



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

January 9th
 February 13th

Weather cancellations will be posted on WDAY, KVLY, KFGO and the Fargo Forum online at www.inforum.com!

Dates to Remember

Mom's meeting - 7 pm on January 23rd @ Denny's
 TCF National Conference July 24-26, 2020 in Atlanta, GA

LOVE GIFTS

Carol & Daniel Winter in memory of their son, Matt Winter
 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.

Grief Attacks
 When grieving we can be going along and everything seems to be okay. Then out of nowhere grief hits full force. These are not set backs, they are a part of the grieving experience.

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 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 January 23rd. For more information please contact Sheryl at 701-540-3287 or sherylc13@msn.com.

Holiday Angel that were not listed in December's Newsletter

<u>Given By</u>	<u>In Memory of</u>
Mary Tuttle.....	Brandon Niles

Normal day, let me be aware of the treasure you are.
 Let me learn from you, love you, savor you, bless you before you depart.
 Let me not pass you by in quest of some rare and perfect tomorrow.
 Let me hold you while I may, for it will not always be so.
 One day I shall dig my nails into the earth, or bury my face in the pillow,
 or stretch myself taut, or raise my hands to the sky,
 and want more than all the world for your return.

by Mary Jean Irion

Resolutions

Every time the holiday season comes to a close, I feel as if I can hear a collective sigh of relief. This year was no different except that the sigh seemed louder and longer than in past years. Some years are like that for us. This one was certainly like that for me. No matter how difficult I thought the holidays would be to get through I was wrong. In some ways they were more difficult and in other ways, surprisingly, they were less difficult. The reality is that you and I, no matter how we anticipated the holidays, did get through them. We did survive the holidays and though it may be difficult for you to believe this now, there is no reason that this new year shouldn't be better.

Which brings me to a favorite topic for this time of year, New Year's resolutions. Resolutions that I think are most helpful are those that concern our well-being. Above all else, resolve to take better care of yourself. Try to eat right and exercise. Find ways to nurture yourself—both your body and your mind. Remember all things in moderation. Seek advice from others when you need it and above all, ask for help when you need it. You won't always get the help when you ask for it, but remember, if you don't ask for it, you surely won't get it.

Another thing you can do to have a happier new year is to become more involved in our chapter of The Compassionate Friends. If you've not come to any meetings, or if it's been a while, give it a try. Commit to attending at least three meetings. If you were to attend only one, you would not necessarily get a very good idea of what our meetings are like. Join us and make your needs known to us.

This newsletter is another way you can become more involved in our chapter. Let us know what works for you and what doesn't. Consider becoming a contributor. Tell us how we might be able to better serve your needs.

Have a happier New Year!

~ Pat Akery, TCF/Medford, OR

Decide What You Want to Do from *You Can Become Whole Again*

There is much more you can do with grief than just survive it. Being able to "take it" and endure life in spite of your loss may seem the brave thing to do, or even the only choice you have when tragedy comes.

But these two assumptions are wrong. Unhealthy too. Such stoical endurance is in reality false courage. It takes no courage to avoid dealing with the unpleasant things that happen in life. Any coward can do that. But it does require the highest kind of courage to continue experiencing life, whatever the circumstance, and that's the other choice you have.

Which do you opt for? The alternative that seems the easiest – carrying on in spite of your loss? Or the one that seems most difficult, but is in fact the most profitable in the long run – growing as a person because of your loss?

Only you can decide. Only you can want to stagnate in sorrow, or grow, as you heal, in understanding more about life and death through grief. Don't say the choice depends upon what you can or cannot do. It's not a matter of "can" or "can't" but of "will" or "won't."

That lays the responsibility for how you fare solely on your shoulders, doesn't it? Accept the fact, my friend, for that's exactly where responsibility for your recovery rests.

