



The Compassionate Friends

Fargo/Moorhead Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we have decided for the safety of our members the March meeting will be a Zoom meeting on March 11th. Please watch our website and our Facebook page for updates.

We are hoping to hold a meeting in April on the 8th at 7 p.m.
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

If we do have an April meeting, the subject will be bring a memento of your child to share with the group

We will be social distancing during our meeting and ask that everyone please wear a mask when entering the building and continue to wear during the meeting.

Please watch for updates of upcoming meetings in our newsletters, on our Facebook page & our website.

Dates to Remember

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

LOVE GIFTS

Ann Johnson in memory of her son, Todd Johnson
Dean & Diane Bauck in memory of their son, Davin Bauck
Jim & Jody Kutter in memory of their daughter, Michelle Kutter
Linda Bartsch in memory of her son, Brent Bartsch

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 p.m. 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 grandpa.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, please check our Facebook page or our website at www.tcffargomoorhead.org to see if we will be meeting on March 25th.

Bereaved Parents

Different ages - Different stages

Different issues - Same pain

Daily strain

Occasional tissues

Our children have died

Often is all we know

A fact we fear to hide

Despite our ever-present woe

We live with pride

Though broken-hearted

To love, remember, and grow

~ Victor Montemurro, TCF/Medford, NY

Web Sites of Interest

Listing of sites does not imply an endorsement by TCF and is included to provide sources of useful information for bereaved families

Bereavement Magazine.....	https://www.bereavementmag.com/
griefHaven - provides loving support, hope, and hands-on tolls for those who have lost a child, brother or sister, or grandchild, and also provides education to professionals and others seeking to help bereaved family members rebuild their lives.	https://griefhaven.org/
Hospice Foundation of America - Includes information about hospice care and programs including bereavement support for families using hospice.....	https://hospicefoundation.org/
MADD - Mothers Against Drunk Drivers has a mission to stop drunk driving, support victims of violent crime, and prevent underage drinking.....	https://www.madd.org/
National SIDS Resource Center - provides information services and technical assistance on sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and related topics.	https://www.sidscenter.org/
Parents Of Murdered Children - provides support and assistance to all survivors of homicide victims while working to create a world free of murder.	https://pomc.org/
SHARE Pregnancy and Infant Loss Support - SHARE's mission is to serve those who are touched by the tragic death of a baby through miscarriage, stillbirth, or newborn death	http://nationalshare.org/
SOS - Survivors of Suicide helps those who have lost a loved one to suicide to resolve their grief and pain in their own personal way	http://www.survivorsof suicide.com

ENERGY DRAIN

It is surprising time that much bereavement literature omits mention of the huge energy drain which comes with grief. If you are newly bereaved and have yet to realize that nearly all your energy is required just to deal with these many emotions you are confronting, then let me assure you that this is the case. Don't expect yourself to complete projects within the same time frame as you were once able to, nor expect yourself to be able to dazzle customers and clients with your pizzazz or gust.

It simply takes too much energy just to dress in the morning, to make the simple decision to eat, to stifle tears in public, to keep your anger from inappropriately erupting. There is very little energy for anything else. Everything will take longer than you think, including grief recovery. You will, however, gradually rediscover yourself and build a new life. Your life will be a rich and full one where the memories of your child will no longer produce pain. In fact, those memories will enrich your life. And that's the truth!

Meanwhile, conserve your energy when and where you can, and allow yourself time to grieve. Those people who deny their grief delay the process. The quicker way to recovery is straight through the grief, not around it.

~ Shirley O., TCF/Denton, TX

Living Life Is Still An Effort

My husband's family held a reunion in July. We planned to attend and told the family to count on us. But when it came time to buy the tickets and make a commitment, I found I couldn't do it. I simply did not want to deal with the hassles of traveling, leaving home, getting out of my daily rhythm.

I am a different person since my child died. I am a different person than I was six months after my child died. And, I will be a different person in another year.

