



The Compassionate Friends

Fargo/Moorhead Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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 January 2019

Volume 36 Number 1

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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

January 10th
 February 14th

Dates to Remember

Mom's meeting - 7 pm on January 24th
 @ Fry'n Pan
 TCF National Conference July 19 - 21, 2019 in Philadelphia, PA

LOVE GIFTS

Carol & Dan Winter in memory of their son, Matthew Winter
 Paul & Kara Bailey in memory of their son, Nick Bailey
 Love gift missed from December's newsletter -

Jim & Shawn Miller and Alex & Elinah Miller in memory of Delores Winkler

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.

"As the rose-tree is composed of the sweetest flowers and the sharpest thorns, as the heavens are sometimes overcast ~ alternately tempestuous and serene ~ so is the life of man intermingled with hopes and fears, with joys and sorrows, with pleasure and pain."

~ Edmond Burke

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 7:00 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 January 24th. For more information please contact Sheryl at 701-540-3287 or sherylc13@msn.com.



Holiday Angels that were not listed in December's Newsletter

Given By	In Memory of
Norma Jackson.....	John C Jackson Jr
.....	Henry Nerat
Larry & Mary Hanson.....	Michael Hanson
Paulette Haugen	Jayson Paul Haugen
Tim & Pauline Rinke	Logan Rinke
John & Nancy Teeuwen.....	Brandi Rose Irene Teeuwen

New Year's Wishes for Bereaved Parents

To the newly bereaved:

We wish you patience with yourselves in the painful weeks, months, even years ahead.

To the bereaved sibling:

We wish you and your parents a new understanding of each other's needs and the beginnings of good communication.

To those who are single parents:

We wish you the inner resources we know you will need to cope, often alone, with your loss.

To those experiencing marital difficulties after the death of your child:

We wish you a special willingness and ability to communicate with each other.

To those who have suffered the death of more than one child:

We wish you the endurance you will need to fight your way back to a meaningful life once again.

To those of you who have suffered the death of an only child or of all your children:

We offer you our eternal gratitude for serving as such an inspiration to the rest of us.

To those of you who are plagued with guilt:

We wish you the reassurance that you did the very best you could under the circumstances, and that your child knew that.

To those of you who are deeply depressed:

We wish you the first steps out of the "valley of the shadows."

To all fathers and those of you unable to cry:

We wish you healing tears and the ability to express your grief.

To those of you who are exhausted from grieving:

We wish you the strength to face just one more hour, just one more day.

To all others with special needs that we have not mentioned:

We wish you the understanding you need and the reassurance that you are loved.

~ Joe Rousseau, Former TCF President

Did I Hear A Sigh Of Relief

The holidays are finally over, and we can put our hurt and pain back in the boxes along with the Christmas decorations. Oh, how easy that would be, if that were so.

Early on in our grief, dealing with the anticipation of the holidays without our loved ones is devastating. We find ourselves not wanting to cope and wishing away the oncoming celebration. This is a natural reaction, of course, and one we must fight to overcome. Memories and the thought of celebrations without our children are fraught with tears and heartache. We can only hope that the next time we must encounter a specific holiday, we will find it less painful to cope with because we have put one more year behind us. Time does have a way of helping to soften our grief, but the road can be very bumpy along the way to recovery.

Our children were our reason for life, and their memories are our reason to go on living.

Because of my sons, my affiliation with TCF has given me many treasured friends whom I can sympathize with and have empathy for. Let's all start the New Year with the promise of mending our bodies; holding the memories of our children, so loved, in our hearts, and helping each newly bereaved parent and sibling to better cope with the difficult task of their loss. By supporting one another in our grief, we find the comfort and understanding we so sorely need.

~ Mary Senbertrand, TCF/Cape May, NJ

SEASONED GRIEF

There used to be a point to summing up a year just past
not as a personal accomplishment but as a reflection.
Leaving previous hurts behind was welcomed and the sensible thing to do.
I thought I was getting wiser as I was getting older.

With new years clean and full of possibilities, becoming another person seemed simple,
another chance at getting it right, like a redemption, being forgiven for
having blundered or been found wanting.

