

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
 January 8th
 February 12th

Dates to Remember
 Mom's meeting - 7 pm on January 22nd @ Fry'n Pan
 TCF National Conference - Dallas, TX July 10-12, 2015
 TCF Regional Conference - Rochester, MN October 2-4, 2015

LOVE GIFTS
 George & Patti Pratt in memory of their daughter, Nancy Pratt Coash
 Maxine McNeal in memory of her daughter, Jill McNeal Gall
 Carol & Daniel Winter in memory of their son, Matthew Winter
 Muriel Lyons in memory of her daughter, Kathy Marie Strand
 Paul & Kara Bailey in memory of their son, Nick Bailey
 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

Holiday Angels that were not listed in December's Newsletter

<u>Given By</u>	<u>In Memory of</u>
Rory, Karen & Terry Hunter.....	Tabatha Hunter
Debby & David Facey.....	Dana Keblar
.....	Fred Finch
Paul & Kara Bailey	Nick Bailey
Sandi & Bob Roel	Joseph Peter Roel

"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 Fry'n' 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 January 22nd. For more information please contact Sheryl at 701-235-8158 or sherylc13@msn.com.

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

After the worst thing has happened with nothing left to fear.
 The sun continues shining with undiminished cheer;
 And winds continue blowing and skies continue fair,
 As hearts continue bearing the pain they could not bear.
 ~ Author Unknown

CARRYING MEMORIES INTO THE NEW YEAR

With the church bells' ringing
the new year enters
echoing the days of yesteryear
memories of happiness
the smiles of our children
the sunlight within each face
Who will remember these dear ones
far from our yearning arms
Who remembers all they were
the way she danced, the hat he wore
With the old year gone, will they
no longer be known?
We will remember them, each one
We will hold them in our hearts
as we carry memories
into this new year.
We will allow the memories to
make us laugh, to make us sing.
Their lives will fill the air as the church bells ring.

~ Alice J. Wisler

Who You'd be Today

Sunny days seem to hurt the most
Wear the pain like a heavy coat
I feel you everywhere I go
See your smile, I see your face
I hear you laughing in the rain
Still can't believe your gone
It ain't fair you died to young
Like a story that had just begun
But death tore the pages all away
God knows how I miss you
All the hell that I've been through
Just knowing, no one could take your place
Sometimes I wonder, who you'd be today
Would you see the world
Would you chase your dreams
Settle down with a family
I wonder what would you name your babies
Someday's the sky's so blue
I feel like I can talk to you
And I know it might sound crazy
It ain't fair you died to young
Like a story that had just begun
But death tore the pages all away
God knows how I miss you
All the hell that I've been through
Just knowing, no one could take your place
Sometimes I wonder, who you'd be today
Sunny days seem to hurt the most
I wear the pain like a heavy coat
The only thing that gives me hope
Is I know, I'll see you again someday
Recorded by Kenny Chesney

The First Snow

The first snow since you left
Fell on the coldest day of the year,
Settling onto rooftops and heights,
Onto the ground, drifts of white.

I drift in thought to past winters
To silhouettes against white,
Rosy-cheeked children crunching snow
In woolen paws for a snowball fight
Shrieks of delight streak the air
Like rising steam from warm breath.

As memories frozen in mind
Thaw like snow in the morning sun,
I don a coat against the wind,
Remembering when past snows
Encased snub footprints in white
And angels fell blinking in the light.

Years have passed since that winter scene
Yet those images move my heart still
As memories like angels' wings
Disturb the silence, and the chill,
And the murmur of the wind protests
The coldness of unmarred snow.

