



# 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

We will be social distancing during our meeting. Please wear a mask when entering the building and continue to wear it during the meeting

#### Upcoming Meetings

November 11<sup>th</sup>

December 9<sup>th</sup>

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 November 18th @ Denny's  
Annual Worldwide Candlelighting - December 12, 2021 7 p.m. local time

#### LOVE GIFTS

Jerry & Yvonne Nelson in memory of their son, Kyle Irvin Nelson  
Ronnie & Sue Olson in memory of their daughter, Theresa Richter  
Dolores Peterson in memory of her daughter, Tamara Peterson Jones  
Craig & Terry Klabo in memory of their son, Darin M Klabo

#### Butterfly donation from:

Opal Bachmeier in memory of her son, Steven M Bachmeier  
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

This month our Mom's group will meet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday due to Thanksgiving at 7 p.m. at the Denny's restaurant, 4437 13th Ave SW, Fargo. Our gatherings are very informal as we meet to talk about our children, books, recipes, jobs and whatever else comes up in conversation. We all have times when we need the listening heart of another mom or grandma. Please join us this month on Thursday November 18<sup>th</sup>. For more information please contact Sheryl at 701-540-3287 or visit our website at [www.tcffargomoorhead.org](http://www.tcffargomoorhead.org).

#### ANGEL OF HOPE MEMORIAL SERVICE



The Angel of Hope will be holding an annual Candlelight Memorial on Monday, 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 flower (traditionally a white one but you may bring any color you choose) to leave at the site in memory of your loved one(s). Candles will be provided.

## A THANKSGIVING PRAYER FROM A BEREAVED PARENT

Dear God, though I'll never be glad that my child died, I thank You, with all my heart that she lived. She touched my life in a way that only she could and I'll always feel enriched for having known her.

Thank You for the strength and courage to endure what has happened. While the lesson was very painful, I have learned that I can handle whatever life has to offer.

Thank You for the little miracles You have sent me. The messages took a little while to sink in, but I am comforted by them now.

Thank You for the friends who gathered around me when I needed them most. They stayed with me through the horrible times and now through the good times.

Thank You for the new friends I have made. They have a very special place in my heart. Though they never knew my child, they cared enough about me to listen, hug me, cry, or whatever I needed.

Thank You for making me constantly search for whatever good I can find in my situation and strive to improve myself. I will never again be the person I was before my child's death, but I am not as broken and empty as I once was afraid I would be. I have more compassion and patience. I am less judgmental. I am the "new and improved" me.

Thank You for love. Loving someone means risking being devastated by loss again. Never loving though would be an even greater loss.

Thank You most of all for my family. They loved me, cried with me, missed my child too, shared my pain, understood, listened to my endless stories, and waited patiently until I could walk on my own again. They were at first, the only reason I could face another day. Now that I am once again a participant in life instead of just a spectator, they share my joy.

Finally I thank You for taking care of my child. I know she's happy, at peace and safe in Your care. I look forward to the day when I'll see her again. Amen.

~ Kathy McCormick, TCF/Lower Bucks, PA

### "How Many Children Do You Have?"

Shortly after my son died, I realized that this question was going to be bothersome. Each time someone asked me about the number of children, I struggled with the answer. I soon decided I was not going to let this become a problem. I thought about how I felt about my choice of answers and chose the one that met my needs in the beginning. I had a surviving daughter, but I know for me to say "one" would seem a denial on my part that my son had lived, and that wasn't right for me.

In the beginning, when I still needed to tell people that my son had died, I would tell in detail about his accident when the question about how many children came my way. As the months passed and I had told the story enough times, I found that it wasn't necessary to go into detail any more. My needs had changed, and I rethought my answer.

Now, when I am asked how many children I have, I answer, "I had two children." The criteria I used in determining if I go any further is whether the person asking is going to be a continuing part of my life. If so, they need to know about my son, and I tell them. Otherwise we will be constantly dancing around the fact. Better, I think, to have it out in the open.