But death changed everything, without permission.
Resolutions, made sincerely and broken quickly, offended my need to hold on to the past,
to rewind life, fast backwards, so I could capture what I had lost.

Still, time went on, regardless of my pleas.
And when exhaustion set in, as eventually it must,
I understood there would be another future,
not the one I thought I had the right to expect
but one where I dared carry hope in my heart again.

~ Eva Lager, TCF/Perth Western Australia
From We Need Not Walk Alone, Spring 1999 Issue

RESOLUTIONS FOR BEREAVED PARENTS:

I will grieve as much and for as long as I feel like grieving, and that I will not let others put a time table on my grief.

I will grieve in whatever way I feel like grieving, and I will ignore those who try to tell me what I should or should not be feeling and how I should or should not be behaving.

I will cry whenever and wherever I feel like crying, and I will not hold back my tears just because someone else feels I should be "brave" or "getting better" or "healing by now."

I will talk about my child as often as I want to, and that I will not let others turn me off just because they can't deal with their own feelings.

I will not expect family and friends to know how I feel, understanding that one who has not lost a child cannot possibly know how it feels.

I will not blame myself for my child's death, and I will constantly remind myself that I did the best job of parenting I could possibly have done. But when feelings of guilt are overwhelming, I will remind myself that this is a normal part of the grief process and it will pass.

I will not be afraid or ashamed to seek professional help if I feel it is necessary.

I will commune with my child at least once a day in whatever way feels comfortable and natural to me, and that I won't feel compelled to explain this communication to others or to justify or even discuss it with them.

I will try to eat, sleep and exercise every day in order to give my body strength it will need to help me cope with my grief.

I will know that I am not losing my mind and I will remind myself that loss of memory, feelings of disorientation, lack of energy and a sense of vulnerability are all normal parts of the grief process. I know that I will heal, even though it will take a long time.

I will let myself heal and not feel guilty about feeling better.

I will remind myself that the grief process is circuitous – that is, I will not make steady upward progress. And when I find myself slipping back into the old moods of despair and depression, I will tell myself that "slipping backward" is also a normal part of the grief process and these moods, too, will pass.

I will try to be happy about something for some part of every day, knowing that at first, I may have to force myself to think cheerful thoughts so eventually they can become a habit.

I will reach out at times and try to help someone else, knowing that helping others will help me to get over my depression. Even though my child is dead, I will opt for life, knowing that is what my child would want me to do.

~ Nancy A. Mower, TCF/Honolulu, HI

To Start a New Year

If I can concentrate on the moral and spiritual side of the holidays

I can make it through.

If I can absorb the love and warmth that was the beginning

I can give love back.

If I can share the grief and love that is in me through these holidays

I can start a new year.

~ Tom Spray, TCF/Ventura, CA

The New Year

With the holidays past, we're off on another 365 now. Some of you, I know, wonder if you can make it. That's such an enormous amount of time to contemplate all at once, isn't it? You may have some of your "firsts" coming in the months ahead, and the normal impulse seems to be to lump all those days together and start dreading them concurrently, like a prisoner serving several life sentences.

It's possible to do it that way, but that's the hard way. Getting through this day may take all the energy you can muster. Why try to handle March or May or July (or whenever your special days are) now? You can't really, and you end up by the trying only defeating yourself in your effort to effectively survive this day. When this day is past, March or May or July will still be there, trying to defeat your tomorrow – but only if you let them!

Get past this day – and tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow. By the time March, May or July gets here you will have improved your coping skills. You can better handle your special days with more practice.

I encourage you to know you can and will be better. Use this New Year constructively to facilitate that end, and utilize the help that is available to you through your compassionate friends.

~ Mary Cleckly, TCF/Atlanta GA

THANKS

Thanks to the friend who did know the right words to say: "There is a group in town who might help you."

Thanks to the parent who somehow found the courage to call that phone number and find out about "that group"

Thanks to the Mother who went to that first meeting knowing that it would really hurt to talk – and talked.

Thanks to the Dad who said, after that first meeting, he could never come back – but did.

Thanks to the parent who, at the fifth meeting, put her arms around a "new one" and said: "They can really help."

Thanks to the Mom who, for the first time, was able to bake cookies for her "compassionate friends."

