



# 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 9th  
July 14th

#### Meeting Subject:

Balloon Release, everyone is welcome.

#### Dates to Remember

Mom's meeting - 7 pm on June 23rd @ Denny's  
TCF FM Chapter's 16th Annual Walk to Remember - July 30, 2022  
45<sup>th</sup> TCF National Conference August 5-7, 2022 in Houston, TX

#### Silent Stories

Somehow they press against the windowpane of your mind.  
Tales of wanting, Tales of longing  
Tales of grief.  
A drumbeat, Heartbeat,  
Calling out loss.  
But we remember.  
But we still love.  
We will not be silent  
We will speak their names,  
Always, we will love them,  
Forever.

Melissa Anne Schroeter  
TCF/Rockland County, NY  
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#### 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 GIFTS

Neil & Kathleen Prochnow in memory of their son, Reed Joel Prochnow  
Walter & Margaret Moratis in memory of their son, Mark Anthony Moratis  
Ravenia Nelson in memory of her son, Charles D Nelson

#### Butterflies:

Kristen Orvik for Elijah Orvik, Nicholas Orvik, & Tanner Orvik

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.

#### 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 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month at 7 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 23rd. For more information, please contact Sheryl at 701-540-3287 or visit our website at [www.tcffargomoorhead.org](http://www.tcffargomoorhead.org).

## A FATHER'S THOUGHTS

Our son, Jacob, has been gone for 10 months now and it seems like 10 life times. There are moments when I find it so difficult to continue doing anything and it seems like life is so out of balance now. My wife and I only had two children, both boys. Jacob was the younger and he died June 29, 2002. Just six weeks to the day before Jacob died, my mother died. While at her wake, Jacob and his mother were sitting outside the funeral home in the twilight, and in that quietness, Jacob said to his mother, "Mom, just look at the thousands of fireflies coming up across the cemetery." And there were, filling the fading light with lights of magic. Jacob said, "Mom, this is probably the most spiritual moment I have ever had. All the fireflies rising from the ground are like the spirits of the deceased joining together in celebration." My wife and my son enjoyed that special time. And then, six weeks later we lost Jacob. The light of my life has been extinguished.

After Jacob's funeral, my wife would spend many, many evenings sitting on the back porch watching the fireflies and remembering that special moment with her son. But the fireflies would always keep a distance and then one evening, just one flew on the porch and blinked its light at my wife. All she could do was cry and say, "Hi, son. I knew you were OK." And now, for the first time this season, not even a year since Jacob left, the fireflies have returned to the woods behind our house. And my wife and I sit on the porch in the stillness of the early evening and watch. We watch the fireflies dance in the woods, waiting for that special one who will come to our porch, blink his light, and once again we will know that Jacob is doing well as an angel in training that one day we shall joyfully join.

I miss my son, Jacob, so much that it hurts. Everyday I hope it gets better, but so far it has not ... but the firefly is back and some joy can be found in that.

~ John Drollinger, TCF/Marietta/Sandy Springs GA, Proud Father of Jacob and John

## Is It Father's Day Already?

Well, it's that time of year again. That awkward, often over-hyped day in which Dad is suppose to "relax" and spend time with the kids. We wake up sometimes to breakfast in bed, a card and a small gift or two (often a tool or gadget of some kind), and then are faced with the rest of the day. After the first hour most kids are bored and want to get on with whatever they had planned that morning for themselves. But they are reminded that this is a "Father's Day" and Dad decides what we are doing.

Before Stefanie died, this "holiday" was taken very lightly without much planning ahead of time. Since then it has taken on new meaning and starts to take on significance around the time Mother's Day arrives. We are being prepared for our day. As the day draws nearer we get more and more uneasy as we try to figure out what to do. Play golf?...Watch a ball game?...Work around the house? These are the stereotyped "dad things to do" on this "special day".

Well, this day is quite special to our bereaved fathers for many different reasons. The first few years can be quite difficult to face if one hasn't planned ahead of time. There is this incredible void of our other child or children who should be there with us. This is where the careful planning comes into play as I try to make this day special for my other daughter Hillary while keeping Stefanie's presence with us too. The best way to do this is to try and plan something new that involves the natural beauty we have around us. Taking a hike on a new trail, kayaking in the bay, playing golf with the family and not alone with the guys, a bike ride or maybe a day trip to the beach exploring tidal pools.

