



The Compassionate Friends

Fargo/Moorhead Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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F-M Area Chapter
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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
October 13th
November 10th

Dates to Remember

Mom's meeting - 7 pm on October 27th
@ Denny's
Annual Worldwide Candle lighting -
December 11th at 7 p.m. local time
Angel Of Hope Memorial Service
December 6th at 7 pm

LOVE GIFTS

Sherry Lassle in memory of her daughter, Jayme Lassle
Carol & Wally Blomberg in memory of their daughter, Bridget Chisaka
Jason & Kristi McSparron in memory of their son, Jesse Skow
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.

Anniversaries of the Heart

"The holiest of all holidays are those kept by ourselves silent and apart;
The secret anniversaries of the heart."
-- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

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 October 27th. For more information, please contact Sheryl at 701-540-3287 or visit our website at www.tcffargomoorhead.org.

"A Gift of Hope"

Human pain does not let go of its grip at one point in time. Rather, it works its way out of our consciousness over time. There is a season of sadness. A season of anger. A season of tranquility. A season of hope. But seasons do not follow one another in a lock-step manner, at least not for those in crisis. The winters and springs of one's life are all jumbled together in a puzzling array. One day we feel as though the dark clouds have lifted, but the next day they have returned. One moment we can smile but a few hours after, the tears emerge... It is true that as we take two steps forward in our journey, we may take one of more steps backward. But when one affirms that the spring thaw will arrive the winter winds seem to lose some of their punch.

How we Survive Our Tragedies, Robert Venigna, 1985

My apologies for a missed birthday in the September newsletter
CHILD PARENTS
HARPER DEKKER BLAKE 12JADEN & MENDI BLAKE

NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL

We are asking, would you please receive your newsletter by email. We do not want to remove anyone from our newsletter mailing list who is benefitting from receiving it. We hope it is a help to you while going through your grief, giving you better understanding of your feelings and letting you know “We need not walk alone”.

We consider this an important function of our program. If you have email, would you consider receiving your newsletter in email format. You will receive your copy earlier if you opt to receive it by email. If you wish to receive your newsletter by email, please email Nancy Teeuwen at fmtnfwnltr@live.com with your full name and your child’s name. **Note:** If you are already receiving the newsletter by email, no action is required.

Glow in the Dark

Upon arriving for my haircut appointment, I went to the restroom. A flowerpot sat on a table with a philodendron spilling over the edges. There was no light source other than the overhead fixture that remained off except when someone came into the room. For a few seconds I focused my attention on the plant wondering, “How does it grow in the dark?”

As I eyed the container of verdant leaves and tossed the question around in my head, my thoughts turned to families of addicts. How can we continue to grow, and even thrive when we’re stuck into the malnourished soil of addiction?

A plant has no choice where it’s planted or potted. It has no control on when, or if, it will be watered and fed plant food. Lack of water and food could result in the plant’s death. Similarly, as a family member of an addict, I had no choice of where my loved one’s decisions would place me. I didn’t die because of my son’s choices; in fact, I continued to grow as a wife, mother and friend in spite of the bleakness of the situation. Initially, though, I withered on the vine when his addiction became obvious. I felt alone, hopeless, helpless and useless. My idyllic upbringing had not prepared me for what lay ahead. But I didn’t shrivel up and turn brown. Shoots of hope sprouted in my darkness, and I carried on, trying to make sense out of the chaos of our family.

Through many years of my addict’s entry into treatment centers, broken promises and relapses, my growth continued. I blossomed when I exposed the darkness to the light of truth. I began to share our family’s story and how we discovered hope in the wasteland of addiction. Listed below are a few ways I established roots: I admitted there was a problem in my family. I confided in some friends who I knew would love and support me regardless of what was happening at home. I sought counseling. Drugs and alcohol were not in my past experiences, and I was ill-equipped to handle the stresses of a young adult addict.

I deepened my faith in God, my Higher Power. I read the Bible and clung to the promises of restoration and redemption I found in scriptures. My prayer life became honest and intentional.

