



The Compassionate Friends

Fargo/Moorhead Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

TCF's National Office
P.O. Box 3696
Oak Brook IL 60522
Toll-free (877) 969-0010
www.compassionatefriends.org

F-M Area Chapter
P.O. Box 10686
Fargo ND 58106
www.tcffargomoorhead.org
May 2018

Volume 35 Number 5

Chapter Leaders - Paul & Kara Bailey (701)491-0364

Newsletter Editor - Nancy Teeuwen (701)730-0805

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
May 10th
June 14th

Dates to Remember

Mom's meeting - 7 pm on May 24th @
Fry'n Pan
41st National Conference
July 27-29, 2018 St Louis, Missouri

LOVE GIFTS

Neil & Kathleen Prochnow in memory of their son, Reed Joel Prochnow
La Roy Norby in memory of her son, Mike Norby
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

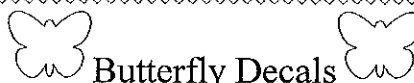
"...Grief is the price we pay for love. We did not lose our children. They died, taking with them our hopes and dreams for the future, but, never, never taking away their love. Though death comes, love will never go away. Hold it tight, the love our children gave us. Hold it tight through the storms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

OUR 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



Butterfly Decals

"Butterflies are the heaven sent kisses of an angel." ~ Author Unknown
Butterfly decals are available to help personalize our trailer. The trailer is used to carry items to and from our Walk to Remember and other chapter events. It has also given us some visibility in the Fargo/Moorhead community. Each butterfly decal holds the first and last name of one of our beloved children.

Butterflies are available in five colors (yellow, pink, red, blue and green). The cost is as follows: \$25 for 1 butterfly, \$50 for 2 butterflies, \$65 for 3 butterflies and \$80 for 4 butterflies. If you wish to purchase more than 4 butterflies please contact Paul and Kara Bailey at 701-491-0364.

Butterfly orders should include the child's first and last name (middle name is optional) and the color of the butterfly. Checks should be made payable to TCF of Fargo-Moorhead and the order mailed to PO Box 10686, Fargo, ND 58106.

You can see pictures of the trailer with butterflies on our website at
www.tcffargomoorhead.org/ourtrailer.html.

Our Mom's group generally meets on the 4th Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. at the Fry'n' Pan restaurant, 300 Main Avenue, Fargo. Our gatherings are very informal as we meet to talk about our children, books, recipes, jobs and whatever else comes up in conversation. We all have times when we need the listening heart of another mom or grandma. Please join us this month on Thursday May 24th. For more information please contact Sheryl at 701-540-3287 or sherylc13@msn.com.

Spring

I'm afraid of the spring
I'm afraid you might say
Of other children's voices
As they come out to play.
I'm afraid of the feelings
Deep down in my heart;
With all the pain and the hurt
I may fall apart.
Shall I shut all the windows
So I don't hear a thing?
Shall I shut my eyes
So I can't see the spring?
Shall I let winter live
The whole year through?
And feel safer inside
And a lot colder too?

Penny Leneham - TCF/Brookside, NJ

MISSING GRADUATE

Parents' happy faces all around me, with a glow from within, Pomp and Circumstance is playing, now the program will begin.

The graduates are lined up, they are coming down the aisle, some have serious faces, yet some have a little smile. I look down the aisle, hoping for your face to come into sight. This is your class, it was to be your graduation night.

All the graduates pass by, but none of them are you. A tug of my heart tells me, you are not here - your death is true.

God called you home...I wanted you here in such a bad way. Looking into your classmates' faces, do they recall you, missing this day?

Memories, sweet memories, now fill my mind and heart. There will be no golden tassel, this day for my Sweetheart. The class is Oh! So happy, this isn't the time to be blue, now I must go shake a hand, and get a hug or two.

~ Emma Valenteen, TCF/Valley Forge

Strangers & Friends

Bereaved parents gather monthly and tell their stories again and again. The pain is evident on their faces yet strength comes deep from within. To simply attend these meetings is courageous. We enter as strangers, and we depart as friends. I've attended our group meetings for over four years. I never had the honor of meeting these children in life, yet I know them intimately—how each lived, and how each died.