I find that I am evolving; my basic personality is still intact, most of my mind works well enough, my perception of life, love, people and events is probably heightened but fairly unchanged. Still I am a different person.

Now I work at living my life. I make myself do the things that I once took for granted....such as getting dressed each day, going to work, handling a number of responsibilities I have chosen to accept. I make myself laugh at silly jokes. Sometimes I even have to force myself to really listen to others. I am surprised when I laugh spontaneously, smile for no particular reason or say something "prophetic". What is going on here? Who am I? Why has the joy of life disappeared?

I believe I have found the answer to these questions and even to questions I haven't yet asked. It lies in the nature of losing one's child to death. Initially we work very hard to maintain sanity. Gradually we expand the boundaries of our lives. Carefully we add events, people, responsibilities and simple enjoyment. But our progress is measured in months and years, not days and weeks.

My awakening to this new reality came at a meeting of The Compassionate Friends. It has been rekindled at each meeting since then. I learn about myself by observing others. I note the change in their voice, their body language, their perspective. I see the sorrow in each parent. I see parents whose children have been gone for many years still weep openly and later talk about a special event they are planning. Then I see parents whose loss was recent yet they appear to be normal, controlled and sociable on many levels and they suddenly and mysteriously crumble before my eyes.

That's the journey. We set our own limits as to what is acceptable for us. Over time we shift from minimalist boundaries to a good representation of the person we once were. We have major setbacks: birthdays, holidays, death anniversaries. We have minor setbacks: a picture, a forgotten scent, a baby shoe, a poignant memory. We sob, we scream, we withdraw. But we do go on. With the help of our Compassionate Friends, we move forward and are supported when we suffer a setback. We each deal with the many facets of our grief. We learn from others. We teach others. We grow from the dialogue. Our kindred spirits bring questions, answers and peace.

Who am I today? A fairly well balanced mother of one beautiful child who no longer is alive. I am where I should be. When will I stop evolving? Probably never.

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

ANGEL KNOCKING AT THE DOOR

There came a frantic knock
At the doctor's office door,
A knock, more urgent than he
had ever heard before.

"Come in, Come in," the impatient doctor said,
"Come in, Come in, before you wake the dead."

In walked a frightened little girl,
a child no more than nine,
It was plain for all to see,
she had troubles on her mind.

"Oh doctor, I beg you, please come with me,
My mother is surely dying, she's as sick as she can be."

"I don't make house calls, bring your mother here,"
"But she's too sick, so you must come, or she will die I fear."

The doctor, touched by her devotion,
decided he would go,
She said he would be blessed,
more than he could know.

She led him to her house
where her mother lay in bed,
Her mother was so very sick
she couldn't raise her head.

But her eyes cried out for help
and help her the doctor did,
She would have died that very night
had it not been for her kid.

The doctor got her fever down
and she lived through the night,
And morning brought the doctor signs,
that she would be all right.

The doctor said he had to leave
but would return again by two,
And later he came back to check,
just like he said he'd do.

The mother praised the doctor
for all the things he'd done,
He told her she would have died,
were it not for her little one.

"How proud you must be
of your wonderful little girl,
It was her pleading that made me come,
she is really quite a pearl!"

"But doctor, my daughter died
over three years ago,
Is the picture on the wall
of the little girl you know?"

The doctor's legs went limp
for the picture on the wall,
Was the same little girl
for whom he'd made this call.

The doctor stood motionless,
for quite a little while,
And then his solemn face,
was broken by his smile.

He was thinking of that frantic knock
heard at his office door,
And of the beautiful little angel
that had walked across his floor.

Author ~ Unknown

FOREVER YOUNG

Through distant mists of memories,
I hear them call my name;
Those who served beside me,
On a battleground of pain.
Nothing left but memories,
Of those forever young;
Lives that ended suddenly,
What would they have become?
What price they paid for freedom,
The sacrifice untold;
Yet, here they are in memories,
Not one will 'ere grow old.
For I shall keep their names alive,
Until my flame is gone;
Then pass the torch to those who will,
Remember....The Forever young.