I attended support groups for family members coping with an addict (NarAnon). Other parents struggling to understand their loved ones met together, and we shared our experience, strength and hope.

I realized I could not fix my addict which lifted a million tons off my shoulders. The weight of carrying that burden was more than I could handle many days. I no longer assumed the responsibility for his sobriety. I wrote a ninety-day devotional for families in recovery, or those wanting to be. I looked for an inspirational book for myself, the parent of an addict, and didn’t find anything so I wrote my own based on Jeremiah 30 and 31.

I offered hope and encouragement to other families that recovery is possible and sustainable.

How do we grow in the darkness of addiction? We take the next right step toward accepting we’ve been placed into a situation not of our choosing. We absorb the nourishment that’s available, through heightened faith, 12 Step meetings, sponsors and the fellowship of like minded folks, and blossom in the light of recovery one day at a time.

Blessings and hope for today.

~ by Sharon Cosby

MEMORIES OF OUR CHILD ARE LIKE A ROSE

When a child dies, our memories are held tightly with lots of pain, just like the tightly folded petals of the rose but with the many thorns and pricks causing pain.

As we talk about our child and share memories with others, we begin to open ourselves to healing as the rose petals start to open ever so gradually.

Just as a rose becomes more beautiful as it blooms, so do the memories of our child.

Yes, the thorns are still there and will hurt when touched, but oh how beautiful the rose and oh, how beautiful the memory of our children!

Share the memory of your child, so that memory can start to bloom to become as beautiful as the rose

~ Julie Timmerman, TCF/ Tulsa, OK

TELL + LISTEN = HEALING

The fastest way through grief is to *tell* your story many times and *listen* to many others tell their story. Do these two things and you will begin to **heal**.

Ah, but you say, “People don’t want to hear my story again. They look away when they see me coming.” What do you think our Compassionate Friends meetings are for? Come tell your story over and over. We will listen.

To My Beautiful Daughter

So as you live the life
 We share so far away....
I in my heart the
 Closeness of you, right here
 Everyday....
So may tears
 As my life without
 Your presence hurts
So many tears
 Of joy as you came into
 My life and brought
 Such beauty, kindness
 And so much Love....
So as I long for you,
 Your hugs, your voice,
 Your smile
I in time wish I would
 Have realized I had
 Everything.
I had you...
Time was full of moments
 Of my beautiful daughter
 Teaching me as she
 Lived her life.
Still sharing her love and beauty
 She sometimes stops to
 Visit awhile....
The dragonfly that sat
 Awhile on my hand
 Was a hug of
 Love from above...
To my beautiful daughter
 That continues to give
And is my everything...
I Love you Jayme
 Forever...

~ Sherry Lassle, TCF/Fargo, ND

Honoring Unhappiness

I have re-read the book *Man's Search for Meaning* by Viktor Frankl more times than I can count. In it, Frankl quotes from a paper written by Edith Weisskopf-Joelson, who had been a professor at the University of Georgia. She wrote, "Our current mental-hygiene philosophy stresses the idea that people ought to be happy, that *unhappiness* is a symptom of maladjustment....in the present day culture of the United States, the incurable sufferer is given very little opportunity to be proud of his suffering and to consider it ennobling rather than degrading...so that he is not only unhappy, but also ashamed of being unhappy."

It is my hope that all bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings will have the chance to feel that our unhappiness is honored and respected by others suffering similarly. I hope we will find validation, whether from the embrace of others at chapter meetings, from words read in a newsletter, or from conversations with other bereaved parents and siblings. I hope we will not be ashamed of being unhappy. And when our time is right, I hope we may find some moments of joy and peace even as we keep our grief for our lost children and siblings.

