



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

FARGO/MOORHEAD AREA CHAPTER

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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F-M Area Chapter
P.O. Box 10686
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www.tcffargomoorhead.org
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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
June 14th
July 12th

Dates to Remember in 2012
July 20-22 in Costa Mesa, CA - 35th TCF/USA Natl Conference; 5th International Gathering
July 28, 2012 - Fargo Chapter's 6th Annual WALK TO REMEMBER

If you have any pictures, stories, or poems of your child, grandchild or sibling that you would like to share on our website, please submit them to Sheryl Cvijanovich at SHERYLCV13@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.

LOVE GIFTS
Neil & Kathleen Prochnow in memory of their son, Joel Reed Prochnow
Jamie, Sheri & Mandy Thoemke in memory of their son/brother, Tyler James Thoemke
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.

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

OUR CREDO

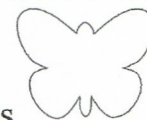
We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope. The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain, just as your hope becomes my hope. 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



Butterfly Decals



The F-M Chapter has recently purchased a trailer, in order to transport materials to our chapter activities. We are selling butterfly decals, which will be placed on the trailer. The butterflies are 4 x 6 and available in five colors: yellow, pink, red, blue and green.

Each butterfly will contain the first and last name of a child.

If you wish to purchase a butterfly in the memory of a child, please send your name, the name of the child, butterfly color, and a check payable to TCF of Fargo-Moorhead, P.O. Box 10686, Fargo, ND 58106.

Butterflies are \$25 each, 3 for \$65 or 4 for \$80. If you wish to purchase more than 4 butterflies, please contact our chapter leader, John Milligan.

Perhaps they are not the stars, but rather openings in Heaven where the love of our lost ones pours through and shines down upon us to let us know they are happy. ~Author Unknown

There's No Law Against Grieving--Even for Men

Two years have now passed but I still remember that day like it was yesterday.

If you are reading this, then you have probably lived that day, too. It may have been slightly different—but still the same.

Even though there was a bunch of relatives and friends in the waiting room with me, it was like I was completely alone. I had been called to the hospital less than an hour before. There had been a car accident. My wife was injured but not in danger. But no one would tell me anything about my 8 year-old Stephanie or 5 year-old Stephen who were riding in the car with her.

I had been led to a waiting room, hoping for word from the emergency room doctor. The minutes seemed like hours. Then the doctor came in. Stephanie was in critical condition and would be flown to Children's Hospital. But they were unable to revive my precious Stephen.

The words echoed over and over in my brain.

"Your son has died." The shock and the grief struck me at the same time. I had expected them to come in and tell me the kids were injured but would be just fine thanks to the excellent efforts of everyone involved. After all, that's the way it always happens on "Rescue 911".

But that wasn't the way it happened this time!

I only half remember being led back to my wife where I broke the news to her.

A moment later when I had been led into the corridor, someone asked me if I wanted to see my son. I don't even remember my response—just walking down the hallway, a nurse on each side holding my arms. All I could take were little half steps. My legs had no strength. Through the tears I could see all the nurses and hospital personnel stop everything they were doing and stare at us. Apparently they hadn't seen a grieving father before.

Finally we reached the emergency room at the end of what seemed like the longest corridor in the world. The door swung open and I spotted my son lying on a table at the far end of the room. I was helped to him and then left alone.

Waves of grief overcame me as I looked at Stephen's sweet face, laying there as if asleep. And the realization that I would never hear his laugh, I would never see him smile, I would never feel his kiss again.

After a few minutes a nurse came back and told me I would have to go because my daughter was being loaded into the helicopter and I should give her some words of encouragement, even though she might not be able to hear me.

I did that and I was driven to Children's Hospital where Stephanie died later that night.

The grief that I felt was so intense. The shock was incredible. This couldn't be happening. Both of my children were dead.

I remember the newspaper reporter who showed up at my house the next day. I had gone home to get some clean clothes and take a shower. On my way into the house she approached me. We sat on the porch and both cried and grieved as I related to her the story of the wonderful life I had spent with my children. This reporter never once stared at me with that critical look that I have seen from others. If translated into words, it would be "Men don't cry".

So often men are not allowed by society to grieve. They have to be strong for their wife and their remaining family. How many bereaved mothers have told me that "He holds it all in.

He never cries. He never talks about our dead child." They want me to meet their husband because maybe I can get him to understand it's okay to open up and feel grief.