~ Peggy Walls, TCF/Alexander City AL

PERHAPS LOVE

Perhaps love is like a resting place
A shelter from the storm
It exists to give you comfort
It is there to keep you warm
And in those times of trouble
When you are most alone
The memory of love will bring you home.
Perhaps love is like a window
Perhaps an open door
It invites you to come closer
It wants to show you more
And even if you lose yourself
And don't know what to do
The memory of love will see you through.
Oh, love to some is like a cloud
To some as strong as steel
For some a way of living
For some a way to feel
And some say love is holding on
And some say letting go
and some say love is everything
And some say they don't know.
Perhaps love is like the ocean
Full of conflict, full of change
Like a fire when it's cold outside
Or thunder when it rains.
If I should live forever
And all my dreams come true
My memories of love will be of you.

~ John Denver

THIS IS ANOTHER YEAR JUST BEGINNING

This is another year just beginning - afresh with new days, new opportunities, new challenges. It occurs to me, however, this is a very difficult task to keep from concentrating on past years and the sadness we endure just because it is a new year and the calendar has flipped the page.

Moving on to a brighter tomorrow and letting go of the pain of yesterday is a gradual process. We cross that threshold one step at a time - a small one at first, faltering and stumbling - but somehow getting there.

With patience, effort, and persistence, once again we will be able to celebrate life as the year stretches on before us, putting behind us our sadness, our guilt, our failures and our pain.

We will be able to smile again. We will be able to remember our precious children in life rather than death.

We will recognize in our days many little blessings and will be able to share our joys with others.

Whenever that "New Year" begins for you, I celebrate with you that marvelous accomplishment, and wish you great peace, courage, and comfort

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

~ Alice Weening, TCF/Cincinnati, OH

WHAT TO DO WITH ANGER

Anger is one of the most difficult emotions for me to express. Reared as a "proper" young lady, I was taught that anger was not becoming. Many of the women I have spoken to were similarly taught.

I found, however, I did not have the tools to deal with the deep anger that came shortly after the death of my daughter. My anger was spilling over to people who did not deserve it, or I vented excess anger by overreacting to some situations.

With the loving care and patience of several people, I developed some tools that helped me express my anger. Rather than trying to suppress my angry feelings, I learned to release them in constructive ways. Hopefully, some of these coping techniques will be helpful to others.

Exercise - This is a great way to release anger, plus get into shape! I joined the YMCA, swam twice a week, did "Y's Ways to Fitness" three times a week and walked three to five miles each day. At first, I was concerned about doing so much exercise because I have a very bad back, so I took it easy and worked my way up to my present routine. I always feel much better after a good workout, and I had the extra benefit of getting out of our home and back into society. After my daughter's death, my life felt so out of control; but as I became more fit, I regained some control. This renewed strength aided my recovery.

Writing - When the anger bubbled up in me, I would write. Many times I didn't know where to begin, so I just started by writing, "I am angry because..." Soon, my thoughts were coming faster than I could write them down. After I had expressed my anger in writing, I often discovered that the sources of my anger were different than I had imagined. It usually sifted down to just being angry about

my daughter's death. The technique of writing about your feelings is especially nice because you can just throw away or burn your words and the anger with them.

Painting - There is nothing like taking bright oils or acrylics and stroking them over an open canvass. I had not painted in over fifteen years, but I went up into the attic and got down the easel, brushes and paints. I always felt better after a good painting session. Those times were very private for me and no one ever saw my creations, but they were helpful in expressing anger.

Talking - Sometimes I would call a friend and just rant and rave. My friend was a very good and non-judgmental listener. She realized that most of what I said in anger I did not mean. She never gave advice or held me to any "anger" statements, she just lovingly listened. This technique calls for a careful choice of friends who can maintain confidentiality and not be afraid of anger. It is even more helpful if the friend has had a similar loss.

Energy - Convert anger into energy and use that energy to change the world. Angry with the limited support that mothers of children with Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) had in the communities, I converted that anger into action. I joined several nation-wide support groups and helped to bring their support into our community.

My anger was further converted into energy which I used to raise money for SMA research. I baked over seven hundred loaves of bread (a lot of anger there!) for a fund raiser. My friends saw my energies and joined to help. Together, our efforts raised over \$6,000 in under six weeks. Reaching out to others can help in healing. If something good can come from our tragedies, it can add meaning to their deaths.

