



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

FARGO/MOORHEAD AREA CHAPTER

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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F-M Area Chapter
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www.tcffargomoorhead.org
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Chapter Leader - John Milligan (701) 282-4794

Newsletter Editor - Nancy Teeuwen (701)730-0805

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 February 14th March 14th

The F/M Chapter of The Compassionate Friends now has a Facebook Page.

Dates to Remember in 2013
National Conference July 5-7
Boston, MA

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.

LOVE GIFTS

Jim & Suzie Hill in memory of their son, Jonathan Poitra
Larry & Lois Gangnes in memory of their son, Brent B. Gangnes
John & Kylene Milligan in memory of their son, Matthew Milligan-Olson

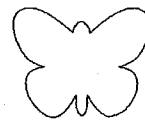
We are deeply grateful for the LOVE GIFTS given this month. Our chapter and all chapters, are financed solely through your Love Gifts. Donations make this newsletter, postage, books, tapes, etc. possible. Thank you for your tax deductible gifts.

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



Butterfly Decals



The F-M Chapter has recently purchased a trailer, in order to transport materials to our chapter activities. We are selling butterfly decals, which will be placed on the trailer. The butterflies are 4 x 6 and available in five colors: yellow, pink, red, blue and green.

Each butterfly will contain the first and last name of a child.

If you wish to purchase a butterfly in the memory of a child, please send your name, the name of the child, butterfly color, and a check payable to TCF of Fargo-Moorhead, P.O. Box 10686, Fargo, ND 58106.

Butterflies are \$25 each, 3 for \$65 or 4 for \$80. If you wish to purchase more than 4 butterflies, please contact our chapter leader, John Milligan.

On Thursday February 21, 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 sherylc13@msn.com. Please join us!

Holiday Angels that were not listed in December's Newsletter

Given By
Marcella Heitkamp

In Memory of
Neil Heitkamp

SYMBOLS

We are fast approaching Valentine's Day, filled with symbols of love ... hearts and roses. As a young schoolgirl, I can remember wishing I would get a valentine from someone special. My friends and I would count how many valentines we had received, feeling certain that the more you received, the more it indicated your popularity.

As I grew older, I was thrilled when I received flowers from that special someone. Surely this was, true love. As a married woman, Valentine's Day was always special. Glen and I usually went out to dinner, and I often received flowers or a special gift that said, I love you! While those gifts were much appreciated, I would be hard pressed now to tell you what we did or what I received.

However, one Valentine's Day will stay frozen in my memory forever, February 14, 1983. Glen took my arm and steadied me as I walked into a mortuary to view the body of our 17 year old son Nathan, who had been killed by a drunken driver on February 10. We had ordered a spray of seventeen red roses to be placed on his casket. When I ordered those flowers, I was stunned to discover how high priced roses are on Valentine's Day! At first, I had decided I would be content with carnations. Then the florist saw in my eyes how much I wanted my last gift to my son to be the very best... red, long stemmed roses. The florist promised she would provide us with roses, regardless of how little we could afford to pay.

That afternoon, I drank in every detail of my boy, his hair, the bruise on his face, the National Honor Society pin on his lapel, those wonderful, strong hands. Then I pulled myself together for a very special appointment. I was the Academic Counselor at Nathan's high school, and we had arranged a special viewing for the students prior to the general visitation. I watched as young girls brought beautiful bouquets of red roses they had received from their boyfriends, but now they were placing them below our son's casket. Their final act of love for a very dear friend.

It has taken me a long time to be able to actually celebrate Valentine's Day in a normal fashion. In fact, I guess I never will be able to do that. Valentine's Day is no longer a superficial type of holiday where I just send cards or give candy or flowers without much deliberation beforehand. The symbols are still there; I just see them differently now:



THE ROSE: A symbol of love that cannot be separated by death.



THE HEART: Broken, bruised, and bandaged, but not defeated.

And now, there's one more symbol:



The HAND: As we offer our hands to each other in friendship, in understanding, in strength, we are saying:

WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE, WE ARE THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS!

May your Valentine's Day be filled with roses that will encourage your broken heart and give you strength to offer a helping hand to others who are grieving.

