



# The Compassionate Friends

## Fargo/Moorhead Area Chapter

### Supporting Family After a Child Dies

TCF's National Office  
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www.compassionatefriends.org

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.

**Meeting Topic -  
Candlelighting Ceremony**

**Upcoming Meetings**  
December 10th  
January 14th

#### Dates to Remember

Mom's meeting - 7 pm on December 17th  
@ Fry'n Pan  
The December Mom's meeting will be held on the 3rd Thursday  
TCF National Conference -  
Scottsdale, AZ July 8-10, 2016

#### LOVE GIFTS

Jim & Suzie Hill in memory of their son, John Poitra  
Pat & Denny Wateland in memory of their daughter, Tracy Ann Wateland  
Lori Brady & family in memory of their son/brother, Greg Sears  
Ruth Blilie in memory of her daughter, Nicole Anne Blilie  
Anne & Carrie Snyder in memory of their son/brother, Adam Joseph Snyder

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.

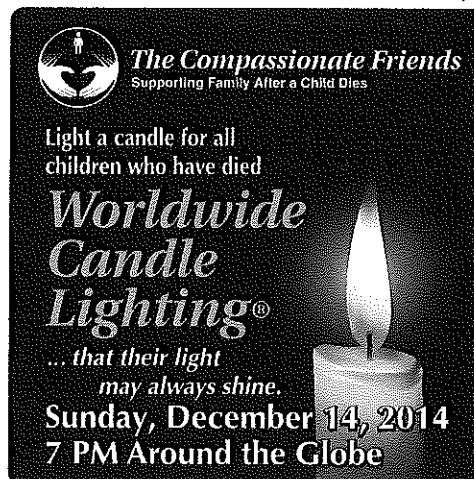
**WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE.**

**WE ARE THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS. ©2007**

#### Worldwide Candle Lighting

The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor the memories of the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and grandchildren who left too soon. As candles are lit at 7:00 p.m. local time, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor the memory of all children gone too soon.

Now believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe, the 19th annual Worldwide Candle Lighting, a gift to the bereavement community from The Compassionate Friends, creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone. TCF's WWCL started in the United States in 1997 as a small internet observance, but has since swelled in numbers as word has spread throughout the world of the remembrance. 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.



## WHAT IS A DADDY TO DO???

What is a DADDY to do? At Christmas time.  
It's only a daughter that's missing - -  
At Christmas time.  
Be strong! Be macho! Act as if everything was "normal!"  
It's only a daughter that's missing - -  
At Christmas time.  
Go on with life! Go on with Giving!  
Remember, it's a time of good cheer!  
It's only a daughter that's missing - -  
At Christmas time.  
Don't weep. Don't cry. You'll spoil the fun, and that's simply not done.  
It's only your daughter that's missing - -  
At Christmas time.  
You want to smash! You want to roar! You want to scream and curse. But not now.... for  
It's only your daughter that's missing - -  
At Christmas time.  
What is a Daddy to do... it's only his daughter that's missing  
At Christmas time.  
~ Tom Crouthamel, TCF/Sarasota, FL

## THE GIFTS FROM WITHIN

For those of you who are further down the road in your journey through grief, the holidays can be a time to re-discover the gifts that lie deep within you, deep within your heart and on your minds. Those gifts are the precious memories that our child has left us with. Take time throughout the coming holidays to remember those memories however brief they are – it is these memories that will keep our children alive within our hearts and will help us make it through the challenge of facing these days without the child who cannot be physically here.

Take some time to quietly remember those things that you and your child may have shared in the "good times" and hold those thoughts close to you to help you get through the days ahead.

One of my last memories of my son is the day we spent shopping with the family – literally hours before he died... I will always cherish the memory of the cookie he bought me – knowing just which one I would like and taking time to sit at the food court and have a snack during the bustle of the holiday shopping.... memories such as those are what help me get through the days ahead. I wish you all sweet memories of your children to sustain you throughout the coming holiday season.  
~ Cindi Bolivar, TCF/Boston-No Shore

## GRANDPARENTS GRIEF

Grandparents have the loss of a beloved grandchild and the pain of seeing your child suffer and you can't "fix it". And so they must deal with their own grief and still try to be helpful to the child. It seems like two hard tasks, but must be handled at the same time. If you have had a child die yourself and/or a sibling this may bring back a flood of emotions to re-handle. Grandparents may also have to deal with "survival guilt". Why did my grandchild die before really enjoying life and I'm still here?"

