



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.

Upcoming Meetings
February 14th
March 14th

Dates to Remember

Mom's meeting - 7 pm on February 28th
@ Fry'n Pan
TCF National Conference July 19 - 21, 2019 in Philadelphia, PA
TCF FM Chapter's 13th Annual Walk to Remember - July 27, 2019

LOVE GIFTS

Sandi & Bob Roel in memory of their son, Joseph Peter Roel
Tom & Nancy Kassman in memory of their son, Kyle Kassman
Larry & Lois Gangnes in memory of their son, Brent M Gangnes
Mark & Jean Chaffee in memory of their daughter, Konnie Chaffee
Anthony (Jim) & Loretta Schumacher in memory of their daughter, Jennifer Schumacher
Diane & Dean Bauck in memory of their son, Davin Bauck
Pontoppidan Lutheran Church Foundation

We are deeply grateful for the LOVE GIFTS given this month. Our chapter and all chapters, are financed solely through your Love Gifts. Donations make this newsletter, postage, books, tapes, etc. possible. Thank you for your tax deductible gifts.

OUR CREDO

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope. The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain, just as your hope becomes my hope. We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances. We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships. We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief, but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope. Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength, while some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression, while others radiate an inner peace. But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died. We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building a future together. We reach out to each other in love to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow.

WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE.

WE ARE THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS. ©2007

LOVE

"...Grief is the price we pay for love. We did not lose our children. They died, taking with them our hopes and dreams for the future, but, never, never taking away their love. Though death comes, love will never go away. Hold it tight, the love our children gave us. Hold it tight through the storms of grief and bring it with you into today. Love never goes away..." ~ Darcie Sims

Our Mom's group generally meets on the 4th Thursday of the month at 7 pm at the Fry'n Pan restaurant, 300 Main Avenue, Fargo. Our gatherings are very informal as we meet to talk about our children, books, recipes, jobs and whatever else comes up in conversation. We all have times when we need the listening heart of another mom or grandma. Please join us this month on Thursday February 28th. For more information please contact Sheryl at 701-540-3287 or sherylc13@msn.com.

Holiday Angel that were not listed in previous newsletters

<u>Given By</u>	<u>In Memory of</u>
Brenda & Tim Doohar.....	Teresa Nathan

In one sense there is no death. The life of a soul on earth lasts beyond his departure. You will always feel that life touching yours, that voice speaking to you, that spirit looking out of others eyes, talking to you in the familiar things he touched, worked with, loved as familiar friends. He lives on in your life and in the lives of all others that knew him.

~ Angelo Patri, TCF/Putnam County, OH

Grief Is Not Depression

When a family member or close friend dies, people may say that we're depressed, but in reality what we're experiencing is grief. Grief is different from depression, which is an emotion or feeling, like anger or glee.

It's only partially correct to tell a mother whose 4-year-old daughter has died of leukemia that she's depressed, or to tell a husband whose wife has been killed in an automobile accident that he's suffering from depression. What also has happened to each person is the onset of grief.

What is grief?

Grief is a condition of moral and spiritual crisis. All of the beliefs which we have, are challenged when a family member or friend dies. We find ourselves asking many painful questions:

- What does it mean to be mortal?
- Why do bad things happen to good people?
- Why is there suffering?
- What does it mean that everyone I love is finite and mortal?
- What role does fate (being in the wrong place at the wrong time) play in our lives?
- Does suffering have meaning?
- Is life inherently tragic?
- Does life have meaning?

A spiritual crisis.

This spiritual crisis-which is not necessarily a religious one - involves both an intellectual and emotional struggle with a variety of emotions, only one of which is depression. Sometimes, a clinical depression will be provoked by a tragic disaster. But along with feelings of depression, there are likely to be feelings of despair, longing, guilt, shame, blame, anger, shock, sorrow, denial, loneliness, fear, and rage. All of this surrounds us as we grieve. We find ourselves asking: If babies die of agonizing diseases, and if people can become widowed in a matter of seconds, can we trust life at all, much less a loving, divine God who is good and all powerful? If such tragedies can happen, how can we feel safe or know the earth won't spin off its axis or that gravity will hold?