I was fortunate that I grew up in a family where it was okay to let my feelings show. If I was beaten up by the school bully, my father and mother let me know it was okay to cry. When the first person I was really close to died, my grandmother, no one told me it wasn't alright to grieve.

And this upbringing stuck with me. If I'm in a store and Bette Midler's song "God is Watching Us From a Distance" (Stephen's favorite tune to sing) comes on, I've given myself permission to cry, right then and there. If I read a poem that touches me, I've given myself permission to let it all out. And if I hear about the death of another child, I've given myself permission to feel my grief all over again.

The only thing bad about men grieving is that society looks down on us because we are not "strong". After losing both my children, I really don't care what society thinks. Less than one percent of them have had a child die—and that one percent understands my feelings. The rest of them don't. And, God willing, they never will.

If you are a man and having a hard time allowing yourself to grieve, look at your inner being. Are you better because you haven't grieved? Or are you worse? Have your feelings of frustration from not grieving affected your relationship with your spouse or remaining children?

Our deceased children would, no doubt want us to accomplish something meaningful with our lives. They would want us to go on living.

Maybe it is time to grieve so that we can move on with our lives.

~ Wayne Loder, TCF/Lakes Area, MI
In Memory of his children, Stephanie and Stephen Loder

Treasured

What I love most is
Waking to the dew of
The grass upon my boots

What I love most is
Smelling the end of
The day upon
My shirt, holding
My child

What I love most is
Something I don't see
Everyday or smell or
Touch

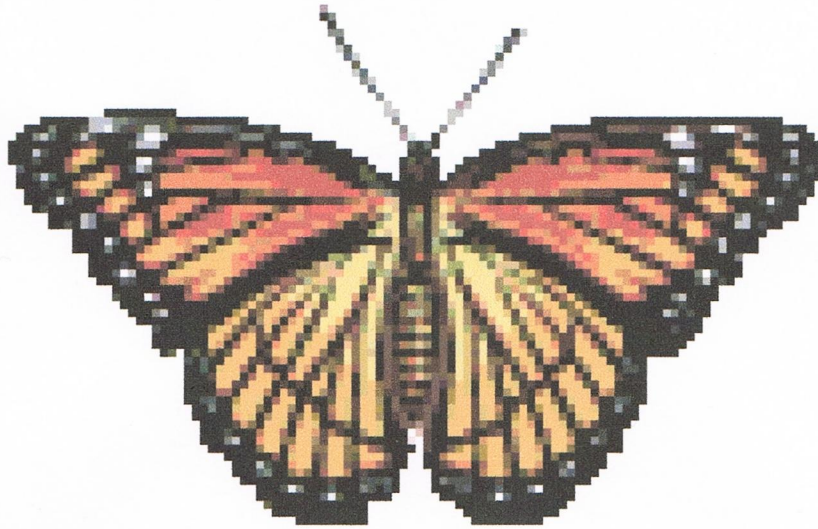
What I do love most is
The memories of those
Moments if only buried in
My dreams

~ Scott Newport, TCF/Royal Oak, MI

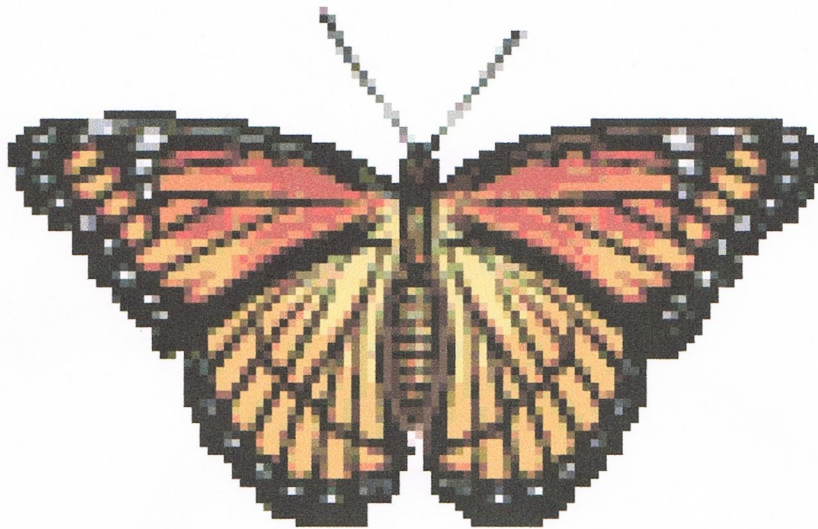
The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt within the heart.

