



The Compassionate Friends

Fargo/Moorhead Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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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
February 9th
March 9th

Dates to Remember

Mom's meeting - 7 pm on February 23rd @ Fry'n Pan
TCF National Conference - Orlando, Florida July 28-30, 2017

LOVE GIFTS

Derrick Chaney in memory of his son, Tyson Chaney
Larry & Lois Gangnes in memory of their son, Brent M. Gangnes
Jim & Suzie Hill in memory of their son, Jonathan Poitra
John & Kylene Milligan in memory of their son, Matthew Olson-Milligan
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 COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS is the hospital where my broken bones were reset and my wounds cared for and dressed with healing ointment. My fears were eased. Now I have been thrust into the hurting and wounded, and I find the grace is there to touch, to hug, to dress a wound. I want to say "thank you" my compassionate friends.

~ Kathi Barnhill

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

Holiday Angel that was not listed in a previous newsletter

Given By
SANDI & BOB ROEL

In Memory of
JOSEPH PETER ROEL

"When our special sadness comes to call, when we remember more than we can bear, when courage falters – shadows everywhere: Then let us reach and touch and share, we, who are friends." ~ Sascha Wagner

Our Mom's group generally meets on the 4th Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm at the Fryn' Pan restaurant, 300 Main Avenue, Fargo. Our gatherings are very informal as we meet to talk about our children, books, recipes, jobs and whatever else comes up in conversation. We all have times when we need the listening heart of another mom or grandma. Please join us this month on Thursday February 23rd. For more information please contact Sheryl at 701-540-3287 or sherylcvl3@msn.com.

THE EMPTY CHAIR

The table is set, and ready with food to delight the eye
Everyone is waiting, with anticipation high.
But one place is empty, void of a loved one dear
And as we pause to remember, we wipe away the tear.
Your chair may be empty, and your presence no longer there
But your memory is with us, as we gather around this fare.
Someone recalls something you once said, and the memories start to flow
And in this magic moment, your spirit upon us glows
Gone but never forgotten, as with us you'll always be
And if I look close, your presence, in the empty chair I see.

~ Sheila Simmons, Dallas, GA

Myths and Their Impact on Grief and Marriage

By Therese Rando, Ph.D

The Adverse Impact of Myths About Grief

Society maintains a number of inappropriate and unrealistic myths, stereotypes and standards for mourners in general. These not only do not help bereaved individuals, they actually hurt them. False expectations are established against which mourners and their caregivers evaluate grief responses, and pathology may be interpreted mistakenly when reactions depart from them. Consequently, mourners may feel guilt and failure, perceive something to be wrong with themselves, or assume they are going crazy when such expectations are unmet, despite their being totally unrealistic to begin with! Additionally, mourners may not receive the necessary assistance they require, since those in a position to give it often are laboring under the same misconceptions as well. They do not have an accurate picture of what mourners require and experience.

Clearly, these myths are quite dangerous, and this is why it is important to educate both the general public and professionals about the realities of bereavement. Hopefully this will result in more appropriate expectations, accurate knowledge, compassionate understanding, and a lessening of unnecessary pain for those who mourn the loss of a loved one.

Unfortunately, the population of bereaved individuals most subject to inappropriate expectations and the negative effects of misinformation are bereaved parents. This is because they must endure all of what mourners in general must cope with, AND THEN SOME. Without question the death of a child is such a unique loss that bereavement after it fails to be explained by the general conceptualizations we have about grief and mourning. In fact, bereaved parents are predisposed to be exceptionally vulnerable to "unresolved grief" and to misdiagnoses of pathology as a result. This is because there are a number of factors inherent in losing a child which are known to promote a failure to grieve, to complicate healthy mourning, or to lead directly to pathological responses. It becomes evident that what has been associated with "abnormal" or "pathological" grief in other mourners is part and parcel of the bereavement experience following the death of a child. The aspects that accompany this particular loss are the very same ones that in any other type of loss predispose a mourner to problems. It is no wonder why so many bereaved parents have been misdiagnosed as having pathological grief or chronic mourning. For this reason, it is absolutely imperative to develop a new model of parental mourning, and to identify new criteria what does constitute unhealthy grief in this special population.

