



The Compassionate Friends

Fargo/Moorhead Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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Newsletter Editor - Nancy Teeuwen 701-730-0805

The F-M Area Chapter of The Compassionate Friends meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. at
FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH
127 2ND AVE E
WEST FARGO, ND

Please enter on the west side. Our meeting is in the Fellowship Hall - lower level, west side
Meetings for 2023 will be quarterly instead of monthly

Next Meeting & Topic

October 12, 2023 – Due to the September meeting was cancelled.
December 14, 2023 - Candle Lighting

Dates to Remember

Mom's meeting – 6:30 pm on October 26th @ Randy's Diner Too
Annual Worldwide Candle lighting - December 10th at 7 p.m. local time
Angel Of Hope Memorial Service
December 6th at 7 p.m.

LOVE

"Let grief have its place among the living as a symbol of how much you loved." ~ Darcie Sims

Our Mom's group generally meets on the 4th Thursday of the month. This month we are meeting at 6:30 pm at Randy's Diner Too, 641 32nd Ave W, West 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 26th. For more information, please contact Sheryl at 701-540-3287 or visit our website at tcffargomoorhead.org.

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 GIFTS

Brenda Kluth in memory of her son, Brandon Kluth
Grace Wendt in memory of her son, John Wendt
Roxann Medenwald in memory of her son, Jeremiah Medenwald
Teri Nyhus in memory of her son, Jason, Nyhus
Janice Aaberg in memory of her son, Jordan Aaberg
Carol & Wally Blomberg in memory of their daughter, Bridget Chisaka
Sherry Lassel in memory of her daughter, Jayme Lassel
Dorla Hanson, in memory of her daughter, Ronda Lo Smith
Jan Kester in memory of her son, Todd M Kester
Dean & Diane Bauck in memory of their son, Davin Bauck

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.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS is the hospital where my broken bones were reset and my wounds cared for and dressed with healing ointment. My fears were eased. Now I have been thrust into the hurting and wounded, and I find the grace is there to touch, to hug, to dress a wound. I want to say "thank you" my compassionate friends.

~ Kathi Barnhill

Once upon a time, I made this random list of 64 Things I Wish Someone Had Told Me About Grief. In response, our readers shared about a zillion things they would add to the list. With December upon us, we've been inspired me to make another list about grief at the holidays, in hopes that we may get a zillion more comments with your thoughts and suggestions for coping.

So here it is: 64 Tips for Coping with Grief at the Holidays. Please share with us in the comments what has worked for you in holidays past, or how you plan to cope with the holidays this year. The holidays are tough for all of us, so the least we can do is share our tips and tricks with one another to make the season just a smidge more tolerable.

