



# 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

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic we are going to cancel our May meeting but are planning a Zoom or Skype meeting. Please feel free to call Kara or Sheryl. Check our website or Facebook for further information.  
June 11th

#### Meeting Subject:

June - Balloon Release, everyone is welcome.

Weather cancellations will be posted on WDAY, KVLV, KFGO and the Fargo Forum online at [www.inforum.com!](http://www.inforum.com!)

#### Dates to Remember

Mom's meeting - 7 pm on May 28th @ Denny's  
TCF National Conference July 24-26, 2020 in Atlanta, GA  
TCF FM Chapter's 14th Annual Walk to Remember - July 25, 2020

#### LOVE GIFTS

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

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.

#### You Know You're Making Progress When—

- You can remember your child with a smile--
- You realize the painful comments others make are made in ignorance---
- You can reach out to help someone else--
- You stop dreading holidays--
- You can sit through a church service without crying
- You can concentrate on something besides your child--
- You can find something to thank God for--
- You can be alone in your house without it bothering you--
- You can talk about what happened to your child without falling apart--
- You no longer feel you have to go to the cemetery every day or every week--
- You can tolerate the sound of a baby crying--
- You don't have to turn off the radio when his or her favorite music comes on--
- You can find something to laugh about--
- You can drive by the hospital or that intersection without screaming--
- You no longer feel exhausted all the time--
- You can appreciate a sunset, the smell of newly-mowed grass, the pattern on a butterfly's wings--

~ Judy Osgood, TCF, Carmel/Indianapolis, IN

#### LOVE

“Some say you're too painful to remember. I say you're too precious to forget.”

Our Mom's group generally meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm at the Denny's restaurant, 4437 13th Ave SW, Fargo. Our gatherings are very informal as we meet to talk about our children, books, recipes, jobs and whatever else comes up in conversation. We all have times when we need the listening heart of another mom or grandma. Please join us this month on Thursday May 28th. For more information please contact Sheryl at 701-540-3287 or [sherylc13@msn.com](mailto:sherylc13@msn.com).

## WRITING...ONE WAY TOWARD HEALING

By Donald Hackett - TCF, Hingham, MA

*What I write mirrors the pathways of my thoughts. It brings some order out of confusion. More than this, each line is a milepost. When all within is chaos, I read the path to re-discover where I have journeyed, hoping to avoid encountering again those hurts already confronted. (Written five months after Olin's death).*

Sadly, for most of us, the time of grieving the loss of our children seems like forever, often encompassing years. It does not matter how our child has died. It is only the loss that is significant. We claim our children in both their living and dying. We own life and death in our own beings, living on as often-reluctant survivors.

Life is no longer the same. For a long while, we seem to move in slow motion, wrapped in a merciful cushion of shocked dullness, cocooning the mind and all sensibilities.

Most of us, when that time is over, begin to seek ways to help ourselves. We frequently feel lost and even the desire to live is muted. Yet life pressures us to proceed with its business, and family and friends usually find it impossible to help us find our way. We are on a lonely journey, with few companions or none, and we need to find the means to resolve some measure of our unremitting pain.

I know. My son and only child, Olin, died in 1982. I have felt the utter emptiness of life and walked in our own shadowed valley. What is offered here did not spare me the darkness. Nothing can do that. But I have found this to be one way to help govern what is happening inside at a time when we have been reminded that we have no real control over the most important elements in our lives.

It would probably be best if we all had at least one friend to help us bear our hurt and grief over a period of several years. But friends are few and we must recognize that, for them, life has suffered only a partial interruption.

If we are able, we may see in ourselves the receptive friend we need, not to the exclusion of others, but in all the empty times we face. Through writing we can move feelings outside ourselves, onto paper, and in reading the work back to ourselves become the listener. We gain a perspective entirely apart from the echo chamber of our minds.

