



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

## FARGO/MOORHEAD AREA CHAPTER

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

National Headquarters  
P.O. Box 3696  
Oak Brook IL 60522  
Toll-free (877) 969-0010  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

F-M Area Chapter  
P.O. Box 10686  
Fargo ND 58106  
[www.tcffargomoorhead.org](http://www.tcffargomoorhead.org)  
April 2013

Volume 30 Number 4

Chapter Leader - John Milligan (701)491-0364

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.

Upcoming Meetings  
April 11th  
May 9th

#### Meeting Subject:

April - Bring a memento of your child to share with the group  
June - Balloon Release, everyone is welcome  
August - Guest Speaker Marshall Olson

#### Dates to Remember in 2013

National Conference July 5-7  
Boston, MA  
July 20th - Fargo Chapter's 7th Annual WALK TO REMEMBER

If you have any pictures, stories, or poems of your child, grandchild or sibling that you would like to share on our website, please submit them to Sheryl Cvijanovich at [SHERYLCV13@MSN.COM](mailto:SHERYLCV13@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.

*GOOD MEMORIES ARE THE PERENNIALS THAT BLOOM AGAIN AFTER THE HARD WINTER OF GRIEF BEGINS TO YIELD TO HOPE."*

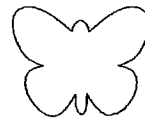
~ Sascha Wagner,  
TCF/Des Moines IA

#### 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**



Butterfly Decals



The F-M Chapter has recently purchased a trailer, in order to transport materials to our chapter activities. We are selling butterfly decals, which will be placed on the trailer. The butterflies are 4 x 6 and available in five colors: yellow, pink, red, blue and green.

Each butterfly will contain the first and last name of a child.

If you wish to purchase a butterfly in the memory of a child, please send your name, the name of the child, butterfly color, and a check payable to TCF of Fargo-Moorhead, P.O. Box 10686, Fargo, ND 58106.

Butterflies are \$25 each, 3 for \$65 or 4 for \$80. If you wish to purchase more than 4 butterflies, please contact our chapter leader, John Milligan.

On Thursday April 25, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. a group of the ladies of TCF Fargo-Moorhead will meet at the Fryn' Pan at 300 Main Avenue in Fargo for coffee (or whatever), fellowship and conversation. This will be an informal gathering of moms, grandmas, aunts, sisters and friends who would like to chat in a more casual setting. If you have any questions please contact Sheryl at 701-235-8158 or [sherylcv13@msn.com](mailto:sherylcv13@msn.com). Please join us!

## TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE IT

"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 lockstep 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 later the tears emerge . . . It is true that as we take two steps forward in our journey, we may take one or more steps backward. But when one affirms that the spring thaw will arrive, the winter winds seem to lose some of their punch."

~ Robert Veninga in *A Gift of Hope: How We Survive Our Tragedies* (Little Brown & Co., 1985)

Just Jamie

Amateur photographer

Mom to Riley, Sadie and Shelbie

Into people and parties

Everybody's friend

Baker of cakes

Extra nice to babies and seniors

Texter and phone friend

Holiday decorator

Melanoma made her "fight like a girl"

Especially liked dolphins

Retail sale "queen"

Cooked like a pro

Into Facebook

Enjoyed life and "things"

Really a special person

~ Carol Mercier, TCF/Fargo, ND

## BILL OF RIGHTS FOR THE BEREAVED

1. Do not make me do anything I do not wish to do.
2. Let me cry.
3. Allow me to talk about the deceased.
4. Do not force me to make quick decisions.
5. Let me act strange sometimes.
6. Let me see that you are grieving too.
7. When I am angry, do not discount it.
8. Do not speak to me in platitudes.
9. Listen to me, **please**.
10. Forgive me my trespasses, my rudeness.

The moment a child is born, the mother is also born. She never existed before. The woman existed, but the mother, never. A mother is something absolutely new.

-Rajneesh

## *I Am Spring*

I am the beginning.

I am budding promise.

I spill cleansing tears of life

from cloudy vessels

creating muddy puddles

where single cell creatures abide

and splashing children play.

I am new green growth.

I softly flow from winter's barren hand.

On gentle breeze I fly – embracing sorrow.

With compassion, we feather nests  
where winged voices sing winter-spring duets.

As frozen ice transforms to playful stream

I whisper truth – life is change.

I am spring.

I bless long, dark wintry days.

I crown mankind's pain

with starry skies

in deepest night

lighting solitary paths from sorrow to joy  
as the wheel of life turns 'round and 'round.

*By Carol Clum*

*(written after attending a workshop presented by John Fox, author of 'Finding What You Didn't Lose' and 'Poetic Medicine'.)*

## You Are Not Going Crazy

One of the most common things we hear from bereaved parents is that they think that they are going crazy. If you feel this way, let us assure you that you are not. Grief and the resultant depression, fits of crying, and the feeling you are going to pieces may lead you to these feelings or often to the feeling you no longer want to continue living. It is not uncommon to have these feelings.

