



The Compassionate Friends

Fargo/Moorhead Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

TCF's National Office
P.O. Box 3696
Oak Brook IL 60522
Toll-free (877) 969-0010
www.compassionatefriends.org

F-M Area Chapter
P.O. Box 10686
Fargo ND 58106
www.tcffargomoorhead.org
July 2016

Volume 33 Number 7

Chapter Leader - John Milligan (701)491-0364

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

July 14th
August 11th

Dates to Remember

Mom's meeting - 7 pm on July 28th @
Fry'n Pan
TCF National Conference -
Scottsdale, AZ July 8-10, 2016
TCF FM Chapter's 10th Annual Walk to
Remember - July 30, 2016 @ 10 am at
South Shelter @ Oak Grove Park

LOVE GIFTS

Don, Linda & Scott Bartsch in
memory of their son/brother, Brent
Bartsch
James & Shawn Miller in memory of
Ron Kylo
Sherry Lassle in memory of their
daughter, Jayme Lassle
Dick & Diane MacGregor in memory
of their daughter, Sandra MacGregor
Casella
Dan & Carol Winter in memory of
their son, Matthew Winter
Persys Piersall in memory of her son,
Rand Piersall
Sharon Wateland in memory of her
niece/goddaughter, Tracy Ann
Wateland
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

ATTN: WE WILL HAVE AREAS TO HANG A PICTURE
OF YOUR LOVED ONE AT THE WALK TO
REMEMBER, SO BRING A PICTURE NO BIGGER THAN
A 4 X 6.

"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 Fry'n 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 July 28th. For more information please contact Sheryl at 701-540-3287 or sherylcvl3@msn.com.

Love – Gratitude

The agony is so great and yet I will stand it. Had I not loved so very much, I would not hurt so much. But goodness knows, I would not want to diminish that precious love by one fraction of an ounce. I will hurt and I will be grateful for that hurt. As it bears witness to the depth of our meaning – and for that I will be eternally grateful.

~ Shirley Holzer Jeffery

The Sacred Ground

Going to the place we laid you
to be close; to be near
finding here...some comfort
in the love we share
a name etched so boldly
on the cold, cold stone
A precious name to me
so sacred so alone
running fingers tender over letters
acting out my love
gentle fingers
that once ran through your hair
and across your cheek
placing hand so gently on the ground
as if to feel your presence all around
so precious in this quiet place
of resting making me
aware of how you fill this space
I'm moving flowers here and there
arranging as I did your hair
I'm making beauty of the place
as the beauty in your face
it is here in stillness
and through my silent tears
seeing now with new, wise eyes
You are not below the ground
I carry you in my heart
Your spirit dwells with God
We are not far apart
and yet so far it sometimes seems
I sigh...
and walk away
...this sacred place...this sacred ground
...with silent sound
has strangely brought some sweet release
...to my weary broken heart
...some gentle peace

By Bev Swanson

Norman Rockwell Never Painted¹ Me

At this time of year, it always seems
that I see the people of others' dreams.
Everywhere I look, every ad I see
shows the joyful reunions of families.
With the table laden, good times abound...
while other families reunited, gather round.
But Rockwell never painted an empty chair,
and a family mourning one who's not there.
A season that was once celebrated
now makes me feel more isolated.
I need TCF so that I can see
that there are others just like me.
Whose feelings about holidays are mixed at best,
whose strength of will is put to the test.
We're loving those that we still hold near,
but thoughts of one out of reach brings a tear.
Even now, amid the love and gladness,
this time of year brings a certain sadness.
I no longer have the average family,
so that is why Rockwell never painted me.
~Kathy Hahn, TCF/Lower Bucks, PA

IF ONLY, ONE MORE TIME...

To hear your voice loud and clear,
To see your image as if you're here,
To feel your warmth like you are near,
If only, one more time...
To hear you call, "Mom, I'm home"
To keep me company when I'm alone,
To watch you run and grab the phone,
If only one more time...
To watch you sit quietly and read,
To buy you things you say you need,
To see you do a thoughtful deed,
If only, one more time...
To find a note written by you,
To walk upstairs and trip over your shoe,
To comfort you when you're feeling blue,
If only, one more time...
To feel your arms in a soft embrace,
To see the smile upon your face,
To understand when you needed "space"
If only, one more time...
If only, one more time...
~ Vicki Richey, TCF/Orange County Chapter, CA

TIME ROLLS ON

Whether we see time going by or not, whether we are aware if it is winter or spring, May or June, day or night.....time keeps rolling on.