As long as one can write the word, 'I love you', externalizing feelings in this manner is possible. It becomes almost a problem solving method:

1. This feeling or thought is haunting my thinking.
2. In any words, series of sentences or phrases, record it.
3. Disregard spelling, grammar and structure.
4. Expand upon it if able. In the early months I could not do this. Just writing it down was enough.
5. Read it back out loud.
6. Change it if it doesn't sound right. It may not adequately express the feeling or the emotional content.
7. Read it aloud again to be certain that what is felt can be heard.
8. Even if it seems awkward or even a little absurd at first, continue and practice the method. It takes a while to perfect it, to become comfortable with it.
9. Share the writings or simply keep them. Do not throw the work away. At a future time this phase of grief may be confronted again. Knowing how it was handled before can help in working it out anew.

Often we are unable to find a safe place to vent our horror and anguish, thus trapping it inside to fester and infect what little seems to be left of us. But we can write at almost any time, and any excuse will provide at least a few minutes of privacy (even using the bathroom if necessary) to read it aloud.

In this communication of self to self through a concrete medium we have ourselves created, we develop an exchange that has the potential for profound results. It has certainly been this way for me, to such an extent that, from time to time, I have actually recorded feelings about writing itself.

Though these occasions were rare, I offer two in the paragraphs that follow, the first written five months after Olin's death and the second nine months afterward. I hope they will indicate how valuable it has been to me to be both talker and listener.

*The compulsion to write is the visible desire of the mind to evaluate itself. From the page the mind can explore its own shallows and shoals, its depth and darkness. In writing the mind seeks its perspective...at once the tablet whereby thoughts may become clay and be re-written.*

\*\*\*\*\*



*It has been five days since last I wrote and so eagerly does my hand and mind reach to paper, I now realize that all other methods of working this anguish through are secondary to the discipline of framing my thoughts, fears, guilts and loss in the structure of written expression. It is right for me and even as I record these words I sense a lessening of tension, rigidity and stress.*

*This act is almost as much process as it is expression. I am forced to categorize, concentrate and channel the chaos of my thoughts, thus increasing self-control. My inner atmosphere is altered and, for the time of writing, I am again empowered in this world where all my abilities to control have been shattered.*

*Today I need to say clearly that I have felt confined for five days. I have craved just a little freedom from the cell of my sorrow. Armed with pencil or pen I am capable of picking my prison's lock. Standing at last outside, the silent rush of words throws back my inner adversaries for but awhile, yet long enough to win another skirmish in this complex struggle to find hope and renewal on the battlefield that is now my life.*

*Where tongue has failed me, where tears leave me still unclean where mental wrestling leaves me spent and vanquished, the ability to write provides my release.*

Thus, in grieving, this manner of externalizing grief has been absolutely essential. I could not deal with the confusion inside and had to find some way in which to work it out. On paper I could scream, cry, curse and flail against fate in any way I chose. It is vital to find a way to do this if only to seek enough sanity to live from day to day.

I began writing two days after Olin died, providing the eulogy for someone else to read. I waited a month before writing again. Since then I have written literally volumes of poems, short statements, letters to Olin, essays and many other things not even worthy of a name. Only a small portion of all this writing has ever been shared, because only this amount had any element of quality.

There is no magic in writing or in any other method. Nothing that we can write will alter the reality that our children are dead. In life as we know it, we will not hold or behold them again. Death is irrefutable, final and forever to all of our physical senses.

We will never think or live again with the same element of fullness. But we are alive and though living is harder, there can and should remain purpose. Our lives can carry the blessing of our child's love, its beauty enhancing our living, or we can let our personal diminishment be the only memorial we offer. The choice is our own.

Writing has provided me a vehicle to perceive the clarity. Through what I write, I can see where and what I am, the distance I have come and the direction I need to follow. I will continue to write. The road to recovery is long and there will always be moments of sadness. In recording these along with the beauties of joys remembered, I provide for myself a journal that speaks the story of my love for Olin.