Some of us were blessed to have our children several years, and others only a few. Some children lived just a few months, days or minutes—and some never took a breath. Still, our pain and emptiness is universal.

Our grief is universally unique. As individuals our journeys lead us in many directions, yet once a month we come together, to tell our stories again and again. These strangers, these people I call friends.

~ Kathy A, TCF/Fort Collins, CO



The Diamond

Once upon a time there was a king who ruled a small kingdom. It wasn't great, and it wasn't really known for any of its resources or people. But the king did have a diamond, a great perfect diamond that had been in his family for generations. He kept it on display for all to see and appreciate. People came from all over the country to admire it and gaze at it.

Then one day a soldier came to the king with the news that, although no one had touched the diamond, for it was guarded day and night, the diamond was cracked. The king ran to see, and sure enough, there was a crack right through the middle of the diamond!

Immediately the king summoned all the jewelers of the land and had them look at the diamond. One after another they examined the diamond and gave the bad news to the king; the diamond was irredeemably flawed. The king was crushed...So were the people. Somehow they felt they had lost everything.

Then, out of nowhere, came an old man who claimed to be a jeweler. He asked to see the diamond. After examining it, he looked up and confidently told the king, "I can fix it. In fact, I can make it better than it was before!" The king was shocked and a bit leery. The old man said, "Give me the jewel, and in a week I'll bring it back fixed."

Now the king was not about to let the stone out of his sight, even if it was ruined, so he gave the old man a room, all the tools and the food and drink he needed and he waited. The whole kingdom waited. It was a long week. At the end of the week the old man appeared with the stone in his hand and gave it to the king. The king couldn't believe his eyes. It was magnificent!! The old man had fixed it, and he had made it even better than it had been before!!!

He had used the crack that ran through the middle of the stone as a stem and carved an intricate, full-blown rose, leaves, and thorns into the diamond. It was exquisite. The king was overjoyed and offered the man half of his kingdom. But the old man refused in front of everyone, saying, "All I did was to take something flawed and cracked at its heart...and turn it into something beautiful. You see,...it is in the crack that the light gets in."

And so it is that we see that often what appears to be worthless, useless, scarred and cracked holds value beyond words. Even in our darkest and weakest moment, there is a way to let the light in.

This ritual of remembering today can be a way of transforming our hurt and sorrow into something beautiful and worthwhile. By remembering we say farewell to the past and make peace with what life brings us today.

Author Unknown

MEMORIAL DAY

For each grave where a soldier lies at his rest;
For each prayer that is said today out of love;
For each sigh of remembering someone who died;
Let us also give thought to the mothers and fathers, the brothers
and sisters,
the friends and the lovers,
whom death left behind.
~ Sascha Wagner

After the First Year, Thoughts For the Bereaved

The first year of bereavement brings raw pain, disbelief, reality, and many other deep emotions. Emotions many of us have never experienced or at least not to the same depth. The time period after the first year is usually not quite as pain filled as all the firsts were. Although we may be a little better, often we are not nearly as healed as we would like. It helps to understand this next period and to learn some skills for coping. It is most helpful if we lower our expectations of ourselves and work on our grief. Remember grief is different for everyone. It is like fingerprints or snowflakes, no two are alike. Everyone grieves differently so don't compare yourself to others or place yourself on a timetable. Some of the following suggestions/observations may help you:

