



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

June 13th
July 11th

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 27th @ Fry'n Pan
TCF National Conference July 19 - 21, 2019 in Philadelphia, PA
TCF FM Chapter's 13th Annual Walk to Remember - July 27, 2019

LOVE GIFTS

Larry & Lori Wiger in memory of their daughter, Ashley Arlene Wiger

Nettie Schreiner in memory of her son, Wes Schreiner

Neil & Kathleen Prochnow & family in memory of their son, Reed Joel Prochnow

Revenia Nelson in memory of her son Charles (Chuck) Nelson

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 27th. For more information please contact Sheryl at 701-540-3287 or sherylc13@msn.com.



Fargo Chapter's 13th Annual WALK TO REMEMBER

The Compassionate Friends of Fargo-Mhd will hold its 13th Annual Walk to Remember, on Saturday July 27, 2019 at the main shelter at Oak Grove Park, 124 N Terrace in Fargo.

The Walk will begin at 10:30 a.m. 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. 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.

Father's Day

Every father believes in his role as protector of his family. He has been assigned the job of fixer and problem solver. He has been told, since his youngest days, that he must be strong – must not cry. But each father among us has had to face that point where no amount of fixing, problem solving, and protecting has been able to stop our child's death. And inside we must face our lack of omnipotence.

Father's Day is often a forgotten holiday, overshadowed by the longer-standing tribute to mothers. But for the bereaved father, it is a poignant reminder of bitter sweetness. Sweet in the memory of a loved, now lost, child; bitter for the death and pain and recognition of inability to stop what happened. Fathers do not often have a chance to share their hurts and concerns. Often times they are unable to do so, a remnant of childhood learnings about the strength and stoicism of "big boys." A father may even be uncomfortable opening up to his wife, and the wife who pushes him to talk may be pushing too hard. Father's Day does not have to be a time when everyone pours out of the woodwork to say, "I'm sorry we haven't talked. Let's do it now." But it can be a time when the family gives Dad a hug, does something special, helps with the chores, and mostly, lets him know how important and needed and loved he is. It is some of these things that he has lost with the death of a child. And, like Mother's Day, the day set aside for fathers does not have to be limited to a Sunday in June. It can be any day and every day. Fathers often show their hurts differently, often internally. **BUT THEY DO HURT.**

~ Gerry Hunt, TCF/White River Junction, VT

*The best and most beautiful things in the world
cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt
within the heart.*

~ Helen Keller

A FATHER'S PRAYER

I am a man, God, and I have been taught that I should be strong and show no weakness. My wife needs me to be strong; I cannot and I must not be weak and lean on her. It is only with you that I can be honest, Lord, and even with you I am ashamed to admit it, but I want to cry. I can feel the tears securely dammed up behind eyes that want to burst. There is a voice in me that shouts, **BE STRONG! BE A MAN! SHOW NO WEAKNESS! SHED NO TEARS!** But there is another voice inside that speaks softly and somehow I feel it is your voice, Father.

Is it you who tells me that I am also a feeling human being who can cry if I need to? Is it your voice that tells me that maybe my wife needs the tenderness of my tears more than she needs the strength of my muscles? You are right, Lord, as always. My wife needs to see my grief, she needs to feel the dampness of my tears and know the aching in my heart. Then, just as we became one to create this life, we become one in our grief which mourns this death. I think I understand now, Lord, it is in sharing the awful pain of my grief that I become an even stronger man. It is in sharing my tears that I share my true strength.

O God, help me communicate my deepest and most sensitive feeling to my wife so we may become whole together.

~ Norman Hagley, TCF/Omaha, NE

DEPRESSION

Depression is a natural result of grief. It comes to all of us. You may experience all or just some of the following. We hope that recognizing the symptoms and then working on the suggestions for coping will enable you to work through it. It can be done.

Symptoms And Solutions

A key symptom of depression is a feeling of deep pervasive sadness and hopelessness that lasts for longer than two weeks.