It is my hope, that in sharing this method and a few samples of my own efforts, another tool will be available to help others meet life once more. In spite of its unspeakable difficulty, life can flow anew for all of us if we will resolve to try.

We have labored under a heavy burden just to survive. We must ultimately work as hard to live. If the situations had been reversed, as we had died, we would expect our children to diligently strive for life and renewal. Surely we cannot ask less from ourselves.



The moment a child is born, the mother is also born. She never existed before. The woman existed, but the mother, never. A mother is something absolutely new.

-Rajneesh

## THE TRUE MEANING OF MOTHER'S DAY

Mother's Day comes once a year.  
That surely is a shame.  
For we should recognize her all year  
and honor her with fame.  
She's the one who stands so proud.  
Sharing the love she gives.  
Taking no credit for all that she does.  
It's for her children she lives.  
Now, we see persons all around us.  
Moms who have lost their own.  
But their Mom's love shines through;  
Keeping them from being alone.  
We also see Moms who have lost a child;  
Oh what a pain it must be for those.  
They are going to need a hug from you ...  
Oh share one as your love flows.  
Yes, this day is a special recognition for Moms.  
Make sure to leave no one out.  
For the love, honor and support she gives ...  
Oh, that is what Mother's Day is all about.  
~ Kaye Des'Ormeaux, Copyright 2003  
Dedicated to all Moms and Mums On Mother's Day

## 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

## THE SUN SHINES

Our friend Beth  
Was so loving and caring  
She shared sunshine  
To all she knew.

The Mountains of Tucson  
Smiled on Beth  
And the Sun will  
Shine on you.

And when Beth heard  
The Angels singing  
Her favorite song,  
She knew it was time.

Don't cry for me  
For I'm at peace.  
I'm here hugging  
Brian, my brother,  
I'm happy to meet.

You will never be alone.  
For all my love, smiles  
And laughter will always  
Be in your heart,  
As the Sun Shines on.  
~ Peggy Nielsen, Panama City, FL

## FROM A GRANDMOTHER'S VIEWPOINT

Death was not something I thought about when my grandchildren were born. Thirteen months after our fifth grandchild came into this world, I was standing in the snow holding my daughter's arm and looking down at a tiny white box containing him.