However, society is not the only group which contributes to the pain of bereaved parents by its unrealistic expectations, bereaved parents do this to themselves as well. One of the prime areas in which this is found is in the marital relationship. Far too many times, bereaved parents tend to underestimate or overestimate the impact of the death of their child on their marriage. The remainder of this article is devoted to delineating some of the myths about the impact of grief on marriage in the hope that bereaved parents will become more realistic in their expectations of themselves and their mates, and decrease the amount of avoidable distress they experience when misinformation prevails.

Myths About the Impact of Grief on the Marriages of Bereaved Parents

- (1) *As the same child has died, each parent experiences the same loss.* Each individual mourns the relationship and person that has been lost. As parents, each of us has experienced our child differently and had a unique relationship with that child. Therefore, both bereaved parents are mourning different losses, and these will be what will influence what one misses and when one misses it (e.g., one parent may miss the opportunity to talk with the child after school, while the other especially may miss watching football games on Sunday).
- (2) *Spouses will tend to be more similar than dissimilar in their grief.* At latest count, people grieve according to 32 different sets of factors, each of which is highly idiosyncratic, as individualistic as a fingerprint. Spouses are no more alike necessarily in their mourning than are strangers. Loving one another, or living in the same house, does not make individuals respond to loss similarly. Some of the major factors contributing to differences between parents include: type and quality of the relationship with the child; sex-role conditioning; personality and coping behaviors; past experiences with loss; social, cultural, and religious backgrounds; social support received; reliance on drugs and alcohol; and physical health. Spouses will have to give each other wide latitude for their differing experiences of grief.
- (3) *Once a couple can learn to manage their grief, they will be back to themselves again.* A major loss always changes the bereaved somewhat. Parts of us dies when someone we love very much dies. Most of us continue on, but we are altered by the impact of the loss and the adaptations to it that have been required of us. We not only will have to learn to relate in a new way to our deceased child (i.e., we still can have a relationship with that child, but it must be a different type now that he or she is dead).

We also must learn how to relate to the rest of the world, including our spouse, in new ways to accommodate the changes in us occasioned by the loss. Especially during the long period of acute grief, in which the absence of our child painfully teaches us repeatedly that he or she is gone, it may be very difficult to relate to our spouse because of our pain and distress. Our communication with each other may have deteriorated; our sexual relationship may not be what it once was or it may have disappeared entirely. It is not abnormal for this to continue for a lengthy period of time. Couples who are successful in managing to weather this crisis together: (1) keep the communication open as much as possible; (2) recognize their distress and the changes in themselves, and work to express both in the healthiest possible fashions; (3) insure their expectations of one another are appropriate and give each other permission to grieve individually as necessary; and (4) find ways slowly to integrate all of the changes into the marriage.

- (4) *If a parent and couple are "healthy," the mourning will last longer than most people expect — up to a few years.* The duration of mourning varies according to the particular loss, its circumstances, the mourner, and the conditions surrounding the mourner. Nevertheless, it is now known that mourning a beloved person may take years of acute grief and that the long-term mourning process takes much longer, with some aspects of mourning never being entirely finished; i.e., there always may occur subsequent experiences which can trigger in us temporary upsurges in grief for our child (e.g. when his brother gets married and he is not there or when it is Thanksgiving and her place is empty at the table). It constitutes neither pathological nor unresolved grief, nor does it mean that acute mourning still persists. Bereaved parents must recognize that mourning the loss of any major person, especially a child, will mean

continuing throughout the rest of life to encounter times when the pain of the loss is brought back and the absence made more acute at that moment, which causes a temporary upsurge in grief. As long as this doesn't interfere too long with your continuing to move adaptively into the new life without your loved one, such reactions need not be incompatible with healthy adaptation for the rest of your life.

(5) *Parental grief declines over time in a steadily decreasing fashion.* Like all types of grief, parental grief fluctuates much more than society expects. In the case of the bereaved couple, parents initially may be more similar in their grief and then, from two to five years after the death, grow further apart before coming closer together again. It is suggested that this is because a mother's grief often increases for several years after the two-year point following the death, while the father's tends to decrease.

Therefore for a period of time they become more discrepant from one another. It is important to realize this so that if it occurs you can be aware of it and act to manage its disruptive effects on you and your spouse.