64 Tips for Coping with Grief at the Holiday

1. Acknowledge that the holidays will be different and hard.
2. Decide which traditions you want to keep.
3. Decide which traditions you want to change.
4. Create a new tradition in memory of your loved one.
5. Decide where you want to spend the holidays. You may want to switch up the location, or it may be of comfort to keep it the same. Either way, make a conscious decision about location.
6. Plan ahead and communicate with the people you will spend the holiday with in advance, to make sure everyone is in agreement about traditions and plans.
7. Remember that not everyone will be grieving the same way you are grieving.
8. Remember that the way others will want to spend the holiday may not match how you want to spend the holiday.
9. Put out a 'memory stocking', 'memory box', or another special place where you and others can write down memories you treasure. Pick a time to read them together.
10. Light a candle in your home in memory of the person you've lost.
11. Include one of your loved one's favorite dishes in your holiday meal.
12. Be honest. Tell people what you DO and DON'T want to do for the holidays.
13. Make a donation to a charity that was important to your loved one in their name.
14. Buy a gift you would have given to your loved one and donate it to a local charity.
15. If you are feeling really ambitious, adopt a family in memory of your loved one. This can often be done through a church, salvation army, or Goodwill.
16. See a counselor. Maybe you've been putting it off. The holidays are especially tough, so this may be the time to talk to someone.
17. Pick a few special items that belonged to your loved one and gift them to friends or family who will appreciate them.
18. Make a memorial ornament, wreath, or other decoration in honor of your loved one.
19. If you have been having a hard time parting with your loved one's clothing, use the holidays as an opportunity to donate some items to a homeless shelter or other charity.
20. Send a holiday card to friends of your loved one who you may regret having lost touch with.
21. Visit your loved one's gravesite and leave a grave blanket, wreath, poinsettia, or another meaningful holiday item.
22. Play your loved one's favorite holiday music.
23. If your loved one hated holiday music, that's okay! Play whatever music they loved.
24. Journal when you are having an especially bad day.
25. Skip holiday events if you are in holiday overload.
26. Don't feel guilty about skipping events if you're experiencing holiday overload!
27. Don't get trapped. When you go to holiday events, drive yourself so you can leave if it gets to be too much.
28. Pull out old photo albums and spend some time on the holiday looking at photos.
29. Talk to kids about the holidays. It can be confusing for kids that the holidays can be both happy and sad after a death. Let them know it is okay to enjoy the holiday, and it is okay to be sad.
30. Make a dish that your loved one used to make. Don't get discouraged if you try to make their dish and you fail. We've all been there (or, at least I've been there!).
31. Leave an empty seat at the holiday table in memory of your loved one.
32. If leaving an empty seat is too depressing, invite someone who doesn't have any family to spend the holiday with.
33. Don't send holiday cards this year if it is too sad or overwhelming.
34. Don't feel guilty about not sending holiday cards!
35. Create a 'dear photograph' with a photo of a holiday past.
36. Skip or minimize gifts. After a death, material things can seem less meaningful and the mall can seem especially stressful. Talk as a family and decide whether you truly want to exchange gifts this year.
37. Put out a photo table with photos of your loved one at holiday celebrations in the past.
38. Go to a grief group. When everyone looks so gosh-darn filled with holiday cheer, sometimes it is helpful to talk with others who are struggling.
39. Skip (or minimize) the decorations if they are too much this year. Don't worry, you'll see plenty of decorations outside your house.
40. Don't feel guilty if you skip or minimize the decorations!

41. Remember that crying is okay. The holidays are everywhere and who knows what may trigger a cry-fest. We've all been there and it's okay to cry (even if you are in the sock aisle at Target).
42. Volunteer in your loved one's memory.
43. Let your perfectionism go. If you always have the perfect tree, perfectly wrapped gifts, and perfect table, accept that this year may not be perfect and that is a-okay. I know this is easier said than done for you type-As, but give it a try.
44. Ignore people who want to tell you what you "should" do for the holiday. Listen to yourself, trust yourself, communicate with your family, and do what works for you.
45. Seek gratitude. I am the queen of holiday funks, so I know this is tough. But try to find one daily gratitude throughout the holiday season. Write it down, photograph it, share it on facebook. Whatever. Just look for the little things.
46. Watch the food. Food can make us feel better in the short term (damn you, dopamine!) until we feel like crap later that we ate that whole tin of holiday cookies. Don't deprive yourself, but be careful that you don't let food become your holiday comfort.
47. Watch the booze. Alcohol can become a fast friend when we are grieving. If that holiday party is getting to be too much, head home instead of to the open bar.
48. If you are stressed about making the holiday dinner, ask someone else to cook or buy dinner this year.
49. If you are stressed about the crowds at the mall, cut back on gifts or do your shopping online.
50. Splurge on a gift for you. Grief can make us feel a little entitled and self-involved, and that is okay sometimes (within reason, of course). Splurge on a holiday gift for yourself this year... and make it a good one!
51. Say yes to help. There will be people who want to help and may offer their support. Take them up on their offers.
52. Ask for help. If people aren't offering, ask. This can be super-hard if it isn't your style, but it's important. Asking others to help with cooking, shopping, or decorating can be a big relief.
53. Have a moment of silence during your holiday prayer or toast in memory of your loved one.
54. Donate a holiday meal to a family in need through a local church, salvation army, or department of social services.
55. Identify the people who will be able to help and support you during the holidays and identify who may cause you more stress. Try to spend more time with the former group and less with the latter.
56. Make some quiet time for yourself. The holidays can be hectic, so make quiet time for yourself to journal, meditate, listen to music, etc.
57. Practice self-care. I know, how cliché. But it's true: Whatever it is that helps you recharge, do it. You can find some self-care tips here.
58. Support kids by doing a memorial grief activity together.
59. Donate altar flowers or other holiday decorations at your place of worship in memory of your loved one.
60. Prioritize and don't overcommit. When the holidays are filled with so many parties, dinners, and events, save your energy for those that are most important. Look at everything you have to do and rank them in order of importance. Plan for the most important and skip the rest.
61. Make a list and check it twice. Grief makes it harder for us to concentrate and remember things. When you have a lot going on at the holidays, make a list even if you aren't usually a list-maker, and write things on the calendar. And here are 64 Tips for Coping with Forgetfulness in Grief.
62. Skip the holidays. Really. If you just can't face the holiday, it's okay to take a break this year. Before you get to this extreme, consider if you could just simplify your holiday. If you do skip, still make a plan. Decide if you will still see friends or family, go see a new movie, or make another plan.
63. Enjoy yourself! The holidays will be tough, but there will also be love and joy.
64. Remember, it is okay to be happy. This doesn't diminish how much you love and miss the person who isn't there this holiday. Don't feel guilty for the joy you do find this holiday season.

