



The Compassionate Friends

Fargo/Moorhead Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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F-M Area Chapter
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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

We will be social distancing during our meeting. Please wear a mask when entering the building and continue to wear it during the meeting

Upcoming Meetings

June 10th
July 8th

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 24th
Denny's
TCF FM Chapter's 15th Annual Walk to Remember - July 31, 2021

LOVE GIFTS

Revenia Nelson in memory of her son, Charles D Nelson
Linda Hinton and Donald Sell in memory of their son. Matthew Albert Sell

Butterfly donation from:
Nancy & John Teeuwen in memory of their daughter, Brandi Teeuwen

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 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 June 24th. For more information, please contact Sheryl at 701-540-3287 or visit our website at www.tcffargomoorhead.org.

Walk to Remember Event – July 31, 2021

This year our Walk to Remember event will be different than previous years as we are unable to have it at our normal location of Oak Grove Park due to construction. This year it will be held at Trollwood Park located at 3664 Elm St N Fargo, ND. We are currently working on a schedule of activities for the event. Please watch our July newsletter, our website and our Facebook page for more information.

A Father's View of The Compassionate Friends: Courage, Surprise, An Understanding

Attendance Requirement: Courage

I don't think I am unique. I did not want to attend a meeting of Compassionate Friends. I was coerced by my wife. It was subtle but effective. My son, on the other hand, made a devil's deal; he agreed to go to the next meeting in exchange for a favor—his debt some weeks away. The thought of discussing death nauseates me. We, my son and I, had made a bad deal.

The Meeting: A Surprise

I was surprised to find I was not the only man to have lost a child. There was a reality to that recognition. My loss, not unlike yours, is a personal matter. No one can tell me how I feel or how I ought to feel. Yet, the group never made me feel guilty about my selfishness; they understood.

The Result: An Understanding

Compassionate Friends is not an efficient organization. There are no systems, no quick, easy cures. Grief is a catharsis. Most of what you hear here you will dismiss; it will not apply to you. But, there are nuggets—small ideas you will want to try or things you will want to think about. Some you will try. Many you will discard. Only a few will help the pain. These, you will treasure. Your friends and associates may try to understand your grief and try to help. They can do neither. They don't understand. The people at the meetings do understand. And they try to help. My son felt he had gained little from the meeting. Yet, he left feeling he had helped someone else deal with his grief. What a marvelous satisfaction for a 15-year-old.

What's in it for you?

Compassionate Friends is here to help—to listen, to suggest, to understand. If you handle your grief well, you do not need Compassionate Friends. But we need you. Your approach or method of dealing with grief could help one or more of us. Please share it.

~ Bob Watts, TCF/Stanford, CT

ARE YOU A GRIEF VICTIM OR GRIEF SURVIVOR?

Being a victim is a state of mind dictated by others.

A survivor dictates their own state of mind.

A victim fears the moments of grief.

A survivor welcomes those moments!

A victim knows about feeling down and tries to stay up.

A survivor knows feeling down is okay.

A victim tries hard to hide the tears.

A survivor never leaves home without kleenex.

A victim struggles to maintain a state of normalcy.

A survivor knows normal no longer exists.

A victim gets caught in isolation.

A survivor reaches out when they need to.

A victim is afraid they, in time, will forget.

A survivor knows they never will!

A victim sometimes feels guilty laughing.

A survivor laughs through their tears.

A victim tries at times to block out the memories.

A survivor embraces memories of all kinds.

A victim wants someone to cure their grief.

A survivor just wants someone to share their journey.

A victim struggles to get over their grief.

A survivor fights to get through it.

A victim tries to get on with their life.

A survivor lives their life knowing nothing will ever be the same.

A victim says, "Oh I'm okay..." then secretly cries.

A survivor openly cries... and says, "I'm okay."

-- Author Unknown

Love – Gratitude

The agony is so great and yet I will stand it. Had I not loved so very much, I would not hurt so much. But goodness knows, I would not want to diminish that precious love by one fraction of an ounce. I will hurt and I will be grateful for that hurt. As it bears witness to the depth of our meaning – and for that I will be eternally grateful.

