



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

FARGO/MOORHEAD AREA CHAPTER

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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Chapter Leader - John Milligan (701)491-0364

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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
August 8th
September 12th

On Thursday August 22, 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. Please join us!

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 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.

"When you come to the edge of all the light you know, and are about to step off into the darkness of the unknown, faith is knowing one of two things will happen: There will be something solid to stand on, or you will be taught how to fly."

- Barbara J. Winter

August - Guest speaker Marshall Olson
Marshal is a retired teacher and coach from Crookston, MN. His message is "coincidence or is God talking to me?"

This is about their families journey after the death of their 17 year old son, Brock, from a car accident in 1997. Marshall shares Brock's faith and how our priorities in life can be strengthened and straightened, we extend a special invitation to those who have lost a child, we hope that you are truly blessed.

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

LOVE GIFTS

Lynn & Donna Mickelson in memory of the Deutscher Family
Clare & Richard Elless in memory of their daughter, Tari Elless Heller
June Volk in memory of her sons, Jeff Volk and David Volk
Lori Brady and family in memory of Greg Sears
Ellen Pazdro in memory of her grandson, Matthew Cvijanovich
Donna Holley in memory of her nephew, Matthew Cvijanovich
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.

THE GRIEF OF A PARENT WHO HAS LOST AN INFANT

To experience the loss of an infant is to grieve for what never was. After all to the months of anticipation and preparation, the actual birth of a child brings the feeling of hope and fulfillment. Should that child be stillborn, or die hours, days or even months later, the unrealized dreams become a source of pain for the parents. No parent ever expects to outlive his child: the death of an infant is often the loss of a child unknown even to his parents. The expected stages of grief (guilt, disbelief, anger, etc.) can have new directions for the parents who have lost an infant.

1. **SHAME & GUILT** -- Especially if the infant was stillborn or had a birth defect, the mother may feel she has failed as a woman, "Other women have live, normal babies, why can't I?" Should an infant die months after birth, parents find it hard to resolve feelings that it was their fault.
2. **NO MEMORIES** -- Parents may only have "souvenirs of an occasion" (birth certificate, I.D. bracelet) by which to remember their child. If the infant is older they may have pictures and a few belongings, but they may still feel they hadn't really gotten to know their child.
3. **LONELINESS IN GRIEF** -- It is hard for friends and relatives to share your grief for a child they never knew. If the child is a newborn they may give the impression that you are grieving unnecessarily over a non-person. They hope that you "forget this baby" and "have another one."
4. **NEGLECTED FATHER** -- Too often the sympathies of professionals and friends are directed mainly to the mother. It is important to remember that the father had made plans for this baby too.
5. **MOTHERS vs. FATHERS** -- Since the mother has bonded with her child all during pregnancy, her grief may be much deeper than the father who only came to know this child after birth. It may be difficult for a father to understand why his wife's grief is so profound and so prolonged.

By Claire McGaughey and Sue Shelley
TCF Infant Group, St. Louis, MO

RISKS

To laugh is to risk appearing the fool,
To weep is the risk appearing sentimental,
To reach out for another is to risk involvement,
To expose feelings it to risk exposing our true self.
To place your ideas, your dreams before a crowd is to risk
loss,
To live is to risk not being loved in return,
To live is to risk dying,
To try at all is to risk failure.
But to RISK WE MUST.
Because the greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing.
The man, the woman, who risks nothing, does nothing, has
nothing, is nothing.
~ Unknown

HEALING VERSUS RECOVERY

I have heard the terms "recovery" and "healing" used interchangeably to refer to the goal of processing grief. I would like to propose the idea that recovery carries with it the assumption of an injury or illness and that when the necessary repair has taken place, the person will return basically to the same person he was previous to the injury or illness.

When a child dies, there is, indeed, an injury of massive proportions. All systems--physical, mental, and spiritual--are affected. There is physical pain, emotional retching, spiritual upheaval, and struggling. All this may be occurring simultaneously. Though there may not be bleeding in the physical sense, there is emotional hemorrhaging. The body and psyche are in crisis. Bereaved parents are often unable to eat; they may experience sleep disturbances and disorientation. Believe it or not, all these reactions are normal. Grief is a normal part of life. This is not a mental illness or some chemical imbalance of the brain. What is not normal is to experience the death of a child.