~ Peggi Johnson, TCF/Piedmont Chapter, VA

IN THE BEGINNING

In the beginning we hurt so bad
 We can't think straight.
Our days and nights run together,
 As we cry out for relief
 From the pain that has
 Seemed to swallow us whole.
That pain now accompanies us everywhere.
 There is no place to hide.
 It has taken over our life.
 It knows our name.
 It knows where we live.
It knows that our loved one has died
 And so do we
 Sort of but not really.
We are still looking for them
 To walk in the door,
 To say our name,
 To reach over and give us a hug.
 With every day that passes
 Our longing for them grows.
We do not want to believe that
They died and are not coming back.
That reality chases us relentlessly,
 Until one day their empty chair
 Speaks louder than our denial,
 And the wall begins to break
 Where we have hidden our heart.
 ~ Deb Kosmer, TCF/Portland, OR

Let's Go Home

Let's go home –
My eyes pleaded to my husband.
We don't belong here.
This is crazy – these people are still hurting.
Two, five years later and they are still coming here.
Let's go home. We don't belong here.
We won't, we can't be like that. Perhaps –
If I don't speak,
If I don't tell them why we came –
It won't be true.
But wait... Why are they laughing?
They all lost children, yet they are laughing
at something somehow.
And wait... Why am I nodding at what he's saying?
Why do I feel I must say something to that couple
who are in this nightmare even less time than we?
They all seem to know what I'm feeling –
without my even saying it –
Just not flinching at my tears.
That steady, endless stream of tears that seems to never stop.
Perhaps – One day I'll join their laughter –
Let's wait – Perhaps we shouldn't leave just yet.
 ~ Sandy Fein, TCF/Manhasset, NY

"Grief is like a journey one must take on a winding
mountainside, often seeing the same scenery many times, a
road which eventually leads to somewhere we've never been
before."

~ Gladys M. Hunt

**OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED
BIRTHDAYS**

CHILD		PARENTS
CALVIN JACOB ARMBRUST	30	DAN & SHELLY ARMBRUST
CALVIN JACOB ARMBRUST	30	KIM ARMBRUST
JAMES "JESSY" HABERMAN	13	JIM & HEATHER HABERMAN
MATTHEW TYLER HARRIS	30	WILLIAM & RACHAEL BODIN
ALEXANDER BRENT KLINKHAMMER	35	CHARLES & SANDY KLINKHAMMER
AMY CHRISTINE LARSON	37	DALE & MARILYN LARSON (Gp)
SUE ELLEN LARSON	59	DALE & MARILYN LARSON
JAYME ELIZABETH LASSLE	37	SHERRY LASSLE
DONNA L PFEIFER	69	JUNE L HAGEMEISTER
KYLE ROOS	45	CHUCK ROOS
NICHOLAS J SADEK	36	JOHN & TAMMY SADEK
JESSE DANIEL SCALLON	34	LEE & LUANNE SCALLON
MATTHEW ALBERT SELL	46	DONALD & PAULA SELL
MATTHEW ALBERT SELL	46	LINDA & RICK HINTON
RONDA L SMITH	59	DORLA HANSON
SPENCER TUFTE	13	DAWN & BRANDON TUFTE

ANNIVERSARIES

CHILD		PARENTS
BRIDGET CHISAKA	2	WALLY & CAROL BLOMBERG
DARREN FORSBERG	3	LINDA FORSBERG
WANDA (HINTZ) HAGEN	3	DARLENE SIMONSON
JOHN CLAYTON JACKSON JR.	9	NORMA JACKSON
DANA DAWN KEBLAR	23	DEBORAH FACEY
DARIN M KLABO	4	CRAIG & TERRY KLABO
DAVID MARK KLEINGARTNER	18	LUELLA KLEINGARTNER
ANNIE PAGE LEGGIO	24	JOSEPH LEGGIO
PAUL MORLOCK	6	DELLA MORLOCK
DENNIS JAMES MULDOON, JR.	4	PATRICIA MULDOON
MATTHEW ALLEN OLSON	15	RICHARD & LINDA OLSON
JESSE SKOW	1	KRISTI & JASON MCSPARRON
PATRICK SPENST	2	ALVINA SPENST

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.

DEATH HAS OCCURRED

A death has occurred, and everything is changed by this event.

We are painfully aware that life can never be the same,
that yesterday is over, that relationships once rich have ended.

But there is another way to look upon this truth.