~ Yolanda Miller

"Wishes For Bereaved Parents For The Coming Year"

by Joe Rosseau, Former National TCF President

- * *To the Newly Bereaved*, we wish you patience - patience with yourselves in the painful weeks, months, even years ahead.
- * *To the Bereaved Siblings*, we wish you and your parents a new understanding of each other's needs and the beginnings of good communication.
- * *To Those Of You Who Are Single Parents*, we wish you the inner resources we know you will need to cope, often alone, with your loss.
- * *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 Have Suffered Multiple Losses*, those who have experienced the death of more than one child, we wish you the endurance you will need to fight your way back to a meaningful life again.
- * *To Those Of You Who Are Deeply Depressed*, we wish you the first steps out of the "valley of the shadow."
- * *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 All the Fathers*, we wish you the ability to express your grief, to move beyond society's conditioning, to cry.
- * *To Those With Few or No Memories Of Your Child*, perhaps because you suffered through a stillbirth, a miscarriage, or infant death, we wish you the sure knowledge that your child is a person and THAT YOUR GRIEF IS REAL.
- * *To Those Of You Who Have Experienced The Death of An Only Child or All Your Children*, we offer you our eternal gratitude for serving as such an inspiration to the rest of us.
- * *To Those Of You Unable To Cry*, we wish you healing tears.
- * *To Those Of You Who Are Tired*, 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 assurance that you are loved.

The Holidays are Behind Us

It is the new year. The holidays are behind us. We did with them what we could. Whether they were a time of sorrow, a time of joy, or a combination of both, they are now a part of our memories. In a strange way, as a memory in our hearts and in our minds, our child's place is there among all the other memories of the season. There is hurt along with the memory, but also a thankfulness for the memory.

Now we look out at the winter landscape. The earth is cold, the land sharply defined. Yet underneath the hard crust, the energy and warmth of our earth is guarding and providing life to all that grows. We may personally know the coldness and hardness of a grief so fresh that we feel numb - a grief so hurtful that our body feels physically hard, our throats tight from tears shed or unshed, our chests banded tightly by our mourning heart.

If we are not now experiencing this, our memories recollect so easily those early days. Yet, as we live these days, like the earth from which we receive our sustenance, we too, in our searchings, find places of warmth and change and love and growth deep within. Let our hearts and minds dwell in these places and be armed and renewed by them, and let us have the courage and love to share them with our loved ones, to talk about even that first dim shape of new hope or of new acceptance or of new understanding or of new love.

These are the new roots, born of our love for our child, that are forming and stirring within, gathering strength so that our lives, at the right time, can blossom once again and be fruitful in a new and deep way.

~Marie Andres, TCF So. MD Chap., MD

Winter

by Roberta Hermansen

This winter's desolation is my desolation,
It's barrenness, my heart.
Some say spring will come
Trees will leaf,
Buds will swell, New life will emerge.
But I feel winter in my heart,
In my soul,
In my being,
I wonder if the ice will ever thaw
So I can drink from it again
To nourish my spirit.

Grief Tip – A Fresh Start

The New Year can bring a feeling of fresh start after loss. It's a time to make an effort to heal your grief going forward. Think about the kind of life you want to be living and the kind of people you want to be around you. Make an effort to surround yourself with hope by joining a support or education group. Engage in activity. It can change you from being lonely to being willing to become social again. Now is the time to begin again.

From the Southern Piedmont/Charlotte Chapter, TCF
Newsletter, Jan-Feb 2012

“Death ends a life, but it does not end a relationship.”

~ Dennis Klass

A New Year's Resolution

Now the holidays are over, and once again a new year faces us—for some, the first one without that precious loved one—for others, another one of many. The loss is still remembered, no matter how many others we have faced.

What will we do in the coming months? Each hour seems so long and the days seem to stretch ahead forever, as if another year cannot possibly ever come to an end. But friends, it will and we will survive. The road at times is hard and the pain is so hard to bear, but each year we realize that the pain has eased. We never will be totally without this pain of love and shattered dreams, but we will be able to live. This love that is stored in us for our missed child can be spread out to others to help us to ease their pain.

So, in this New Year, let's make a new resolution—that our love for our dead child will be brought out of our hearts and given with our best effort to others to help them ease their pain. In so doing, we will find our pain is eased also.

~ Thelma Richardson, TCF/Mesa County, AZ

What is New About the New Year?

There is a lot of silliness about ringing in the New Year, and I have never been able to enter into the spirit with noisemakers, funny hats and loud hurrahs. Since the death of my son, I especially find myself wondering what this is all about. I think some of the partying and celebrating are motivated by a deep desire for a new start in our lives; a desire to leave behind some of the problems, sorrows, worries and pain of the year just ending. The short, sunless days and long, dark nights make us want something to cheer us. So we give the New Year's Eve party a try.