If, on the other hand, the person asking is simply passing through my life, then I feel no need to go any further than "I had two children." Seldom does anyone catch the "HAD" instead of "have," and pursue it. If they do, or if they ask follow up questions about ages or professions, I tell them first that my 26 year old son was killed in an accident. Then I tell them about my daughter who is alive and doing well, this gives them a choice. They can either acknowledge my son's death and ask questions or they can ignore that and ask about my daughter. I am comfortable either way. If they are embarrassed, I see that as their problem. Just to show you how different we all are, however, my husband feels comfortable answering, "We have one child." That is what is right for him and that is what he should say. You decide what is right for you – then Say it. That way you defuse that powerful question and it loses its ability to traumatize. Don't let it be a problem.

~ Mary Cleckley, TCF/Atlanta, GA

## November Mourning

Memories rain down like falling leaves  
Amidst a torrent of tears  
Fall used to be my favorite -  
Now November brings only fear.  
For October was the last full month  
That we could share together.  
My bright October full of joy  
When again we heard your laughter.  
Then darkness came November eight  
Now there is only pain.  
For when your gentle heart was stilled  
We knew only loss and shame.  
How could we lose our only son?

Our precious gift from God?  
We miss you with an intense love  
And grief is the road we plod.  
Never will I feel the joy  
That autumn used to bring -  
Although I smile at memories  
Of you saying funny things.  
Those days we spent are treasures;  
How I wish for just one more!  
So now, I'm waiting for the day  
We meet on eternity's shore.

~Sarah Chavez, TCF/Greater Ozarks, MO

She was no longer wrestling with the grief, but could sit down with it as a lasting companion and make it a sharer in her thoughts.

~George Eliot

## THE KEEPERS OF MEMORIES

You make friends because you have things in common.  
We are friends because of our children.  
The older ones, the younger ones, the one who never even had a chance to breathe.  
They are our reason for being.  
Our heartbeat, our life's blood.  
Whether we have lots of memories or only a few, we are joined by an unbreakable bond.  
We are the ones left behind, to remember and carry the torch for those we remember so lovingly.  
We are there for ourselves and each other.  
Because we understand the pain of loss.  
We must also be there for those who unfortunately join our ranks.  
Because we are the parent of lost children, the bruised hearts, the keepers of memories.

~ Cheryl Pelletier, TCF/Concord NH

## Giving Thanks

I can not hold your hands today,  
I can not see your smiles.  
I can not hear your voices now,  
My children, who are gone  
But I recall your faces still,  
The songs, the talks, the sighs.  
And story times, and winter walks,  
And sharing secret things.  
I know you helped my mind to live  
Beyond your time with me.  
You gave me clearer eyes to see -  
You gave me finer ears to hear -  
What living means, what dying means,  
My children, who are gone.  
So here it is Thanksgiving Day,  
And you are not with me.  
And while I weep a mother's tears,  
I thank you for the gift you were,  
And all the gifts you gave to me,  
My children, who are gone.

~ Sascha Wagner

## PREPARE YOURSELF FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Because the person who died is no longer there to share the holidays with you, you may feel particularly sad and vulnerable during Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, and other holidays.

- Don't overextend yourself during the holidays.
- Don't feel you have to shop, bake, entertain, send cards, etc., if you're not up for it.
- Sometimes old holiday rituals are comforting after a death, and sometimes they're not. Continue them only if they feel good to you. Consider creating new ones, as well.

What's the next major holiday? Make a game plan right now and let those with whom you usually spend the day know of your plan well in advance.

~ Dr. Alan Wolfelt, Healing Your Grieving Heart

Those we love don't go away,  
They walk beside us every day,  
Unseen, unheard, but always near,  
Still loved, still missed and very dear.

~ Anonymous

## NOT GUILT, REGRET

One of our basic responsibilities as parents is to keep our children from harm. So, when anything happens to them, we feel guilty whether we could realistically have done anything or not. When the ultimate tragedy occurs, we are devastated. How could we let it happen? Why didn't we stop it? If we have compounded our guilt with any degree of human error of commission or omission, we are beyond devastation. Even words, either of anger or left unspoken, haunt us.

Guilt implies intent. If we intended to harm our child, we can feel guilty of that. If we never intended harm to ever, ever come to our child, the correct name for our emotion is regret. The crushing pain is still there, but regret is softer, gentler, less judgmental, and easier to forgive and to heal. It is also more accurate. If that name doesn't feel strong enough for our feelings, it will in time. Let it float there and try it now and then. Not guilt - we feel regret.