Eggs - Yes, eggs! When I just could not resolve my anger with any of the above techniques, I would take a dozen eggs and black felt-tipped pen and go into the back yard. Writing the reason I was angry on the egg, I threw it at the back fence. At first, I thought this was a little crazy, but after throwing the first egg and watching it shatter, I felt so much better!

I always used just one word to describe my anger. It might be: Death, SMA (the disease my daughter died of), Husband, a friend's name, God. No one need know what you write on the egg! Afterwards, the birds would have a treat eating the eggs; and listening to their happy noises while having their treat, eased my anger.

These are some of the techniques I used to express my anger. It is OK to be angry, and it is important to express, not suppress anger. Suppressed anger can result in deep depression.

It is also all right to be angry with God. He is forgiving and understands our emotions. He would rather have us angry with Him than shut Him out.

~ Penny Blazej, New Canaan, Connecticut

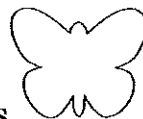
Memories are like threads of gold,
they never tarnish or grow old.

OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED BIRTHDAYS

CHILD	PARENTS
NICHOLAS LEE BAILEY.....22.....	PAUL & KARA BAILEY
KIRSTIN ELIZABETH CANTLER-BOOKE.....6.....	CHRIS & DAWN CANTLER (Grandparents)
KONNIE JEAN CHAFFEE.....42.....	MARK & JEAN CHAFFEE
NANCY PRATT COASH.....56.....	GEORGE & PATTI PRATT
BRIELLE DEUTSCHER.....4.....	LYNN & DONNA MICKELSON (Grandparents)
DANA DAWN KEBLAR.....37.....	DEBORAH FACEY
TARA LEA KELLAR.....36.....	CATHY & GREG GRONLAND
DAVID VICTOR LAMBRECHT.....53.....	VICTOR & LORETTA LAMBRECHT
MICHAEL L LIVDAHL.....21.....	ROBERT & TANYA LIVDAHL
CHRISTIANA N SANDSTROM.....2.....	ANDREW & SHAYNA SANDSTROM
MATTHEW AARON THIBEDAU.....41.....	MARY & GALEN SCHROEDER
THOMAS LEE THOEMKE.....39.....	JEAN & BILL THOEMKE
GABRIEL "GABE" THOMPSON.....34.....	FRANK & JANE THOMPSON
MATTHEW ALLEN WINTER.....28.....	CAROL & DAN WINTER

ANNIVERSARIES

CHILD	PARENTS
NATHAN ANDERSON.....14.....	DIANE & JAY FENSKE
SHERI PETERSON BJORGAN.....15.....	DEWAYNE & ARLENE PETERSON
ANDREW HOWARD BRAUN.....9.....	CRAIG & DEANNA BRAUN
SANDRA DIANE CASELLA.....3.....	RICHARD & DIANE MACGREGOR
ZACHARY COLE.....3.....	JERRY & DEB COLE
MATTHEW ISAAC CVIJANOVICH.....10.....	MICHAEL & SHERYL CVIJANOVICH
TYLER JUSTIN EICHOLTZ.....12.....	STEVE & LISA EICHOLTZ
WADE HAAKE.....6.....	RANDIE HAAKE
CORRINE HOEPKER.....12.....	MARY VASECKA
WENDY KUEHL.....5.....	KEITH KUEHL
WENDY KUEHL.....5.....	LAURA KUEHL
DAVID VICTOR LAMBRECHT.....53.....	VICTOR & LORETTA LAMBRECHT
CHRISTOPHER LOE.....2.....	MARGARET "MUGS" LOE
BRUCE C THORNBY.....6.....	JANET & HOWARD GALLAGHER



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.