If life went on the same

without the presence of the one who died,
we could only conclude that the life we here remember
made no contribution, filled no space, meant nothing.

The fact that this person left behind a place that cannot be filled
is a high tribute to this individual.

Life can be the same after a trinket has been lost,
but never the same after the loss of a treasure.

~ Paul Iron, TCF/Savannah, GA

SIBLING PAGE

My Sister

I am not sure where to start. My older sister, Lezlie, died on October 1, 1997. It has been a little more than four months and I still catch my breath and start to tear up when someone mentions her name. I am a private griever, I guess. When I heard the news that she was in the ER, I fell to my knees and prayed to God. I told Him I was going to put this in His hands and that it was up to Him now – as if it was not earlier. “She did not make it.” These are the words that I heard my father say through a cloud of tears and pain. While holding my mother, he explained that she was gone. My immediate reaction was to cry. I really did not know what this would mean. I am slowly finding out just what it does.

What do we do now? I wanted to take immediate action, calling relatives, the minister, and helping in a time when my parents needed someone to lean on. I was bound and determined to be the strong one for a while. And I was.

As we made funeral arrangements and memorial plans, I, like the rest of them, sat in silence as the tears and pain flowed from my eyes. It hurt. But I was determined to remain strong for my children and for my family who seemed to be crumbling right before my very eyes. A very difficult thing to do for a little girl who thinks her daddy is the strongest person she has ever known.

I dreaded the viewing at the funeral home. I did not want to go to the funeral home and see her like that, not even one last time. My parents insisted it would be a good thing for all of us. As the time approached, I was more and more frustrated at the prospect of falling apart upon seeing her. However, as we entered the funeral home and went into the room where her body lay at rest, something happened. I could not shed a tear. It was as if my brain and body (and soul, for that matter) went on autopilot. I sat quietly on the first row watching my father fall to his knees and sob. My mother could not speak. My baby sister holding on to them both, in tears. I was on the outside looking in on the strangest and yet saddest heartbreaking moment of my life. But that’s just it: I was on the outside looking in. I was the strong one, but not by choice. I did not consciously decide to lock out my feelings and, yet, the entire episode was painful. I can’t explain my reaction.

I went through the memorial service with minimal tears. I greeted those wishing to personally offer condolences because I know my family was struggling with having to look them in the eyes and share their pain along with their own. But then I saw my friend, Julie. Julie has survived through the same experience I am going through. The key word is survived. As I hugged her, my strength lapsed and I started to cry, sort of uncontrollably. This was good.

Julie told me that “things are never going to get better.” I thought to myself, what a terrible thing to say to someone in my circumstance, but she was right. Her honesty now is appreciated. She was right. Things will never get better, we just learn to handle and cope. I am grateful for her kindness and friendship. We belong to a club that I hope no one will ever have to join. We have lost a piece of ourselves and our family will never be the same. This is a permanent state.

I still cry. I am able to get through a conversation using her name without crying – well, at least sometimes. But there are times; I call them “moments of truth,” that I am starting to experience. The first occurred on December 1, 1997. I was sitting having lunch with my coworkers. We were not talking about anything related to my loss but all of a sudden, I blurted out, “Oh, my God, it’s been two months since my sister died.” I had to get up and run. It’s odd I seem to have this need to get up and bolt

frequently. I mostly control it and move on to something else, but the urge is still present and strong.

There are songs, music, books, and a little newsletter published by The Compassionate Friends that will bring me to uncontrolled grieving. I sit and hold my children as I totally let go of all the pent-up pain and sadness. It’s funny, I have remained strong for them and in my weakest moments they are all I hold on to.

Anyway, these “moments of truth” come frequently.

The closest analogy I can think of to explain this whole experience is that I am like a child whose nose is pressed up against the window pane of life when all of a sudden, the window shatters. I am so busy trying to pick up the pieces to protect the others and insure that no one else gets hurt that I do not realize until much later that my arms and hands are bleeding heavily. I can finally see the devastation and now feel the pain.

~ Kim Bernal, TCF/Sugar Land-Southwest Houston, TX
In Memory of my sister, Lezlie Dyane Davis

What About Me?

