



The Compassionate Friends

Fargo/Moorhead Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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F-M Area Chapter
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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

April 13th
May 11th

Dates to Remember

Mom's meeting - 7 pm on April 27th @ Fry'n Pan

TCF National Conference - Orlando, Florida July 28-30, 2017

LOVE GIFTS

Lyle, Tammy, Justin, Stacy, Hunter, Jersey, Jamie and Jordyn Helgeson in memory of their son/brother, Jared Scott Helgeson

Sandy & Chuck Klinkhammer in memory of their son, Alex Brent 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.

" I wish for you..."

Comfort on difficult days,
Smiles when sadness intrudes,
Rainbows to follow the clouds,
Laughter to kiss your lips,
Sunsets to warm your heart,
Gentle hugs when spirits sag,
Friendships to brighten your being,
Beauty for your eyes to see,
Confidence for when you doubt,
Faith so that you can believe,
Courage to know yourself,
Patience to accept the truth,
And love to complete your life.
Author unknown

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 April 27th. For more information please contact Sheryl at 701-540-3287 or sherylc13@msn.com.

Normal day, let me be aware of the treasure you are.

Let me learn from you, love you, savor you, bless you before you depart.

Let me not pass you by in quest of some rare and perfect tomorrow.

Let me hold you while I may, for it will not always be so.

One day I shall dig my nails into the earth, or bury my face in the pillow,
or stretch myself taut, or raise my hands to the sky,
and want more than all the world for your return.

~ Mary Jean Irion

It is the will of God and Nature that these mortal bodies be laid aside,
when the soul is to enter into real life;
'tis rather an embrio state,

a preparation for living; a man is not completely born until he be dead.
Why then should we grieve that a new child is born among the immortals?
~Benjamin Franklin, 22 February 1756

“How Many Children Do You Have?”

Shortly after my son died, I realized that this question was going to be bothersome. Each time someone asked me about the number of children, I struggled with the answer. I soon decided I was not going to let this become a problem. I thought about how I felt about my choice of answers and chose the one that met my needs in the beginning. I had a surviving daughter, but I know for me to say “one” would seem a denial on my part that my son had lived, and that wasn’t right for me.

In the beginning, when I still needed to tell people that my son had died, I would tell in detail about his accident when the question about how many children came my way. As the months passed and I had told the story enough times, I found that it wasn’t necessary to go into detail any more. My needs had changed, and I rethought my answer.

Now, when I am asked how many children I have, I answer, “I had two children.” The criteria I used in determining if I go any further is whether the person asking is going to be a continuing part of my life. If so, they need to know about my son, and I tell them. Otherwise we will be constantly dancing around the fact. Better, I think, to have it out in the open.

If, on the other hand, the person asking is simply passing through my life, then I feel no need to go any further than “I had two children.” Seldom does anyone catch the “HAD” instead of “have,” and pursue it. If they do, or if they ask follow up questions about ages or professions, I tell them first that my 26 year old son was killed in an accident. Then I tell them about my daughter who is alive and doing well, this gives them a choice. They can either acknowledge my son’s death and ask questions or they can ignore that and ask about my daughter. I am comfortable either way. If they are embarrassed, I see that as their problem. Just to show you how different we all are, however, my husband feels comfortable answering, “We have one child.” That is what is right for him and that is what he should say. You decide what is right for you – then Say it. That way you defuse that powerful question and it loses its ability to traumatize. Don't let it be a problem.

~ Mary Cleckley, TCF/Atlanta, GA

HAPPINESS IS . . .

Happiness is . . . “and I don't remember the rest of the commercial, nor what they're selling. Soda? Cigarettes? A car? Who knows? Does it matter?”

What is happiness? What do you mean by “happy?” Is it totally rollicky jollicky glee 100% of the time? Who do you know who has that? I imagine that the richest, the brightest, the prettiest, the most successful of people have issues they must face that trouble them, that render them less than “HAPPY.”