~ Kitty Sanders, Nashville, TN  
Survivors of Suicide Group

## FREEDOM TO GRIEVE

Freedom - condition of being free or unrestricted  
Grief - intense sorrow

Does someone always have to die for others to be free?  
If that's the case, then freedom always leads to grief.

Does someone always have to leave their families to fight for freedom's course?

If that's the case, then freedom's fight always leaves their families in remorse.

Does someone always have to chart the course so others will know the way?

If that's the case, then *Compassionate Friends* has opened freedom's gates.

Have others walked this path before me to wage their war with grief?

If that's the case, then they have also fought through pain and torment, and have lost their child so sweet.

Is it possible for us to join together? - To fight for our freedom to grieve?

If that's the case, then together we'll march on to try to live our lives in peace.

And together we'll fight the battles of grief - all parents who are sorely bereaved,

And pay tribute to the children we have lost, for they've given us the freedom to grieve.

~ Faye McCord,

In loving memory of my son, Lane McCord

## The Picture



I always see the picture smiling back at me.  
I always see the picture with unending sympathy  
I always see the picture with Gods willing mercy

I always see the picture as my grief

I always see the picture playing a special part in my life

I always see the picture as the only remaining song in life

I always see the picture as the one memory to proceed

I always see the picture as my little daredevil brother

Dedicated to Ryan Duffner - by little angel brother

~by Erica Duffner, Lawrenceville GA

**OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED  
BIRTHDAYS**

**CHILD**

**PARENTS**

|                                |         |                                      |
|--------------------------------|---------|--------------------------------------|
| OLIVIA MAE BUTH.....           | 23..... | TIM & MELANIE BUTH                   |
| MATTHEW ISAAC CVIJANOVICH..... | 40..... | SHERYL CVIJANOVICH                   |
| STEVEN "HERMAN" FESKE.....     | 63..... | ROSEMARY FESKE                       |
| JOHN CHARLES FRISCH.....       | 59..... | ARLEEN FRISCH                        |
| RYAN P GOERTZ.....             | 43..... | JAMES & CHERI GOERTZ                 |
| COLE HALLAND.....              | 36..... | STEVEN & JOAN HALLAND                |
| KYLE KASSMAN.....              | 36..... | TOM & NANCY KASSMAN                  |
| KAMMI THORLAKSON LELAND.....   | 47..... | LYNDA & SVEN MICKELS                 |
| BENJAMIN MERCK.....            | 18..... | MARK & LINDA MERCK                   |
| DENNIS JAMES MULDOON, JR.....  | 54..... | PATRICIA MULDOON                     |
| RYAN DEAN NELSON.....          | 41..... | BECKY NELSON                         |
| BRANDON NILES.....             | 26..... | MARY & MARK TUTTLE                   |
| KENT ALAN PETERSON.....        | 61..... | DEWAYNE PETERSON                     |
| RAND LOREN PIERSALL.....       | 66..... | PERSYS PIERSALL                      |
| REED JOEL PROCHNOW.....        | 46..... | NEIL & KATHLEEN PROCHNOW             |
| THERESA JANE RICHTER.....      | 48..... | RONALD & SUE OLSON                   |
| CHLOE GRACE RONGEN.....        | 10..... | CONNIE & BARRY RONGEN (Grandparents) |
| ANDREW SADEK.....              | 28..... | JOHN & TAMMY SADEK                   |
| TYLER JAMES THOEMKE.....       | 30..... | JAMIE & SHERI THOEMKE                |

Correction to a birthday from last month (October) due to wrong age listed  
RONDA L SMITH.....58.....DORLA HANSON