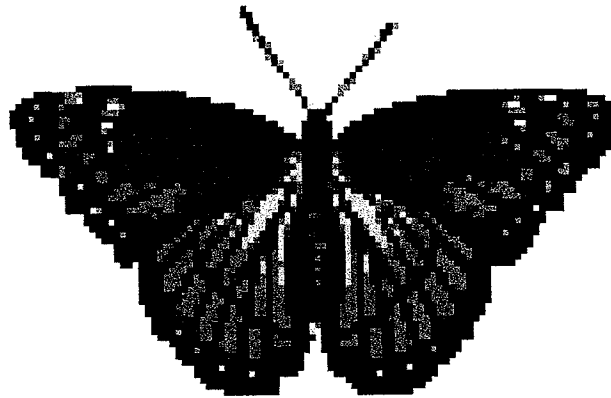
But most grief-stricken people do not go crazy or commit suicide. It is most important at these times for you to have someone to talk to – to share your feelings – and for you to be able to verbalize your pain. We of The Compassionate Friends want to help. We encourage you to call on us. We have all been where you are now, and we understand your pain.

~ Fay Harden, TCF/Tuscaloosa, FL

"Giving yourself time to heal and creating space for the process allows the painful memories to be replaced gradually by more pleasant ones. When the pain subsides, one remembers the whole relationship not the most recent memories of illness, accidents and death. Eventually we need to make peace with that which will never be resolved."

~ Anne Brener

**OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED**



Birthdays and Anniversaries have been removed from the Internet version of our newsletter for security purposes



**APRIL LOVE GIFTS**

**Ernie & Birdine Grafsgaard in memory of their son, David Grafsgaard**  
**Terry & Carol Mercier in memory of their daughter, Jamie Beth Mercier**  
**Doug & Joan Warnecke in memory of their children, Scott & Michelle Warnecke**  
**Sharon Cook in memory of her son, Steven Duane Cook**  
**Sandra & Charles Klinkhammer in memory of their son, Alex Klinkhammer**

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.

## SIBLING PAGE

### A Sister's Love

First, there's the fear,  
Followed by disbelief.  
Then there's the tears,  
Followed by the grief,  
Could it really be true  
That they say she may die?  
The pain is so deep seeded  
Why her, Father, why?  
Time can never change the hurt,  
hide the tears, they never dry.  
Things can never be the same,  
A child should never die.  
She did though, on a summer day,  
One I won't forget.  
I loved that girl, oh, so much,  
Now memories are all that's left.  
Is it fair to live on without you, girl?  
I think that's what you'd like,  
The house has an empty feeling,  
Your room is dark, day and night.  
I won't forget you, don't you fear,  
You'll always have a place in my heart  
My love for you lives on.  
Looking back through  
The book of life  
YOU are my favorite part!  
~Helen Ann Marie Naselli, Rockville Center, NY

### MARK

Some people dread the holidays;  
others, anniversary or birthdays.  
With me, it's not just these days,  
but Spring and Summer.

From the first talk of Spring training to  
the last out of the World Series, I MISS YOU.  
Baseball was such a big part of your life. I see you in  
a baseball uniform in so many of my memories.  
How I wish we could catch a Royal's game together!  
Did you know they were World Champions in '85?  
I know that you have rounded third and slid into  
home, but that doesn't ease the pain in my heart.

I love you so much!  
~ Tamala Lauffer, TCF/Independence MO

*You are struggling...  
I see it, I feel it,  
I hurt for you.  
But I must tell you, dear friend,  
I believe with all my heart  
That you will emerge  
Somehow wiser, stronger,  
And more aware.  
Hold onto that thought,  
Tuck it away in a  
Corner of your heart  
Until the hurts melts enough  
For the learning to have meaning.*

~ Sue Mitchell

### DO NOT OVER PROTECT ME ... LET ME BE ME...

Dedicated to all the brothers and sisters of The  
Compassionate Friends.  
When you are consumed with grief, don't forget about me.

*Let me be me ...*

I grieve too but different from you, I miss my  
brother/sister too.

*Let me be me ...*

Tell me I can't fix your pain. Don't tell me I won't  
understand. Please don't overwhelm me  
with your grief. Just like the real world mine doesn't want  
to talk about a dead sister/brother.

*Let me be me ...*

Tell me often that you love me for being me. Ask me  
about my goals and dreams for the future.

*Let me be me ...*

Don't break my spirit with your grief.

*Let me be me ...*

Let me follow my dreams. Now they will include some of  
my sister's/brother's dreams.

*Let me be me ...*

Don't overprotect me.

*Let me be me ...*

Please don't feel every spare moment I have with  
basketball, baseball, soccer, music or dance  
classes, just so you can fill your spare time and fall  
exhausted into bed at night. I need free time  
to explore who I am.

*Let me be me ...*

Don't forget to continue to teach me to celebrate life. I  
need to know that through all this pain  
there is hope ...for my future.

