



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
November 9th
December 14th

Dates to Remember

Due to Thanksgiving the Mom's meeting will be on November 16th at 7 pm at Fry'n Pan
Annual Worldwide Candlelighting - December 10, 2017 7 p.m. local time

LOVE GIFTS

Madonna Sweeney in memory of her son, Patrick Sweeney
Persys Piersall in memory of her son, Rand L Piersall
Jerry & Yvonne Nelson in memory of their son, Kyle Irvin Nelson
Neil & Kathleen Prochnow in memory of their son, Reed Joel Prochnow
Richard & Clare Elless in memory of their daughter, Tari Elless Heller
Sheryl Cvijanovich in memory of her son, Matthew Cvijanovich
Paul & Kara Bailey in memory of their nephew, Brandon James Kuck

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

"When our special sadness comes to call, when we remember more than we can bear, when courage falters – shadows everywhere: Then let us reach and touch and share, we, who are friends." ~ Sascha Wagner

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. Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, the November meeting will be on Thursday November 16th. 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. For more information please contact Sheryl at 701-540-3287 or sherylc13@msn.com.

ANGEL OF HOPE MEMORIAL SERVICE

The Angel of Hope will be holding an annual Candlelight Memorial on Wednesday, December 6th at 7 p.m. The Angel of Hope in Fargo was dedicated in 2005, and serves as a place for healing and love for all who have lost children. The Angel of Hope is located on the north in Island Park off of 1st Avenue South between 4th and 7th Streets. Attendees are invited to bring a white flower to place at the base of the statue in memory of loved ones. Refreshments will be served at Hanson Runsvold Funeral Home following the service.



"Courage is doing what you're afraid to do. There can be no courage unless you're scared!" -Eddie Rickenbacker

The Myth of Closure

“When will I begin to feel better? When will I return to normal? When will I achieve some closure?” grievors often ask. Closure, our culture tells us, will bring about a tidy ending, a sense of completion. Some grievors hope that the desired magical closure will occur after the funeral or memorial service. Others are confident it will come once they have cleared out their loved one’s room. Or maybe after a special personal ritual. Or perhaps after the first anniversary comes and goes—“surely then, we will have closure,” we think. We pray.

The reason we long for closure, of course, is because we would like to neatly seal away all of this pain. We would like to close all of the sad, confused, desperate, angry feelings out of our life. We would like to put all of this behind us.

Closure. What an odd concept really, as if we could truly close the door on pain—turn the lock and throw away the key. The truth is far more complex, of course.

Closure is for business deals. Closure is for real estate transactions. Closure is not for feelings or for people we love.

Closure simply does not exist emotionally, not in a pure sense. We cannot close the door on the past as if it didn’t exist because, after losing someone dear to us, we never forget that person or the love we shared. And in some ways, we never entirely get over the loss. We learn to live with the loss, to integrate it into our new identity.

Imagine if we really could end this chapter in our life, completely. It would mean losing our memories, our connections to those we love. If we really found closure, it would ironically hurt even more because the attachment would be severed. And this attachment is vital to us—the memories are treasures to be held close, not closed out.

Perhaps it is better to think in terms of healing. Yes, we can process our pain and move to deeper and deeper levels of healing. Yes, we can find ways to move on and channel our pain into productive activities. Yes, we can even learn to smile again and laugh again and love again.

But let’s not ever think that we’ll close the door completely on what this loss means, for if we did that, we would unwittingly close the door on all the love that we shared. And that would truly be a loss too terrible to bear.

~ Ashley Davis Prend, ACSW, Hospice of North Idaho

Circle

How do you bear it all?
The cry came from a mother
Whose son had died only weeks before.
We were in a circle, looking at her,
Looking around, looking away,
Tears in our hearts, in our eyes.

How do we bear it?
I don’t know,
But the circle helps.

~ Eva Lager, TCF/Western Australia

GRIEF

When a storm of grief grows in the heart; reach back
to yesterday to catch onto your memories.
The storm will calm and, for a brief moment, the lost
feeling of happiness will shine through and through.

~ Lori Pollard, TCF/Montgomery, AL

First Thanksgiving

The thought of being thankful
fills my heart with dread.
They’ll all be feigning gladness,
not a word about her said.
These heavy shrouds of blackness
enveloping my soul,
pervasive, throat-catching,
writhe in me, and coil.
I must, I must acknowledge,
just express her name,
so all sitting at the table,
know I’m thankful that she came.
Though she’s gone from us forever
and we mourn to see her face,
not one minute of her living,
would her death ever replace.
So I stop the cheerful gathering,
though my voice quivers, quakes,
make a toast to all her living.
That small tribute’s all it takes.