**ANNIVERSARIES**

**CHILD**

**PARENTS**

|                                     |         |                                      |
|-------------------------------------|---------|--------------------------------------|
| BRIAN BJERKEN.....                  | 15..... | DENNIS & SHIRLEY BJERKEN             |
| BARBARA MAE (STEICHEN) COSSETTE.... | 2.....  | ANGELINE STEICHEN                    |
| RILEY MARK DAHLBERG.....            | 15..... | BLAKE & CHRISTINA DAHLBERG           |
| PAMELA JO ERICKSON.....             | 2.....  | VIRGIL & LUELLE SCHLUETER            |
| GREGORY S GROOTERS.....             | 5.....  | LARRY & HAZEL GROOTERS               |
| HEIDI HELLAND.....                  | 10..... | JOHN & TERRI HELLAND                 |
| TARI L HELLER.....                  | 14..... | RICHARD & CLARE ELLESS               |
| TRAVIS KOENIG.....                  | 1.....  | LAUREL KOENIG                        |
| JESSE ANDREW KOLNES.....            | 4.....  | LEOBA KOLNES                         |
| LANNIE LEE KORNELIUS.....           | 14..... | LEROY & DONNA KORNELIUS              |
| ISIAH KUJANSON.....                 | 2.....  | ARNE & SHAWNA KUJANSON               |
| ERIC C LARSON.....                  | 19..... | CRAIG & BARB LARSON                  |
| BENJAMIN MERCK.....                 | 2.....  | MARK & LINDA MERCK                   |
| KYLE NELSON.....                    | 7.....  | JERRY & YVONNE NELSON                |
| CHLOE GRACE RONGEN.....             | 10..... | CONNIE & BARRY RONGEN (Grandparents) |
| KYLE ROOS.....                      | 1.....  | CHUCK ROOS                           |
| JUSTIN DONALD RUEDIGER.....         | 3.....  | STEVE & CARISSA HAUGEN               |

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.

## SIBLING PAGE

### MOTHER OF SORROW

I hate to look at my mother  
To see her in so much pain  
Wrinkles hiding her countless tears  
That would otherwise pour like rain.  
    I hate to see her hurt so much  
    But silently hold it in  
    Struggling to beat the heartbreak  
    When she knows that she can't win.  
I hate to listen to her cries  
Which she tries so hard not to show  
Grasping on to everything  
I wish she could let go.  
    I hate to watch her smile so bright  
    And know that it's all fake  
    Sure she's "Happy" every day  
    But she's acting for our sake.  
I hate competing with the sorrow  
And I can't bring back my brother  
Drew is up there watching you  
He living, loving and laughing--  
Mother.

~ Kristy Sheldon, TCF/Ashtabula, OH

### FOREVER 13

He would have been a junior  
He should have been on the football team  
He could have been a wrestler  
He might have been.....  
He would have been 17 this year  
He should have been laughing and running  
    about  
He could have been chasing the girls  
He might have been.....  
He would have been blowing his French horn  
He should have been giving his teachers  
    a hard time  
He could have been learning how to drive  
He might have been.....  
Except now he is forever 13.....

~ Lorie Beyl, TCF/Colorado Springs, CO

### I Felt I Was Healed

I felt I was healed, felt I was ok  
Ten years had passed to make me this way.  
Worked with others who were feeling the pain  
So tears and the heartache would soon go away.  
I make the newsletter and work on the slides  
That we watch as we remember the better times.  
But life has a way of throwing a curve  
That rocks to the core and shatters the nerves.  
My brother has died and though he was ill  
A hole has re-opened once again I must fill.  
I know all the steps that take me through grief  
Of the traps to watch out for, oh what a relief.  
Though same it is different, the hurt is still there  
I miss my little brother and wish he were here.

~ Stew Levett, TCF/Pikes Peak Chapter

### A THOUSAND FACES

I walked in wearing your jacket, my arms linked between Mom  
and Dad.  
My hand trembled around the folded pages of my speech.  
I could barely breathe as we sat down in front of your coffin.  
I had asked to speak first. One thousand sets of eyes watched  
every step of my careful pace to the podium.  
My heart pounded, my hands shook the unfolded pages, and  
tears began to stream down my cheeks.  
I stood beside your silence. And listened to the echo of my grief  
into the sobbing crowd.  
I wanted to fall to my knees, pound the wooden floor and  
scream for answers. I wanted to lay down into the madness  
that your death brought me to. But you had always taught  
me to be strong.  
I took a deep breath and continued as if you were standing  
beside me—  
I spoke of your sarcasm, your love for chicks, our childhood  
fights, and our developed friendship. And my memories  
were joined by a laughter that reminded me to remember  
your smile and not this day.  
I wiped my eyes and folded the pages that said goodbye to the  
sixteen years that I spent looking up to you.  
Your favorite song began and echoed from the walls of the same  
gymnasium that used to chant your name on game day.  
I watched your best friends file around you and looked into eyes  
that I had never seen shed tears until today.  
A thousand hearts broke for the shaken spirits of the boys that  
led your procession.  
My hand trembled around the folded pages of my speech.  
And I followed your lead for the last time.