I remember back to those early days of grief, when time seemed to stand still. I remember looking at the clock, realizing that it was 3.00 am. And being surprised that it was night time. I remember not knowing or caring whether it was a Sunday or a Tuesday.....

But I did know when it was a Wednesday, I knew it was a Wednesday each week because Wednesday was the day our daughter died.

Everything from that moment on was measured by a different standard of time. At first, we marked time by the hours, then the days, then the weeks. All time was measured by how long it had been since she had passed from our world. Days became weeks, weeks became months, and now.....months have been years. For us, the marking of time has evolved.

Our family history will forever be divided into the "before...." and the "after....." but we have gradually become aware of time again. We keep a calendar, we make appointments, and we schedule ourselves into events and commitments.

Once again, time is rolling on.

~ Jane, TCF/Coquitlam

She was no longer wrestling with the grief, but could sit down with it as a lasting companion and make it a sharer in her thoughts.

~George Eliot

Dare to reach out your hand into the darkness, to pull another hand into the light.

~ Norman B. Rice

What Are We Waiting For?

My brother-in-law opened the bottom drawer of my sister's bureau and lifted out a tissue-wrapped package. "This," he said, "is not a slip. This is lingerie." He discarded the tissue and handed me the slip. It was exquisite: silk, handmade, and trimmed with a cobweb of lace. The price tag with an astronomical figure was still attached. "Jan bought it the first time we went to New York eight or nine years ago. She never wore it. She was saving it for a special occasion. Well, I guess this is the special occasion."

He took the slip from me and put it on the bed with the other clothes we were taking to the funeral home. His hands lingered on the soft material for a moment. He slammed the drawer shut and turned to me. "Don't ever save anything for a special occasion. Every day you're alive is a special occasion."

I remembered those words through the funeral and the days that followed when I helped him attend to all the sad chores that follow an unexpected death. I thought about them on the plane returning home. I thought about all the things she hadn't seen or heard or done. I thought about the things that she had done without realizing that they were special.

I still think about his words and how they've changed my life. I read more and dust less. I sit on the deck and admire the view without fussing about the weed in the garden. I spend more time with my family and friends and less time in committee meetings. Whenever possible, life should be a pattern of experience to savor, not endure. I try to recognize those moments now and cherish them. I don't save anything. We use our good china for every special event—such as losing a pound, getting the sink unstopped, or discovering the first camellia blossom. I wear my good blazer to the market if I feel like it. I don't save my good perfume for special parties. "Someday" and "one of these days" are losing their grip on my vocabulary. If it's worth seeing, hearing, or doing, I want to see, hear, and do it now.

I am not sure what my sister would have done had she known that she wouldn't be here for the tomorrows we all take for granted. I think she would have called family members and a few close friends. She might have called a few former friends to apologize and mend fences for past squabbles. It's these little things left undone that would make me angry if I knew my hours were limited—angry because I put off seeing good friends, angry because I hadn't written certain letters that I intend to write, angry and sorry that I didn't tell my husband and daughter often enough how much I truly love them. I am trying not to put off, hold back, or save anything that would add laughter and luster to our lives. Every morning when I open my eyes, I tell myself that it's a special day.

• ~ Ann Wells, TCF/Laguna Niguel, CA

NOT GUILT, REGRET

One of our basic responsibilities as parents is to keep our children from harm. So, when anything happens to them, we feel guilty whether we could realistically have done anything or not. When the ultimate tragedy occurs, we are devastated. How could we let it happen? Why didn't we stop it? If we have compounded our guilt with any degree of human error of commission or omission, we are beyond devastation. Even words, either of anger or left unspoken, haunt us.

Guilt implies intent. If we intended to harm our child, we can feel guilty of that. If we never intended harm to ever, ever come to our child, the correct name for our emotion is regret. The crushing pain is still there, but regret is softer, gentler, less judgmental, and easier to forgive and to heal. It is also more accurate. If that name doesn't feel strong enough for our feelings, it will in time. Let it float there and try it now and then. Not guilt - we feel regret.