~ Shirley Holzer Jeffery

WHEN FATHERS WEEP AT GRAVES

I see them weep
the fathers at the stones
taking off the brave armor
forced to wear in the work place
clearing away the debris
with gentle fingers
inhaling the sorrow
diminished by anguish
their hearts desiring
what they cannot have--
to walk hand in hand
with children no longer held--
to all the fathers who leave a part
of their hearts at the stones
may breezes underneath trees of
time ease their pain
as they receive healing tears
...the gift the children give.

~ Alice J. Wisler, For David, in memory of our son Daniel

Dad

I've watched his eyes grow tired, Liquid full with pain
from having to put dreams aside.

I recall leathery hands, large and warm as they
covered mine. I now realize caring that hid behind a
stone face, and hopes that patiently waited as I
searched for my own space.

I still hurt from times I couldn't succeed, I beg for
more time to show him the respect he needs. I see
his eyes, they still hold their light and I

Want him to wish me a million more good nights.
by Scott McFarlane 1965 to 1996

Many people will walk in and out of your life,
But only true friends will leave footprints on your heart.

SOMETIMES ...

"Sometimes, I still don't believe it,"
My husband said to me
We had gone to bed, said our goodnights
And were resting comfortably.
My reply was short and to the point,
I simply said, "I know,"
Though it's been eight years since you have died
Chip, we miss you so.
The memories of our life with you
Are treasures that we share.
For nineteen years we loved you well
While you were in our care
So once again we said goodnight.
But before this we did pray.
This was a very poignant night.
This night was Father's Day.
~ Nancy McKeane, TCF/North Penn
In Memory of my son, Chip

That renewed energy and love become the memorials to our loved ones: not the grave markers we decorate, not the books we write, nor the speeches we make, but the LOVE we share and pass on.
~ by Darcie D Sims, "Footsteps through the Valley"

Letter to an Angel

There have been times since you've gone
When I felt that you were near
Only an angel could do that
Because you're no longer here.
Just wishful thinking, I don't think so
My heart tells me it's you.
A slight breeze, that little flutter
Like an angel's wings might do.
It could only be an angel's arms
The power of some unseen will
That carried us here from where we were
The day our world stood still.
You'd be so proud of your brother
With his music and his degree
A wonderful girlfriend, a positive attitude
A life full of possibilities.
Your mom and I have our good days and bad
Outward appearances might say we're okay
You're still our first thought in the morning
Our last breath at the end of the day.
We know that you're in heaven
But it will always make us cry
To whisper your name in the darkness
And know that we'll hear no reply.
It's hard to let you go
To admit that this was God's plan
For there now to be an angel
Where once stood a son and a man.
The flames have gone, the embers slowly die
The ashes of our words now part of the sky
We've sent this letter to our angel
Love, Mom and Dad, Goodbye
~ Tom Murphy, Greater Cincinnati TCF/East Chapter, OH
In Memory of my son, Brennan Murphy

Though life is not as it was before,
And never will be again,
Our memories are much richer,
Than if love had never been."
-- Author Unknown

"YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED A BIT"

Someone I haven't spoken to for over six years rang me a while back and, during the course of a conversation peppered with exclamation marks, she said, "You know, Linda, you sound exactly the same." The same as what, I wondered. And when we met, some days later, she confused me even further by shrieking (with obvious relief), "Oh, you haven't changed a bit!"

Who was she kidding? She was lying through her teeth! *But she wasn't!* Because she saw what she wanted to see -- and to be fair, she saw what I allowed her to see: The "me" of the day! And she was vastly relieved that I hadn't dressed in black. That I didn't weep into the iced coffee, produce photographs of my son, or have a soggy tissue tucked up my sleeves.

We reminisced and giggled. And studiously skirted the fact that Joel had died since I last saw her. She knew it. I knew it. And I was fascinated by the way she managed to avoid all mention of him. But I didn't feel a need to steer the conversation towards my child. There was a sense of control in that. And freedom.