Is “happy” the absence of misery? Who do you know with no misery? Yet don't you know some happy people? Haven't you even heard laughter at a TCF meeting? Only “HAPPY” people laugh?

Maybe it's like a big, steep hill. Down at the bottom, in darkness, is abject misery and sorrow. Way way up at the top, beyond the rainbow, is that beaming gleaming unreal total 100% glee. And somewhere in between is where most of us are. During the first years after our child dies, we're down in the pits with the dark miseries. And we know we're the most unhappy of people.

But sometimes there's a glimpse, a memory of what's on the upper slope of that steep hill. Smiles, laughter, good days, pleasure. Happiness?

How do you get there? At some point it takes a conscious decision to survive, to smile, to rearrange, probably to compromise. Each of us has to make this decision for ourself. In a family people arrive at (and abandon for a bit) this decision at different times.

So—once you've decided to survive, what can make you “happy?” Different things for different people. You're still basically you. But look around, listen. Talk to other bereaved parents. Ask them.

For me, I decided to snatch at simple pleasures. Flowers that bloom in the cold—crocus, snowdrops—that's good. Birds are interesting to watch. Squirrels and chipmunks can be funny. A blue sky with puffy white clouds—that's beautiful.

A shining silvery airplane overhead—amazing! Snowflakes are a geometric wonder. Raindrops' collarbuttons plopping into a puddle are fun to watch. All around me there are small things to bring a small smile, to give me little pleasures.

But the world is not only for watching. There's doing, too. I've learned that an absorbing activity, something new to be mastered, something old to be perfected, an enjoyable project to be completed—these also bring pleasure (and are distractions). Painting can be engrossing for hours, as can quilting, knitting, working with wood, latch hooking, cross stitch, jigsaw puzzles. There are probably as many concentration activities as there are people. (Ask someone to teach you – or try a class).

Major muscle activities (exercise) are good for letting off excess energy, or steam. Walking, bike riding, swimming, or the really strenuous athletic kinds of games can divert the mind, be fun, and they're usually good for you, too.

It takes a conscious decision, some thought, some determination. I will survive. I will smile again. I will be “happy,” at least for part of each day. There will be bad minutes and sad hours; but I'll let the tears flow, and then try to find something good.

I need not walk alone. There are others to share and to care. When we listen or give an idea, talk or get an idea, we're helping each other. That's good, too. That's what TCF is all about.

Peace and Love! ~ Joan Schmidt, 2/28/85

We've discovered a strength inside us that amazes us and sometimes it angers us... what will shake me up? I survived the death of my child... maybe you have the survived the death of 2, 3 or all of your children. IS

THERE NOTHING THAT WILL DESTROY ME?

~Darcie D Sims "Footsteps Through the Valley"

The Picture



I always see the picture smiling back at me.
I always see the picture with unending
sympathy
I always see the picture with Gods willing
mercy

I always see the picture as my grief
I always see the picture playing a special part in my life
I always see the picture as the only remaining song in life
I always see the picture as the one memory to proceed
I always see the picture as my little daredevil brother
Dedicated to Ryan Duffner - by little angel brother
~by Erica Duffner, Lawrenceville GA

Journey Through Grief

Why should I, who never did neglect my grief,
Who began this journey so resolutely,
Determined to accept each step and see it through,
Find myself beginning on this path again
As if from the very start of it?
Did I not face this tragedy straight on,
And look death in the face and feel its touch?
Do I not understand that each soul, soon or late,
Returns to God? Why then, in a sudden unexpected moment
Does the shock of this death confront me,
As if I had never known of it at all?
Why do I, who was recipient of such love,
Of caring and compassion that abound -
Who was encompassed in the arms of family and friends,
And know that my loss is shared by many,
Feel such an individual grief?
And why do I, who let my tears flow free,
Who felt them wash upon my heart, my mind, my soul,
Who has screamed the scream of primal desperation,
And, through blurred eyes, has set my gaze upon the present,
Find that in some unsuspected moment,
Tears rage and gush, as if I'd never cried?
Because I am the mother of a child who died!
by Vivian Dean, TCF/Fort Bragg CA

