



# The Compassionate Friends

## Fargo/Moorhead Area Chapter

### Supporting Family After a Child Dies

TCF's National Office  
48660 Pontiac Trl #930808  
Wixom MI 48393-7736  
Toll-free (877) 969-0010  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

F-M Area Chapter  
PO Box 10686  
Fargo ND 58106  
[www.tcffargomoorhead.org](http://www.tcffargomoorhead.org)  
February 2023

Volume 40 Number 2

Chapter Leaders - Paul & Kara Bailey 701-491-0364

Newsletter Editor - Nancy Teeuwen 701-730-0805

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

**Meetings for 2023 will be quarterly instead of monthly**

#### Next Meeting & Topic

March 9, 2023 - Bring a Memento

Weather cancellations will be posted on WDAY, KVLV, KFGO and the Fargo Forum online at [www.inforum.com](http://www.inforum.com)!

#### Dates to Remember

Mom's meeting - 7 pm on February 23rd @ Denny's  
46th TCF National Conference July 7-9, 2023 in Denver, Colorado

#### LOVE GIFTS

Jerry & Mary Schutz in memory of their son, Daniel Schutz  
Shelley Ford in memory of her son, Jess Ford  
Sandi & Bob Roel in memory of their son, Joseph Peter Roel  
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.

**Holiday Angel received not listed in prior newsletters**

Hanson Runsvold Funeral Home

#### 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 February 23rd. For more information, please contact Sheryl at 701-540-3287 or visit our website at [www.tcffargomoorhead.org](http://www.tcffargomoorhead.org).

At the finest level of my being, you're still with me.  
We still look at each other, at that level beyond sight.  
We talk and laugh with each other, in a place beyond words.  
We still touch each other, on a level beyond touch.  
We share time together in a place where time stands still.  
We are still together, on a level called LOVE.  
But I cry alone for you, in a place called reality."  
~ Richard Lepinsky

Letting go of grief doesn't mean that you  
No longer miss your loved one.  
He is part of your life forever.  
However, his role in your life changes.

~ Darcie D Sims, "Footsteps Through the Valley"

## Alphabet Grief

Allow & express your feelings  
Be patient with yourself & others  
Cry without shame—tears are healing  
Don't compare the depth of your feeling w/other mourning styles—don't waste energy trying to measure someone else's pain  
Energy might be low or absent  
Fight to survive—one day, hour or minute at a time  
Give forgiveness a chance—forgive yourself, your child, the circumstances, your God  
Hope hides but will emerge just when you need it  
Ignore the dumb & inappropriate comments of others—they don't mean to hurt you  
Join a support group—Compassionate Friends understands  
Keep searching for your sense of humor—once found, laughter will help you cope  
Live each day as best you can—take time to take care of yourself  
Make only small goals—baby steps are OK  
Note that you are still standing  
Overcome your expectations of yourself and others  
Pray, if it is part of your belief system, otherwise meditate or spend some time in solitude  
Quiet silence & calm  
Realize your love for who you lost, and theirs for you, did not die with them  
Sleep as much as you can at night, napping in the day is fine also  
Take time to grieve and mourn. Don't dive into extreme business or make hasty decisions  
Use a compassionate friend, family member, counselor or God to vent and express how you feel  
Veer away from expecting others to grieve the same way you do  
Write about how you feel and how much you miss your child  
X out feelings of guilt, know you did the best you could as a parent  
You are not alone—remember and take comfort in that  
Zoo: Yes, it feels like you're in a zoo. The world keeps moving despite your loss. Be gentle with yourself and don't get stuck and caged in your grief.

~ Author unknown

## Lacy

Everyone's forgotten you, Lacy. Everyone but me...  
Your mother, a mother without a child. What am I?  
I had a baby, but she's gone.  
Am I a mother? What am I?  
Sue Chaidez, GriefworksBC.com

## The Long Forever

You left us so quickly; there were no goodbyes.  
How long this forever, your death and our lives.  
The sadness, the anger, the loneliness of three,  
preferring four always, how small, this new we.  
Genesse Bourdeau Gentry  
From *Stars in the Deepest Night – After the Death of a Child*

## Reconciliation

Long ago it was thought that in order to heal, one should detach, completely, from the one who died. Upon reading this I wondered if that was why there are those who still push us toward such a thing. We've likely all experienced that person who suggests we get rid of all their belongings, or perhaps asks how long we will hold onto something. ("Something" that is more dear to us than they could ever imagine.)