SIBLING PAGE

FOREVER ON MY MIND

When I attended my first meeting of the Bergen-Passaic Compassionate Friends, it was the day after my fifth birthday without my twin brother Alan. Up to then I was working nights and unable to attend meetings. Nine months later, May 1998 at a chapter meeting someone in the circle spoke of the tenth anniversary of his or her child's death. They said they no longer think of their child everyday and it didn't bother them. This was shocking to me, not to mention upsetting. I couldn't imagine living a day without thoughts of him - both happy and sad. I went home very upset.

Even after five years I always thought of him each and everyday. To this day I will lick the bowl of frosting and think of the times we fought over the bowl. After a snowstorm I write his initials in the snow. When I hear something funny I think of him. But I also think of all that he has missed. He would have gotten to know his six, soon to be seven nieces and nephews. We would have been able to enjoy many vacations together.

This June will be the ninth anniversary of his death. With the passing of time I have adjusted to not talking to him everyday (we both had 800#'s at work). I do think of what he would say when I have a problem to work out. I think the part of the old me is returning. I have started to exercise again. This is something I used to love to do before Alan got sick. I have taken steps to advance my career, something I was planning at the time of his death. I also think I took on some of his traits like becoming a better writer and not emptying the laundry basket after each wash.

There are now many more good days than bad. But almost nine years after Alan's death, I am probably the only adult male to cry at a children's movie. In "Rugrats in Paris" Chucky's father remarries sometime after his mother's death. Tommy is thrilled that he will have two mommies, one on earth and one in heaven. I am forced to remember that I can't have another Alan.

I have given myself a job that I love: The job of keeping Alan's memory alive. I do this by putting this newsletter together, collecting license plates, with his name, for each new state that I visit, donating to his scholarship fund and in many other ways.

When "Phantom of the Opera" opened on Broadway I had no desire to see it. That was until it opened in Philadelphia, after Alan's death. Alan was a publicist in Philly and the show was playing at the only theatre where I had not seen something Alan had publicized. One of the songs has a line "There will never be a day in which I won't think of you." I think this will be true for a long time to come.

~ Daniel Yoffee Reprinted by permission of author

For My Sister

Sisters are special
from young ones to old.
God gave me a sister
more precious than gold.
We shared many secrets,
the same mom and dad,
we shared lots of good times,
don't think of the bad.
Our memories we'll cherish,
with love without end,
I'm glad you're my sister,
I'm glad you're my friend.
~ Author Unknown

Siblings

When my parents lost their son, I lost my twin brother (when I was 30). I could not share my loss with my parents, yet their loss was the same as mine. The fear, despair and anger I felt ran deep. My parents were already suffering from the deepest of wounds themselves, and simply did not realize my feelings.

I was old enough to understand, but for younger children, one crisis may pile upon another, causing a separation between parent and child. Everyone in the family has changed. The struggle to survive when everyone is so unsure of their footing takes a total effort - and that effort must begin with yourself.

Finding someone outside the family who understands is a beginning. It was the beginning for me. I could confront the emotional crisis with the care and concern of others. I won't live in the past, but the past will live in me. My life is no longer entirely my own. That part of my brother that is within me will live on, too. It is a great help to be able to talk with others in the sibling support group, and I am grateful for it.

~ Denise Schoo, Dallas, TX

PLAYING IN THE SHADOWS

We grew up together,
Big sister, little brother.
I took care of you
Until you were old enough to care for yourself.
Though you didn't say it,
I knew you loved me.

We played in the sunlight, you and I;
Remember the games of Mother-May-I and Hide-and-Seek
Sure we had our fights
As all siblings do.
But through it all we never lost
Our love for each other.

Now you're gone.
I'll never see you again
except in the memories
of those sunny days.

You will forever be sixteen—
Far too young to die.
You had your whole life to live.
I'll always grieve, but I must go on.
Still, without you,
I play alone in the shadows.

