



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

Volume 27 Number 12

Fargo ND/Moorhead MN

December 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 December 9<sup>th</sup>

Next month's meeting is on January 13<sup>th</sup>

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.

**Meeting Topic - Candlelighting Ceremony**

**DATES TO REMEMBER:**

December 12, 2010 - Worldwide Candle Lighting 7 pm

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) 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.

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.

\*\*\*\*\*DECEMBER LOVE GIFTS\*\*\*\*\*

Neil & Kathleen Prochnow in memory of their son, Reed Joel Prochnow 11/1975 - 5/1999

Ralph & Ethel Hest in memory of their daughter, Nancy Hest 7/1951 - 12/2004

Chris & Dawn Cantler in memory of their granddaughter, Kirstin Elizabeth Cantler-Booke 1/2009-12/2009

Scott, Ruth & Dan Blilie in memory of their daughter/sister, Nicole Anne Blilie 12/1989 - 12/2007

Lori & Jerry Brady & Loving Family in memory of Greg Sears 12/1987 - 8/2009

We are deeply grateful for the LOVE GIFTS given this month.

Our chapter and all chapters, are financed solely through your Love Gifts.

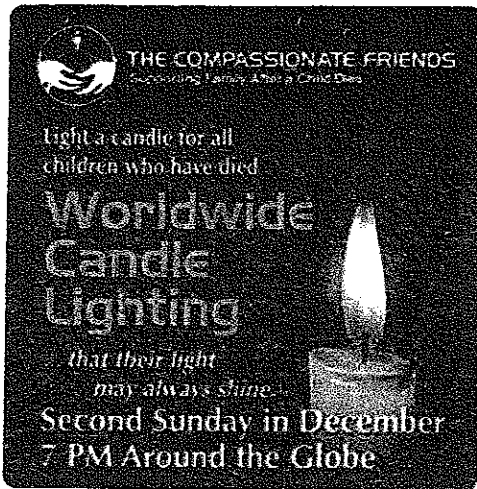
Donations make this newsletter, postage, books, tapes, etc. possible.

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



## Worldwide Candle Lighting

The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting, held annually the second Sunday in December, this year December 12th, unites family and friends around the globe as they light candles for one hour to honor and remember children who have died at any age from any cause. As candles are lit at 7 p.m. local time, creating a virtual wave of light, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor the memories of children in a way that transcends all ethnic, cultural, religious, and political boundaries.

Now believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe, the Worldwide Candle Lighting, a gift from TCF to the bereavement community, creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone. Hundreds of formal candle lighting events are held and thousands of informal candle lightings are conducted in homes as families gather in quiet remembrance of children who have died, but will never be forgotten.

### The Holidays Are Coming!

"The Holidays are coming! The Holidays are coming! Most bereaved parents make that observation with the same sense of fear and dread that Chicken Little had when he announced, "The sky is falling! The sky is falling!" We view Christmas or Hanukkah differently than the rest of the world. In our minds they become great trials to be endured. In my opinion, this trial is tougher than birthdays or death anniversaries. This is the time when love abounds. The family (and extended family) all gather together, coming from near and far, to share in this love.

The only trouble with this happy scene is that our child is missing. He or she has traveled too far from us to come for the holidays! We can't buy gifts for a photograph or hug and kiss a memory. The emptiness that this creates in us cannot be filled, no matter how many relatives gather by our hearth.

To add to the pain, most well-meaning friends and relatives feel that the best way to handle the problem is to pretend that it doesn't exist. They never mention the one person that is on the minds and in the hearts of everyone. We found out early on that it is not possible to keep the presence" of our child out of a family gathering. Trying to do so makes everyone uncomfortable and causes us as parents to feel disloyal.

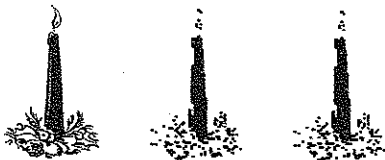
The first Christmas after our son died, we did it "their" way. Never again! Now we make sure that he is very much a part of our holiday. For starters, we decided once again to hang all three stockings. We don't fill them, but just seeing them all hanging together is right for us. The tree was very important to Blake. Every year he took the responsibility of stringing the lights for us. Now it is important to us to see that Blake has a tree. We have a very special one, about 3 feet tall, that we weight heavily at the bottom. We decorate it with weather-proof ornaments and place it at his grave.

