



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

Volume 27 Number 8

Fargo ND/Moorhead MN

AUGUST 2010

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 August 12th

Next month's meeting is on September 9<sup>th</sup>

*There will be a guest speaker at the September 9<sup>th</sup> meeting. Therefore, the meeting in September will begin a half hour early at 7 p.m.*

*The speaker will be Marshal Olson and his topic is about "Signs from our loved ones."*

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

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

### DATES TO REMEMBER:

August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2010 - Fargo Chapter's 4th Annual WALK TO REMEMBER

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](mailto:nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org) - Web Site: [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

Website for the Fargo/Moorhead Chapter - [www.tcffargomoorhead.org](http://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](mailto:sherylc13@msn.com).

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](mailto: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.

\*\*\*\*\*AUGUST LOVE GIFTS\*\*\*\*\*

Lori & Jerry Brady & Sears family in memory of their son/brother, Greg Sears 12/1987 - 8/2009

Persys Piersall & family in memory of their grandson, Greg Sears 12/1987 - 8/2009

Larry & Lois Gangnes in memory of Lorraine Smutzler (Kylene Milligan's mother)

Clare & Richard Elless in memory of their daughter, Tari Heller 8/1955 - 11/2007

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



## Fargo Chapter's 4th Annual WALK TO REMEMBER

WHAT: 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Walk to Remember and Potluck

WHEN: Saturday, August 14, 2010 at 10:00 am.

WHERE: South Shelter at Oak Grove Park

The Compassionate Friend of Fargo-Moorhead will hold its Walk To Remember, on Saturday, August 14, 2010, at the South Shelter at Oak Grove Park, 124 N Terrace in Fargo.

The Walk To Remember begins at 10:00 am. We will walk from Oak Grove School to the Angel of Hope statue in Island Park and then back to Oak Grove. For those who prefer to walk one-way, rides from Island Park back to Oak Grove will be provided. There will be a pot-luck lunch in the Eid Center, following the walk. Please bring your favorite dish and join us for good food and conversation.

If you have any Questions please contact:

John Milligan (Chapter Leader) - 701-282-4794, email-[patkylene@hotmail.com](mailto:patkylene@hotmail.com)

Sheryl Cvijanovich - 701-235-8158 or email-[sherylev13@msn.com](mailto:sherylev13@msn.com)

### WHAT? TEN YEARS AND YOU AREN'T OVER IT YET

To this statement I reply, "I've gotten over the death of my child, but I haven't gone over it all yet. Perhaps I won't ever." There are still deep places in my heart that need to be touched. And sometimes my newly bereaved compassionate friends touch these recesses of my soul. I'm glad when they do because one more thread of my torn tapestry is thus whetted; one more thread can be woven again. This is what I still get from Compassionate Friends meetings. What do I give back? My fellow participants tell me it is important for me to be there beside them, to listen, to speak their child's name, to connect one experience to another. It is being alive; it is sharing stories which by themselves may not make sense, but which, in the context of the meeting, carry our children right back here among us. When I say I, or my, I really mean us-the veteran bereaved parents who still participate and facilitate TCF meetings. We represent hope and love to the newly bereaved. To the newly bereaved, hope can be insult. Our most significant hopes have been savagely shattered. We are advised by well-meaning family and friends to have hope for the future. How, I ask you? When the veteran bereaved parent comes to a meeting, he is the hope for the newly bereaved. He has survived!

One of the things that happens. To us as we experience grief and participate in The Compassionate Friends sharing groups is that we become more philosophical. We are forced by the grief we experience to examine all aspects of life. And by choice and need we listen to and learn about our fellow bereaved participants. We begin to understand more about life. When we share these insights with the newly bereaved, their tunnel of darkness and their confusion is lightened. Come on, participate!

~ Marcel Kopp - TCF/Boston, MA

### STEPPARENTS

Stepfathers are a rare breed, they are called upon to do the tough deeds.

Saying 'no' to the children when Mom wants to stay clean, Leaving you as the bad guy and also called mean.

No one stops to think of the love you have for the child, It's been going unnoticed for a long while.

It's time we speak up and let others know the children were also ours and we love them so.

In tough times, moms reply, "This is my child." We don't retaliate because that's not our style.

Yes, Mom, you gave them life, it's true, but we stepfathers gave our lives to them and to you.

Please remember biological does not mean love.

It's the gift of yourself spreading your wings like a dove, Protecting and nourishing the ones you love dear,

While comforting their hearts and eliminating their fears.

