



The Compassionate Friends

Fargo/Moorhead Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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The F-M Area Chapter of The Compassionate Friends meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. at
FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH
127 2ND AVE E
WEST FARGO, ND
Please enter on the West side. Our meeting is in the Fellowship Hall - lower level, west side.

Upcoming Meetings
September 14th
October 12th

Dates to Remember

Mom's meeting - 7 pm on September 28th @ Fry'n Pan
Annual Worldwide Candlelighting - December 10, 2017 7 p.m. local time

LOVE GIFTS

Karen Boyes in memory of her daughter, Kelly Boyes
Don & Linda Bartsch in memory of their son, Brent Bartsch
Carol & Daniel Winter in memory of their son, Matthew Winter
Jim, Shawn Alex, & Elinah Miller in memory of Lowel Baldock
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.

MEMORIES ARE TREASURES
NO ONE CAN STEAL.
DEATH IS A HEARTACHE
NOTHING CAN HEAL.
SOME MAY FORGET YOU,
NOW THAT YOU ARE GONE.
BUT WE WILL REMEMBER NO
MATTER HOW LONG!
Lovingly Lifted from Pekin
Chapter Newsletter Sept. '96

OUR CREDO

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope. The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain, just as your hope becomes my hope. We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances. We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships. We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief, but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope. Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength, while some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression, while others radiate an inner peace. But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died. We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building a future together. We reach out to each other in love to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow.

WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE.
WE ARE THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS. ©2007

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

Our Mom's group generally meets on the 4th Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm at the Fryn' Pan restaurant, 300 Main Avenue, 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 September 28th. For more information please contact Sheryl at 701-540-3287 or sherylcv13@msn.com.

Grandparent's Day is the second Sunday in September. Bereaved Grandparents have a double burden. They hurt because their precious grandchild is dead and they hurt because their child is desolate. They feel helpless and frustrated in addition to their pain. If you know a grandparent who might benefit from our Compassionate Friends meetings or newsletters, be sure to pass the word on or share this newsletter. Their grief also needs to be recognized and shared.

Grief is a solitary journey. No one but you knows how great the hurt is. No one but you can know the gaping hole left in your life when someone you know has died. And no one but you can mourn the silence that was once filled with laughter and song. It is the nature of love and of death to touch every person in a totally unique way. Comfort comes from knowing that people have made the same journey. And solace comes from understanding how others have learned to sing again.

~ Helen Steiner Rice

A Fitting Tribute

Came the darkness of new winter
We huddled together in frozen disbelief
Lowering your precious vessel into cold unfeeling earth.
No bird sang nor shone the sun to cast mocking shadows on
our despair.
A light went out in the world that day
Leaving us to shiver in the blackness of your absence.

Four seasons of our sadness have passed since that bleak
day.
And now we return to put cold stone above your head.
It does not seem a fitting monument for a man of joy.
Too many tears have been shed,
I can weep no more.

Others may not believe
But every day your spirit comforts me.
Your voice still speaks within my heart.
And while I may long for the warmth of your hands on my
shoulders
I can feel your workings in God's plan.
I believe with perfect faith that no loss is forever.

Today I come to bury my grief
Tomorrow may we rejoice that you have lived and loved us
Erecting a monument of joy in life's celebration
Singing a eulogy of love for the broken-hearted,
Lighting an eternal flame of hope for those in despair.
In your loving memory let us seek to perfect the world
And in so doing, perfect ourselves.

I believe with perfect faith
That you are forever.
Your body may lie in this sorrowful ground,
But your spirit soars with the eagles
Still rages at injustice
Reaches out in loving kindness
Dances with the ecstasy of life that never ends,
And laughs deep in the belly to cleanse us of our mortal
sadness.

~ Judy Gradford, TCF/Rochester, NY

SCHOOL IS OPENING

For some of us this is a period of deep, unuttered hurt.
Only the pain of the holidays may be deeper.

As these doors open once again, and as he opening
weeks pass, let us remember and reach out to those for
whom the school bell is no longer calling. For these parents,
that is an endless tolling.

Let us all offer the assuring hope that today's doleful
tolling will instead, someday, become an evoker of
memories... remembered images that will dance upon your
heart, forming an echo of love on which healing may poise
itself to soar, to bring the darkness of pain to light.

~ Don Hackett, TCF/Hingham, MA

"No one's death comes to pass without making some
impression, and those close to the deceased inherit part of
the liberated soul and become richer in their humanness."