I was pleased with myself. A year before, her determined refusal to acknowledge my son's absence from my life would have angered and hurt me. It was good to find that this silly kind of thoughtlessness couldn't get to me any more.

But something rankled, and I couldn't put my finger on it. I sat and watched her prattling on. Her life was so removed from mine. Untouched by tragedy, she was the same as she had always been. And there it was: It was SHE who hadn't changed, not I.

Joel's death was the single, most immense, mind-altering experience of my existence. I remember the madness of those days: exhausted nights of hypnotic rocking to and fro, muffling the sounds of pain with a pillow; those huge, hot limitless tears embarrassing me everywhere, clouding my vision in rush-hour traffic; the confusion (How could he be dead? Had he ever lived? Here? With me? How long ago, now?) Everything measured in terms of this time last week, last month, last year. I remember the raging, frightening wildness of it all.

And she dares to say I haven't changed!

I have stood at his grave, thrown back my head, and roared at the injustice of living longer than my child. I have whimpered his name over and over, feeling it upon my lips, fearing I may never hear it in reference to him again. And I have prayed deep, urgent prayers, trying desperately to reach some intrinsic part of him in me.

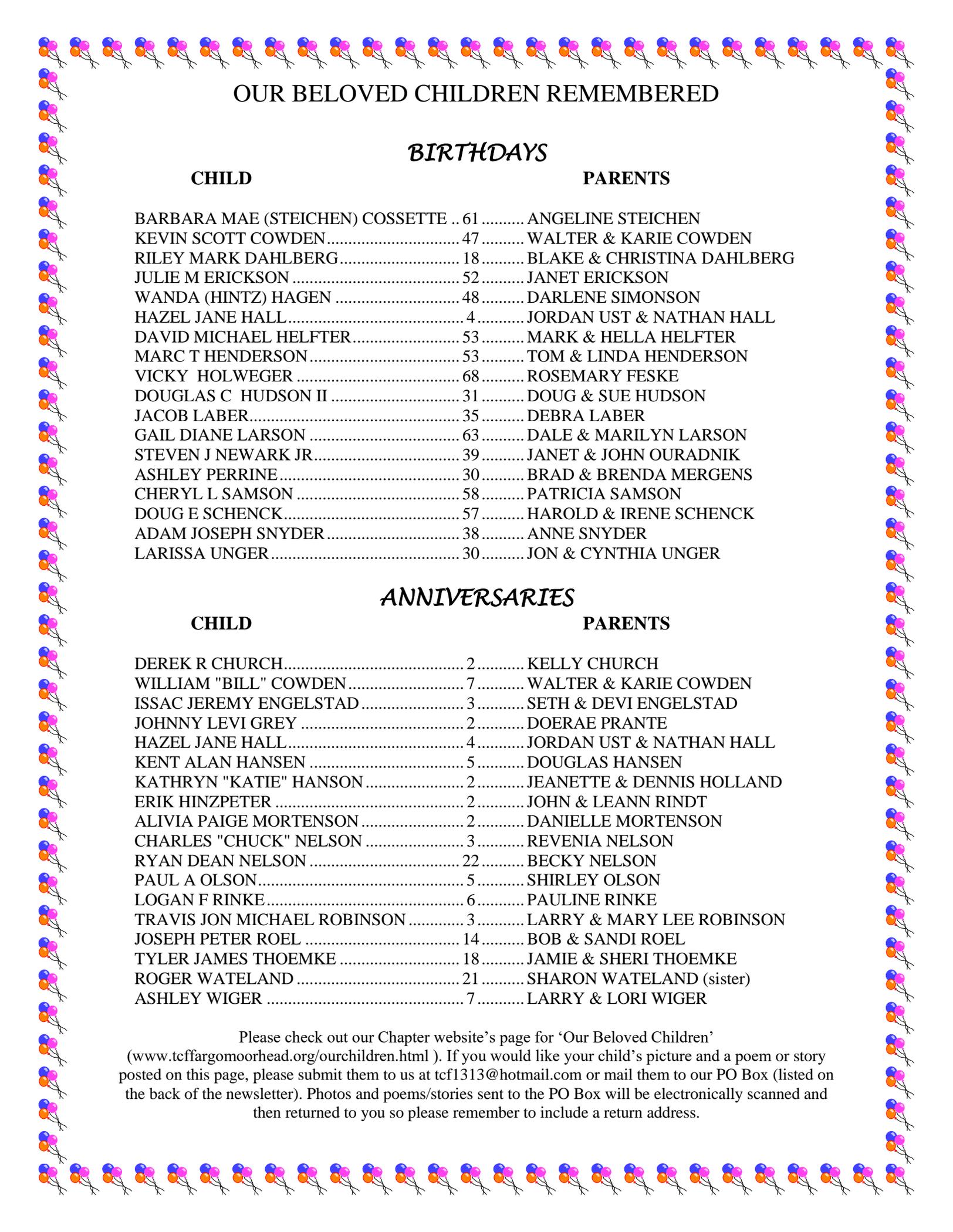
These are experiences that change the very soul. For nobody could go where I have been and not be changed. I have been forced to examine and question my faith and my priorities. She has not. My depths and values have been challenged, not hers.