Thankfully we know better today. Humans are created for connection. Our days, our lives consist of interaction, intimacy and relations. We form bonds. And so we should.

Though we have many relationships over the course of our lives, the bonds between us and our children are the deepest. Death may remove them physically from us, but it does nothing to sever the emotional connection. I believe a big part of the reconciliation process is learning to integrate our past with our present, our losses into our ongoing lives. Having built several houses, and thus moving multiple times, I have found that I need to keep and bring a few familiar items to each new place. It seems I need a piece of the past. It anchors me. When we lose a child this need is far greater. Necessary to survival. Will others understand why we keep their favorite ski jacket, stuffed animal or skateboard?

Possibly not. Does that matter? No. Experts call these "linking objects", and they tell us how crucial they are. No one knows but you what your needs are, what your path will look like, what will see you through each tomorrow. I'm so grateful to TCF, where we all share an understanding of the need to support one another, to make space for different approaches, and to extend grace and kindness on this path we never would have chosen.

Hugs to all. May you hold close a special item and feel the warmth of your beautiful child. They are with us forever.

~ Michelle Thomason, TCF/Portland, OR

## In Memory of Brent M Gangnes

2/1977 - 2/2001

Five years have come and gone now  
And we all think of you every day  
Each one of us still carries you with us  
Each one in our own special way  
Some carry you within their hearts  
While others carry you in every thought  
Two little boys carry you by their names  
One carries you in the last name she never got

We remember the man that you always were  
And the man you never got the chance to be  
Truth in the fact only the good die young  
Is something we've all come to see.

So many dreams you had yet to live out  
And so much you still had to do  
One thing that we all know every day  
Is that we will forever miss you

In five years that have come to pass  
Each one of us thinks of you each day  
And still struggle with the heartache  
That your life shouldn't have end this way  
We will always love and miss you  
Continue to carry you in each heart  
Memories of happy times we all shared  
Will always keep us from ever being apart  
We all love you and miss you, Brent

~ Lois Gangnes, TCF/Fargo, ND  
Written in 2006

## Newly Bereaved...

### Normal Feelings While Grieving

- A feeling of numbness—no feelings at all.
- A sense of abandonment and desolation.
- A sense of protest—"No, this did not happen."
- Loss of appetite, an empty feeling in the stomach or "nervous eating" even when not hungry.
- Difficulty sleeping.
- Guilt. Awareness of aspects in the relationship that were less than perfect.
- A feeling of "If only..."
- Anger—at God, at the people around us, at the person who died for leaving us, at those who took care of the one who died, at things which did or did not happen in the relationship.
- Restlessness and a desire to be busy, but difficulty in concentrating or finishing what is started.
- Aimless activity and forgetfulness.
- Wondering if you are "going crazy."
- Searching for or expecting the loved one to walk in the door or call on the phone; hearing his or her voice; seeing his or her face; frequent dreaming about the loved one.
- A need to tell and retell the details of the death.
- Crying at unexpected times and experiencing mood changes for minor reasons.
- A desire to remember and talk about life experiences with the loved one.
- An awareness that other people are uncomfortable around us and don't know what to say for fear of "upsetting us."
- A desire "not to be a bother" to other family members, while at the same time needing to express the feelings of loss.
- Difficulty enjoying special days, like birthdays, weddings, anniversaries and holidays.
- Feelings of loss seem acute at these times.

~ Author Unknown

### TO THOSE WHO REALLY HURT

KNOW . . . that your grieving is the most difficult thing you will ever have to do. UNDERSTAND . . . that part of grief is bad days and bad nights. And intense pain and terrible sadness. You must ACCEPT this as part of your healing.

