



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

Volume 28 Number 3

Fargo ND/Moorhead MN

March 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 March 10th
Next month's meeting is on April 14th

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.

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 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. Please be sure to include your name in the email.

*****MARCH LOVE GIFTS*****

Barb Mashek in memory of her son, Michael Mashek 5/1959 - 2/2006

John & Kylene Milligan in memory of their son, Matthew Milligan-Olson 2/1975 - 3/2000

Jim, Jody & Dana Kutter in memory of their daughter/sister, Michelle Kay Kutter 3/1989 - 9/2005

Shandra Malheim & Billy Olafson in memory of their son, Zayne William Malheim Olafson 3/2009 - 3/2009

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

DATES TO REMEMBER:

April 1-2, 2011 Regional Conference in Omaha, Nebraska

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

August 13, 2011 - Fargo Chapter's 5th Annual WALK TO REMEMBER

watch for more details in June & July newsletters.

I Don't Know Why

I don't know why.
I'll never know why.
I don't have to know why.
I don't like it.
I don't have to like it.

What I have to do is make a choice about my living.
What I do want to do is accept it and go on living.

The choice is mine.
I can go on living, valuing every moment
in a way I never did before,
or I can be destroyed by it and,
in turn, destroy others.
I thought I was immortal.

That my family and my children were also.
That tragedy happened only to others.
But I know now that life is tenuous and valuable.

So I am choosing to go on living,
making the most of the time I have,
valuing my family and friends
in a way never possible before.

From the book, *My Son, My Son*, by Iris Bolton, whose son
Mitch died by suicide.

SPRING'S TEARS

When the sun's sharp brilliance echoes in the luminescent blue
A grim, oppressive darkness stabs my aching heart anew.
Its golden glow upon my face, the warmth of winter's sun
Holds the promise of renewal when the icy months are done.
It is this vow of nature's of resurgence in the spring
That bows my head, and breaks my heart; unlocks my suffering.
For you will miss again the beauty of this time of year
The growing warmth, the sunny days when life will reappear.
For nature has no power over death that holds you still,
And though I know, I still resent spring's early daffodil.
Oh, would that I could speak to Mother Nature face to face!
To beg she work her magic on your lonely resting place.
Why can't it be YOUR rebirth when the gray, cold days are
done?

Why mightn't YOU not live again to see spring's fresh new dawn
And feel the warmth of sunshine relish in the greening earth...
To open arms, embracing life, why can't it be YOUR birth?
You were so young, your life so new when death crept in the
door,
And in my grief, beloved child, I'll ask forever more
The reason why the earth's renewed when spring comes 'round
each year
Yet in your grave you're silent still, and I condemned am here.
Remembering Tracey, always

~ Sally Migliaccio, TCF/Babylon, NY

*The mind has a dumb sense of vast loss —that is all.
It will take mind and memory months and possibly years
to gather all the details and thus learn and know the
whole extent of the loss.*

~ Mark Twain

Any Child's Death Diminishes Me

What difference does it make whether a child is stillborn
or dies after some years of life? She spoke of the lack of
memories because her child was stillborn. He commented on
the deep pain brought by those very memories which remind
one of what is lost!

When it comes to a child's death, does the type of death
matter? Is a murder worse than an accident? Suicide worse
than chronic illness? Teenage worse than the older adults?
Stillborn worse than teenage?

I've tried to be thankful that Jeanie wasn't murdered. That
she did not commit suicide. That she and those dear boys did
not linger, comatose. Or die from prolonged illness. I could
not find thankfulness though I have sought diligently for it
within my deepest being!

The death of a child, whatever the age or circumstances,
brings its own guilt and anger. Its own despair and
questioning. Any child's death diminishes the parents who
loved that child. And, for those bereaved parents, that death
is surely the worst. Their grief the most severe!

Robert F. Gloor, TCF/Tuscaloosa, AL

Someone Who'll Watch Over Me

I remember how I used to watch over you,
Tried to teach you the things you should do.
I can remember the things I would say
As I tried to guide you along the way.
But since you've gone, and our lives have changed,
It seems the roles have been rearranged.
Sometimes it feels like it used to be,
Only you're the one watching over me.
I know in my mind that you're not here;
Yet there are times when you feel so near.
I've learned if I let the love flow through,
I'll get to keep a part of you.
For though death comes — the love never goes away.
You're presence is with me every day.
For my guardian angel you now will be,
And you're the some who'll watch over me.