The options are endless if you use your imagination. The nice thing about doing something outside as opposed to say, a movie, is that it allows you to "feel" the presence of your other child. Places like Monterey, Point Reyes or anywhere along the coast give me a real sense of peace. If it happens to be foggy, then head inland towards some of the back roads of wine country. The sun is very important on this day, our day.

So rather than dreading this day, use it as a chance to reflect on all the wonderful memories of our children. Share the day with your family and allow their warmth, support and comfort to be a part of us.

~ Rob Jacobs, TCF/Marin, CA

## Upward, Inward, Outward

We are not born into relationships. We enter life with both hands up in the air and fists clenched tightly. We are born emptyhanded. There are no hands to hold but our own. We learn to reach out, but only after we have had a chance to reach inward and upward. It is the upward reach of the spirit and the inward reach of the soul that enables the outward reach of the body.

Our losses change us and change the course of our lives. It's not that one can never again be happy following an experience of loss. The reality is simply that one can never again be the same.

~ Ann Kaiser Sterns

### Memory

Memory is a form of immortality

Those you remember never die

They continue to walk and talk with you

Their influence is with you always.

Wilford A. Peterson, TCF/Kansas City, MO

### Separation

From where I stand

I cannot see

How far it is

From you to me.

At different times

It seems to be

A step or an infinity.

~ Richard Dew, MD

### **A Father Mourns Too**

I just watched another TV commercial for cologne, which is the first sign of the approach of Father's Day. Like other fathers, I know the gift I'd like to get this Father's Day, just as I know there is no way that it will happen—my son's life, an opportunity not to hurt when I see boys who are his age, a chance to dream those dreams for that little boy again.

But that's not going to happen. Instead I will get up on that day, having called my own father the night before to wish him a happy Father's Day, and I will go to the cemetery to place flowers on my son's grave. I will stand alone and cry for a time and then return home to my wife and new infant son.

This year we will have a greater measure of peace because of the birth of our son, but I shall always have a hole in my soul, a longing that I know I will have until I die.

Like many bereaved fathers, I have felt misunderstood about how a father should mourn and for how long. I do not understand how a society can have such a belief in the strength of maternal love and do such a good job ignoring the intensity of paternal love. From the people whose only question at my son's memorial service was how was my wife dealing with this tragedy, to the longtime friend who didn't understand my choking up after watching a Hallmark commercial, it seems that many around us have difficulty understanding a father's grief.

So, support and love is needed and needed badly. Of course, we have Compassionate Friends, but something more personal and closer to home is needed. I hope that bereaved fathers will not be forgotten on Father's Day. It is often said that we don't often talk of our emotional needs and are reluctant to show our pain, but we too need love when we hurt.

Please remember us on Father's Day and remember that the cute little commercials that hurt mothers in May take their toll on fathers in June.

~ Doug Hughes, TCF/Las Vegas, NV

### **THE WAVES OF GRIEF**

I watched the waves break on the shore  
I heard them crash and pound and roar,  
Some broke a long way out at sea  
And some washed right up over me.

And as I watched them ebb and flow  
They seemed quite like the grief I know  
They never stopped, yet there were those  
Which carried me with them as they rose.

Other waves were very calm  
And I could stand and not fall down.  
While I watched the tide went out  
And "Grief" retreated without doubt.

I knew that it would come again  
And I would feel that awful pain,  
But maybe not so often now  
Will I be overwhelmed somehow.

Since David died the grief has changed  
Not dimmed, but rather rearranged.  
The waves of grief I'll always have  
But this I know - I have survived.