1. Beware of becoming critical of ourselves, either consciously or unconsciously, due to unrealistic expectations.
2. A different level of reality may hit us. We usually no longer deny the death, but now face the reality and its long run implications.
3. If the death was unexpected, some say that the second year is even more difficult.
4. It may be the time to struggle with a new life pattern. We may have handled grief by over-activity or becoming a workaholic, etc. If our previous style of grieving has not been helpful we must be willing to try new approaches such as: becoming more active in a support group, finding telephone friends, reading about grief, developing coping skills, becoming determined not to become stuck in our grief.
5. It is so important to find friends with whom we may talk. This is the one significant factor that prevents people from sliding into deep depression.
6. We should carefully consider the phases of grief. Subconsciously one or more phases may be giving us trouble such as anger/guilt. If so, recognize the phase and work on it. Don't push it down or ignore it.
7. Other events in your life may also be grief situations (trouble with spouse, children, work, other family members, or friends.) Realize this happens to many grieving people and it does complicate your grief.
8. You may or may not cry as often but when you do, realize it is therapeutic. Don't fight the tears. As the author Jean G. Jones says, "Cry when you have to - laugh when you can."
9. Physical symptoms may become more severe (stomach disorders, headaches, sleeplessness, etc.) Have a checkup.
10. Insufficient sleep plagues many bereaved. It may be helpful to give up all caffeine (colas, coffee, tea, Anacin, etc.) Beware of alcohol, which is a depressant. Some findings indicate that alcohol causes insomnia. Physical exercise helps to relax and tire one. Often bereaved awaken very early or during the middle of the night. Sometimes it helps to go to bed earlier.
11. Check frequently that you have balance in your life - rest, read, recreation (including exercise), and work.
12. Depression may enter your life again or for the first time. Coping with the depression is very difficult. Again we need determination, understanding friends, and possibly the help of a professional counselor if our depression is deep and long.
13. Our grief may seem "out of control." We may feel as if "we are going crazy." This is common in bereaved people. It is important to realize grief work takes time. Much more time than we think it should. Be patient with yourself.
14. Be a "fighter" against giving up and becoming stuck in grief as 15% do. A determination to work through grief may be one of the common denominators of those who recover.
15. We had no choice when our loved one died, but we do have a choice to get better. It may be the hardest work we will ever perform.

~ Jean G. Jones, TCF/Orange Coast, CA

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

Resilience

In her book, *Resilience*, Elizabeth Edwards contemplated her life and her impending death. She lost her oldest son, Wade when he was 16. She once said she was not so afraid of death since Wade's death. I understand her words. I'm not so afraid of death either, some days I long for death, so I can see my Wyatt. Death is my passage to being with Wyatt again, I long to see him; to sit and talk with him; to watch him grow; to be his mom; to see his future. If death takes me to him then I am not afraid of death.

Resilience comes in how I am dealing with Wyatt's death. Resilience is knowing that I can get up each morning even though when I look in his room I know I will not see him. Resilience is smiling at other's happiness even when my heart is broken. Resilience is sharing company with friends when I wish to cover my head and hide in darkness. Resilience is taking the time to speak and be cordial when really I want to scream and show my anguish. Resilience is knowing my heart will never heal and still choosing to live.

One of the things Elizabeth Edwards said was we have to be resilient, we must make the best out of our situation, make the best of what this world gives us.

That is resilience. I will be resilient.

~ Marian W. Lambeth, TCF Tallahassee, FL
In memory of my son, Wyatt Lambeth

OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED BIRTHDAYS

CHILD		PARENTS
LUCAS ALLMENDINGER.....	37	DEAN & JO ALLMENDINGER
JONI ELLIOTT.....	50	SONNY ELLIOTT (Sibling)
DANNY LEE FOWLER.....	49	CAROL & LIONEL KAIM
DAVID MARK KLEINGARTNER.....	54	NORBERT & LUELLA KLEINGARTNER
MICHAEL LEALLEN KRAIG.....	22	JILL KRAIG & BRYAN MOFFET
CARMEN LALUM.....	38	RUSSELL & SHARON LALUM
ERIC LARSON.....	31	DALE & MARILYN LARSON (Grandparents)
JOSEPH CHRIS LARSON.....	61	DALE & MARILYN LARSON
PAUL MORLOCK.....	54	DELLA MORLOCK
ERIC JOHN SCHAFER.....	39	BILL & LOIS SCHAFER
DUSTIN CHARLES WROLSTAD.....	31	KIMBERLY LAVERDURE

