



The Compassionate Friends

Fargo/Moorhead Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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June 2018

Volume 35 Number 6

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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

June 14th

July 12th

June - Balloon Release, please bring a special balloon if you would like. We will also provide balloons.

Dates to Remember

Mom's meeting - 7 pm on June 28th @
Fry'n Pan
41st National Conference
July 27-29, 2018 St Louis, Missouri
TCF FM Chapter's 12th Annual Walk to
Remember - July 28, 2018

LOVE GIFTS

Andrea Sinclair in memory of her daughter, Lola Sinclair
Joan & Steve Halland in memory of their son, Cole Halland
Russ & Sharon Lalum in memory of their daughter, Carmen Lalum
James & Phil Nelson in memory of their daughter, Jane Nelson Snyder
We are deeply grateful for the LOVE GIFTS given this month.
Our chapter and all chapters, are financed solely through your Love Gifts.
Donations make this newsletter, postage, books, tapes, etc. possible.
Thank you for your tax deductible gifts.

OUR CREDO

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

WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE.

WE ARE THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS. ©2007

LOVE

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

Our Mom's group generally meets on the 4th Thursday of the month at 7:00 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 June 28th. For more information please contact Sheryl at 701-540-3287 or sherylc13@msn.com.

FATHER'S DAY

As this day approaches I wonder how I will react.

Am I still a father?

I will sit quietly never allowing family and friends to see how I feel.

I will miss my son, but I can't allow myself to "break".

I must remain strong and always be the 'rock'.

I wish I could just let someone know how much I miss my little angel.

How much I cry and how much I miss hearing "Dad I love you."

I am a father, but I wonder, will I just pretend, as usual, that it doesn't bother me?

Remember me, for I hurt, too, on this special day.

TCF/Tampa, FL

IN RESPONSE TO A MESSAGE 'ONE BALLOON'

I too, have wondered who finds the balloons we send to our children. We released balloons last year for Melanie's first birthday in Heaven. But this year, being her 21st birthday we, Melanie's best friend Lisa and I, wanted to do something special to honor her. So, like last year we sent up balloons, but I borrowed an idea from another parent. Each balloon carried inside Forget-Me-Not flower seeds. I like to think that when the balloons burst that the seeds dropped to earth and Forget-Me-Not flowers will soon grow in memory of Melanie.

Then I remembered something that my oldest daughter had done when she was in the 2nd grade. Her class had a balloon send off with notes attached. The notes asked the person who found the balloon to please send it back to the student. The school wanted to see how far the balloons would travel and how many they would get back. I don't know how many were found but about a year and a half later Trinity's was returned. It had been found by a farmer ploughing his field.

So we attached notes, with a return address label, to each of the balloons. I was eager to find out if anyone would find one of our balloons. About a week later, I received in the mail, one of the balloons. It had been found the next day in a neighboring state. A bank president found it in his parking space. At first he said he thought it was just trash but discovered it was my balloon. He took the time out to mail the balloon back to me with a very nice letter.

He wrote that he took the note into the bank and shared the message with his co-workers. He said after reading the note that there wasn't a dry eye left in the house. That everyone had been moved by the message and what it stood for. He had just recently lost his father and was dealing with his own pain and grief. He said he had a young daughter and understood some of what I was feeling.

I hope in some small way that finding Melanie's message might have brought him some small comfort. And I gained some comfort knowing that my balloons were not sent up in vain. That they had reached out to someone else in pain.

~ Kathy Thompson, TCF/Broome Cty, NY

TAKE YOUR TIME

One of the hardest things about grief is the so-called "time table." You are told you should be feeling one way or the other. You are given a time to mourn by the outside world, and then you must be "over it." "Get on with your life." "Count your blessings." All of this can make you both angry and afraid. Angry because (a) you don't WANT to "get over it." (b) you are "getting on" with your life in the best way you know how, and (c) your "blessings" have nothing whatsoever to do with the pain of your loss! Afraid because you are not having some of the feelings you think you should be having because you are not reacting "normally." There is a period of extreme shock that can last from a few weeks to several months; you may not feel anything except numbness for awhile, That's OK!

The best advice is ... take your time. Be gentle with yourself. Do what you need to do, not what you think you should do. Don't clutter up your life with things that will exhaust you physically and weaken you emotionally. Remember, you are fighting the hardest battle you will ever have to face, so give yourself the best weapons you can. Rest; get in touch with your feelings, and talk. Say your child's name to anyone who will listen...take time,,your time...to heal.