~ Barb Patterson, TCF/Coquitlam, Canada

### **My Dad is a Survivor**

My dad is a survivor too  
which is no surprise to me.  
He's always been like a lighthouse  
that helps you cross a stormy sea.  
But, I walk with my dad each day  
to lift him when he's down.  
I wipe the tears he hides from others;  
he cries when no one's around.  
I watch him sit up late at night  
with my picture in his hand.  
He cries as he tries to grieve alone,  
and wishes he could understand.  
My dad is like a tower of strength.  
He's the greatest of them all!  
But, there are times when he needs to cry...  
please be there when he falls.  
Hold his hand or pat his shoulder...  
and tell him it's okay.  
Be his strength when he's sad;  
help him mourn in his own way.  
Now, as I watch over my precious dad  
from the Heavens up above...  
I'm so proud that he's a survivor...  
and, I can still feel his love.  
~ Kaye Des'Ormeaux ~  
*Dedicated to all dads who have lost a child &  
were forced to survive*

### **HURTING ON FATHER'S DAY**

As the day approaches  
I wonder how I will react -  
Am I still a father?  
I will sit quietly never  
Allowing friends and family  
To see how I feel.

I 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

With what a deep devotedness of woe  
I wept thy absence - o'er and o'er again  
Thinking of thee, still thee, till thought grew pain,  
And memory, like a drop that, night and day,  
Falls cold and ceaseless, wore my heart away!  
~Thomas Moore

## OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED BIRTHDAYS

<b>CHILD</b>	<b>PARENTS</b>
BARBARA MAE (STEICHEN) COSSETTE...62.....	ANGELINE STEICHEN
KEVIN SCOTT COWDEN.....48.....	WALTER & KARIE COWDEN
RILEY MARK DAHLBERG.....19.....	BLAKE & CHRISTINA DAHLBERG
JULIE M ERICKSON.....53.....	JANET ERICKSON
JARRED FALLER.....36.....	CONNIE JOHNSON
BRADLEY KARL GRABER.....59.....	CONNIE GRABER
WANDA (HINTZ) HAGEN.....49.....	DARLENE SIMONSON
HAZEL JANE HALL.....5.....	JORDAN UST & NATHAN HALL
DAVID MICHAEL HELFTER.....54.....	MARK & HELLA HELFTER
MARC T HENDERSON.....54.....	TOM & LINDA HENDERSON
VICKY HOLWEGER.....69.....	ROSEMARY FESKE
DOUGLAS C HUDSON II.....32.....	DOUG & SUE HUDSON
JACOB LABER.....36.....	DEBRA LABER
GAIL DIANE LARSON.....64.....	DALE & MARILYN LARSON
STEVEN J NEWARK JR.....40.....	JANET & JOHN OURADNIK
ASHLEY PERRINE.....31.....	BRAD & BRENDA MERGENS
CHERYL L SAMSON.....59.....	PATRICIA SAMSON
DOUG E SCHENCK.....58.....	HAROLD & IRENE SCHENCK
ADAM JOSEPH SNYDER.....39.....	ANNE SNYDER
LARISSA UNGER.....31.....	JON & CYNTHIA UNGER

## ANNIVERSARIES

<b>CHILD</b>	<b>PARENTS</b>
DEREK R CHURCH.....3.....	KELLY CHURCH
WILLIAM "BILL" COWDEN.....8.....	WALTER & KARIE COWDEN
ISSAC JEREMY ENGELSTAD.....4.....	SETH & DEVI ENGELSTAD
JOHNNY LEVI GREY.....3.....	DOERAE PRANTE
HAZEL JANE HALL.....5.....	JORDAN UST & NATHAN HALL
KENT ALAN HANSEN.....6.....	DOUGLAS HANSEN
KATHRYN "KATIE" HANSON.....3.....	JEANETTE & DENNIS HOLLAND
ERIK HINZPETER.....3.....	JOHN & LEANN RINDT
RYAN PHILLIP JENSON.....1.....	DALE & KELLY JENSON
SCOTT LIMA.....1.....	MARGARET LIMA
ALIVIA PAIGE MORTENSON.....3.....	DANIELLE MORTENSON
CHARLES "CHUCK" NELSON.....4.....	REVENIA NELSON
RYAN DEAN NELSON.....23.....	BECKY NELSON
PAUL A OLSON.....6.....	SHIRLEY OLSON
LOGAN F RINKE.....7.....	PAULINE RINKE
TRAVIS JON MICHAEL ROBINSON.....4.....	LARRY & MARY LEE ROBINSON
JOSEPH PETER ROEL.....15.....	BOB & SANDI ROEL
DANE SAYERS.....1.....	DALE & BONNIE SAYERS
TYLER JAMES THOEMKE.....19.....	JAMIE & SHERI THOEMKE