~ Cheryl Larson TCF, Pikes Peak,

A Brother Means so Much

The gift of a brother
Is a precious treasure.
It is the love, tears, and
Joys of a friendship that
Has unbreakable bonds.
The beauty of a brother
Cannot be described,
Measured or defined.
For it is a wonderful legacy
That will always be carried
In a sister's heart.

Jill Hricik, TCF/Pittsburg, PA

Things Aren't Always As They Seem

"Is your baby a girl?" the woman inquired, as she eyed my four month-old Ellen, happily seated in her stroller in the crowded department store restroom. Four year-old Ethan held my hand as we inched toward a vacant stall. "Yes, she is," I answered, but, as soon as the woman heard me she ran off. I thought this was strange, but was too busy situating Ethan in his stall to follow the woman with my eyes. "Why did I bring them to the mall on a Saturday?" I pondered, as I peered at Ethan's feet under the door of his stall. Crowds are not my passion.

As I passed the time while waiting for Ethan, I couldn't stop thinking about the woman. I wondered why she had run off after I told her that Ellen was a girl. Before I had time for further analysis, I was distracted by Ethan who had finished going potty and was ready to tackle the mysterious blower shared by half a dozen wet hands. Baby Ellen was fast asleep, oblivious to the chaos around her. When Ethan's hands were nearly dry, we flowed with the crowd toward the exit.

Just before reaching the door, with people pushing behind us, I noticed her again—the woman who had asked about Ellen. She sat in a torn chair in the restroom lounge, and sobbed uncontrollably as she dabbed a ragged tissue on her reddened eyes. I wanted to ask what was wrong, but instead I moved with the crowd toward the exit.

After leaving the odor and heat of the restroom, the department store air was a relief, yet I couldn't stop thinking about the woman. I had thought it strange that she ran off after learning Ellen's gender. Most people make a fuss over my chubby blue eyed baby. Suddenly, I knew. The woman cried because her baby, probably a girl, had died. Seeing us brought her pain to the surface. I know that look in her eyes, and I know how she feels. I've been there.

When my daughter, Caroline, was stillborn nearly two years ago, my first trip to the mall was a painful one. It seemed like a convention of pregnant women and baby girls. My eyes had focused on the lace dresses, wicker bedroom sets, and smiling dolls—reminders of all that I had lost. Around me, families were laughing as they strolled the mall, and I felt singled out. What did *I* do wrong? Why did *my* baby have to die?

I thought of the woman sobbing in the restroom lounge and how I must have represented her loss. The experience reminded me of a parable a close friend had shared with me shortly after Caroline's death. It goes as follows:

Two traveling angels stopped to spend the night in the home of a wealthy family. The family, rude to the angels, refused to let them stay in the mansion's guest room. Instead, the angels were offered a space in the cold basement. As they made their bed on the hard floor, the older angel saw a hole in the wall and repaired it. When the younger of the two asked why the older angel had fixed the wall for this rude family, the elder's reply was, "Things aren't always as they seem."

The next night the pair came to rest at the home of a very poor, and very hospitable, farmer and his wife. After sharing what little food they had, the couple let the angels sleep in their bedroom where they could have a good night's rest. When the sun came up the next morning, the angels found the farmer and his wife in tears. Their only cow, whose milk had been their sole source of income, lay dead in the field.

The younger angel was infuriated and asked the older angel how she could have let this happen. "The first man had everything, yet you helped him," she accused. "The second man had little, but was willing to share everything, and you let his cow die."

"Things aren't always as they seem," the older angel replied. "When we stayed in the basement of the mansion two nights ago, I noticed there was gold stored in a hole in the wall. Since the owner was so obsessed with greed, and unwilling to share his good fortune, I sealed the wall so he wouldn't find it," she explained. "Then, last night, as we slept in the farmer's bed, the angel of death came for his wife. I gave her the cow instead." She paused. "Things aren't always as they seem."