- Author Unknown

"You once did something for me more meaningful than the greatest of deeds; you held me in your arms and let me cry."

~ Bonnie Jison, TCF/Topeka, KS

## Death Is Nothing At All

"Death is nothing at all. I have only slipped away into the next room. I am I and you are you. Whatever we were to each other, that we are still. Call me by my old familiar name; speak to me in the easy way which you always used; put no difference in your tone; wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow; laugh, as we always laughed at the little jokes we enjoyed together; pray, smile, think of me, pray for me; let my name be ever the household word that it always was; let it be spoken without effect, without the trace of a shadow on it. Life means all that it ever meant; it is the same as it ever was; there is unbroken continuity. Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight? I am waiting for you, for an interval, somewhere very near -- Just around the corner. All is well."

Henry Scott Holland, Canon of St Paul's, London 1847 - 1918

From: TCF Atlanta Online

## Remember

Remember the children, we ask tonight,  
As we continue this wave of light.  
Remember the babies, never given a chance,  
To grow, to play, to love, or dance.  
Remember the toddlers, just starting to live,  
Teddy Bears and blankies and big hugs to give.  
Remember the children, who grew strong and true,  
Maybe struck by an illness that devastated you.  
Remember the teen-agers and the promise in each,  
Taken suddenly or slowly, beyond our reach.  
Don't forget the adult child, fully grown,  
Whether 18 or 80, we still called them our own.  
Our grandchildren, sisters and brothers have died,  
For nieces and nephews and cousins, we've cried.  
Some of us say, "I've lost my dreams,"  
While others say, "my memories."  
So tonight we remember with this candlelight,  
So like our love that shines so bright.

~ Marilyn Rollins, TCF/Lake-Porter County, IN

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

Our Mom's group has been meeting on the 4th Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm at the Fryn' Pan Restaurant, 300 Main Avenue, Fargo. Our gatherings are informal as we come together to talk about our children, books that we've read, recipes we've tried, our jobs and whatever else comes up during the course of the evening. We all have times where the listening heart of another mom or grandma is welcome (and necessary). Please join us this month on Thursday December 17th. For more information please contact Sheryl at 701-540-3287 or [sherylcv13@msn.com](mailto:sherylcv13@msn.com).

## 2016 FM TCF Chapter Meeting Dates

January 14th	February 11th
March 10th	April 14th
May 12th	June 9th
July 14th	August 11th
September 8th	October 13th
November 10th	December 8th

## **Christmas is the Hardest Holiday!**

Why is Christmas the hardest holiday? Is it because of all those traditions that mean so much but NOW lie broken and empty in my heart? Is it especially hard NOW . . . because of all the tinsel and tissue? Because of all the crowds dashing madly in and out of stores, buying something wonderful for someone wonderful? Is Christmas hard NOW because I don't need to shop or bake or decorate anymore?

It's been a long time since I endured my first bereaved holiday season. But even NOW, my heart sometimes still echoes with emptiness as I roll out the cookie dough or hang his special ornament on our treasure tree. I think that hurt will always be with me, but now I know it only as a momentary ache . . . not like the first year when grief washed over me in waves, each new wave hurling me deeper and deeper into despair.

And it's not like the second year's hurt when I found myself both surprised and angry that IT hadn't gone away YET. I grew anxious about my sanity in the third year when my hands shook as I unwrapped the precious ornaments. When was I going to get better?!! When was the grief going to end?!! Was I doomed to suffer miserably at every holiday for the rest of my life?!!

The year the little satin balls wouldn't stay on the tree, I gave up. Even the Christmas tree died! As my daughter and I dragged the brittle (and shedding) mess out into the snow drift on Christmas morning, I knew we had reached the bottom. He had died, but we were alive. Had our grief so permeated our house, our lives that even a Christmas tree could not survive? His death was more than enough . . . had we lost love, too?

That was the year we began to understand. And that was the year we decided to keep Christmas any-way. So what if our new completely bare tree was stuck in the snowdrift, already waiting for the garbage men? So what if the cookies were still a bit too salty with tears?