Thanks to the homemaker who could never talk in front of people – who became a facilitator.

Thanks to the six-foot father who cried in front of the other men – and didn't say he was sorry.

Because of you we will be able to help someone we don't even know – next month.

~ John DeBoer, TCF/Greater Omaha Chapter, NE

DEATH HAS OCCURRED

A death has occurred, and everything is changed by this event.

We are painfully aware that life can never be the same, that yesterday is over, that relationships once rich have ended.

But there is another way to look upon this truth.

If life went on the same

without the presence of the one who died,

we could only conclude that the life we here remember made no contribution, filled no space, meant nothing.

The fact that this person left behind a place that cannot be filled is a high tribute to this individual.

Life can be the same after a trinket has been lost, but never the same after the loss of a treasure.

~ Paul Iron, TCF/Savannah, GA

"I will not say, do now weep, for not all tears are an evil."

~ J.R.R. Tolkien

OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED BIRTHDAYS

CHILD		PARENTS
NICHOLAS LEE BAILEY	26	PAUL & KARA BAILEY
KIRSTIN ELIZABETH CANTLER-BOOKE	10	CHRIS & DAWN CANTLER (grandparents)
KONNIE JEAN CHAFFEE	46	MARK & JEAN CHAFFEE
NANCY PRATT COASH	60	PATRICIA PRATT
WILLIAM "BILL" COWDEN	52	WALTER & KARIE COWDEN
BRIELLE DEUTSCHER	8	LYNN & DONNA MICKELSON (grandparents)
GREGORY S GROOTERS	59	LARRY & HAZEL GROOTERS
MATTHEW R HOLLAND	23	CHAD & RHONDA HOLLAND
DANA DAWN KEBLAR	41	DEBORAH FACEY
MICHAEL L LIVDAHL	25	ROBERT & TANYA LIVDAHL
MATTHEW ALLEN WINTER	32	CAROL & DAN WINTER

ANNIVERSARIES

CHILD		PARENTS
NATHAN ANDERSON	18	DIANE & JAY FENSKE
SHERI PETERSON BJORGAN	19	DEWAYNE PETERSON
ANDREW HOWARD BRAUN	13	CRAIG & DEANNA BRAUN
OLIVIA MAE BUTH	1	TIM & MELANIE BUTH
SANDRA DIANE CASELLA	7	RICHARD & DIANE MACGREGOR
MATTHEW ISAAC CVIJANOVICH	14	SHERYL CVIJANOVICH
MATTHEW R HOLLAND	4	CHAD & RHONDA HOLLAND
JESSICA FAYE MOEN	3	BRAD & JACKIE MOEN
TERESA JO NATHAN	1	TIMOTHY & BRENDA DOOHER
JESSE SCALLON	1	LEE & LUANNE SCALLON
ERIC JOHN SCHAFER	4	BILL & LOIS SCHAFER
GARRETT JOSEPH SCHWAN	15	JENNA BJORNSTAD
BRUCE C THORNBY	10	JANET & HOWARD GALLAGHER
CARLA RAE TRUITT	2	LORETTA KEISACKER
KATHRYN "KATIE" ELIZABETH WHELTLE ...	4	SHARON & MARK WHELTLE
CHAD WOLD	3	TOM & BONNIE WOLD

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 tcfl1313@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

I've Wondered

I've wondered why you had to go and why your car had left the road.
Why your Mom and I, we had to stay and your great smile has gone away.
Our hearts so ache, our tears do flow, the pain we feel too many know.
One year has passed since that terrible night.
We have survived but it's not right.
Our lives have changed, they are not the same, but somehow we endure the pain.
I've wondered why you had to go, our only son we love and miss you so.

~ Larry Oshel, TCF/Galveston County, TX
In Memory of his son, Brian Oshel

SIBLING PAGE

A Sibling Dies by © L. Nicole Dean

It is January first. My heart twinkles once again because the holidays are over. How can a season of light bring so much dark? Thirty years ago, on Christmas morning, my brother died in our home by suicide in a very violent manner. He was 23; my other brother was 24; and I was 19 years old. Our family of five was irretrievably shattered.