<https://whatsyourgrief.com/64-tips-grief-at-the-holidays/>

"Loss leaves us empty – but learn not to close your heart and mind in grief. Allow life to replenish you. When sorrow comes it seems impossible – but new joys wait to fill the void."

~ Pam Brown

A Note from our Chapter Leader:

Sheryl, Nancy and I have all decided that it is time for us to step down from our roles and let someone else take over our Compassionate Friends Chapter. Sheryl will be leaving her position as Secretary, database administrator and the webmaster at the end of this year. Nancy will be stepping down from her role as Newsletter Editor at the end of June 2024 and I will be stepping down as Chapter Leader at the end of March of 2024. We are all very thankful for TCF and all of the support we received when we lost our children and all of the wonderful lifetime friends we have gained through the years.

We would love to talk to anyone who is interested in taking over these positions and give you an outline of our duties. Please feel free to contact me or Sheryl.

~ Kara Bailey



OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED BIRTHDAYS

CHILD		PARENTS
CALVIN JACOB ARMBRUST.....	31	DAN & SHELLY ARMBRUST
CALVIN JACOB ARMBRUST.....	31	KIM ARMBRUST
MATTHEW TYLER HARRIS	31	WILLIAM & RACHAEL BODIN
PATRICK JACOB "JAKE" HECKER.....	60	PATRICK HECKER
ALEXANDER BRENT KLINKHAMMER	36	CHARLES & SANDY KLINKHAMMER
AMY CHRISTINE LARSON	38	DALE & MARILYN LARSON (Gp)
SUE ELLEN LARSON	60	DALE & MARILYN LARSON
JAYME ELIZABETH LASSLE	38	SHERRY LASSLE
TYLER ROURKE RICHARDSON	27	JENNIFER RICHARDSON SMITH
KYLE ROOS	46	CHUCK ROOS
NICHOLAS J SADEK	37	JOHN & TAMMY SADEK
JESSE DANIEL SCALLON	35	LEE & LUANNE SCALLON
RONDA L SMITH	60	DORLA HANSON

ANNIVERSARIES

CHILD		PARENTS
BRIDGET CHISAKA	3	WALLY & CAROL BLOMBERG
WANDA (HINTZ) HAGEN	4	DARLENE SIMONSON
KATIE JEAN JOHNSON	2	STAN & PAM JOHNSON
DANA DAWN KEBLAR	24	DEBORAH FACEY
DARIN M KLABO	5	CRAIG & TERRY KLABO
DAVID MARK KLEINGARTNER.....	19	LUELLA KLEINGARTNER
ANNIE PAGE LEGGIO.....	25	JOSEPH LEGGIO
PAUL MORLOCK.....	7	DELLA MORLOCK
DENNIS JAMES MULDOON, JR	5	PATRICIA MULDOON
MATTHEW ALLEN OLSON.....	16	RICHARD & LINDA OLSON
JESSE SKOW.....	2	KRISTI & JASON MCSPARRON
PATRICK SPENST.....	3	ALVINA SPENST

Please check out our Chapter website's page for 'Our Beloved Children'. 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.

French Toast

I stand here before the stove. All the ingredients are here. The eggs, the milk, vanilla, cinnamon, and sugar. The frying pan is heating slowly, melting the butter and still I stand in my robe and slippers.

I pick up an egg to break it in the bowl, but I just can't do it. I want so much to fix french toast because my husband loves it so. Just like my son did all his life, right up until he died. I've lived this scene so many times since then, always with a tear and a sigh.

We'd had french toast at least once a week for more years than I can remember. How they ate! I'd laugh and complain because I had to cook so much.

Once, in Florida when we had french toast for breakfast in a restaurant with friends, he said. "This is ok, but you ought to taste my mom's!" I can still hear him saying it.