Other typical symptoms may be:

- Loss of appetite or overeating
- Insomnia or sleeping much more than usual
- Inability to enjoy anything
- Apathy/restless or anxious behavior
- Preoccupation with thoughts of suicide, or wishing to be dead
- Loss of interest in sex
- Difficulty in concentrating and making decisions
- Poor memory
- Can't cry/ won't cry/ can't stop crying
- Feelings of guilt
- Withdrawal from friends and relatives
- Headaches/ backaches (more frequent illness or colds)
- Self-criticism, pessimism, discouragement
- Neglect of appearance
- Irrational anger
- Alcohol and drug use to "medicate"

Some Suggestions For Coping With Depression

- Acknowledge your depression
- Accept responsibility for alleviating it
- Depression serves a purpose, face it and work through it
- Talk, it could help avoid serious depression
- Redirect energy into constructive channels to help create more pleasure in your life (trips, night out, etc)
- Exercise. It helps you to relax, work off tension and sleep better
- Lean into your pain. Allow yourself to experience the many feelings you get such as anger and guilt. Express them! Scream, hit a pillow, cry!
- Get involved with others, volunteer
- Try deep breathing, it stimulates physical energy
- Good nutrition is very important
- Think pleasant thoughts as hard as that may be, just one moment at a time
- Avoid alcohol as it is a depressant
- Work on self-esteem; do something that you do well; be kind to yourself
- Remember, you do have a choice. Depression is manageable and does not have to ruin your life
- If the depression becomes so severe that suggestions such as these do not help you, PLEASE don't hesitate to seek professional help.

From *Support Newsletter POMC, Inc.*

TCF/Greater Cincinnati Chapter

The head learns new things, but the heart forevermore practices old experiences.

~ Henry Ward Beecher

Dear Mr. Hallmark
 (A Father's Day Message)
 It's me again from Heaven
 Where clearly everything is seen,
 And so it just occurred to me,
 It's nearly June fifteen. I know we just discussed
 A card for Mom this year,
 And how no cards there were
 For a child like me to share.
 And now I found no card again
 For me to reach down from above
 To thank my Dad who gave me life
 And really needs my love.
 He's still the father I call Dad,
 No matter where my soul resides;
 He tries so hard to comfort Mom,
 And so his tears he hides.
 I need some way to tell him
 He can be sad and cry with Mother -
 It's good for him to cry-at times,
 We all cry for each other.
 Yes, I see Dad as he talks to me,
 To my picture in his wallet -
 You see I really need a way
 To let him know I got it!
 Some say that Mom and Dad,
 They grieve in different ways,
 And so it looks from the outside,
 But I see through that worldly haze.
 My Dad he cries while in the car,
 The shower washes all those tears;
 He thinks, "A better Dad I could've been
 Than I was throughout those years."
 And so you see dear Hallmark man,
 I need your help to let him know
 Just what a wonderful Dad he's been -
 He's given all he can bestow.
 My dad, my friend, the one with whom
 I could walk and talk and play -
 He needs to be remembered too,
 Like other fathers on Father's Day.
 Please help me [md that special way
 To tell him all to me he's been -
 That by his side each day I'll stay
 Until, one day we meet again.

~ Jody Seilheimer

"A SIGN OF HOPE"

Since the times, the butterfly has symbolized renewed life. The caterpillar signifies life here on earth; the cocoon, death; and the butterfly, the emergence of the dead into a new, beautiful and freer existence. Frequently, the butterfly is seen with the word "Nika," which means victory. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross movingly tells of seeing butterflies drawn all over the walls of the children's dormitories in the World War II concentration camps. Since Elisabeth believes in the innate intuitiveness of children, she concludes that these children knew their fate and were leaving us a message. Many members of The Compassionate Friends embrace the butterfly as a symbol--a sign of hope to them that their children are living in another dimension with greater beauty and freedom--a comforting thought to many.

What of the One Who comes After?

What of the one who comes after,
 The one who's born at the last?
 What does he know of your presence?
 What does he know of your past?

He knows not of your place in this world.
 He knows not of our heart's home for you.
 He simply knows your name's spoken
 Among tears, if now only a few.