But it really doesn't work for most of us; we see now that we are just the same and the heaviness in our hearts, as we continue with the struggle to cope with the loss of our child, remains with us. Can we find new ways to live our lives in the New Year?

I'd like to suggest a few things we can try. Let's make an effort to find new friends. A good place to start this is at Compassionate Friends meetings. Here you are with a group of people who care about each other in special ways. We understand the pain and anger, the confusion and the inertia suffered by bereaved parents.

In the New Year, let's also find new ways to be close to the family that we have left. We feel regrets about hugs not given, letters not written, "I love you" not said often enough. We can do all these things now. We can establish new memories with the family we have right now. Another way to move into this New Year with a better feeling is to think about what we can do for others, because that is truly a way to help ourselves, too.

If we can reach out to other sorrowing families, give a gift of our time, a note of love, a listening ear, or a shoulder to lean on, we'll grow stronger ourselves. For those parents who are suffering the deep pain of the newly bereaved, none of the things I've mentioned may be possible yet. For you, I hold out the hope that soon your days will be just a bit better, your sorrow a little lighter, your tears healing, your friends strengthening and your memories filled more with the good times and less with the unhappiness of your grief.

~ Dory Rooker, TCF/Upper Valley, VT

OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED BIRTHDAYS

CHILD		PARENTS
NICHOLAS LEE BAILEY	27	PAUL & KARA BAILEY
KIRSTIN ELIZABETH CANTLER-BOOKE	11	CHRIS & DAWN CANTLER (Grandparents)
KONNIE JEAN CHAFFEE	47	MARK & JEAN CHAFFEE
NANCY PRATT COASH	61	PATRICIA PRATT
WILLIAM "BILL" COWDEN	53	WALTER & KARIE COWDEN
BRIELLE DEUTSCHER	9	LYNN & DONNA MICKELSON (Grandparents)
GREGORY S GROOTERS	60	LARRY & HAZEL GROOTERS
MATTHEW R HOLLAND	24	CHAD & RHONDA HOLLAND
DANA DAWN KEBLAR	42	DEBORAH FACEY
MICHAEL L LIVDAHL	26	ROBERT & TANYA LIVDAHL
MATTHEW ALLEN WINTER	33	CAROL & DAN WINTER

ANNIVERSARIES

CHILD		PARENTS
NATHAN ANDERSON	19	DIANE & JAY FENSKE
SHERI PETERSON BJORGAN	20	DEWAYNE PETERSON
ANDREW HOWARD BRAUN	14	CRAIG & DEANNA BRAUN
OLIVIA MAE BUTH	2	TIM & MELANIE BUTH
SANDRA DIANE CASELLA	8	RICHARD & DIANE MACGREGOR
MATTHEW ISAAC CVIJANOVICH	15	SHERYL CVIJANOVICH
RACHEL ELIZABETH ELLINGSON	1	PATRICIA & ERIC MONSON
TERESA JO NATHAN	2	TIMOTHY & BRENDA DOOHER
SUZETTE AMELIA PARKOS	1	ANN & ROBERT WAGNER
JESSE SCALLON	2	LEE & LUANNE SCALLON
ERIC JOHN SCHAFER	5	BILL & LOIS SCHAFER
BRUCE C THORNBYS	11	JANET & HOWARD GALLAGHER
SHERYL ANN TOBAR	1	ANGIE SCHLIGHT
CARLA RAE TRUITT	3	LORETTA KEISACKER
KATHRYN "KATIE" ELIZABETH WHELTLE ...	5	SHARON & MARK WHELTLE

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.

Letting Go

Recently I received an award for volunteering in the community. I was honored to receive it. Some of the people in my life mentioned that it looked like I had "let go" of the pain of losing my child. "Let go?" Of course, they don't understand.

But when the award was mentioned at our monthly Compassionate Friends meeting, a bereaved mother made an interesting observation that touched my heart and reminded me why I need this special group to keep me centered and balanced.

"I remember that article you read to us last Mother's Day....the one your son wrote about how proud he was of you," she said. "Wouldn't it be great to put that article in our memory book with the newspaper article about your award? He was right about you. He was proud of you."