So, in the middle of that Christmas day, we returned to that forlorn, frozen stick of a tree. Carefully, we hung the bare branches with popcorn strings and suet balls (not quite the same as satin!). I'm sure we were a strange sight that afternoon, but with a mixture of tears and snowflakes, we began to let the hurt out and make room for the healing to begin.

With each kernel strung, we found ourselves remembering. Some memories came with pain. Others began to grow with us . . . warming heart — places we thought had frozen long ago. By the time we were finished, we were exhausted. Memories take a lot of work! At last WE had a tree, although it was not the one we were expecting. But we had one, decorated with tears and memories, sadness and remembered laughter.

And now we've grown older (and maybe a little wiser) and we've learned that love isn't something that you toss out, bury, pack away or forget. Love isn't something that ends with death. Life can become good and whole and complete once again . . . not when we try to fill up the empty spaces left by loved ones no longer within a hug's reach, but when we realize that love creates new spaces in the heart and expands the spirit and deepens the joy of simply being alive.

We saved a tiny twig from that frozen tree . . . to remind us of what we almost lost. That was the year we chose to let Christmas come back. Now we don't have to wait for joy to return. For now we know it lives with us . . . where Christmas is EVERY DAY.

~ Darcie Sims

## **Coping with Grief: Winter Blues**

When the weather gets colder and the days get shorter, we often find ourselves feeling low. Some people call this the Winter Blues. When you are grieving, those blues can feel overwhelming. Grief itself is hard to cope with and cold winds and longer nights can make those feelings seem more intense. Here are a few ideas that may help you cope with the Winter Blues:

- Winter only lasts a few months. Use this time to reflect on your relationship with the person who died. Sometimes in our efforts to deny our loss, we rob ourselves of precious memories.
- Reach out to friends or family when you can. Often our isolation is worse because we do not allow ourselves time with others. You are not alone. There are many other people going through a similar experience. Although your relationship with your loved one is special, other people can understand. Take the risk to ask someone over for coffee or tea. Share with them.
- Take time to look through picture albums. Gather family to share stories. Make a new tradition during the dreary months of winter for family to gather for an evening of remembering. The holidays are over and the pressure is off. Maybe other people are feeling the same way and are afraid to talk about it.
- Try a grief support group. Sometimes all we need is to know other people hear us and understand. A group can help you to know you are normal.
- Read . . . favorite stories, comedies, novels, or information about grief to understand your own reactions better. Somehow reading about such topics helps us know we are not alone. You can look for grief materials in your local library, church, or local TCF chapter.
- Take good care of yourself. Eat right, rest and pamper your body. This goes for any season. Your body is under a tremendous amount of stress in adjusting to your loss.
- Since grief affects us physically, paying attention to our bodies is important. Whether you prefer to do things alone or with others, physical activity helps. Taking a walk, doing simple aerobics, indoor swimming, playing racquetball or other activities can help you keep your body ready for the continued adjustment to loss. Feeling better physically can make a difference.
- If you feel sad and need to cry, know that is a normal reaction. You are not weak if you need to show your emotions.
- Write a letter to your loved one. Sometimes we need to communicate with them. Going to the cemetery is okay and normal. If the weather prevents that, a letter can be very helpful.
- Remember that you will survive this loss. The pain and ache can seem like it will last forever. The intensity will lessen in time, although you will always remember your loved one. Time does not necessarily "heal" all wounds, but it can help us adjust to the change. Take it minute by minute . . . then day by day. From TCF Newsletter, Pittsburgh, PA

**OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED  
BIRTHDAYS**

<b>CHILD</b>	<b>PARENTS</b>
NICOLE ANNE BLILIE.....26	SCOTT & RUTH BLILIE
STEVEN DUANE COOK.....47	SHARON COOK
SARA FRANCES GUNDERSON.....29	JEROME & RAMONA GUNDERSON
DAVID WILLIAM HALLMAN.....27	DAVID HALLMAN
.....	LYNETTE MYROLD
GREGORY SEARS.....28	LORI & JERRY BRADY
.....	PERSYS PIERSALL (grandparent)
SCOTT WARNECKE.....47	DOUG & JOAN WARNECKE
TRACY ANN WATELAND.....44	DENNIS & PAT WATELAND
.....	SHARON WATELAND (godmother)
BRUCE ALLEN ZAESKE.....53	ALAN & CHARLEEN ZAESKE