Please check out our Chapter website's page for 'Our Beloved Children'  
([www.tcffargomoorhead.org/ourchildren.html](http://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](mailto: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

## It's the Music that Bonds the Souls

The room you once lived in,  
Doesn't look the same. The people who  
used to call you, Never mention your name.  
The car you used to drive,  
They may not make them anymore; And  
all the things you once treasured, Are  
boxed behind closet doors.  
The clothes you set the trends by,  
Are surely out of date.  
The people you owed money to,  
Have wiped away the slate.  
Things have changed and changed again  
since you went away,  
But some things have  
remained the same  
Each and every day ...  
Like this aching in my heart,  
A scar that just won't heal,  
Or the way a special song,  
Can change the way I feel.  
Brother, you must know that the music  
bonds us and will keep us close; Because  
secretly I know deep in my heart; It's  
the music you miss the most.  
So let the world keep on turning,  
And time can take its toll.  
For as long as the music keeps playing  
You'll be alive and dancing in my soul

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

## WHEN MY SIBLING DIED I FELT:

- that a part of me died and that I was all alone  
very angry at everything  
my childhood had died, too  
angry and sad that my family life as I had known it was over  
terrified that I would lose someone else that I loved  
cheated that I didn't have a brother  
angry at how it happened  
alone  
afraid to get close and let anyone in  
terrible  
I wanted to cry  
I felt angry, depressed, confused, drained, worried  
why did it happen to him and not someone else  
I wanted him back

~ Author Unknown

## People Think

People think we're fine, you know.  
They say, "Oh, siblings heal so fast."  
But they don't know the empty feelings,  
or our longing for the past.  
People think we're fine, you know.  
"Look, how they've resumed their lives." they say.  
But they don't know of our troubled hearts  
or the loneliness from day to day.  
People think we're fine, you know.  
"See how they're getting over it?" they surmise.  
But they don't know that we've learned to laugh and smile,  
Only to complete our broken heart's disguise.  
~ Mary Matthews, TCF/Ft. Lauderdale, FL

## "A Completed Journey"

We're all searching for the one moment,  
That one sparkling place in time  
That answers our questions.  
Change is in the wind  
Confidence is upon the sand  
I realize as I stare out at the ocean  
This is my moment  
I embrace it, take it in  
And lose myself in the infinity of Utopia.  
I've found the answers  
Now I am reborn, perfect  
A child of the sand, wind, water and stars  
Never look back  
Never to return.

~ Jed Hutcheson - For my brother Jacob

## My Sister

If she's here,  
Where is she?  
Mom, where is she?  
You said she's here.  
So where is she?  
We had fun together,  
I remember that.  
Oh, that's where she is,  
In my memory  
So even if I move,  
I'll still be with her.

~ Sara Bundock, Cheshire, CT

## I REMEMBER YOU

I remember the way you laughed,  
You meant so much to me  
I remember the way you smiled,  
You were the way a Christian should be  
You were so smart,  
Your presence could light up any room  
We all miss you so much,  
We wonder why you left so soon  
Memories of you make me smile,  
While others make me cry  
I wish you could have stayed for one more day,  
Now all I have is the question, "Why?"  
The day that you were called  
Was sad for everyone,  
We tried and tried to save you  
But nothing could be done  
I know that you are in Heaven,  
And I know that you are free  
But when I'm sad I stop and wonder,  
Do you remember me?  
Now all that I have left,  
Are memories of what you would do  
Some are happy, some are sad,  
But I remember you.

Sara Knauss, TCF/Phoenix, AZ  
In memory my brother, Dalton William Knauss  
1984 - 1999

## **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

## **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

## **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 ask ourselves about our failure, and 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 his inability to stop what happened.

Fathers do not often have a chance to share their hurts and concerns. Oftentimes they're 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

## **Traveling with My Grief**

I am writing this as I sit in a cabin in the forest of the Finnish north, the Laplands. This place is wild, gorgeous, and civilized, all at the same time. We have walked up a ski hill, seen bears, foxes, lynx, and the ever-present reindeer, and have gone on a boat ride through a beautiful canyon lake. Oh, and lest I forget, we have shopped!