~ Allison Chambers Coxsey, TCF/Bridgewater, NJ

Just For Today for Bereaved Parents

Just for today, I will try to live through the next 24 hours
and not expect to get over my child's death, but instead learn
to live with it just one day at a time.

Just for today, I will remember my child's life, not his
death, and bask in the comfort of all those treasured days and
moments we shared.

Just for today, I will forgive all the family and friends
who didn't help or comfort me the way I needed them to. They
truly did not know how.

Just for today, I will smile no matter how much I hurt on
the inside, for maybe if I smile a little, my heart will soften
and I will begin to heal.

Just for today, I will reach out to comfort a relative or
friend of my child, for they are hurting too, and perhaps we
can comfort each other.

Just for today, I will free myself from my self-inflicted
burden of guilt, for deep in my heart I know if there was
anything in this world I could have done to save my child
from death, I would have done it.

Just for today, I will honor my child's memory by doing
some-thing with another child because I know that would have
made my own child proud.

Just for today, I will offer my hand in friendship to
another bereaved parent, for I do know how they feel.

Just for today, when my heart feels like breaking, I will
stop and remember that grief is the price we pay for loving,
and the only reason I hurt is because I had the privilege of
loving so much.

Just for today, I will not compare myself with others, I am
fortunate to be who I am and to have had my child for as long
as I did.

Just for today, I will allow myself to be happy, for I know
that I am not deserting my child by living on.

Just for today, I will accept that I did not die when my
child did, my life did go on, and I am the only one who can
make that life worthwhile once more.

~ Vickie Tushingam

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

OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED *BIRTHDAYS*

CHILD		PARENTS
BRENT M BARTSCH	39	LINDA BARTSCH
JOHNNY LEVI GREY	40	DOERAE PRANTE
TAMARA JO "TAMMY" HINES	56	SHARON COOK
JOHN CLAYTON JACKSON JR	73	NORMA JACKSON
DARIN M KLABO	37	CRAIG & TERRY KLABO
ISIAH KUJANSON	21	ARNE & SHAWNA KUJANSON
MICHELLE KUTTER	32	JIM & JODY KUTTER
GREGORY MICKELSON	66	ROSELLA MICKELSON
ZAYNE WILLIAM MALHEIM OLAFSON	12	BILLY OLAFSON & SHANDRA MALHEIM
JAMIE CLIFFORD OLSON	43	GLENNIS OLSON
ANNIKA LORRAINE QUALLEY	10	RHONDA & MICHAEL QUALLEY
ANNIKA LORRAINE QUALLEY	10	MARLYS KESSEL (Great grandmother)
ROY DANA RICHMOND	56	THOMAS & AUDREY RICHMOND
CARLA RAE TRUITT	57	LORETTA KEISACKER
CHAD VARRIANO	49	ANTHONY & KAREL VARRIANO
ROBIN VIGDAL-HOSLER	50	WALTER & KARIE COWDEN
ASHLEY WIGER	34	LARRY & LORI WIGER
PAIGE WIGHTMAN	31	DAVID & MICHELLE WIGHTMAN
MELINDA JOY WINTERROTH	39	MONTY & JOANNE WINTERROTH

