



The Compassionate Friends

Fargo/Moorhead Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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www.compassionatefriends.org

F-M Area Chapter
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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.

Upcoming Meetings
April 9th
May 14th

Meeting Subject:
April - Bring a memento of your child to share with the group
June - Balloon Release, everyone is welcome

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.

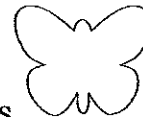
WE ARE THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS. ©2007

Dates to Remember

Mom's meeting - 7 pm on April 23rd @ Fry'n Pan
TCF National Conference - Dallas, TX July 10-12, 2015
TCF FM Chapter's 9th Annual Walk to Remember - August 8, 2015
TCF Regional Conference - Rochester, MN October 2-4, 2015

LOVE GIFTS

Sandra & Charles Klinkhammer in memory of their son, Alexander Brent Klinkhammer
Ernie & Birdine Grafsgarrd in memory of their son, David Grafsgarrd
Ron & Michelle Wullstein in memory of their son, Zachary Wayne Wullstein
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.



Butterfly Decals

Our trailer is beginning to look like a butterfly garden! The trailer was purchased in order to transport materials to our chapter activities but it has also helped make our local chapter better known in the Fargo-Moorhead community. Each butterfly decal holds the first and last name of one of our precious children.

Butterflies are still available in all five colors (yellow, pink, red, blue and green). The cost for 1 butterfly is \$25, 3 butterflies are \$65 and 4 butterflies are \$80. If you wish to purchase more than 4, please contact our chapter leader, John Milligan. Butterfly orders should include the child's name and 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.

"Some say you're too painful to remember. I say you're too precious to forget."

Our Mom's group has been meeting on the 4th Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm at the Fry'n Pan Restaurant, 300 Main Avenue, Fargo. Our gatherings are informal as we come together to talk about our children, books that we've read, recipes we've tried, our jobs and whatever else comes up during the course of the evening. We all have times where the listening heart of another mom or grandma is welcome (and necessary). Please join us this month on Thursday April 23rd. For more information please contact Sheryl at 701-540-3287 or sherylc13@msn.com.

LONELINESS and HOW TO OVERCOME IT

Why are there times when a bereaved parent feels lonely even though surrounded by loving people and people the bereaved parent loves?

Loneliness is the outgrowth of separation from one who has given meaning to life. Yes, other relationships offer meaning, but it is normal for the searing pain from the loss of one's child to supersede the pleasure from other experiences.

Part of yourself had been invested in another person. When that person has died, in a sense, you are lonely for a part of yourself that has been destroyed. At times you look around you and think that no one else is experiencing the pain you are feeling, no one's world has been shattered.

This self-centeredness is a natural part of the grief process. Do not deny it, but DO NOT HOLD ON TO IT AS A WAY OF LIFE. Give yourself permission to accept help from others and then to reach out and help others.

Although your child is not here to give continuity to your life, by having lived and having given purpose to your life, your child can be the bridge to your continuity with life as a thinking, loving and active person. ♥

Ruth Eiseman - TCF/Louisville, KY

Hope is not an easy word for
grievers.
But we, more than most others,
need to understand
what hope can mean for us.
Hope means finding the strength
to live with grief.
Hope means nurturing with grace
the joy of remembrance.
Hope means embracing
with tenderness and pride
our own life
and the gifts left to us
by those we have lost.♥

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

The Diamond

Once upon a time there was a king who ruled a small kingdom. It wasn't great, and it wasn't really known for any of its resources or people. But the king did have a diamond, a great perfect diamond that had been in his family for generations. He kept it on display for all to see and appreciate. People came from all over the country to admire it and gaze at it.

Then one day a soldier came to the king with the news that, although no one had touched the diamond, for it was guarded day and night, the diamond was cracked. The king ran to see, and sure enough, there was a crack right through the middle of the diamond!

Immediately the king summoned all the jewelers of the land and had them look at the diamond. One after another they examined the diamond and gave the bad news to the king; the diamond was irredeemably flawed. The king was crushed...So were the people. Somehow they felt they had lost everything.