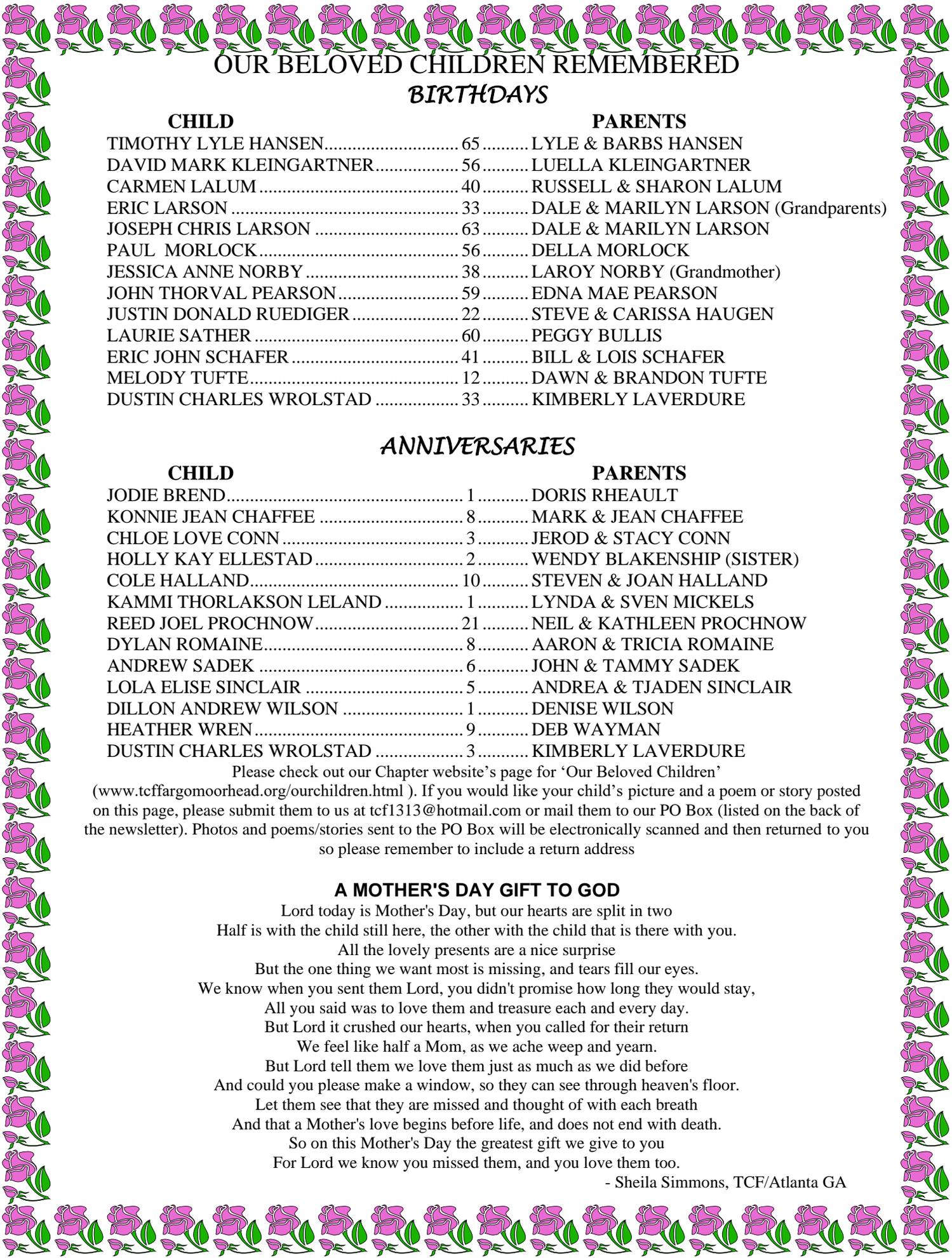
The grief came in waves, sometimes bearable ... sometimes not. As well as dealing with the loss and watching my daughter, her husband, and two sons grieve, I felt helpless to ease their pain. When you lose a grandchild, you also lose the people your daughter and her family were. They no longer look at life the same - they change. Grief does that - it changes the entire family and all those the family touches.

Unless one has lost a child or grandchild, you cannot even imagine what life is like in this grieving process. It has been six years since Kyle died. We are still healing, yet have come a long way. We are stronger and closer for having come thus far. **WE WILL NEVER FORGET THIS CHILD!**

~ Kyle's Grandmother, TCF/Central CT

"As the rose-tree is composed of the sweetest flowers and the sharpest thorns, as the heavens are sometimes overcast ~ alternately tempestuous and serene ~ so is the life of man intermingled with hopes and fears, with joys and sorrows, with pleasure and pain."

~ Edmond Burke



# OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED

## BIRTHDAYS

CHILD		PARENTS
TIMOTHY LYLE HANSEN.....	65 .....	LYLE & BARBS HANSEN
DAVID MARK KLEINGARTNER.....	56 .....	LUELLA KLEINGARTNER
CARMEN LALUM.....	40.....	RUSSELL & SHARON LALUM
ERIC LARSON .....	33.....	DALE & MARILYN LARSON (Grandparents)
JOSEPH CHRIS LARSON .....	63.....	DALE & MARILYN LARSON
PAUL MORLOCK.....	56.....	DELLA MORLOCK
JESSICA ANNE NORBY .....	38.....	LAROY NORBY (Grandmother)
JOHN THORVAL PEARSON.....	59.....	EDNA MAE PEARSON
JUSTIN DONALD RUEDIGER .....	22.....	STEVE & CARISSA HAUGEN
LAURIE SATHER .....	60.....	PEGGY BULLIS
ERIC JOHN SCHAFER.....	41.....	BILL & LOIS SCHAFER
MELODY TUFTE.....	12.....	DAWN & BRANDON TUFTE
DUSTIN CHARLES WROLSTAD .....	33.....	KIMBERLY LAVERDURE