(6) *Parents who lose children usually end up with a divorce.* Despite the prevalence of the belief, it is positively untrue that parents whose child dies inevitably are headed for a divorce. The death of a child places an enormous strain on a relationship, but it has *not* been proven to destroy it. In fact, Dennis Klass' study of TCF parents suggests that it is precisely because parents who survive their grief (i.e., as a result of the positive growth that can come from loss) no longer wish to remain in unhealthy relationships, and this is one reason for divorces following a child's death. When parents do divorce, more often than not it is due to their having had significant problems before the child died, and the death only brought the long-term issues to a head. Although there is no question that the loss of a child and the ensuing grief does stress a marriage, do not think you must end up with a divorce. Some parents actually become closer after their child's death.

(7) *Loss only brings pain and devastation.* Despite the agony of losing their child and the long-term effects of such a loss, many bereaved parents have worked enormously hard to develop some positive gains out of their loss (e.g., beginning support groups, reordering their priorities, developing better family communication, establishing closer relationships, etc.) While they never would have chosen to lose their child to achieve these gains, they are determined to choose healthy responses to it. You can do this as well.

Summary: Myths hurt all bereaved parents. The more accurate information you have, the better prepared you will be not only to encounter the vicissitudes of parental grief, but to minimize the negative effects of such misinformation.

Valentine Love - New Meaning for Bereaved Parents

Though winter's delicate, lacy snowflakes may remind us of the lace-trimmed hearts of February's valentines, the "mourning" heart seems frozen in time. The bitter winds of loneliness blow mournfully through our souls.

Death has tapped us on the shoulder, introducing his brother, Grief, who has moved into our hearts to take up unwelcome residence. Wearing and exhausted by our pain, we have little energy to evict the intruder. It's hard for us to remember that the sun still faithfully shines behind the clouds and have obscured our vision.

"Love" is apparently the thought of the season, and we are reminded of its tenderness at every turn. But a piece of the fiber of our lives has been torn away, and love seems a vague and unfulfilled promise that belongs only to others.

Hearts and flowers, lace and love, romantic verse and melody seem to have abandoned us as we grope in the darkness of our beloved's absence. Will the pain ever end? Will the hope and joy and renewal once again warm the frozen places in our hearts?

Gradually, as the hurt begins to soften, the thawing relief of healing slowly begins to melt the icy grip of our pain, hope does begin to "spring eternal". Roses, traditional in February's favorite holiday, remind us that summer will return.

It's unlikely that we will ever again perceive the usual symbols of love in quite the same way as before, but in many ways our concepts of genuine love will be stronger, richer and less assailable. Frivolous and shallow affection are absent from our thoughts. Deeper commitments and more demonstrative attention have become our new marching orders.

In costly lessons, we've learned firsthand how fragile and fleeting life can be, and we are now resolute in our determination to announce to our remaining dear ones the importance of our bonds with them. We abandon the intimidation of "limits" such as the archaic notions that "men" mustn't cry or say "I Love You" or that we're too busy just not to pay attention to someone's needs.

As little by little, our pain softens and recedes, and we learn that suffering is but for a season, we also learn that LOVE doesn't die. In our emotional lives, Valentines can now take on a new significance as precious reminders of the love that still exists on both sides of life. Love lives within our hearts, and even Grief cannot steal it away. Love is our bridge over the rainbow.

~ Andrea Gambrell, reprinted from Bereavement Magazine

AFTER SOME TIME - IT IS STILL OKAY TO CRY

It seems to be acceptable to go for counseling or therapy during the early months of grief.

But what happens after a certain amount of time has passed and you feel yourself being "ambushed" by the first raw feelings of grief? Most people think you should just "buck up" and look around you and count the blessings you have left. These are worthy and meritorious attitudes, but sometimes they are simply unattainable, at least for a little while. We have lost MUCH when we lost our child. Sometimes we have to remind ourselves that it is okay to relapse, that there is nothing wrong with us when we feel alone and sad, that there is no shame in backtracking to the dark recesses of grief, for it is in those times when we give way to the hurt and pain that we acknowledge how MUCH our child continues to matter to us. We sometimes have to allow ourselves "space" to be sad and permission to cry over the simple sadness of no longer having our child with us.

They MATTERED to us. They still do. WE CONTINUE to remember them, to love them, and to miss them. "IT IS STILL OKAY TO CRY."