**ANNIVERSARIES**

<b>CHILD</b>	<b>PARENTS</b>
BENJAMIN GORDON ASHER.....1	JERRY & BONNIE ASHER
NICOLE ANNE BLILIE.....8	SCOTT & RUTH BLILIE
KARI RAE BORGEN.....9	JOHN & KELLY BORGEN
KIRSTIN ELIZABETH CANTLER-BOOKE...6	CHRIS & DAWN CANTLER (grandparents)
BRIAN W FOSS.....7	ED & ELSIE FOSS
TYLER JAY FREED.....5	RANDY & DEBBIE FREED
SARA FRANCES GUNDERSON.....3	JEROME & RAMONA GUNDERSON
ASHLEY RAE HAINES.....4	WILLIAM HAINES III
DAVID WILLIAM HALLMAN.....22	DAVID HALLMAN
DAVID WILLIAM HALLMAN.....22	LYNETTE MYROLD
NANCY DIANE HEST.....11	RALPH & ETHEL HEST
TARA LEA KELLAR.....4	CATHY & GREG GRONLAND
JODY ANN MAURER KNUDSON.....6	JOHN & SHARON MAURER
JONATHAN LEVI POITRA.....5	SUZIE & JAMES HILL
CHERYL L SAMSON.....4	DUKE & PATRICIA SAMSON



*2015 Holiday Angels*



**Given By:**

JOHN & TAMMY SADEK (mom & dad)  
  
 JAMIE, SHERI & MANDY THOEMKE  
 DEBBY & DAVID FACEY  
  
 ELLEN PAZDRO  
 TODD & SUZIE KAPAUN

**In Memory of:**

NICK SADEK  
 ANDREW SADEK  
 TYLER JAMES THOEMKE  
 DANA KEBLAR  
 FRED FINCH  
 MATTHEW CVIJANOVICH  
 DILLON KAPAUN

KORSMO FUNERAL SERVICE  
 HANSON-RUNSVOLD FUNERAL HOME  
 BOULGER FUNERAL HOME



## 2015 Holiday Angels



### Given By:

DALE & MARILYN LARSON

CAROL DUGGAN  
MARLYS KESSEL  
NORBERT & LUELLA KLEINGARTNER

JOHN & KELLY BORGEN  
TOM & NANCY KASSMAN  
DAN & CAROL WINTER  
SONNY & BONNIE SKAR  
RAY & JAN MILLER

RICHARD & CLARE ELLESS  
RUSS & ANN JOHNSON  
MIKE & SHERYL CVIJANOVICH

ERNIE & BIRDINE GRAFSGAARD  
LAURA KUEHL

BECKY NELSON  
PAT & DENNY WATELAND  
PATTI PRATT  
PERSYS PIERSALL  
JERRY & YVONNE NELSON  
DONNA & LEROY KORNELIUS  
LYNETTE MYROLD  
MIKE & SHARON FERRIS  
MOM & DAD, TYLER, JARED, ZACH, ELLIE & AMY  
LORI BRADY & FAMILY  
MARK & HELLA HELFTER  
TYLER KLOSTERMAN  
RUTH JELINEK  
SONIA WATELAND  
DIANE FENSKE  
MIKE & JAN KNUDSON  
CLINTON & CARMEN BERG  
SCOTT & RUTH BLILIE  
DEB WAYMAN  
JUNE N. VOLK

LYLE, TAMMY, JUSTIN, STACY, JAMIE, JORDYN,  
HUNTER & JERSEY  
JERRY & ANNE BARBEE  
DEWAYNE & ARLENE PETERSON  
PAUL & KARA BAILEY  
CHUCK & SANDY KLINKHAMMER  
LORI & LARRY WIGER  
LISA BEACH