## ANNIVERSARIES

CHILD		PARENTS
JODIE BREND.....	1 .....	DORIS RHEAULT
KONNIE JEAN CHAFFEE .....	8.....	MARK & JEAN CHAFFEE
CHLOE LOVE CONN .....	3.....	JEROD & STACY CONN
HOLLY KAY ELLESTAD.....	2.....	WENDY BLAKENSHIP (SISTER)
COLE HALLAND.....	10.....	STEVEN & JOAN HALLAND
KAMMI THORLAKSON LELAND .....	1 .....	LYNDA & SVEN MICKELS
REED JOEL PROCHNOW.....	21.....	NEIL & KATHLEEN PROCHNOW
DYLAN ROMAINE.....	8.....	AARON & TRICIA ROMAINE
ANDREW SADEK .....	6.....	JOHN & TAMMY SADEK
LOLA ELISE SINCLAIR .....	5.....	ANDREA & TJADEN SINCLAIR
DILLON ANDREW WILSON .....	1 .....	DENISE WILSON
HEATHER WREN.....	9.....	DEB WAYMAN
DUSTIN CHARLES WROLSTAD .....	3.....	KIMBERLY LAVERDURE

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

### A MOTHER'S DAY GIFT TO GOD

Lord today is Mother's Day, but our hearts are split in two  
Half is with the child still here, the other with the child that is there with you.  
All the lovely presents are a nice surprise  
But the one thing we want most is missing, and tears fill our eyes.  
We know when you sent them Lord, you didn't promise how long they would stay,  
All you said was to love them and treasure each and every day.  
But Lord it crushed our hearts, when you called for their return  
We feel like half a Mom, as we ache weep and yearn.  
But Lord tell them we love them just as much as we did before  
And could you please make a window, so they can see through heaven's floor.  
Let them see that they are missed and thought of with each breath  
And that a Mother's love begins before life, and does not end with death.  
So on this Mother's Day the greatest gift we give to you  
For Lord we know you missed them, and you love them too.

- Sheila Simmons, TCF/Atlanta GA

# SIBLING PAGE

## A Tribute to my Sister Lori Lee Smith I Saw You

I saw you today in the morning dew  
As brilliant as a sea of shimmering diamonds  
I shared the most amazing sunrise with you today  
A million shades of red so random in their perfection  
I heard you today in the laugh of my children  
An enchanting melody a thousand angels strong  
I walked with you today and we talked about everything  
... and nothing all at once  
I saw you today in the changing of the leaves  
The colors of your life, the close of one season  
And the ushering in of another  
I sat beside a stream with you today  
The peaceful flow, steady and constant  
I saw you today ... and you were perfect  
And rest assured ... I shall see you again  
~ Avery Smith, TCF/Ada Area Chapter

## WHEN A SIBLING DIES

The death of a child is a family crisis no less for the siblings than for the parents. Surviving siblings may feel abandoned because grieving parents no longer have the emotional energy to care for them. They may feel unloved as they experience family friends putting the deceased child on a pedestal. They may feel incredibly guilty, remembering every bout of sibling rivalry, every unkind word, and every slammed door. They may feel unworthy to be alive, longing for answers to explain why their brother or sister died and they didn't. And they may, therefore, seek conscious or unconscious ways to self-destruct: running away from home, using alcohol and other drugs, taking on characteristics of the dead siblings and thus diminishing their own image.

