



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

Volume 28 Number 4

Fargo ND/Moorhead MN

April 2011

PLEASE NOTE OUR MAILING ADDRESS ON THE BACK PAGE
REGULAR MEETING: 7:30 P.M. SECOND THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH
This month's meeting is on April 14th
Next month's meeting is on May 12th

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH - 127 2ND AVE E - WEST FARGO, ND

MEETING SUBJECT: Bring a memento of your child to share with the group.

Please enter on the West side (Elevator entrance). Our meeting is in the Fellowship Hall - lower level, west side.

If you have topic ideas for future meetings, please let us know.

The Compassionate Friends National Office, P.O. Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696

Phone number: 877-969-0010 - E-mail: nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org - Web Site: www.compassionatefriends.org

Website for the Fargo/Moorhead Chapter - www.tcffargomoorhead.org

If you have any pictures, stories, or poems of your child/grandchild/sibling that you would like to share on our website, please submit them to Sheryl Cvijanovich at sherylc13@msn.com or mail them to the PO box listed on the back of the Newsletter. Anything sent to the PO Box will be scanned for the website and returned.

Help us save money and paper.....

To receive the newsletters via email in a pdf format, please send an email to the newsletter editor, Nancy Teeuwen at FMTCFNWLTR@LIVE.COM. Please be sure to include your name in the email. Also add this email address to your contacts, so when the newsletter is sent to you, it does not go to your junk mail.

*****APRIL LOVE GIFTS*****

June Volk in memory of her sons, David Volk 3/1962 - 2/2010 and Jeff Volk 4/1957 - 5/2007

Ed & Elsie Foss in memory of their son, Brian Foss 2/1960 - 12/2008

We are deeply grateful for the LOVE GIFTS given this month.

Our chapter and all chapters, are financed solely through your Love Gifts.

Donations make this newsletter, postage, books, tapes, etc. possible.

Thank you for your tax deductible gifts.

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

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

For information on other chapters: TCF National Office.....877-969-0010

DATES TO REMEMBER:

July 15-17, 2011 - 34th National Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota

August 13, 2011 - Fargo Chapter's 5th Annual WALK TO REMEMBER

watch for more details in June & July newsletters

CHANGE TO DATE OF JULY MEETING - meeting will be on July 21st instead of July 14th

SPRING'S TEARS

When the sun's sharp brilliance echoes in the luminescent blue
A grim, oppressive darkness stabs my aching heart anew.
Its golden glow upon my face, the warmth of winter's sun
Holds the promise of renewal when the icy months are done.

It is this vow of nature's of resurgence in the spring
That bows my head, and breaks my heart; unlocks my suffering.
For you will miss again the beauty of this time of year
The growing warmth, the sunny days when life will reappear.

For nature has no power over death that holds you still,
And though I know, I still resent spring's early daffodil.
Oh, would that I could speak to Mother Nature face to face!
To beg she work her magic on your lonely resting place.

Why can't it be YOUR rebirth when the gray, cold days are done?
Why mightn't YOU not live again to see spring's fresh new dawn
and feel the warmth of sunshine
relish in the greening earth...
to open arms, embracing life
why can't it be YOUR birth?

You were so young, your life so new when death crept in the door,
And in my grief, beloved child, I'll ask forever more
The reason why the earth's renewed when spring comes 'round each
year
Yet in your grave you're silent still,
and I condemned
am here.

~ Sally Migliaccio, TCF/Babylon NY

Holding Onto Love

Trees and flowers seem suddenly reborn,
As another spring arrives fresh and new,
Surrounded by such beauty,
My thoughts turn to you.
As another college graduation looms,
Great excitement fills the air,
Glancing at the smiling students,
I still search for strawberry blonde hair,
No matter what I do in life
You are always there,
I feel your presence constantly,
As each new experience we share.
Though physically, you have left us,
Your love remains here to stay,
A bond so strong and nourishing,
It gets us through another day.

~ Chuck Collins, TCF, Burke/Springfield/Fairfax Chapter

Grief Is Not...

Grief is not a mountain to be climbed,
with the strong reaching the summit
long before the week.
Grief is not an athletic event,
with stop watches timing our progress.
Grief is a walk through loss and pain
with no competition and no time trials.