~ Kitty Sanders, Nashville, TN
Survivors of Suicide Group

Awkward Silence

I wish that someone would say his name.
I know my feelings they're trying to spare,
And so we go through the charade, the game,
Of dancing around the ghost that is there.

Trying to avoid evoking a tear,
Or stirring emotions too painful to bear.

That he be forgotten is what I fear,
That no one will even his presence miss,
As if there were no trace that he was here.

Be referring to him, my purpose is
Not to stir pity or keep things the same,

But my heart will simply break if his
Memory will die like a flickering flame.

I just wish someone would say his name.

~ Richard Dew, M.D., TCF/Knoxville, TN

TOGETHER WE'LL WALK THE STEPPING STONES

Come, take my hand, the road is long,

We must travel by stepping stones.

No, you're not alone, I'll go with you.

I know the road well, I've been there.

Don't fear the darkness, I'll be with you.

We must take one step at a time

But remember we may have to stop awhile.

It is a long way to the other side

And there are many obstacles.

We have many stones to cross,

Some are bigger than others,

Shock, denial, and anger to start,

Then comes guilt, despair and loneliness.

It's a hard road to travel, but it must be done.

It's the only way to reach the other side.

Come, slip your hand in mine.

What? Oh yes, it's strong.

I've held so many hands like yours.

Yes, mine was one time small and weak, like yours.

Once, you see, I had to take

Someone's hand in order to take the first step.

Oops, you've stumbled, go ahead and cry.

Don't be ashamed, I understand.

Let's wait here awhile and get your breath,

When you're stronger we'll go on, one step at a time.

Say, it's nice to hear you laugh.

Yes, I agree, the memories you shared are good.

Look, we're half way there now,

I can see the other side.

It looks so warm and sunny.

Oh, have you noticed, we're nearing the last stone,

And you're standing alone.

And look, your hand, you've let go of mine,

We've reached the other side.

But wait, look back, someone is standing there,

They are alone and want to cross

The stepping stones,

I'd better go, they need my help.

What? Are you sure? Go ahead, I'll wait,

You know the way, you've been there.

Yes, I agree, it's your turn, my friend—

To help someone else cross the stepping stones.

~ Barb Williams, TCF/Fort Wayne, IN

**OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED
BIRTHDAYS**

CHILD

PARENTS

SANDRA DIANE CASELLA.....	48.....	RICHARD & DIANE MACGREGOR
BABY DEUTSCHER.....	4.....	LYNN & DONNA MICKELSON (grandparents)
AARON DEUTSCHER.....	39.....	LYNN & DONNA MICKELSON (in-laws)
JASON ESKILDSEN.....	42.....	RICHARD & DENISE ESKILDSEN
NANCY DIANE HEST.....	65.....	RALPH & ETHEL HEST
JILL MCNEAL-GALL.....	68.....	MAXINE MCNEAL
JARAD NILLES.....	32.....	RALPH & CAROLYN NILLES
ZANDYN LARRY MALHEIM OLAFSON.....	6.....	BILLY OLAFSON & SHANDRA MALHEIM
MATTHEW ALLEN OLSON.....	41.....	DICK & LINDA OLSON
JUSTIN OLSON.....	28.....	CHERIE HARLAND & BILL BARTHOLOMAUS
LOGAN F RINKE.....	26.....	TIM & PAULINE RINKE
MATTHEW ROBERT SAUNDERS.....	11.....	ROBERTS & MARY SAUNDERS
TERRY STAIGER.....	67.....	CLARA STAIGER
AUSTIN WAYNE WAGAR.....	21.....	JAMIE & SCOTT OLSON
MARK ALAN WATELAND.....	67.....	SONIA WATELAND

