



The Compassionate Friends

Fargo/Moorhead Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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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.

Guest Speaker at March Meeting:
Kriston Wenzel with Hospice of the Red River Valley

Upcoming Meetings
March 9th
April 13th

Dates to Remember

Mom's meeting - 7 pm on March 23rd @ Fry'n Pan
TCF National Conference - Orlando, Florida July 28-30, 2017

LOVE GIFTS

Lisa Beach in memory of her son,
Nathan Beach
Larry & Lori Wiger in memory of their nephew, Nathan Beach
Jim & Jody Kutter in memory of their daughter, Michelle Kutter
Patti Pratt in memory of her daughter,
Nancy Pratt Coash
Don & Linda Bartsch in memory of their son, Brent Bartsch
Larry & Lori Arlene Wiger in memory of their daughter, Ashley Wiger
Lisa Beach in memory of her niece,
Ashley Wiger
Brenda Kluth in memory of her son,
Brandon Kluth
Paul & Kara Bailey in memory of their son, Nick Bailey
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

"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 March 23rd. For more information please contact Sheryl at 701-540-3287 or sherylc13@msn.com.

Bereaved Parents

Different ages
Different stages
Different issues
Same pain
Daily strain
Occasional tissues
Our children have died
Often is all we know
A fact we fear to hide
Despite our ever-present woe
We live with pride
Though broken-hearted
To love, remember, and grow

~ Victor Montemurro, TCF/Medford, NY

Butterfly Wings, Bricks and Lead

When I saw her load of grief, it looked to me to be merely a light load of butterfly wings, as compared to my full load of heavy bricks. Then I saw another man, and he seemed to be carrying a small load of lead. But as I watched her step on the scales bearing her load of butterfly wings, the scales read "one ton." When he stepped on the scales with his load of lead, the scales also read "one ton."

I knew my grief-load of bricks would weigh more, but those scales read for me, "one ton." Our loads of butterfly wings, lead and bricks weighed exactly the same to the one carrying that particular load of grief. We bereaved parents often feel resentment when a nonbereaved person speaks about our child's death. HOW CAN THAT PERSON know or even dream of how I feel or what I am going through? These feelings may be justified. But when we begin to feel resentment toward another bereaved parent "That child's death was easy compared to my child's death," "I have suffered more than she/he ever did" —we should remember that each of our grief-loads weighs two thousand pounds to the one under it. Compared to Rose Kennedy, who had one child in a mental institution, and lost one daughter and three sons in violent deaths, my grief-load begins to look as if it were made of gossamer soap bubbles, but when I again step on that scale, it still reads, "one ton."

Our grief-loads may appear to weigh less because we who are under them have grown stronger through time and grief process maturation. The load actually weighs no less; it is we who have grown stronger and can carry it more easily. Sometimes we can even completely ignore the weight that is still there. Always be careful in judging another's grief-load. Remember the lead, butterfly wings and those bricks, and how they all weigh the same to the one under that load of grief.

~ Tom Crouthamel, TCF/Sarasota, FL

THE GRIEF OF MENTAL ILLNESS

I know now that my daughter, Laurie was mentally ill. I did not understand the meaning of this 20 years ago when her depression and "strange" behavior preceded a suicide attempt while in college. Despite all the help we could get for her, she succeeded in completing suicide five years later, at the age of 25, in 1980.

Her psychiatrist then agreed to talk to me -- he said, with tears in his eyes, she had been a serious schizophrenic patient. For reasons of patient confidentiality, I was not privy to this information earlier. WHY couldn't I have learned about this before it was too late?

The grief I felt as a bereaved parent was compounded by the truth of her illness. There is a stigma with mental illness. Society has been slow to understand and to accept mental illness. There is grief with mental illness -- for the loss of the child that we wanted to be normal. Why did this have to happen to my child?

Was this my fault? Guilt rears its ugly head. Why didn't I see the early signs that she needed help? I felt anger -- wanting to blame others for what happened. I was frustrated -- with the professionals who could not/did not "fix it." I was disillusioned with the public and private mental health system and its limited resources for the mentally ill and their families. Laurie fell between the cracks and is gone.