Author unknown

You Did Not Die

You live in the beautiful wind that blows.
You live in the sound of birds that crow.
You live in the sun that shines so bright.
You live in the peaceful dark at night.
You live in a star I see in the sky.
You live in ocean waves that come in with the tide.
You live in the smell of flowers and grass.
You live in the summer that goes so fast.
You live in my heart that hurts so much.
You did not die, we only lost touch.
~ Shari Swirsky, TCF/Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Empty Places

I drove the old way yesterday.
It'd been a while, you see.
And there, without a warning,
the pain washed over me.

I drove the old way yesterday
and sadness came on strong,
taken back by so much feeling,
since you've been gone so long.

Places seem to lie in wait
to summon up the tears,
to say remember yesterday,
those days when you were here.

Places where you laughed and played
are places where I cry.
These places hold the memories
that will live as long as I.

~ Genesse Gentry, TCF/Marin Cnty CA

Spring

I'm afraid of the spring
I'm afraid you might say
Of other children's voices
As they come out to play.
I'm afraid of the feelings
Deep down in my heart;
With all the pain and the hurt
I may fall apart.
Shall I shut all the windows
So I don't hear a thing?
Shall I shut my eyes
So I can't see the spring?
Shall I let winter live
The whole year through?
And feel safer inside
And a lot colder too?

~ Penny Leneham, TCF/Brookside, NJ

*At times our own light goes out
and is rekindled by a spark from another person.
Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those
who have lighted the flame within us.*

~ Albert Schweitzer

SIBLING PAGE

MY FIRST FIVE YEARS AS AN ONLY CHILD

I've been without my brother for five years. I guess the hard part is over now. Sometimes I think I've aged thirty years in the past five. In a strange way, these past five years have been the best and worst years of my life. I've accomplished the many things of a typical young adult -learning to drive, graduating from high school, going to college, and starting a career. Every one of my accomplishments have been clouded by the fact that my brother George is not here to share each milestone and is not achieving any more milestones for himself. He was cheated of so many things. He will never graduate, get married, have children, or travel. He will never grow old, and I will never have a brother to grow old with. I'll never have nieces and nephews. The sibling relationship, usually the longest relationship of one's life, has been cut short for us. In these five years, although I've learned to accept that he's not coming back, the difficult part is dealing with it day by day.

My relationship with George ended just when we started to become friends. The childish fights and other annoyances of having a big brother were changed to real conversations and to having an occasional ally. I'm angry about all of the things that we've missed and all of the things that will never be, and I guess I always will be. Five years heals a lot of wounds, but the hurt will always be there, no matter how many years pass. In these past five years, I've been forced to grow up too fast. I've been forced into a new outlook on life. I've felt lonely and alone. I now realize that I will never be the same person as before. That person is locked away and is gone forever. Maybe I'm a better person now because of what I've been through. Five years ago I never thought I'd survive, but I'm still here dealing with it every day. I don't know what the next five years will bring, but at least I've made it this far.

Kristina Steiner ~ TCF/Staten Island, NY

"AFTER"

As the world around me gets brighter,
And the darkness fades away,
The weight I carry gets lighter
Because I know she'll be near one day.
My life is no longer as lonely,
As when it was when she left.
I know she wasn't trying to hurt me,
But for a while I couldn't catch my breath.
Each day the pain gets easier
And the memories aren't so sad.
I'm finally able to smile for her,
As I think of the time we had.
Now when I'm feeling alone,
And ask for her embrace,
I close my eyes and she warms me,
And her spirit kisses my face.

Sarah Yoder

in memory of her sister Morgan

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt within the heart.

~ Helen Keller

The Rose

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

BIG SISTER, LITTLE BROTHER...

We grew up together-
big sister, little brother.
I took care of you,
until you were old enough to
care for yourself.
Though you didn't say it,
I knew you loved me.
We played in the sunlight, you and I.
Remember the games of
'Mother-May-I' and 'Hide and Seek'?
Sure we had our fights,
all siblings do,
but through it all we never lost
our love for each other.
Now you're gone.
I'll never see you again,
except the memories
of those sunny days.
You will forever be sixteen-
far too young to die.
You had your whole life to live.
I'll always grieve, but I must go on.
Still, without you,
I play alone in the shadows.
Author unknown ~ TCF/MI

"Heart hath its own memory, like the mind. And in it are enshrined the precious keepsakes, into which is wrought the giver's loving thought."

—H.W. Longfellow

What My Daughter Taught Me in Two Days

~By Steve Bryant, TCF/Des Moines, Iowa

Anyone who knows me knows I believe that everything happens for a reason.

