport your sibling played, or holidays past.

10. Give your album to your parents. Cry (and LAUGH!) at the pictures and the memories they generate.

I hope that you are blessed this holiday season, and that my suggestions are helpful. Please know that the holidays get easier with time, and that you WILL make it through, even though it may seem impossible.

~ Amy Baker Ferry, TCF/Heart of Florida Chapter

TO OUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

The "Holiday Season" is a time of family - festive gatherings, worshipping together, sharing love and gifts, and cherished memories. For the bereaved parent, these aspects of the season are precisely what make us dread its arrival.

The absence of our child when the "whole family" gathers seems to accentuate our incomplete family. We are sorely reminded of "how it used to be" and don't want to accept what is now. We need the patience and understanding of our family and friends to help us through the holidays as best we can.

We may want to change the way we spend Thanksgiving, Christmas, or Hanukkah. If the family traditionally gathers at one house, perhaps the gathering place could be changed, especially if the gathering home is that of the bereaved. If we do prepare the meal, be aware that we may not have all the energy we have had in the past and will need a lot of help.

Perhaps we'll try to avoid the holiday altogether by going away for a few days. Whatever our thoughts are for coping with the day, please take our feelings into consideration when you make your plans.

For some of us shopping for gifts is a painful experience. The stores' festive decorations and music belie our mood as we feel forced into participating in the "season". We think longingly about that special gift we won't be buying this year. Again, our depression saps us of the energy to do the things we have done in the past, and we need your understanding for the things that remain undone.

Perhaps the single most helpful thing you can do for us is to include our child in the holidays. We want to hear his/her name, to have you recall fond memories of their lives, to know that you, too, are feeling their absence and remembering them with love.

Getting through the holidays is a rough task for bereaved parents. We need to handle them in a way that we feel is best for ourselves and families. We ask for your love and support during this especially difficult time.

~ Marge Henning, TCF/West Orange, NJ

The Fourth Christmas

As I walked into a large store last Saturday to pick up some gardening ornaments and pots, I was hit by the reality that this Christmas will be the fourth one without my child. Yes, it's late summer as I write this, but some retailers are already hyping the Christmas merchandise. A weakness swept over me; I didn't think I'd have to deal with Christmas so soon. But here it was.....color coordinated Christmas trees, thematic trees, wreaths, decorations, paper. I felt like screaming and shoving the shopping cart into a display.

I remember the first Christmas after my son died. He was killed in an accident six days before Christmas. The day after Todd was killed my cousin came to the house and asked what she could do. We had to shop for Todd's children; they couldn't quite decide what they wanted until a week before Christmas. So here we were, 5 days before Christmas, one day after my son died, shopping for my son's children. I don't remember what we purchased. I was still in shock as my cousin continued to push along. Never much of a shopper, I was totally lost on that day; I followed my cousin's green jacket around the stores. We got it done, and my cousin did all the wrapping while I sat and stared blankly at the activity.

This year will be the fourth Christmas without my child.....even though he's been gone for 2 years and 8 months, I dread facing another Christmas. His death anniversary is on the 19th of December.

Seeing this materialistic Christmas outrage in August set me back. My husband was with me; we bought what we needed and left. We went to the grocery store; when we came out, we found that I had left the keys in the car door. This was not a good sign.

"That's it", I told my husband. "What's it"?, he asked. "I'm not going into another store until January unless I have no choice." He reminded me that I didn't do much shopping anyway, so that shouldn't be too difficult. I laughed because he is right; I avoid retail stores and malls when I can.

In my rational mind I know that I overreacted to the Christmas display. In my emotional mind I know that this is my reality. Since my son's death I have avoided Christmas. I hang one wreath on the door. I started putting a candle in the window on the first anniversary of Todd's death, and I light it every night as it now remains in the window all year.

We each find our own methods of coping. We each re-experience the shock, horror and helplessness of our children's death with personal triggers-smells, sights, sounds, seasons. We must train our minds to expect the unexpected from ourselves. We must learn to accept our reactions. We must understand this is our normalcy.

If I stop reacting to certain events and dreading other events, if unexpected tears stop rolling down my cheeks, I might be considered normal by some. But, I know in my heart of hearts that these reactions will stop on the day that I die. The duration and frequency have been reduced. But, no, I'll not stop reacting. My mind tells me that to "get on" with it is to repress a big part of who I am: Todd's mom. My son lived, loved, laughed, cried, learned and taught. He was my singular pure joy. No, I won't erase him. I won't erase the memories because the memories are as much a part of me as my heart.