But, KNOW ALSO . . . that there are gifts in your grief. They are not easy to find. And you will earn them with your tears. As you think about it . . . deep within your heart you KNOW that this is true. THIS is why you can endure it.

Slowly . . . you will find new patterns. You will force yourself to take first steps. You will accomplish little victories. (None of us will tell you it was easy.) GRIEVE WELL, my friend.

For grief well-grieved is truly life well-lived. And once accomplished, you will discover untold new dimensions in your life. . . BECAUSE a child died.

~ Shirley Melin, TCF/Aurora, IL

### Don't Take My Grief Away

"Grief is not an enemy. It is a friend.

It is a natural process of walking through the pain and growing because of the walk. Stand tall to friends and yourself and say, "Don't take my grief away from me. I deserve it, and I am going to have it."

~Rev. Douglas Manning

## The Unwanted Job

The job was thrust upon me suddenly, with no forethought, consultation, or preparation. My position title read, "Mourner". And once appointed to the position, no amount of pleading revoked the assignment. The job description dimly read: No coffee breaks or lunch hours, no sick days, personal time, or vacations; total commitment demanded; crying allowed.

How long, I asked, must I labor at this mourning? I get so tired of my daily tasks: looking at photos of Nathan, son of promise and hope; wandering into his room, fingering his pitifully few possessions; watching videos to hear his voice and laugh for fear of forgetting him; mulling over in my mind: the final moments of his life, the sheriff delivering the numbing news, his strong, young body lying lifeless, the final good-bye for now as the casket lid closed.

Questioning God - Where were you? Can't I trust you? and crying ... and crying ... and crying.

As long as you need to, the disquieting answer came. You will know when your work is done. Until then, you must do the necessary work of mourning in order to heal. Allow family and friends to toil along side of you, spend quiet times, search your inner being for hidden resources, ask your questions over and over again, tell your story repeatedly, be honest with God, He can take it. Acknowledge your anger, be patient with yourself; and cry ... and cry ... and cry.

It is good I did not know the duration of my tenure. I would have despaired. But a lifetime of a year has passed, and I find my load has miraculously lightened. Now I can talk about Nathan without always crying, look at his pictures and videos without longing to die to be with him, some of the time control my thoughts, thinking of his death when I want to.

Now I can see beyond my pain to other's needs, find some hope and purpose for going on living without him, cry shorter periods without feeling hopeless. No wages of dollars and cents compensate my grief; they would soon be spent and vanish.

I'm paid with a deeper understanding of myself, others, and God: discovery of untapped springs of strength; amazement at the God-given resiliency of the human spirit; the value of family and friends who never tire of my story; letting God be God, because there are not always answers. Believing God collects my tears and mourns along with me; trusting I can give up my mourning without giving up my memories.

Others tell me this job requires lifelong attention; it accepts no resignations. But I pray the workload continues to ease and that my healing becomes complete.

I go on with this business of life. And I look forward, in due time, to my retirement gift; Reunion with Nathan in Eternity.

~ Ruth Tullock, In memory of Nathan Allan Tulloch

### The Song Is the Same

Different are the circumstances of our child's death,

Different are their names,

Different was their life and the length of it,

But their song was the same.

They lived for one brief moment in history,

Much too soon they were gone,

They left us here, parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters,

To remember the gift of their life and somehow go on.

Whatever the time that has passed for us,

Whatever the pain and grief that we claim,

We are all here together to remember our kids,

So your song becomes my song and our song is the same.