~ Sandra Young, TCF/Knoxville, TN

CAN'T YOU HEAR OUR HEARTS BREAKING?

You Say:

- You look great
- Time will heal
- He is in a better place
- You have so many good memories
- You are so strong

We think you lie.

How can we look great when we get no sleep, cry easily almost constantly?

Time is not healing - it may dull but never heal.

He is in a better place? - Where is the best place for any mother's child? Of course! In the mother's arms. Eventually we will all go to that better place but with all my heart I pray you go before your child.

It was God's will? - No, it was not God's will! It was David's will, David's anguish, David's despair. Oh, Davey! Why didn't you call me or just come home?

You have so many good memories. - We can't talk to a memory, hug a memory, or kiss a memory. A memory is just that - a memory.

You are so strong! - How dare you! Our insides crawl. Our minds explode, our memories haunt and you say "You are so strong." Listen closely, friends -

CAN'T YOU HEAR OUR HEARTS BREAKING?

~ Jeanne M. Barker, TCF/Chapter unknown
Mother of David who died from suicide in 1988

THE BIRTHDAY TABLE

No rustling tissue paper,
scattered ribbons, or burst balloons,
no shouts of Happy Birthday,
break the silence in this room.

. Nonetheless, a birthday has rolled round again,
though the beloved children who reveled in the cheer

no longer blow the candles out
at the turning of the year

Loving hands may bring

a photograph of that precious life to share
and place it on the Birthday Table
with utmost tenderness and care

For though the world may not recall
the laughter or the joy

we treasure every memory

of our birthday girls and boys.

~ Frankie Wilford, TCF/Carrollton-Farmers Branch, TX

A Beginning

One day you wake up and realize that you must have survived it because you are still here, alive and breathing. But you don't remember the infinitely small steps and decisions you took to get there. Your only awareness is that you have shed miles of tears on what seems to be an endless road of sorrow. One day - one glorious day - you wake up and feel your skin tingle again, and you forget just for an instant that your heart is broken and it is a beginning.

~ Susan Borrowman, TCF/Kingston, Ontario

"It takes TWO to speak the truth...one to talk and the other to listen...."

~ Henry David Thoreau

Father's Day

Father's Day not a big holiday like Christmas or Thanksgiving, but one that holds a lot of meaning for those to whom it applies. For first-time fathers, that Sunday in June brings a feeling of joy and pride. For a long-time dad, it's a reminder of the fulfillment which children may have brought to his life. For those men who have lost a child, it can be a painful time. For those who must endure their pain in secret and in silence, either through their own desire for that approach or through society's expectations that they must be strong and controlled, it can become a horror. But we in TCF wish to acknowledge the day because the death of a child does not negate the parenthood of the dad who loved him or her. Love for ones offspring does not die when the body dies and death does not succeed in robbing us of our parental identity. We wish all bereaved fathers a day of peace. In the midst of the grief and loss, may you experience a taste of good memories and remembered love for your child.

~ Betty Roehm, TCF/Mesa County, CO

GRIEF AND VACATION TIME

Vacation time, like holidays, can be especially painful for bereaved parents. Vacations, especially the "take it easy" kind which release the mind to think, are sometimes very hard. For the first few years, you may find fast-paced vacations to be best. Places you have never been before, new experiences, new places, new people may refresh you and prepare you to pick up your grief work when you return. Our memories do travel with us, but somehow they seem less painful than at home. Remember to allow enough time for rest -- an exhausted body will often lead to depression.

Some couples have even found an occasional separate vacation or weekend to be helpful. Allow space, since you are not grieving at the same rate. When you go alone, you do not take your mate's memories, only your own. It can be a time of sorting out and straightening priorities. The bottom line is, you must find your own way. Don't be afraid of change.

~ Leona Dooley, TCF/Amarillo, TX

WHEN GRIEF IS NEW REMINDERS

- Try not to imagine the future; take one day at a time.
- Allow yourself time to cry, both alone and with your loved ones.
- Don't shut out other family members from your thoughts and feelings. Share these difficult times. You may all become closer for it.
- Try to be realistic about your expectations of yourself, your spouse, other family members and friends. If each of us is unique and different, how can there be perfect understanding?
- When a good day comes, relish it. Don't feel guilty and don't be discouraged because it doesn't last.
- Take care of your health. Even though the mind might not care, a sick body will only compound your troubles. Drink lots of water, take stress-type vitamins, rest (even if you don't sleep), and get moderate exercise. Help your body to heal as well as your mind.
- Share your feelings with other compassionate friends and let them share with you. You will find that as you begin caring about the pain of others, you will start to come out of your shell - a very healthy sign.