~ Helen Keller

OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED



Birthdays and Anniversaries have been removed from the Internet version of our newsletter for security purposes



SIBLING PAGE

Monarch Butterflies



When we were children, Joe, you and I were like caterpillars. We formed ideas, learned our lessons, and wrapped our cocoons. Then, as young adults, taking our values, we emerged like butterflies set free.

Never losing faith and always remaining patient, we sought the flowers of our youth. The golden sun warmed us.

We flew side by side until you became sick with cancer.

Your soul remained strong.

Your spiritual wings glowed of the joys of Heaven. You flew away with the angels, as I prayed for the strength to watch you go.

Then, I remembered, you are a Monarch in the presence of God. My brother, Joe, you have become the most glorious butterfly of all.

~ Mary Lario, TCF/Williamsport, PA

Memories of my brother

Why is it so very hard
Accepting you are gone;
I guess the thought is unbearable
And I am not that strong.

I am too afraid to face the truth
And scared to feel the pain,
Of never seeing your sweet face
Or hearing your voice again.

Sometimes I see you in my dreams
And picture you still here, till I awaken dreadfully
To watch you disappear.

You were always happy and carefree,
And I don't understand

How you can seem so real to me,
As your grasp slips from my hand.

The sixteen years of life you had
Somehow do not compare,
To the tragic, senseless death you faced
And the cross you had to bear.

I try to think of pleasant times
And childhood memories,
But guilt and sorrow haunt my soul
And I cannot break free.

I am sorry for the times we fought
And for treating you so badly.

I am sorry for ignoring you
And wasting the time we had.

You were and are my brother still.
When you took your last breath,
A part of me went on with you
And I shall mourn your death.

~ Jennifer, TCF/Ellicott City, MD

Don't try to destroy a beautiful part of your life because remembering it hurts. As children of today and tomorrow, we are also children of the yesterday. The past still travels with us and what it has been, makes us what we are.

~ Rabbi Earl Grollman

MEMORIES OF YOUR FACE

I woke this morning
Finding everything in a haze
Wiping tears from my eyes

I saw your smiling face.
I reached out and touched you

Yet all I could feel was pain
You felt nothing

From your life within a frame.
I spoke-receiving no reply

I told you that I loved you
I asked you

Why?

I'll never have another

No one to take your place

All I have, Little Brother, are memories
And the picture of your face.

~ Lisa Walmsley, TCF/Sarasota, FL

WHEN A BROTHER OR SISTER DIES...

Sometimes you might think you have to fill that empty place left in your family. You don't have to be just like your sister or brother - we are all unique and have good points that are worthwhile.

It's okay....

to cry and feel depressed. You've lost a great deal. If the feelings get too scary or overwhelming, find a caring friend (no matter what age) to talk it out.

It's okay....

to want to copy some of your brother or sister's habits and interests, but be yourself, too.

It's okay....

to live "in the past" for awhile. It is one way to keep alive the memory of your brother or sister. However, you have a life, too, one that should be lived to the fullest.

It's okay....

to have fun and enjoy life, to laugh again.

It's okay....

to forgive yourself for the fights, arguments, and mean things that you said or did to your brother or sister.

It's okay....

to go on living.

But it is NOT okay to ease the pain and hurt-

* by using drugs or alcohol. It will take longer to accept the hurt
It only can hide the pain, not heal it.

* by acting out your frustration with reckless driving or skipping school.

* by doing things out of anger to hurt others because *you* hurt so much yourself.

* by experimenting with sex just to get close to someone.

* by protecting your parents by not letting them know what is bothering *you*.

* by being a scapegoat or bad guy so you'll appear tough. By dropping the things that once meant so much to *you*.

~ TCF/Waterville/Toledo, OH

A real friend is one who walks in
when the rest of the world walks out.
Widely attributed to Walter Winchell

TCF National Magazine *We Need Not Walk Alone* Available Free Online!

The Compassionate Friends announces that you can now receive our award-winning national magazine *We Need Not Walk Alone*®, for free online thanks to the wish of the National Organization to make it readily available to anyone seeking support after the death of a child. Previously the magazine, winner of the Apex Award for Journalistic Excellence, had been available only in print and it remains available in that form free with any patron donation or when ordered by paid subscription through TCF's online store.