~ Barb Seth, TCF/Madison, WI

## OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED *BIRTHDAYS*

<b>CHILD</b>		<b>PARENTS</b>
DAVIN LOREN BAUCK .....	33.....	DEAN & DIANE BAUCK
PAMELA KAYE BJERKE .....	67.....	DARLENE SKAR
BRIAN BJERKEN .....	51.....	DENNIS & SHIRLEY BJERKEN
SHERI PETERSON BJORGAN.....	60.....	DEWAYNE PETERSON
KEVIN DILLENBURG .....	68.....	LOYSE PORTER
ISSAC JEREMY ENGELSTAD .....	27.....	SETH & DEVI ENGELSTAD
BRENT GANGNES.....	46.....	LARRY & LOIS GANGNES
DERRICK DENNIS JACOBS.....	35.....	TROY & DENISE JACOBS
RYAN PHILLIP JENSON .....	33.....	DALE & KELLY JENSON
BRANDON WILLIAM THOMAS KLUTH.....	40.....	BRENDA KLUTH
SCOTT LIMA.....	49.....	MARGARET LIMA
MATTHEW MILLIGAN-OLSON .....	48.....	JOHN & KYLENE MILLIGAN
AMANDA LEA PERKINS .....	35.....	DWIGHT & MARLENE PERKINS
JANZEN PETERSON.....	23.....	JULIE & JAY PETERSON
JONATHAN LEVI POITRA.....	41.....	SUZIE & JAMES HILL
TRAVIS JON MICHAEL ROBINSON.....	36.....	LARRY & MARY LEE ROBINSON
JOSEPH PETER ROEL .....	55.....	BOB & SANDI ROEL
KORBIN KURT STEINWEHR.....	25.....	MAZY STEINWEHR
ALEXANDER TUFTE .....	17.....	DAWN & BRANDON TUFTE

## *ANNIVERSARIES*

<b>CHILD</b>		<b>PARENTS</b>
NATHAN KEITH BEACH .....	9.....	LISA BEACH
BRENT GANGNES.....	22.....	LARRY & LOIS GANGNES
ROBERT DEAN HANSON .....	4.....	STEVE & DIANE HANSON
KARL HELFTER .....	7.....	MARK & HELLA HELFTER
MARK ANTHONY MORATIS .....	1.....	WALTER & MARGARET MORATIS
ROY DANA RICHMOND.....	14.....	THOMAS & AUDREY RICHMOND
CARSON DENNIS RONEY .....	6.....	PAUL & RENAE RONEY
ALEXANDER TUFTE .....	6.....	DAWN & BRANDON TUFTE
MELODY TUFTE .....	6.....	DAWN & BRANDON TUFTE
SPENCER TUFTE.....	6.....	DAWN & BRANDON TUFTE
CHAD VARRIANO.....	6.....	ANTHONY & KAREL VARRIANO

Please check out our Chapter website's page for 'Our Beloved Children'  
([www.tcffargomoorhead.org/ourchildren.html](http://www.tcffargomoorhead.org/ourchildren.html) ). If you would like your child's picture and a poem or story posted on this page, please submit them to us at [tcf1313@hotmail.com](mailto: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.

### **A Prayer for Spring**

Like spring time, let me unfold and grow fresh and anew from this cocoon of grief that has been spun around me. Help me face the harsh reality of sunshine and renewed life as my bones still creak from the winter of my grief. Life has dared to go on around me and as I recover from the insult of life's continuance, I adjust my focus to include healing and growth as possibility in my future. Give me strength to break out of the cocoon of my grief, but may I never forget it is the place where I grew my wings, becoming a new person because of my loss.

~ Janis Hiel, Bereaved Parents/USA, Ocala, Fl. Chapter

# SIBLING PAGE

## What Siblings Think About

At a Pennsylvania chapter meeting, the brothers and sisters explored their feeling about a number of issues. Those siblings were kind enough to record their feelings on paper with others  
*I would like my parents to know....*

That I am OK and would like to talk to them about my brother or sister whenever they feel like it  
That I hurt too and loved my brother/sister.  
That my love for my sibling will never go away.  
How special my parents are and how proud I am of their love.  
It's all right if they want to talk to me. I will listen and be sad with them  
That they are not at fault.  
That it's OK to cry together and that I'm there for them.  
That I'll never forget my sibling, the good times and the hard ones.

*I would like my father to know....*

It helps to talk.  
That if anything happened to him, I would feel the same way.  
He is not alone and I want to laugh and cry with him again.  
That his child knew that he loved him/her.  
That it's OK to talk about my brother/sister when I am around.  
I do cry, not a lot, but I do cry.