~ Genesse Bourdeau Gentry
from Stars in the Deepest Night –
After the Death of a Child

Rosebush Full of Blooms

On a rosebush full of blooms, there is occasionally one rose more fragile than the rest. Nobody knows why. The rose receives the same amounts of rain and sun as its neighboring blooms: it receives the same amounts of food and water from the earth, of clipping and tending and gentle encouragement from the gardener. Its time on earth is neither more nor less significant than that of the other blooms alongside it. It has all the necessary components to become what it is intended to be: a beautiful flower, fully open, spreading its petals and fragrance and color for the world to see.

But for some reason, once in a while, a single rose doesn’t reach maturity. It’s not the gardener’s fault, nor the fault of the rose. So it is that sometimes, despite the best growing conditions, the best efforts of the gardener, the best possibilities for a glorious blooming season, a particularly fragile rose will share its growth for awhile, then fade and die. And the gardener and the rosebush and the earth and all around grieve.

We are never ready for a loss, not for the loss of a promising rosebud, whose life appears ready to unfold with brilliant color and fulfillment. In the midst of our grieving, we can remember the glimpses of color and fragrance and growth that was shared. We can love the fragile rose and the fragile soul for the valiant battles won and the blooming that was done. And as our own petals unfold, we can remember the softness and beauty of those who touched us along the way.

~ Ernestine Clark, TCF/Oklahoma City, OK

At the finest level of my being, you’re still with me.
We still look at each other, at that level beyond sight.
We talk and laugh with each other, in a place beyond words.
We still touch each other, on a level beyond touch.
We share time together in a place where time stands still.
We are still together, on a level called LOVE.
But I cry alone for you, in a place called reality.

~ Richard Lepinsky

FOR FRIENDS, FAMILIES, AND PROFESSIONALS
ANGER AT GOD AFTER A CHILD DIES

Many people who suffer the death of a child find themselves feeling angry at God. This anger is sometimes expressed directly: "I'm angry at God for allowing my child to die."

Most often, however, the anger reveals itself in less direct phrases such as, "Why would a loving God allow my child to die?" "Doesn't God have any mercy?" "Where was God when my child experienced so much suffering?" "With all the horrible abuse being done to children by some adults, why did God take the child of loving parents?"

It is important to understand that anger is a normal, healthy part of grief. While not all parents who suffer the death of a child feel angry at God, most will feel this way at someone or something over the long process of grief. The best support we can provide to these individuals is to listen in silence. This will allow them to work through the anger in their own time frame.

Michelle remembers the intense anger she felt at God when her daughter, Robin, died a year after being diagnosed with leukemia. "The depth of my feelings surprised and concerned me," she recalls. "I thought I was losing my mind. Although God was the chief target of my anger, I was also angry at my family, friends and strangers I'd see at the mall with their children. Even the weather affected my mood. When it rained I was angry, and the same was true when the sun shone brightly. And most of my energy was directed at God."

Michelle's anger gradually subsided. She attributes this to the permission she received from her minister to express her feelings during their many pastoral counseling sessions. "Reverend Johnson told me that God could take my anger and still loves me as His child," she remembers. "This was very important for me to hear. Many other people tried to defend God, saying that He didn't cause Robin's death. I know they meant well, but I didn't find their efforts helpful at all."

Recently I spoke to a group of hospital chaplains at a medical center in the Los Angeles area. The subject addressed was death and dying. At the beginning of the workshop I showed a videotape of a woman grieving the death of a loved one. The woman said that she was angry at God for allowing her loved one to suffer with cancer for nearly two years before dying.

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At the conclusion of the video I asked the chaplains how they were going to care for the grief-stricken woman. Several of them replied that their first agenda was to get the woman's "anger off of God."

When I asked why they felt this was necessary one chaplain replied, "Because God didn't cause her loved one to suffer." I then asked the group if they thought that God could handle the anger of one hurting woman—whether or not God caused the suffering? They all agreed that God could.

Mona knows the pain of not only having a child die, but also being told that her anger at God was wrong. Her first child, Jason, died shortly after being born.

"When Jason died," she recalls, "I asked God where was His mercy? It had taken my husband, Tim, and me more than two years to conceive. It didn't make any sense that God would allow our child to die. I was definitely angry at Him." Mona says that many people tried to shift her anger away from God. This was especially the case with her and Tim's minister.