~Mary Ehmman, TCF/Valley Forge, PA

KISSES TO HEAVEN

Today I sent a kiss to heaven
I'm encouraging all of you to try
For if I have shared this with you
You have had a child die
This kiss came from down deep inside
And I know that it truly was received
Right after I had sent my kiss
A calming breeze surrounded me
Not only that, a wind chime rang
From where I do not know
But I felt my child smile at me
And say he loved me so
Take a kiss within your hands
And look up at the sky
Release that kiss with loving care
Now please try not to cry
Once the kiss is off to them
To Heavens gate above
Just look for any single sign
Of your child's precious love
I felt my kiss returned to me
And yours will do the same
It might not be from the breeze or chimes
but in the trees, the sun or rain
Now smile up to your child
In the clouds way up above
But most importantly tell
Your child, that they are always loved

~ Author Unknown

His Room

Sun splinters through the stained-glass unicorn
Still on the sill splattering black walls with color
Few things are as forlorn as a vacant room
Furniture gone, awaiting definition
Bare, yet there on the carpet imprints of chair and waterbed
And there is the hole he accidentally shot through the wall
And there and there and there nail holes that held pictures and
posters and eight-point antlers
And there... God, how can a place so empty, be so full?

~ Richard Dew - From *Rachel's Cry A Journey Through Grief*

A PENNY

I found a penny today
Just lying on the ground,
That's not just a penny
This little coin I've found.
Found pennies come from heaven
That's what my grandpa told me,
He said angels toss them down
Oh, how I loved that story.
He said when an angel misses you
They toss a penny down
Sometimes just to cheer you up
To make a smile out of your frown.
So don't pass by that penny
When you're feeling blue,
That's a penny from heaven
That an angel's tossed to you.

~ Author unknown

We Need Not Walk Alone Summer 2004



OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED BIRTHDAYS

CHILD	PARENTS
AKSEL JAMES BIRCH.....7	STACY & AARON BIRCH
RILEY MARK DAHLBERG15	BLAKE & CHRISTINA DAHLBERG
JULIE M ERICKSON49	JANET ERICKSON
HAZEL JANE HALL1	JORDAN UST & NATHAN HALL
DAVID MICHAEL HELFTER50	MARK & HELLA HELFTER
JARED SCOTT HELGESON.....35	LYLE & TAMMY HELGESON
JACOB LABER.....32	DEBRA LABER
GAIL DIANE LARSON.....60	DALE & MARILYN LARSON
CARRIE AABYE OLSON CHAPELL.....55	CARL AABYE
JACOB RIEDMAN25	KASEY & JON SKALICKY
CHERYL L SAMSON.....55	HENRY (DUKE) & PATRICIA SAMSON
CRAIG A SCHEER50	WILLIAM & ELAINE SCHEER
DOUG E SCHENCK54	HAROLD & IRENE SCHENCK
DUANE SCHMITCKE.....60	MARY ANN SCHMITCKE
LOLA ELISE SINCLAIR.....3	ANDREA & TJADEN SINCLAIR
ADAM JOSEPH SNYDER35	ANNE SNYDER
JANE N SNYDER57	JIM & PHILOMENA NELSON
CHAD WOLD53	TOM & BONNIE WOLD

ANNIVERSARIES

CHILD	PARENTS
DAVID GRAFSGAARD.....11	BERDINE GRAFSGAARD
HAZEL JANE HALL1	JORDAN UST & NATHAN HALL
KENT ALAN HANSEN.....2	DOUGLAS HANSEN
ALLEN HARRIS.....8	DELORES HARRIS
RYAN DEAN NELSON19	BECKY NELSON
PAUL A OLSON2	SHIRLEY OLSON
LOGAN F RINKE3	TIM & PAULINE RINKE
JOSEPH PETER ROEL.....11	ROBERT & SANDRA ROEL
TOMMY ROESCH.....4	DAVID & LINDA ROESCH
CHRISTIANA N SANDSTROM.....5	ANDREW & SHAYNA SANDSTROM
JANE N SNYDER.....3	JIM & PHILOMENA NELSON
KINLEY SNYDER.....6	JEREMY & TERI SNYDER
TYLER JAMES THOEMKE.....15	JAMIE & SHERI THOEMKE
ASHLEY WIGER.....4	LARRY & LORI WIGER

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

If tears could build a stairway,
And memories a lane,
I'd walk right up to Heaven
And bring you home again.
~Author Unknown

Fargo Chapter's 12 Annual WALK TO REMEMBER

What: 12th Annual Walk to Remember and Pot-luck

When: Saturday, July 28, 2018 at 10:30am

Where: South Shelter at Oka Grove Park (shelter #1)

The Compassionate Friends of Fargo-Mhd will hold its 12th Annual Walk to Remember, on Saturday July 28th, 2017 at the south shelter at Oak Grove Park, 124 N Terrace in Fargo.