There appears to be no order, no meaning to life as we have known it, when we grieve.

A crisis of the entire human condition.

This is why grief transcends emotions, becoming a crisis of the entire human condition. In addition to the wrenching emotional pain that occurs when we grieve, our intellectual understandings are cracked wide open, forcing us to our knees. We are overwhelmed with doubt, even if we thought we had faith.

An entire reworking of our fundamental beliefs will have to take place, from the ground up, as we work through our grief. Most of us go through life believing that bad things should not happen to good, law-abiding, God-loving individuals. It becomes important in a time of loss to find a philosophy of life that can incorporate an unfair, undeserved catastrophe. This takes a hard and rigorous searching of the soul.

Often, our grief excludes those systems, beliefs, and friends we used to count on for discourse. Working through the grieving process can be a lonely, exhausting, and relentless process. Sleep disorders, eating disorders, and mood swings often characterize the period surrounding grief. Our constant questioning may require the help of professionals (psychotherapists, psychologists, or clergy).

Become better, not bitter.

The grieving period can take months, even years. In time, courageous individuals choose to become better rather than bitter. We realize that the only way out of grief is through it. We don't get over it. We get used to it by incorporating the loss into our revised beliefs and philosophies. Only then can we continue on with our lives.

~ Peg Armstrong, Grief and Bereavement Specialist, San Antonio, TX

WHY ME?—THE UNANSWERABLE QUESTION

Most of us have pondered this question at some time in our lives, especially since the death of our children. It resurfaces periodically in discussions with the newly bereaved. I have never been completely satisfied with the responses given and have gone away considering "Why me?" to be an unanswerable question.

That was until recently when an article was brought to my attention. The writer states that no one is immune to disaster. "Whatever else separates us, suffering is the common bond of our humanity." He told the tale of several people shattered by great losses, including the death of a child, each searching for an answer to "Why, why me?"

They came together in their suffering. Though unable to prevent the pain, these fellow grievers found that by sharing their hurt, standing together and supporting one another they could endure devastating losses.

"Why me?" is a singular and lonely question, but it doesn't have to be. Together we can give hope to the hopeless and comfort to the suffering. All we need to do is reach out, then maybe the "Why me?" will answer itself.

~ Polly Moore, TCF/ Nashville, TN

A HEART WEEPS

This is a level of loss
That numbs every part of my being
My heart is bound so tightly
That it cannot even weep:
Will this ever end?
The ground lies bare and brown
Covered with last year's leaves.
The earth is cold and hard
As desolate as my heart.
Sustain me in this hour!
Today, from that barren earth
A clump of green appeared
White snowdrops clustered there.
And I saw, once again, a fragment of beauty!
I weep with thanksgiving
For this beauty that has warmed me.
For this heart that leapt, and now knows
That joy can enter once again.
~ Marie Andrews, TCF/Southern Maryland

IN FEBRUARY

In February we celebrate the birthday of George Washington and Abe Lincoln. Lent begins. We wonder if the groundhog will see his shadow, and we have Valentine's Day in the middle of the month. Most people think of Valentine's Day as Sweetheart Day. Candy, flowers, and cards are often exchanged. Many time cards are given and received between parents and children as a way of showing love for one another. Valentine's Day is another holiday on which bereaved parents remember the drawings and cards and gifts received from their deceased child.

Take time out to be good to yourself. Take time out to remember the child who has died. Perhaps you could remember that child with a special flower, a rose or carnation; or perhaps you could do a kindness for someone in need in his or her memory; or send a special card to someone in need of help and understanding. Most of all, take time out to tell your living children and your spouse or that someone special how fortunate you are to have them and how much they mean to you.