Now I just can't do it, I cannot cook french toast! My husband never asks, and while I stand before the stove and weep he pretends not to notice. But I know he understands. I just can't cook french toast...NOT YET.

~ Fay Harden, "Songs from the Edge"

SIBLING PAGE

Who Am I Now?

You and I we're a Team,
It seems like we fought against the odds,
You and I, we'd paint rainbows when
The world would fall apart
We'd laugh and play all day,
And make angels in the snow.
We were two, You and I,
Me and You.
Who and I now without you,
Who will I turn out to be?
I stand alone, I'm broken in two
Doesn't anybody realize
How much I'm missing you?
You and I, we'd play the music box,
And giggle in the sand.
You and I, we'd look for shooting stars,
When our fears got out of hand.
We'd close our eyes real tight,
And make a secret plan.
We were two,
You and I,
Me and You.
You're still with me,
Like the air I breathe.
And the Sun that fills the Sky
Forever, You and I.
By Paul Alexander

A Letter to My Brother

Suddenly you're gone. I'm still here. Why? How can this be? Someone tell me the reason, the answer.

How can I fill the void, the space once so full of life? What will I do? How will I be strong for others when the sting of pain is so real, so near?

Though everyone seems calm, my soul screams at the injustice, the unfairness of losing you. I miss you. I think of you every day and feel you in my heart always.

Whatever the reason for your leaving, I know your living had a reason. Despite the brevity of your life, you lived a lifetime's worth. You blessed us with your presence, your specialness.

I have only to think of you to feel the joy you've left as a legacy. You shaped the purpose of my life. I can see the world through your eyes.

~ Robin Holemon, TCF/Tuscaloosa, AL

A Tribute

I think of you in silence
My feelings seldom show,
But how it hurts to lose you
No one will ever know.
I hope there is eternal life,
So we can meet again.
I not only lost my brother,
I lost my very best friend.
The reason you left so early
I'll never understand why.
I just wish I'd known
You were never coming back
'cause I would have said goodbye.
Martha King - TCF/Concord NH

Two Viewpoints

The following letter, signed "Sibling," appeared in the Louisville, KY newsletter. It is a poignant expression of love and pain that is typical of siblings' reactions. It is hoped that, for those of you with teenagers, it will offer clues leading to freer communications and sharing of feelings.

Dear Parents of "Compassionate Friends":

I am writing to let you know how I feel and maybe how some of the other siblings feel. There have been times when my parents start really getting extra down about my brother. I usually leave the room. I feel that no matter how hard I try, I will say or do something that will hurt them more, or that they won't understand what I'm really trying to say. They already feel enough pain. I really love them and I understand enough about how they hurt, but I'm just not good at saying what I feel. It seems like it never sounds right. I also hold my emotions back from them. I always hear it is best to let it out, and I do, but not in front of my parents. I'm afraid they might try to hold their emotions back in front of me, so I won't get upset. I've had rough times for the past couple of years, and I'm still having hard times, so I'm always afraid they will hold back if they see me getting upset. I know that would just hurt them more when they try to hold it back. I love to talk about the good times my brother and I had, but I'd just rather be alone when I cry for him. Just once in a while my sister and I can talk about him, but that's the only person I can really talk to. I hope and pray with all my heart that my parents will understand, but I just can't talk to them. I miss my brother a lot, more than I think they really realize. I love and care for them too much to go and upset them even more. Maybe I'm wrong, but please parents, understand how I feel. May we always be close.

Love, Sibling

KEITH - with all my love - Lisa

I love you and I miss you –
just wish I could kiss you.
I miss you every morning,
I miss you every day.
I miss you every night –
Just want to hold you tight.
I hope you know how much I care,
now your memory lives on around me,
each and every day.
Just wish you were here beside me,
listening to what I have to say.
~ Lisa Ann Kline, TCF/Valley Forge, PA
for brother Keith Kline 1974 - 1995

TO MY SISTER

You touched us all, you loved us all,
Forever giving, forever caring,
Forever forgiving.
Never wanting in return.
Blessed are those who shared your life
Rich are those who carry your memories.
Please rest now; your chores we will finish.
'Til we meet again . . .
~ Cindy Keltz, TCF/Arlington Heights IL

