



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
Meetings for 2023 will be quarterly instead of monthly

Next Meeting & Topic

June 8, 2023 - Balloon Release – Everyone is welcome.

Weather cancellations will be posted on WDAY, KVLV, KFGO and the Fargo Forum online at www.inforum.com!

Dates to Remember

Mom's meeting - 7 pm on May 25th @ Denny's
46th TCF National Conference July 7-9, 2023 in Denver, Colorado
TCF FM Chapter's Annual Walk to Remember - July 29, 2023

LOVE GIFTS

Lynn & Donna Mickelson in memory of their daughter Allison Deutscher
Mary & Dave Griffin in memory of their son Peter
Neil & Kathleen Prochnow in memory of their son Reed Joel Prochnow
Carol Erdmann in memory of her son Erik Erdmann
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 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 25th. For more information, please contact Sheryl at 701-540-3287 or visit our website at www.tcffargomoorhead.org.

When God sends forth a tiny soul
To learn the ways of earth,
A mother's love is waiting here --
We call this wonder -- birth.

When God calls home a tired soul
And stills a fleeting breath,
A Father's love is waiting there,
This too is birth -- not death.
~ Author Unknown

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:

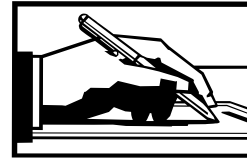
1. This feeling or thought is haunting my thinking.
2. In any words, series of sentences or phrases, record it.
3. Disregard spelling, grammar and structure.
4. Expand upon it if able. In the early months I could not do this. Just writing it down was enough.
5. Read it back out loud.
6. Change it if 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.



"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

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

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

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

ON BUTTERFLY WINGS

From earth's caterpillars to heaven's butterflies -
They soar with the angels from the earth to the sky.
Their wings seem so fragile, translucent and light -
But they transfuse our world giving us strength in our night.
In silence they appear like messengers of love,
Bringing hope and comfort from heaven above.
These beautiful butterflies so graceful in flight,
Transport us from darkness to color and light.
So when choosing a symbol to help grieving parents cope,
What more than a butterfly could best symbolize hope.
Our hearts stand in awe and hope from within us springs.
As our hearts take flight - On Butterfly Wings.
~ Faye McCord, TCF/Jackson, MS
In loving memory of my son, Lane McCord

OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED BIRTHDAYS

CHILD	PARENTS
JEFF "BONZO" BRENNAN.....65.....	CLAYTON & GLORIA BRENNAN
ERIK JOHN ERDMANN.....32.....	CAROL ERDMANN
JESS R FORD.....40.....	SHELLEY FORD
BRODIE GILBERTSON.....16.....	VANESSA GILBERTSON
DAVID MARK KLEINGARTNER59.....	LUELLA KLEINGARTNER
CARMEN LALUM.....43.....	RUSSELL & SHARON LALUM
ERIC LARSON.....36.....	DALE & MARILYN LARSON (Grandparents)
JOSEPH CHRIS LARSON.....66.....	DALE & MARILYN LARSON
PAUL MORLOCK.....59.....	DELLA MORLOCK
JOHN THORVAL PEARSON62.....	EDNA MAE PEARSON
LAURIE SATHER.....63.....	PEGGY BULLIS
ERIC JOHN SCHAFER.....44.....	BILL & LOIS SCHAFER
THOMAS SCHMITZ.....55.....	BOB & CAROL SCHMITZ
MICHAEL ROBERT WAGNER57.....	ROBERT WAGNER
AVA MARIE WEBER.....2.....	TONIA KING & LUKE WEBER

ANNIVERSARIES

CHILD	PARENTS
JODIE BREND.....4.....	DORIS RHEAULT
KONNIE JEAN CHAFFEE.....11.....	MARK & JEAN CHAFFEE
CHLOE LOVE CONN.....6.....	JEROD & STACY CONN
JARRED FALLER.....2.....	CONNIE JOHNSON
COLE HALLAND.....13.....	STEVEN & JOAN HALLAND
KAMMI THORLAKSON LELAND.....4.....	LYNDA & SVEN MICKELS
REED JOEL PROCHNOW.....24.....	NEIL & KATHLEEN PROCHNOW
THERESA JANE RICHTER.....2.....	RONALD & SUE OLSON
DYLAN ROMAINE11.....	AARON & TRICIA ROMAINE
ANDREW SADEK.....9.....	JOHN & TAMMY SADEK
MATTHEW ALBERT SELL.....3.....	DONALD & PAULA SELL
RONDA L SMITH.....2.....	DORLA HANSON
AVA MARIE WEBER.....2.....	TONIA KING & LUKE WEBER
DILLON ANDREW WILSON.....4.....	DENISE WILSON
HEATHER WREN.....12.....	DEB WAYMAN

Please check out our Chapter website's page for 'Our Beloved Children' (tcffargomoorhead.org/?page_id=577). 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.

