



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

Volume 27 Number 6

Fargo ND/Moorhead MN

June 2010

PLEASE NOTE OUR MAILING ADDRESS ON THE BACK PAGE
REGULAR MEETING: 7:30 P.M. SECOND THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH

This month's meeting is on June 10th

Next month's meeting is on July 8th

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH - 127 2ND AVE E - WEST FARGO, ND

Please enter on the West side (Elevator entrance). Our meeting is in the Fellowship Hall - lower level, west side.

MEETING SUBJECT: Balloon Launch - Balloons will be provided, or bring a balloon of your own that has special meaning to you and your child.

DATES TO REMEMBER:

July 2-4, 2010 - National Conference in Arlington, Virginia

August 14th, 2010 - Fargo Chapter's 4th Annual WALK TO REMEMBER

If you have topic ideas for future meetings, please let us know.

The Compassionate Friends National Office, P.O. Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696

Phone number: 877-969-0010 - E-mail: nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org - Web Site: www.compassionatefriends.org

Website for the Fargo/Moorhead Chapter - www.tcffargomoorhead.org

If you have any pictures, stories, or poems of your child/grandchild/sibling that you would like to share on our website, please submit them to Sheryl Cvijanovich at sherylcv13@msn.com."

Help us save money and paper.....

To receive the newsletters via email in a pdf format, please send an email to the newsletter editor, Nancy Teeuwen at FMTCFNLTR@LIVE.COM. Please be sure to include your name in the email. Also add this email address to your contacts, so when the newsletter is sent to you, it does not go to your junk mail.

*****JUNE LOVE GIFTS*****

Alice Cumber in memory her son, Gary Cumber 11/1949 - 5/2009

Jamie, Sheri & Mandy Thoemke in memory of their son/brother, Tyler James Thoemke 11/1991 - 6/2003

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

For information on other chapters: TCF National Office.....877-969-0010

When Fathers Weep at Graves

I see them weep
the fathers at the stones
taking off the brave armor
forced to wear in the work place
clearing away the debris
with gentle fingers
inhaling the sorrow
diminished by anguish
their hearts desiring
what they cannot have--
to walk hand in hand
with children no longer held--
to all the fathers who leave a part
of their hearts at the stones
may breezes underneath trees of time
ease their pain
as they receive healing tears
...the gift the children give.
~ Alice J. Wisler, for David, in memory of our son Daniel

Missing You

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

Dad

by Scott McFarlane ~ 9/65 to 1/96
I've watched his eyes grow tired, Liquid full with pain
from having to put dreams aside.
I recall leathery hands, large and warm as they
covered mine. I now realize caring that hid behind a
stone face, and hopes that patiently waited as I
searched for my own space.
I still hurt from times I couldn't succeed, I beg for
more time to show him the respect he needs. I see
his eyes, they still hold their light and I
Want him to wish me a million more good nights.

The Grief Of A Parent Who Has Lost An Infant

To experience the loss of an infant is to grieve for what never was. After all the months of anticipation and preparation, the actual birth of a child brings the feeling of hope and fulfillment. Should that child be stillborn, or die hours, days or even months later, the unrealized dreams become a source of pain for the parents. No parent expects to outlive his child; the death of an infant is often the loss of a child unknown even to the parents. The expected stages of grief (guilt, disbelief, anger, etc.) can have new directions for the parents who have lost an infant.

1. Shame and guilt. Especially if the infant was stillborn or had a birth defect, the mother may feel she has failed as a woman. "Other women have live, normal babies, why can't I?" Should an infant die months after birth, parents find it hard to resolve feelings that it was their fault.

2. No memories. Parents may only have "souvenirs of an occasion" (birth certificate, ID bracelet) by which to remember their child. If the infant is older, they may have pictures and a few belongings, but they still feel they hadn't really gotten to know their child.

3. Loneliness in grief. It is hard for friends and relatives to share your grief for a child they never knew. If the child is a newborn they may give the impression that you are grieving unnecessarily over a non-person. They hope that you can "forget this baby" and "have another one."