~ Alexandra, TCF/Portland, OR

### LONELY HURTING CHILDREN

"How is your mom doing?"  
Is the basic question asked.  
Sometimes an inquiry about Dad,  
    Bus so sadly seldom  
They do not ask about the siblings  
    They must be so sad.  
    True, the depth of our loss  
    Brings agony and pain.  
But the children, the dear children  
Really do hurt again and again.  
    They lost a brother or sis  
    Their pain is just as real  
    Frustration, anger and fear  
    They, too, go through hell.  
Who is there to comfort them?  
    To give a word of care?  
    Everyone is more concerned  
    About the parents' welfare.  
While the siblings drown in their hurt and pain  
    Not one to hold them near  
And let them know they are not to blame.  
    To uplift and ease their minds from fear.  
    ~ Linda J. Camper, TCF/Colorado Springs, CO

## The Good Fight

Before our son's death turned our lives upside down, I cannot recall spending any time in cemeteries. One or two elderly relatives, who had lived out their span, are in cemeteries now, and their loss is felt at holiday gatherings. When I was a child, our Sunday school class once took a tour of the pre-Revolutionary cemetery behind the historic old church I attended. I remember being shocked at the number of tiny markers for the very young who, our teacher said, were so susceptible to diseases in those colonial days. We were simply told that people had large families then because they knew illness would take some of the children. We were never exposed to the notion that this was a tragedy to these real people of so long ago.

Many years later, when my grandmother was in her eighties, she told me that the child born before her died at the age of three. At the age of thirteen, Grandmother was stunned to find her mother caressing this child's clothing and weeping in the attic of their home in the rolling hills of Kentucky. I was a parent then and I thought, "Well, of course Grandmother's mother was sad, but she had other children." I didn't know, did I? Who among us did?

Now when I go to my son's marker, I examine the other headstones carefully. Did everyone in the family live to an acceptable age? When I find one that clearly indicates the death of a child, I study the parents' markers closely. How long did they have to live without their child? Sometimes the number of years takes my breath away. I am to learn from this. Others "made it." So can I. Without Compassionate Friends I wouldn't have had a clue as to HOW they made it, and I probably would have given up on the effort.

I read the inscriptions on these older markers to see if they provide any clues as to what helped those before me carry on. I found one that summed it up. It read:

"LIVING, YOU MADE IT GOODLIER TO LIVE;  
DEAD, YOU MADE IT EASIER TO DIE."

So—we are to endure. We do know what it was to live, but now we have the added dimensions of courage, love and steadfastness. And, though we no longer hope for our own death as a release from the pain, we, unlike most "other people," will not fear it when we have finished "fighting the good fight."

~ Pat Kuzela, TCF/Atlanta, GA

## Hold Me

I want to cry.  
Just sometime, let me cry.  
Do not demand  
that constant smile from me.  
I know you are  
uneasy with my tears.  
I need to cry.  
Please, do not turn away.  
I promise you  
that I will smile again.  
Tomorrow I will be as light as air  
But hold me now.  
And let my sorrow be.  
Just for today,  
this moment: let me cry.  
~ Sascha Wagner

## Reduce Holiday Anxiety

The holidays are upon us. Office parties, church parties, club parties, party-parties. Pressures to buy, to bake, and to bask in the season are applied from within and without. As the holidays approach, most bereaved parents feel anxiety, apprehension and some little bit of fear. The past is gone along with our beautiful children. We live in the now, the new reality, of holidays without our children.

Newly bereaved parents are especially vulnerable; even seasoned parents can't avoid the momentary tearfulness, the anxiety and the pain of this season completely. But there are ways to cope.

Avoid loud, noisy parties. If you plan to do any shopping, do not go into stores during peak traffic times. Take a friend with you who can help you to focus on what you must buy and then leave.

Avoid depressing and maudlin movies and shows. Do as much or as little as you feel is appropriate. Take "holiday breaks." Do some gardening; this is an ideal time to plant trees and shrubs. Clean out the garage. Stay busy with tasks that are unrelated to the holiday rush. Send cards if you decide you're up to the task. If you're not ready to do this, don't do it. Don't put pressure on yourself to live up to the expectations of others.