By Marilyn Heavilin, TCF/Redlands - <http://www.tcfatlanta.org/Valentine.html>

Meditation

A woman whose life had had many hard times said, "The hardest grief I have had to bear is this temporary separation from my daughter." That she was able, in faith, to view her adolescent daughter's death as a temporary separation surely helped her immeasurably. But of course she longed for her daughter's presence now.

It is foolish to expect to "get over" a serious grief. The pain is always there, the fantasy of what might have been. Over time, I'm sure that for this woman the pain was mixed in with happy memories of the daughter's childhood and adolescence, and also with her anticipation of their ultimate reunion.

So the mosaics of adjustment are laid down. On some days the grief is most noticeable; on others, the happy memories; on others, the hope of reunion burns bright.

As I think about my loss, the strands of grief and memory and hope are mysteriously braided together.

- Martha Whitmore Hickman, *Healing After Loss*

OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED



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



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
or email it to fntcfnwltr@live.com

SIBLING PAGE

I wish I could tell everyone who has lost a loved one how important it is to let themselves, and their family, remember. Forget, if you can, the sickness or tragedy that took them, but give them a place in your life. My family speaks very naturally of their father and their sister. We remember the fun, the love, and the closeness... We have memories to cherish, and we shouldn't cheat ourselves by not doing that. I don't mean that we should constantly talk about them, but when something we're doing reminds us of something good that happened when we were still a whole family, we don't hesitate to say so.

~ Lettie Petrie

For My Baby Brother

You came and went without a word.
But I'll miss your loving cry.
We barely got acquainted,
And then it was goodbye.
There was so much more
You should have done.
Your innocent eyes had barely opened,
Your life had just begun.
You never saw a sunset,
Or a star in the night sky.
You never saw a sunrise,
Or a rainbow flying high.
You never drew a picture,
Or sang a nursery rhyme.
You never took those first few steps,
You should have had more time.
You never hit a baseball
To score the winning run.
You never even had the chance
To miss the things you've never done.
Although you left so many things
Undone, unseen, and unsaid,
Their numbers never shall come close
To the tears that I have shed.
You came and went without a word.
T.C. , Miami, FL
From Bereaved Parents USA

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 Hts, IL

THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-CARE

One of the most notable characteristics of bereaved siblings is their ability to help others who are grieving. In research studies, this particular characteristic is mentioned again and again. However, bereaved siblings are often unable to help themselves with their own grief.

One of the patterns of dynamics that is often seen in bereaved siblings is as follows. The surviving siblings have been so hurt and become so vulnerable that they cannot tolerate their own feelings. They would like to disown their own vulnerability. So they project their feelings onto others who are grieving, and then take care of the other person. If this dynamic is operating in your life, you need to work on self-care. Withdrawing the projection from others, and accepting your own vulnerability is not easy, but is essential for healing.

In order to take care of yourself, you have to know yourself and know what your needs are. Sometimes we spend more time trying to get someone else to take care of us than we do in actively caring for ourselves. First, you must learn what your needs are. Everyone knows about needs—we know that babies need love and attention as well as food. Needs do not go away when we become adults. Some of the needs that we all share are: needs for food, security, love, acceptance, beauty, order, appreciation, and self-expression. Get to know yourself and what it takes to make you happy.

~ TCF Special Edition Sibling Newsletter

For Siblings: A Tribute

I think of you in silence,
my feelings seldom show,
but how it hurt to lose you,
no one will ever know.
I hope there is eternal life,
so we can meet again.
I not only lost my brother,
I lost my very best friend.
The reason you left so early,
I'll never understand why.
I just wish I'd known
you were never coming back,
'cause I would have said,
"Good-bye."

~ Martha K., TCF/Concord, NH

Grief Is Not...

Grief is not a mountain to be climbed,
with the strong reaching the summit
long before the week.
Grief is not an athletic event,
with stop watches timing our progress.
Grief is a walk through loss and pain
with no competition and no time trials.

Author unknown

What Does It Mean?

Why do we say committed suicide? I mean, why not say she committed love or he committed laughter? Words uttered from mouths removed having never tasted it wreak a curious kind of havoc in the hearts of many survivors.