Following are suggestions children have shared about how parents can help them when a brother or sister has died:

1. Allow siblings to participate fully in funeral plans and memorial activities. Let them choose whether or not they want to see their sibling at the funeral home. Let them choose some of the music, write and/or read a memorial to their brother or sister, go with you or alone to cemetery visits.
2. Share with the siblings all factual information, as it becomes known. Being "left out" only enhances a growing sense of not being important to the family.
3. When you see children who remind you of your child, point them out to the siblings and explain the grief spasm it has caused. Mysterious behavior enhances the sibling's fear of being left out.
4. Ask the siblings to be with you occasionally as you grieve. If you always grieve in private, the emotional distance between you will widen.
5. Talk with siblings both about pleasant memories and unpleasant memories of the dead child. This prevents pedestal placing.
6. Don't tell siblings to "be strong" for someone else. That is too great a burden to carry.
7. Understand that it may be easier for siblings to talk to friends, or another trusted adult, than to parents. They desperately do not want to add to their parents' devastation so may seek counsel and understanding elsewhere.
8. Remember that you can't change the past. But you can face the present and guide the future. Your family will forever be changed--it does not always have to remain devastated.

- Janice Lord, TCF/Anne Arundel County, MD

## THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-CARE

One of the most notable characteristics of bereaved siblings is their ability to help others who are grieving. In research studies, this particular characteristic is mentioned again and again. However, bereaved siblings are often unable to help themselves with their own grief.

One of the patterns of dynamics that is often seen in bereaved siblings is as follows. The surviving siblings have been so hurt and become so vulnerable that they cannot tolerate their own feelings. They would like to disown their own vulnerability. So they project their feelings onto others who are grieving, and then take care of the other person. If this dynamic is operating in your life, you need to work on self-care. Withdrawing the projection from others, and accepting your own vulnerability is not easy, but is essential for healing.

In order to take care of yourself, you have to know yourself and know what your needs are. Sometimes we spend more time trying to get someone else to take care of us than we do in actively caring for ourselves. First, you must learn what your needs are. Everyone knows about needs—we know that babies need love and attention as well as food. Needs do not go away when we become adults. Some of the needs that we all share are: needs for food, security, love, acceptance, beauty, order, appreciation, and self-expression. Get to know yourself and what it takes to make you happy.

~ TCF Special Edition Sibling Newsletter

## WHILE YOU'RE WALKING

While you're walking today, will you keep an eye out for my brother?

He's tall with dark brown hair and looks a lot like our mother.

His eyes are filled with loneliness.

You will find tears upon his face.

His heart was cold and empty; he could be anywhere.

If you should see a man who looks like he's been crying,

Please just stop and say to him,

"Mister, don't stop trying.

Try to get over the mountains, to reach the other side.

You'll find with each step you take,

you'll be building up your pride."

Don't ever say to a crying man,

"Cheer up, your life is just starting."

When all along everyone knows;

Divorce - his life is not parting?

He loved his children, he loved his wife.

How can we say, "Start a new life." ?

He has left us now, filled with grief and much sorrow.

He couldn't see beyond his heart, not even for tomorrow.

Tomorrow will be better they say.

Time will be the test.

You can stop looking for my brother now,

you see, he's been laid to rest.

God bless his heart, for it was broke.

Suicide's the word I spoke.

~ Brenda DeLarger, TCF/St. Clair Shores, MI

## I AM SO SAD

I am so sad, so very, very sad.

My brother died, died, died

When I was tiny, tiny, tiny.

Now I'm older, older older.

And he's still my older brother.

~ Leah Kaminsky, TCF/Miami FL

## MOTHERS DAY AND GRADUATION

After my daughter Kyra died on November 14 of 2004, one of my first thoughts was I am no longer a mother, because Kyra was my only child. It didn't take me long to realize that that was not true; I am and always will be Kyra's mom. As I have walked my grief journey I have found myself referring to grief as labor. It then came to me that for me, losing Kyra was like giving birth in reverse. I experienced intense emotional and physical pain that I wondered if I could endure, similar to the physical pain of labor, only in grief it lasts for weeks, months and years. It took my breath away, brought me to my knees and often I found myself crying out in anguish and anger, like child birth. It has been over a year and a half since Kyra died and I have felt a break in the pain. It has started back up recently due to graduation but I know it will ease some after May. Some women experience false labor leading up to the birth of their child. I think that those intense pains that come from out of nowhere and last only a short time is something that I will forever experience. I now realize that in letting go of her death, I can embrace and carry her spirit with me always. So, I liken grief to giving birth in reverse.