Thirteen years later I have come to terms with her suicide. I know now there are many reasons for mental illness, most of which are beyond my control. Mental illness is a disease. It can be the result of genetics, a chemical imbalance in the brain, or a nutritional deficiency/allergy -- NOT bad parenting.

I have learned that in grief and in loss, most people want to/need to "talk about it." The magic of sharing feelings and experiences with others who understand (because they've been there), is a healing process. For me, The Compassionate Friends, a national peer-support organization for bereaved parents and siblings, has provided this outlet on a local and national level. I have also participated in a local chapter of The Alliance for the Mentally Ill, and have learned so much more about mental illness through sharing with others who are coping with this stigma and grief. The National Alliance for Mentally Ill slogan in 1991 was "the most shocking thing about mental illness is how little people understand it." How true! How sad!

After Laurie's suicide, initially the most therapeutic healing for me was to publish a book of her writings, material I found expressing her thoughts, visions and frustrations from the ages of 15 to 25. This actual documentation of a mentally ill young person is poetic, loving, humorous, depressing and spiritual. Perhaps her words will help others to see and understand this disease. Her words express intuitive insights in a most articulate way, despite the message of helplessness and hopelessness. As a bereaved parent I felt a strong motivation to perpetuate the memory of Laurie in a positive way.

Public education, and acceptance of mental illness as a disease is helping to change attitudes. We are learning to be more open and honest about it. We are learning to cope and go on with our lives.

Maybe it was the mother in me, but I never thought I would lose her. Now through the grief and later understanding of this disease, I have found a new purpose in my life. Reaching out to help others caught in the quagmire of grief from mental illness, from suicide, from the death of a child, through support groups and writings, in turn has been a healing process for me too. I know that Laurie's 25 years on this earth have made a difference.

~ Carol Katz, TCF/Regional Coordinator, MA

LOST POTENTIAL

Last year I attended a workshop presented by a specialist in grief named Dr. Cable. Dr. Cable said many important things about the grief process, but as a bereaved parent one thing stuck in my mind.

He said that if you ask a bereaved person to describe his deceased mother, he will say, "Oh, she was so sweet. She always wore flowered dresses and loved to bake cookies." But, if you ask a bereaved parent to describe her deceased child, she will say, "Oh, he would be five this year and just starting kindergarten," or, "She would be twenty-two this year and graduating from college."

You see, we bereaved parents grieve the lost potential of our children. Our children don't stop growing in our minds. We grieve again and anew each year as our child would have been a different age.

~ Chris Anderson, TCF/Walla Walla, Washington

"A Gift of Hope"

Human pain does not let go of its grip at one point in time. Rather, it works its way out of our consciousness over time. There is a season of sadness. A season of anger. A season of tranquility. A season of hope. But seasons do not follow one another in a lock-step manner, at least not for those in crisis. The winters and springs of one's life are all jumbled together in a puzzling array. One day we feel as though the dark clouds have lifted, but the next day they have returned. One moment we can smile but a few hours after, the tears emerge... It is true that as we take two steps forward in our journey, we may take one of more steps backward. But when one affirms that the spring thaw will arrive the winter winds seem to lose some of their punch.

How we Survive Our Tragedies, Robert Venigna, 1985

An Image of Grief

I am a tree, standing alone in the early winter. I feel cold, empty, gray and ugly. The winds of grief have ripped away a branch and have left me unbalanced – with a great gaping hole. The sap of my innermost being rushes to the hole to provide a balm for the pain of the open wound. The icy cold rain of my weeping falls through the shaking of my boughs. I continue to sway in the harsh gales of reality, and the keening of the winds are the voice of my heartaches. But....

Under the ground there is life. Each root of love, friendship, care, family and faith is feeding into the trunk, and I know for a certainty that surely spring will come again! The bark of time will cover the rending wound. The scar will always be there, but the drain on my heart will be over. The leaves will burst forth and gently surround the wound with breezes of loving memories and promises of life to come. My boughs will be heavy with the wonder of living. Nestled near the scarred trunk, secure in the knowledge that God is my refuge and strength, the sweet bird of happiness will sing again.