And the breach that causes such offense along with the need to stigmatize is it not more insult to our vanity, more reminder of our frailty than offense to humanity?

To die of affliction like any ailing body tattered, torn, on the brink beyond finding any link so racked with pain no option remains but we in horror that life could so test and terrified of who might be next shrink away, heaping judgments on all who've left crossing a border, taboo.

And I ask you when does one commit the act? Just how do we read the walking dead turning away from the fullness of longing that signifies a life? And how to view the random stuffing, heady diversions, walls we build around our hearts, these various numbings we engage hoping to soften the edge of pain that is the human condition.

By Kristen Spexarth

(Published in TCF's "We Need Not Walk Alone" magazine, Autumn 2008)

I BELIEVE

I believe that imagination is stronger than knowledge.

That myth is more potent than history.

I believe that dreams are more powerful than facts.

That hope always triumphs over experience;

That laughter is the only cure for grief.

And I believe that love is stronger than death.

~ Robert Fulgham, TCF/Boise, ID

The Wounded Heart

Children have preceded their parents in death for eons of time. We are not the first, nor will we be the last to enter the realm of Bereaved Parents. But for now – right now - it is Our Hearts that are freshly wounded and Our Hearts in need of mending.

Wounded hearts must be allowed to mourn and lament their loss; to pour out their pain, agony, sadness, hurt, and anger; and to release their well of tears. Wounded hearts need to be wrapped in quietness, gentleness, and compassion, away from the turmoil of daily life.

A wounded heart not allowed to mend from the depth of its agony, will be as an abscess- to swell and undermine – erupting at a distant time. Or, suppressed, will slowly choke the spirit of its host. Only the bearer will know when his heart has healed.

The wounded heart, encouraged and given the time and freedom to mend, will carry in its chambers the memory and shared love of a precious child.

Nancy Green, TCF, Livonia, MI



FAMILY TIES

Every time a new person is added to the family by birth, marriage, adoption, etc., everyone begins to readjust and reorganize to new roles they must assume. Husband and wife work out the give and take necessary to establish a family system. Mothers and fathers find new roles when children enter the picture, and adjust their sleeping, eating, loving, working and being. Brothers and sisters truly learn what sharing and change are all about when a new member is added.

Everyone, in fact, becomes a changed individual in this new system. New patterns of trusting and communicating are established. Like the mobile we hang above the crib, the family works toward establishing stability; each part balances the whole.

The family mobile is susceptible to many forces of change; winds from outside and within. But blown and disturbed, each piece moves and sways until eventually the mobile becomes stabilized once again.

When one of the parts is suddenly removed, as in the death of a child, the very core is threatened. Cut off one of the parts of the mobile and it becomes frenzied, looking for stability and lost balance. It sways to and fro, bobbing and weaving, tilting up and down.

When our child dies, we are inevitably faced with this chaos in the system. How can we seek to balance our ship of life when we, as a part of that system, feel pain, confusion and imbalance? If we were the anchor before, we find ourselves adrift, unable to hold in the current. If we were the steering wheel, we begin to spin uncontrollably. The propeller shaft is bent; the spare oar is missing; there aren't enough life preservers to go around. How do you save the ship – the mobile – the family?

- Recognize the part you as an individual play in the family and work at resolving your own losses.
- Encourage the expressing of feelings in yourself and others. Know that each person grieves in his own way and at his own pace, and give them permission to do so.
- Understand that sometimes a system cannot rebalance without professional help, and seek this help if needed.
- Watch for obsessive behavior in your family, i.e. overprotectiveness, overeating, undereating, alcohol and/or drug abuse, rage and violence, etc., and offer support, sharing and help for the pain – not the behaviors.

How tragic it is when the ultimate loss, the death of a child, leads to an even greater loss; the breakdown of the family, the marriage, the individual. You, as part of the family, can work to make sure this doesn't happen.

~ Neenan, TCF/Wisconsin



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OF THE F-M AREA
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**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS**
FARGO/MOORHEAD AREA CHAPTER
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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

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

FARGO-MOORHEAD COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS BOARD

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN THE BOARD AT ANY TIME!

Chapter Leader	John Milligan 701-282-4794	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
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.