Just remember we are grieving, too, maybe as much as you; yes, it's true.

Your tears may seem to come more frequently, but ours come mostly in secrecy.

This is because we are grieving for two, our child and yes, a life anew.

We have lost our wives and the life we once knew, It's unbelievable, but unfortunately very true.

Just remember we love like you do, deep in our hearts and souls through and through.

There is no "step" in a father's love,

We are the guys God sent from above.

~ Wayne Bell, in memory of their daughter, Karen Reilly

### *It's Been a Year*

*Sadness too deep for the telling  
Pain far beyond wretched tears  
losing you, my sweet beautiful  
daughter  
Was the worst of all of my fears.  
Your presence brought purpose  
and meaning  
To a life that was stumbling along.*

*Each day spent with you was a  
blessing...  
Every moment without you is  
wrong.  
A year has dragged by since you  
left here  
A time full of anguish and pain..  
I've gone through these days  
heavy-hearted  
Living life down on memory lane.*

*I remember you as a small baby  
With your blonde hair and great  
Big blue eyes..  
And I think of the years that I  
rocked you to sleep  
Singing sweet soothing lullabies.  
My arms are now aching and  
empty  
The rocker is pushed out of sight  
But I'm still singing all of our  
lullabies  
In case you are listening tonight.*

*By Sally Milaca - TCF/Syosset NY  
In memory of her daughter, Tracey,  
on the first anniversary of her death.  
7/8/67 - 7/2/94*

### **TAKE ME TO WHERE THE WATERMELON GROWS**

Take me to where the watermelon grows  
stretched out over years ago  
Take me to where memories live, and sorrow  
never casts its shadow  
Show me the grass where laughter thrives  
where little boys and girls dance  
Take me to those rich fields of yesterday  
ripe with the memories  
...basking in sunlight,  
waiting for me to smile  
as I remember my child.  
~ Alice J. Wisler

When one has tasted watermelon  
He knows what the angels eat.

~ Mark Twain

### **A Grandparent's Point of View**

The death of a child is the most tragic thing that can happen to anyone. It affects so many lives—family, friends, and even strangers. I lost my grandchild through death, and only a grandparent can understand the special love we have for our grandchildren and the loss we feel when the child dies. For grandparents, it is a double loss. Not only is your grandchild gone, but you also watch your child die each day. The smile that was always on my daughter's face is no longer there. The hurt is so deep and there are so many questions. You feel helpless as a parent. You can't kiss the hurt away as you did when they were a child. You have no answers for their questions, for you can barely understand your own feelings. Each day I hope and pray for a little ray of sunshine to show on my daughter's face. I search for a little something to day or do that will comfort her. It seems that there is no end to the suffering. As time has slowly gone by, I have seen the healing process begin. In time a ray of hope will shine on my daughter's face and a smile will make her eyes light up again. She will turn to me for what little comfort I can give her. There will always be a part of me that is gone, but in time I will learn to live with the part that is still there.

~ Ruth Eaton - TCF/Savannah, GA

### **CEMETERY VISITS**

Are you one of those people who have a need to go to the cemetery often?

The non - bereaved frown on that, as a rule. Many people feel there is something morbid about those visits; that you're obsessing.

Unless you know the pain of losing someone you love better than yourself, you can't understand that need.

Some people need to visit every day; others go now and then, and still some never go back once the funeral is over.

There are no rules. If it makes people uncomfortable when you make your cemetery visits, go alone. Don't feel you need to get anybody's permission or approval. Call a friend who won't judge you by the number of miles you travel to and from.

It is important for you to know that how often you go to the cemetery has absolutely nothing to do with the length and depth of your expression of your grief. It is important to know that you have the right to do whatever comforts you. It may not seem right to your sister, your brother-in-law or your friends, but that's their problem.

If you try to please everybody by the things you do and say, you'll find you are not taking care of your needs - and there are no more important ones right now.

You won't always required visits this often, and when you no longer feel this urge to go so often, don't feel guilty. It just means you are getting better. Accept is as that and move forward with your life when you are able. For right now, do what make you feel better.

~ Mary Cleckley, TCF/Atlanta, GA

# SIBLING PAGE

## When Your Brother or Sister Has Died

When a brother or sister dies, it is not only a crisis for surviving siblings who are children, but also for surviving adult siblings. Sometimes siblings tend to be neglected in the grieving process because so much focus is placed on the parents (if the deceased sibling is a child) or the remaining spouse and children (if the deceased sibling is an adult). Often the depth of grief that people feel when their sister or brother dies is underestimated. A sibling relationship carries with it a connection that cannot be broken. You can decide to break off a friendship, but the bond between siblings will always be present. You and your sibling may not have been especially close, but you will always be connected to one another.