I could not have stayed the same. I would not have wanted to.

For each small alteration in my life carries the signature of my son's being -- that one little person's presence in my world. I am willing to learn and grow, to seek and explore, so that I may better understand the responsibility I bear towards all life, my own included. And so that his life should not have been for nothing.

So I pushed back my chair and said goodbye to her. She seemed un-pressed for time. But I had things to do.

~ Linda A., TCF/Johannesburg, South Africa



OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED

BIRTHDAYS

CHILD		PARENTS
BARBARA MAE (STEICHEN) COSSETTE ..	61	ANGELINE STEICHEN
KEVIN SCOTT COWDEN	47	WALTER & KARIE COWDEN
RILEY MARK DAHLBERG	18	BLAKE & CHRISTINA DAHLBERG
JULIE M ERICKSON	52	JANET ERICKSON
WANDA (HINTZ) HAGEN	48	DARLENE SIMONSON
HAZEL JANE HALL	4	JORDAN UST & NATHAN HALL
DAVID MICHAEL HELFTER	53	MARK & HELLA HELFTER
MARC T HENDERSON	53	TOM & LINDA HENDERSON
VICKY HOLWEGER	68	ROSEMARY FESKE
DOUGLAS C HUDSON II	31	DOUG & SUE HUDSON
JACOB LABER	35	DEBRA LABER
GAIL DIANE LARSON	63	DALE & MARILYN LARSON
STEVEN J NEWARK JR	39	JANET & JOHN OURADNIK
ASHLEY PERRINE	30	BRAD & BRENDA MERGENS
CHERYL L SAMSON	58	PATRICIA SAMSON
DOUG E SCHENCK	57	HAROLD & IRENE SCHENCK
ADAM JOSEPH SNYDER	38	ANNE SNYDER
LARISSA UNGER	30	JON & CYNTHIA UNGER

ANNIVERSARIES

CHILD		PARENTS
DEREK R CHURCH	2	KELLY CHURCH
WILLIAM "BILL" COWDEN	7	WALTER & KARIE COWDEN
ISSAC JEREMY ENGELSTAD	3	SETH & DEVI ENGELSTAD
JOHNNY LEVI GREY	2	DOERAE PRANTE
HAZEL JANE HALL	4	JORDAN UST & NATHAN HALL
KENT ALAN HANSEN	5	DOUGLAS HANSEN
KATHRYN "KATIE" HANSON	2	JEANETTE & DENNIS HOLLAND
ERIK HINZPETER	2	JOHN & LEANN RINDT
ALIVIA PAIGE MORTENSON	2	DANIELLE MORTENSON
CHARLES "CHUCK" NELSON	3	REVENIA NELSON
RYAN DEAN NELSON	22	BECKY NELSON
PAUL A OLSON	5	SHIRLEY OLSON
LOGAN F RINKE	6	PAULINE RINKE
TRAVIS JON MICHAEL ROBINSON	3	LARRY & MARY LEE ROBINSON
JOSEPH PETER ROEL	14	BOB & SANDI ROEL
TYLER JAMES THOEMKE	18	JAMIE & SHERI THOEMKE
ROGER WATELAND	21	SHARON WATELAND (sister)
ASHLEY WIGER	7	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.