Then, out of nowhere, came an old man who claimed to be a jeweler. He asked to see the diamond. After examining it, he looked up and confidently told the king, "I can fix it. In fact, I can make it better than it was before!" The king was shocked and a bit leery. The old man said, "Give me the jewel, and in a week I'll bring it back fixed."

Now the king was not about to let the stone out of his sight, even if it was ruined, so he gave the old man a room, all the tools and the food and drink he needed and he waited. The whole kingdom waited. It was a long week. At the end of the week the old man appeared with the stone in his hand and gave it to the king. The king couldn't believe his eyes. It was magnificent!! The old man had fixed it, and he had made it even better than it had been before!!!

He had used the crack that ran through the middle of the stone as a stem and carved an intricate, full-blown rose, leaves, and thorns into the diamond. It was exquisite. The king was overjoyed and offered the man half of his kingdom. But the old man refused in front of everyone, saying, "All I did was to take something flawed and cracked at its heart...and turn it into something beautiful. You see,....it is in the crack that the light gets in."

And so it is that we see that often what appears to be worthless, useless, scarred and cracked holds value beyond words. Even in our darkest and weakest moment, there is a way to let the light in.

This ritual of remembering today can be a way of transforming our hurt and sorrow into something beautiful and worthwhile. By remembering we say farewell to the past and make peace with what life brings us today.

Author Unknown

April

(Time for jesting, time for laughter?)
And if you are not ready, not yet,
to remember something
that makes you laugh:
Tell April to be patient.
Take your time.....

Sascha Wagner - TCF/Des Moines, IA

SITTING HERE

To sit here and not think of you is impossible.
To sit here and not be able to touch you is unbearable.
To sit here and not be able to hear your voice is torture.
To sit here and not be able to watch you play outside with
your brother is pure agony.
To sit here and watch your daddy and brother play together
and see that certain look in their eyes that says,
"We wish you were here," makes my heart ache.
But to be able to sit here and remember your smile, your
touch, hearing your voice, thinking of times you did play
outside with your brother, and thinking of the times I'd
kneel beside your bed as you slept and cry a tear because I
love you so, are pure heaven.
Because no one can ever take my memories away. To sit
here and be with you in my heart is truly a wonderful time
in my day.
To sit here...

~ Nancy Barrs, TCF/Salina, CA

I WILL NOT FORGET

I will not forget you.
Boy with hazel eyes.
I will see you shining
In every new sunrise.

I will not forget you
Child with golden hair.
I will feel your presence
You are every where.

I will not forget
Your grin with dimples deep.
I'll hold you in my dreams
While in my deepest sleep.

I will not forget you
Sweet memories make me glad.
I will not forget you
Not all the love we had.

I will not forget
Your laughter or your smile.
You'll be right beside me
And walk my every mile.

No, I will not forget you
Your spirit fills my soul.
I will not forget my son
Your memory keeps me whole.

~ Jacqueline Brown, TCF/New Britain, PA

Mommy Tears

"Mommy tears" fall for the first time as she gives birth.
When the pain is over, she feels suddenly fulfilled, and she
gives thanks to God for this heavenly gift.

Months later she will cry again as she endures the
exhaustion and frustration that come as she nurtures her baby
through the days and long nights without sleep. Later, as her
little one waves goodbye on her first day of school, she
smiles cheerily and waves back. Closing the door, she wraps
her empty arms around "only herself" and sobs.

Ahead are the school plays and the dance recitals where
other proud moms cry with her. Too soon comes the time of
minutes seeming like hours as she waits for her teen-ager to
return home at night. She knows her daughter must learn the
adult world without Mom to protect her. She imagines a
horrible car accident or worse. She paces. She cries. She
prays.

At last comes the time of her daughter's wedding day.
Determined not to embarrass her child, she bravely holds
back the tears and smiles. Proudly, she swallows the big
lump in her throat. She will cry later when she closes the
door.