~ Robert Oxton Bolt -, "Man for All Seasons"

What Does It Mean?

Why do we say committed suicide? I mean, why not say she
committed love or he committed laughter? Words uttered from mouths
removed having never tasted it wreak a curious kind of havoc in the
hearts of many survivors.

And the breach that causes such offense along with the need to
stigmatize is it not more insult to our vanity, more reminder of our
frailty than offense to humanity?

To die of affliction like any ailing body tattered, torn, on the brink
beyond finding any link so racked with pain no option remains but we
in horror that life could so test and terrified of who might be next
shrink away, heaping judgments on all who've left crossing a border,
taboo.

And I ask you when does one commit the act? Just how do we read
the walking dead turning away from the fullness of longing that
signifies a life? And how to view the random stuffing, heady
diversions, walls we build around our hearts, these various numbings
we engage hoping to soften the edge of pain that is the human
condition.

By Kristen Spexarth

(Published in TCF's "We Need Not Walk Alone" magazine, Fall 2008)

The Timing of Grief

Folks say that there's been enough time
For me to be beyond my grief.
There are those who think it's a crime
That I have not complete relief.

I know I'm better, happier now
Than when bereavement came to me.
But life has trouble knowing how
To be as it was formerly.

I'm thankful folks can understand
That healing takes not months but years.
And yet some folks would now have banned
That I should ever be in tears.

Yes, grief will heal, though it be slow;
Yet, grief continues, though it's less.
But this our friends could only know
If they've been through it, I confess.

For once, I too, thought time would heal
And back to normal I would go
Now death and grief are very real!
But how, without them, can one know?

~ Robert Gloor, TCF/Tuscaloosa, AL

Like Barley Bending

Like barley bending
In low fields by the sea --
Singing in the harsh winds,
Ceaselessly;
Like barley bending
And rising again --
So will I, unbroken,
Rise from pain;
So will I, softly,
Day long, night long --
Change my sorrow
Into song.
by Sara Teasdale

SEPTEMBER MEMORIES

Many of our new members have lost children of school age. Even for those whose children died before they could go to school or after they finished with school, September often brings painful memories. Seeing children with brand new clothes and the latest craze in lunch boxes and book bags, lined up for the bus brings back memories for all of us. For some, we see children our child's age, progressing to the next grade when he or she will never have that experience. For some, we remember putting our child on that bus, the last minute rush to replace outgrown clothes and buy school supplies. For some, the pain is from the dreams we had of seeing our child go to school, dreams that our child never lived long enough to bring to fruition.

Some of us have younger children who are now "passing" in age our dead child, who should have been the older brother or sister. In my case, I have one daughter left and I remember shopping for back-to-school clothes for two. I can't help but wonder what size Colleen would be wearing now. She'd be 12. Colleen rode in one of those little buses because she was handicapped. My mom used to hold her at the front door of her house, swaying back and forth saying, "Tick tock, here comes the bus." I often think of that when I notice one of those little buses. Even after 5 years, I still look for #77, her bus.

I guess what I'm trying to say is two things. First, we're all in this together. We all have the same pains, just different variations. Second, we all have to expect that moments of nostalgia and longing will be with us ALWAYS. The pain does dull, somewhat, with the years, but tears will always spring to your eyes at certain moments. The special days will always tug at our heartstrings in a way that non-bereaved parents will never fully understand.

At least we have each other; people who know what we're feeling and who understand our pain. I'm glad we can be here for each other.

~ Kathy Hahn, TCF/Lower Bucks, PA

"Surrender"

Grief is the process of exhuming all that has been, examining its precious contents, and lovingly preparing it for reburial.

She grasped my hands tightly, staring into my eyes, past the tears, both hers and mine, into the struggle of my understanding.

"I'll cry with you," she whispered, "until we run out of tears. Even if it's forever. We'll do it together."

There it was ... a simple promise of connection. The loving alliance of grief and hope that blesses both our breaking apart and our coming together again.

Where once the scar left by death was a painful reminder of lost love, that same love will someday claim the power to transform that scar into a permanent remembrance of joy.

After days of wandering in the uncertain pain of my grief, of hiding from my fear, of begging to be brought back safely, I have finally come home to face the occasion of my wandering, and to dwell again in the certainty and safety of myself.

- from Safe Passage by Molly Fumia

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 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, TCF/Albuquerque, NM

A Season of Mercy

To love is to risk losing. To lose is to risk finding something new. The cycle of the heart; birth, death, rebirth. Therefore, before my heart turns to stone, I will re-enter the cycle, and make up my mind again to risk living.