~ Lorraine Bauman, TCF/Fairmont, MN

A VALENTINE SENT TO HEAVEN

Angels come swiftly, hurry to our side.

Carry our hearts back with you, to our children in heaven now reside.

Carry them gently, handle them with care
And take them to their sides, and gently lay them there.

Whisper to them of our love, and our longing hearts
All our lonely aching while we are apart.

Hold them gently to you, and let them see our love

Let them see this, our valentine to them above.

Reassure them of our love, that it is still the same
And gently hold us when we cry, when we hear them
whisper our names.

Let this exchange of love be our valentine

And whisper to them that our love will
stand the test of time.

Show them the memories are safely held inside
And with us they will always abide.

Let them see this day, a day filled with our love
As we shed our tears, and whisper their names, to our
Valentines above.

~ Sheila Simmons, TCF/Atlanta, GA

DIFFICULT TIME

I used to have a very difficult time, then some difficult times, then some difficult days, then a difficult day at times, but now it's difficult moments in a day now and then.

I would not have believed that possible 10 years ago, nor did I care if I even had another day, of any kind, at that time. It sounds so trite to say that time helps heal, but surviving this moment, then the next and the next, and then tomorrow, is what helped me to know that I'd be OK.

I'm very different, I'll never "get over it", but I am surviving and going on with this life and after a while I've learned to acknowledge and accept good moments and the good times even more.

Thanks to Compassionate Friends for being there.

~ Kathy Mattocks, TCF/Palo Alto, CA

A Man

When I look in the mirror I see a middle aged man. His hair is thinning on top and beginning to turn gray on the sides. Lines and creases are starting to form at the corner of his eyes. It seems that his age may be starting to show. When I look in the mirror at this man I see much more. I see a lonely man that is hurting and angry inside. He's trying to grieve over the loss of someone very dear and special to him. Someone taken away by death with no warning, his life taken by his own hand. It has left a big emptiness inside him.

He sometimes wears a mask to hide the tears from the pain and anguish that he feels. Sometimes he's afraid to let others know exactly how he feels, afraid of what they'll say to him, afraid of their reaction to him.

He just wishes things were different. He wishes it would all go away. He wishes he could wake up in the morning and realize it has all been a bad dream.

When he's out in public he hopes it doesn't show. He hopes the tears don't come to his eyes. He hopes his anger doesn't come out. So he tries as hard as he can to hold back the tears. After all a real man is not suppose to cry. So he hides behind his mask.

He manages to suppress his anger. He saves it for when he's alone then he finds ways to release it to keep from hurting others and to keep from lashing out at them for no reason. So if you see me out and about and you manage to see a tear in my eye, don't criticize me, judge me, or stereotype me. Real men do cry and sometimes it is difficult not to. Don't tell me things like "enough is enough", or that "it's time to get on with your life. "Don't tell me, "It's been long enough, that I should be over it." It just doesn't work that way. Life will never be the same again, and you never get over it.

Listen to me but don't condemn me. Don't feel sorry for me, feel with me. Don't shy away from me, but help me carry this load. Be there for me when I need someone to talk to. Tell me I don't need to hide behind my mask. Tell me it's ok to feel the way I feel. Tell me it's ok for me to cry. Tell me it's ok to feel the anger. Most of all tell me you'll help me through this nightmare of life.

~ Lloyd E. Carson

Silk Roses for Susan

I took silk roses to your grave today.

Valentine's Day is coming

And you loved red roses

I stayed there awhile and remembered

Your last Valentine's Day.

I kissed you and gave you candy

With money stuck in the top.

You tilted your head

In that certain way you had

And smiled, pleased at the gift.

Sweet daughter, I miss you so.

There was still much of life to share.

Nineteen is way too young for dying.

I would pick fresh roses for you every day

If I could have you back.

But I can't change the ending.

So I took silk roses to your grave today,

And cried fresh tears instead.