We leave the tree there until spring so it can make the gravesite when the snows are deep. We also have a lovely candle that we burn on special days. This is our way of including our missing son in the family circle. But most important, we talk about him. We don't do it obsessively, but we don't hesitate to recall memories of him as often as we recall those of other children in the family. Because we talk of him in an easy and natural manner, the rest of the family has taken our cue. They now bring up his name naturally. It is all so much more comfortable than the way we tried to handle it that first year.

Another couple in our chapter had a wonderful idea for the first holiday after their daughter died. Their greatest fear was that no one would mention her, so they compiled an album of her pictures and casually left it out on the coffee table. It wasn't long before people were looking through it, recalling favorite memories of her, and the ice was broken.

There must be so many other ways that you can make your child a part of your holiday ways that seem right and comfortable for you. You may choose to keep your thoughts private rather than share them with others. But the most important thing to remember is that the choice is yours. Do what makes you comfortable, not what others think should make you comfortable. If you follow the dictates of your heart and that gives you comfort, those around you will see that it is so and follow your lead.

Marge Frankenberg ~ TCF/Arlington Heights IL



### ANGEL OF HOPE MEMORIAL SERVICE



The Annual Candlelight Memorial Service will be held for all parents and families who have lost a child at the Angel of Hope statue on Monday, December 6th, at 7 pm. The statue is located at the North entrance of Island Park, Fargo.

Attendees are invited to bring a white flower to place at the base of the statue in memory of loved ones.

### A VERY SPECIAL CHRISTMAS TREE

Once upon a time in a big Christmas tree orchard with a lot of big trees, I was a little new sprout just 15 inches tall. The year was 1989.

One day a man, woman and a boy came and chopped me down. They took me from all my friends. I was sad and lonely. The next day, the boy and woman came home with a coffee can. They put some soil in the bottom with some plant food. They put me into the can; then they filled it with some more soil.

Everyday they would water me. One day on the morning of the 24<sup>th</sup> of December, they came into the dining room, took me off the table and brought me into the kitchen. They put me onto the kitchen table and started to decorate me with lights (that were battery-operated), a crocheted star, tinsel and some red and green Christmas balls. I looked like a million dollars.

After a couple of hours, they came back into the kitchen and took me to the car. The boy had put me on the floor so I couldn't see. I went to sleep. It seemed to take hours but it only took a few minutes. They walked awhile until they came to a gravestone that is blue. The boy sat me down just behind the gravestone. I read the words on the gravestone "OUR SPECIAL SON AND BROTHER." I was here to celebrate Christmas with their son and brother, Michael Lee. Oh my! What a special place and they picked me to be her with him! Pictures were taken of me and Michael's place. After an hour they left.

Dark came and I was scared and cold but then I had this weird feeling. The feeling felt warm and happy. I wasn't scared either. I couldn't see Michael but I could tell he was watching me and was happy too. I couldn't see him but I heard him laugh because he liked me being there.

About three days later they came back and took me away. I waved goodbye but; I made it look like the wind moved my branch. I could feel his laugh and wave goodbye too.

Jeremy D Hale, TCF/Hutchinson, KS

### MY BROTHER

My brother is an angel and he can fly---

I'll get to see him when I die.

I love Him I love Him---

Matthew McGowin, age 5, TCF/Montgomery, AL

### A LETTER TO MY BROTHER

Suddenly you're gone. I'm still here. Why?

How can this be? Someone tell me the reason, the answer. How can I fill the void, the space once so full of life? What will I do? How will I be strong for others when the sting of pain is so real, so near? Though everyone seems calm, my soul screams at the injustice, the unfairness of losing you. I miss you. I think of you every day and feel you in my heart always. Whatever the reason for you leaving, I know your living had a reason. Despite the brevity of your life, you lived a lifetime's worth. You blessed us with your presence, your special-ness. I have only to think of you to feel the joy you've left as a legacy. You shaped the purpose of my life. I can see the world through your eyes.

Robin Holeman, TCF Tuscaloosa, AL

### PLEASE DON'T OVERLOOK ME!

I know my size is smaller

my hands are littler

my legs are short,

But my HEART

can hurt just like yours.

I'm a CHILD

You're an adult...

Please don't overlook me!

I know my vocabulary isn't the greatest,

my attention span lacks longevity

my logic sometimes seems irrational,

But my MIND

can question death just like yours can.