ANNIVERSARIES

CHILD		PARENTS
NANCY PRATT COASH	17	PATRICIA PRATT
KEVIN SCOTT COWDEN	3	WALTER & KARIE COWDEN
JUSTIN L DIETRICH	3	TRACY & CAROL DIETRICH
STEVEN "HERMAN" FESKE	3	ROSEMARY FESKE
COREY ALAN FLEISCHFRESSER	1	ANNETTE & SCOTT ENGEN
JAYSON P HAUGEN	4	PAULETTE HAUGEN
DAVID MICHAEL HELFTER	17	MARK & HELLA HELFTER
TODD ALLAN JOHNSON	6	ANN JOHNSON
MATTHEW MILLIGAN-OLSON	21	JOHN & KYLENE MILLIGAN
STEVEN J NEWARK JR	3	JANET & JOHN OURADNIK
JARAD NILLES	9	CAROLYN NILLES
ZAYNE WILLIAM MALHEIM OLAFSON	12	BILLY OLAFSON & SHANDRA MALHEIM
AMANDA LEA PERKINS	2	DWIGHT & MARLENE PERKINS
CONNER SANDER	2	KELLY SANDER
LAURIE SATHER	2	PEGGY BULLIS
JEFFREY M WEBBER	4	JUANITA WEBBER

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.

You don't heal from the loss of a loved one because time passes;
You heal because of what you do with the time.

~ Carol Crandall

SIBLING PAGE

SURELY MISSED

Every night as I lay down to sleep,
I lay my head down as I begin to weep.
The thought of your strong embrace,
Brings such a sweet memory and smile to my face.
 The thought of you not being here,
 How painful it is to think of, my dear.
 I think of the past and fall into a trance,
 My mind begins to wonder and dance.
As the tears begin to fall,
I get up and look in the mirror in awe.
How could such a young life come to an end?
Now my life has begun to bend.
 I walk down the hall and pass your untouched room,
 I suddenly become distraught and gloom.
 I open the door and you're not inside,
 The agonizing pain makes me want to run and hide.
I realize that I can no longer pretend,
My life too will come to an end.

~ Stephanie Andrea Vasquez
In loving memory of my big brother
Daniel Andres Vasquez 1986-2004

IN LOVING MEMORY OF MY LITTLE SISTER

I remember when mom brought you home that bright summer day, a beautiful bundle of joy. I looked at you and smiled, when I saw your sparkling eyes and smile that would light the darkest room. I was so proud to call you my little sister.

As the years went by, you grew up so fast. One day, I'm looking down to talk to you and the next, I'm fighting neck pains from looking up at you. For being the youngest, you looked to be the oldest. It was fun going to the mall and have people ask us, if we were twins, or almost argue with us that you were older than I.

Your hair grew long and turned the color of fire - your eyes large and bright. Every day, in every way, the closeness, that we shared, grew. And my love grew even more.

Every day I heard you sing, your voice like none I had ever heard before. I'd swear that I was listening to an angel sing. I could listen to you all day. Your voice was made of gold and sent shivers of joy down my spine.

The day, that you left to join a choir in the sky, is the hardest day to forget. I try so hard to be strong, because I don't want you to see my tears. It is hard not to cry. I try to remember how strong you were and tell myself to be too. I know that where you are, you are with people who love you, as much as I.

I sometimes look back over the years and smile at all of the wonderful memories that I have. I see your face in my mind and feel the happiness and joy that I felt the day that mom brought you home. As long as I live, so too shall you. Nothing will ever change the fact that you are and always will be my little sister.

~ Dawn Porter, TCF/Central Iowa

MY SISTER, MY FRIEND

Within our hearts, You will always be.
Our minds will be filled, With sweet memories
Your spirit and love, Will never be gone
For each life you touched, Will carry them on

~ Catherine Hall, TCF/Hinsdale, IL

Get Well Soon Poem

I know our loss is very great
but I'm sure many people can
 relate
I know its hard to say good-bye
don't hold back your tears! It's ok
 to cry
Just hold my hand and we will
 stand up high
We will gather strength from one
 another
hugging and holding each other
we will find each other and
 together we will be
 once again, a family
By Alyssa Flora, age 13
In memory of her brother Bryson, age 9

Grief is OK

Grief is normal, grief is OK.
Grief is the way your body has to say that you love the
son, daughter, brother, sister, even a friend that died;
But sometimes it makes you cry.
~ Steve Horn, Age 10, TCF/Hinsdale, IL

PLEASE DON'T OVERLOOK ME!