The Golden Gate Bridge: Still Beautiful

On May 23rd, 1995 my son jumped off the Golden Gate Bridge [in San Francisco]. Tempting as it is to believe he'd still be alive had there been a barrier, I think it would be naive. In my despair I wanted to blame the psychiatrist who refused to see him because he'd missed some appointments, the girlfriend who'd ended their relationship just two days prior to his jump, the crisis center at the hospital where he'd gone for help and who could have kept him had they read the signs right, but didn't; myself, (especially myself), for flawed parenting. But never did I blame the bridge! In the end it was his decision. In his farewell note, he said he was going to electrocute himself. What made him change his mind? I don't know, but I believe it was the deed, not the method, that he was determined to execute. People who really want to die find a way. So while a barrier would deter suicides on the bridge, it would hardly deter suicides. Should we eliminate tall buildings, parking structures, automobile exhaust pipes, ropes?

In spite of very sad memories, I still appreciate the beauty of the bridge. People from all over the world enjoy the vistas from this compelling structure. Is it fair to impair the visibility in a futile effort to control deaths from the bridge? The bridge is for the living, too.

~ Carol Sheldon, TCF/Marin County, California

THE GRIEF OF A PARENT WHO HAS LOST AN INFANT

To experience the loss of an infant is to grieve for what never was. After all to the months of anticipation and preparation, the actual birth of a child brings the feeling of hope and fulfillment. Should that child be stillborn, or die hours, days or even months later, the unrealized dreams become a source of pain for the parents. No parent ever expects to outlive his child: the death of an infant is often the loss of a child unknown even to his parents. The expected stages of grief (guilt, disbelief, anger, etc.) can have new directions for the parents who have lost an infant.

1. SHAME & GUILT -- Especially if the infant was stillborn or had a birth defect, the mother may feel she has failed as a woman, "Other women have live, normal babies, why can't I?" Should an infant die months after birth, parents find it hard to resolve feelings that it was their fault.

2. NO MEMORIES -- Parents may only have "souvenirs of an occasion" (birth certificate, I.D. bracelet) by which to remember their child. If the infant is older they may have pictures and a few belongings, but they may still feel they hadn't really gotten to know their child.

3. LONELINESS IN GRIEF -- It is hard for friends and relatives to share your grief for a child they never knew. If the child is a newborn they may give the impression that you are grieving unnecessarily over a non-person. They hope that you "forget this baby" and "have another one."

4. NEGLECTED FATHER -- Too often the sympathies of professionals and friends are directed mainly to the mother. It is important to remember that the father had made plans for this baby too.

5. MOTHERS vs. FATHERS -- Since the mother has bonded with her child all during pregnancy, her grief may be much deeper than the father who only came to know this child after birth. It may be difficult for a father to understand why his wife's grief is so profound and so prolonged.

By Claire McGaughey and Sue Shelley
TCF Infant Group, St. Louis, MO

HEALING VERSUS RECOVERY

I have heard the terms "recovery" and "healing" used interchangeably to refer to the goal of processing grief. I would like to propose the idea that recovery carries with it the assumption of an injury or illness and that when the necessary repair has taken place, the person will return basically to the same person he was previous to the injury or illness.

When a child dies, there is, indeed, an injury of massive proportions. All systems--physical, mental, and spiritual--are affected. There is physical pain, emotional retching, spiritual upheaval, and struggling. All this may be occurring simultaneously. Though there may not be bleeding in the physical sense, there is emotional hemorrhaging. The body and psyche are in crisis. Bereaved parents are often unable to eat; they may experience sleep disturbances and disorientation. Believe it or not, all these reactions are normal. Grief is a normal part of life. This is not a mental illness or some chemical imbalance of the brain. What is not normal is to experience the death of a child.

The major difference between recovery and healing is that the goal is not to return to who we were before our child died. That goal is impossible to achieve. To continue to try to achieve a goal of recovery is to assume that life will be basically the same with a few minor adjustments. We'll set one less place at the table, buy less food, feel sad on holidays, cry a bit more. Our lives have been permanently and irrevocably changed. Part of the healing process is accepting that not only has our life changed, but that we are, in fact, becoming different people. The becoming is the healing.

During this process, we examine every facet of our lives and our belief systems. This is a journey, not a "repair." By living through this journey, we become different people. True, we may basically look the same, but we are not the same as before our child died. We look at life in a new way. Our interests change and our priorities change. We will never look at a child the same again. We have a new and deeper level of understanding and compassion for those experiencing pain--all kinds of pain. We have a different understanding of spirituality. We ourselves feel new and different. We carry some of the old person with us through the healing process, but we emerge different. We are healed, not recovered.