What is it that I have left to do with you?

I must gather up our memories and divide them into two boxes.

In the first I will lovingly set all those things that are gone and can never be replaced. These are the secret signs of our unique understanding. I will mourn these lost treasures as I have mourned you, and then I will give the box away. In the other I will collect all those things that remain to be shared again in another time and place. Each of these joys you have left to me, with a blessing, to be recreated with other, yet undiscovered loves. I will celebrate these gifts as I have celebrated you, and then this box, I will keep.

~Author Unknown

Counting Time In The Night

Without warning
So invisible and so quiet
Came horror and tragedy
Counting time in the night

It was June fourteen
No chance to change that date
It was written in the books
And already marked fate

In anguish, and great despair I cry out
Helplessly knowing they will not be back
Could anything hurt me so much
Reaching for them finding nothing to touch

Hovering above so silent
Is the stealth cloud of horror and fear
Never are we prepared for tragedy
For it is unknown where next it will appear

~ Donald Moyers, TCF/Galveston County, TX

Little Baby

Little baby who was not to be,
You were a person . . . at least to me.
Would your eyes be blue?
Or hazel and dark?
Would you caw like the crow?
Or sing like a lark?
Would you have ten little fingers and ten tiny toes?
A rosebud mouth, a turned up nose?
Would you be laughing and happy,
Or somber and quiet?
Would you run and jump or rather be still?
Would you like to read, or prefer to play?
None of my questions will have an answer.
Your chance to live will never be.
The only thing I truly know . . .
Little baby,
We would have loved you so!
~ Joan D. Schmidt, TCF/Spotswood, NJ

OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED BIRTHDAYS

CHILD		PARENTS
NATHAN ANDERSON	40	DIANE & JAY FENSKE
TYSON CHANEY	26	DERRIK & ANDREA CHANEY
ROBERT (BOB) TODD DUGGAN.....	55	GARY & CAROL DUGGAN
MATTHEW JOHN GAFFNEY.....	35	JOHN & JILL GAFFNEY
KENT ALAN HANSEN.....	28	DOUGLAS HANSEN
ADYSON JEAN KNUDSEN	3	KRISTIN & MICHAELKNUDSEN
ANNIE PAGE LEGGIO	19	JOSEPH LEGGIO
SARAH DEWITZ MARTINSEN.....	29	DEB DEWITZ
HENRY LUCAS NERAT	2	MORGAN NERAT
DEETTA LOUISE NICHOLS.....	68	RAMONA A KADOUN
DALE G NYGARD	55	JOANN NYGARD
JACOB ALLEN OCHSNER	31	ALLAN & MARLENE OCHSNER
ALIVIA LEA PLUTOWSKI	3	TIFFANY & JARED PLUTOWSKI
RONALD ROBERT POEHLER	48	ROBERT POEHLER
DYLAN ROMAINE	6	AARON & TRICIA ROMAINE
SCOTT ANTHONY TOBOLT.....	41	JOHN & MARY TOBOLT

ANNIVERSARIES

CHILD		PARENTS
NICHOLAS LEE BAILEY.....	8	PAUL & KARA BAILEY
KELLY ANN BOYES.....	9	KAREN BOYES
BRANDON WILLIAM THOMAS KLUTH.....	2	BRENDA KLUTH
ADYSON JEAN KNUDSEN	3	KRISTIN & MICHAELKNUDSEN
BENJAMIN KOTTA.....	15	ARLEN & JULIE KOTTA
MICHELLE KUTTER.....	12	JIM & JODY KUTTER
JEFF MUNIGHAN	7	JERALD & ARLENE MUNIGHAN
HENRY LUCAS NERAT	2	MORGAN NERAT
JAMIE C OLSON.....	5	GLENNIS OLSON
RONALD ROBERT POEHLER.....	3	ROBERT POEHLER
JOSE DANIEL SAUVEGEAU	1	DANIEL SAUVEGEU & MARY BJERKE
SCOTT WARNECKE	17	DOUG & JOAN WARNECKE

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 tcfl313@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

"You are so strong"
 Empty words
 That don't touch the reality
 That my life has become.
 Walking through fog
 Incredible pain
 Searching for the beloved face
 I crave to see
 The voice that I strain to hear over the noises
 Of people who have no idea
 Of what the world has lost
 ~ Charisse Smith, TCF/Tyler, TX

SIBLING PAGE

COURAGE

My brother died three years ago when he was seventeen years old. It was an accident when he fell while hiking in the mountains. I was fifteen and my brother was my hero. I would do anything to make him proud. When I lost him, I could have just given up. I have the courage to love people even though I know that I could lose them. I had many opportunities to just forget everyone else and lose myself. My brother was my best friend and when he died I could have too.