These days, when I stroll through the mall with my two beautiful children, I realize that on the outside my life looks picture perfect. But as I admire the store windows, alive with colorful dresses, Caroline comes to mind. She owns only one dress, and she'll wear it forever in her grave across town. A bittersweet tear streams down my cheek, yet I am able to smile at passersby as I hug my kids just a little bit tighter. Things aren't always as they seem.

By Rhonda Cloos, TCF/Sugar Land-SW Houston, TX

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Just an Idea

As you sit and ponder about what the New Year will bring for you and your family, try this: take a note pad and pen, and at the top of the page, write, "This year I hope I can..." or, "This year I hope to do..." or, another "hope" you wish to concentrate on. Then make a list of what you hope will take place during the year. Later, go a step further and number each "hope" in order of preference or importance. Then work on it...one thing at a time. And mark it off your list as it's accomplished or a goal is reached. Then you can look at your progress. And please remember, each and every time you accomplish something you set out to do—no matter how small or trivial it may seem at the time—that it IS PROGRESS.

~ TCF/Anniston, AL

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: _____

(Signature) _____ Date: _____

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). 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

The Death Anniversary

On June 1, 2007, my 82-year old aunt unexpectedly and suddenly died. She and I had always talked frequently, even though she lived in Washington and I live in Texas. The last time I saw her was at my Dad's funeral in 2000. But we kept in touch, and shared a mutual interest in the family genealogy. Many nights I would call her and we would talk for hours about the death of my son, Todd. She would always reassure me that I was the best mother a child could have. Her opinion meant much to me as she raised three sons who became very responsible, loving adults. Her life was well lived, her advice always sound.

In the spring of 2006, my aunt lost her husband of 60 years. Her three sons helped her for a while then she suggested that they get on with their lives. Moms are like that. But she and I talked about her loss, my loss and the differences between the two.

When the first anniversary of my uncle's death was approaching, I sent her a card. I wanted her to know that I remembered this sad anniversary date. I wrote about her husband, their relationship, how much I admired them, and that I was keeping her in my thoughts and prayers on this sad day.

She e-mailed me right after she received the card. She thanked me over and over for the card and reiterated her absolute certainty that I was a good mother for Todd. Her sons had called to talk with her. However, they didn't bring up the anniversary, even though it was obvious that they were thinking about it. "Men are like that", she told me. Her sisters called and talked to her about her husband, the anniversary and more. My dad's sisters are special people. I'd like to think that I have learned from them. We must talk about our feelings; death cannot be ignored. If one of us breaks down and cries, the "girls" are there with an understanding that transcends distance. They listen; they talk about the loss, the life, and the sadness. They encourage us to take our loved one with us. That's what they did when they lost children, parents and their husbands to death.

Bereaved parents understand the importance of death anniversaries to the family, especially to each parent. When we have lost a child, that date takes on a significance that cannot be measured. That is a date that we will never forget. A month before the date, bereaved parents begin anticipating the anniversary date. Anxiety sets in. Depression can sweep over us. We count days until the date finally arrives. Then we go with it. We let the day take us where it will. We receive cards from our Compassionate Friends. We receive some telephone calls. Sometimes our families call or send a card. Sometimes friends come over and talk. Sometimes we hear from very few people and find that to be just fine. This is a day for us, the parents who have endured the worst, to reflect, to cry, to remember, to honor our child.

Each month I read the names and death anniversary dates of the children of our Compassionate Friends. Each month I sigh, shed tears for the upcoming pain and then begin to edit the newsletter. Yet each month I feel as if, somehow, we are each lightening the burden of the others. Our presence, our concern, our acceptance of each grief journey....no matter how that road twists and winds, are meant to give each parent the light of hope.

We don't walk this road alone. We are connected to each other with an invisible golden thread that touches each heart. This is our journey.

~ Annette Mennen Baldwin, TCF/Katy, TX
In memory of my son, Todd Mennen

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
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 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 701-235-8158	Website Administrator	Sheryl Cvijanovich 701-235-8158
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 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.