We'll tell him of days in your midst
 When joy was the order of the day.
 We'll tell him of your short life here.
 We'll love him the very same way.

Although you two shall not meet
 In this life or where I can see.
 Your bond, though invisible, is strong.
 And brothers you always will be.

What of the one who comes after,
 The one who's born at the last?
 Now he shall know of your presence.
 Now he shall know of your past.

~ Janie French, TCF/Carrollton-Farmers, TX
 In Memory of my son, Austin Matthew French

The Learning of Love

Love lives - continually gives ~ LOVE NEVER FAILS
 Love never leaves & never deceives.
 Love always remembers, Love sometimes grieves
 Love establishes, Love includes, Love understands, Love honors,
 Love forgives, Love waits...
 There are secret things with Love - mysteries, moments, memories
 The secret things belong to One higher, sovereign, & wiser
 But the things that inspire LOVE & the things that are revealed
 about LOVE;
 Belong to us - to our sons & daughters, to our siblings &
 grandparents, family & friends
 ~THE THINGS REVEALED ABOUT LOVE BELONG TO US~
 That we may observe, honor, & remember
 ALWAYS & FOREVER

~ Pamela Hagens

To My Husband

Your tears flow within your heart,
 Mine flow down my cheeks.
 Your anger lies with thoughts and movements.
 Mine gallops forward for all to see.
 Your despair shows in your now dull eyes.
 Mine shows in line after written line.
 You grieve over the death of your son,
 I grieve over the death of my baby.
 But we're still the same, still one,
 Only we grieve at different times,
 Over different memories,
 and at different lengths.
 Yet we both realize the death of our child.

~ Pam Burden, TCF/Augusta, GA

OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED BIRTHDAYS

CHILD		PARENTS
AKSEL JAMES BIRCH	8	STACY & AARON BIRCH
DOMINIC A COOK	46	DINO & HELEN COOK
KEVIN SCOTT COWDEN	45	WALTER & KARIE COWDEN
RILEY MARK DAHLBERG	16	BLAKE & CHRISTINA DAHLBERG
JULIE M ERICKSON	50	JANET ERICKSON
HAZEL JANE HALL	2	JORDAN UST & NATHAN HALL
DAVID MICHAEL HELFTER	51	MARK & HELLA HELFTER
JARED SCOTT HELGESON.....	36	LYLE & TAMMY HELGESON
JACOB LABER.....	33	DEBRA LABER
GAIL DIANE LARSON.....	61	DALE & MARILYN LARSON
STEVEN J NEWARK JR.....	37	JANET & JOHN OURADNIK
ASHLEY PERRINE	28	BRAD & BRENDA MERGENS
JACOB RIEDMAN	26	KASEY & JON SKALICKY
CHERYL L SAMSON.....	56	HENRY (DUKE) & PATRICIA SAMSON
DOUG E SCHENCK.....	55	HAROLD & IRENE SCHENCK
LOLA ELISE SINCLAIR.....	4	ANDREA & TJADEN SINCLAIR
ADAM JOSEPH SNYDER.....	36	ANNE SNYDER
JANE N SNYDER.....	58	JIM & PHILOMENA NELSON

ANNIVERSARIES

CHILD		PARENTS
WILLIAM "BILL" COWDEN	5	WALTER & KARIE COWDEN
DAVID GRAFSGAARD.....	12	BERDINE GRAFSGAARD
HAZEL JANE HALL	2	JORDAN UST & NATHAN HALL
KENT ALAN HANSEN.....	3	DOUGLAS HANSEN
CHARLES "CHUCK" NELSON.....	1	REVENIA NELSON
RYAN DEAN NELSON	20	BECKY NELSON
PAUL A OLSON	3	SHIRLEY OLSON
LOGAN F RINKE	4	TIM & PAULINE RINKE
JOSEPH PETER ROEL.....	12	BOB & SANDI ROEL
JANE N SNYDER.....	4	JIM & PHILOMENA NELSON
TYLER JAMES THOEMKE.....	16	JAMIE & SHERI THOEMKE
ASHLEY WIGER.....	5	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

A Butterfly Release

As you release this butterfly in honor of me, know that I'm with you and will always be.