To All Parents

"I'll lend you for a little time a child of Mine," He said.
"For you to love him while he lives, and mourn for when I come to
claim him.
It may be six or eight years or twenty-two or three.
But will you, till I call him back, take care of him for me?
He'll bring his charms to gladden you, and should his stay be brief,
You'll have his lovely memories as solace for your grief.
I cannot promise he will stay, since all from Earth return,
But there are lessons taught down there I want this child to learn.
I've looked this wide world over in my search for teachers true,
And from the throngs that crowd life's lanes, I have selected you.
Now will you give him all your love, nor think the labor vain,
Nor hate Me, when I come to call to take him back again?"
I fancied that I heard them say, "Dear Lord, Thy will be done.
For all the joy Thy child shall bring, the risk of grief we'll run.
We'll shelter him with tenderness, we'll love him while we may,
And for the happiness we've known, forever grateful stay.
But should the angels call for him, sooner than we've planned,
We'll brave the bitter grief that comes and try to understand."
~ Edgar Guest

To Know Me

To know me, is to know I worry. I worry even though I know
I shouldn't. I worry even though I know it is completely
unproductive. I worry, as I breathe.

I was faced with raising four sons as a single mom. Sons that
seemed to get into every kind of scrape imaginable, and I found
myself facing emergency room visits for stitches & broken arm or
two. I began to restrict their activity, fearful that when they rode
their bikes something "bad" could happen, or when they roller
skated, or when they just played rough as boys often do. I became
the over-protective mom I didn't want to be. I saw other mom's
letting their kids build skate board ramps, and taking them dirt bike
riding...but I was too fearful. Sports? Oh heavens, you know they
could get hurt don't you? So, to a degree I sheltered them from the
experiences that they should have enjoyed. Fear robbed them of
some of their childhood experiences.

The thing I worried about more than any other was that one
day, I would have to bury one of my children. I was so fearful that
when they went out, I would literally make myself sick with the
"what ifs". Go to sleep before they got home? Never happen. Fear
would paralyze me at times.

"You'll break the worry habit the day you decide you can meet
and master the worst that can happen to you." Arnold Glasgow.
God knows, I DID NOT want to have to meet and master this
fear...but it happened and I had no choice but to deal with it.

Shane was a safe, cautious driver who took it so very
seriously. He would readily volunteer to be the designated driver
so that everyone would safely return from a night out. Shane's life
ended on a stretch of road that is flat and clear for miles and miles.
Flat everywhere except for the tiny spot that took his life...an
overpass. Shane's life ended when at the top of this tiny hill, he
was met head-on with a drunk driver who got on the freeway going
the wrong direction. A minute or two later, or a minute or two
earlier, and he would had the opportunity to see it and react. BUT,
he was killed instantly and I was faced with my worst fear.

In the six years since Shane's death, I have learned that what
everyone said about worry was true. WORRY is such a waste of
time. I spent hours, hours and hours fretting about something that
happened anyway. Did any of that worry make it not so?
Absolutely not. Did any of that worry make it easier to bear when
it did happen? Absolutely not. Did any of my protective measures
stop it from happening? Absolutely not.

I coped. I believe it was God and a band of angels that saw me
through, but I coped better than all those worries I had conjured up
in my brain. It was then I realized I would not live the rest of my
life worrying about every little thing. A worrier will never stop
worrying completely, let's be realistic. BUT, I don't restrict
myself, or my boys, from enjoying life out of fear. If it's going to
happen, it will happen whether I worry about it or not. The only
thing that worry does is rob us of today's joy, while it instills a fear
of something that may or may not happen tomorrow. I wish I never
had to face this fear. I wish more than anything Shane was still
here, however, from this day forward, instead of living by fear and
worry, I remind myself of a better motto...Carpe Diem (Seize the
day).