I decided that he would not have wanted me to throw my life away. I try my hardest to work hard in school and live up to what his expectations would have been. I am not living just for him. I am living for myself. A lot of people like to escape their problems by drinking or doing drugs. Alcohol and drugs only make problems worse because escaping a problem is not solving the problem. Self-respect means knowing who you are and treating yourself with dignity. I want people to look at me and to respect me. Staying in school and working to my potential is essential for respect. People cannot respect those who do not respect themselves. As Shakespeare said, "This above all else, to thine own self be true."

I do not make choices based on what the popular decision is. I base my thoughts and ideas on what I believe is right and important. I know that my brother would have been proud of me, because I made it through the most difficult time in my life, without him. I kept living when I lost the most important person in the world to me.

Courage is to keep fighting even though it looks like you are going to lose. When he died, I felt the world crash down on me. Everything I ever hoped for just seemed empty. Even now sometimes it will just hit me that my brother is gone. I have to keep on living and facing the world because that is what life is all about. Sometimes things happen that seem impossible to face. If I do not face my problems, who will?

Life is not supposed to be easy but it is not devastating either. There are so many wonderful things that happen and I have to have the courage to realize it. Life is not just a long line of problems. It is also a long line of answers. I need courage and self-respect to find these answers. I have to trust myself and my future that everything will work out. It always does. The answers to life's problems can only be found through hard work and belief in yourself. My belief in myself comes from a big brother who always had faith in me.

~ Patricia Kelley, TCF/Richmond, VA
In Memory of my brother, Sean 1976 - 1993

EVERY TIME THAT IT RAINS

I think of you every time that it rains.
When clouds fill the sky and storm winds blow,
Memories of you drop from the sky
Kissing my tulips and brushing my cheek.
I know you are there...
When the rainbow appears.
I love you and miss you with all of my heart
and I think of you every time that it rains.

~ Lorie Haacke, TCF/Billings, MT
In memory of her brother, Tony

SOMETIMES

Sometimes something clicks
and with a tear, remembrance of the pain
and the loneliness flood the heart.
Sometimes something clicks
and with a smile, remembrance of the love
and the laughter flood the senses.
And there are times when nothing clicks at all
and a voice echoes through the emptiness and
numbness never finding the person who used to fill
that space.
And sometimes
the most special times of all
a feeling ripples through your body, heart and soul
that tells you that person never left you, and he is
right there with you, through it all.

Kristen Hansen, Bereaved Sibling
TCF Nashville Newsletter Feb09

REFLECTIONS

With the death of my sister come some painful realizations; that life isn't always fair or predictable; that sometimes even my best still isn't good enough; and that from the day of her death, the happy events in my life would always be tinged with sadness.

Despite the pain and loss, death has also left me with some valuable lessons and precious gifts. As a result of my sister's death, I have a greater appreciation of life and a greater compassion for those who hurt. I have learned to be a survivor and to have a successful career and productive life in the face of tremendous grief and loss. I have been gifted with good friends and special people to help me through the rough times. But most of all, I have been given the gift of time – time to heal and time to replace those painful memories of death with priceless memories of my sister's life.

Cathy Schanberger

BROTHERS & SISTERS

Be it your brother or your sister,
their presence is taken for granted.
When together, you fight and argue.
But also together, you stand against all others.
Then, one day you stand alone.
Gone the friend, the confidante, the rock.
You regret the last fight.
You wish to hear the voice, share your secrets.
The memories are sweet -
remember the laughs and jokes.
They now await to be your guide.

~ John W. Hollinshead, Lockport, NY

DEATH

Death never comes when we are ready,
Often it sneaks up silently like an ocean wave covering rocks and
sand,
Or as God's angels in the sky and wind.
Other times it wanders around like wild tears running down your
face.
It doesn't seem to have very good feelings,
Leaving us with night and lives to go on with.
And yet it can be told quietly that death is memories and sadness.

- Linda Gayle Julian, age 11
Bereavement & Kids - Nov/Dec 1996

GIVING BACK TO FRIENDS WHO HELPED YOU GRIEVE

Grief is isolating. You may become so isolated that you are barely aware of your friends' help. Sure, you remember their phone calls and sympathy cards; but, you may not see the scope of their caring. As I discovered, the support of friends is necessary for grief reconciliations.