~ Annette Mennen Baldwin, TCF/Katy, TX
In memory of my son, Todd Mennen

SHARING A PRIVATE GRIEF

The other day some said to me, "My grief is too private to share." I think we all feel that way sometime. We are saying two things when we say that. First, "You couldn't possibly know how I feel." And second, we are saying, "I hurt so much, I'm not about to tell of my anguish and leave myself open to your judgment of my feelings." We have to protect ourselves, but in protecting our privacy, are we forgetting something? Is it possible that our friends also grieve: that they, too, miss our child and hurt for us in ways we don't let them express? It is possible that our friends are not judging us and that in not giving voice to our sorrow, we are closing the door to the healing love that may be in store for us. People have no trouble wishing us "Happy Birthday", "Get well soon", or "Have a good day", and mean it. But it is hard for people to express their sorrow, often because they are afraid of hurting us. That they don't express their grief isolates us. Sometimes we have to encourage others to address the issues closest to our hearts for our own protection.

~Pat Tyan, TCF/Silverdale, WA

Holidays

The holiest of all holidays are those
Kept by ourselves in silence and apart;
The secret anniversaries of the heart,
When the full river of feeling overflows;--
The happy days unclouded to their close;
The sudden joys that out of darkness start
As flames from ashes; swift desires that dart
Like swallows singing down each wind that blows!
White as the gleam of a receding sail,
White as a cloud that floats and fades in air,
White as the whitest lily on a stream,
These tender memories are;--a fairy tale
Of some enchanted land we know not where,
But lovely as a landscape in a dream.

~ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Have You Decorated Your Tree?

My tree is clothed in dark and light
And I sit before it in the night.
Remembering how, with loving care,
A child once hung those trinkets there.
 And though the tree seems fully dressed,
 Alone, I now must hang the rest.
 Then the tree with greater love will shine
 With memories of that son of mine.
I hang the sparkle from his eyes
That shone each day with sweet surprise.
I hang a gentle heart-shaped kiss,
And a glowing ball of childlike bliss.
 I hang a bow of loving charms,
 and a hug he once held in his arms.
 Now every light will hold a part
 Of all the memories of my heart.
For though my grief will never sleep,
His heart would break, and he would weep.
If we never again felt the Christmas joy
That was so much a part of my angel boy.

~ Lynette Siler, TCF/Troy, MI

Candles in December

My sadness seems reflected in the music that I hear..
Every young one's glowing face reminds me you're not here.
Shoppers crowd the festive stores; emotions all run high
This world I was a part of once, before that sad July.

 This season's meant for happy times; for love, warm hearts,
 and cheer.

 But grieving families 'round the world remember those not
 here.

 We struggle through the season, lighting candles to
 proclaim

 Our children aren't forgotten, 'round the world our candles
 flame.

I slowly pass through gates thrown wide one clear, cold
Christmas Day.

No toys or playthings do I bring - those gifts of yesterday.

I carry with me just a polished heart of granite made

And walk with grief to where she lies in a silent, silvered glade.

 "Merry Christmas, love," I whisper — the quiet words
 seem so forlorn.

 "I've brought my heart for you to keep, my gift this
 Christmas morn.

 It is filled with all my love, though this one's carved of
 stone..

 I'll place it here — it will be near — you'll never be alone."

We parents don't forget, my love; this month we will unite

To honor all we'll light a wall of candles through the night.

The world will know our memories glow with love that's deep
and true

We'll stand as one, and 'fore it's done the Heavens will know,
too.

 Please keep my gift, beloved child, close to where you lie,
 And know my love surrounds you 'til the day I too shall
 die.

 On the tenth of December my candle's flame will light
 I pray you'll see the love we'll free into the starry night.

~ Sally Migliaccio

GUILT----IF ONLY...OF ONLY....IF ONLY

You may hear yourself using those words. Most parents whose child had died have periods when they feel guilty. A part of the guilt is wanting to undo what has been done...to stop time...to re-do a day or a minute that might make a difference.