COME SIT WITH ME

Come sit with me awhile and let me hold your hand,
I understand your sorrow and know you need a friend. I understand the pain that lies within your heart,
I have felt the silent screams that tear you all apart
I know about the sleepless nights that last so very long,
I understand the emptiness when you hear that special song. Come share with me your memories and let me be
Your friend, you can cry, laugh or say nothing at all, And I will understand.
Come sit with me my friend, I'll try to help you through. I understand my friend, for I have been there too.

~Judy Peckinpough, TCF /Empire, CA

SIBLING PAGE

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

BELOVED BROTHER: LOSING YOU IS LOSING ME

Dearest Justin,
To lose a sibling is to lose oneself,
For a part of me is gone...
And now I'm left to reminisce
As now I try to carry on.
The thought of you not being here
Has torn my world apart...
Yet every day I feel you near;
Is a blessing to my heart.
Your memory comforts me today
In ways I wish you knew...
But tears are falling from the pain
That comes from losing you.
I see your face in the morning sun
And in the moon at night...
I wonder how you're feeling now,
I pray that you're alright.
And one day when my time has come
To soar with eagle's wings...
We will be joined forevermore.
I Love You Forever & Always.
Charlie Clakley, TCF/Tyler, TX

WHAT I NEED

A lot of time! A little space, A kind of quiet
Resting place, Are what I need At times like these
A special spot Where I can grieve.
~ Beth Pinion, TCF/Andalusia, AL

Brothers

Brothers grow together with wind in their hair, wild schemes in their heads, and with mud in their raggedy pants. They look back into one another's eyes, with spirits burning from a common flame. They wrestle life with such similar hands. No tree is too tall or hill too high to climb, for those whose bonds are flesh and set together through time. Yet the song ever told us that dragons live forever but not the little boys. Suddenly one of us is all alone, clinging to the memories of wind and mud and hills of stone. We're still together in our own way, if not but in a burning little flame.

~ Ken / TCF Salem, OR

A Sister's Love

First, there's the fear,
Followed by disbelief.
Then there's the tears,
Followed by the grief,
Could it really be true
That they say she may die?
The pain is so deep seeded
Why her, Father, why?
Time can never change the hurt,
hide the tears, they never dry.
Things can never be the same,
A child should never die.
She did though, on a summer day,
One I won't forget.
I loved that girl, oh, so much,
Now memories are all that's left.
Is it fair to live on without you, girl?
I think that's what you'd like,
The house has an empty feeling,
Your room is dark, day and night.
I won't forget you, don't you fear,
You'll always have a place in my heart
My love for you lives on.
Looking back through
The book of life
YOU are my favorite part!
~Helen Ann Marie Naselli, Rockville Center, NY

COMPASSIONATE SIBLINGS

I had a prayer answered today, one I'd like to share.
I found I'm not alone in my grief, I found someone to care!
I've been in pain for quite awhile, but kept it deep inside,
But now I know there are people in whom I can confide!

They'll let me cry or scream or yell, and they know just how I feel.
You see they also know that pain and know it's very real.
Each one has suffered a loss, one like I have known;
Yet now we stand together.
This unique group of siblings is bonded, you might say,
And strength to carry on is for what each one must pray.

One by one we keep going, although painful it might be,
And the emptiness we feel, many will never see;
Because we choose what face to show the world and courage
keeps us going,
We have a constant ache inside,
No matter what the outside is showing.

And whether it takes me a year or two,
Time is all that can heal;
So I've been sent some "Compassionate Siblings"
Who know just how I feel.

Bless those who need to be understood
When tears come and go without warning.
May we help heal the wounds so deep that are hurting all the
hearts left empty by the death of sibling.
- Stacie Gilliam, TCF/N. Oklahoma City, OK

THE GRIEF OF MENTAL ILLNESS

I know now that my daughter, Laurie was mentally ill. I did not understand the meaning of this 20 years ago when her depression and "strange" behavior preceded a suicide attempt while in college. Despite all the help we could get for her, she succeeded in completing suicide five years later, at the age of 25, in 1980.