Hold a hand, say a prayer, close your eyes and see me there.

Although you may feel a bit torn apart, please know that I will be forever in your heart.

Now fly away butterfly as high as you can go, I am right there with you more than you know.

~ Jill Haley

SIBLING PAGE

When You Stop Asking Why

All these emotions, change by the moment.
Stuck in time, inside my mind.
Shifting tides changed my life.
Tore me apart, and broke my heart.
But when you stop asking why,
Then you can start to say goodbye.
The pain will only hold you there,
And never get you anywhere.
And so I must go on with life.
That I cannot sacrifice.
And I will hold you in my heart,
As I make this brand-new start.
Precious memories,
Can I take them with me?
Oh, they hurt, oh so deeply.
But they were true, and they were mine.
And I can't erase time.
Can't change the past to ease the pain,
And so they must always remain.
And when you stop asking why,
Then you can start to say goodbye.
The pain will only hold you there,
And never get you anywhere.
And so I must go on with life.
That I cannot sacrifice.
And I will hold you in my heart,
As I make this brand-new start.
Curtains open, I step forward.
Take a breath, to see what's left.
Arms wide open, No more trembling.
Brace my heart, for this new start.
And when you stop asking why,
Then you can start to say goodbye.
The pain will only hold you there,
And never get you anywhere.
And so I must go on with life.
That I cannot sacrifice.
And I will hold you in my heart,
As I make this brand-new start.

~ Tonya Thompson

We Need Not Walk Alone Winter 2011/Spring 2012

Siblings

When my parents lost their son, I lost my twin brother (when I was 30). I could not share my loss with my parents, yet their loss was the same as mine. The fear, despair and anger I felt ran deep. My parents were already suffering from the deepest of wounds themselves, and simply did not realize my feelings.

I was old enough to understand, but for younger children, one crisis may pile upon another, causing a separation between parent and child. Everyone in the family has changed. The struggle to survive when everyone is so unsure of their footing takes a total effort - and that effort must begin with yourself.

Finding someone outside the family who understands is a beginning. It was the beginning for me. I could confront the emotional crisis with the care and concern of others. I won't live in the past, but the past will live in me. My life is no longer entirely my own. That part of my brother that is within me will live on, too. It is a great help to be able to talk with others in the sibling support group, and I am grateful for it.

~ Denise Schoo, Dallas, TX

Forever and Always

Every time I think of you it always eats away,
60 minutes an hour, 24 hours a day.
From the time I get up to the time I go to bed.
I regret the things that were left unsaid.
A simple I love you would have done just fine,
sadly to say there was not enough time.
You were taken too early or so we thought,
but God needed a guardian angel to watch over us
and it was you that He brought.
Not a word, nor a sentence can tell how I feel,
I still can't believe that this is all real.
The way that I feel I cannot explain,
the horrible emptiness, aching, and pain.
The way you were always there for me
no matter when, where or why,
now when I think of you it makes me want to cry.
I love you so much and will forever and always,
for the rest of my life, and the rest of my days.

~ Michael Oetken

One

It was only *1* second, *one* thought, *one* decision, *one* action in a lifetime of seconds, and thoughts, and decisions, and actions. It was so fast, so permanent, so irreversible, so hopeless. This moment, this thought, this decision, this action do not define him, do not honor him, do not immortalize him. It is the preceding 946,080,000 seconds, and thoughts, and decisions, and actions that define him, that honor him, that immortalize him.

I remember my brother in all of the other seconds, and thoughts, and decisions, and actions that preceded this *one*. I remember him coming home from the hospital, lip synching in the basement, falling out of the tree, biking across campus, coming home from school, from boot camp, from war... I remember him hiking, and skiing, and running, and laughing, and crying. I remember how safe I always felt when he was around. I knew he would take care, protect, defend. I don't remember exactly when my brother became an amazing human being - I just looked at him one day and knew he was.