On a Friday night in February of 2007, my elder daughter died from the injuries she received in a car crash. On Sunday, just two days later, my father-in-law succumbed to pneumonia. I sobbed when I saw their photos on the same page of the newspaper. Friends saw the photos, read the obituaries, and were ringing the door bell an hour after they received the paper.

Eight weeks later, my brother had a heart attack and died. Again, my friends rallied to help. Nine months after the dual death weekend, my former son-in-law died from the injuries he received in another car crash. His death made our twin grandchildren orphans and my husband and me their legal guardians. Tragedy after tragedy, my friends provided a foundation of support, a foundation strong as steel, and it has never faltered.

According to the article, "Trauma, Loss and Traumatic Grief," posted on The International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies Website, survivors need to find a support system. This system may include friends, clergy, or others who have experienced traumatic loss. "It may take some time to identify friends who can be good listeners," the article notes. All of my friends were good listeners, thank goodness.

Judith Viorst writes about the values of friendship in her book, *Necessary Losses*. She thinks close friends contribute to our personal growth. "We will frequently turn – for reassurance, for comfort, for come-and-save me help – not to our blood relations; but, to friends," writes Viorst. With the support of family and friends, I've created a new and happy life. It was time to return their kindness.

I'm giving back by listening. Listening was the greatest gift my friends gave me. More important, they listened without judging. Instead of my friends listening to me, I am now listening to them. I hear stories about family relationships, wedding plans, and grandchildren. These stories remind me of the similarity of our lives.

I'm giving back by speaking. When a church friend called and asked if I would be willing to give a sermon, I agreed. My sermon was about saying "yes" to life after loved ones die. After the service, many church members thanked me for sharing my story. One said, "I wanted to stand up and applaud." Others described the memorials they had established in honor of their deceased loved ones.

I'm giving back by volunteering. When I agreed to serve as secretary of a state organization, my husband was concerned. He didn't think I had time to raise our grandchildren, manage the household, maintain a writing career, and carry out the duties of the office. "I only need to take minutes eight times," I explained. "Besides, they need me." The president was relieved to fill the office and I was glad to help out.

I'm giving back by comforting. Experience with grief has increased my sensitivity. When I meet someone who is grieving, I encourage them to talk about their deceased loved one. Also, I ask their permission to give them a hug. Sending friends copies of my grief books is another way I offer comfort.

Are you emerging from the darkness of grief? If so, maybe it's time to give back. According to certified psychotherapist Derek P. Scott, giving back can be a form of personal growth. In his article, "Understanding and Working with Multiple Loss," Scott says mourners may move from meaninglessness to "a sense of reconnection to the soul's purpose." Giving back has enriched my soul and it can do the same for you.

Harriet Hodgson, From the Open to Hope Foundation

Does the Pain Ever End?

No, I don't think the pain ever ends. I don't even think it gets less. But I DO believe that our capacity to absorb, submerge, manage, and breathe through the pain expands until it lays over our grief like a comforting quilt. Sometimes we lift the corners and peek underneath, and are overwhelmed that the same pain is still there, but we learn that gently putting the quilt back down and resting our hands on it lets us know that we are in control of our grief, not the other way around.

It takes a long, long time.

It takes a lot of very hard work.

But we are the ones to make our grief-covering quilt, and we do it in our own way, on our own time, and in our own pattern.

And the quilt grows bigger with time, too, covering all those "new" things we discover bring us grief...like cleaning out our kid's bedroom, or finding a diary that was hidden in a drawer, or hearing from our child's best friend years later, saying that he or she still misses and thinks about our kid.

May your quilt cover your grief softly today, and may you feel its warmth and weight and know that love made every stitch.

Love and blessings, ~ Vicki W, TCF/Miles City, MT

COPING WITH MEMORIES

Memories are a bridge between the past and the present. In an abstract, though none the less real sense, you can teach your child, be with him or her, by crossing the bridge. remembering. but herein lies the pain — you have to go back to the past because he or she is not physically present.

The memories that you have of your child. whether of happy or unhappy times. or perhaps of how he or she looked, felt, sounded — all of these are precious. special, and sometimes can be so painful that you want to block them to escape the anguish. This is normal. natural. And yet the loss of your memories would leave a large gap. Perhaps the most difficult to deal with are the sudden, unexpected stabs that can occur at any time. When an association with your child comes out of the blue — perhaps a piece of music or a can of spaghetti in the supermarket — whatever it is that throws you. by to remember to breathe deeply and slow', and it will help. Remembering is important because even when it is painful, healing is taking place.