*I would like my mother to know....*

I love her.  
It's OK to cry and I am there for her to talk to  
That I will always love her.  
She has been my example of giving love.  
That my sibling is at peace with God  
It's OK to talk about the past.  
I cry. I knew my sibling in a different way. I think about those times and smile through the tears.

*I would like my dead brother/sister to know....*

We miss you.  
That I love you and miss you and need you in my life.  
That we are well, sharing all we have, and waiting to be with you again.  
It's sad around here, but we remember you.  
That we all love and miss you very, very much  
That your life won't be forgotten.  
That I try to be like you. I am in many ways.  
One thing I'd like to say is that I go into your room for the memories.

*The hardest part of losing my brother/sister is....*

Having such a hole in our family.  
Believing it actually happened and that I'll never see or talk to him/her again.  
I will never have a sibling to talk to.  
Not being able to look into your eyes, hug you and laugh with you  
That I never told you personally that I loved you - it was always assumed.  
Losing my best friend.  
Not having you there to complain at me for the things I do.

*I like to remember my sister/brother by....*

Looking at pictures.  
Thinking of you when you would goof off with my children.  
Going to the grave.

Playing my music loud, singing like you and laughing I listen to your favorite albums.  
Talking about him and looking at his truck in the driveway.  
*I regret.....*  
Nothing  
All the arguments we had and not having the chance to say good-bye.  
Fighting with my brother/sister.  
Not hearing your music play and the telephone busy.  
Not sharing enough time with you.  
Not telling you how much I loved you.  
Not yelling at or hugging you one more time.  
Not knowing when you were going to die.  
Hugging you because you were the "big brother/sister."  
Not spending time with you.  
Being a massive pest.

The Sibling Group TCF, Lehigh Valley, PA

## Ashley

When I think of Ashley, I think of all the good times. And some of the stupid little fights that we had. Maybe those fights used to feel dumb but now I miss them. I love and will always hang on to the good times.

My biggest fear is that I will forget her. If I don't think I'm going to remember, I dig out old memories. I think of her death sometimes as we're sledding down a hill, which is our life, and the sled is getting faster to the end of her life, or the bottom of the hill, but my sled isn't going as fast as hers. I know she can see me, but I can't see her. I hear her calling my name, but no words are coming out of my mouth to call her. This is how I sometimes feel.

~ Hannah Childs, TCF/NE Baltimore

## Open Letter to Our Siblings

Dear Sibling,

How can I possibly tell you how much I miss you? But of course you probably know – since you knew me better than anyone. No matter how much time passes, I still wish you were here to share our lives and the future I expected us to have together. Even though we fought and at times neglected each other, I just assumed that you would always be there. That we'd grow old together and remember stories of growing up and laugh at each other as we looked and acted more like our parents. That we'd share our joys and setbacks, and adore each other's children.

Your death has rocked me harder than I could imagined I'd survive. Ultimately, there are no answers to my questions. There is no replacing you and there is no solace for my grief. There is only the simple choice I make every day to live on in the honor of your memory and the love we shared. To strive to carry on the best of who you were. To cherish the brief time we have with others. To celebrate the opportunity to be alive. To have compassion for the pain of others as well as my own. To have the courage to love fully as I have loved you and to remember that you would want me to go on and find joy again.

You gave me so many gifts while you were alive and I continue to discover the gifts in this loss. I am so thankful you were born my sibling. I would not have traded our time together for anything. You are always with me because you are a part of me.

~ Mary Lamourex, TCF/Marin County, CA

# **PARTING IS NOT ALWAYS SUCH SWEET SORROW**

by Louise Marie Gaskin TCF/East Aurora NY  
"We Need Not Walk Alone" Vol 18, #3

In February of 1990 my 14-year-old daughter, Brigette, died suddenly. One situation I found very difficult was sorting through her personal belongings. Knowing that we all grieve in our own way, you should never feel that you have to go through your child's belongings if you do not want to. You will know when and if the time is right. If you do decide that the time is right, the following suggestions are some that you might find helpful:

## **Golden Rules/Getting Started**

### **1. DO NOT PUSH YOURSELF**

When my daughter first passed away, I never thought I would touch anything in her room. Three months later I found myself going through her personal items. My normal spring cleaning and rearranging a room or two helped get me in the mood.