ANNIVERSARIES

CHILD

PARENTS

BRENT M BARTSCH.....	1.....	DON & LINDA BARTSCH
HALLIE CLARE BJELLAND.....	11.....	ANDY & RHONDA BJELLAND
AARON DEUTSCHER.....	4.....	LYNN & DONNA MICKELSON (in-laws)
ALLISON DEUTSCHER.....	4.....	LYNN & DONNA MICKELSON
BABY DEUTSCHER.....	4.....	LYNN & DONNA MICKELSON (grandparents)
BRIELLE DEUTSCHER.....	4.....	LYNN & DONNA MICKELSON (grandparents)
TABATHA HUNTER.....	11.....	RORY & KAREN HUNTER
RYAN W JENSEN.....	17.....	LARAE JENSEN
JAMES ALLEN LAMBRECHT.....	31.....	VICTOR & LORETTA LAMBRECHT
SUE ELLEN LARSON.....	34.....	DALE & MARILYN LARSON
JAYME ELIZABETH LASSLE.....	6.....	SHERRY LASSLE
MICHAEL L LIVDAHL.....	3.....	ROBERT & TANYA LIVDAHL
JOSHUAH G NELSON.....	3.....	JOHN & DARCY NELSON
ZANDYN LARRY MALHEIM OLAFSON.....	6.....	BILLY OLAFSON & SHANDRA MALHEIM
RAND LOREN PIERSALL.....	2.....	PERSYS PIERSALL
NICHOLAS J SADEK.....	11.....	JOHN & TAMMY SADEK
DOUG E SCHENCK.....	12.....	HAROLD & IRENE SCHENCK
ADAM JOSEPH SNYDER.....	3.....	ANNE SNYDER
TIMOTHY J SWEENEY.....	1.....	MADONNA SWEENEY
TRACY ANN WATELAND.....	23.....	DENNIS & PAT WATELAND
TRACY ANN WATELAND.....	23.....	SHARON WATELAND (godmother)
MATTHEW ALLEN WINTER.....	3.....	CAROL & DAN WINTER
JUSTIN JAY WOLF.....	18.....	GRACE WOLF

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

SIBLING PAGE

A Tribute to my Sister Lori Lee Smith

I Saw You

I saw you today in the morning dew
As brilliant as a sea of shimmering diamonds
I shared the most amazing sunrise with you today
A million shades of red so random in their perfection
I heard you today in the laugh of my children
An enchanting melody a thousand angels strong
I walked with you today and we talked about everything
... and nothing all at once
I saw you today in the changing of the leaves
The colors of your life, the close of one season
And the ushering in of another
I sat beside a stream with you today
The peaceful flow, steady and constant
I saw you today . . . and you were perfect
And rest assured . . . I shall see you again
~ Avery Smith, TCF/Ada Area Chapter

WHEN A SIBLING DIES

The death of a child is a family crisis no less for the siblings than for the parents. Surviving siblings may feel abandoned because grieving parents no longer have the emotional energy to care for them. They may feel unloved as they experience family friends putting the deceased child on a pedestal. They may feel incredibly guilty, remembering every bout of sibling rivalry, every unkind word, and every slammed door. They may feel unworthy to be alive, longing for answers to explain why their brother or sister died and they didn't. And they may, therefore, seek conscious or unconscious ways to self-destruct: running away from home, using alcohol and other drugs, taking on characteristics of the dead siblings and thus diminishing their own image.

Following are suggestions children have shared about how parents can help them when a brother or sister has died:

1. Allow siblings to participate fully in funeral plans and memorial activities. Let them choose whether or not they want to see their sibling at the funeral home. Let them choose some of the music, write and/or read a memorial to their brother or sister, go with you or alone to cemetery visits.
2. Share with the siblings all factual information, as it becomes known. Being "left out" only enhances a growing sense of not being important to the family.
3. When you see children who remind you of your child, point them out to the siblings and explain the grief spasm it has caused. Mysterious behavior enhances the sibling's fear of being left out.
4. Ask the siblings to be with you occasionally as you grieve. If you always grieve in private, the emotional distance between you will widen.
5. Talk with siblings both about pleasant memories and unpleasant memories of the dead child. This prevents pedestal placing.
6. Don't tell siblings to "be strong" for someone else. That is too great a burden to carry.
7. Understand that it may be easier for siblings to talk to friends, or another trusted adult, than to parents. They desperately do not want to add to their parents' devastation so may seek counsel and understanding elsewhere.
8. Remember that you can't change the past. But you can face the present and guide the future. Your family will forever be changed--it does not always have to remain devastated.

- Janice Lord, TCF/Anne Arundel County, MD

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

WHILE YOU'RE WALKING

While you're walking today, will you keep an eye out for my brother?

He's tall with dark brown hair and looks a lot like our mother.

His eyes are filled with loneliness.

You will find tears upon his face.

His heart was cold and empty; he could be anyone.

