



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

Volume 28 Number 6

Fargo ND/Moorhead MN

June 2011

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 9<sup>th</sup>

Next month's meeting is on July 21<sup>st</sup> due to National Conference

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 15-17, 2011 - 34th National Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota

August 13, 2011 - Fargo Chapter's 5th 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](mailto:nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org) - Web Site: [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

Website for the Fargo/Moorhead Chapter - [www.tcffargomoorhead.org](http://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 [sherylc13@msn.com](mailto:sherylc13@msn.com) or mail them to the PO box listed on the back of the Newsletter. Anything sent to the PO Box will be scanned for the website and returned.

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 [FMTCFNWLTR@LIVE.COM](mailto:FMTCFNWLTR@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\*\*\*\*\*

Neil & Kathleen Prochnow in memory of their son, Reed Joel Prochnow 11/1975 - 5/1999

Lyle & Tammy Helgeson in memory of their son, Jared Helgeson 6/1983 - 5/2010

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.

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**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

## A Father Speaks

Driving to work with the radio on, I sit next to a fellow co-worker and friend in the passenger seat. It's early in the morning, and the conversation is light. A song reminds me of Jesse, my deceased son, so I tell a story about Jesse. A cloud of silence and dread fills the car. My friend shifts his position, and I can feel how uncomfortable he is. I swallow the memories of Jesse and switch the conversation to last night's ball game. Sound familiar? It's painful to your friends to hear about your deceased child, and it's painful for you to silence your memories, too.

Certain studies claim that women are social beings and are more able to communicate their emotions than are men. The same studies state that men are mostly competitive and tend to hide their negative emotions, such as sadness or grief, especially from other men. Does that mean that men have less need to deal with their emotions? I don't think so. From personal experiences and experiences of other men whom I have known, grief is one emotion that *demand*s relief. Without grief recovery, grief can become a destructive force that at some point can consume you—your physical as well as your mental and spiritual health.

Bereavement support groups remind us that we need not walk alone. From a man's viewpoint, I think our support group's monthly gatherings offer an important avenue for men to work through the grief recovery process. Other doors are often shut to men who need to discuss their anger, guilt, sadness, and even happy memories concerning their deceased children. Let's talk with and listen to each other.

*Jim Hobbs, Bereaved Parents of North Texas*

## Helping a Father through Father's Day

Father's Day has become a traditional holiday celebrated by many with gifts, cards, family gatherings, and perhaps even a special dinner out just for daddy. Stores begin advertising for Father's Day weeks in advance of the actual holiday. The scenes in advertisements and cards always depict a loving father with a child snuggled close to that special man called daddy.

Many fathers, however, have experienced the devastation of losing a child, and there seems to be an almost nonexistent recognition of the fact that fathers suffer from feelings of lost dreams, loneliness, failure, and loss of identity when a child has died. Very rarely are comments of support made to the father in a family when a child has died. For some reason, our society seems to be more in tune to the feelings of the pain a mother experiences during child loss. Fathers are somehow expected to be stronger emotionally, and they are expected to heal much sooner.

What can be done to show support on Father's Day to a father who has experienced the deep pain of losing a child? Probably the most appreciated gesture of support would be to acknowledge the fact that the father is still a father even though his child is no longer living on this earth. Refer to him as a father, and express your genuine sorrow for his loss. Fathers who have lost a child as early as miscarriage should certainly be included among the group of grieving fathers. Often, fathers of miscarried babies are never given any recognition of being a father.

Finding a Father's Day card specifically for fathers who have lost a child can be next to impossible. If you cannot find a card with an appropriate verse, choose a blank card and write your own message from the heart. "Sharing in your sorrow this Father's Day" or "Blessings to you this Father's Day as God watches over your heavenly angel" will show a tremendous amount of compassion and support to a father who is grieving the loss of a child on Father's Day.

Recognize the fact that fathers go through emotional upheavals during the grief of child loss. Fathers grieve differently than mothers, so they might not want a lot of special treatment on Father's Day. Men are generally less apt to talk about their feelings of hurt and loss than women, but those feelings are still there and need to be recognized. Father's Day without a child can be just as emotionally heartbreaking for a father as Mother's Day is for a mother without her child. We need to be sensitive to the needs of fathers, too!