ANNIVERSARIES

CHILD		PARENTS
KONNIE JEAN CHAFFEE.....	6	MARK & JEAN CHAFFEE
JONI ELLIOTT.....	1	SONNY ELLIOTT (Sibling)
COLE HALLAND.....	8	STEVEN & JOAN HALLAND
JARED SCOTT HELGESON.....	8	LYLE & TAMMY HELGESON
DAVID KUEHL.....	11	KEITH KUEHL
REED JOEL PROCHNOW.....	19	NEIL & KATHLEEN PROCHNOW
JACOB RIEDMAN.....	4	KASEY & JON SKALICKY
DYLAN ROMAINE.....	6	AARON & TRICIA ROMAINE
ANDREW SADEK.....	4	JOHN & TAMMY SADEK
CRAIG A SCHEER.....	6	WILLIAM & ELAINE SCHEER
LOLA ELISE SINCLAIR.....	3	ANDREA & TJADEN SINCLAIR
JUSTIN DANIEL TANGEN.....	1	TODD & LEAH TANGEN
MATTHEW AARON THIBEDEAU.....	9	MARY & GALEN SCHROEDER
HEATHER WREN.....	7	DEB WAYMAN
DUSTIN CHARLES WROLSTAD.....	1	KIMBERLY LAVERDURE

Please check out our Chapter website's page for 'Our Beloved Children'
(www.tcfargomoorhead.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

Do It Your Way

It is not possible to lose someone as vital as one's child and not have the pain of deep grief. You will find a great many non-bereaved people who will encourage you to play the old game of, "If you'll pretend you're okay and it's not really so bad, we'll let you come play with us. But if you're going to cry and talk about your dead child, then you can't play."

This is one time in your life you don't have to meet anybody else's standards. There is nothing more unique about you than the way you express your grief -- and you have the right however it is manifested. A great deal of how you go about it is determined by how you have handled previous losses.

So if someone tries to influence you to play the old game by rewarding you with attention because "you're doing so well," tell them you're not doing well. Tell them your child has died and you're hurting. Let them know it doesn't help you for them to pretend everything is okay. Do whatever it is you need to do to survive this trauma and don't worry about whether it pleases or displeases other people ...DO IT YOUR WAY!

~Mary Cleckly, TCF/Atlanta, GA

SIBLING PAGE

LAST MOMENTS

Last moments...
Snatches of conversation
That echo across all decades...
Priceless words
Indelibly etched on the heart.
Sometimes
Thoughts were never spoken,
But unexpected sentiment-
A quick embrace,
A silly smirk,
Or joyous laughter-
Reaches through the pain
And warms the heart.
We came too soon to understand
The folly
Of harsh words
Or neglected touch,
For who can know which taken-for-granted event
Will become
A last moment.

~ Diane N. Fields, TCF/Westmoreland County, PA

Alone in the
Night sky,
God bless that child,
Every one loved him, I will
Love you too, Nathan, forever.

In memory of my brother,
Nathan Moyer Schewe

~ Written by Madeline Schewe, age 8

What can you do?

What do you do when someone dies?
Do you celebrate or do you cry?
Do you cry because you won't see them again?
Or do you celebrate knowing that they are in heaven?
What can you do, where can you go?
Somewhere, anywhere to just be alone!
It's ok to cry, it's ok to feel sad,
It's even ok to be a little mad.
Go to someone you trust or someone you love.
Cry with them, feel sad with them,
Yet feel good that the person is now
Watching over you from above.
How do I know this you're probably wondering why?
It happened to me; I wish I could've said good-bye.

~ Michael Oetken

- brother of Lisa Renae Oetken

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

For My Baby Brother

You came and went without a word.
But I'll miss your loving cry.
We barely got acquainted,
And then it was goodbye.
There was so much more
You should have done.
Your innocent eyes had barely opened,
Your life had just begun.
You never saw a sunset,
Or a star in the night sky.
You never saw a sunrise,
Or a rainbow flying high.
You never drew a picture,
Or sang a nursery rhyme.
You never took those first few steps,
You should have had more time.
You never hit a baseball
To score the winning run.
You never even had the chance
To miss the things you've never done.
Although you left so many things
Undone, unseen, and unsaid,
Their numbers never shall come close
To the tears that I have shed.
You came and went without a word.