~ Judi Barkman, TCF/Redland, CA

Look at yourself in the mirror. Say to yourself, "It is hard to lose a
child." Say to yourself, "It is reasonable to hurt." Say to yourself,
"Healing takes time." Be good to yourself

~ Sascha Wagner, TCF/Des Moines, IA

**OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED
BIRTHDAYS**

CHILD

PARENTS

JESSICA MARIE BALSTER.....	28	.....	CARRIE BALSTER
NATHAN BEACH	26	.....	LISA BEACH
ANDREW HOWARD BRAUN	28	.....	CRAIG & DEANNA BRAUN
ALLISON DEUTSCHER	41	.....	LYNN & DONNA MICKELSON
TRAVIS FREED.....	35	.....	RANDY & DEBBIE FREED
TYLER JAY FREED.....	35	.....	RANDY & DEBBIE FREED
DAVID GRAFSGAARD.....	57	.....	ERNEST & BERDINE GRAFSGAARD
LANNIE LEE KORNELIUS.....	57	.....	LEROY & DONNA KORNELIUS
DEBORAH CHERYL KYLLO.....	64	.....	B MICHAEL & GENEVA KNUDSON
JAMIE BETH MERCIER.....	41	.....	TERRY & CAROL MERCIER
JEFF MUNIGHAN	51	.....	JERALD & ARLENE MUNIGHAN
CASANDRA (CASY) PERRHUS	56	.....	RAYMOND & JAN MILLER
AMELIA MARIE PRATT.....	6	.....	JASON & TANDY PRATT
MARY-ALICE MARIE PRATT	9	.....	JASON & TANDY PRATT
BRUCE C THORNBY	56	.....	JANET & HOWARD GALLAGHER
HEATHER WREN	41	.....	DEB WAYMAN

ANNIVERSARIES

CHILD

PARENTS

TODD TIMOTHY CLARK.....	1	.....	JEFFREY & ANNA MARIE CLARK
ANNE CLEMENSON	1	.....	MARVIN & DOROTHY CLEMENSON
STEVEN DUANE COOK	6	.....	SHARON COOK
TRAVIS FREED.....	35	.....	RANDY & DEBBIE FREED
KYLE KASSMAN	3	.....	TOM & NANCY KASSMAN
ALEXANDER BRENT KLINKHAMMER.....	5	.....	CHARLES & SANDY KLINKHAMMER
CARMEN LALUM	2	.....	RUSSELL & SHARON LALUM
AMY CHRISTINE LARSON.....	18	.....	DALE & MARILYN LARSON (Grandparents)
ERIC LARSON.....	18	.....	DALE & MARILYN LARSON (Grandparents)
GAIL DIANE LARSON.....	18	.....	DALE & MARILYN LARSON
JOSEPH CHRIS LARSON.....	18	.....	DALE & MARILYN LARSON
JAMIE BETH MERCIER.....	5	.....	TERRY & CAROL MERCIER
AMELIA MARIE PRATT.....	6	.....	JASON & TANDY PRATT
MARY-ALICE MARIE PRATT	9	.....	JASON & TANDY PRATT
DANE TVEDT	7	.....	TOMMY & LEAH TVEDT
MICHELLE WARNECKE.....	5	.....	DOUG & JOAN WARNECKE
ANGELA MARIE WENTZ	4	.....	DAVID WENTZ

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

SIBLING PAGE

Not the Same

He was a very nice man, like so many others, and yet he was so different.
His quick smile and gentle ways were like those of others and yet, he was so uncommon.
He was kind and loving with unshakable faith like others, and yet he was so unique.
He was a dutiful soldier who gave his life like many others, and yet he was so special.
The same as others? No
Not to those who knew and loved him.
He was himself, and individual, and he was my brother!
~ Pam Miller Farrell, TCF/Evansville, IL