I knew that nothing would make him change his mind about me. He was without judgment, without prejudice, without preconception. I knew my brother because we talked and he listened. I respected my brother most for his humanity - for being so sensitive, so vulnerable, so honest. I loved my brother for sharing the load when it was too hard for someone he loved to carry alone. I knew my brother because he left so much of him in me.

I trusted and respected my brother's decisions in the preceding 946,080,000 seconds, I have to trust and respect this *one* decision the same. I honor my brother by honoring myself. I do not dwell in that *one* moment, instead I celebrate and cherish all of the others. In that *1* second, *one* thought, *one* decision, *one* action, I found the strength he had given me and I will not let him down. I will not let that *one* moment be the only *one*.

By Michele Mallory

Reprinted from *This Healing Journey:
An Anthology for Bereaved Siblings*

Grief is like weeding in a flower garden in the summer
You have to do it over and over again until the season changes.

~ Fay Harden, TCF/Tuscaloosa, AL

The Father's Grief

At my second meeting of The Compassionate Friends about three years ago, one of the mothers said how nice it was to see a man attending, since "men grieve differently from women."

Her remark was no doubt meant to help put me at ease. I hadn't said a thing so far, and might have been intimidating in my silence. But it caught me off guard. What I was feeling after George's death was so absolute, so awful, how could it possibly come with any "differences"? Would one grieve differently for an infant than for an adolescent? For a son than for a daughter? Surely, grief was absolute for both mothers and fathers.

Over time I came to acknowledge the differences the well-meaning mother had in mind:

* Neither I nor the other men who occasionally attended talked much; the women talked freely.

* I sensed I was better at compartmentalizing my grief than the mothers, better at keeping a lid on it socially and at work.

* My male friends seemed less comfortable talking about George, bringing up his name or even looking at his pictures than female friends.

* I came to see how intensely I felt I had let my son down as his protector, the father's primary role.

Shortly after becoming editor of my chapter newsletter, I sent a copy to my friend Jack Knebel in California. Jack and his wife, Linda, had been involved with a Compassionate Friends chapter after the death of their daughter, Hollis. He replied, "It's good to see that a man is taking an active role in the group." Then he went on to write movingly about those male-female grieving differences. The rest of his letter, which touched me deeply, follows:

... Several years after Hollis died, Linda and I were being trained by Compassionate Friends to be 'buddies' for newly bereaved parents. One of the exercises was to list all the unhelpful things that others had said in trying to comfort us, so that we wouldn't make the same mistakes. The other trainees, all women, made long lists, and did it with enthusiasm. When the lists were read aloud, they nodded knowingly at every entry and eventually hooted and howled with derision at the worst (some of which were pretty bad). When it came my turn, I held up an empty page and said:

"People may have said such things to me. I just don't recall.

"What I do remember is that people tried to tell me how sad they were for us. I remember being told how much they loved Hollis and how much they cared about us. I remember one of my partners hugging me in the halls of my very stiff and proper law firm. I remember men who had never told me anything more personal than their reactions to a Giants' loss crying at our loss and their fears.

"You women are used to talking to each other about your emotions and about personal things. I wasn't and my friends weren't either. So the fact that we could do so was a great gift, and it wasn't marred in the slightest by someone's choice of words."

Now, the shell has been broken and I find it easier to talk about my emotions, my hopes and fears, about those things that really are important. And that for me was one of Hollis' greatest gifts.

I know that even after George's death, he is a major part of your life. My guess is that you're becoming more open to the gifts that he and those who care about you are able to give.

*Yours, with compassion and friendship,
Jack*

~ David Pellegrin, TCF/Honolulu, HI

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LOGIC VERSUS EMOTION

I was thinking recently about how our emotions play such a strong part in how we feel. After my daughter's death (2002), a few people pointed out to me that I shouldn't feel guilty about something I couldn't change. Their advice was logical. But humans aren't like Mr. Spock on Star Trek. You remember that Mr. Spock would frequently chide Captain Kirk for doing something illogical, something based on his feelings.