~ Ginger Elwood, TCF/Knoxville, TN

OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED BIRTHDAYS

CHILD		PARENTS
DAVIN BAUCK.....	29	DEAN & DIANE BAUCK
PAMELA KAYE BJERKE	63	DARLENE SKAR
BRIAN BJERKEN.....	47	DENNIS & SHIRLEY BJERKEN
SHERI PETERSON BJORGAN.....	56	DEWAYNE PETERSON
KELLY ANN BOYES.....	38	KAREN BOYES
BRENT GANGNES	42	LARRY & LOIS GANGNES
TODD ALLAN JOHNSON.....	49	RUSSELL & ANNE JOHNSON
BRANDON WILLIAM THOMAS KLUTH.....	36	BRENDA KLUTH
BENJAMIN KOTTA.....	36	ARLEN & JULIE KOTTA
KEVIN DEANE MAESSE.....	63	HELEN MAESSE
MATTHEW MILLIGAN-OLSON.....	44	JOHN & KYLENE MILLIGAN
JONATHAN LEVI POITRA.....	37	SUZIE & JAMES HILL
JOSEPH PETER ROEL.....	51	BOB & SANDI ROEL

ANNIVERSARIES

CHILD		PARENTS
NATHAN BEACH.....	5	LISA BEACH
QUENTIN LEE CLEMENTS.....	4	JAMIE KUROWSKI
MATTHEW JOHN GAFFNEY.....	14	JOHN & JILL GAFFNEY
BRENT GANGNES	18	LARRY & LOIS GANGNES
JAMES "JESSY" HABERMAN.....	1	JIM & HEATHER HABERMAN
KARL HELFTER.....	3	MARK & HELLA HELFTER
ROY DANA RICHMOND.....	10	THOMAS & AUDREY RICHMOND
CARSON DENNIS RONEY.....	2	PAUL & RENAE RONEY
CHAD VARRIANO.....	2	ANTHONY & KAREL VARRIANO

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 Loving Listener

One day last month, seemingly out of nowhere, my dark and dreaded companion "grief" came roaring back in to my life. Just as I thought I was "doing all right," grief came once again to wrench, rip, and tear at the thin delicate membrane of scar tissue that had formed over the wound in my heart, that I had foolishly believed allowed me to be normal again. I was in unbearable agony. I thought, "Oh my God, I can't believe I ever hurt this bad. How did I ever survive this agony?" I finally pulled myself together as best I could and reached out to one of our beautiful angels of mercy. I called our "Loving Listener." "Hi, do you have a minute?" She chirped "Absolutely!" I went on to pour out my heart to her. She listened patiently. She offered no quick fixes or advice, trite phrases, or empty platitudes. She just spiritually embraced me and suffered along with me; quietly offering her love, compassion and understanding. When most of my pain and sorrow had finally emptied out, I realized it was coming up on the anniversary death date of my child. It would mark five years since the death of my beloved daughter Angela. This was the catalyst that had plunged me back into the abyss of grief. I could not bear the thought that my beautiful child had been dead for a half a decade. As soon as I realized what had caused this awful digression, I began to feel a little better. If your chapter has a Loving Listener, please give them a call. They will give you solace, comfort and companionship. We Need Not Walk Alone.

~ Janet G. Reyes, TCF/Alamo Area Chapter, TX

SIBLING PAGE

GRIEF'S ARRAY OF EMOTIONS

I think the most frustrating thing about grief is that it is more than just sadness or the persistent feeling of emptiness I feel. Grief spans a wide array of feelings and emotions including, but not limited to sorrow, anger, jealousy, and helplessness. Lately, I have been struggling with coming to grips with my life as it continues along a path I would never have imagined. If Carl were still alive, I imagine he would be married and I would be an aunt to his children. He would have been there for my wedding and would be anxiously awaiting, along with my parents, the arrival of his future nieces and nephews. He would have been a great uncle. He was always great with kids and reveled in the part of himself which never grew up; the same trait which inexplicably drew kids to him.