Have you ever felt that, as a surviving brother or sister, we are often forgotten? I have felt this way quite often in the last 6 years. Over time, the feeling becomes less and less. Our parents' grief is so much different from ours. No more or less hurtful than ours, but different. They lost their child. I hope that, in my lifetime, I never have to know how that feels. I know how painful it was when Sean died. I don't want to know the pain of having a child die. But, oftentimes, we are “the forgotten mourners.” I love my brother very much, and miss him just as much. I think that people sometimes forget that we are hurting also. My parents were offenders of that too.

I know they know my sister and I were hurting, but they were so wrapped up in what they were feeling that they didn't have time to worry about what we were feeling. I tried so hard to make my parents well again that I neglected my own grief. Pretty much denied it. We really want to make our families “normal” again.

I have had some awful things said to me over the last 6 years. Two weeks after Sean died, someone said to me, “Well, you do still have a sister.” Well, yes, I do still have a sister, but that doesn't lessen the pain of my brother's death, and my sister can't possibly replace my brother. Probably the worst thing anyone has said to me is “Why aren't you over this? Sean has been dead for 6 months.” Well it is not something you just “get over.” I have learned a lot of things over the years, and if I hadn't been in such a state of shock, maybe I would have had some good responses. When I think back on it, I wish I had. I have decided that, from what I have learned, I need to educate people and make them understand that siblings and friends have the right to grieve too.

As surviving siblings and friends, we also have to realize that we need to find a new “normal.” We also need to know that it's okay to feel all of the things that we feel — be it anger, sadness, guilt, or any other emotion.

Just know that you're not crazy or wrong to grieve. Know also that it is all right to think and talk about them when you're ready, not when someone else says or thinks you should be ready. Death and grieving are, unfortunately, a part of life.

~ Traci Morlock, BPUSA, St. Louis, MO

Wanting

I see him standing at the cross walk
books under his left arm
blue jeans, white Element T-shirt
white DC ball cap.
But it's not.
I see him walking
tall thin young man
with short almost shaved head.
But it's not.
I call his cell.
I hear his voice.
I wish his outgoing message was longer.
But it's not.
I sift through a black trash bag
of his unwashed laundry
wanting to smell his essence.
But it's not.
It never will be.
And I want.
~ Wendy Richardson, TCF/Santa Cruz, CA
In Memory of my son, Tyler

Catching Butterflies

It often hurts to come upon reminders of my son
Tho' often since I lost him I would search around for one
Which always brought on sadness and the tears that I'd
shed were caused by names or faces, all things that
I'd dread.
But then one day I came upon a man who'd lost his son
I found that things I ran from, he wouldn't even shun.
But rather he would treasure and I said I wondered why
He told me that he called them "Catching Butterflies."
This view of his intrigued me; I wanted to hear more
And learned that he took all of them and carefully would
store
All of the reminders that I chose to push away
He would tuck deep down inside his heart each and
every day.
Now a name or likeness when catching me off guard
Does not upset me as it did and I don't find it hard
For now instead I see these times as opportunities
To see my son awakened in these new fresh memories.
~ Dottie Williams, TCF/Pittsburgh, PA

EACH LIFE IS LIKE A SONG

A life is like a song we write
In our own tone and key,
Each Life we touch reflects a note
That forms the melody.
We choose the theme and chorus
Of the song to bear our name,
And each will have a special sound,
No two can be the same.
So when someone we love departs,
In memory we find
Their song plays on within the hearts
Of those they leave behind.
By Elma Burns Semko,
Mother to Bobby Burns
*Lovingly lifted from the Northshore/Boston Chapter
August 2005 Newsletter*

Beautiful Dream

Eyes open wide
I awake from a beautiful dream
Within seconds the painful reality of my life sets in
I find myself wanting to scream
Grief so strong
Impossible to explain
Living with a broken heart
Struggling with the pain
Eyes closed tight
I pray for that beautiful dream
A short escape from the painful reality
That makes me want to scream
~ Robert Willis, TCF/Frederick, MD