The major difference between recovery and healing is that the goal is not to return to who we were before our child died. That goal is impossible to achieve. To continue to try to achieve a goal of recovery is to assume that life will be basically the same with a few minor adjustments. We'll set one less place at the table, buy less food, feel sad on holidays, cry a bit more. Our lives have been permanently and irrevocably changed. Part of the healing process is accepting that not only has our life changed, but that we are, in fact, becoming different people. The becoming is the healing.

During this process, we examine every facet of our lives and our belief systems. This is a journey, not a "repair." By living through this journey, we become different people. True, we may basically look the same, but we are not the same as before our child died. We look at life in a new way. Our interests change and our priorities change. We will never look at a child the same again. We have a new and deeper level of understanding and compassion for those experiencing pain--all kinds of pain. We have a different understanding of spirituality. We ourselves feel new and different. We carry some of the old person with us through the healing process, but we emerge different. We are healed, not recovered.

~ Bridie Tracy, TCF/Shoreline Chapter, CT

Crying

When your heart says "cry" but your mind says "don't," listen to your heart. It could be your pride, not your mind, that is saying don't cry: for tears are hard for one's pride to accept. Crying because your child has died does not mean you are not a strong person. Tears do not mean you are having problems with emotional instability. You are crying because you are hurt. You are in love with your child and now the child is dead. Not letting it out little by little through tears may mean you are bottling it all inside. Is this good? Next time your heart says "cry," listen to it. You'll feel better for it in the long run.

When God sends forth a tiny soul
To learn the ways of earth,
A mother's love is waiting here --
We call this wonder -- birth.

When God calls home a tired soul
And stills a fleeting breath,
A Father's love is waiting there,
This too is birth -- not death.
~ Author Unknown

OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED



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

This Mixed-Up Grief

Have you ever noticed the many mixed-up, confusing emotions involved in grieving? On the one hand, you feel restless; on the other hand, you feel like you don't want to move at all. You feel desperately alone, yet you don't want anyone around. You feel scatterbrained, forgetful, and yet frantically meticulous. You feel like crying at nothing, and sometimes laughing at anything. (Or do I have that backwards?) Being in a crowd of people is fine as long as they don't talk to you. And yet, if they don't talk to you, you feel as if nobody cares. You want so desperately for someone to mention your child, to remember the life that once was. And yet it can make you furious if ALL they want to talk about is the dead one, and never even mention the living ones.

Grief settles over you like a hot blanket. You're as cold as the winter snow. Grief presses on you like a steamroller. You're floating in a bubble above yourself. Grief boxes you in on four sides and introduces you to a pain no one should have to know. But then, once again, you begin to feel compassion. You relate to other parents who have had an experience similar to your own. And eventually, in a moment as sharp as a sunburst, you hear yourself saying your child's name with an unfamiliar smile on your face. You remember some of the funny times and feel laughter building in your throat.

One morning you notice the sun is shining. Many days, months, and possibly years have passed unnoticed—and somehow, you are still here. Even though your child is still—there. You feel your heart swell with a love you never even knew could exist. And you find a place in your life for something called (dare I say) peace. And then, ever so gently, the memories enfold you in a warmth as soothing as a cool shower on a hot summer day, so you find you WANT to remember. And tender memories of love lift you to unreachable heights, to the brightest of stars, to the loveliest touch of your child.

~ Dana Gensler, TCF/Kentucky

SIBLING PAGE

WHILE YOU'RE WALKING

While you're walking today, will you keep an eye out for my brother?
He's tall with dark brown hair and looks a lot like our mother.
His eyes are filled with loneliness.
You will find tears upon his face.
His heart was cold and empty; he could be anywhere.
If you should see a man who looks like he's been crying,
Please just stop and say to him,
"Mister, don't stop trying.
Try to get over the mountains, to reach the other side.
You'll find with each step you take,
you'll be building up your pride."
Don't ever say to a crying man,
"Cheer up, your life is just starting."
When all along everyone knows;
Divorce - his life is not parting?
He loved his children, he loved his wife.
How can we say, "Start a new life." ?
He has left us now, filled with grief and much sorrow.
He couldn't see beyond his heart, not even for tomorrow.
Tomorrow will be better they say.
Time will be the test.
You can stop looking for my brother now,
you see, he's been laid to rest.
God bless his heart, for it was broke.
Suicide's the word I spoke.

Brenda DeLarger, St. Clair Shores, MI

WHERE DOES THE SISTER COME IN?