The day of miracles arrives as her child, now a woman,
gives birth to her own child. The immensity of this moment
stuns her. "My past, my present and my future are together in
this room.." Mother and daughter now share a new bond. As
she cries tears of remembrance and joy, she suddenly
remembers her own dear mother. Until that moment, she had
never realized how much she had been loved herself.

Then come the biggest "mommy tears" of all as she
holds her baby's now womanly hand as her daughter sleeps
silently, then draws her last breath. As it was on that first day
of school, many years ago, she kisses her child's cheek
reassuringly and bids her farewell. When life's door closes,
she once again wraps her empty arms around "only herself"
and sobs again. This is too final to comprehend. Her heart
breaks open to let the tears fall, unrestrained.

Through the remaining years of her life, she will
remember the sad and the happy tears. She knows there are
more new tears to come. These "mommy tears" are special
and indefinable to others. She alone knows an intimacy with
them that others cannot share. Tears and laughter are both
gifts she cannot return. Nor does she want to. She sheds yet
another, in gratitude.

~ Mary Jane Cronin, Scottsdale, Arizona
Bereavement Magazine (March/April 2000) - (888)604-4673

BABY

I used to hold you in my arms,
Baby.

A pleasant weight.
Now I hold flowers, sweet
Like you.

A bundle so very, very light,
But oh, so heavy a burden.

Lifted from Pikes Peak Chapter, TCF/Colorado Springs



OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED

BIRTHDAYS

CHILD	PARENTS
ANDREW HOWARD BRAUN.....26.....	CRAIG & DEANNA BRAUN
ALLISON DEUTSCHER.....39.....	LYNN & DONNA MICKELSON
TRAVIS FREED33.....	RANDY & DEBBIE FREED
TYLER JAY FREED33.....	RANDY & DEBBIE FREED
DAVID GRAFSGAARD55.....	ERNEST & BERDINE GRAFSGAARD
LANNIE LEE KORNELIUS.....55.....	LEROY & DONNA KORNELIUS
JAMIE BETH MERCIER39.....	TERRY & CAROL MERCIER
JEFF MUNIGHAN.....49.....	JERALD & ARLENE MUNIGHAN
KENT R NELSON26.....	DEANNA NELSON
AMELIA MARIE PRATT4.....	JASON & TANDY PRATT
MARY-ALICE MARIE PRATT.....7.....	JASON & TANDY PRATT
JACOB L SKAR.....27.....	ALBERT & BONNIE SKAR
BRUCE C THORNBY54.....	JANET & HOWARD GALLAGHER
JEFFREY D VOLK.....58.....	JACK & JUNE VOLK
HEATHER WREN.....39.....	DEB WAYMAN
ZACHARY WAYNE WULLSTEIN4.....	RON & MICHELLE WULLSTEIN

ANNIVERSARIES

CHILD	PARENTS
STEVEN DUANE COOK.....4.....	SHARON COOK
TRAVIS FREED33.....	RANDY & DEBBIE FREED
KYLE KASSMAN1.....	TOM & NANCY KASSMAN
ALEXANDER BRENT KLINKHAMMER.....3.....	CHARLES & SANDY KLINKHAMMER
AMY CHRISTINE LARSON16.....	DALE & MARILYN LARSON (Grandparents)
ERIC LARSON16.....	DALE & MARILYN LARSON (Grandparents)
GAIL DIANE LARSON16.....	DALE & MARILYN LARSON
JOSEPH CHRIS LARSON16.....	DALE & MARILYN LARSON
JAMIE BETH MERCIER3.....	TERRY & CAROL MERCIER
AMELIA MARIE PRATT4.....	JASON & TANDY PRATT
MARY-ALICE MARIE PRATT.....7.....	JASON & TANDY PRATT
JACOB L SKAR.....1.....	ALBERT & BONNIE SKAR
JAMES KEVIN SKJEFTE17.....	VERNE & DIANE SKJEFTE
DANE TVEDT5.....	TOMMY & LEAH TVEDT
MICHELLE WARNECKE.....3.....	DOUG & JOAN WARNECKE
ANGELA MARIE WENTZ2.....	DAVID WENTZ
ZACHARY WAYNE WULLSTEIN4.....	RON & MICHELLE WULLSTEIN

I WILL NOT FORGET

I will not forget you.
 Boy with hazel eyes.
 I will see you shining
 In every new sunrise.