### In Memory of:

SUE ELLEN LARSON  
JOE LARSON  
GAIL LARSON  
AMY LARSON  
ERIC LARSON  
ROBERT T. (BOB) DUGGAN  
ANNIKA QUALLEY  
DAVID KLEINGARTNER  
LARAE MURCH  
KARI BORGEN  
KYLE KASSMAN  
MATTHEW WINTER  
JACOB LYLE SKAR  
COLLEEN NYGARD  
CASY (CASANDRA) PERLIRS  
TARI ELLESS HELLER  
TODD JOHNSON  
MATTHEW CVIJANOVICH  
KELLY BOYES  
DAVID GRAFSGAARD  
SSGT. DAVID KUEHL  
WENDY KUEHL  
RYAN NELSON  
TRACY ANN WATELAND  
NANCY PRATT COASH  
RAND L. PIERSALL  
KYLE IRVIN NELSON  
LANNIE LEE KORNELIUS  
DAVID WILLIAM HALLMAN  
KEVIN FERRIS  
AMANDA JO SWANSON  
GREG SEARS  
DAVID MICHAEL HELFTER  
RAYELLA KLOSTERMAN  
JEREMIAH JELINEK  
MARK ALAN WATELAND  
NATHAN ANDERSON  
DEBORAH CHERYL KYLLO  
JONATHAN CARL BERG  
NICOLE ANNE BLILIE  
HEATHER WREN  
JEFF VOLK  
DAVID VOLK

JARED SCOTT HELGESON  
MATTHEW J. GAFFNEY  
SHERI PETERSON BJORGAN  
NICK BAILEY  
ALEX KLINKHAMMER  
ASHLEY WIGER  
NATE BEACH



## 2015 Holiday Angels



### Given By:

JOHN & KYLENE MILLIGAN  
LARRY & MARY HANSON  
LARA E JENSEN  
MARK & LAVERNE CZICHOTZKI  
ARLEN & JULIE KOTTA  
JIM & SUZIE HILL  
MARY TOBOLT  
JERRY, DEB & ANDY COLE  
CRAIG & DEANNA BRAUN  
ROBERT & TANYA LIVDAHL  
NORMA JACKSON, LUKE & MORGAN NERAT  
BLAKE & CHRISTINE DAHLBERG  
BILL & LOIS SCHAFFER  
LOWELL & PRISCILLA BOLGER  
SHERRY LASSLE  
BONNIE & JERRY ASHER  
RICHARD & LINDA OLSON  
LYNN & DONNA MICKELSON

TIMOTHY & PAULINE RINKE  
JEROME & RAMONA GUNDERSON & BECKY, CHRIS  
& CLARA MACE & JANA GUNDERSON  
MUGS LOE  
JIM & JODY KUTTER  
SCOTT & JAMIE OLSON  
DAVID & SALLY HALLMAN  
GLENNIS OLSON  
BILL & ELAINE SCHEER  
TOM & LEAH TVEDT  
DELORIS BURNS  
MARY & GALEN SCHROEDER  
CONNIE & BARRY RONGEN  
ELEANOR INFELD  
CRAIG & BARB LARSON  
AL & CHAR ZAESKE  
JOHN & TERRI HELLAND  
JON & KASEY SKALICKY  
RICK & TAMMY DERHEIM  
DIANA SKJEFTE  
SHIRLEY & DENNIS BJERKEN  
NEIL & KATHY PROCHNOW  
KEITH & SANDRA KISER  
DUKE & PAT SAMSON