What a great idea! What a wonderful way to bring my son into my life even though he is no longer on this plane. That's what Compassionate Friends do.....they help to bring our children into our lives even though our children are no longer alive. For a few hours each month, our children return to us. We're proud parents who can share our children's stories and keep our children in our lives.....without explaining why we won't be "letting go."

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

SIBLING PAGE

THE DAY THE MUSIC DIED

On February 3, 1959, parents would lose children, siblings would lose brothers and grandchildren would die. This was the day a plane crash took the lives of singers J.P. Richardson (The Big Bopper), 28, Buddy Holly, 22 and Ritchie Valens, 17. Since all three were so prominent at the time, February 3, 1959, became known as "The Day The Music Died."

At the time of his death Ritchie Valens was a young man with superstar potential who, even though was still in his first year as a recording artist, had already made a name for himself in the music industry.

Growing up music would become a large part of my twin brother Alan's life. His interest in "The Wizard of Oz" would lead to an admiration of Judy Garland and in time Liza Minelli. He had seen many of Liza's concerts often sending her mail-grams of well wishes much to my mother's disapproval. It was her fear that he would get arrested for harassment. We would travel often to other concerts as well including Billy Joel, Bruce Springsteen, Diana Ross, Whitney Houston, Kenny G and even Yanni.

Alan's interest in music and the arts began in high school with the artistic productions. After graduation from Temple University he would become entrenched in the Philadelphia cultural scene. Much of his free time was spent volunteering for arts, dance and theatre organizations. His name would be listed in the credits of many artistic productions. He, like Ritchie Valens, was just starting to realize his dreams. Then came June 25, 1992. Alan had died of an AIDS-related brain tumor that had started not more than two months earlier. This was-for me-the day the music died.

Don McLean immortalized the February 1959 tragedy with his 1972 hit "American Pie", a song that took Alan and I years to understand and memorize. I would mark my personal tragedy by constantly changing the radio station. So much that I thought I would break the buttons. A break-up song would remind me too much of my loss. While in a friend's car I had him turn off the radio rather than risk crying.

Then one day a few years later, upon leaving the cemetery, on the radio I heard Whitney Houston's "The Greatest Love of All". Alan and I had recorded an awful rendition at a Hershey, PA amusement park recording studio. We agreed that no one else would hear the dreadful outcome. I switched stations twice only to hear the song two more times. It was my reflection that Alan was telling me to enjoy the music once again. To take pleasure in life and to do what we enjoyed doing together. I hear Alan's voice saying the words inscribed on Ritchie Valens grave "Come On, Let's Go."

Daniel Yoffee, TCF Board of Directors Sibling Representative.
Reprinted from We Need Not Walk Alone (Summer 2003)

BROTHERS & SISTERS

Be it your brother or your sister,
their presence is taken for granted.
When together, you fight and argue.
But also together, you stand against all others.
Then, one day you stand alone.
Gone the friend, the confidante, the rock.
You regret the last fight.
You wish to hear the voice, share your secrets.
The memories are sweet -
remember the laughs and jokes.
They now await to be your guide.
~ John W. Hollinshead, Lockport, NY

My First Five Years as an Only Child

I've been without my brother for five years. I guess the hard part is over now. Sometimes I think I have aged 30 years in the past five. In a strange way, these past five years have been the best and worst years of my life. I have accomplished the many things of a typical young adult learning to drive, graduating from high school, going to college, and starting a career. Every one of my accomplishments has been clouded by the fact that my brother George is not here to share each milestone, and is not achieving any more milestones for himself. He was cheated of so many things. He will never graduate, get married, have children or travel. He will never grow old, and I will never have a brother to grow old with. I'll never have nieces and nephews. The sibling relationship, usually the longest relationship of one's life, has been cut short for us. In these five years, although I have learned to accept that he is not coming back, the difficult part is dealing with it day by day.

My relationship with George ended just when we started to become friends. The childish fights and other annoyances of having a big brother were changing to real conversations and to having an occasional ally. I am angry about all the things that we have missed and all the things that will never be, and I guess I always will be. Five years heals a lot of wounds, but the hurt will always be there, no matter how many years pass. In these past five years, I have been forced to grow up too fast. I have been forced into a new outlook on life. I have felt lonely and alone. I now realize that I will never be the same person as before. Maybe I am a better person because of what I have been through. Five years ago I never thought I would survive, but I am still here dealing with it every day. I don't know what the next five years will bring, but at least I have made it this far.