Her psychiatrist then agreed to talk to me -- he said, with tears in his eyes, she had been a serious schizophrenic patient. For reasons of patient confidentiality, I was not privy to this information earlier. WHY couldn't I have learned about this before it was too late?

The grief I felt as a bereaved parent was compounded by the truth of her illness. There is a stigma with mental illness. Society has been slow to understand and to accept mental illness. There is grief with mental illness -- for the loss of the child that we wanted to be normal. Why did this have to happen to my child?

Was this my fault? Guilt rears its ugly head. Why didn't I see the early signs that she needed help? I felt anger -- wanting to blame others for what happened. I was frustrated -- with the professionals who could not/did not "fix it." I was disillusioned with the public and private mental health system and its limited resources for the mentally ill and their families. Laurie fell between the cracks and is gone.

Thirteen years later I have come to terms with her suicide. I know now there are many reasons for mental illness, most of which are beyond my control. Mental illness is a disease. It can be the result of genetics, a chemical imbalance in the brain, or a nutritional deficiency/allergy -- NOT bad parenting.

I have learned that in grief and in loss, most people want to/need to "talk about it." The magic of sharing feelings and experiences with others who understand (because they've been there), is a healing process. For me, The Compassionate Friends, a national peer-support organization for bereaved parents and siblings, has provided this outlet on a local and national level. I have also participated in a local chapter of The Alliance for the Mentally Ill, and have learned so much more about mental illness through sharing with others who are coping with this stigma and grief. The National Alliance for Mentally Ill slogan in 1991 was "the most shocking thing about mental illness is how little people understand it." How true! How sad!

After Laurie's suicide, initially the most therapeutic healing for me was to publish a book of her writings, material I found expressing her thoughts, visions and frustrations from the ages of 15 to 25. This actual documentation of a mentally ill young person is poetic, loving, humorous, depressing and spiritual. Perhaps her words will help others to see and understand this disease. Her words express intuitive insights in a most articulate way, despite the message of helplessness and hopelessness. As a bereaved parent I felt a strong motivation to perpetuate the memory of Laurie in a positive way.

Public education, and acceptance of mental illness as a disease is helping to change attitudes. We are learning to be more open and honest about it. We are learning to cope and go on with our lives.

Maybe it was the mother in me, but I never thought I would lose her. Now through the grief and later understanding of this disease, I have found a new purpose in my life. Reaching out to help others caught in the quagmire of grief from mental illness, from suicide, from the death of a child, through support groups and writings, in turn has been a healing process for me too. I know that Laurie's 25 years on this earth have made a difference.

~ Carol Katz, TCF/Regional Coordinator, MA

It's Been a Year

Sadness too deep for the telling
Pain far beyond wretched tears
losing you, my sweet beautiful daughter
Was the worst of all of my fears.
Your presence brought purpose and meaning
To a life that was stumbling along.
Each day spent with you was a blessing...
Every moment without you is wrong.
A year has dragged by since you left here
A time full of anguish and pain..
I've gone through these days heavy-hearted
Living life down on memory lane.
I remember you as a small baby
With your blonde hair and great
Big blue eyes..
And I think of the years that I rocked you to sleep
Singing sweet soothing lullabies.
My arms are now aching and empty
The rocker is pushed out of sight
But I'm still singing all of our lullabies
In case you are listening tonight.

~ Sally Milaca, TCF/Syosset, NY

In memory of her daughter, Tracey,
on the first anniversary of her death. 1967 – 1994

Spring is Coming

If you are newly bereaved and looking toward your "first" spring, you may be surprised by some of the feelings you may experience during the next few weeks. We hear so much about the beauty of spring - the new life and the feelings of renewal that are supposed to accompany this lovely time of year. During my "first" year, I expected that spring would cheer me up, and make me feel lots better. How surprised and frustrated I was when, on one of those truly magnificent spring days as life seems to burst forth everywhere, I was "in the pits." When a friend said to me, "Doesn't a day like this really lift your spirits and make you feel better?" I had to reply honestly that I was having a really bad day --that the sense of loss and emptiness was greatly intensified.