Don, my brother who died, was so much a part of us. He brought so much joy in his living and then so much pain in his dying. Who am I to grieve him still? The memories well up every December like a deep dark night unbidden. Anger, sadness, rejection, guilt become my Christmas ornaments. "Give me back my family - give me back my Christmas, you creep, Give me back your laughter," I want to shout at him. Who am I to miss him? Who am I to rage when he was the one in the grips of a pain so untenable that he could not speak of it, but only act upon it? Who am I to cry? Well, I'm entitled. I'm a survivor after all. One doesn't get there on a water slide, if you know what I mean.

When Christmas rolls around, I do my dance with grief once again. Some years, it's a waltz; other years a tango. It doesn't seem to matter if it's two, twenty or thirty years since my brother died, I get out my dancing shoes. I don't go looking for pain like some wacky masochist. It finds me.

Some years I announce - around November 25th, "I'm over this." I act accordingly. I shop for Christmas Cards and don't go near my dancing shoes. It doesn't matter. They find me. And after all, it's not like I didn't have therapy. I've had dance therapy, art therapy, regular therapy, travel therapy, friendship therapy, biofeedback/hypnosis therapy, creampuff therapy, swimming therapy, forgiveness therapy, spiritual community therapy, law school therapy ... Law School therapy? The fun had to end somewhere.

Seriously, losing a sibling is heart wrenching and no laughing matter. It took me ten or fifteen years to truly laugh again, let alone make light of myself. That just happened this year. No doubt, because I am writing of it, rather than speaking of it, which I rarely do. It feels safer to write. Other than to therapists, I've spoken of his death to three people in thirty years. Who could understand, I felt, and why diminish his being or expose myself?

I adored my brother Don - he made me laugh like a monkey. I adore both my brothers; as a child they were my world. Not very healthy perhaps, but it worked for me. Home life was chaotic and quite frightening because my father was more than a little nuts. My mother's energy was spent containing his insanity and keeping our bodies and souls together. She was part steel, part angora.

We never spoke of Don after his death. The community ostracized us; my father took a trip down devil 's lane, and my mother mourned my brother until the day she died. I'm sad to say that we never had Don's picture in our home again, because the pain was too severe. It seems we could not get past it. We went to our separate corners and quietly mourned. It was different years ago; so much remained hidden. Self-healing groups were non-existent, shrinks were stigmas, and the Catholic Church unforgiving.

I couldn't save him. I was the last person he talked with on Christmas Eve. For months, I barely spoke and relived the shock daily. I ate a lot. Death by mashed potatoes. That was sure to bring him back. I retreated into a private world for several years where if I wasn't dead, I'd sure like to have been. This is grief. And it does soften over time. It softens like water softens rock, in its flowing, gentle, rushing, mysterious way. It softens like a sweet whisper of a memory that lulls you to sleep, knowing that love knits the bones of despair together, tighter, stronger, more curious, more delicious than ever before.

Knowing that the fires of your being burn the dross of despair. Knowing that the chamber of the heart is strong beyond measure and can take it and transform the pain into joy. Joy for having known this person, for a day or ten years or two months. Joy for having the courage to be. For knowing yourself in many garments. For taking a risk to love anyone again: a neighbor, a friend, a cat, a lover, a stranger, yourself. The broken heart opens and mends itself. In the middle of the night, when no one is there but many are listening. Joy seeps into me. After all, I'm entitled. I'm a survivor.

~ TCF Marin County & San Francisco Chapters

How Does It Feel? What's It Like?

It's like:

A hole with no bottom
A hill with no top
A road with no bend
A night with no end
It's as if it's not happened
It's as if it's not true
It's as if it's a dream
Yet a numbness seeps through
There's a feeling of emptiness
A gap to be filled
There's a feeling of loneliness
That cannot be stilled
They say times a healer
How long will it take?
I can't see it ending
It's a permanent ache
Life has no meaning
Yet it has to go on
I find it so hard
To feel so alone
No one will ever know
The depth of my sorrow
I just have to trust
There'll be a better tomorrow
May God give me strength
To keep on going
To get through this pain to
feel real again
I'll never get over it
Of that I am sure
But I'll give time a chance
And hope for a cure.
Time's without end
Love is too
I'll never forget you
I'll always miss you
~ Stella Kelly (after the death of her brother)
Submitted by Pat King, TCF/ Seattle, WA

I Wish

I wish I could say that it gets easier. I wish it GOT easier. The good news is that it does get easier to recognize when it will be difficult. The passage of time, the repetition of holidays and of certain event, having gone through those occasions before lessens the anticipation. I'm also a lot better at letting people know what I need from them. And more importantly, what I don't.