LARRY & LOIS GANGNES  
MARK & JEAN CHAFFEE  
SHARON COOK  
DICK & DIANE MACGREGOR  
ANDY & RHONDA BJELLAND

### In Memory of:

MATTHEW MILLIGAN-OLSON  
MICHAEL HANSON  
RYAN W. JENSEN  
MIKE CZICHOTZKI  
BENJAMIN KOTTA  
JON POITRA  
SCOTT ANTHONY TOBOLT  
ZACHARY COLE  
ANDREW HOWARD BRAUN  
MICHAEL LIVDAHL  
HENRY LUCAS NERAT  
RILEY DAHLBERG  
ERIC SCHAFFER  
JOSEPH BOLGER  
JAYME LASSLE  
BEN ASHER  
MATTHEW OLSON  
ALLISON DEUTSCHER  
AARON DEUTSCHER  
BRIELLE DEUTSCHER  
UNBORN BABY DEUTSCHER  
LOGAN RINKE  
SARAH FRANCES GUNDERSON  
CHRISTOPHER LOE  
MICHELLE KUTTER  
AUSTIN WAYNE WAGER  
DAVID WILLIAM HALLMAN  
JAMIE OLSON  
CRAIG SCHEER  
DANE ADAM TVEDT  
JODIE MANSTON  
MATTHEW THIBEDAU  
CHLOE GRACE RONGEN  
DARRYL INFELD  
ERIC C. LARSON  
BRUCE ZAESKE  
HEIDE HELLAND  
JAKE RIEDMAN  
KEEGAN DERHEIM  
JAMES KEVIN SKJEFTE  
BRIAN BJERKEN  
REED JOEL PROCHNOW  
CORDELL ALAN KISER  
CHERYL SAMSON  
CHRIS SAMSON  
BRENT M. GANGNES  
KONNIE CHAFFEE  
STEVEN DUANE COOK  
SANDRA MACGREGOR CASELLA  
HALLIE CLARE BJELLAND

## SIBLING PAGE

### TO MY SISTER

You touched us all, you loved us all,  
Forever giving, forever caring,  
Forever forgiving.  
Never wanting in return.  
Blessed are those who shared your life  
Rich are those who carry your memories.  
Please rest now; your chores we will finish.  
'Til we meet again . . .  
~ Cindy Keltz, TCF/Arlington Heights IL

### REMEMBRANCE

In the light of day  
I awake with thoughts of you.  
In the dark of night  
I sleep with thoughts of you.  
Is it grief or disbelief?  
~ Evan Fillmore, Huntington, UT

### Grief is OK

Grief is normal, grief is OK.  
Grief is the way your body has to say that you love the son,  
daughter, brother, sister, even a friend that died;  
But sometimes it makes you cry.  
~ Steve Horn, Age 10, TCF/Hinsdale, IL

### 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

### 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

### GRIEF IS LONELY

Grief is lonely. When my sister died two years ago, everyone knew about it and talked about it. Everyone was in shock – but now, two years later, the anniversary of her death came and went without even a card in the mail. No one at work remembered the day. No one called to say, "I am thinking of you." No one asked, "How are you feeling?" My family has stayed in close contact and we talk about Susan all the time. But when it comes to grieving over Susan, everyone grieves alone. No one knows how I feel about my little sister and how it hurts me so deeply to know she is not here. Everything else in life can be shared with someone else, but not grieving. No one can fully understand the pain because everyone's pain is different. When the pain is the greatest, the loneliness is the greatest too. I never thought I could feel this much pain and still survive. I am alone in my grief. There is no one else here with me.

Susan was born when I was almost 11. She died by suicide when she was 16. The baby of the family, the youngest of four kids; our hearts are broken forever.

~ Cherie Bagadiong, TCF/St. Mary's County

"Death ends a life, but it does not end a relationship."

~ Dennis Klass



## **THE GRIEVER'S HOLIDAY BILL OF RIGHTS**

By Bruce Conley

1. You have a right to say TIME OUT! anytime you need to. Time out to let up, blow off a little steam, step away from the holidays, have a "huddle", and start over.
2. You have a right to TELL IT LIKE IT IS. When people ask, "How are you?" you have the right to tell them how you really feel, not just what they want to hear. (P.S. You also have the right to smile and say you're fine, because telling them how you really feel isn't worth your time---some people will never understand anyway.)
3. You have the right to some "BAH HUM BUG" DAYS. You are not a bad person just because you don't feel like singing Christmas carols all day.
4. You have the right to DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY. There is no law that says you must always do Christmas the same way. You can do 10 cards instead of 100--or no cards at all! You can open your presents at somebody else's house. You can do without a tree. You can have pizza instead of turkey--the list is endless.
5. You have the right to be WHERE YOU WANT TO BE. Be at home or at the relatives. Be in any city, any state you chose! NOBODY SAID YOU HAVE TO HAVE SNOW TO HAVE CHRISTMAS. There's no law that says you must stay at home.
6. You have a right to SOME FUN. When you have a day that isn't so bad and you feel like doing something just for fun, then do it! Don't be afraid of what someone else will say if they see you laughing and having a good time. Laughter is every bit as important as tears!