"The first thing my Pastor said," she remembers, "wasn't, 'I'm sorry for your loss,' or some other compassionate words. Instead, he said, 'Mona, God's not to blame. Remember He, too, suffered the death of a child. We simply live in a world where tragedies occur.'"

Mona did not find his words helpful. "I know Pastor was well-meaning," she said. "But he seemed to be more concerned with defending God than caring for Tim and me. Although I continued to be angry at God, I no longer expressed my feelings out loud. Pastor seemed to imply that my anger was misguided or wrong."

Grieving people don't need their feelings about God stifled or redirected. God can handle the anger of humans without our defense or justification. Anger is a normal, healthy part of the grief process. Given the permission to be expressed, it will eventually help bring about healing and a renewed sense of wholeness.

~ Reverend Al Miles

The Reverend Al Miles is the Coordinator of Hospital Ministry with Interfaith Ministries of Hawaii at The Queen's Medical Center.

OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED
BIRTHDAYS

CHILD	PARENTS
MATTHEW ISAAC CVIJANOVICH	36			MICHAEL & SHERYL CVIJANOVICH
RYAN P GOERTZ	39			JAMES & CHERI GOERTZ
COLE HALLAND	32			STEVEN & JOAN HALLAND
JAY JOSHNON	52			BRUCE & BEV JOHNSON
KYLE KASSMAN	32			TOM & NANCY KASSMAN
LIAM PAUL KUMMER	2			BLAINE & MEGAN KUMMER
RYAN DEAN NELSON	37			BECKY NELSON
RAND LOREN PIERSALL	62			PERSYS PIERSALL
REED JOEL PROCHNOW	42			NEIL & KATHLEEN PROCHNOW
CHLOE GRACE RONGEN	6			CONNIE & BARRY RONGEN (grandparents)
MICHAEL ROBERT SACKMAN	43			ROBERT & GLORIA SACKMAN
ANDREW SADEK	24			JOHN & TAMMY SADEK
KINLEY SNYDER	7			JEREMY & TERI SNYDER
TYLER JAMES THOEMKE	26			JAMIE & SHERI THOEMKE

ANNIVERSARIES

CHILD	PARENTS
LUCAS ALLMENDINGER	8		DEAN & JO ALLMENDINGER
BRIAN BJERKEN	11		DENNIS & SHIRLEY BJERKEN
RILEY MARK DAHLBERG	11		BLAKE & CHRISTINA DAHLBERG
GREGORY S GROOTERS	1		LARRY & HAZEL GROOTERS
MICHAEL L HANSON	9		LARRY & MARY HANSON
HEIDI HELLAND	6		JOHN & TERRI HELLAND
TARI L HELLER	10		RICHARD & CLARE ELLESS
LANNIE LEE KORNELIUS	10		LEROY & DONNA KORNELIUS
ERIC C LARSON	15		CRAIG & BARB LARSON
KEVIN DEANE MAESSE	1		HELEN MAESSE
KYLE NELSON	3		JERRY & YVONNE NELSON
JACOB ALLEN OCHSNER	7		ALLAN & MARLENE OCHSNER
CHLOE GRACE RONGEN	6		CONNIE & BARRY RONGEN (grandparents)
TERRY STAIGER	5		CLARA STAIGER
THOMAS LEE THOEMKE	7		JEAN & BILL THOEMKE
MARK ALAN WATELAND	16		SONIA WATELAND

Please check out our Chapter website's page for 'Our Beloved Children' (www.tcffargomoorhead.org/ourchildren.html). If you would like your child's picture and a poem or story posted on this page, please submit them to us at tcf1313@hotmail.com or mail them to our PO Box (listed on the back of the newsletter). Photos and poems/stories sent to the PO Box will be electronically scanned and then returned to you so please remember to include a return address

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

SIBLING PAGE

BOYS

Boys
bats, both winged and wood
bugs, beehives
dinosaurs
balls of every size, color
some hard, some soft
bikes, big wheels then ten speeds
baseball cards and bubble gum
barber hair cuts
Bert and Ernie lunch boxes
Batman and Robin, G-I Joe
but butterflies
cannon balls into the pool
jack knives, and belly flops
sun burns, sneakers
and lost towels
buck teeth, then braces
bait, worms or bacon
burps and farts
black-eyes, blisters,
bruises and scabs
but butterflies
and then always
good-byes.
Taddy Dawson, TCF/Valley Forge, PA