I will not forget
 Your grin with dimples deep.
 I'll hold you in my dreams
 While in my deepest sleep.

I will not forget
 Your laughter or your smile.
 You'll be right beside me
 And walk my every mile.

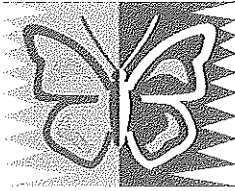
I will not forget you
 Child with golden hair.
 I will feel your presence
 You are every where.

I will not forget you
 Sweet memories make me glad.
 I will not forget you
 Not all the love we had.

No, I will not forget you
 Your spirit fills my soul.
 I will not forget my son
 Your memory keeps me whole.

~ Jacqueline Brown, TCF/New Britain, PA

SIBLING PAGE



SHE'S HERE...BUT NOT

She's here but she's there.
She's with us, but she's not.
She's right around the bend,
But then she's gone again.
She's far away but so near.
It's like she's gone but here again.

Stacy Sharp - TCF/Defiance, OH

EVERYTHING IS A FIRST

Everything is a first. Many moments must be faced. There are the first holidays, the first anniversary, and the first birthday. Thoughts about my brother Dave will always be with us. It's never more than a sentence away from me..NEVER.

The ordinary cannot be ordinary. A certain phrase, a look or an article of clothing can trigger thoughts and emotions. The joy of my senior year in college was interrupted by sad reality.

Forget? How is this possible? The days and months following my brother's death were filled with grief. Flowers and food were everywhere--love and concern were translated into strength that kept me moving one step at a time. People don't know what to say--nothing is NORMAL.

Tragedy has brought seriousness to my life. Thoughts about the meaning of life and the unimportance of a lot of things I have previously found important are circulating in my mind. I think about my own funeral now. When will it be: Tomorrow, next week, next year, before or after my parents? There are good days and bad days. I am learning to deal with all of this.

People ask me, "How are you?" Here is my answer. "I am mad Dave died at the age of 17. I'm angry that my parents have to go through this. I'm concerned about my role in the family. I am jealous of other families. I'm sad. I'm fearful about the future. I am hopeful things will get better. I am courageous. I think about my brother every day. I will be STRONG."

Lisa Ann Jones, TCF/Avoca, PA

There Are Times

There are times
When I see a fiery sunset
Or the silver glow of the moon,
And I see my brother and
feel the peace, as if he still exists.
But these times are few,
And most of what I see is -
What he is missing.
Cry now, my silent tears,
Quietly, so no one hears.
They don't know the pain I go through
Day after day,
And through the years.

Alissa Roeder - TCF/Pikes Peak, CO

Lament

Losing a sibling is like
Losing sight -
A certain vision is gone
A certain hope
Born in childhood has ended
You're left to love till the end -
There is an eternal fluidity
That is gone forever
Whereas before all you knew
Was for always -
There is a sadness
That remains constant
In the knowledge
That death brought
When your sibling is gone.

Ann Ley - TCF/San Francisco CA

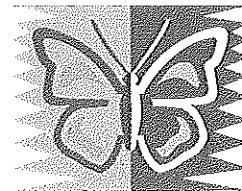
A Tribute

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

"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



Love Never Goes Away

“Why does it hurt so much? Why is this grief so incapacitating? If only the hurt weren’t so crushing.” Sounds familiar? All of us have known hurts before, but none of our previous “ouchies” can compare with the hurt we feel. Nothing can touch the pain of burying a child.

Yet most of us have discovered that the sun still comes up. We still have to function. We did not die when our child did, even though we wished we could have, so—we are stuck with this pain, this grief, and what do we do with it? Surely we can’t live like THIS forever!