The Walk will begin at 10:30 am and will walk from Oak Grove Park to the Angel of Hope statue in Island Park and then back to Island Park. We will have a balloon release at Island Park, please bring a balloon if you would like to participate in the release. We will also be having a butterfly release, Butterflies will be provided by TCF. For those who prefer to walk one-way, rides from Island park back to Oak Grove will be provided. There will be a potluck lunch following the walk and we ask that you please bring your favorite dish to share and PLEASE BRING IT IN A COOLER so we can keep it cold while we are on the walk.

Walk to Remember T-shirts will be available with a suggested donation of \$5.00 per shirt.

We ask that you please PRE-REGISTER before hand but we will have a registration table at the Walk from 9:45am-10:15am. We will need your name, number of walkers & your loved ones name.

Pre-Registration – www.tcffargomoorhead.org

or you can text Kara at 701-261-0668

****Please bring a picture (no bigger than 5x7 please) or a small memory item to hang up during the walk. Please remember to grab it when you leave.**

****This year we will be holding a silent auction with the proceeds going towards the next phase of the Angel of Hope.**

****We will be having face painting for the kids**

****There will be a magic show for the children to enjoy after the pot-luck**

Everyone is welcome to join us; everyone has someone to remember that has been lost. The total walk is about 3 miles round trip

If you have any questions please contact:

Kara Bailey (Chapter Leader) 701-261-0668

Lori Wiger (Co Chapter Leader) 701-446-7504

Sheryl Cvijanovich 701-540-3287, email sherylc13@msn.com

Lois Gagness 701-282-4083, email lrgangness@gmail.com

SIBLING PAGE

SIBLINGS THOUGHTS & FEELINGS

He is gone
And he's never coming back
I hope he knows
How much he's missed.
He touched so many people
They loved him too
But they have no idea
What I'm going through.
I cover up my feelings
As much as I can
Nobody has to know
The pain I have inside.
Sometimes I just can't hold back
My feelings of loneliness and
despair
I love him so much
This world is not fair.
Why Him?
He was such a good brother
I still don't understand
Why did it happen to him?
I can't handle these feelings
They have become too much
I just want to be with him
Am I asking too much?
I love him, I always will
But one day we'll be together - forever.
~ Selina Lepinski, TCF/Winnipeg

COMPASSIONATE SIBLINGS

I had a prayer answered today, one I'd like to share.
I found I'm not alone in my grief, I found someone to care!
I've been in pain for quite awhile, but kept it deep inside,
But now I know there are people in whom I can confide!

They'll let me cry or scream or yell, and they know just
how I feel.

You see they also know that pain and know it's very real.
Each one has suffered a loss, one like I have known;
Yet now we stand together.

This unique group of siblings is bonded, you might say,
And strength to carry on is for what each one must pray.

One by one we keep going, although painful it might be,
And the emptiness we feel, many will never see;
Because we choose what face to show the world and
courage keeps us going,
We have a constant ache inside,
No matter what the outside is showing.

And whether it takes me a year or two,
Time is all that can heal;
So I've been sent some "Compassionate Siblings"
Who know just how I feel.

Bless those who need to be understood
When tears come and go without warning.
May we help heal the wounds so deep that are hurting all
the hearts left empty by the death of sibling.

- Stacie Gilliam, TCF/N. Oklahoma City, OK

A Sister's Love

First, there's the fear,
Followed by disbelief.
Then there's the tears,
Followed by the grief,
Could it really be true
That they say she may die?
The pain is so deep seeded
Why her, Father, why?
Time can never change the hurt,
hide the tears, they never dry.
Things can never be the same,
A child should never die.
She did though, on a summer day,
One I won't forget.
I loved that girl, oh, so much,
Now memories are all that's left.
Is it fair to live on without you, girl?
I think that's what you'd like,
The house has an empty feeling,
Your room is dark, day and night.
I won't forget you, don't you fear,
You'll always have a place in my heart
My love for you lives on.
Looking back through
The book of life
YOU are my favorite part!
~Helen Ann Marie Naselli, Rockville Center, NY

The Room Across The Hall

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

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

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

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

~ Melissa B., TCF/Atlanta, GA

A Tribute

I think of you in silence
My feelings seldom show,
But how it hurts to lose you
No one will ever know.
I hope there is eternal life,
So we can meet again.
I not only lost my brother,
I lost my very best friend.
The reason you left so early
I'll never understand why.
I just wish I'd known
You were never coming back
'cause I would have said goodbye.