--Kristin Steiner, TCF/Staten Island, NY

LITTLE BROTHER

Someone took you away from me
And I wonder if they cared
About the ones' they left behind
And the pain that each must bear
Why did you have to leave me
When there was so much left to do
I'm not sure if I can go on
If I have to go on without you.
But life dictates the rules
There are things that I can't change
When you left, my heart was torn in two
My life got rearranged.
I have to believe I'll see you again
It keeps the hope alive and new
So until we meet again, little brother
Never forget that I love you.

~ Jenny, TCF/Indianapolis, IN

For A Moment

I thought I saw you today he looked just like you, for a moment I
pray but no - as he turned around it wasn't you, I found.
I felt like I was losing my mind.
He had the same build, he had the same hair.
I hope no one noticed, when I looked over his way the tears I
cried, the confusion I felt while I continued to stand there and
stare.

~Judy Prather to Glen, age 14 Atlanta, GA

WHEN A LIFE BREAKS

After suicide, the first commandment is kindness, both toward the life that has broken and toward ourselves. We need to beware of using against ourselves some preconceived notions about suicide.

If our child has taken his or her own life, many people feel compelled to comment that the dead sufferer should not have hurt THAT much. Moreover, the religious community removes grace, the social community judges character, the medical community pronounces insanity. If the concept of unbearable pain is admitted at all, we are told that either (1) the suicide's faith was weak, or (2) her/his expectations were immodest, or (3) she/he was mean and selfish. It must have been a weakling who said: Every person has his or her breaking point: - right? WRONG!

The truth is that most of us have wondered about ending it all – because life does SEEM unmanageable at times. And we acknowledge the possibility that life IS unmanageable for long stretches. Who is to say that we are always obliged or able to meet an overwhelming darkness with the strength and/or the will of a heroic supersaint? We are all vulnerable, we can all feel lost and frightened and without hope. It is arrogant to assume that everyone is equipped to overcome even the most extreme challenge (whether real or imaginary) with fortitude, mastery and success.

Some of us are angry after suicide has happened close to us. Most of us are incredibly hurt and helpless. We feel betrayed, we feel abandoned, even punished. We often blame ourselves for some carelessness, some omission, some selfishness, some cruelty, which caused that fatal break of life..... It can be a long time before there comes a small and unexpected comfort when reality reminds us that the suicide was, as it were, bigger than life.

Western society has little love for those who take their own life, nor for those who are left behind. But we CAN cross the boundaries of misguided opinion, and we can try to see beyond the camouflage of traditional superstitions.

Yes, the first (through not the easiest) commandment is kindness. Be good to yourself. Give love and honor to the memory of that broken life.

Sascha Wagner, from *The Sorrow and The Light* (Sascha's daughter, Eve, died of suicide)

Which season is the hardest? They are all full of memories. I think they are all too hard to bear.

~ Darcie Sims, *Footsteps Through the Valley*

Older grief is gentler.

It's about sudden tears swept in by a strand of music.

It's about haunting echoes of first pain, at anniversaries.

It's about feeling his presence for an instant one day while I'm dusting his room.

It's about early pictures that invite me to fold him in my arms again.

It's about memories blown in on wisps of wood smoke and sea scent.

Older grief is about aching in gentler ways, rarer longing, less engulfing fire.

Older grief is about searing pain wrought into tenderness

~ Linda Zelenka, TCF/Orange Park, FL

Blessings Inside Sorrow

There are blessings inside sorrow, or so I have been told. I am not sure I always agree. At times I can see the gifts I have been given. Love...without measure...fills my heart when I think of you. But I loved you then too, when you were in my arms, not in my heart. And I miss you now. The emptiness you left can never be filled, not by any blessings I might receive from sorrow.

And yet, still, I wonder. Are there blessings? Would I have known how much I cared for you...for your brothers, for your Dad, were it not for your coming, and so suddenly, softly, leaving, without a good-bye? Would I treasure life I have remaining if it weren't for your loss? Certainly, I loved and treasured before you left, but hasn't my sorrow caused me to express that love and to treasure more highly those around me? I KNOW I can't take for granted they will always be.