SIBLING PAGE

A Letter to My Sister:

Dear Jenny,

I feel so mixed up. I don't know what to think. Sometimes I'm really cross with you for dying and leaving me. I wanted to go on being your big sister. Sometimes I feel guilty too. I wasn't there with you when you died. Maybe I could have done something to save you.

Sometimes I just want to scream and scream to get the pain out. I cry too but mostly on my own. When I'm alone I think about you and imagine us having a coke, talking and laughing together like we used to. Then I remember so many happy memories of silly things we did together. Remember that wee "Jack in the Box" I gave you when you were little and how surprised you were when he jumped out?

Then sometimes right in the middle of a good memory when I'm feeling good...CLICK! I remember that you are not here anymore, that you're dead, yes DEAD, and it is AWFUL, TERRIBLE and my insides ache.

Some days I feel normal, happy and hardly think of you; other days I can't get you out of my head and it is so hard to go on without you. I want to have more days when I can remember you and smile with no pain. Will that happen? I hope so. Anyway, that's for me to find out.

No matter what, Jenny, remember that I love you and always will.

Your big sister, Louise (16)

Lovingly taken from Treetops, Issue No 4
Sibbs, TCF UK, Autumn Issue 2001

REMINISCING

I thought about you today
As I bade farewell for school.
I thought about you today
When I heard a certain song.
I thought about you today
As the teacher passed the test.
I thought about you today
When the kids jumped in the leaves.
I thought about you today
As a stranger passed my way.
I thought about you today
When I got drenched in the rain.
I thought about you today
As I sat in church and prayed.
I thought about you today
When I embraced an old friend.
I thought about you today
As the day turned into night.
I will think of you again
When I close my eyes and dream.

~ Lori Phillips, TCF/Scranton, PA

I AM SO SAD

I am so sad, so very, very sad.
My brother died, died, died
When I was tiny, tiny, tiny.
Now im older, older older.
And he's still my older brother.

Leah Kaminsky, TCF/Miami FL

Monarch Butterflies



When we were children, Joe, you and I were like caterpillars. We formed ideas, learned our lessons, and wrapped our cocoons. Then, as young adults, taking our values, we emerged like butterflies set free.

Never losing faith and always remaining patient, we sought the flowers of our youth. The golden sun warmed us.

We flew side by side until you became sick with cancer. Your soul remained strong.

Your spiritual wings glowed of the joys of Heaven. You flew away with the angels, as I prayed for the strength to watch you go.

Then, I remembered, you are a Monarch in the presence of God. My brother, Joe, you have become the most glorious butterfly of all.

~ Mary Lario, TCF/Williamsport, PA

Memories of my brother

Why is it so very hard
Accepting you are gone;
I guess the thought is unbearable
And I am not that strong.
I am too afraid to face the truth
And scared to feel the pain,
Of never seeing your sweet face
Or hearing your voice again.
Sometimes I see you in my dreams
And picture you still here, till I awaken dreadfully
To watch you disappear.
You were always happy and carefree,
And I don't understand
How you can seem so real to me,
As your grasp slips from my hand.
The sixteen years of life you had
Somehow do not compare,
To the tragic, senseless death you faced
And the cross you had to bear.
I try to think of pleasant times
And childhood memories,
But guilt and sorrow haunt my soul
And I cannot break free.
I am sorry for the times we fought
And for treating you so badly.
I am sorry for ignoring you
And wasting the time we had.
You were and are my brother still.
When you took your last breath,
A part of me went on with you
And I shall mourn your death.