FEELINGS

We feel sad,
For what we have lost.
We feel happy,
For what we have had.
We feel poor,
For the empty spaces.
We feel rich,
For we have each other.
We will cry,
For what we can't have.
We will laugh,
For our memories abound.
We will hurt,
For the love we can't give.
We will rejoice,
For the love we have received.
We will be restless,
For our lives are not whole.
We will be peaceful,
For we know it is not forever.
~ Annette Hamilton, TCF/Prince George, BC

Thanks for a little while

Thank you for life, for its good times and bad.
Thank you for love, even when I can't feel it.
Thank you for the love (we used to share)
For the arms that held me tight.
Thank you for my family
In faraway places, In different times.
Thank you for the songs we sang,
For the dreams we saved, For the smiles we shared.
Thank you for the strength that eludes me just now.
Thank you for the weakness that sends me to my knees.
Thank you for the searching, the reaching, the hoping.
Thank you for the bonds of memory that hold me in place,
Even when I don't believe in it anymore,
Or...forget what it is all about. Thank you most of all,
For having been blessed with the love I have known,
Even now when I fear I will forget it.
Thank you for memory and
For filling it full measure for me.
It wasn't nearly long enough, but it will have to do.
Thanks for the moments we danced.
Thanks for the little while.

~ Darcie D. Sims, Ph.D

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

Your Name: _____

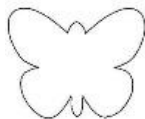
Child's Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Birth Date: _____ Death Date: _____

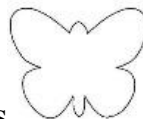
Date: _____

(Signature)

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



Butterfly Decals



“Butterflies are the heaven-sent kisses of an angel.” ~ Author Unknown

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

Butterflies are available in 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.

GRIEF: OUR ACT OF LOVE

“I had a child who died.” How simple these words are, yet how painful they are to say. The death of a child is the harshest blow life has to offer; it destroys our trust in the world at the most basic level. Grief is our total response to the death of a child; our body, mind, emotions and spirit all react to the loss. While many of us wish to stop the intense grief work we are doing, we find it impossible for many reasons.

First, grief is an act of love, not a lack of strength or faith. The more we loved our child, the greater will be our grief. The more integrated our lives were with the life of our child, the more we will miss his or her very presence. The intensity of our grief is often representative of our love.

Second, grief is a necessary process that we must go through in order to maintain our wholeness and sanity. If we do not grieve, we will not heal. One of the earliest and hardest lessons we bereaved parents learn is that men and women grieve differently; women, in general, grieve more openly than do men, and women, on the whole, are more comfortable verbally expressing their feelings of loss. While segments of our culture indicate it is more “manly” not to cry, we know this is not true.

Grief work also helps us to complete unfinished business with our child and close the past relationship that we had. We will never “get over” the loss of our child, nor would we ever really want to. We are who we are partly because of our relationship to that child. Our lives will always be influenced by our son or daughter, but most of us will eventually learn to live a meaningful life, despite our tragedy. Our child will always be with us in spirit and in love, and we often feel a need to hold on to tangible items, such as toys or clothes, to maintain that feeling of closeness. But, intense grief work allows us to let go of the relationship we had and create a new relationship with our child. Our remembrances, love and feelings of oneness with our child can never be destroyed. I cannot see nor touch my Philip, but I vividly remember him. I have completed earthly mothering, but I still have an intense mother-child relationship with my son.

Grief over the death of a child is the hardest work that most of us will ever do. While we all wish for the pain to stop, we need to remember that we grieve intensely because we loved intensely. It is unrealistic to expect that grief to ever totally go away, because the love we have for our child will never go away. Our grief is an act of love and is nothing for which we should be ashamed.

~ Elaine Grier, TCF/Atlanta, GA
In Memory of my son, Philip

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
Librarian	Contact Us to Volunteer		

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

TELEPHONE FRIENDS

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

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

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

Love gift given in Memory/Honor of _____

Name _____

Address _____

Relationship _____ Born _____ Died _____

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