MEMORIES

My little brother who loved winter and icicles that are clear,
My heart aches and I cry because you
are now gone forever. How did time go by so fast
with all the memories we made?
They are everlasting; but without you the world is lonely
And there are no new memories.
~ Renee Miller, TCF/Troy, ID

I'm Sorry For The Things I Didn't Do

It's too late to say "I'm sorry"
for the things i didn't do.
It's too late to say, "Forgive me, and I'll make it up to you"
For you're gone now, forever, oh, if you only knew,
"Kid Brother," just how much I miss you.
no more teasing, no more pleasing,
No more borrowing the car,
No more promising to be careful,
No more sneaking in the pickle jar.
God in Heaven, please take care
Of the brother of mine.
He was so sweet, so tender, and kind.
O, Dear God, when you see him
Please tell him for me
That I miss him something awful,
Through I have my memories.
And, Dear God, there is something
That I'm asking of you -
Ask Jimmie to please forgive me
for the things i didn't do.
~ Laura Mae Martin, TCF/Grand Junction, CO

TO THOSE WHO COME AFTER

I never knew my brother,
Yet I knew him well.
Through my mother's eyes
I've known him,
And I love him still.
I'll grow tall and strong like him,
Yet not like him at all.
He'll be my guardian angel,
And we'll go through life together, as one.
I have his clothes and his toys
And his photos,
I hold them dear to me, But most of all,
I treasure the loving memories
My mother gave to me.
~ Karen Hoyland, TCF/Brisbane, Australia

I'M HERE

I cannot ease your aching heart,
Nor take the pain away,
But let me stay and take your hand
And walk with you today.

I'll listen if you need to talk;
I'll wipe away your tears.
I'll share your worries when they come;
I'll help you face your fears.

I'm here and I will stand by you,
Each hill you have to climb,
So take my hand, let's face the world;
Live one day at a time.

You're not alone, for I'm still here.
I'll go that extra mile,
And when your grief is easier,
I'll help you learn to smile.

~ Jeanne Losey

WHEN SIBLINGS ARE GRIEVING

The sibling group of the Acadiana Chapter, Lafayette, LA, has prepared a list of concerns that siblings who are grieving must cope with. These issues and suggestions are relevant not only for parents but for family members, friends, and teachers as well.

1. Don't overprotect us. We are trying to fit back into our lives, and overprotecting us makes it harder.
2. Many feel that being stoical is being strong. Don't hide your grief from us. Show us that you grieve, too, so we will come to you when we are hurting.
3. Information is important. We want to know what has happened or is happening, but we are often afraid to ask for fear of hurting you more than you already hurt. Please give us opportunities to ask questions, and please answer our questions truthfully.
4. We often feel we are being ignored when we are left with other people, especially when these people won't talk to us about what is going on. Parents and family members can help us when they help others to be open.
5. Grief is an individual experience. Sometimes when we are hurting badly, we need to be left alone. Please honor this need.
6. Grief is not a placid experience: it is full of ups and downs. Sometimes we're happy when you are sad. and sometimes we're sad when you are happy. Help us to accept that this is all right.
7. Advice and easy answers to difficult philosophical questions don't help. Don't tell us something just to be saying something. It's all right to tell us that you don't have all the answers.
8. Don't tell us that we won't understand when we ask questions. We understand more than you think we do.