Losing a brother is not just losing a companion, a best friend, a confidant, someone to pave the way for a little sister as she follows eagerly behind. When Carl died I not only lost those things, but I lost the future we would have had. I wish I would have had a chance to see how great he would have been with the children I hope to someday have. I wish I would have had the chance to see his sparkle, his amazing smile passed on to his children. But my reality is that these things will never come to pass. As each year turns into the next I struggle to reconcile the life I had imagined with the life I live today. It's hard to keep moving forward when I no longer have a big brother to do things first so I know, more or less, what to expect.

Maybe dealing with Carl's death and the loss of the future I had imagined would be easier if grief were merely a matter of dealing with the ensuing sadness. However, as my life continues to move forward I come across new struggles. I find myself getting jealous of my husband of three months, relationship with his brother and angry at him for having one when mine is gone. Is it rational? No, but grief isn't always rational. I can't fault him for having a close relationship with his brother, nor can I fault him for Carl's death. I have no real reason to be angry with him when he is on the phone with his brother. I can't be angry with him because it's not me. No matter how much I wish, it will never be me again. I have no real reason to be jealous of his niece and nephew and the relationship he has with them. It is not his fault that I will never hold my brother's children.

It isn't fair for me to take my anger out on him or brood silently while he continues to nurture relationships with his family. I know, too well, the importance of family. One of the things I love most about him is that he is very close to his family and places great importance on maintaining strong familial ties. But, my grief inevitably creeps in and weaves its way through our relationship. Not only do I have to deal with my grief, but I have to be careful in how I channel it, if I want to have a successful marriage. Yet, even as I try to channel my grief, more anger creeps in because I have to concentrate harder on my actions because I am grieving my brother's death—and that doesn't feel very fair either.

I try to tell my husband and try to help him understand when I am feeling angry or jealous because he has something I long to have, but I am afraid. I fear that there will come a day when I tell him the reason I am acting irrationally is because I am struggling with my grief and he sees my explanation merely as an excuse or something I should learn to control. I fear he will tire of being patient with me, or expect that one day I won't cry "over nothing" or that one day I won't feel sad on the Fourth of July because it was one of Carl's favorite holidays.

Is my fear irrational, or am I assuming he will react to me the way others in the past have reacted? I guess I am bound to find out sooner or later. Just as I learn to live with my grief I will have to learn how to manage my grief while maintaining a marriage. I sure wish grief was just about feeling sad. No, I really wish I didn't have to deal with it all.

~ Carrie Kears

Carrie's brother, Carl Pueschel, died January 19, 1996

HAND IN HAND

Our times and memories spent together
Were meant to be cherished
They were burned in our hearts
Never to perish.

We walked unknowingly, on the same road
Hand in hand.
Now the road has divided
We are apart in this land.

We are separated now,
No longer together
The memories now hurt
There are no more to be made, it is forever.

Someday, along the way,
Our roads may meet again
And maybe, to love
Will no longer bring pain.

That is my dream,
That it might not hurt
To think of you
That this pain would desert.

As we grow farther and farther
Astray, it may seem
But those are mere illusions
To picture each other unseen.

But you are only on the other side
Of the mirror, reach through
And grasp my hand.
We'll run together, me and you.

Maybe we cannot see
Or talk face to face
But we are hand in hand
And we're winning this race.
~ a 13 year old girl, whose brother died

BECAUSE

Because you can't feel me,
Doesn't mean I'm not there.
Because you can't see me,
doesn't mean I'm not near.
Because you can't hear me,
doesn't mean I don't speak.
Because you can't see me,
doesn't mean I'm out of reach.
Because I am dead,
doesn't mean I'm gone.
~ Beth Oldani, TCF/Arlington Heights, IL

Grief never ends, but it changes.
It's a passage, not a place to stay.
The sense of loss must give way if we're to
value the life that was lived

A Grandmother's Grief

My mother, diagnosed with lymphoma, died just before Mother's Day in 2008. Only two months prior, she had been a high spirited fun-loving woman, the heart of our family who was looking forward to her 90th birthday celebration that fall. As I cared for my dear mother, knowing I would soon lose her, I reflected back on my daughter's Kristen's death at age seven and my mother's concerns about me at that time.