### **Frost**

On a cold winter's day  
Frost etches a beautiful artistry  
On everything it touches every blade of grass  
It glitters and sparkles and for moments  
Before the sun comes out and the master piece evaporates  
before our eyes we stand memorized cherishing the  
wondrous sight  
Like frost our children were only here for a brief moment  
But while they were here  
Whether it was moments in the womb  
Days, months or many years  
They etched their beautiful artistry of love  
On our hearts and lives and all of those they touched.  
Unlike frost what they etched is forever  
It is something that we can cherish and hold onto always  
We stand here tonight lighting a candle to remember children  
we will never forget  
Their light their spirits their artistry lives on  
And like the flame of the candle gives warmth on a cold  
winter's night and light in the darkness  
The love our children gave us still remains  
It keeps us warm when the cold winds of grief blow  
It lights our way through the darkness and loneliness  
That we feel  
And it gives us hope

~ Julie Short

2007 Southeastern TCF/Candle Lighting Ceremony

### **A Christmas Wish**

I'll miss you at Christmas  
When laughter's everywhere,  
When church bells chime  
In merry rhyme  
And warmth is in the air.

I'll think of you at Christmas  
Of when you were with me,  
Of simple joys and silly toys  
And days that used to be.

I'll miss you at Christmas  
When children's faces glow,  
And gaze in childish wonderment  
At Santa and presents in a row.

I wish a Christmas miracle  
Could bring you back this way,  
And we could be together  
For one more Christmas day.

~ Lily deLauder

### **WHERE IS CHRISTMAS?**

Where is Christmas? Where can it be found?  
I've tried and I've tried, I have looked all around.  
Is it hiding in some forgotten space?  
Have I misplaced it? I can't find a trace.  
Up in the attic in boxes stored away?  
I try to find it, it will soon be Christmas Day.  
As I sit and ponder my lost Christmas plight.  
My mind drifts back to long ago Christmas Eve night.  
When did I lose it? Where did I lock it away?  
Why can't I find Christmas this Christmas Day?  
Years before it was so readily found  
But now I can't find it, it is no where around.  
And as I remember it comes clear to see  
When I lost Christmas inside of me.  
For Christmas is born from a joy deep within  
But since you are gone, I don't know where to begin.  
The feelings of joy have been replaced  
By the pain of longing to see your sweet face.  
Yes, Christmas is here, but the joy gone away  
And try as I may, I can't find Christmas,  
this Christmas Day.

~ Sheila Simmons, TCF/Atlanta, GA

### **Missing You**

I just can't believe it . . . The sun still rises and sets. The moon and stars still shine. The flowers still bloom. The birds still sing. I expected a change in everything. I just can't believe it . . . It still gets dark and light. The ocean still has waves. The rain still rains. The wind still blows. Is it because they do not know? I just can't believe it . . . I thought the world would stop. When in my house I found an empty chair, a missing smile. I thought it would stop for just awhile. I just can't believe it.

~Gretta Vinney, TCF/Austin, 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: \_\_\_\_\_

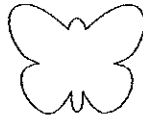
Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Death Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

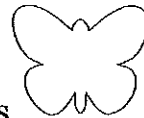
(Signature)

Please return to: The Compassionate Friends of F-M Area, P.O. Box 10686, Fargo ND 58106  
(Please note that if you have already submitted a permission slip, you do not need to submit another one)

Please check out our Chapter website's page for 'Our Beloved Children' ([www.tcffargomoorhead.org/ourchildren.html](http://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](mailto: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



### Butterfly Decals



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

Butterflies are still available in all five colors (yellow, pink, red, blue and green). The cost for 1 butterfly is \$25, 3 butterflies are \$65 and 4 butterflies are \$80. If you wish to purchase more than 4, please contact our chapter leader, John Milligan. Butterfly orders should include the child's name and color of the butterfly. Checks should be made payable to TCF of Fargo-Moorhead and the order mailed to PO Box 10686, Fargo, ND 58106.

You can see pictures of the trailer with butterflies on our website at [www.tcffargomoorhead.org/ourtrailer.html](http://www.tcffargomoorhead.org/ourtrailer.html).