I know my size is smaller
my hands are littler
my legs are short,
But my HEART
 can hurt just like yours.
I'm a CHILD
 You're an adult...
 Please don't overlook me!
I know my vocabulary isn't the greatest,
my attention span lacks longevity
my logic sometimes seems irrational,
But my MIND
 can question death just like yours can.
I'm a TEENAGER
 You're an adult...
 Please don't overlook me!
I know my needs seem less important
my feelings seem less controlled
my actions are hard to understand,
But my BODY
 needs a hug just like yours does.
I'm YOUNGER
 You're older...
 Please don't overlook me!
I know tears are hard to show
fears are difficult to face,
death means not coming back,
But my SOUL
 search for reassurance just like yours does.
I'm HURTING
 and you're hurting too...
 Please don't overlook me!

Author unknown

A Broken Heart Doesn't Show

"We are the walking wounded. Our lives are seemingly normal for those looking at us from the outside, but we know differently – for a broken heart doesn't show from the outside," said a participant in my grief support group. It is true that life continues following the death of a loved one. Groceries still need to be bought and clothes laundered. Jobs require our attendance and our attention. Little league games, dance recitals, graduations and weddings still take place. For those grieving, it takes enormous effort to participate in these rituals of life. The daily "got-to-dos" and the occasional "special event" all beckon to us at a time when we would rather just curl up until the world begins to make sense again.

So how can you function when your heart is not in it? How can you find a way to care if you eat a hot meal or just make a bowl of cold cereal for dinner?

The bigger question is – How can you be anything but involved with life? It calls to you each day. It urges you to get up and be a part of it. Not in spite of your grief, but because of it. The only way to journey through grief is to get up each day and see what the Universe brings your way.

We are social beings by nature, so staying home hibernating does not help us to feel better. Our emotional pain does not diminish if we become a recluse, nor can we sleep our pain away. When we are in the world doing our "normal" routine that has now become anything but normal, it allows us to reach out to others for help and understanding. It allows us to remember our loved one and how they were a part of this schedule and, how in some ways, still are.

Distraction can be a wonderful tool when mourning a loss. Staying busy can keep you from thinking too much about what has changed in your life and you may even catch yourself having a laugh or two with others. Used skillfully, distraction can bring you into the present moment where healing can take place.

So much of grief is looking back with regret or forward with fear. It is only when we are truly present that we can get a bit of relief from the overwhelming emotional pain.

Working, shopping, even ironing can help you regroup and realign. However, too much distraction that does not allow you the time and space to grieve is not healthy either. You must find a balance between time to get quiet and remember and time for busyness.

This may not be easy, but the world still calls to you. There are things to do and people to meet and somehow you need to find the inner strength to get out and be a part of it all. While others may not understand why you seem distant or sad, for your heart is unseen, being with others is still the best salve for your hidden wound. Remember the immortal words of Robert Frost, "In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life: it goes on." It does... and so will you.

~Nancy Weil, TCF/ Evergreen Park, IL
July - August 2012 South Suburban Chapter Newsletter

Circle

How do you bear it all?
The cry came from a mother
Whose son had died only weeks before.
We were in a circle, looking at her,
Looking around, looking away,
Tears in our hearts, in our eyes.
How do we bear it?
I don't know,
But the circle helps.

~ Eva Lager, TCF/Western Australia

MIND GAMES

Mind games it can happen anywhere, anytime. Driving along the highway, I think: suppose, just suppose I turn my head quickly, will you suddenly be sitting next to me? Will you be humming along to a song that was a particular favorite of yours? I swear I can hear you. I want so much to hear you singing loudly and a bit off-key again.

Or perhaps I'm in the supermarket and I see someone with long, blond hair - is it you? My heart thumps. I want so badly for it to be you. People glance at me strangely and I realize I am standing in the middle of the aisle weeping. Even the special foods you loved can reduce me to tears. I'm tempted to buy your favorites and prepare them for when you come home for supper.