May each of you weep tears of release for the child that you so deeply continue to love and miss.
With the deepest respect and compassion for my fellow grievers,

~ Faye McCord, TCF/Jackson, MS
In memory of Lane McCord (1965-1998)

OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED BIRTHDAYS

CHILD	PARENTS
BRIAN BJERKEN	45 DENNIS & SHIRLEY BJERKEN
SHERI PETERSON BJORGAN	54 DEWAYNE & ARLENE PETERSON
KELLY ANN BOYES.....	36 KAREN BOYES
TAMERA KAY CHAPUT.....	58 GERALD & DELORES BEYERS
BRENT GANGNES	40 LARRY & LOIS GANGNES
TODD ALLAN JOHNSON.....	47 RUSSELL & ANNE JOHNSON
BRANDON WILLIAM THOMAS KLUTH.....	34 BRENDA KLUTH
BENJAMIN KOTTA.....	34 ARLEN & JULIE KOTTA
DAVID KUEHL.....	37 KEITH KUEHL
WENDY KUEHL.....	40 KEITH KUEHL
KEVIN DEANE MAESSE.....	61 HELEN MAESSE
MATTHEW MILLIGAN-OLSON.....	42 JOHN & KYLENE MILLIGAN
JONATHAN LEVI POITRA.....	35 SUZIE & JAMES HILL
JOSEPH PETER ROEL.....	39 ROBERT & SANDRA ROEL

ANNIVERSARIES

CHILD	PARENTS
NATHAN BEACH.....	3 LISA BEACH
QUENTIN LEE CLEMENTS	2 JAMIE KUROWSKI
ROBERT (BOB) TODD DUGGAN	11 GARY & CAROL DUGGAN
DANNY LEE FOWLER	4 CAROL & LIONEL KAIM
MATTHEW JOHN GAFFNEY	12 JOHN & JILL GAFFNEY
BRENT GANGNES	16 LARRY & LOIS GANGNES
KARL HELFTER.....	1 MARK & HELLA HELFTER
DILLON T KAPAUN	5 TODD & SUZIE KAPAUN
DALE G NYGARD.....	2 JOANN NYGARD
ROY DANA RICHMOND.....	8 THOMAS & AUDREY RICHMOND
DUANE SCHMITCKE	5 MARY ANN SCHMITCKE
ALICIA SPURR	18 TAMMY SPURR

Please check out our Chapter website's page for 'Our Beloved Children'
(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 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

Daily message from Healing After Loss

We found that our circle of friends shifted....We were surprised and disappointed that people we thought were good friends became distant, uneasy, and seemed unable to help us. Others who were casual acquaintances become suddenly close, sustainers of life for us. Grief changes the rules, and sometimes rearranges the combinations.

by Martha Whitmore Hickman

"Next time you feel lonely, take a walk under the stars and feel the magic of not being alone".

~ Joe A. Perez

SIBLING PAGE

Don't Ask If I'm Okay

Don't ask me how I'm doing
Don't ask if I'm okay
Don't say they're in a better place
As you won't like what I say
No...Time is not a healer
And this was NOT God's will
If He knew how much I've really lost
They would be right here still
I WON'T try to be positive
And this wasn't for the best
My hearts in broken pieces
And it hurts deep in my chest.
Don't say, at least they're out of pain
Well I'm not, and MAY NEVER be.
Their pain is gone, but mines still here
It's been passed on to me
Don't tell me, you know how I feel
Even though, it may be true.
This Grief is MINE,
For what length of time...
It takes me, to get through
~ Toni Kane, all-greatquotes.com

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

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

#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



INCONGRUITIES

Thoughts of you can bring a smile to my face . . .
and tears to my eyes.
Memories of you tug at my heart
filling it with love . . . and longing.
I feel so thankful for having had you in my life . . .
and yet so sad that you are gone.
I'm comforted by the sense of your presence
surrounding me at all times . . .
while loneliness overwhelms me.
My life is filled with incongruities;
they assure me I am healing . . .
and that I never will.

~ Gayle Block, TCF/Baytown, Texas

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

You left us so suddenly that I think most of us just felt shock. Did you know of everyone's love for you? We used to have lots of fun playing basketball, talking about diesel trucks and dragsters, and playing videos. You lived for scouting, you lived for animals and nature -- you lived for us all. I got to know your corny jokes, your adolescent fears (although for you they were understandably real), the simplest way with which you saw life, the joy you placed in other's hearts.
How could it be that you're gone now while others seemingly less deserving live on? I'm not sure. Life isn't fair - everyone has said it - but why? Why does the sun rise? Why are we here? What is the purpose of life? I haven't been alive very long, but the only response I can come up with is love. Love has to be the answer to this question.
I love you. We all love you. We shall meet again someday, and that day will be a day of joy for me, a day that we shall again be companions. By that time, we will have a lot to share. It already seems a lifetime since you've gone. So it goes.