### CHRISTMAS PAST, CHRISTMAS PRESENT

As the holidays approach, most bereaved parents feel anxiety, apprehension and some little bit of fear. The past is gone, along with our beautiful children. We live in the now, the new reality of holidays without our children.

This will be my fifth Christmas without my son, Todd. It will be my fourth Christmas without his children. And yet, I find that on some small level, I am looking forward to the holiday. I imagine the Christmases of the past when Todd was growing up and after he started his family. I also imagine Christmases of the future where Todd's children share in the traditions that their Dad so dearly loved. But that won't happen. I have come to accept that wives and children go on with their lives. I have come to accept that my son's children will not be a part of their father's family, his heritage or his legacy. That is the reality. But I have also found that wonderful people can help make the holiday special.

We won't be decorating this year, but we haven't decorated for five years. We have changed our traditions — traditions that Todd loved so much. It is simply too painful to do this alone. Christmas will never be what it once was, but I no longer dread the holidays as I once did.

Some of my Compassionate Friends have returned to old traditions with their surviving children and maybe even with grandchildren. Each of us learns to deal with Christmas in our own way. Each year I am a different person with a new perspective on the holidays. Next year I may decide to skip it all or immerse myself in the season. My truth is changing.

Find what is right for you. Pressures from others mean nothing. You choose whether a celebration is in order. You choose how to celebrate. You choose the old traditions or you choose some new ones ... maybe you choose nothing and decide to go with the flow of the moment. As bereaved parents, you will always remember your child at Christmas, but as the years add up and grief starts to release its grip on your soul, you may find that you can keep your child in your heart and have room for the spirit of Christmas as well.

The holidays do get better. Life does get better. The days will gradually become softer and sweeter. The nights will ease into gentleness. Friendships will again have luster, and relationships will become deeper and more meaningful. That is the future for each of us. The present is driven by where we are in our grief. So for this, and every Christmas Holiday season, be who you are and mark the day as you choose. May we all have serenity throughout the Holiday season and in the years ahead.

~ Annette Mennen Baldwin, TCF/Katy, TX  
Mom of Todd Mennen

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS  
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**The  
 Compassionate  
 Friends**  
*Fargo/Moorhead Area Chapter*  
**Supporting Family After a Child Dies**

**MISSION STATEMENT:** When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

A SINCERE WELCOME TO ALL COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS... We are a nonprofit self-help organization offering friendship and support to families who have experienced the death of a child. We offer group support, understanding and friendship. Our purpose is to promote and aid parents and siblings in the positive resolution of the grief they are experiencing and to foster physical and emotional health. If you have questions or wish to talk directly to a member of the Fargo-Moorhead Compassionate Friends, please call any of the numbers listed.

**FARGO-MOORHEAD COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS BOARD**

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN THE BOARD AT ANY TIME!

Chapter Leader	John Milligan..... 701-491-0364	Newsletter Editor	Nancy Teeuwen ..... 701-730-0805
Meeting Facilitator	Paul & Kara Bailey..... 701-261-0668	Newsletter Database	Mike Cvijanovich ..... 701-235-8158
Secretary	Sheryl Cvijanovich ..... 701-540-3287	Website Administrator	Sheryl Cvijanovich ..... 701-540-3287
Treasurer	Chuck Klinkhammer ..... 701-298-2929	Newsletter Printing	Joyce at Olivet Lutheran Church
Initial Contact	Jamie Olson ..... 701-219-3865	Mailing Committee	Contact Us to Join
Librarian	Contact Us to Volunteer		

LIBRARY INFORMATION: We have an extensive library available. Please feel free to check materials at our next meeting.

**TELEPHONE FRIENDS**

HAVING A BAD DAY OR NIGHT? Feel free to call and talk to any of the following:  
 John Milligan (son, 25 - car accident) ..... 701-491-0364  
 Lois Gangnes (son, 24 - accident) ..... 701-282-4083  
 Nancy Teeuwen (daughter, 15 hours - illness) ..... 701-730-0805  
 Mark & Hella Helfter (miscarriage & son, 35 - accident) ..... 701-235-9622

Love gifts must be received by the 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 \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: By giving a love gift, you are giving us permission to include your child(ren) in our monthly birthdays and anniversaries.