MY brother was killed
He was murdered for no reason at all
My pain is so sharp, so close.
But THEY think I shouldn't
be suffering as much...
As much as his wife,
who grieves for her love and her future.
As much as his son,
who will never know his daddy.
As much as his parents,
who have lost their only son,
their first born, their child.

I have lost my closest friend, the man I
Admired most in my world: he person I
Spent most of my free time with—only
For the company; the person I played
Yahtzee with until 2 a.m., knowing
I'd beat him soon: the boy I grew up
With and followed around constantly; the
Love that only a brother and a sister can
Know; the respect he had for me; the talks
And the personal jokes.
I have lost my brother.
It hurts just as much.
~Bridgette Huard

#1 BROTHER

I've been wanting to write these words for so long
But found it hard to say what I was feeling.
Besides loneliness and feelings of forlorn,
There's this missing piece in my life,
A space in my heart
That I know time can never heal.
Some days when I'm thinking of you
A smile comes easy.
Other days, like today,
It's my tears that fall like the rain.
I'm missing you so much, big brother.
I look for you in the face of a crowd.
I search to find resemblance anywhere, in anyone,
Hoping that seeing that slight
Resemblance will numb the pain
At least for a while,
Maybe take away the ache in my heart
And put that smile back on my face.
I know you're watching out for me,
And I know you're with me.
And until the day when we are with each other,
I'll have to learn to live with the memories
And continue to search for your face in the crowd.

~ Suzanne Hemenway, TCF/Montgomery



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

But It Hurts Differently...

There is no way to predict how you will feel. The reactions to grief are not like recipes with different ingredients and certain results. Each person mourns in a different way. You may cry hysterically or you may remain outwardly controlled, showing little emotion. You may lash out in anger against your family and friends, or you may express your gratitude for their concern and dedication. You may be calm one moment --in turmoil the next. Reactions are varied and contradictory. Grief is universal. At the same time it is extremely personal.

HEAL IN YOUR OWN WAY. ~ Rabbi Earl Groliman



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)

GRIEF

STILLBIRTH, MISCARRIAGE, AND INFANT DEATH

The following information is for parents who have experienced a stillbirth, miscarriage, or the death of an infant. These guidelines have been gathered from the experiences of other bereaved parents, and from the studies and writings of professionals in GRIEF counseling.

- normal grieving, with many ups and downs, lasts far longer than society in general recognizes. Be patient with yourself.
- crying is a very acceptable and healthy expression of grief for both mothers and fathers which releases built-up tension; cry freely as you feel the need.
- consider whatever you do to be normal for you: don't be afraid of bizarre delusions (such as phantom crying and aching arms) - this is part of normal grief.
- whenever possible, put off major decisions (changing residence, changing job, etc.) for at least a year.
- when considering another pregnancy, give yourself sufficient time to mourn and to recover your physical and emotional strength.
- when you do have another pregnancy, choose new names; each child is unique and does not deserve to be a surrogate.
- because the "bonding" between mother and child begins long before birth, a father should expect the mother to have more intense feelings for a longer time; mourn with her and be supportive.
- learn to let others know how you feel and how you are working out your grief so they may be supportive to you.
- within three months, try to become involved with a group of parents having similar experiences.
- the anniversaries of a baby's birth and death can be a most stressful time for parents - be good to yourself and allow yourself some emotional space and special time for grieving.

BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES CAN FIND HEALING AND HOPE FOR THE FUTURE.

HUGGING

Friends, I'm not a doctor, but I've got some very good news.

I've got a new prescription for getting rid of the blues.

What you need is a great big hug from a relative, lover or friend.

It may seem strange at first, but you'll feel better in the end.

Everybody needs hugging - child, woman or man.

It give you something your body needs and does it like nothing else can.

It warms your heart and touches something in you that's very rare.

It makes you feel secure and give you a feeling that someone cares.

Hugging is a two-way street, as you give you shall receive,
So fill your hugs with genuine love, don't fake it, don't deceive.

Every human being has a basic need to touch.

So pass you hugs around generously, you just can't hug too much.

So make today a hugging day and hug the next person you see,

and just in case I miss you, hug someone for me,

And I will do the very same and hug someone for you,

till hugging spreads throughout the land, and no one's ever blue.

~ Ernie Scott, Prairie View, IL

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OF THE F-M AREA
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**THE
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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 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.