~ Jenny Kander, TCF/Johannesburg, SA

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

Your Name: _____

Child's Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Birth Date: _____ Death Date: _____

Date: _____

(Signature)

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



"Butterflies are the heaven sent kisses of an angel." ~ Author Unknown

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

Butterflies are available in five colors (yellow, pink, red, blue and green). The cost is as follows: \$25 for 1 butterfly, \$50 for 2 butterflies, \$65 for 3 butterflies and \$80 for 4 butterflies. If you wish to purchase more than 4 butterflies please contact John Milligan at 701-491-0364.

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

You can see pictures of the trailer with butterflies on our website at www.tcffargomoorhead.org/ourtrailer.html.

Letting Go and Holding On

By Dennis Klass, Advisor, TCF/St. Louis, MO
TCF National Newsletter - Summer 1985 - Vol. 8 No. 3

It seems to me that the one thing I see with bereaved parents is that they have a problem in that they need, somehow, to let go of their dead child and yet need very much to hold on to that child. How do you let go and still hold on?

What I see in The Compassionate Friends are people who let go by honestly facing the pain that the death and separation have brought. We let go when we let ourselves cry, when we let the pain, the missing, the loneliness and the questioning be experienced. When we allow ourselves to feel the pain, we feel the child being torn loose from us. We also let go when we look our world squarely in the face, when we see the world doesn't have our child in it, when we see the world as a different place, when we see that people are treating us differently, we KNOW our child is gone.

We let the child go when we, at some point, allow him to be a part of something bigger. For some of us, that means to say, "Okay, God, he's your. He's in Heaven." For others, that means when we look out at nature, when we look at the woods, when we look at the ground and we say the child is part of all nature and no longer belongs to just me. He is part of something bigger. When we say that, we let go. If we are to live as anything except as emotional cripples for the rest of our lives, we've got to know that our child died and is not coming back. That is a hard thing to do, but we must let go.

The other side of recovery is the need to hold on to our child. We can't simply let him go as if he never existed. I have observed that members of The Compassionate Friends learn how to hold on to their child, also.

The first way we hold on is with our memory. We remember child. Memory is making him part of our every day as if the child were simply in another city or away at school. At some point the child would have left home and we wouldn't have seen him every day. It is the same with our child who is dead. We remember him when we see something and we let the memory come. When we're walking in the store and we see a toy that reminds us of him or when we're walking down the street and we see a little child with a snow suit like his or we see a child on a bike the color of his, we remember. That memory is there and when we really resolve our grief, that memory is still there and it's a memory that feels good. We can have good memories and hold on to the child.

Sometimes we hold on to our child by simply giving ourselves back to the pain of the child's death by reading old letters, going through the album, going to the grave or going through their things again. I've noticed that many bereaved parents simply let the present go its own way and give themselves to the memory of the child when it occurs. That is a good healthy way to hold on to the child, by immersing yourself in the memories when they present themselves. Don't long for them but give yourself over to them when they show up. Then, after briefly visiting the past, you can say, "There, I was there. I don't need to do that again for a while, but I will do it again sometime."

The most profound way we keep our child is by sharing with others what we have shared with the child. That is the secret of TCF. We learn to take the love we had for the child and turn it outward, so that we're loving others. Perhaps, at first that love is directed only to other bereaved parents. As our healing progresses, that circle of caring and loving broadens. We give to the world some of what we gave to our child, and by so doing, are able to hold on to the essence of what we shared with our child.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
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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	John Milligan 701-491-0364	Newsletter Editor	Nancy Teeuwen.....701-730-0805
Meeting Facilitator	Paul & Kara Bailey 701-261-0668	Newsletter Database	Mike Cvijanovich.....701-235-8158
Secretary	Sheryl Cvijanovich 701-540-3287	Website Administrator	Sheryl Cvijanovich.....701-540-3287
Treasurer	Chuck Klinkhammer.....701-298-2929	Initial Contact	Jamie Olson.....701-219-3865
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:

- John Milligan (son, 25 - car accident)..... 701-491-0364
- Lois Gangnes (son, 24 - accident)..... 701-282-4083
- Nancy Teeuwen (daughter, 15 hours - illness)..... 701-730-0805
- Mark & Hella Helfter (miscarriage, son, 35-accident & son, 45-cancer) ... 701-235-9622

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

Love gift given in Memory/Honor of _____
 Name _____
 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.