There are no magic formulas for surviving grief. There are a few recognized patterns for grief, but even those are only guidelines. What we do know is that the emptiness will never go away. It will become tolerable and livable—some day.

TIME—the longest word in our grief. We used to measure TIME by the steps of our child: the first word, first tooth, first date, first car—now we don’t have that measure any more. All we have is TIME, and it only seems to make the hurt worse.

So what do we do? Give ourselves TIME—to hurt, to grieve, to cry. TIME to choke, to scream. TIME to be “crazy” and TIME to remember. Be nice to yourself! Don’t measure your progress through grief against anyone else’s. Be your own timekeeper.

Don’t push. Eventually you will find the hours and days of grief have turned to minutes and then moments—but don’t expect them to go away. We will always hurt. You don’t get over grief—it only becomes tolerable and livable. Change your focus a bit. Instead of dwelling on how much you lost, try thinking of how much you had. Try letting good memories come over you as easily as the awful ones do. We didn’t lose our child—HE [SHE] DIED. We don’t lose the love that flowed between—it still flows, but differently now.

Does it help to know that if we didn’t love so very much, it would not hurt so badly? Grief is the price we pay for love. And as much as it hurts, I’m very glad I loved. Don’t let death cast ugly shadows, but rather warm memories of the loving times you shared. Even though death comes, LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY!

~ Darcie Sims, TCF/Abilene, TX

A Stepparent’s Thoughts

I am a bereaved stepparent—stepfather to be exact. Robin Ann Craney, my stepdaughter, was killed at the hands of a drunk driver on June 8, 2001. She was 17 years old.

I have a son named Greg. His Mom remarried so I saw him on weekends, did the trips, and long summer visits as many divorced parents do. I did not get the chance to be a part of his life and see him every day. I got to hear about his activities and accomplishments all after the fact. When you marry someone with kids, you get another chance.

After several months of dating my (now) wife Cindy, I finally met her kids, Chris and Robin. Robin was almost 7 years old at the time. I remember that first meeting clearly because she wasn’t feeling so good. She ended up getting sick and had to go home. What a first meeting that was! After that, I became totally involved in the lives and activities of both of the children. I remember one of those nights well! Cindy and I attended parent-teacher conferences for both kids, a Cub Scout Pack meeting and a Girl Scout Brownie meeting—not bad for a single guy, who had been unmarried for 13 years!

Over the years, I got to know Robin’s likes, dislikes and all of her friends—and she had a lot of friends! I attended and participated in all of Robin’s activities, supporting her in her many endeavors—including gymnastics (her favorite). I was there when she had migraine headaches, running her to the doctor when her mother couldn’t, encouraging her, supporting her—all the things Dads do for their kids. I want to tell you in no uncertain terms, being a stepparent is so much harder. You get the responsibility and, often times it seems, none of the respect. “Mom said I could so I don’t have to listen to you” or “You can’t tell me what to do, you are not my dad” and so forth. I tolerated and dealt with her emotional outbursts when she became incensed at anything (sometimes it seemed everything) during the teen years. All Dads know how trying those times can be!

Now I am a bereaved stepparent—the one in a kind of “no man’s land.” I am not biologically connected to Robin; I sometimes feel like an outsider around people who were once a family—mother, father, son and daughter. Many of our friends have worried about Cindy and Chris. They often ask me “How is Cindy doing?” or “Is Chris OK?” Although I knew and lived with Robin for 10 years, very few ask, “How are you doing?” I am only the stepparent. The idea that this tragedy cannot be as devastating to me as it is to Robin’s “real family” is incomprehensible.

One definition for the word father is “father figure: one often of particular power or influence who serves as an emotional substitute for a father.” This is what I was for Robin. She loved to push my buttons—but that was part of our relationship—as frustrating as it could be. Robin is the only daughter I will ever have. I was every bit a father to her. I love her and I miss her. We, the stepparents of children who have died, grieve for our children too. Only society puts the “step” in the name. Parent is still the biggest part of who we are. We hurt because they were our children too—often without the support and understanding that is demonstrated towards the biologically connected parents. These beautiful children with whom we developed emotional bonds are now gone out of our lives; and we, too, endure the same feelings of loss and sadness.