We live, we love, we learn. Our biggest task to learn is to let you go and never Forget.

~ Scott T. Anderson, TCF/Omaha, NE



A GRIEVING PARENT IS...

A grieving parent is someone who will never forget their child no matter how painful the memories are.

A grieving parent is someone who yearns to be with their dead child but cannot conceive leaving their living ones.

A grieving parent is someone who has only part of a heart as the rest of it is buried with their child.

A grieving parent is someone who begs for relief from the memories which plague them and then feels guilty when they get it.

A grieving parent is someone who pretends to be happy and enjoying life when they really are dying inside.

A grieving parent is someone who holds the lives of their remaining children as the most precious gift they have.

A grieving parent is someone who can cry or laugh at the drop of a hat whenever they remember their beloved child.

A grieving parent is someone who feels as if they just lost their child yesterday no matter how much time has passed.

A grieving parent is someone who fears for their remaining family because they cannot bear to have any more loss.

A grieving parent is someone who sits by their child's gravestone and feels a knife stabbing their heart.

A grieving parent is someone who wants to help others who have lost loved ones because somehow their loss is theirs all over again.

~ Judy Skapik,

Sept. 2004 Newsletter of the Tampa Bay Chapter of BP/USA

Healing with Humor

Laughter is not a part of everybody's life, so it is easy to accidentally offend someone with humor. Bereaved parents, especially the newly bereaved, do not feel like laughing; their joy in life has gone. Laughing seems so trivial to them, they can easily be offended. Some bereaved parents feel guilty about humor and laughter. They feel they have no right to joy because their child is dead. Appearing joyous can bring condemnation from society, not to mention your spouse, for appearing to not care. People may think, surely if you are laughing you did not love your child as much as I love mine. The truth is, joy makes life better. Joyous talk and laughter do not show disrespect, they show that healing is taking place. If you laughed with your child while they lived, it is OK to someday laugh with your child again. Your dear child has never left your heart and their spirit would surely rather fill your heart with joy than sorrow.

Our Children Did Exist

I've lost two children, I hear myself say,
And the person I'm talking to just turns away.
Now why did I tell them, I don't understand.
It wasn't for sympathy or to get a helping hand.
just wanted them to know we've lost something dear,
I want them to know that our children were here.
They left something behind which no one can see. They made just two people into a family.
So, if I've upset you, I'm sorry as can be. You'll have to forgive me, I could not resist.
I just wanted you to know that our children did exist.

~ Betty Schreiber, TCF/Ashtabula, OH

The Strength of Butterflies

They didn't want to change. Their lives were full. The caterpillars crawled happily through the green leaves, played and rested in the sun, and ate their fill. Yet, through the darkness and quiet mystery, they did change. Their luminous beauty now lights the skies, their colors are vibrant, their airy flight is delightful.

They didn't want to change. Their lives were full. They laughed and worked and sang and played; our children loved their lives. Yet, through the darkness and quiet mystery, they did change. Beyond our own imaginings they now live in indescribable harmony and perfect joy. Their new lives are a color invisible to us, but it is the color of eternity.

We didn't want to change. Our lives were full. We cared and nurtured and disciplined and laughed and mothered and fathered; we loved their lives and them. Yet, through the darkness and quiet mystery, we have changed. Though fragile in our forever-longing for them, we are gifted with a growing strength of spirit called HOPE. We are a resilient and enduring new color as well, held close to our children by unbreakable threads of love that keep us tethered for awhile yet between earth and heaven.

~Mary Sue Zercher, TCF/Marietta, GA

What Do I Do With My Child's Things?

This is a problem that faces all bereaved parents. We discuss it from time to time at our meetings. Some of us keep the child's room just as it was before the death. We don't want anything touched or moved. Some of us find solace in giving things away to close friends or relatives. Knowing that someone we love is wearing our child's clothes or playing with his or her toys brings us comfort. Some of us find we can deal with only a few items at a time: clothes one month, books another, and perhaps toys a few months later. Some of us find that as time goes on and we would have gotten rid of the things anyway, it becomes easier. For instance, after awhile, we may realize that if our child were still alive, he/she would have outgrown the clothes. Then it may be easier to give them away. Or he/she would have graduated college this year and would therefore no longer be using a study desk or clock radio. We can give these things away in the normal time sequence. The important thing is to not let ourselves feel guilty about the amount of time it takes us to make these types of decisions and equally important not to let others rush us into something we are not yet ready to do. When the time is right, we will know what to do.