I had been so consumed by my own grief then, and the grief of my young son, only nine when his sister died, that I was hardly aware of others' grief. Not until a few years ago did my mother confide her pain of not only grieving for her precious granddaughter, but her daughter as well. Her fear was that the tragic and sudden loss of Kristen could also mean the loss of her daughter. "Kristen drowned in the ocean," she said, "but you were drowning in grief. I know you felt helpless to save her, but I felt the same about you. I had no idea how to rescue you." Surprised to hear this, even though I had also feared losing my mind, I became aware for the first time of the unique role grandparents play when their grandchild dies.

I recently became a grandmother myself and have been overjoyed with this new role of welcoming Joseph into the world. My favorite picture is of my mother, shortly before she died, with a huge smile and outstretched arms reaching for baby Joseph when meeting him for the first time. While my mother's death, unlike Kristen's, is part of the natural cycle of life, I will miss her deeply. She taught me so much. I think of her often in my new role as a grandparent.

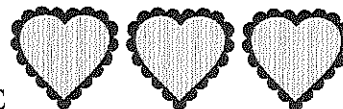
When Joseph was born, I had the luxury of spending the first several weeks with him, watching him change daily as his parents moved nervously into their new role. I loved being witness to the bond developing as they changed from being a couple to being a little family.

My son, a resident in anesthesiology, studies nightly, often with Joseph nestled against his chest in a baby sling. He once shared how much he missing his baby while he spends long hours at the hospital. Watching the creation of this strong parental bond, I became aware of the unique dual bond of the grandparent. A bond that takes her heart to places she never thought possible...a bond that should never be broken. I now appreciated more than ever what my mother experienced.

~ Carol Kearns, TCF/Marin County, CA



SUGGESTIONS TO AID MARRIAGE



1. Don't expect spouse to be a tower of strength when he or she is also experiencing grief.
2. Be sensitive to your spouse's personality style. In general he or she will approach grief with the same personality habits as they approach life. It may be very private, very open and sharing or someplace in between.
3. Find a "sympathetic ear" (not necessarily our mate's) --someone who cares and will listen.
4. Do talk about your child with your spouse. If necessary set up a time to talk about the child.
5. Seek the help of a counselor if depression, grief or problems in your marriage are getting out of hand.
6. Do not overlook or ignore anger causing situations. It is like adding fuel to a fire. Eventually there is an explosion. Deal with things as they occur.
7. Remember you loved your spouse enough to marry. Try to keep your marriage alive: go out for dinner or an ice cream cone; take a walk; go on a vacation.
8. Be gentle with yourself and your mate.
9. Join a support group for bereaved parents. Attend as a couple, come by yourself or with a friend. It is a good place to learn about grief and to feel understood. Do not make it a pressure on your spouse to attend with you if it is not his/her preference.
10. Join a mutually agreeable community betterment project.
11. Do not blame yourself or mate for what you were powerless to prevent. If you blame your spouse or personally feel responsible for your child's death seek immediate counseling help for yourself and your marriage.
12. Realize that you are not alone. There are many bereaved parents. In 2 1/2 years our mailing list has grown from 50 parents to over 700 parents.
13. Choose to believe again in the goodness of God and of life. Search for you and laughter.
14. Recognize your extreme sensitivity and vulnerability and be alert to tendency to take things personally.
15. Read about grief, especially the books written for bereaved parents.
16. Take your time with decisions about child's things, change of residence, etc.
17. Be aware of unrealistic expectations for yourself or your mate.
18. Remember there is no timetable. Everyone goes through grief differently, even parents of the same child.
19. Try to remember that your spouse is doing the best he or she can.
20. Marital friction is normal in any marriage. Don't blow it out of proportion.
21. Try not to let little everyday irritants become major issues. Talk about them and try to be patient.
22. Be sensitive to the needs and wishes of your spouse as well as yourself. Sometimes it is important to compromise.
23. It is very important to keep the lines of communication open.
24. Work on your grief instead of wishing that your spouse would handle his/her grief differently. You will find that you will have enough just handling your own grief. Remember when you help yourself cope with grief, it indirectly helps your spouse.
25. As Harriet Schiff states, "Value your marriage. You have lost enough."
26. Hold on to HOPE. With time, work and support, you will survive. It will never be the same but you can learn again to appreciate life and the people in your life.