At night when I climb into bed, I scrunch over toward the middle, this gives you room to sit next to me the way you would after coming home from a late date. My senses are alive with you. I can smell your special perfume and feel your long, slender fingers with the pearl ring Daddy gave you for graduation. I can hear your laughter. I will you to stay with me until I fall asleep.

Then there are the times when I consciously call out your name in the silence of the house. My mind knows there will be no response, but in my heart I hear you answer me and for that split moment you are there at the top of the stairs as surely as I am at the bottom. Barbara...Barbara...Barbara... Your name is a litany. I suppose that behavior could be considered quite strange. What does one make of it? Weeping in supermarkets, calling to one who is not here. Oh, but in that fraction of a second when one feels one's loved one close, that feeling, although bittersweet, soothes and comforts a splintered heart. Mind games... it can happen anywhere, anytime.

~ Bunny Placco, TCF/Greater Providence, RI

A Thousand Little Moments

A thousand little moments each and every day remind me of all the things I lost the day you went away.

A thousand little moments each and every day remind me of the pain I feel in my heart that never fades away.

A thousand little moments each and every day remind me of the piece of my soul that you took with you that day.

A thousand little moments each and every day remind me of the time we've lost and the games you'll never play.

A thousand little moments each and every day remind me of all the memories we never got to make and all the words I never got to say.

But a thousand little moments each and every day also remind me of all the things I've gained in the short amount of time you got to stay.

A thousand little moments each and every day remind me of the love I hold within my heart that will never fade away.

A thousand little moments each and every day remind me that the missing piece of my soul will be restored when we meet again on my final day.

A thousand little moments each and every day remind me to be thankful for the time we had and reassure me that you hear my words every time I pray.

And a thousand little moments each and every day remind me that I am one moment closer to the day that I'll once again see your smiling face.

~ Tracy Smith
In Memory of my niece Madison Lynne Smith

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: _____

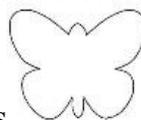
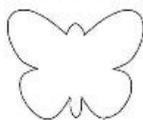
Child's Name: _____ Relationship: _____

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.

Daisies in Huge Handfuls

"Pick more daisies" was the most popular expression in our family. I picked it up from a magazine article about a 94 year old lady in Kentucky who, when asked what she would do differently if she had her life to live over, responded "I would take more chances; I would eat more ice cream and less beans; I would have more real troubles but fewer imaginary ones; I would climb more mountains; I would swim more rivers, and I would pick more daisies."

Our son, Mark, seized the daisy expression as the theme both for his life and his entrance exam essay at UCLA. It helped him live his brief 18 years; his essay helped him get an academic scholarship.

Daisies became our family flower. They marked our attitude about living. And they marked our son's memorial service. After it was over, his friends and fraternity brothers each threw a daisy into the ocean. Daisies still mark his grave every week. It has taken me almost two years to return to really thinking about daisies and what that quote by a 94-year-old lady really means. During that time I made a pretty big mess of things. I did the best I could, but I was often going through the motions outside, but empty inside.

To me, what this quote means is we really do have to pull ourselves together again and go on. Dr. Charles Heuser, a former pastor at our church, notes "going through the steps of grief is like walking through the valley and shadow of death. Keep walking, but don't camp there."

Our children would not want us to "camp there," but to go pick more daisies—to somehow live an even more meaningful life in their name. As I go on I am truly a different person. I don't suffer fools or superficiality very well any more. As one of my best friends said..."I get tired of beige people." Yet, I will drop everything to help another bereaved parent. I certainly have more "real troubles and fewer imaginary ones." But it's OK—I like myself better that way.

And I am returning to embrace life each day again. But this time I am following my heart instead of my expected career. I am taking more chances, climbing more unfamiliar mountains, and picking daisies in huge handfuls.

Mark would want it so.

~ Rich Edler, TCF/South Bay, CA
In Memory of my son Mark Edler

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
OF THE F-M AREA
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**The
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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
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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:

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