Special holidays stir up many different emotions for fathers, and Father's Day is a particularly difficult holiday to go through following the loss of a child. With help and support from family and friends, a father can move forward in his grief. By letting a father know that he has not been forgotten on Father's Day, you will validate his identity as a father, and you will allow him the special privilege of once again being called that most cherished name of all—daddy.

Finally, find some way to validate the fact that a father is still a father even though his child is not living. Fathers are by nature "fixers" and the loss of a child is one loss that cannot be fixed. This fact is often very hard for a man to accept. By giving a card and a personal word on Father's Day, you will help validate to the father that he is still honored among that special group of men called fathers on Father's Day. Validation of fatherhood on Father's Day is one more step forward in this process we call grief.

Clara Hinton | Jun 08, 2003-Brief Encounters Online Newsletter-www.briefencounters.org

When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives meant the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is a friend who cares." ~ *Henri Nouwen*

## SIBLING PAGE

### A Letter to My Sister:

Dear Jenny,

I feel so mixed up. I don't know what to think. Sometimes I'm really cross with you for dying and leaving me. I wanted to go on being your big sister. Sometimes I feel guilty too. I wasn't there with you when you died. Maybe I could have done something to save you.

Sometimes I just want to scream and scream to get the pain out. I cry too but mostly on my own. When I'm alone I think about you and imagine us having a coke, talking and laughing together like we used to. Then I remember so many happy memories of silly things we did together. Remember that wee "Jack in the Box" I gave you when you were little and how surprised you were when he jumped out?

Then sometimes right in the middle of a good memory when I'm feeling good...CLICK! I remember that you are not here anymore, that you're dead, yes DEAD, and it is AWFUL, TERRIBLE and my insides ache.

Some days I feel normal, happy and hardly think of you; other days I can't get you out of my head and it is so hard to go on without you. I want to have more days when I can remember you and smile with no pain. Will that happen? I hope so. Anyway, that's for me to find out.

No matter what, Jenny, remember that I love you and always will.

Your big sister,  
Louise (16)

Lovingly taken from Treetops, Issue No 4  
Sibbs, TCF UK, Autumn Issue 2001

### REMINISCING

I thought about you today  
As I bade farewell for school.  
I thought about you today  
When I heard a certain song.  
I thought about you today  
As the teacher passed the test.  
I thought about you today  
When the kids jumped in the leaves.  
I thought about you today  
As a stranger passed my way.  
I thought about you today  
When I got drenched in the rain.  
I thought about you today  
As I sat in church and prayed.  
I thought about you today  
When I embraced an old friend.  
I thought about you today  
As the day turned into night.  
I will think of you again  
When I close my eyes and dream.

~ Lori Phillips, TCF/Scranton, PA

### It's the Music that Bonds the Souls

The room you once lived in,  
Doesn't look the same. The people who  
used to call you, Never mention your name.

The car you used to drive,  
They may not make them anymore; And  
all the things you once treasured, Are  
boxed behind closet doors.

The clothes you set the trends by,  
Are surely out of date.  
The people you owed money to,  
Have wiped away the slate.

Things have changed and changed again  
since you went away,  
But some things have  
remained the same  
Each and every day ...

Like this aching in my heart,  
A scar that just won't heal,  
Or the way a special song,  
Can change the way I feel.

Brother, you must know that the music  
bonds us and will keep us close; Because  
secretly I know deep in my heart; It's  
the music you miss the most.

So let the world keep on turning,  
And time can take its toll.  
For as long as the music keeps playing  
You'll be alive and dancing in my soul

~ Stacie Gilliam, TCF/N. Oklahoma City, OK

### WHEN MY SIBLING DIED I FELT:

- that a part of me died and that I was all alone  
very angry at everything  
my childhood had died, too  
angry and sad that my family life as I had known it was over  
terrified that I would lose someone else that I loved  
cheated that I didn't have a brother  
angry at how it happened  
alone  
afraid to get close and let anyone in  
terrible  
I wanted to cry  
I felt angry, depressed, confused, drained, worried  
why did it happen to him and not some one else  
I wanted him back