I do not know the reason for what happened to Bailey. So far the doctors don't know either. They say it could have been a virus that attacked and destroyed a perfect pregnancy. They say that we might never know what happened to her medically. I have spent countless hours trying to sort things out lately. But I don't think we will ever truly know why she was taken.

I do know, however that Bailey touched many lives in the short time she was here. And I'd like to share how she transformed my life in just two days; forever changing the way I look at things.

She made me realize that I need to slow down and cherish the "little things" in life that people talk about and I could not even see.

She makes me want to be a better father, a better husband, a better son, a better friend, and a better person.

She brought me new meanings to the words *compassion, caring, family, friendship, forgiving, unconditional love, selflessness, and thankfulness.*

Some of the things she taught me have to do with the way I look and "see" things. For example . . .

When I first heard we were pregnant, I was excited, of course. But I was also scared silly. I remember selfishly thinking in the first couple of months of the pregnancy about our life. I even asked my wife ". . . Why do we want a baby now?" We have three other kids; 16, 13, and 9. My God, I am 43 years old! We have the perfect life; we come and go as we want, we do what we want, we vacation when and where we want. Our other children are older and can pretty much take care of themselves. All I could think about was myself and how a baby would get in the way . . . ***Now all I think about is her and how I would give anything to have her in my life.***

Recently, I was having lunch with a friend and there was a crying baby close by. I remember thinking how annoying it was and how I wished it would be quiet. I hate to admit it, but I was even questioning if I was ready for that noise again in my life . . . I never got to hear Bailey cry. ***Now, I would give anything to hear my baby cry.***

I remember "teasing" Kim about changing the baby's diapers and that she would have to be in charge of that department. I would have helped her of course, but not really enjoyed it, and probably complained about it . . . ***Now, I would give anything to change Bailey's diapers.***

We talked about daycare and complained about the high cost of daycare . . . Now, I would give anything to write that check.

I would not let Kim buy any diapers until just recently at Sam's Club, even though she wanted to buy the first diapers 6 months ago . . . Then, in those last hours, I hoped and prayed for Bailey to wet as it would have been a positive sign of recovery. ***Now, I would give anything to get to pay for diapers.***

I had not been tucking in our other children at night as faithfully as I once did, thinking, They're old enough now . . . ***Now, I will tuck them in until THEY tell me not to. I forgot how much that meant to them.***

I used to see children throwing temper tantrums when we were out and sometimes think, *Thank God my kids are older so I do not have to deal with that . . . Now, I would give anything to see Bailey throw a temper tantrum.*

We have brand-new white carpet in our house and I remember thinking and hoping that it would not get soiled with the new baby . . . ***Now, I'd love to have that problem.***

I recently had a discussion with my wife about how we would deal with the night feedings. I thought to myself, *She is going to be a stay-at-home mom. That's her job. I need to be rested. And she even agreed that she would be doing most of that 'chore' . . . Oh, how blind I was. Now, I would be so thankful to be exhausted when I went in to work because I was up half the night with the baby.*

My friends at work have been teasing me and saying how my world was going to change soon with the baby coming. They were right, but for a different reason. Thanks to my daughter Bailey, my world and life have changed forever. I am so thankful I knew her and I am grateful for what she taught me in just two days.

I love you, Bailey. I thank you, and I will miss you forever.

Steven wrote and delivered this at Bailey's funeral. He and his wife, Kimberly, have three other children, Whitney, Taylor, and Jessica.

Reprinted from *We Need Not Walk Alone*, the national magazine of The Compassionate Friends. Copyright 2005.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
OF THE F-M AREA
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**MISSION
STATEMENT:**

The mission of The
Compassionate
Friends is to assist
families toward the
positive resolution
of grief following
the death of a child
of any age and to
provide information
to help others be
supportive.



**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS**

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.....701-282-4794	Secretary-Treasurer	Sheryl Cvijanovich.....701-235-8158
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Newsletter Printing	Joyce at Olivet Lutheran Church	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:

John Milligan (son, 25 - car accident).....	701-282-4794
Duane Skramstad (daughter, 20 - car accident; son, 2 - drowning)	701-437-2507
Cheri Eraker (son, 23 - accident)	701-451-0045
Carol Nelson (son , 13 - leukemia)	218-346-3854
Nancy Teeuwen (daughter, 15 hours - illness).....	701-730-0805
Mark & Hella Helfter (miscarriage & son, 35 - accident).....	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 _____