~ Tony Cinocco, TCF/Denver, CO

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)

Please check out our Chapter website's page for 'Our Beloved Children' (www.tcffargomoorhead.org/ourchildren.html). If you would like your child's picture and a poem or story posted on this page, please submit them to us at tcf1313@hotmail.com or mail them to our PO Box (listed on the back of the newsletter). Photos and poems/stories sent to the PO Box will be electronically scanned and then returned to you so please remember to include a return address.

"Don't let death cast ugly shadows, but rather warm memories of the loving times you shared. Even though death comes, LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY."

Darcie Sims

My pain helps me live with my loss

The morning our 20-year old daughter Lee took sick with her last illness, I was trying to write a letter of sympathy to a friend, wondering if it would make any difference.

Five days later, I knew. It made a difference.

I discovered it was better to reach out than turn away, to say the wrong thing than say nothing. But in living through losing Lee, I also discovered I had something to say to others who suffered the loss of someone they loved.

Pain is better than forgetting.

It has been almost 18 years since she died, but Lee is still with us. The pain has not so much lessened, as it has become familiar, like the pain that continues in the leg that has been amputated. Her death is part of us.

I steel myself pretty well for the expected moments of pain. Her birthday in March, her death day in August, Thanksgiving, Christmas, even, these days, listening to an Albinoni oboe concerto knowing it is not she practicing in the next room.

But there is no protection from the blindside hit. Lee waves from a passing car. She appears ahead of me on a street in Siena, wearing a backpack; I rush to catch up with her but she turns a corner and is gone.

She stands in the shadows, just outside the living room. I hear her counsel when I have a problem and pay attention. At the concert I sit beside her in the center of the orchestra.

It is not all tears. We laugh at the same old jokes - and some new ones. Every submarine sandwich, I eat, I share with Lee. It was her favorite.

When I thought I was dying of a heart attack, Lee stood - in the blue jumper she had made - waiting at the end of a brightly lit tunnel, smiling.

But, I often say in a letter of sympathy, people will want you to get over it, snap out of it, buck up, forget. Of course we have to get on with life, to find salvation in routine that suddenly seems trivial, to fulfill our responsibilities to the living. But not to forget.

It is far better to remember, to mourn! To weep, to rage, than to allow the one who is gone to disappear.

In a way, I welcome the pain. I hurt; I remember.

So, I say in my sympathy letter, they should learn to accept the pain, even in a way welcome it, by comparing it to the terror of forgetting.

And as an elder of the tribe who has experienced loss, I write for them to remember in their own way, to mourn in their own way, to do what would be appropriate for the person who has gone and, more important, to do what needs to be done for the living.

The night Lee died we went to a musical in which her sister was appearing in the chorus. Lee would have wanted that, no matter if others approved.

We chose cremation because it was what we thought she would have wanted and it was, we discovered, what each of us wanted for ourselves. We paid no attention to the relative who said, "I don't know how you could burn her up."

We did what we had to do.

We could not handle a formal funeral, bringing the family from afar, after her quick dying, so we had a private service at the graveside.

I wept - frequently - and Minnie Mae did not. No guilt, no public measuring of pain. I dream of Lee and Minnie Mae does not. That does not mean that one of us mourns more deeply than the other. No guilt. No keeping score.

We love in our own way; we grieve in our own way.

And in this terrible loss we have found strength. When we are tested by other events, we have a measure of our ability to survive.

And we are also reminded that life is fragile.

In my letters reaching out I tell others what Lee's passing taught us: to listen to each other and to ourselves, to live the gift of life with caring and celebration. Today. Right now.

~ Donald M. Murray

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	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	Newsletter Printing	Joyce at Olivet Lutheran Church
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) 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.