The Rose

Some say love it is a river
that drowns the tender reed
Some say love it is a razor
that leaves your soul to bleed
Some say love it is a hunger
an endless aching need
I say love it is a flower
and you it's only seed
It's the heart afraid of breaking
that never learns to dance
It's the dream afraid of waking
that never takes the chance
It's the one who won't be taken
who cannot seem to give
and the soul afraid of dying
that never learns to live
When the night has been too lonely
and the road has been too long
and you think that love is only
for the lucky and the strong
Just remember in the winter
far beneath the bitter snows
lies the seed that with the sun's love
in the spring becomes the rose
~ Amanda McBroom
Sung by Bette Midler

"A sister is a gift from God, sent from above
to make life worthwhile here below"
~ Author Unknown

Why ?

When my sister died, I asked what every surviving sibling most likely asks himself: Why? For quite awhile this question gave me something to strive for, a purpose to fight for. But what I soon realized was that there was no use in asking. That question is irrelevant; the point is moot. It no longer matters why she died. The fact remains that she died, and there is nothing I can do to change that, including finding the answer to "why?" There is no such answer.

If perchance God would speak to me, would that change anything? If he would say, "Trey, I took your sister because I want her up here in Heaven," what would that mean to me? I still lost her. I would still question God's decision. What it comes down to, however, and although it is hard, we who have lost a sibling must accept the fact that they are now gone. Put aside the fact of why or how they died, and remember that they once lived and they will always be alive in your memory and heart. Bypass the question of why they died, and instead concentrate on how we should now live. Remember, they would have wanted it that way.

~ Trey Martin, TCF/ Hardin County, OH

From *This Healing Journey—An Anthology for Bereaved Siblings*

An Essay On Love

Many things have affected my life during my short seventeen years. I have seen myself undergo several changes, and pass through different stages. However, the event that, without a doubt, has had the most profound effect on my life, was the death of my brother Doug on July 23, 1994. Because of this, I find myself to be a completely different person than I ever imagined I would be, and my entire outlook on life has changed.

At the time of Doug's death, he was only at the young age of 19. I was only five years younger at 14. Because I was at the age when I began to share many of the same interests as him, we had become closer than we had ever been. The memories of our playful wrestling-matches, and frequent games of softball or basketball, are forever implanted in my mind. He was more than just my brother; he was truly my best friend. There were so many things that I wanted to do with him, or anticipated to see him accomplish, and it all seems so unfair that he had to slip away just when we realized our special relationship.

Since Doug's death, I have come to realizations that some people take years to come to, and those that some people never will. The most important of these is that we must cherish every moment we have with those we love, because nobody is promised to be alive when they wake up. This may seem drastic, however, when I woke up at 1 in the morning and found out my brother was gone, it seemed anything but drastic. Looking back, I wish I could change words I spoke to him, and actions, which at the time seemed harmless. The only thing in life that I feel is necessary for everyone to learn is how to love without limits, and to appreciate what we have.

It has taken me much time, and many tears to accept this tragedy which has been placed so suddenly in my life. I fear, however, that I would never have been who I am now if the one I so dearly cherished had not fallen into God's grace. It is sad to realize that sometimes only a tragedy can change a person's heart forever.

~ Kari Brown, TCF/Warrington, PA

People Think

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

~ Mary Matthews, TCF/Ft. Lauderdale, FL

Allowing Grief in our Society

One of the biggest problems I had with my grief was in allowing myself to grieve. I was caught up in the societal expectations I had grown up with: "Don't cry," "Be brave," "Keep a stiff upper lip." When I look back I can see how harmful that was. I was filled with "shoulds" and "should nots," "oughts, and ought nots." I never stopped and asked myself WHY I should not or ought not. If I had, I would have realized that I was only doing what society expected me to do. Society was telling me to do what was necessary to make it comfortable. Society couldn't handle my negative emotions. Society, for me, was my friends and relatives. I could laugh and be happy with them, but I dared not cry or show unhappiness with them. If I did, I made them uncomfortable, and I wasn't to do that.

My soul cried out for release of my emotions. I wanted to cry and scream and lash out at the world in my anger. I wanted to confess my guilts. I wanted to tell someone I hurt so terribly. I wanted to talk and talk and talk about Arthur. But I could not, I should not, I ought not. I was a victim of not only the most devastating thing that can happen to a person--his child's death---but also of a society that denied death and the emotions that resulted from the loss of the most important part of one's life.