Our culture teaches people to be hard on themselves and blame themselves when anything goes wrong. We tend, then, to feel responsible when children died, too. "If only I had kept him in longerIf only I had been there... If only I had known...If only...If only." we are people who want answers. It goes against all our beliefs, hopes and dreams when children die. You will search and look for answers to questions, which sometimes have no answers. Feeling guilty is one way of getting some kind of meaning into a situation, which makes no sense, of trying to answer the unanswerable WHY questions. When you feel guilty, recognize it for what it is...a sense of guilt and a searching for an answer. If you could have prevented your child's death, you would have. You and your family are not to blame.

~ Joy & Mary Johnson from the booklet "Children Die"

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. A submitted permission slip is valid for four years from the month received.

Your Name: _____

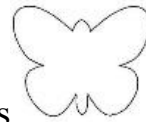
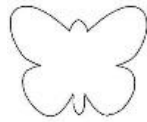
Child's Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Birth Date: _____ Death Date: _____

Date: _____

(Signature)

Please return to: The Compassionate Friends of F-M Area, PO Box 10686, Fargo ND 58106
(If you have already submitted a permission slip within the past 4 years, 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.

CHRISTMAS PAST, CHRISTMAS PRESENT

As the holidays approach, most bereaved parents feel anxiety, apprehension and some little bit of fear. The past is gone, along with our beautiful children. We live in the now, the new reality of holidays without our children.

This will be my fifth Christmas without my son, Todd. It will be my fourth Christmas without his children. And yet, I find that on some small level, I am looking forward to the holiday. I imagine the Christmases of the past when Todd was growing up and after he started his family. I also imagine Christmases of the future where Todd's children share in the traditions that their Dad so dearly loved. But that won't happen. I have come to accept that wives and children go on with their lives. I have come to accept that my son's children will not be a part of their father's family, his heritage or his legacy. That is the reality. But I have also found that wonderful people can help make the holiday special.

We won't be decorating this year, but we haven't decorated for five years. We have changed our traditions — traditions that Todd loved so much. It is simply too painful to do this alone. Christmas will never be what it once was, but I no longer dread the holidays as I once did.

Some of my Compassionate Friends have returned to old traditions with their surviving children and maybe even with grandchildren. Each of us learns to deal with Christmas in our own way. Each year I am a different person with a new perspective on the holidays. Next year I may decide to skip it all or immerse myself in the season. My truth is changing.

Find what is right for you. Pressures from others mean nothing. You choose whether a celebration is in order. You choose how to celebrate. You choose the old traditions or you choose some new ones ... maybe you choose nothing and decide to go with the flow of the moment. As bereaved parents, you will always remember your child at Christmas, but as the years add up and grief starts to release its grip on your soul, you may find that you can keep your child in your heart and have room for the spirit of Christmas as well.

The holidays do get better. Life does get better. The days will gradually become softer and sweeter. The nights will ease into gentleness. Friendships will again have luster, and relationships will become deeper and more meaningful. That is the future for each of us. The present is driven by where we are in our grief. So for this, and every Christmas Holiday season, be who you are and mark the day as you choose. May we all have serenity throughout the Holiday season and in the years ahead.

~ Annette Mennen Baldwin, TCF/Katy, TX
Mom of Todd Mennen

People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.

~ Maya Angelou

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**The
Compassionate
Friends**
Fargo/Moorhead Area Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

MISSION STATEMENT: When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

A SINCERE WELCOME TO ALL COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS. We are a nonprofit self-help organization offering friendship and support to families who have experienced the death of a child. We offer group support, understanding and friendship. Our purpose is to promote and aid parents and siblings in the positive resolution of the grief they are experiencing and to foster physical and emotional health. If you have questions or wish to talk directly to a member of the Fargo-Moorhead Compassionate Friends, please call any of the numbers listed.

FARGO-MOORHEAD COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS BOARD

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN THE BOARD AT ANY TIME!

Chapter Leader	Paul & Kara Bailey.....701-491-0364	Newsletter Editor	Nancy Teeuwen 701-730-0805
Newsletter Database	Sheryl Cvijanovich701-540-3287	Secretary	Sheryl Cvijanovich..... 701-540-3287
Treasurer	Chuck Klinkhammer.....701-298-2929	Website Administrator	Sheryl Cvijanovich..... 701-540-3287
Initial Contact	Sheryl Cvijanovich	Mailing Committee	Contact Us to Join

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 for a period of 18 months.