If you should see a man who looks like he's been crying,

Please just stop and say to him,

"Mister, don't stop trying.

Try to get over the mountains, to reach the other side.

You'll find with each step you take,
you'll be building up your pride."

Don't ever say to a crying man,

"Cheer up, your life is just starting."

• When all along everyone knows;

Divorce - his life is not parting?

He loved his children, he loved his wife.

How can we say, "Start a new life." ?

He has left us now, filled with grief and much sorrow.

He couldn't see beyond his heart, not even for tomorrow.

Tomorrow will be better they say.

Time will be the test.

You can stop looking for my brother now,

you see, he's been laid to rest.

God bless his heart, for it was broke.

Suicide's the word I spoke.

~ Brenda DeLarger, TCF/St. Clair Shores, MI

I AM SO SAD

I am so sad, so very, very sad.

My brother died, died, died

When I was tiny, tiny, tiny.

Now I'm older, older older.

And he's still my older brother.

~ Leah Kaminsky, TCF/Miami FL

The Flight of the Sparrow

In the vast field, I spot a sparrow. It is floating overhead, with its wings slowly moving up and down like a leaf swaying in the breeze. It is unusually quiet almost as if all the life has gone, but if you lay down and stretch out on the carpeted desert, you can hear the frogs croaking and the insects buzzing. The mice pattering and the snakes slithering.

I have drifted away from reality, I can see myself standing in a glittering palace filled with animals each making their own and unique sound.

Every direction I turned, there is a habitat for different animals. Desert, ocean, meadow, swamp, river, creek, mountain, rain-forest, forest, ice, trees.

I am awakened by the sound of a sparrow. It seems as though calling to someone, but it is only known to the spirits of the meadow.

I was surprised to see a cloud of sparrows soaring through the sky. Their wings flapping wildly at their sides.

I stared up in bewilderment at the angels of the meadow, all dancing through the sky.

I wanted to call out to one of them, ask them to take me with them on their extraordinary adventure. Over many meadows, oceans, deserts. How at that moment I wish I could fly!

Then, one came swooping low, too low, It seemed to be motioning to me to come and ride on its back.

I stood motionless, not knowing what to do. It didn't seem to want to waste any time. It glided through the air closer, closer...

And before I knew it, I was gliding up above the clouds,

on the back of a sparrow. All around me was blue, a cool breeze rippled through my hair. I was free! I had a new freedom.

When I had gotten over my sensation, we were in a glittering palace filled with animals, each making their own and unique sound...

Author Unknown, TCF/Atlanta, GA Summer 2006 Newsletter

SHARED THOUGHTS ON HEALING

Healing is the one gift all bereaved parents & siblings are searching for. Because our pain is so all consuming and overwhelming, it makes us feel that it would be impossible to laugh or be happy again. We and all those around us want the impossible, which is to return to the way we were before the death of our child or sibling.

The shock of our loss usually insulates us, which helps us to get through those first few weeks of grief, but unfortunately that is about as long as some of our friends and family will hang in there with us. We are grieving for our child or sibling, but most friend's primary grief is for us and the pain we are going through, their tolerance for our extended grief wears thin. They want us to hurry and feel better so that their pain will go away.

About this time even we ask ourselves, "when will I feel better?" I can remember, after Doug's death, of wondering if the pain would ever ease. Life seemed so pointless and without hope. Just to survive a day seemed so difficult and demanded every ounce of strength I had.

Gradually, (and never as soon as we would like it to come), we do feel a glimmer of hope for some small interest in life again. No matter how small our accomplishment, we need to recognize this as healing. Little by little our empty feelings diminish, even though they are not gone. Since our healing time is proportionate to our loss, the road is very long and hard.

We at Compassionate Friends, have traveled the road. We never want to forget our loved ones. Our child or sibling died, but the love lives on, and whatever we were to one another, we still are. Healing is not forgetting, it's remembering without pain.

Our deep pain blocks our objectivity, but someday this agony (and the love for our child or sibling) will bring us new meanings about life. We have to choose our own path for peace and healing.

During your grief, if you feel more compassionate toward another's loss, refine your priorities, are less judgmental, want to ease someone's pain, or can remember your loved one without intense pain. You are healing!

Come share, we need one another to get to the other side of grief.