Those were society's expectations in 1971. They are not much different today. There are some small breakthroughs being made in respect to how society looks at death, dying and grief by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross and others, and groups such as Make Today Count, SIDS, and, of course, The Compassionate Friends. But society is far from allowing negative emotions, much less allowing our sharing our pain with them. We can change that.

With every great change that society has made there had to be a beginning. There had to be small changes in people, and ideas grew until many people changed. So it is up to us, each in his own way, to work toward changing society's expectations for the grieving person. We can begin with our own family and friends. We must tell them of our needs in our grief and ask them to help us.

This will not be easy at first. We, too, are part of that death denying society. We, too, have in the past been uncomfortable with another's negative emotions., but we must try. Specifically, we must tell our relatives and friends that we need to talk about our child and our grief. At the same time, we must tell them we know it is uncomfortable for them. Honesty and openness are necessary. We must be patient with them. We are going to find friends or relatives who refuse to listen or allow us to discuss our feelings and emotions. Some will be completely unable to help us. Their own life experiences will not allow them to get close to our pain as we are asking them to do. With these people we must try not to be critical and think they are unfeeling or do not care. With gentle persistence we will at least have let them know how they can help us. Whether they help us or not must be their choice.

Our children's' deaths have made us painfully aware of the needs of bereaved parents. It has also made us aware that there is little knowledge in our society of these needs. Each of us can do something to raise this awareness in others. Hopefully, ten or twenty years from now society will look at the grieving person and say; "It's OK to cry," "Tell me about your loved one," "I'll listen to your angers, your guilts, and your fears and not judge," and we will be able to say that we were a part of that change.

~ Margaret Gerner, TCF/St. Louis, MO

WHERE ELSE

WHERE ELSE - can you come into a group of complete strangers and talk about the death of your child?

WHERE ELSE - can you know that you are not alone in your bereavement?

WHERE ELSE - can others sincerely say to you "I know how you feel . . .?"

WHERE ELSE - will you not hear "It's time you were over it and start getting on with your life" and other unwelcome advice?

WHERE ELSE - can you cry without feeling shamed or laugh without feeling guilty?

WHERE ELSE - can you just listen and not talk if you don't want to?

WHERE ELSE - can you reach out to newly bereaved parents who are experiencing the grief and pain you have felt?

WHERE ELSE - can you share the love and memories of your child(ren) with others?

WHERE ELSE - NOWHERE ELSE BUT AT THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS.

~ Dave Ziv, TCF/Warrington, PA

SEASONS

The change of seasons is difficult. It reminds me that I must change if I am to live again. We can become stuck in our grief, full of self-pity and overwhelmed with pain. I do not believe our children would want us to live the rest of our lives in pain and misery. It is so easy to fall into the "black pit" and never have the strength or courage to crawl out – because crawl out we must...on our bellies.

We are different now, with different priorities and goals. We must find a new purpose for going on, and we must accept the changes in our lives – including ourselves, for we are different now. We cannot go backward, though there are times we yearn to. We must move forward. If we don't, we stay stuck at the point that our world changed. I used to say "ended."

Change is difficult. To accept the loss of our child is the most difficult of all. Our comfort comes from believing that the love we shares will go on for all eternity and that we will be reunited again – and each day brings us closer. We must learn to live again, love again, feel joy and peace again – or our survival will be without value to ourselves or others.

~ Renée Little, Fort Collins, Colorado

You Will Feel Better

Sorrow comes to all... it comes with bitterest agony...

Perfect relief is not possible except with time.

You cannot now realize that you will ever feel better...

And yet this is a mistake You are sure to be happy again,

To know this, which is certainly true, will make you some less miserable now. I have had experience enough to know what I say.

~ Abraham Lincoln

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: _____

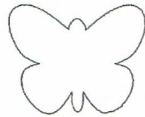
Child's Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Birth Date: _____ Death Date: _____

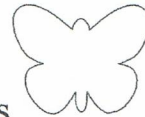
Date: _____

(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)



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 John Milligan 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.

Daisies in Huge Handfuls

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mark would want it so.

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

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
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**The
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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	John Milligan..... 701-491-0364	Newsletter Editor	Nancy Teeuwen 701-730-0805
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LIBRARY INFORMATION: We have an extensive library available. Please feel free to check materials at our next meeting.

TELEPHONE FRIENDS

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

- John Milligan (son, 25 - car accident) 701-491-0364
- 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 _____

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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.