In the aftermath of losing you, when life lay crumbled around me... still was there not a glimmer of hope? That life would go on, somehow, we would survive and build on the ashes of our broken hearts. Building somehow in spite of our pain. Mixing the cement of our love with tears, we bound ourselves together even more tightly than ever before. And our love grows stronger. And we have not forgotten.

What a bitter lesson! And still, the emptiness will never be filled. There yet remains a hole in my heart...and in all our hearts. Dear son, we will never forget you. The blessings inside our sorrow will never fill the hole you left in our fabric of our lives. It remains open, a testament that you mattered, and that your coming and soft going made a difference. And in that difference lies the blessing inside our sorrow.

We were blessed to have held you for a time, even though you could not stay. And even through our tears, we smile at the memories. And we know that you are not completely alone. You shadow our lives, affecting them in big ways and small. And though I would trade blessings in a minute just to have you back in my arms, I am indeed grateful for the blessings inside sorrow.

~ Lisa Sculley, TCF/Jacksonville, Orange Park Chapter

Promises of Rainbows

I promise not to offer
Rainbows after storms
Or silver linings beyond the clouds,
But if you have tears of sorrow,
I will share them.

If you have words of anger,
I will hear them.
If you have moments of confusion,
I will help you through them.

Perhaps
Your tears of sorrow today
Will water the seeds
Of tomorrow's garden
Of spiritual growth, of worthy priorities,
Of loving relationships and genuine
Understanding and compassion.

My sad friend, your weeping is not fruitless.

~ Nancy Williams, TCF/Marlbor, NJ

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.

The Fear of Forgetting

When my daughter died just after turning four years old, one of my biggest fears has been that she will be forgotten. But lately, I've been asking myself what does that really mean? What am I really scared of?

The idea that she will be forgotten is actually two separate fears. The first is that due to the notion of "out of sight, out of mind," friends and even family will stop thinking of her and, in essence, "forget her." In reality, this is the natural course of life. I have beloved relatives and dear friends who have passed, and yet I rarely think of them. Does it mean they didn't exist, or had any less impact on my life? No. Nor does it mean I love them any less. What it does represent is that life goes on, and current matters occupy our minds.

I think my fear is actually rooted in the reality of family and friends no longer talking about my daughter or – from my perspective – thinking of her, which feels as though it further isolates me from the "normal" world. It has been years since she died, and yet the pain is ever present and my daily thoughts are still filled with memories and longing for my daughter. Other than the news sensationalizing death and destruction to grab our attention for ratings, our society tends to not want to talk about grief or the lingering pain of loss after the funeral is over. So I go about my business and lead two lives: the "normal" one that goes about living a "normal" life, and the "private" one where I still struggle to figure out how to work through the pain of grief while learning to once again embrace the love, joy, and adventures that surround me.

The second part of my fear has to do with me and my memory. With my daughter no longer physically here, memories of her have become precious commodities. Those few memories of specific moments captured in time allow me to momentarily remember not just who she was, but remember life before the pain of her death forever changed me and my world. But with every passing day, and with all the new information coming in, those memories tend to get crowded out and forgotten. All those everyday moments that I took for granted at the time have already faded into the abyss of memories lost to time. It makes me sad that her older brothers say that they have very few specific memories of her. It makes me sadder that her baby brother never had the chance to meet her, and will have to rely on our stories and descriptions of her if he ever wants to get to know her.

To combat this fear, I have tried to write down as many memories as I can – even if they are mundane. I keep them in a journal, and some I post to www.aliveinmemory.org to share them with others. This way I can refer back to them and share them with whoever is interested in reading them. Her brothers can read them and share them with their eventual families.

But lately, I wonder is my fear of forgetting my memories really necessary? Does it make me a bad mother that I can't remember more moments I shared with her? Of course not. Does it mean my love for her will fade with the memories? Absolutely not. While I wish I could remember more specific memories of time that I shared with her, I will try to be content knowing that I will never forget how much I love my daughter, or how much she means to me. I will never forget her personality quirks, her vivid imagination, and endless creativity. And I will never forget how her life – and her death – have helped me grow tremendously in my understanding of this life and how best to live it.

~ Maria Kubitz, TCF/Contra Costa County, CA
In memory of my daughter, Margareta

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**The
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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!

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

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