~ Jennifer, TCF/Ellicott City, MD

Don't try to destroy a beautiful part of your life because remembering it hurts. As children of today and tomorrow, we are also children of the yesterday. The past still travels with us and what it has been, makes us what we are.

~ Rabbi Earl Grollman

GRIEF WRITING: Some Ideas on Keeping a Journal

Writing is a simple, yet powerful way to begin working through your grief. You will find it helps to relieve some of the physical, emotional and spiritual pain that many grieving folks are experiencing.

- It will help you work through many of the issues which are difficult to communicate in other ways.
- It is very personal and confidential - no one need share in your writings unless you specifically choose to permit it.
- It is simple to do spontaneously.
- It does not require making complicated plans; it can be accomplished at the moment your feelings and needs are strongest, even when you wake up at three in the morning.

Who are you writing for? Even though you intellectually know that it is for you and you alone, all your prior training has conditioned you differently. During school years we always wrote for others to see and usually judge, correct and grade. We have all written letters for others to read. Nearly all our prior writing has been to communicate with others.

JOURNAL WRITING IS DIFFERENT: IT IS ONLY FOR YOU TO READ!

While this sounds like such an obvious thought, you may be surprised at the difficulty in getting your inner self to grant you permission to write freely without ANY editorial judgment. As you progress in your writing, you will find that you are able to overcome the 'mind set' that you are writing for others, and you will concentrate on fully serving your needs for expression.

Since you are writing for yourself, you now have permission not to be a perfectionist. You can use an old wide lined school notebook or one of those expensive "designer journals," and you can give yourself permission to be as sloppy or as neat as you wish. Forget erasers – it is easier, quicker and more spontaneous to cross out words. Furthermore, there are no errors when writing for yourself - merely thoughts you wish to re-read and those you want to skip. Rather than erasing or tearing out pages in order to obliterate, try putting a big X through a page or crossing out a phrase. Pay attention to those thoughts you are inclined to obliterate – often they are rich sources of issues you need to work through in your grief work. For this reason, I always suggest a permanently bound notebook rather than a spiral bound or loose-leaf book.

As a new writer, I have certainly experienced a blank page staring me in the face, unable to think of anything to say. What a relief when I learned to write my "stream of consciousness". I set a time limit – for starts, perhaps 5 or 10 minutes – and then write everything which comes into my mind, no matter how unconnected, scattered, or inane it may seem. Since I am not judging myself, and no one else will read it, it doesn't matter that it isn't a well composed sentence or paragraph. I capture whatever thought or image comes to mind. Since I am not trying to write a story, I merely begin to document my internal images and feelings, my internal dialogue.

Not having the pressure of composing something which makes sense, I just have to be able to write fast enough to keep up with my internal activity. If my thoughts lead me to a particular issue, I may begin to elaborate on it. When the allotted time has passed, I may choose to continue or will allow myself to stop for the day and start again fresh the next day.

You will surprise yourself at how quickly you have developed a new tool for making progress with your grief work. With the mechanics of writing now a comfortable routine, you can become more focused. In grief work, we are frequently writing for one or more of the following reasons:

- To capture our experience or progress
- To confront an issue
- To vent, explore or express a feeling or emotion
- To connect
- To atone
- To preserve a thought
- To memorialize our loss

While few people feel they want to share everything they have written, there is frequently added value in sharing some of what we have written. Some, in their writings, have discovered parts of themselves which they felt they wanted to share. If you find this to be the case, the sharing circle at a meeting of The Compassionate Friends provides that opportunity.

If writing has always been easy and comfortable, please continue to do it. If this is all new to you, please be encouraged as you begin to use this new and useful tool which will serve you well, even beyond your grief work.

This article was adapted from a handout prepared by Alan B. Taplow, of Plainfield, New Jersey, for use with his Bereavement Support Group. He created it from material inspired by Carol Staudacher in her book, Men & Grief (New Harbinger Publ., 1991)

LONELINESS and HOW TO OVERCOME IT

Why are there times when a bereaved parent feels lonely even though surrounded by loving people and people the bereaved parent loves?