T.C., Miami, FL

From Bereaved Parents USA

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

Where Did My Sunshine Go

"In My Daughter's Eyes" is our song
Our song, for you and me
For it tells how much of a love we have
And is there for all to see

It speaks of how I see you
And how I hope that you see me
And a love that only we two shared
A love for all of eternity

We danced to this song together
At your wedding you and I
And as happy as I should have been
I couldn't help but cry

I was sad that you were all grown up
And that you would move away
But I never thought I would have lost you
On a dark September day

My sunshine was taken in September
It seems so long ago
A day I will always remember
A day that hurt me so

We did so much together
You were my true best friend
You listened, loved and comforted me
Until the very end

I am so lost without you Jessie
People truly have no clue
Each day that I am without you
My heart is a deeper blue

Someday my heart will stop beating
And you will be standing beside me with a smile
And you will reach out your beautiful arms
And hold me for a while

Then, with your gentle hands
You will lead me to the light
Where Jesus will smile upon us
And we will never leave each other's sight

~ Laurie Card

In Memory of my beloved daughter Jessie

Mothers and Fathers

A mother's love for children is a very special thing. Filled with all the many days that motherhood can bring. Days when children misbehave and try your patience so. Days when they are sweet and kind and let their loving feelings show. A father's love for children is very strong and pure. There's no problem that a child may have which a father cannot cure.

A parent's love for children is a never-ending thing. It lasts from day to day and year to year, through summer, winter, fall, and spring. That special love continues still when someone's child has died. For the feelings that a parent has is impossible to hide.

~ Jean Hotopp, TCF/Fox Valley, IL

On the Death of a Child

When a child dies, a light goes out in the world, never to be replaced. We are overcome by pain and heartbreak which is beyond measurement, and completely unable to comprehend any meaning behind such a tragedy. The loss of such a young life, the finality of it, can hardly be fathomed. We search in vain for an answer to why a life so full of promise and unfulfilled potential has been torn away so prematurely.

Our grief and anguish is unrelenting and unyielding in its intensity. Although we know that death can come quickly, with no warning to any living creature, never in our wildest dreams did any of us imagine that one of our children should be taken—a reversal of the natural order.

At first it seems as if our lives, our souls, the very innermost substance of our being have been shattered, never to be resurrected again. Our tears, our anguish, conceal any legacy that remains of the child's existence. It is as if we are enveloped in a cloud of darkness and deep despair. The reality of the death is as unforgiving as the sky, the sea, the earth and all eternity.

The inevitability of birth, life and death blankets us with a feeling of futility about the uselessness of it all. It is hard to remember that during the child's short and transitory time on earth, he or she contributed a unique essence of life, imprinting an image on all those who were touched. Therein lies the child's legacy—the only bridge connecting the chasm between the living and the dead. For each of us the legacies left by our children differ in detail, yet at the same time are similar with respect to the precious memories, which are all that remain to provide comfort.

At first we are inconsolable, but gradually the reaching out of heart and hand by those who understand and can respond to such a loss touches the soul, helps soothe the unbearable pain and intense suffering. Only a parent who has lost a child can give such a gift to another bereaved parent.

As in any event, there is a lesson to be learned. An opportunity emerges from the sorrow—an opportunity to sort out trivia, old resentments, to perceive with clear vision that in our lives which is truly important. The tragedy we have experienced somehow enables us to establish new and more meaningful priorities, to love and to value those who are close with a renewed sense of appreciation and awareness. If any meaning is ever again to exist in our lives, it will develop as a result of newly found sensitivity, love and compassion for others.

~ Chris Moon, TCF/ Rio Linda, CO

OUR PRECIOUS CHILDREN

There's a special group of children
That society needs to be aware.
That are still so very important
Even though they are not here.
The only thing that isn't here
Are their bodies as we know them.
We're left with memories and
filled with love we want to show them.
So even though we can't reach out
and kiss their beautiful face,
their world must know in our
hearts they always have a place.
The tender tears, the memories we
live with every day.
Our precious children living in
our hearts really haven't gone away.

~ Tony Hamilton, TCF/McMinnville, OR

We must have your written permission on file to use your child's name in the newsletter. Permission may be withdrawn at any time by written request. This information is used to maintain our Chapter Database. It is confidential and is only utilized for Chapter activities such as the newsletter.