I'm a TEENAGER

You're an adult...

Please don't overlook me!

I know my needs seem less important

my feelings seem less controlled

my actions are hard to understand,

But my BODY

needs a hug just like yours does.

I'm YOUNGER

You're older...

Please don't overlook me!

I know tears are hard to show

fears are difficult to face,

death means not coming back,

But my SOUL

search for reassurance just like yours does.

I'm HURTING

and you're hurting too...

Please don't overlook me!

Author unknown

### SIBLING POEM

Will we ever meet again?

And what will be our first reaction?

Will we hug?

Or will we cry?

Will we laugh?

Or will we just hold each other?

Will you remember me as the last time you saw me?

Or will you try to imagine how I have changed?

Will we reminisce about the good old days?

And cry about all of the bad days?

The ultimate question is:

Will we ever meet again?

Jenny McDermott

In loving memory of her sister, Meggan McDermott

1976-1991

### A STORM OF GRIEF

When a storm of grief grows in the heart,

Reach back for yesterday

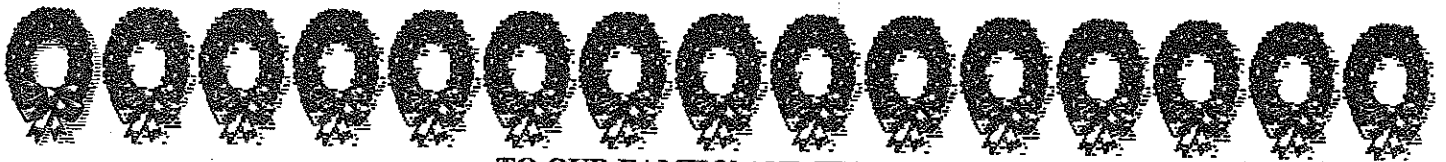
To catch onto your memories.

The storm will calm, and for a brief moment

The lost feelings of happiness

Will shine through and through

Lori Pollard, TFC/Montgomery AL



### TO OUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

The "Holiday Season" is a time of family - festive gatherings, worshiping together, sharing love and gifts, and cherished memories. For the bereaved parent, these aspects of the season are precisely what make us dread its arrival.

The absence of our child when the "whole family" gathers seems to accentuate our incomplete family. We are sorely reminded of "how it used to be" and don't want to accept what is now. We need the patience and understanding of our family and friends to help us through the holidays as best we can.

We may want to change the way we spend Thanksgiving, Christmas, or Hanukkah. If the family traditionally gathers at one house, perhaps the gathering place could be changed, especially if the gathering home is that of the bereaved. If we do prepare the meal, be aware that we may not have all the energy we have had in the past and will need a lot of help.

Perhaps we'll try to avoid the holiday altogether by going away for a few days. Whatever our thoughts are for coping with the day, please take our feelings into consideration when you make your plans.

For some of us shopping for gifts is a painful experience. The stores' festive decorations and music belie our mood as we feel forced into participating in the "season". We think longingly about that special gift we won't be buying this year. Again, our depression saps us of the energy to do the things we have done in the past, and we need your understanding for the things that remain undone.

Perhaps the single most helpful thing you can do for us is to include our child in the holidays. We want to hear his/her name, to have you recall fond memories of their lives, to know that you, too, are feeling their absence and remembering them with love.

Getting through the holidays is a rough task for bereaved parents. We need to handle them in a way that we feel is best for ourselves and families. We ask for your love and support during this especially difficult time.

~ Marge Henning, TCF/West Orange, NJ



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS  
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**MISSION STATEMENT:**  
The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.



**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS**

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..... 701-282-4794	Secretary-Treasurer	Sheryl Cvijanovich..... 701-235-8158
Librarian		Initial Contact	Kylene Milligan ..... 701-282-4794
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)..... 701-282-4794  
Duane Skramstad (daughter, 20 - car accident; son, 2 - drowning) ..... 701-437-2507  
Cheri Eraker (son, 23 - accident) ..... 701-451-0045  
Carol Nelson (son , 13 - leukemia) ..... 218-346-3854  
Nancy Teeuwen (daughter, 15 hours - illness)..... 701-730-0805  
Mark & Hella Helfter (miscarriage & son, 35 - accident)..... 701-235-9622

Love gifts must be received by the 15<sup>th</sup> to be included in the next month's newsletter. If you wish to give a love gift please complete:

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