Carolyn Bryan, TCF/Orange Park, FL

Adjustments

Went to the field with a heart heavy as stone,
I have lost my riding partner so I just rode all alone.
But watched the group she rode with, they had fun,
It reminded me of the past and her place in the sun.
Tried to draw picture of children as I have for years,
But have lost my oldest subject to sadness and tears.
We have removed things that cause pain and grief,
And we don't go out in public, to parties for relief.
Vacations are a safe place and the same safe place,
Old friends have not been replaced with a new face.
We only have our family as our friends these days,
Death has caused lives to change in untested ways.
The future I am told will not be so dark and black,
But things are altered forever, we can never go back.

Jere Williamson, TCF/Nashville, TN

SIBLING PAGE

WHAT WAS HE REALLY LIKE?

After meeting a friend that I had not seen for quite some time and exchanging catch-up information, something wonderful happened to me. This beloved friend expressed the usual condolences over the loss of my brother but went on to post the question "What was he really like?" My eyes must have sparkled like fire. The question itself ignited an unbelievable response. Unleashing all my memories, I began immediately bursting at the seams.

Oh, he was so kind and gentle. He was so seldom angry that you remembered the exact moment when he lost his temper—because it just didn't happen that often. And he was so good at telling stories. Believe me, he could embellish a story. His left eye would wink, and he'd get a silly grin on his face as if he weren't going to tell you the ending. By then he'd spout out the ending, knowing that he had teased you once more.

And oh, he was so respectful to Mom and Dad that I wanted to slug him sometimes. He would always tell me that I wouldn't get into trouble if I'd just keep my mouth shut! And never, never could I outlast him at night. He would come in from a date at midnight and still have enough energy to watch the late movie. Brilliant -- why he never had to crack one book in high school.

And I could have gone on and on. I told my friend that I didn't want to keep her and that I certainly didn't mean to get so carried away, but so few people ask me that question. She told me that she would have liked to have known him. This instance may be a rarity with friends who have not experienced the death of a loved one. But may we, in the Compassionate Friends, keep asking each other over and over, "*What was he really like?*"

Julie Cameron, TCF/Louisville, KY

PEOPLE THINK

People think we're fine, you know.

They say, "Oh, siblings heal so fast."

But they don't know the empty feelings,
or our longing for the past.

People think we're fine, you know.

"Look, how they've resumed their lives," they say.

But they don't know of our troubled hearts
or the loneliness from day to day.

People think we're fine, you know.

"See how they're getting over it?" they surmise.

But they don't know that we've learned to laugh and
smile,

Only to complete our broken heart's disguise.

Mary Mathews, TCF/Fort Lauderdale, FL

"A sister is a gift from God, sent from above to make
life worthwhile here below" -Author Unknown

EVERYTHING IS A FIRST

Everything 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 seriousness to my life. Thoughts about the meaning of life and the unimportance of a lot of things I have previously found important are 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 am learning to deal with all of this.

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

Lisa Ann Jones, TCF/Avoca, PA

YOU WILL NEVER KNOW

You will never know

How much I loved being your big sister

How much I loved looking out for you.

You will never know

How I would lie in bed late at night

And wait until you were home.

You will never know

How I would pretend to be asleep

As I heard you say goodnight to Fudge

And quietly pass by my door.

You will never know

How on that last night you left the house

I waited wide awake listening for your familiar sound

But that sound never happened and you never

Passed by my door.

The house is so quiet now and the only sound

Is from myself - crying.

Because you will never know how much I miss

Being your big sister.

Elizabeth Cannon - TCF/N. Reading, MA

Sibling Newsletter - Spring 1991

A TIME TO GRIEVE

Compassionate Friends aids parents after a child's death.

By [Tresa McBee](#) News-Leader Staff

Springfield, Missouri

Originally published January 21, 2005

For many people, the first day of spring heralds renewal, when winter fades and life blossoms. For Wayne Loder, the first day of spring marks the day his two children were killed.