Still, I miss Melissa. My longing for her never changes no matter where I am. I see all this beauty and experience a culture not my own. Yet one thing remains ugly and familiar; it is my grief. Melissa should be here. I take her spirit with me but of course, it is not the same as the living breathing Melissa.

So, what do I do with the ugliness in all of this beauty? I guess I keep practicing what I do at home. I live with it, accept it as part of me, and do my best not to let it overshadow the beauty.

As I said, it is familiar. I am half a world away from home and the ugliness of my grief is part of my connection to home. It is packed into my soul just as tightly as the clothes into my suitcase. To try to leave it behind would be traitorous and futile.

Tomorrow we will travel to the Arctic Circle, near the border of Russia, and take a river-rafting trip. My daughter will be with me there as well. Not the laughing, adventurous girl I once held, but the one who continues to live in my dreams. She will always be there, forever 13, forever mine.

~ Joanne Rademacher, TCF/Minot, ND

**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 four colors (yellow, pink, red 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.

### **Letting Go and Holding On**

By Dennis Klass, Advisor, TCF/St. Louis, MO  
TCF National Newsletter - Summer 1985 - Vol. 8 No. 3

It seems to me that the one thing I see with bereaved parents is that they have a problem in that they need, somehow, to let go of their dead child and yet need very much to hold on to that child. How do you let go and still hold on?

What I see in The Compassionate Friends are people who let go by honestly facing the pain that the death and separation have brought. We let go when we let ourselves cry, when we let the pain, the missing, the loneliness and the questioning be experienced. When we allow ourselves to feel the pain, we feel the child being torn loose from us. We also let go when we look our world squarely in the face, when we see the world doesn't have our child in it, when we see the world as a different place, when we see that people are treating us differently, we KNOW our child is gone.

We let the child go when we, at some point, allow him to be a part of something bigger. For some of us, that means to say, "Okay, God, he's your. He's in Heaven." For others, that means when we look out at nature, when we look at the woods, when we look at the ground and we say the child is part of all nature and no longer belongs to just me. He is part of something bigger. When we say that, we let go. If we are to live as anything except as emotional cripples for the rest of our lives, we've got to know that our child died and is not coming back. That is a hard thing to do, but we must let go.

The other side of recovery is the need to hold on to our child. We can't simply let him go as if he never existed. I have observed that members of The Compassionate Friends learn how to hold on to their child, also.

The first way we hold on is with our memory. We remember child. Memory is making him part of our every day as if the child were simply in another city or away at school. At some point the child would have left home and we wouldn't have seen him every day. It is the same with our child who is dead. We remember him when we see something and we let the memory come. When we're walking in the store and we see a toy that reminds us of him or when we're walking down the street and we see a little child with a snow suit like his or we see a child on a bike the color of his, we remember. That memory is there and when we really resolve our grief, that memory is still there and it's a memory that feels good. We can have good memories and hold on to the child.

Sometimes we hold on to our child by simply giving ourselves back to the pain of the child's death by reading old letters, going through the album, going to the grave or going through their things again. I've noticed that many bereaved parents simply let the present go its own way and give themselves to the memory of the child when it occurs. That is a good healthy way to hold on to the child, by immersing yourself in the memories when they present themselves. Don't long for them but give yourself over to them when they show up. Then, after briefly visiting the past, you can say, "There, I was there. I don't need to do that again for a while, but I will do it again sometime."

The most profound way we keep our child is by sharing with others what we have shared with the child. That is the secret of TCF. We learn to take the love we had for the child and turn it outward, so that we're loving others. Perhaps, at first that love is directed only to other bereaved parents. As our healing progresses, that circle of caring and loving broadens. We give to the world some of what we gave to our child, and by so doing, are able to hold on to the essence of what we shared with our child.

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

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

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

**FARGO-MOORHEAD COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS BOARD**

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN THE BOARD AT ANY TIME!

Chapter Leader	Paul & Kara Bailey.....701-491-0364	Newsletter Editor	Nancy Teeuwen ..... 701-730-0805
Newsletter Database	Sheryl Cvijanovich .....701-540-3287	Secretary	Sheryl Cvijanovich..... 701-540-3287
Treasurer	Chuck Klinkhammer.....701-298-2929	Website Administrator	Sheryl Cvijanovich..... 701-540-3287
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 15<sup>th</sup> 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.