I go from Mother's day to Graduation, because Kyra would have graduated from High School at the end of May. Graduation was something I knew would be hard for me to endure without her here, alive and being part of the celebration. I thought about what Kyra graduating would mean to me and it didn't take me long to come up with, it was going to be my day to celebrate. Kyra was an intelligent child with a low attention span, a need to talk, and lower than I would have liked motivation. It was a frustration that her teachers and I shared. So, homework time was a challenge and I used motivational charts, rewards and even punishment. But, I quickly found that you can't force someone to be motivated and went back to encouraging. I knew that she would come around and become motivated and I started seeing it her Junior year the year she died. I thought that graduation would be the reward for all the long nights and constantly trying to encourage and motivate. Well, it's not to be and I had to decide how will I endure graduation. I began to think about all she is missing. I believe in Heaven so I don't believe she is missing any joy or good times, because I believe she is now experiencing indescribable joy and unimaginable good times. The reality of what she is missing is, she is missing misery, pain, frustration, disappointment, a broken heart, grief, hopelessness and agony. And I am missing her incredible, joy and zest for life, her strong faith, beautiful smile and her wonderful heart.

As I close I remember when I was pregnant with Kyra, I took two helpings of food because I said I'm eating for two. Now I will try my best to live life to the fullest and be all that I can because now I'm living for two. Just as her living made me want to be a better person, her dying will make me a better person if I allow it, because I now carry her with me. I will strive to do and see life the way she would have if she could have stayed here longer.

~ Julie Short, TCF/Southeastern IL  
In Memory of my daughter, Kyra

## A Safe Place

The Compassionate Friends is about transforming the pain of grief into the elixir of hope. It takes people out of the isolation society imposes on the bereaved and lets them express their grief naturally. With the shedding of tears, healing comes. And the newly bereaved get to see people who have survived and are learning to live and love again.

~ Simon Stephens, founder of The Compassionate Friends

## THE LITTLE THINGS

Often, even the simple tasks of everyday living seem to drain every ounce of one's energy. Remember going to the grocery store even months after your child's death and the feelings you had as you passed up his or her favorite cereal? Or watching another child the same age as yours in a restaurant and trying to swallow your food – you probably didn't even taste it. Or hearing a certain song in public and fighting back the tears? Sometimes even getting through the day in your own home makes you feel like you've run a marathon and leaves you in worse shape. You probably never dreamed that doing the family laundry could make you cry or that getting a piece of mail in your child's name could suck your breath away.

Even the best of friends and families can't possibly know the strength you must summon day after day after day. We shouldn't expect them to understand completely, but it does get lonely. Perhaps this quote puts it in a nutshell:

*One sad thing about this world is that the acts  
that take the most out of you are usually the  
ones that other people never know about.*

~ Anne Tyler, TCF/Sacramento Valley, CA

## Nine Years or Nine Hundred

Sometimes it seems that nobody understands

The pain of losing your child

"Well," they say, "it's been nine years

Shouldn't you be over it by now?

My parents died (or my cousin - or my dog,)

And I did my grieving and got over it," they say.

Nine years— It seems like only yesterday

And I remember the horror:

- The police knocking at the door in the middle of the night
- Making funeral arrangements (funeral arrangements?) for my son.
- Asking his best friends — boys who were just yesterday playing ball and laughing with him — to be his pallbearers.
- That awful empty feeling in the pit of my stomach when the limousine from the funeral home; drove up to our house.
- Seeing his casket poised above the freshly-dug grave.
- Being pulled away from the graveside when the eternity of services was done.
- Waking up every morning for weeks and for a blessed split second thinking everything was right with the world, then the reality crashing in that he is dead.
- Fumbling my way, somehow, through the days and nights.