No, we humans are filled with emotional feelings. It's one of the things that separates us from animals. Even though someone might tell me not to linger in sadness or to feel guilty about my daughter's death because it wouldn't change what happened, I still had both feelings. Even though my logic might tell me to shrug off these unpleasant feelings, I couldn't, at least not for some time. And that's the point. Clear thinking, logical human beings are still subject to powerful emotions, even though those emotions will seem illogical to some people.

Do understand that strong feelings of sadness, loss, and guilt are normal after the death of a child, and at some point logic will allow those feelings to lessen. As our logical minds begin to prevail, we may seek positive ways to remember our child (scholarship funds, charitable donations, etc.) and we may seek positive ways of changing ourselves into better people. At this point our logical minds will push us in a constructive direction and we will feel better. So don't worry excessively about those strong, emotional feelings after the death of your child they're perfectly "logical".

~ David Haddock

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)



“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 or 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.

WHY WE STILL GO TO TCF

“Are you still involved with that group? Aren't you over it yet? Why do you go?” These are questions I often hear now that it has been more than seven years since Mark died. I suspect you hear them too. There are easy answers.

But not everyone understands, unless you have been there. Here are ten I can think of:

1. Because we never want the world to forget our child, so what we do we do in his or her name.
2. Because when we reach out to help someone else, we also help ourselves.
3. Because someone was there for us when we needed it most; now the best way to say “thank you” is to pass it on by being there for others.
4. Because it is the one thing we do that can bring something positive out of tragedy.
5. Because we have found in TCF better friends and closer bonds than we ever thought possible. Here we can cry and hug people even if we don't know their last name or what they do for a living. And it doesn't matter.
6. Because few people are qualified to walk up to a newly bereaved family and say, “I know how you feel.” And because we can, we must.
7. Because sometimes we need to talk, too, and to remember and share. We are further along than many around us, but we never forget.
8. Because many of us believe that one day we will meet our child or brother or sister again, and he or she will ask, “So what did you do with your life after I left?” And we will have an answer.

9. Because our presence might help newly bereaved families understand that they will survive and even laugh again.
10. Because we love cold coffee, cookies, and hard metal chairs.
~ Richard Edler, TCF South Bay/L.A., California Chapter

A Grandparent's Point of View

The death of a child is the most tragic thing that can happen to anyone. It affects so many lives – family, friends, and even strangers.

I lost my grandchild through death, and only a grandparent can understand the love a grandparent has for a grandchild and the loss that is felt when the child dies. For a grandparent, it is a double loss. Not only is your grandchild gone, but you also watch your child die each day. The smile that was always on her face is no longer there.

The hurt is so deep and the questions so many. You feel helpless as a parent. You can't kiss the hurt away as you did when she was a child. You have no answers for her questions, for you don't understand the many feelings that you are experiencing yourself. Each day you hope and pray for a little ray of sunshine to show on her face. You search for a little something to say or do that will comfort her. It seems that there is no end to the suffering.

As time goes slowly by, the healing process begins. In time, a ray of hope will show on her face and a smile will make her eyes light up again. She will turn to you for what little comfort you can give her. There will always be a part of you that is gone, but in time you can learn to live with the part that is still here.

~ Ruth Eaton, TCF/Savannah, GA

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

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

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

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

FARGO-MOORHEAD COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS BOARD

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN THE BOARD AT ANY TIME!

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

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

TELEPHONE FRIENDS

HAVING A BAD DAY OR NIGHT? Feel free to call and talk to any of the following:

- Sheryl Cvijanovich (son, 23 - illness).....701-540-3287
- Lois Gangnes (son, 24 - accident).....701-282-4083
- Nancy Teeuwen (daughter, 15 hours - illness).....701-730-0805
- Mark & Hella Helfter (miscarriage, son, 35-accident & son, 45-cancer) ...701-235-9622

Love gifts must be received by the 15th to be included in the next month's newsletter. If you wish to give a love gift please complete:

Love gift given in Memory/Honor of _____

Name _____

Address _____

Relationship _____ Born _____ Died _____

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