~ The Sibling Group, TCF, Acadiana Chapter, LA

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

Waiting for Answers

Years ago I left my first meeting of The Compassionate Friends and drove home in tears. My son, Max, had died a few short weeks before and I had been anxiously awaiting this evening. These people must have some answers, I thought. With paper and pen in purse, I was ready to take notes and do as they prescribed. I would do anything to ease the ache in my soul. But when I walked out into the spring air later that night, I felt betrayed. I hadn't heard any answers. Instead of learning how to leave my grief behind, it had been confirmed, made more real with expression. I knew I would miss Max forever. Now I wondered if I would grieve forever. Would it always be this way, a flash of pain aligned with every memory? During the next months and years, I attended TCF meetings and conferences, read books, raged, kept busy, sometimes spent the day in bed. I wrote, cried and talked about Max. Slowly, I discovered the answers I had long feared were true: yes, I will grieve forever, and yes, my memories will often provoke tears. But some-thing had changed. My grief was now more forgiving, my tears almost sweet with memory. Max's life took shape again as the anguish of his death began to recede. If I would always miss him, I would also always have him with me in so many ways. I wanted to carry his memory into the future: the joy, the lessons, and the inevitable pain. How could I do otherwise? As I walked to my car after that first meeting, the TCF chapter leader caught up with me. "How can I stop this pain?" I asked. "Just do what feels right to you," she said, "Listen to your heart. And we'll be here to listen, too. Sometimes the best advice is none at all."

Mary Clark, TCF/Sugar Land TX

Family

A family has been described as a group of people whose trouble is that the youngsters grow out of childhood, but the parents never grow out of parenthood.

How true that is, and how painful when one is a grandparent whose grandchild has died. Grandparents carry dreadful burdens that are frequently never mentioned. When a child dies, grandparents bear the grief of the death of a loved boy or girl compounded by the pain of watching their own adult child, the dead child's parent, writhe in an agony they are powerless to ease.

It is a double grief.

~ Harriet Sarnoff Schiff

CAPSIZED

Put a family onboard a boat and, when a loved one dies, the boat capsizes. Each family member is stunned, but they begin to swim for shore the best way they know how. Some swim with long strokes, others float or dog paddle while hoping the others are coming along okay. It seems to take all of one's energy, leaving no reserve.

They want to stay together but need to have room apart to navigate through the waves. Some comfort is found in that they are not alone, and yet, are on their own to find the method to shore that works for them.

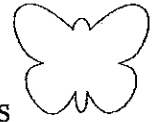
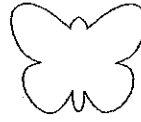
Successfully reaching shore has more rewards than realized. In looking back subtle signs of encouragement were almost overlooked, and that love and support still lingers on in the heart-healing-along with a newly found confidence in inner strength.

A new relationship is born enabling each family member to carry forth a treasure of personal memories, honoring the loved one who has gone ahead to a shoreline we have yet to see.

The journey through grief is designed to build strength, to honor our differences, and to encourage others for a lifetime.

~ Jayne Belancio

(Reprinted with permission from Bereavement Publishing, Inc.)



Butterfly Decals

"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

FREEDOM TO GRIEVE

Freedom - condition of being free or unrestricted

Grief - intense sorrow

Does someone always have to die for others to be free?

If that's the case, then freedom always leads to grief.

Does someone always have to leave their families to fight for freedom's course?

If that 's the case, then freedom's fight always leaves their families in remorse.

Does someone always have to chart the course so others will know the way?

If that's the case, then *Compassionate Friends* has opened freedom's gates.

Have others walked this path before me to wage their war with grief?

If that's the case, then they have also fought through pain and torment, and have lost their child so sweet.

Is it possible for us to join together? - To fight for our freedom to grieve?

If that's the case, then together we'll march on to try to live our lives in peace.

And together we'll fight the battles of grief - all parents who are sorely bereaved,

And pay tribute to the children we have lost, for they've given us the freedom to grieve.

~ Faye McCord,

In loving memory of my son, Lane McCord

Pieces of My Heart

I kneel beside you,

I tremble, I can't stop.

The tears pour from my eyes
watering your grave.

The scattered pieces of my heart
pull together one last time
to give me the courage to tell you ...
I love you. I miss you. I need you.