Yes, my friends, it's been nine years. And still it hurts to say his name.

To think what he might have been doing now with his life.

To realize what a waste of a young life it was.

So, please, don't expect me to be "over it" or "okay."

**Not in nine years - Or in ninety - Or in nine hundred**

Barbara Koontz Clarihew, TCF/Bucksmont Chapter

**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.

## Butterfly Wings, Bricks and Lead

When I saw her load of grief, it looked to me to be merely a light load of butterfly wings, as compared to my full load of heavy bricks. Then I saw another man, and he seemed to be carrying a small load of lead. But as I watched her step on the scales bearing her load of butterfly wings, the scales read "one ton." When he stepped on the scales with his load of lead, the scales also read "one ton." I knew my grief-load of bricks would weigh more, but those scales read for me, "one ton." Our loads of butterfly wings, lead and bricks weighed exactly the same to the one carrying that particular load of grief.

We bereaved parents often feel resentment when a non-bereaved person speaks about our child's death. HOW can THAT PERSON know or even dream of how I feel or what I am going through? These feelings may be justified. But when we begin to feel resentment toward another bereaved parent "That child's death was easy compared to my child's death," "I have suffered more than she/he ever did" —we should remember that each of our grief-loads weights two thousand pounds to the one under it. Compared to Rose Kennedy, who had one child in a mental institution, and lost one daughter and three sons in violent deaths, my grief-load begins to look as if it were made of gossamer soap bubbles, but when I again step on that scale, it still reads, "one ton."

Our grief-loads may appear to weigh less because we who are under them have grown stronger through time and grief process maturation. The load actually weighs no less; it is we who have grown stronger and can carry it more easily. Sometimes we can even completely ignore the weight that is still there. Always be careful in judging another's grief-load. Remember the lead, butterfly wings and those bricks, and how they all weigh the same to the one under that load of grief.

~ Tom Crouthamel, TCF/Sarasota, FL

## THOUGHTS ON MOTHERS' DAY

I saw my friend standing, staring at a picture of my son and daughter, and I joined her. Instinctively *we* put our arms around each other as we stood there together.

"Loving him was worth the pain of losing him, wasn't it," she said. It wasn't a question. It was a statement of fact and we both knew the answer was "yes, yes, thousand times yes."

My friend is childless, but not by choice. I know how hard Mothers' Day is for me, but I can only imagine how difficult and empty it must be for her. For me there are the memories of the months I nurtured that child beneath my heart. Will I ever forget the time he actually kicked a purse off that bump I called my lap? And the times he hiccupped? Even if he had died at birth, I would still have those memories to treasure.

Then, there were those wonderful toddler days when he told the world all our family secrets and amused a whole airplane full of people when he said in his loudest three-year-old voice, "Tell the maid I want a coke!"

School brought a mixed bag of memories. Some good, some bad, but all a part of a boy growing up. How we loved him as a teenager. "I'm half kid and half adult," he said, "and the kid comes out on Saturday night." We lost him during those years, but sometimes I've consoled myself with the thought that 16 would be a magical age to be forever.

"Yes," dear friend, "loving him was worth all the pain of losing him, and more. Much, much more."

~ Judy Osgood, TCF/Central Oregon Chapter

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
Co-Chapter Leader	Lori Wiger.....701-781-3931	Newsletter Database	Sheryl Cvijanovich ..... 701-540-3287
Secretary	Sheryl Cvijanovich.....701-540-3287	Website Administrator	Sheryl Cvijanovich ..... 701-540-3287
Treasurer	Chuck Klinkhammer .....701-298-2929	Initial Contact	Sheryl Cvijanovich
Mailing Committee	Contact Us to Join	Librarian	Contact Us to Volunteer

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

**TELEPHONE FRIENDS**

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

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

Love gifts must be received by the 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.