Your Name: _____

Child's Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Birth Date: _____ Death Date: _____

Date: _____

(Signature)

Please return to: The Compassionate Friends of F-M Area, P.O. Box 10686, Fargo ND 58106
(Please note that if you have already submitted a permission slip, you do not need to submit another one)

The Death Anniversary

On June 1, 2007, my 82-year old aunt unexpectedly and suddenly died. She and I had always talked frequently, even though she lived in Washington and I live in Texas. The last time I saw her was at my Dad's funeral in 2000. But we kept in touch, and shared a mutual interest in the family genealogy. Many nights I would call her and we would talk for hours about the death of my son, Todd. She would always reassure me that I was the best mother a child could have. Her opinion meant much to me as she raised three sons who became very responsible, loving adults. Her life was well lived, her advice always sound.

In the spring of 2006, my aunt lost her husband of 60 years. Her three sons helped her for a while then she suggested that they get on with their lives. Moms are like that. But she and I talked about her loss, my loss and the differences between the two.

When the first anniversary of my uncle's death was approaching, I sent her a card. I wanted her to know that I remembered this sad anniversary date. I wrote about her husband, their relationship, how much I admired them, and that I was keeping her in my thoughts and prayers on this sad day.

She e-mailed me right after she received the card. She thanked me over and over for the card and reiterated her absolute certainty that I was a good mother for Todd. Her sons had called to talk with her. However, they didn't bring up the anniversary, even though it was obvious that they were thinking about it. "Men are like that", she told me. Her sisters called and talked to her about her husband, the anniversary and more. My dad's sisters are special people. I'd like to think that I have learned from them. We must talk about our feelings; death cannot be ignored. If one of us breaks down and cries, the "girls" are there with an understanding that transcends distance. They listen; they talk about the loss, the life, and the sadness. They encourage us to take our loved one with us. That's what they did when they lost children, parents and their husbands to death.

Bereaved parents understand the importance of death anniversaries to the family, especially to each parent. When we have lost a child, that date takes on a significance that cannot be measured. That is a date that we will never forget. A month before the date, bereaved parents begin anticipating the anniversary date. Anxiety sets in. Depression can sweep over us. We count days until the date finally arrives. Then we go with it. We let the day take us where it will. We receive cards from our Compassionate Friends. We receive some telephone calls. Sometimes our families call or send a card. Sometimes friends come over and talk. Sometimes we hear from very few people and find that to be just fine. This is a day for us, the parents who have endured the worst, to reflect, to cry, to remember, to honor our child.

Each month I read the names and death anniversary dates of the children of our Compassionate Friends. Each month I sigh, shed tears for the upcoming pain and then begin to edit the newsletter. Yet each month I feel as if, somehow, we are each lightening the burden of the others. Our presence, our concern, our acceptance of each grief journey....no matter how that road twists and winds, are meant to give each parent the light of hope.

We don't walk this road alone. We are connected to each other with an invisible golden thread that touches each heart. This is our journey.

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

GRANDPARENTS' REMEMBRANCE

We are the grieving grandparents, the shepherds of our children and grandchildren's lives. Our grief is two-fold and at times we feel powerless to help. We seek to comfort our children in the depths of their grief and yet we need the time and space to face our own broken hearts. We have been robbed of the special tender touch a grandparent shares with a grandchild, and we have lost a symbol of our immortality. As we walk by our child's side, we both give and draw strength. We reach into their hearts to comfort them, and when they reach out to us in their distress, we begin the journey to heal together. We continue to be their guardians. We allow traditions to change to accommodate their loss. We support the new ones, which symbolize the small steps on their journey. It is in their healing that our hearts find comfort.

~ Susan Mackey, TCF/Rutland VT

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

NON-PROFIT
 U.S. POSTAGE PAID
 PERMIT #1625
 FARGO, ND

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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

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

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

FARGO-MOORHEAD COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS BOARD

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN THE BOARD AT ANY TIME!

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

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

TELEPHONE FRIENDS

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

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

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

Love gift given in Memory/Honor of _____
 Name _____
 Address _____
 Relationship _____ Born _____ Died _____

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