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

Your Name: _____

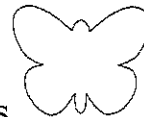
Child's Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Birth Date: _____ Death Date: _____

Date: _____

(Signature)

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



Butterfly Decals

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

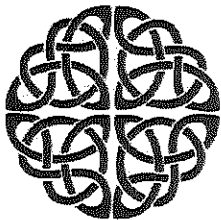
Butterfly decals are available to help personalize our trailer. The trailer is used to carry items to and from our Walk to Remember and other chapter events. It has also given us some visibility in the Fargo/Moorhead community. Each butterfly decal holds the first and last name of one of our beloved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

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

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

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

Forever Entwined



Losing a child to death is statistically improbable, yet all parents harbor the concept as their worst fear, the stuff of nightmares, cold sweats and anxiety. But when our children die, the anxiety of that possibility pales against the soul wrenching horror of the reality. At first we freeze in time as our focus is on the primal.....breathe, drink water. After the initial shock has ceased to control our every moment, we seek answers. Can I get through this? Do I want to get through this? How have others managed to continue living after their child has died? I have disconnected from my friends and even my family. I don't want to go forward.....the pain is too intense. Death would be a mercy. Life is no longer a joy. My heart is broken. I will never see my child again.

If we are fortunate enough to find a Compassionate Friends Group, we meet people who have taken this nightmare journey.....and survived. Our first meeting is the most difficult.....at my first meeting the only word I could say was my son's name. Later, we tell our story to those have experienced the death of their child and find that talking to kindred souls can be cathartic. If we persevere and continue to attend meetings, get to know other parents, participate in the group discussions, cry with others and smile at the memories of their child.....we begin the healing process.

Now our lives are forever entwined with those of other parents who have lost a child to death. Like the Celtic knot, we are now part of an eternal paradigm: we are strands in the knot, weaving our stories into each others' lives. This interlace of our lives is a permanent and beautiful blending of souls seeking comfort from one another. Our reality is shared by others; we lean on them, they lean on us. We give, we receive.

Many friends from our lives before the death of our child hesitate to mention our child's name and even fear talking about our child's life and listening to our memories. But we don't want to forget our child as that would be the worst betrayal. We want to talk about our child's life and keep their spirit with us always. Those in our lives who do not share this feeling are not part of our eternal paradigm; they will never be entwined with us as we complete our journey on this earth.

The Celtic knot, the symbol of eternity, is symbolic of the relationships we have found at Compassionate Friends. These lives are forever woven into ours, we accept each other's perspectives and share their sorrow and the joy of their memories. There is a place in our Celtic knot for all parents who have lost a child. As other parents join us, they are enfolded forever into the eternal paradigm of healing and compassion.

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

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
 OF THE F-M AREA
 PO BOX 10686
 FARGO ND 58106

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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 701-446-7504	Newsletter Database	Sheryl Cvijanovich.....701-540-3287
Secretary	Sheryl Cvijanovich 701-540-3287	Website Administrator	Sheryl Cvijanovich.....701-540-3287
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.