On March 20, 1991, the car holding 8-year-old Stephanie, 5-year-old Stephen and their mother, Pat, was struck by a high-speed sports motorcycle. The car was bent like a banana. The children's seat belts were no match for the impact. And so the Loders joined an exclusive group to which no one seeks membership: parents whose children have died. "It's the worst grief you can have," Loder says.

Loder, who lives in Michigan, is public awareness coordinator for The Compassionate Friends, a nonprofit with about 600 chapters nationwide. It was founded in England in 1969. Based in Oak Brook, Ill., the organization offers understanding and hope to bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents. Pat Loder is the executive director. Her grief, her husband says, was compounded by survivor's guilt: Pat suffered only minor injuries. For a while, she wondered why she didn't die. For a while, she wished she had. Loder felt guilty, too. Parents have a hard time accepting they were not able to keep their children safe, he says. Searching for a way to handle their grief, the Loders first attended a general bereavement group, but it did not help. The members' grief, while tragic, just was not the same. "When we did find The Compassionate Friends, we started relating to them and hearing the same words coming out of their mouths," Loder says.

Mary Ann Hale understands. In November 1989, 20-year-old Debbie Hale drowned in a bathtub at her parents' home. Although an autopsy was not done — one of Hale's regrets — Debbie likely had a seizure or aneurysm. "My husband and I had to break down the door," remembers Hale, who has three other children. "It was very traumatic." Living in Kansas City, Hale attended a TCF meeting. She did not like it. Initial meetings, particularly if grief is fresh, may not be what bereaved parents expect, says Hale, leader of the Greater Ozarks Chapter. That's why the organization recommends people attend meetings at least three times. People must make decisions at their own pace, Loder says. Some people attend one meeting and don't return for a year. "Each meeting's different," Hale says. "Three gives you a chance."

After moving to Springfield in 1990, she tried TCF again. "I was so desperate, because I had no one to talk to." Who else could grasp the guilt of a mother who heard a thump — like a dropped shampoo bottle — and didn't think anything amiss? Who else but another bereaved parent would understand how difficult 8:30 a.m. on Saturdays can be — the time and day Debbie was discovered? "I don't think you ever resolve your grief. You learn to live with it," Hale says.

Carol Simmons hopes she can help other parents. It's been two years since the death of her only child, 25-year-old Angelic Ruth, and Simmons knows how different life becomes. "My daughter is the first thing I think of in the morning and the last thing I think of before I go to bed. I miss her terribly." Simmons, of Willard, says TCF provides comfort of a common bond: the knowledge that there is no such thing as closure. "I can go there and talk and don't have to worry about anyone judging me. They know how I feel, because they've lost a child." Simmons also finds the chapter's resource library and newsletter helpful.

Loder says bereaved parents love hearing their child's name, not cliché — "You can have other children" or "God needed an angel" — however well-intentioned. He explains: "We still think about Stephen and Stephanie every day and will the rest of our lives." And remember the No. 1 thing bereaved parents don't like hearing: "I understand." "If they haven't been through it, no one understands," Loder says. How can you help? A genuine "I'm sorry" and a heartfelt hug do wonders, Loder says.

And another thing: Forget the myth about high divorce rates following a child's death. A 1999 survey conducted by a research company for TCF found 72 percent of parents married at the time their child died were still married. Most couples who divorced had problems before their child's death, Loder says. Another survey is planned. The often-repeated statistic is that 90 percent of marriages end following a child's death — as Pat Loder heard from a friend. "She was told that in the hospital," her husband says. "She told me later she thought, 'My children have just died, and now I'm being told I'm going to lose my husband. How will I survive?'" Parents who grieve together — even if they do so differently — often become closer, Loder says. And while newly bereaved parents might not envision a future, things do get better, he says.

"Life is worth living — even though a lot of people don't feel that way and may not like hearing me say it," Loder says. Even if he and his wife hadn't had Chris, 12, and Katie, 11, the couple would have found meaning in honoring Stephanie and Stephen, Loder says. The siblings are remembered on their birthdays, and Christmas ornaments are hung in their honor. Chris and Katie know all about their big brother and sister. Loder thinks they all would have been great friends.

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

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:

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 Tecuwen (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 _____