~ Martha King, TCF/Concord NH

WHEN A CHILD DIES

When the thing that one only imagines...actually happens, you discover very quickly that you have a difficult time speaking about it...People who have lost a child, including myself, act in all kinds of weird ways in order to deny the awful truth...not just because of the awful pain of losing a person they have loved...many of us have lost parents, mates and friends, and no matter how painful, it's just not the same...but because what has happened is so unnatural, so against the necessary order of things, that we cannot accept it... It is almost beyond our comprehension that children should die before the adults...it contradicts history, violates basic physics and so when we lose a child or children, life seems to lose all meaning. We are changed forever...

~ Anne Davis, TCF/Oklahoma City, OK

June is Graduation Month!

Many of you would have had a child to "march down the aisle" had they lived. This will be a difficult time for you and the way you handle this is important for your healing. Should I go to the graduation ceremonies? Will everyone think I'm crazy if I do? Can I handle it emotionally? Many parents have found that participation in graduation ceremonies can be helpful. Don't be too concerned about what others will think. Do what you feel is needed for you. And don't be afraid of tears. Remember, our children HAVE graduated to a much better life than we can know or comprehend.

~ TCF/Jackson, MS

GRIEVING IN PAIRS

How many times have people said, "Well, thank God you have each other." How many times have you felt "each other" to be entirely inadequate at meeting your needs?

Alarming statistics are available telling us of the rocky road parents encounter in their marriage after the death of a child. We sometimes see in ourselves a touchiness or quickness to become irritated that wasn't there before. It always seem that my "bad" day is my wife's "good" day or the day she wakes up crying was the day I had planned on playing tennis.

Or sometimes, even more difficult, we both have a bad day and find no help from the other in pulling things back together. How can one person hold up another when he is himself facedown in the mud?

Every person grieves differently. This is a rule that even applies within a family. And the needs of every individual are different. While you may need to talk and talk and talk, your spouse may need some time alone to reflect inwardly.

You have both been through the worst experience of your life. And while at times you can face recovery as a team, sometimes you must develop the patience to be able to wait out certain needs alone or with someone else. Realize that no matter how it is shown, your partner hurts too.

~ Gerry Hunt, TCF/White River Junction, VT

You give yourself permission to grieve by recognizing the need for grieving.

Grieving is the natural way of working through the loss of a love.

Grieving is not weakness, nor absence of faith.

Grieving is as natural as crying when you are hurt, sleeping when you are tired or sneezing when your nose itches.

It is nature's way of healing a broken heart.

~ Doug Manning

Anniversary Reaction

By Margaret Gerner, MSW Certified Grief Counselor

Every year there is an anniversary of your child's death, and every year you react to it. It doesn't make any difference if it's the first or the twenty-first. You *know* the date is approaching. Strangely, sometimes you will be deeply disturbed for weeks before the actual date. Other times the fact that an anniversary is nearing, won't seem to bother you much at all. The only thing consistent in the anniversary reaction, is that you *WILL* react. For years after Arthur was killed I would begin my anniversary reaction around Easter time. Easter Sunday, 1971 was the last "holiday" that we were together as a complete family. For many years Easter Sunday was the starting date for reliving that terrible Friday and the days following. For a number of years I experienced painful anniversary reactions, but generally, the farther I get from Arthur's death date, the less painful it is.

But, circumstances or events can make it painful, even years later. For example, on the eleventh anniversary, I was also grieving the death of my granddaughter. At that time Emily hadn't been dead a year yet. I saw the pain my daughter was experiencing and because I couldn't "kiss it and make it better" for MY child, I hurt even more.

There will be times when the coming of an anniversary will fill you with fear and pain. Other years it will come with just a ripple in your heart. Some years will be very hard, other years won't be. Accept that as normal. Know that however you feel is right for you. Be kind to yourself, you may need a lot of care at that time. For the times that you don't hurt deeply, be thankful that some of the pain is gone.