We Need Not Walk Alone, for almost 14 years, has provided comfort and support to bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents as the country's premier magazine providing stories, poems, advice columns, and much more for families devastated by the death of a child. It has been referred to as "a support group in print" and is published three times a year.

To sign up for a free online subscription, go to TCF's national website at www.compassionatefriends.org and click on "Sign up for National Publications" at the top of the Home (or any inside) page. Fill out the information and when each issue of the magazine is published, the National Office will send you a special link so you can be among the first to read its great content. When you sign-up in-between issues, during the upcoming week, you will receive your own link to the current edition. It can then be read online or downloaded to your computer for personal use.

In conjunction with the change, the magazine will also accept paid advertising from organizations, products, and services that are in line with TCF's Mission Statement and Principles. For more information, write wayne@compassionatefriends.org.

At the same time as you sign up for *We Need Not Walk Alone*, you also have the opportunity to sign up to receive The Compassionate Friends monthly national e-newsletter which provides information about what is currently happening within the organization.

Register Now for 2012 TCF National Conference/International Gathering

Registration is now open for anyone wishing to attend TCF's 35th National/5th International Gathering to be held July 20-22 in Costa Mesa, California. Registration opened almost two months earlier than normal this year due to the International aspects of the event. Early discounted registration ends June 15, 2012; Pre-registration Ends June 29, 2012.

TCF conferences are known for their great entertainment and this year will be no different. We'll have all California entertainers including the Love in Motion Signing Choir; TCF favorite Alan Pedersen; and Cassidy Mueller and Chris Donohue, local favorites. **UPDATE:** Nashville's Karen Taylor-Good, author of the heartwarming "Precious Child," which she wrote for The Compassionate Friends national conference in 1998 in memory of her nephew will be joining us.

Much more is planned for the conference. For more information, visit www.compassionatefriends.org> News and Events>TCF 2012 National Conference and 5th International Gathering or call the national office at 877-969-0010 begin_of_the_skype_highlighting 877-969-0010 end_of_the_skype_highlighting. Registration can be made online or through the mail using a registration brochure being distributed to chapters and past attendees, and also available for download from the national website.

Compassionate Friends Offers Grief Related Webinar Series

The Compassionate Friends is expanding its outreach to bereaved families by offering a series of free online grief related seminars. The webinars, to be held once per month, are on various grief topics and guests are well-known experts in the field.

Webinars have included such topics as "Handling Grief Through the Holidays," "Getting 'Stuck' and 'Unstuck,'" "Caring for Your Health While Grieving," and "Coping with Guilt During Bereavement." These webinars were recorded and are available to view on demand on TCF's national website.

To reserve a seat for the next webinar (or to view the previous month's webinar), go to www.compassionatefriends.org>News & Events>Special Events>Webinars. Webinars are being archived in TCF's Webinar Library, accessible from the webinar page. .

Father's Day

Father's Day not a big holiday like Christmas or Thanksgiving, but one that holds a lot of meaning for those to whom it applies. For first-time fathers, that Sunday in June brings a feeling of joy and pride. For a long-time dad, it's a reminder of the fulfillment which children may have brought to his life. For those men who have lost a child, it can be a painful time. For those who must endure their pain in secret and in silence, either through their own desire for that approach or through society's expectations that they must be strong and controlled, it can become a horror. But we in TCF wish to acknowledge the day because the death of a child does not negate the parenthood of the dad who loved him or her. Love for one's offspring does not die when the body dies and death does not succeed in robbing us of our parental identity. We wish all bereaved fathers a day of peace. In the midst of the grief and loss, may you experience a taste of good memories and remembered love for your child.

~ Betty Roehm, TCF/Mesa County, CO

FATHER'S DAY

As this day approaches I wonder how I will react.

Am I still a father?

I will sit quietly never allowing family and friends to see how I feel.

I will miss my son, but I can't allow myself to "break".

I must remain strong and always be the "rock".

I wish I could just let someone know how much I miss my little angel.

How much I cry and how much I miss hearing "Dad I love you."

I am a father, but I wonder, will I just pretend, as usual, that it doesn't bother me?

Remember me, for I hurt, too, on this special day.

TCF/Tampa, FL

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
OF THE F-M AREA
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FARGO ND 58106

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**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS**
FARGO/MOORHEAD AREA CHAPTER
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

MISSION STATEMENT: When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

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

FARGO-MOORHEAD COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS BOARD

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN THE BOARD AT ANY TIME!

Chapter Leader	John Milligan 701-282-4794	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 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.