*Let me be me ...*

As young as I am please don't overprotect me ... Love me,  
guide me, teach me.

**LET ME BE ME ...**

~ Colleen, TCF Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

*Two years, has it  
been that long?  
Seems like only  
yesterday.  
I think the pain,  
is here to stay.  
I loved you then.  
I love you now.  
Tears for you then.  
Tears for me now.  
Flowers for you then.  
Flowers for me now.  
Thoughts of you.  
Fill each new day  
I wish it wasn't you.  
they took away.*

~Beebe Adam-Hammack, TCF/ Louisville, KY

## PERMISSION FORM

**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)

### FROM YOUR CHAPTER LEADER JOHN:

I just wanted to bring your attention to the importance of the "PERMISSION FORM". As you have noticed that the "BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED" page is getting smaller. That is because we cannot publish your child's name without your permission. Your child's name is only used in our newsletter. We only need your permission one time and can be stopped if you request in writing. Please send in this permission form so we can share your child with the rest of our members. SO SORRY FOR YOUR LOSS. JOHN MILLIGAN

### I'd Rather do it MYSELF!

Many of you are far too young to remember an old TV-commercial for headache pain relief. (Sadly, that doesn't include me!) Growing up, I remember seeing the situation play out with different people who were so stressed out with pain that their irritation level was off the charts. When some well-meaning relative or friend suggested something to do, the one who needed to use the advertised product would shout: "I'd rather do it MYSELF!" Naturally, the camera would then pan to the product that was supposed to instantly relieve this pain and stress.

As kids, we'd watch our parents or teachers start to get upset about something, and one of us would whisper a mimic of that commercial: "I'd rather do it MYSELF!" Then we'd all dissolve into giggles.

I wonder if sometimes, in grief, that is what we realistically really need to do: do it ourselves. This thought came to mind while reading letters from many of your readers. So many times I see things like:

- \* This feels good to me, because I can be in control.
- \* I can stay here as long as I want, and nobody tells me to leave.
- \* I don't have to justify this to anybody.

So exactly what are we "just doing ourselves" that feels so much better? Many new survivors feel better when they can wear some clothing or accessories their loved one left behind. A woman might substitute his shirt for her nightgown - and sleep better. She may wear her spouse's ring on a chain around her neck and feel closer to him. A widow might sit in the sawdust of the workshop where her husband loved to be and feel close to him there, while someone else might take a lawn chair to the cemetery and linger for an extended period of time.

Others may choose to stay in their child's room for an extended period of time, just feeling close to them there. Many play the music their loved ones especially enjoyed and then choose to cry or smile or relax as they see fit. It just feels good. There are so many places we can be or things we can wear or objects we can hold close to us that make this grieving process very personal and all our own. Have you discovered this, too?

I always thought this situation was just part of reaching out for the one who is gone, and trying to relive our time with them, even though that is irretrievable. But lately I've been thinking it may be our way of trying to exert a little control by doing some of our grieving on our terms.

After all, grief's worst habit is to show up when we least expect it, right? The tears come on an "ordinary" day. A sob rumbles in our chests when we're talking to someone about anything but our grief. We're driving the car and suddenly tears are splashing on the steering wheel. These occasions leave us feeling extremely vulnerable. I don't know about you, but I sure feel awkward and terribly unsettled by its unexpected appearance, because I can never get mentally ready for grief symptoms that show up like that.

But when we have made the choice to wear our daughter's baggy sweatshirt or our husband's socks, or to play his favorite music or sit in her "space," we are in charge of our own feelings. We're willing to take the chance that tears may come - or maybe, instead, we will feel quiet peace. Why? Because we are controlling our grief and we are in charge for that brief period of time. My, how that feels good!

Hummm, I'm truly amazed this never crossed my mind before. Do you think this idea is crazy?! (I guess that could be a possibility, too!) But if you think there is some validity to this strange notion, then the next time a friend or relative looks at you as if you've lost your mind because you're doing some of these things, feel free to mimic that old commercial and shout out (well, keeping peace in the family might require muttering it instead!), "I'd rather do it MYSELF!"

Cheering you on, Carlene  
*Living With Loss Magazine Archives*

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	John Milligan ..... 701-491-0364	Secretary-Treasurer	Sheryl Cvijanovich ..... 701-235-8158
Librarian		Initial Contact	Kylene Milligan ..... 701-491-0364
Newsletter Editor	Nancy Teeuwen ..... 701-730-0805	Newsletter Database	Mike Cvijanovich ..... 701-235-8158
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) ..... 701-491-0364  
Duane Skramstad (daughter, 20 - car accident; son, 2 - drowning) ..... 701-437-2507  
Lois Gangnes (son, 24 - accident) ..... 701-282-4083  
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 15<sup>th</sup> to be included in the next month's newsletter. If you wish to give a love gift please complete:

Love gift given in Memory/Honor of \_\_\_\_\_  
Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship \_\_\_\_\_ Born \_\_\_\_\_ Died \_\_\_\_\_

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