### **2. TAKE ONE STEP AT A TIME**

Do not expect to do it all at once. As you begin sorting through your child's possessions, do not get upset if you cannot part with any of his or her belongings. It took me three attempts to just be able to stop crying long enough to go through them.

### **3. ASK FAMILY MEMBERS OR CLOSE FRIENDS FOR HELP**

Having someone there to help is a good idea. I invited a friend to help me go through my daughter's hat and t-shirt collections. She sat and listened to the stories about how and where we acquired each hat and t-shirt. It was so much fun talking about my daughter and having someone there to listen. After it was all over, she thanked me for letting her help!

### **4. THE DECISION ON WHAT YOU WANT TO KEEP SHOULD BE YOURS**

Do not feel guilty about what you want to do. I sold my home approximately a year and a half after my daughter passed away and once I began packing, I found that there were many items that I did not want to move. If you decide you want to part with some of your child's belongings, I suggest that you get them out of the house on the same day or very soon after. I found that if I left the items in my home more than two days after I had initially gone through them, I was going through them again and again. Remember, letting go is very difficult.

### **5. SET A PLAN FOR ACTION**

Set up a schedule and write down the items that you would like to go through. It gives you something to start with. Be sure to note your progress! It will make you feel better.

## **For Those Items You Decide to Keep:**

### **1. FIND NEW USES AND PLACES**

My daughter's red wagon was converted into an indoor garden. A favorite worn-out sweatshirt of hers became a pillow cover. I had some of her gold jewelry melted down and made into a pendant that I wear often. A shelf in the guest room proudly displays her doll collection, her shell collection is in the family room, and one wall of my study proudly displays her pictures.

### **2. KEEP THEM NEAR AND DEAR**

I bought a cedar chest that is filled with many little remembrances from my daughter. I organized some of the remembrances in clear storage boxes that I labeled so that they are easy to get to. The cedar chest is a beautiful addition to my home and it keeps many loving memories secure and near.

### **3. PACK THEM AWAY**

There were some items that I needed to keep, if only for the comfort of knowing that I still had them. For the items, I packed them securely in boxes and then stored the boxes in a safe, dry place.

### **4. RECYCLE ITEMS**

By recycling, I mean changing which items I leave out. My daughter collected small boxes, teddy bears, sea shells and other items. Sometimes I will have the teddy bears out on my bed or maybe her little boxes arranged nicely on my dresser. I find it comforting when I get to go through one of her collections.

**NOTE:** I keep a 3" x 5" card catalog with cards listing all of her items and where they are. This saves time and panic when I need to locate something of hers.

## **For Those Items You Decide To Give Away:**

### **1. KEEP THE MEMORY.**

Parting with many of my daughter's possessions was extremely difficult. I knew that once they were given away, I might not ever see or remember them again. Prior to giving some of her things away, I wrote down my thoughts and notes about the items in the 3x5 card catalog. Now, whenever I want or need a memory, I just go to my file and pick one.

### **2. SPECIAL OCCASIONS AND HOLIDAYS**

Holidays and family affairs are always so difficult to get through without your child. Some of her handmade Halloween costumes were given away as presents along with a picture of her in the costume. They made for very special and unexpected presents. The children loved receiving the costumes and it helped me to get through Halloween. Her pearl earrings were given to my best friend's daughter for her First Holy Communion. It is still very difficult to attend these events without my daughter. As the little girl went around and showed everyone her earrings, I felt my daughter's presence there with us. My mother received her birthstone ring. It was over 12 years old and had been resized at least five times. I wrote a story to accompany the ring and gave it to my mom for Christmas. Although it was difficult to part with this ring, my mother takes great pride in wearing it and that has helped her to deal with the loss.