~ Karly Esther Falcon, TCF/Houston TX

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

Your Name: _____

Child's Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Birth Date: _____ Death Date: _____

(Signature) _____ Date: _____

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)

Dormant Anger Erupts Unexpectedly

Over three years ago, just 15 months after my son was killed in a traffic accident, a Dodge Ram dual cab truck that was traveling at 55 miles per hour when it ran a stop sign struck the vehicle I was driving. The front end of my car was ripped from the frame, the hood was crumpled and car spun from the impact. The other driver was cited for running the stop sign. A very credible witness gave his statement. Three months later I had neck surgery for the injuries sustained in the accident. The facts were simple in my mind. He ran the stop sign. I stopped. He was negligent. His insurance company paid for my car that was totaled but stopped talking to me when the adjustor heard about the necessary surgery that was performed a month later.

Mediation failed. The defense postponed the trial eleven times. The attorneys for the defendant's two insurance companies dug in. Delay, deny, debate...the mantra of all defense attorneys now became my reality.

Finally we had a court date. The players knew their lines....the diminutive judge whose campaign election funds are donated by the attorneys who practice in his court, the four well-dressed defense attorneys, my attorney and his associate....all knew the rules. All played the game well. This was their theater, their play, and their world. I was not happy with the pre-trial instructions that ruled out much of the evidence. But I wanted my day in court. I'd served on many juries, but I had never seen this side of the courtroom. It was a revelation.

All went fairly well with the testimony of the eyewitness and the policeman who had handled the accident scene. Then it was my turn. My attorney began asking me questions and suddenly, out of somewhere in my soul, anger akin to a long dormant volcano arose. I repressed it after my attorney asked me if I was angry. That was my hint: be sweet, be likeable, Harris County juries are notorious for stingy awards. I settled back down until the louder of the six defense attorneys began asking his carefully prepared questions.

I spoke over him. I responded with no small amount of hostility. He baited me, and I swallowed the hook. The volcano unleashed. I raised my voice, became animated in my anger and finally drew the judge's wrath. I even interrupted the judge to say I was sorry. The judge raised his voice to top volume, berating me for failing to answer the questions in a single word, for continuing to respond while the defense attorney was talking. The judge gestured wildly at the court reporter, explaining that she couldn't write the words of two people at one time. Someone who was very important in his own world had chastised me. But more significantly, I had discovered something about myself: the anger that had erupted from within me like a volcano was not caused by the accident, the neck surgery, the legal-eagle games, the courtroom setting or the judicial stage.

I discovered that the repressed anger that I had managed to contain for over 4 1/2 years was still alive and well. Much was learned that day by this bereaved mother. As the volcano of anger erupted, the truth was so apparent to me that I smiled at my naivety.

Since my son's death, I have intentionally placed myself in situations where the people are gentle, positive, upbeat, balanced and not aggressive and violent in their actions or words. Subconsciously I knew that my anger was still there, and I didn't want to tempt the fates; the anger caused by the death of my only child was not going away. Now it had become apparent that my anger had to be addressed. So I brought it to the forefront of my mind as my husband and I drove home. I examined it closely, seeking an answer.

Sitting quietly that evening I realized that my anger has surfaced from time to time since my son died but never in such a nerve jolting eruption. When I realized the depth and scope of that anger, when I acknowledged its existence, when I faced it down, the volcano quietly went back to simmer. I must be very careful about quick retorts, actions without thought, words spoken in haste. I must be conscious of my anger during the process of releasing that anger in a gradual way. One day the anger volcano will become dormant.

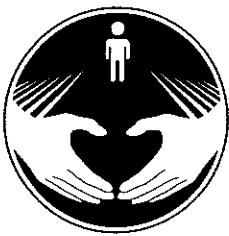
Our grief journeys are life-long. I will always feel the many emotions that accompany the death of my only child. But each emotion has moderated over the years. My anger will be less raw, just as the other negative emotions and feelings have become less pronounced over time. Actively identifying each enemy that lives in my psyche has enabled me to address it. Negativity cannot fester when exposed to the light of hope. And, yet, I must always remember that I am still a work in progress. We are all a work in progress.

~ Annette Mennen Baldwin
In memory of my son, Todd Mennen
TCF/Katy, TX

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
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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.