Gradually, I began to realize that my expectations for spring were unrealistically high. I had looked forward to spring with the wrong kind of hope. When we are newly bereaved, we are constantly looking for something to take away the pain and make our lives all right again. Unfortunately, there is no magical event or moment when this takes place. It does happen, but only with time and the grief work which we all must do before we can be healed. The coming of spring cannot make everything okay again. What is can do, however, is remind us that regardless of what happens in our lives, nature's process will continue, and that can offer us hope.

I am looking forward to spring this year. I welcome the sun's warmth, the return of the birds from their winter in the south, and forsythia, the daffodils and the greening of the world. Know that someday you will once again welcome spring. Be gentle and patient with yourself and with nature. Don't expect too much. Be ready to let a little of the hope that spring can offer into your heart.

-Evelyn Billings, TCF/Springfield, MA

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. A submitted permission slip is valid for four years from the month received.

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
(If you have already submitted a permission slip within the past 4 years, 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 four colors (yellow, pink, red and green). The cost is as follows: \$25 for 1 butterfly, \$50 for 2 butterflies, \$65 for 3 butterflies and \$80 for 4 butterflies. If you wish to purchase more than 4 butterflies, please contact Paul and Kara Bailey at 701-491-0364.

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

MOTHER'S DAY

As I write this, I am very much aware that Mother's Day is coming soon. That will be a doubly difficult day in countless homes. For all the thousands of mothers who will be glowing with a radiant kind of pride and happiness on that day, there will also be those of you whose hearts are aching for that phone call that will never come, that special visit, that one Mother's Day card that will not arrive. For us, the reading and rereading of that one last card - "Mom, you are the greatest and I love you" - will have to last a lifetime. How does a mother face a lifetime of silence on "her" day? Ask those of us who have "been there" already, and we will tell you of lonely Mother's Day visits to spring-green cemeteries where the sweet clear notes of a single spring bird, perched nearby, float over our heads and seem surely to have been intended as divine comfort for a heart full to breaking. You will hear of yellow roses being sent to a small church - "In memory of..." - and a cherished story of a kind and sensitive friend who sent a single rose that first Mother's Day "in remembrance."

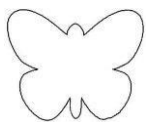
Always we struggle with the eternal question - how does life in fairness exact from us the life of a beloved child in exchange for a clear bird call in a spring-green cemetery, a slender vase of yellow rosebuds or even the kindness and sensitivity of a friend who remembered our loneliness and pain on that day? Where is the fairness and justice of such a barter?

The answer comes back again and again - life does not always bargain fairly. We are surrounded from birth to death by those things which we cannot keep, but which enrich, ennoble and endow our lives with a foretaste of Heaven because we have been privileged to behold, to experience, to wrap our arms around the joyous and the beautiful.

Can we bottle the fragrance of an April morning or the splendor of a winter's sunset and take it home with us to place on our fireplace mantle? Can we grasp and hold the blithesome charm of childhood's laughter? Can we capture within cupped hands the beauty and richness of a rainbow? Can we pluck the glitter of a million stars on a summer night or place in an alabaster box the glow and tenderness of love?

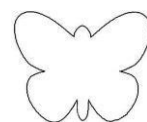
No, we cannot. But to those who have been given the splendor, the blithesome charm, the glory, the glitter, the tenderness and the love of a child who has departed, someday the pain will speak to you of enrichment, of compassion for others, of deeper sensitivity to the world about you, of a deeper joy for having known a deeper pain. Your child will not have left you completely, as you thought. But rather you will find him in that first clear, sweet bird call, in those yellow rosebuds, in giving and in receiving and in the tissue-wrapped memories that you hold forever in your heart.

~ Mary Wildman, TCF/Moro, IL



Happiness is a butterfly, which when pursued, is always just beyond your grasp,
but which, if you will sit down quietly, may alight upon you.

~Nathaniel Hawthorne



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

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

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

FARGO-MOORHEAD COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS BOARD

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN THE BOARD AT ANY TIME!

Chapter Leader	Paul & Kara Bailey.....701-491-0364	Newsletter Editor	Nancy Teeuwen 701-730-0805
Newsletter Database	Sheryl Cvijanovich701-540-3287	Secretary	Sheryl Cvijanovich..... 701-540-3287
Treasurer	Chuck Klinkhammer.....701-298-2929	Website Administrator	Sheryl Cvijanovich..... 701-540-3287
Initial Contact	Sheryl Cvijanovich	Mailing Committee	Contact Us to Join

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 for a period of 18 months.