### **3. RETURN ITEMS TO THOSE THAT GAVE THEM.**

Whenever I gave any items back to the people who originally gave them to her, they were overjoyed. Over the years some of my daughter's school friends had given her little stuffed animals, posters and other gifts. I asked the children if they would like to have these items back. They were so appreciative of my kindness. I know it helped them with their grief.

### **4. NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS**

There are many not-for-profit organizations that help others. You may have some organizations that you are fond of or maybe one that your child chose to acknowledge. Whichever agency you choose, most are very grateful for any donated items. All donations to nonprofit organizations are tax deductible. Remember, there is no right way or wrong way when it comes to dealing with the loss of a child. Each person is unique and so is each person's grief. Maintain a network of honest friends and/or family members to whom you can talk. Above all, remember to be patient with yourself. You have been through a very difficult experience.

Love never goes away. It just grows and grows and grows -- if we let it.

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

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

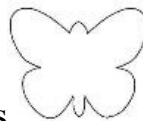
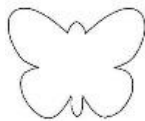
Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

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.

### Valentine Love - New Meaning for Bereaved Parents

Though winter's delicate, lacy snowflakes may remind us of the lace-trimmed hearts of February's valentines, the "mourning" heart seems frozen in time. The bitter winds of loneliness blow mournfully through our souls.

Death has tapped us on the shoulder, introducing his brother, Grief, who has moved into our hearts to take up unwelcome residence. Wearied and exhausted by our pain, we have little energy to evict the intruder. It's hard for us to remember that the sun still faithfully shines behind the clouds and have obscured our vision.

"Love" is apparently the thought of the season, and we are reminded of its tenderness at every turn. But a piece of the fiber of our lives has been torn away, and love seems a vague and unfulfilled promise that belongs only to others.

Hearts and flowers, lace and love, romantic verse and melody seem to have abandoned us as we grope in the darkness of our beloved's absence. Will the pain ever end? Will the hope and joy and renewal once again warm the frozen places in our hearts?

Gradually, as the hurt begins to soften, the thawing relief of healing slowly begins to melt the icy grip of our pain, hope does begin to "spring eternal". Roses, traditional in February's favorite holiday, remind us that summer will return.

It's unlikely that we will ever again perceive the usual symbols of love in quite the same way as before, but in many ways our concepts of genuine love will be stronger, richer and less assailable. Frivolous and shallow affection are absent from our thoughts. Deeper commitments and more demonstrative attention have become our new marching orders.

In costly lessons, we've learned firsthand how fragile and fleeting life can be, and we are now resolute in our determination to announce to our remaining dear ones the importance of our bonds with them. We abandon the intimidation of "limits" such as the archaic notions that "men" mustn't cry or say "I Love You" or that we're too busy just not to pay attention to someone's needs.

As little by little, our pain softens and recedes, and we learn that suffering is but for a season, we also learn that LOVE doesn't die. In our emotional lives, Valentines can now take on a new significance as precious reminders of the love that still exists on both sides of life. Love lives within our hearts, and even Grief cannot steal it away. Love is our bridge over the rainbow.

~ Andrea Gambrill, reprinted from Bereavement Magazine

### THE STORY OF THE SNOWFLAKE

It was 1885, more than a century ago, when Wilson Bentley acquired his fascination with snow. Mr. Bentley photographed snowflakes, so delicate and fine, and he began to realize each was different in design. But each snowflake served a purpose, in the vast sky above. Just as our precious children did— to us they gave their love. And with their love came happiness and precious memories, for us to cherish and treasure for all eternity! Although the snowflake fades away, it's memory lives on. Just like our precious children, who from this earth are gone. Each time you see a snowflake, so white that it is blue, open up your heart and smile, your angel is watching you!

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

NON-PROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
PERMIT #1625  
FARGO, ND

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



**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 Cvijanovich .....701-540-3287	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 15<sup>th</sup> to be included in the next month's newsletter. If you wish to give a love gift, please complete:

Love gift given in Memory/Honor of \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship \_\_\_\_\_ Born \_\_\_\_\_ Died \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: By giving a love gift, you are giving us permission to include your child(ren) in our monthly birthdays and anniversaries for a period of 18 months.