~ Jordon Ferber, Russell's brother

Days of Our Lives

Before my son died, life was filled with event after another. The days came and went, one month evolved into another, and the "special" days on the calendar added a new and joyful dimension to our otherwise routine lives. Philip's sudden death changed every part of my life, including the way I now look at the days, the months, the seasons, and those special occasions that previously were times of great anticipation. Now my calendar is not always my friend; rather, it is a guide through my life as a bereaved parent. This is how my calendar now looks:

JANUARY- A new year begins, and I am here to see it enter. My son does not have the opportunity to grow, to learn, and to develop as I do. When the new year dawns, I feel guilt because of all I have and all that he is missing.

FEBRUARY- How I miss the Valentine made by tiny hands and lots of glue, and the "I love you, Mommy" prompted by his dad. Do children still make silhouettes of Lincoln and Washington to tape on the refrigerator on President's Day?

MARCH- In the south, the trees are beginning to bud and daffodils are bobbing in the gentle breeze. I remember when he picked everyone in the yard and offered them to me in his chubby hand. Then he blew his nose into them, trying to sniff their fragrance. Daffodils now make me sad.

APRIL- Easter and spring symbolize new life. Oh, how I wish his life was here with me. There are no new Easter clothes to buy for him and no eggs to gather in his basket. His chair is conspicuously empty at Easter lunch.

MAY- As soon as the Easter displays are taken down, Mother's Day displays go up in the stores. I can wear a red rose that day because I rejoice that my own mom is still living, but how can I show the world that my heart is broken because I am a mother who has lost a child?

JUNE- The last day of school arrives and I wonder what he would want to do with his summer. Vacation provides a nice relief, but the homecoming is so painful that I wonder if it is worth the trip. My heart breaks for my husband because he lives through Father's Day without his precious son.

JULY- The fireworks are beautiful in the sky and I wonder if Philip can see them. I miss him at the parades and cook-outs I didn't get to teach him about our nation's birth.

AUGUST- It is now time to buy new school clothes, new crayons, and a back-pack. The mall seems crowded with blonde, blue-eyed boys.

SEPTEMBER- The new school year begins and I see children all around me in various stages of anxiety, getting ready to meet new teachers and new friends. I see boys and girls parade down the street to and from school, but my son is not among them.

OCTOBER- Halloween- what would he want to "be" this year? He Man? A ghost? Thundercat? When the small children knock at my door for treats, a lump forms in my throat.

NOVEMBER- Sitting around a bountiful table with all of the relatives seems to make his absence even more pronounced than before. For three years after Philip's death, I was thankful that I had him for even a little while. This is still my hardest time.

DECEMBER- Christmas and Hanukkah are family-centered occasions that cater to our children. What should we do with his stocking this year? What would Santa be bringing him if he were alive? Will I be able to sing the carols this year? His special ornament is on the tree and the memories of his two Christmases are bittersweet.

With a calendar so loaded with special time and special events, no wonder we bereaved parents are constantly on a roller coaster. It is understandable that at every meeting of The Compassionate Friends, parents can be heard saying, "It has been a hard month". When you add to these months the day of our child's birth, the date of his/her death, and birthdays of other family members, the days of our lives seem overwhelming.

It has been four years since Philip died, and I can honestly say that the days, months, and special occasions do get easier to bear. I do believe, however, that it is unrealistic to think that they will ever be the same.