The time will come when you no longer hurt because X number of years ago your child died. Be glad of that. What won't go away until you die will be the lack of history continuing past his-her death date. You will be very aware that your child isn't graduating from high school, or being married, or having your grandchildren, and that will hurt. There will always be the questions, what would she/he look like? What would she/he be doing now? These thoughts and questions will forever be unanswered.

You will always react to your child's death date, because you will always love your child, and she/he will always be in your heart and mind.

But then, the anniversary will be over and life will take on sunshine again. However old your child was when she/he died is the mental picture you will have of her/him. And, Oh! What a beautiful picture it is.

Margaret Gerner is currently Director of the Chrysalis Center, a bereavement counseling & resource center. She is a bereaved parent, having experienced the loss of her son in 1971 & a bereaved grandparent in 1982 when her granddaughter died.

Margaret is a regular contributing writer for We Need Not Walk Alone.

QUESTIONS

How do things look from your side of the rainbow?

Are the colors still the same?

Are they dull or bright?

Are the clouds white or gray?

What about the trees?

The grass?

The flowers?

Do you see me kneeling at your grave?

~ Mary Vandever, TCF/Long Beach, CA

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: _____

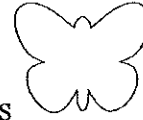
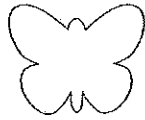
Child's Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Birth Date: _____ Death Date: _____

_____ Date: _____

(Signature)

Please return to: The Compassionate Friends of F-M Area, P.O. 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.

GRIEVING IS A LONELY JOB

I don't care what anybody says, grieving is a very lonely job. Friends and family try to help in their own way, but, sometimes it's almost too much effort to try to explain how you feel inside.

In fact, I'm not so sure that there are words to describe the feeling. It isn't "physical pain," and I don't know if "emotional pain" is any more descriptive. It's just a feeling that's always there. The sadness, the loneliness, the helplessness. On the outside, of course, no one would know. From the beginning people would always tell me how great I looked or how well I was doing. What did they expect? Sometimes I'm tempted to ask, "Well, how do you expect me to look?" But I don't. They mean well. They just don't know what else to say.

Oh, it's true, the last 15 months since my 17 year old son, Shane was killed in a motorcycle accident with his friend, I've come a long way. Life is good, and I have much to look forward to each day. A challenging job, terrific friends, a great family including Shane's 14 year old brother, Zachary. But there are days when it's just not enough.

It's interesting how your entire perspective about life changes when you're forced to endure a personal tragedy. I call it my "Big Deal Scale". Losing Shane was the "biggest deal" I've ever experienced. It gives me a tool in which to measure the trivial ups and downs of life. We all have the strength to endure a tremendous amount of pain. We just have to get it in perspective.

It doesn't come easy. I consciously work at it every day. I wonder if it will ever go away. Sometimes I hope it doesn't. I guess it's my way of remembering,, holding on.

My biggest source of strength comes from Zachary, though. My heart aches for him; knowing how close he was to Shane. The first few days after the accident, he said, "Shane was my idol. He always helped me and taught me things." It's hard for me to imagine what it must be like for him. Still sleeping in the same room that they shared for 13 years. Although, now he sleeps in Shane's bed, and does his homework at Shane's desk. He says he likes it like that. I guess it's just his way of remembering. Of holding on.

Months ago when Zachary asked when the "hurt" would stop, I didn't have an instant answer. Grieving is a lonely job. To be done in individual time frames. But what I did tell him was, "Trust me. The pain will eventually fade but, the memories will last a lifetime." And just the other day he said to me, "You're right, Mom, The hurt is much better." I can see it in his face, in his eyes. He has matured so much this last year. It seems like he was a baby when all this happened. Now, I can see so much of Shane in him. And, I know that if he can do this "job", he can handle anything. And so can I.

~ Susan Hedlund, TCF/Portland, OR

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

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

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

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

FARGO-MOORHEAD COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS BOARD
YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN THE BOARD AT ANY TIME!

Chapter Leader	Paul & Kara Bailey 701-491-0364	Newsletter Editor	Nancy Teeuwen.....701-730-0805
Co-Chapter Leader	Lori Wiger 701-446-7504	Newsletter Database	Sheryl Cvijanovich.....701-540-3287
Secretary	Sheryl Cvijanovich 701-540-3287	Website Administrator	Sheryl Cvijanovich.....701-540-3287
Treasurer	Chuck Klinkhammer..... 701-298-2929	Initial Contact	Mary Bjerke
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.