Loneliness is the outgrowth of separation from one who has given meaning to life. Yes, other relationships offer meaning, but it is normal for the searing pain from the loss of one's child to supersede the pleasure from other experiences.

Part of yourself had been invested in another person. When that person has died, in a sense, you are lonely for a part of yourself that has been destroyed. At times you look around you and think that no one else is experiencing the pain you are feeling, no one's world has been shattered.

This self-centeredness is a natural part of the grief process. Do not deny it, but DO NOT HOLD ON TO IT AS A WAY OF LIFE. Give yourself permission to accept help from others and then to reach out and help others.

Although your child is not here to give continuity to your life, by having lived and having given purpose to your life, your child can be the bridge to your continuity with life as a thinking, loving and active person. ♥

~ Ruth Eiseman, TCF/Louisville, KY

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: _____

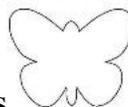
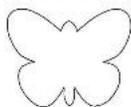
Child's Name: _____ Relationship: _____

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.

In Dad's Lap

Why does that phrase have so much meaning now? It used to be pretty simple. When I could find the time (not as often as I would have liked), my lap was a neat place to hold my young son for a few moments of special time together. Now—no son! Different use of the lap! Problems in Daddy's lap. (Thank God a 7-year-old daughter is there too, sometimes!) Being male becomes a more difficult task. How can I properly help those who are dependent on me—or can I admit to myself and others that this is one thing Daddy can't fix, like my son's broken toys? Is it “manly” to cry in public? Or do I care about “manly” now? It seems like so much garbage when my future has a hole in it.

I feel depressed too. My wife's suffering aggravates my own, which makes me angry at her for spoiling my attempts at coping. Maybe I should issue a household edict that “Richy's name or the subject of his death are OFF LIMITS around me.” That should fix it! Except that my wife still looks at me, and I know what's on her mind. Also, I keep thinking about it—and wish I had a better outlet for myself. Certainly not work, or sports, or—God forbid—a shrink (think of my (mage); I need someone who's been there. My wife suggests we try The Compassionate Friends—maybe so! After the first time, I know it's not for me. After all, where are all the men? Obviously, they don't need it, right? Anyway, I go to TCF a few more times as it is one of the few unselfish things I do supportively for my wife, and my being there helps her. And when she's better, I'm better. PRESTO—we're both getting stronger again and still together and communicating.

Also, I listen to some of the other TCF members, and the message I get is that their “men,” by and large, are denying themselves the privilege of grieving, and are destroying their own marriages by forcing their wives to grieve quietly or not at all around them. That's not manly, it's dumb in my book, and self-destructive too. So some men don't like groups okay. But my solution is actually having results (for real), and I'm not suppressing the problem. My family and I will be scarred but not walking wounded. My particular masculine viewpoint is nothing special, except that I'm willing to share it in this newsletter.

~ Chuck Armstrong, TCF/Pikes Peak, CO
In Memory of Richy

Death of an Adult Child

Just as the family grieves the infant, the young child, and the adolescent, so do they grieve the death of their adult child, who is at the same time part of themselves and yet a separate person who has contributed to their lives over the years. For elderly parents who no doubt have known other losses, being predeceased by their child is intolerable and unnatural and produces a special sense of injustice and guilt. The natural order of the elderly dying and the young living is reversed. Many parents would willingly exchange their own lives for the life of their child. To have lived beyond their child seems intolerable. Cards, messages of support, phone calls are for the most part directed to the widows and surviving children. Grief on the death of one's child is not bound by age or circumstances.

From A Child Dies - by Joan Arnold and P. Gemma

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OF THE F-M AREA
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**The
Compassionate
Friends**
Fargo/Moorhead Area Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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

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

FARGO-MOORHEAD COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS BOARD

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN THE BOARD AT ANY TIME!

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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.