God Bless, Marie Hofmocker, TCF/Valley Forge, PA

Love is Immortal

Many of us will resent the lengthening of time between our child's life and our own present. Others may welcome the increasing distance in the hope that time itself will be a balm to pain. Yet, all of us perceive, beyond all the hype and expectations, that new years and seasons are merely calendar events.

Whatever problems we have had in the past will follow us into the present. There is no inner demarcation with hurting behind and joy ahead.

Each of us has the same opportunities now as we had before. We can permit time to simply pass, or we can work to mold its passage into constructive growth.

In the deaths of our children we have discovered with certainty that we lack the means to control the most cherished elements of our lives. But we also know that within each of us is the potential to rise above the debilitating anguish we have experienced.

Time continues to move forward and most of us have been too damaged to even play the games of resolutions and dance the rites of spring. We are beyond the futility of such exercises. But, let us each confront this moment and time with an inward commitment to recovery, to living the hours which comprise our existence with the fullness and love of which we are capable.

Hurting will ultimately lessen. Pain will slowly become more bearable. Fears and guilt will gradually pass away. But love, that inner dance of the heart which leaps to our child's name or the memory of an especially close experience that bears only the mantle of endless joy, will not pass away. All else, fame, fortune, distress and dismay, wealth and power, even ourselves, will at last be done. But love...Love is immortal... May the immortality of love grow secure and healthy again within each of us.

~ Don Hackett, Plymouth, MA, from ALIVE ALONE

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: _____

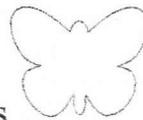
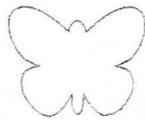
Child's Name: _____ Relationship: _____

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.

The Robin's Song

It's spring once again. Our part of the world is turning back towards the sun; trees are leafing out; wildflowers are blooming. Robins are again singing to one another. And, I believe, also singing to those who are grieving.

Before my daughter Lori died in the summer of 1991, I was under the misperception that only the English robin had a glorious song. That smaller, red-breasted scalawag of a bird delights all who hear it, and I had felt that we in the United States had been short-changed when they'd misnamed its larger, boring, American cousin the same sweet name. All I'd ever heard our robins do was cheep!

Then one spring day in the year after Lori died, during one of the darkest times of my grief, my ears and heart flew open with surprise at a song I heard outside my window. I distinctly heard, in the midst of my pain, a bird singing loudly and clearly, "Cheer up! Cheer up! Cheerio! . . . Cheer up! Cheer up! Cheerio!" I went outside to see what marvelous bird might have been sent to sing to me. I could barely see the bird at the top of the neighbor's poplar tree, so, while hoping this exotic, magical bird wouldn't fly away while I was gone, I went to find our binoculars.

Rushing back, I could hear the bird from each room in the house. After adjusting the binoculars, I was truly amazed to see one of our "boring" American robins come clearly into view! As he continued singing clear as day, "Cheer up! Cheer up! Cheerio!" I marveled at this special message and wondered if my robin was the only one who sang these words. So I looked it up in my *Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Birds* and found that my robin was not an anomaly, but that robins are considered the true harbinger of spring, singing "Cheer-up, cheer-up, cheerily."

I stood there that day filled with wonder. I wasn't hearing things; there it was in the bird book: "Cheer-up, cheer-up, cheerily." I thought to myself, "Cheerily . . . No, that isn't what I hear." We had lived in England for a year and our family, especially Lori, who loved to put on an English accent, often said "Cheerio!" to one another when we meant, "Goodbye" or "See you later!" There was no doubt in my mind as I stood there listening. It WAS cheerio. Lori could have found no more perfect way to try to cheer me up AND say "hello"!

Nine springs have passed since then, and although I will always deeply miss Lori's physical presence in my life, those darkest of times are thankfully now mostly in the past. It is spring once again and as I hear the robin singing so hopefully in the highest branches, it takes me back to that first spring song, and I smile, remembering. And I think of all those who are now in the darkest depths of their own grief and pray they too will hear this lovely song.

Genesse Bourdeau Gentry, TCF/San Francisco, CA
Stars in the Deepest Night - After the Death of a Child

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
 OF THE F-M AREA
 PO BOX 10686
 FARGO ND 58106

NON-PROFIT
 U.S. POSTAGE PAID
 PERMIT #1625
 FARGO, ND

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



**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 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.