~ Author Unknown

**Dear Mr. Hallmark**  
(A Father's Day Message)

It's me again from Heaven  
Where clearly everything is seen,  
And so it just occurred to me,  
It's nearly June fifteen.  
I know we just discussed  
A card for Mom this year,  
And how no cards there were  
For a child like me to share.  
And now I found no card again  
For me to reach down from above  
To thank my Dad who gave me life  
And really needs my love.  
He's still the father I call Dad,  
No matter where my soul resides;  
He tries so hard to comfort Mom,  
And so his tears he hides.  
I need some way to tell him  
He can be sad and cry with Mother—  
It's good for him to cry—at times,  
We all cry for each other.  
Yes, I see Dad as he talks to me,  
To my picture in his wallet—  
You see I really need a way  
To let him know I got it!  
Some say that Mom and Dad,  
They grieve in different ways,  
And so it looks from the outside,  
But I see through that worldly haze.  
My Dad he cries while in the car,  
The shower washes all those tears;  
He thinks, "A better Dad I could've been  
Than I was throughout those years."  
And so you see, dear Hallmark man,  
I need your help to let him know  
Just what a wonderful Dad he's been—  
He's given all he can bestow.  
My dad, my friend, the one with whom  
I could walk and talk and play—  
He needs to be remembered too,  
Like other fathers on Father's Day.  
Please help me find that special way  
To tell him all to me he's been—  
That by his side each day I'll stay  
Until, one day we meet again.

**June is Graduation Month!**

Many of you would have had a child to "march down the aisle" had they lived. This will be a difficult time for you and the way you handle this is important for your healing. Should I go to the graduation ceremonies? Will everyone think I'm crazy if I do? Can I handle it emotionally? Many parents have found that participation in graduation ceremonies can be helpful. Don't be too concerned about what others will think. Do what you feel is needed for you. And don't be afraid of tears. Remember, our children HAVE graduated to a much better life than we can know or comprehend.

~ TCF/Jackson, MS

**Summer Thoughts**

Summer is a time when things naturally slow down, a time when many are waiting for the orderly routine of their lives to begin again. For those of us in grief whose lives are already in limbo, it can seem endless if we let it. Seeing children, babies, and teenagers is not easy for us, and we see them everywhere from shopping centers to beaches. Everyone is out living, loving, enjoying carefree activities with their children, and we want to scream, it's not fair! I was sitting on my patio one evening at dusk recently listening to the shouts of children playing and I was crying as I remembered the sounds that my child used to make. I became very depressed as I thought what a long summer this was going to be.

In my reverie, I was reminded of a recent comment that I had heard at a TCF meeting: My child was such a loving, giving person. He would not want me to waste my life being bitter. I also remembered a good friend telling me to count my blessings and naming all the things I had to be grateful for. I was furious at the time. Nothing that I had to be grateful for could compensate for the fact that my child was dead.

Now, sitting in the twilight of this early summer evening, I began to see things differently. I was determined that this summer would not be an eternity; I would not let it be. I decided first of all to stay busy. I know I can find plenty to do if I only take the time to look. I am also going to try to enjoy the simple things that used to give me so much pleasure, like working in my garden, and flowers. I then decided to try to be truly grateful for the blessings that I have, like my husband, my surviving children, my job, friends, etc.

It has been almost five years for me, and I know that last year this would not have worked. Of course, I still have times of sadness. I know I always will, but I have decided that in the process of grieving, we close so many doors that the only way to recovery is to reopen them gradually at our own pace.

I know I will never be the same person I was before the death of my child but I hope eventually in some ways I will be a better person because suffering can be beneficial if we learn and grow through it. A year ago I didn't feel this way, and I know I still have a long way to go, but in the meantime, I know the greatest tribute to my child will be to enjoy this summer as he would have done.

~ Libby Gonzalez, TCF/Huntsville, AL

**A Gift for Fathers on Father's Day**

You have memories – don't crowd them out  
Think about them – Treasure them  
And let them bring you solace  
and a measure of joy.

~ TCF/Louisville, KY

With what a deep devotedness of woe  
I wept thy absence - o'er and o'er again  
Thinking of thee, still thee, till thought grew pain,  
And memory, like a drop that, night and day,  
Falls cold and ceaseless, wore my heart away!

~ Thomas Moore

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS  
 OF THE F-M AREA  
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**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**

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

**FARGO-MOORHEAD COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS BOARD**

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN THE BOARD AT ANY TIME!

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

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

**TELEPHONE FRIENDS**

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

- John Milligan (son, 25 - car accident).....701-282-4794
- Duane Skramstad (daughter, 20 - car accident; son, 2 - drowning) .....701-437-2507
- 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
- Mark & Hella Helfter (miscarriage & son, 35 - accident).....701-235-9622

Love gifts must be received by the 15<sup>th</sup> 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 \_\_\_\_\_