~ Bridie Tracy, TCF/Shoreline Chapter, CT

Fleeting pictures cross my mind

Fleeting pictures cross my mind
Your smile imprinted on my heart
So very long since I heard your voice...
You would be 21 today.

What would you do, where would we celebrate?
The early piercing agony of losing you is different
Replaced by a yearning so deep, and a longing so
strong

To hold you in my arms,
Cradle your head on my chest
And whisper
"Happy birthday my darlin',
I miss you."

~Charisse Smith, TCF/Tyler, TX

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

Your Name: _____

Child's Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Birth Date: _____ Death Date: _____

Date: _____

(Signature)

Please return to: The Compassionate Friends of F-M Area, PO Box 10686, Fargo ND 58106

(If you have already submitted a permission slip within the past 4 years, you do not need to submit another one.)

My Witch and My Angel

For Zoë Halloween is just about as good as it gets. Not much in my daughter's world beats candy, costumes, friends, make-up, and staying up late even on a school night. Life at age six can be gloriously simple.

But I don't know much of what my son Max thought of Halloween. When he died at age two, he only had one real "trick-or-treat" to his credit. That year—1987—I dressed him in a pumpkin costume and we traipsed to a few neighbors. I took far too many pictures. Max was a fiend for sweets and with the candy ration lifted for the evening, he had to be living well.

I imagine that year would have been his last dressed as a mommy-pleasing pumpkin. At three or four I knew he would demand Ninja or pirate costumes; I would have laughingly bought them and maybe even the plastic sword. I would have let him paint grotesque stitches across his nose and wear fangs that glowed in the dark.

Instead, this is Zoë's year to cast aside the girly version of Max's pumpkin cap. The beloved pink princess frills and red nail polish are being exchanged for a witch hat and black glue-on fingernails sharpened into talons. For the first time, she wants to be Scary and Ugly. With mahogany lipstick and smoky eyes, she will fly out the door in less than a month to cross one more threshold that her brother did not.

I can see the evening now. As I assemble face paints on the counter, I will take a deep breath—the same one I take every year at every holiday and milestone. With my unsteady hand I will design witchy warts and create wrinkles on Zoë's perfect face. I will declare her the Scariest and Ugliest of All.

But as I help my little witch into her costume, I know my eyes will fill with tears. I will think about the years that were supposed to be: a young boy as Dracula, a 13 year-old teen in baggy clothes escorting his little witch-sister down the block. Who would he be now, the toddler we knew, the boy we lost? What would our life be like if the scary things were still just make-believe?

Zoë will see my tears, but she won't be alarmed: in our family's emotional lexicon, sad and happy often go together and crying is as OK as laughing. She will ask me why I'm sad and I will tell her the truth: I am thinking about Max and wishing he could be here.

And although she is now the mean and fierce Witch Zoë, she will nod her head with understanding. Her plastic nails will lightly graze my arm as she reaches to pat me. Suddenly the frown on her face will disappear and she repeats what has become her annual Halloween revelation: "Mommy, it's OK. Don't forget that Max can go 'trick-or-treat' as an angel." She describes a glittering figure, luminous wings aflutter, giant treat bag at the ready. I smile at the idea and the moment passes.

Later, I light the candle in the pumpkin and watch Zoë skip next door to show off her costume. She heads up the sidewalk, stopping halfway to turn and wave to me. She makes her scariest face and yells, "Mom—take my picture!" I raise my camera and look through the viewfinder. As the flash glows briefly in the dusk, I see a beautiful angel standing in the shadows beside her. But this angel doesn't wear white and his wings have been clipped. I am sure he never had a golden halo. He is a small chubby boy with a jack-o-lantern face on his tummy and chocolate on his fingers. It is 1987 and he is having a really great Halloween.

Just like his sister.

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In memory of Max

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

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**The
Compassionate
Friends**
Fargo/Moorhead Area Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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

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

FARGO-MOORHEAD COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS BOARD

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN THE BOARD AT ANY TIME!

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

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

TELEPHONE FRIENDS

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

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

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

Love gift given in Memory/Honor of _____

Name _____

Address _____

Relationship _____ Born _____ Died _____

NOTE: By giving a love gift, you are giving us permission to include your child(ren) in our monthly birthdays and anniversaries for a period of 18 months.