## Helping Surviving Children Cope with a Sibling's Death

Often when a child's sister or brother dies, the child actually feels that he has lost three people: the sibling and both parents. For the parents, the death of a child is so devastating that they have very little left to give to their surviving children. However, these children have important needs to be met and fears to be addressed, and if they don't get the help they need, there can be long term emotional damage. A surviving child is trying to cope with the loss of his brother or sister AND to the change in his family situation along with the behavior of his grieving parents. The child needs to be reassured that even though his parents are grieving profoundly over the death of their other child, it does not in any way diminish the love they feel for the surviving sibling. When a child loses a sibling, he loses a playmate, a friend and sometimes even a "surrogate parent." Below are some feelings and thoughts that a child may naturally have:

- "Will my other siblings or my parents die?"
- "Did I do something that made my brother/sister die?"
- "Things will never be the same again."
- "I can't let my parents see me cry, because it will upset them."
- "No one cares about my feelings, only my parents' feelings."
- "I feel left out."
- "If I act like my brother/sister, maybe my parents won't be so sad."

## How to help:

- Reassure the child that he is not going to also die, and that he is loved and wanted.
- The child's parents should try to keep the family's routine as normal as possible.
- Expressions of grief should be shared. Encourage the child to share his feelings and talk openly; let the child know that he shouldn't be afraid to talk about the sibling who died.
- Give the child plenty of comfort in the way of hugs and holding.
- Reassure the child that he is not responsible for the death.
- Keep in mind that surviving children cannot be expected to "take the place" of the deceased sibling.
- Try to answer all the child's questions about the death as honestly as possible, but don't feel obliged to have all the answers.

## Special Needs of Adolescent Siblings

Adolescents may have some unique issues to deal with along with the death of a brother or sister. Adolescents are in the process of trying to break away from their parents and become more emotionally independent. They are usually lacking

confidence and are somewhat self-absorbed during this time in their lives. Because of this insecurity, accepting the death of a sibling is often something that they will try to avoid. Adolescents face a special dilemma in this situation; they desperately need the support of their parents and other family members, but on the other hand, they don't want to let their feelings show for fear of seeming childlike and vulnerable. All the stress that surviving teens face can cause them to take risks, run away from home or abuse drugs or alcohol. For an adolescent, "flirting with death" can be a way to try to have power over it. Parents of a surviving teen need to provide emotional support and counseling if needed, but also be understanding if their teen needs a means to "escape," as long as he is not being self-destructive in doing so. Teens may be more likely to open up more to their friends about their sibling's death than to their parents. Don't be discouraged or disappointed if this happens. They may be reaching out to other people to avoid upsetting or hurting you, which is understandable. The most important thing is that they are able to share their feelings with someone, whether that person is a friend, a counselor or a parent.

## Adult Siblings

When your brother or sister died, you not only lost a beloved member of your family, you probably lost that sibling's role within the family. You may also now experience a gap in the birth order. If the oldest sibling died, you may have lost a "caregiver." If the youngest died, you may feel that you have lost the one you had the role of protecting. If your sibling was your twin or part of a multiple birth, more than likely you feel that part of you has died. It can be confusing to consider taking on a new role in the family, and the pain of trying to accept your sibling's death makes it even more difficult.

In some ways you may also feel that you have lost your parents. This could be the first time that you turn to your parents for support, and find that they need you as much as you need them, if not more. In a way, you may feel that you need to grieve the loss of the parents you once knew, the parents who were strong, supportive and in control. It can be extremely disturbing to see your parents so vulnerable and helpless.

Try to spend some time thinking about your sibling's role in the family and how you can learn to accept the way your family will now relate to one another. Be patient and kind to your parents, other siblings and most importantly, to yourself.

## Learning to Heal

Regrettably, there is no such thing as complete acceptance when someone you love dies. The death of your brother or sister has changed your family, and it has changed you. The future is also changed, since it will no longer include a person with whom you expected to grow old. However, over time you will learn to remember your brother or sister with laughter, smiles and memories of happy times. Let the love you shared comfort you. In this way, you can celebrate the essence that was your sibling's life and spirit.

Source:

<http://www.theeasierway.com/resourceDocs/losingasibling.htm>

"A sister is a gift from God, sent from above to make life worthwhile here below" -Author Unknown