~ Elaine Grier, Philip's Mom

Time and Determination

Learning to live after losing a child is similar in many ways to an amputee learning to live with the loss of a limb. First, there is the tremendous shock of the loss, both emotional and physical. It's true that many parents actually feel physical pain upon the death of their child. Grieving is extremely hard on the body and can make a person weak and ill. It is also common to deny the fact that a part of you is gone. Some amputees have periods when they imagine their missing limb is still intact. Likewise, bereaved parents frequently imagine their child is still alive. They "see" the child at play or walking down the street, or they "hear" them drive up in their car. Then after the initial bereavement, like an amputee, the parent must begin the long, arduous task of accepting his loss, and begin the therapy he/she needs to become a useful person once again. Many times it's tempting to say, "I quit! I don't care if I live again." Of course life will never be the same again, whether it is due to the loss of a limb or the death of a child, but with time and work, life can take on a new, much different quality. For example, the amputee knows he can't run up steps two at a time, but takes satisfaction in knowing he CAN make it to the top in his own way, even if it takes longer. The bereaved parent knows that life will never rush on at the carefree pace it once did. Now each day plods on, and tasks once done without a thought take total concentration. But they CAN BE DONE! Our lives CAN become full again.

For the amputee, the raw and bleeding stump heals and the physical pain goes away. But he lives with the pain in his heart, knowing his limb will not grow back. He has to learn to live without it and rebuild his life around his loss. Bereaved parents must do the same. In time the pain in our hearts will gradually ease, and we can learn to live again without our beloved child. Our lives will never be whole, but they can become full once more. The keys for both the amputee and the bereaved parent are TIME AND DETERMINATION!!!

~ Washington County Chapter, Potosi, MO

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: _____

(Signature) _____ Date: _____

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.

One Foot in Yesterday

Yesterday my child was here, on this planet, alive. Yesterday life looked promising. Yesterday morning I woke up looking forward to the day. Today I awake peacefully and then I remember my child is dead, and I cannot breathe. I am jolted from head to toe. My child has been dead for a day. I wonder what my child was thinking in the last moments. I remember all the wonderful times. I remember the joy. I think of my child's life and how his life changed me forever. I remember the last time I saw my child. I remember the last goodbye. I sob and breathe.

I am lost for days. Final arrangements are made. The platitudes float past me.....these words have no meaning. A memorial service for my child. People with sad faces. Hugs, words, tears, head shaking. I can see it in their eyes.....they are thankful it isn't their child. They are uncomfortable. Time heals, they say. There's a plan, there's a reason. I cannot respond. They understand. No, they don't. My child is dead. This is not my parent, my husband, my sibling. This is my child. My child was supposed to outlive me. I thank them for their good intentions. I have no interest in their words. A few friends say nothing. This is the better choice, the wiser action. Be there, be there for me. Understand my unspoken words. See my broken heart. Understand. Listen to my story, a story of my child. Remember his life, remember his death.

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

"The Shack" by Wm. Paul Young A Must Read Book!

I can only imagine my friends talking behind my back. "Should we have her read it? Will it be too painful for her to read? Maybe it will be healing!" Oh, the blessing of friends! They told me about the thought-provoking book called, *The Shack*, by Wm. Paul Young.

This book is about a man, Mack, whose child was abducted and brutally murdered. In a note from "Papa" he is invited back to the shack where his daughter, Missy, was murdered. With much anxiety he makes the trip and meets three people who he learns are actually The Trinity. Mack comes to understand the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit. Through his journey he comes to understand God's mercy.

For those of us who have lost a child, we have so many questions for God. I wonder if Young lost a child because he seems to know our pain so well! Young describes God in terms that humanize Him.

I've always said that I didn't blame God for my daughter, Shannon's, death, but as I read this, I came to recognize my hidden anger. While there are parts of this book that may not fit with my Christian doctrines, I was moved to feel closer to God, His mercy, and love. I'm no expert in religion, so it's hard to believe I'm writing this, but I do know the book brings me closer to God, my understanding of how Shannon died, and the many questions that I have surrounding her death. It offers hope and healing.

I intend to reread this book, with a highlighter in hand, and then find my friends to sit and chat. I know we have quite a lot to talk about!

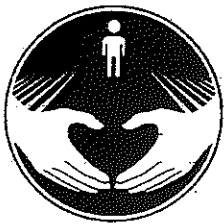
I'm not even sure if you have to be of the Christian faith to benefit from this book. To help you in your journey, go get a copy of *The Shack*, and read it today!

~ Anne Lloyd, TCF/Omaha NE

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
 OF THE F-M AREA
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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.