Nancy Mower, TCF/Honolulu, HI

MAY I GRIEVE?

In the daytime, I walk and work, and all;
But at home, in the evening, I stumble and fall.
The office says, "Function, smile and get control."
But at home I can grieve to cleanse my soul.
Must I be two people for the rest of my life?
If I could be just one person for more than one day,
My freedom to grieve would help light the way.
But society tells me not to be sad,
They say, "She's at peace now
and you should be glad."

When grieving the loss of a child is perceived,
How much easier it is for we the bereaved.

~ Susanne Demars, TCF/Hingham, MA

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: _____

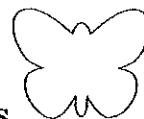
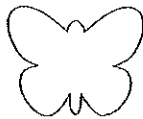
Child's Name: _____ Relationship: _____

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)



Butterfly Decals

"Butterflies are the heaven sent kisses of an angel." ~ Author Unknown

Butterfly decals are available to help personalize our trailer. The trailer is used to carry items to and from our Walk to Remember and other chapter events. It has also given us some visibility in the Fargo/Moorhead community. Each butterfly decal holds the first and last name of one of our beloved children.

Butterflies are available in five colors (yellow, pink, red, blue and green). The cost is as follows: \$25 for 1 butterfly, \$50 for 2 butterflies, \$65 for 3 butterflies and \$80 for 4 butterflies. If you wish to purchase more than 4 butterflies please contact John Milligan at 701-491-0364.

Butterfly orders should include the child's first and last name (middle name is optional) and the 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.

Hidden Emotion

Hidden deep inside my breast is a longing that has been suppressed. The feeling is always there---longing---longing to see you, to hug you, to know who you are at this time in your existence. It stays hidden for a period of time and then---when I least expect it---rises to the surface and must be tended to.

At times I feel as if I cannot breathe, as if I will suffocate trying to suppress the pain. At other times a tear comes from nowhere and trickles down my cheek. Occasionally, something inside of me explodes causing me to weep uncontrollably.

I can only guess what causes these unbidden emotions. Is it the song that's playing on the radio? Can it be the changing of the seasons? Do the budding trees beginning new life cause me to let down my guard? The longing never goes away.

I feel like a tight rope walker never knowing if I will make a misstep, causing me to fall into the stream of emotional pain that forces me to cry out, as I long to see you again.

With the passing of years, I have learned that if I can hang on for just a little longer, these emotions---strong as they are---will pass and I can live again with the longing hidden deep inside my breast.

~ Shirley Muller, TCF/Lafayette, IN

Pity Party

I feel that every day I engage in a battle with my very own personal adversary. It plagues me and pursues me relentlessly. It has many tricks. It's a master at the "sneak attack." My adversary's name is Self-Pity.

I know the mistakes I'm making in this daily battle. I am supposed to ask "Why not me?" instead of "Why me?" I'm supposed to focus on the things and people I have and not on what I have lost. But there's a significant gap between knowing in my head what I'm supposed to do and actually being able to do it.

My most effective defense against it is to focus on people who are enduring a similar loss; I hold them in my heart and mind. I am grateful that because of The Compassionate Friends, they have names and faces and are real to me. I also try to remember those who inspire me by the way they endure different challenges, such as serious illness or financial misfortunes. However, this perspective takes effort and energy. Energy is in short supply for me. I try not to give in to it, my Self-Pity beast.

It's hard when my son's friends and classmates are graduating from college and have photos of their celebrations all over Facebook (note to self: it is not a good idea to look at Facebook).

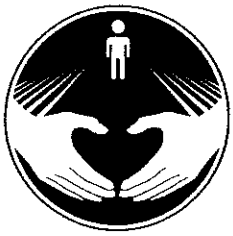
I don't understand why it's called a "pity party." It sure doesn't feel like a party. It feels like a war.

~ Peggi Johnson, TCF/Arlington, VA

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
 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..... 701-491-0364	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 & son, 45-cancer)... 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.