4. Neglected father. Too often the sympathies of professionals and friends are directed mainly to the mother. It is important to remember that the father had made plans for this baby too.

5. Mothers vs. fathers. Since the mother has bonded with her child all during pregnancy, her grief may be much deeper than the father who only came to know this child after birth. It may be difficult for a father to understand why his wife's grief is so profound and so prolonged.

~ Claire McGauhey and Sue Shelley
TCF/St. Louis, Missouri

Graduation Time

It's June and graduation time again. Your child would have been among those wearing the cap and gown, walking down the aisle to the ever stirring "Pomp and Circumstance", Now there is a vacant spot in the line. Should you attend? Can you stand the pain? Will people think you are strange?

As always you must follow your heart. So, go if you'd like to and don't hide your tears. It's quite all right to miss your own child while celebrating the achievements of others.

Just remember: That your instincts are the most important ones; that no one else can make this decision for you, and that it doesn't really matter what other people think. It was your child who died. This is your pain and you have the right to feel it and deal with it in your own way – and may a bit more healing take place in the doing.

~ Peggy Gibson, TCF/Nashville, TN



SIBLING PAGE

Get Well Soon Poem

I know our loss is very great
but I'm sure many people can
relate
I know its hard to say good-bye
don't hold back your tears! It's ok
to cry
Just hold my hand and we will
stand up high
We will gather strength from one
another
hugging and holding each other
we will find each other and
together we will be
once again, a family

~ Alyssa Flora, age 13

In memory of her brother Bryson, age 9

TO MY SISTER

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

I Carried Him

I went into the school.
I felt cold, a feeling of death in the air.
My body shook, my knees gave way.
I stumbled to his locker.
The halls were empty.
I looked at the locker.
Took too many tries to open it.
In front of me were his books, jackets, and papers.
As I cleaned out his locker, tears came.
Never felt so alone.
Gathered his stuff in my arms.
Tears covered my face.
Slowly walked down the hall.
A feeling-
I felt him.
He was in my arms.
It felt like I was carrying his body.
I cried, many tears filled my eyes.
Thoughts entered my mind -
He was no more.
~ Donald Freeman, TCF/Brunswick, ME

Everything is a First

Every thing is a first. Many moments must be faced.
There are the first holidays, the first anniversary, and the
first birthday. Thoughts about my brother Dave will
always be with us. It's never more than a sentence away
from me....NEVER!

The ordinary cannot be ordinary. A certain phrase, a
look, or an article of clothing can trigger thoughts and
emotions. The joy of my senior year in college was
interrupted by sad reality.

Forget? How is this possible? The days and months
following my brother's death were filled with grief.
Flowers and food were everywhere – love and concern
were translated into strength that kept me moving one step
at a time. People don't know what to say – nothing is
NORMAL.

Tragedy has brought a seriousness to my life. Thoughts
about the meaning of life and the important keep
circulating in my mind. I think about my own funeral now.
When will it be: tomorrow, next week, next year, before or
after my parents? There are good days and bad days. I'm
learning to deal with all of this.

People ask me "How are you"? Here is my answer. "I am
mad Dave died at age 17. I am angry that my parents have
to go through this. I am confused about my role in the
family. I am jealous of other families. I am sad. I am
fearful about the future. I hope things will get better. I am
courageous. I think about my brother every day. I will be
STRONG."

~ Lisa Anne Jones, TCF Avoca, PA

"A Completed Journey"

We're all searching for the one moment, That one
sparkling place in time
That answers our questions.
Change is in the wind
Confidence is upon the sand
I realize as I stare out at the ocean
This is my moment
I embrace it, take it in
And lose myself in the infinity of Utopia.
I've found the answers
Now I am reborn, perfect
A child of the sand, wind, water and stars
Never look back
Never to return.
~ Jed Hutcheson - For my brother Jacob

When someone you love becomes a memory, the
memory becomes a treasure.

~Author Unknown

The Father's Grief

By David Pellegrin
TCF/Honolulu, HI

At my second meeting of The Compassionate Friends about three years ago, one of the mothers said how nice it was to see a man attending, since "men grieve differently from women."