Find what is right for you. Pressures from others mean nothing. You choose whether a celebration is in order. You choose how to celebrate. You choose the old traditions or you choose some new ones . . . maybe you choose nothing and decide to go with the flow of the moment. As bereaved parents, you will always remember your child at Christmas, but as the years add up and grief starts to release its grip on your soul, you may find that you can keep your child in your heart and have room for the spirit of Christmas, as well.

Each of us learns to deal with Christmas in our own way. Each year I am a different person with a new perspective on the holidays. This year I may decide to skip it all or immerse myself in the season. My truth is ever changing.

The holidays do get better. Life does get better. The days will gradually become softer and sweeter. The nights will ease into gentleness. Friendships will again have luster, and relationships will become deeper and more meaningful. That is the future for each of us. The present is driven by where we are in our grief. So for this and every Christmas holiday season, be who you are and mark the day as you choose.

May we all have serenity throughout the holiday season and in the years ahead.

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

## God Saw You

God saw you getting tired  
and a cure was not to be,  
so He put His arms around you  
and whispered "Come to Me".  
With tearful eyes we watched you  
and saw you pass away,  
and though we loved you dearly  
we could not make you stay.  
A golden heart stopped beating  
with gentle hands at rest,  
God broke our hearts to prove to us,  
He only takes the best.

Submitted by Sharon Conti, TCF/Katy, TX  
In memory of my son, Jerod Nixon

**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)



“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.

### **In Search of Lost Joy**

Just as it happened in your life, a single moment changed everything and so here I am with you tonight. My son's death took with him all our hopes and dreams. All of us here know that loss, the emptiness that brings us here in search of something to stop the pain, something to stop the tears, something to dream about again. We came tonight as a family to share with each other, loving each other, protecting each other during the storm. I can't think of anything else I'd rather be doing right now than living.

That wasn't always true. After my son's death there were days when all I could do was think about dying, to join my son, or just to relieve my pain. Now there is a freshness about each day that I never understood before. I got to where I am today because of time and a commitment to rediscovering the joy of living.

Time does help fade the fabric of our grief. As time stretches us away from the moment of our child's death, we may begin to grow away from our child. And so we cling to that which we know, even though it tears our heart again and again. Is it not possible that one day some-time in the future, we will begin to understand that joy can return as we remember our child's life, not his death?

We once feared we would never be happy again, that only helplessness and darkness would prevail in our lives, but now ten years later, I can share with you the wonderful discovery that we can do more than survive. Survival is not enough: I want to live. We cannot find words to sooth the hurt; there simply aren't any.

We can, however, build supports and safety nets. Recovery from the death of a child is a matter of choice. Time does help heal over open wounds. Scars form and serve as reminders. Gradually, however, we must learn to live with those scars and, slowly, let them sink in place. Recovery begins to occur when we can learn to reinvest our energies, emotions and love rather than seek to replace it. When we completely understand we did not lose our child, recovery is possible. Our child died, but the love we shared between us can never be destroyed.

I cannot reach out alone. I need the love and strength of my new-found family to be a cheering section and a safety network of caring individuals who will support me if I fail, and who believe strongly enough in me to put me back on track to go on again.

The human spirit has an infinite capacity to survive, endure, and grow. It requires both laughter and tears to thrive and flourish. It requires love and faith, strength and support as well. Hurt and pain have their lessons too, and we cannot rob ourselves of the richness of the tapestry that hurt and love weave together. To eliminate one from the loom is to break the thread and steal away the fabric.

For those of you who are hurting too deeply, whose pain is too fresh, whose child's death is still too close to hear me, I want to give you the message: "HOLD ON, HOLD ON TIGHT." Right now for you, there seems to be little sunshine, little hope and no energy to choose life. So hang on tight.

And if you know parents who are struggling just to hang on, reach out to them right now. Loan them some of your strength, knowing they will loan you some of theirs when you need it. That's what TCF is all about: helping each other through the valley of the shadow, helping each other through the hurt, helping each other through the anger, the pain, the emptiness, the silence, helping each other rediscover life.

~ Darcie D. Sims, PhD, CGC, CHT

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

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 U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
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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.