Her remark was no doubt meant to help put me at ease. I hadn't said a thing so far, and might have been intimidating in my silence. But it caught me off guard. What I was feeling after George's death was so absolute, so awful, how could it possibly come with any "differences"? Would one grieve differently for an infant than for an adolescent? For a son than for a daughter? Surely, grief was absolute for both mothers and fathers.

Over time I came to acknowledge the differences the well-meaning mother had in mind:

- * Neither I nor the other men who occasionally attended talked much; the women talked freely.
- * I sensed I was better at compartmentalizing my grief than the mothers, better at keeping a lid on it socially and at work.
- * My male friends seemed less comfortable talking about George, bringing up his name or even looking at his pictures than female friends.
- * I came to see how intensely I felt I had let my son down as his protector, the father's primary role.

Shortly after becoming editor of my chapter newsletter, I sent a copy to my friend Jack Knebel in California. Jack and his wife, Linda, had been involved with a Compassionate Friends chapter after the death of their daughter, Hollis. He replied, "It's good to see that a man is taking an active role in the group." Then he went on to write movingly about those male-female grieving differences. The rest of his letter, which touched me deeply, follows:

... Several years after Hollis died, Linda and I were being trained by Compassionate Friends to be 'buddies' for newly bereaved parents. One of the exercises was to list all the unhelpful things that others had said in trying to comfort us, so that we wouldn't make the same mistakes. The other trainees, all women, made long lists, and did it with enthusiasm. When the lists were read aloud, they nodded knowingly at every entry and eventually hooted and howled with derision at the worst (some of which were pretty bad). When it came my turn, I held up an empty page and said:

"People may have said such things to me. I just don't recall.

"What I do remember is that people tried to tell me how sad they were for us. I remember being told how much they loved Hollis and how much they cared about us. I remember one of my partners hugging me in the halls of my very stiff and proper law firm. I remember men who had never told me anything more personal than their reactions to a Giants' loss crying at our loss and their fears.

"You women are used to talking to each other about your emotions and about personal things. I wasn't and my friends weren't either. So the fact that we could do so was a great gift, and it wasn't marred in the slightest by someone's choice of words."

Now, the shell has been broken and I find it easier to talk about my emotions, my hopes and fears, about those things that really are important. And that for me was one of Hollis' greatest gifts.

I know that even after George's death, he is a major part of your life. My guess is that you're becoming more open to the gifts that he and those who care about you are able to give.

Yours, with compassion and friendship,

Jack

(Winter 1996)

Reprint policy: Proper attribution must be given to the author and *We Need Not Walk Alone*, the national magazine of The Compassionate Friends. Copyright 1996

The best way to honor the dead is to love the living,
...for if our lives stop when their life stops, death has killed twice.

Reverend William A. Ritter, Bereaved father, Key Note Speaker, TCF 2006 Conference, Michigan

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

MISSION STATEMENT:
The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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

FARGO-MOORHEAD COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS BOARD

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN THE BOARD AT ANY TIME!

Chapter Leader	John Milligan.....701-282-4794	Secretary-Treasurer	Sheryl Cvijanovich.....701-235-8158
Librarian		Initial Contact	Kylene Milligan701-282-4794
Newsletter Editor	Nancy Teeuwen.....701-730-0805	Newsletter Database	Mike Cvijanovich.....701-235-8158
Newsletter Printing	Joyce at Olivet Lutheran Church	Mailing Committee	Contact Us to Join

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

TELEPHONE FRIENDS

HAVING A BAD DAY OR NIGHT? Feel free to call and talk to any of the following:

Marc & Ann Engelbrektson (son, 22 months - illness)	701-293-5681
John Milligan (son, 25 - car accident).....	701-282-4794
Duane Skramstad (daughter, 20 - car accident; son, 2 - drowning)	701-437-2507
Cheri Eraker (son, 23 - accident)	701-451-0045
Carol Nelson (son , 13 - leukemia)	218-346-3854
Nancy Teeuwen (daughter, 15 hours - illness).....	701-730-0805

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 _____