~ Anita King, TCF/Hagerstown MD

I Can See You

I can see you when a friend visits your grave,
I can see you when I hear your favorite music,
I can see you when your dog howls as you taught him,
I can see you when the stars shine brightly,
I see you in my mind's image when the summer rain cools
the desert brush,
When spring buds emerge with new growth,
When winter chills the air,
When I see young lovers look into each other's eyes and
make promises, have goals and dreams.
In my intense pain, I hear you whisper, "I'm O.K."

I cannot see you when others are uncomfortable with me,
When I can't even mention the anniversary of your death,
When someone unwittingly said I have two children and I
wanted to scream that I have three, now and always.
Please be kind and allow me to see him in my own way
because he exists in my world and
I see him when you let me.

~ Cindy Nevins, TCF/Tucson Chapter, AZ

"Grief is like a journey one must take on a winding mountainside, often seeing the same scenery many times, a road which eventually leads to somewhere we've never been before."

~ Gladys M. Hunt

Life's Tapestry

It's said a splendid tapestry depicts Life's "grand design." Immense in its complexity, the threads all intertwine...to form a pattern illustrating with explicit weave the reason why our children die, and why we're left to grieve.

I've heard it called the "Master Plan," and there are those who say each thread's the story of a life, from birth to dying day, no death occurs that is not planned; some greater purpose served.

And some draw comfort from belief that fate cannot be swerved. If destiny holds all the cards then nothing would be changed, we would not alter tragedy, for death was prearranged. I do not know if I believe that fate decreed the day my life lost its illusions, enchantment came to stay.

But I do know the path I'm on is one that's far less clear... I stumble through this dad mess praying light will reappear. Yet in my soul her light lives on; my love for her remains with innocence she healed my heart and broke thru life's chains.

My daughter showed me how to trust, her needs taught me to fight, she planted seeds of caring about others and their plight.

If the tapestry depicts the life of all who walk the earth. The master weaver added my child's thread, and knew her worth. Her life, her death, my agony, are pushing me to find the reason for her years with me, and why I'm left behind.

I understand my path will stay in darkness 'til I see the means by which I'll utilize the gifts she gave to me. If I can find a way to share the caring I now feel it will honor her dear memory, and help my heart to heal.

~ Salty Miglioccio, TCF/Babylon, MO

IF THEY ONLY KNEW

If only they knew that when I speak of him, I am not being morbid. I am not denying his death. I am proclaiming his life. I am learning to live with his absence. For twenty-six years he was a part of my life, born, nurtured, molded and loved – this cannot be put aside to please those who are uncomfortable with my grief.

If only they knew that when I sit quietly, apparently content with my own company, I am not self indulgently unhappy, dwelling on things which cannot be changed; I am with him. I am seeing his face, hearing his voice, remembering his laughter, recalling his excitement and joy in life. Please allow me this time with him, as I do not begrudge you your time with your children.

If only they knew that when I sometimes weep quietly, I do not cry in self pity for what I have lost. I weep for what he has lost, for the life he loved, for the music which filled his very being, and for all he still longed to hear, for the poetry which moved him to tears, for the beauty about him that daily fed his soul, for the exhilaration and excitement of flying the skies, of searching for his God in the vast space of the universe. For all that he loved and lost, I cry.

If only they knew the feeling of deep grief, the emptiness, the dull pain, the endlessness of death. If only they understood the insanity of the platitudes so freely spoken that "time heals," that "you'll get over it," that "it was for the best," that "God takes only the best," and realize that these are more an insult than a comfort, that the warm and compassionate touch of another means so much more.

If only they knew that we will not find true peace and tranquility until we are prepared to try to stand in the shoes of others. We will not be understood until we learn to understand compassionately and we will not be heard until we learn to listen with hearts as well as minds.

~ Jan McNess, TCF/Victoria, Australia

OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED BIRTHDAYS

CHILD		PARENTS
BRENT M BARTSCH	35	DON & LINDA BARTSCH
KARI RAE BORGEN	45	JOHN & KELLY BORGEN
MICHAEL L HANSON	34	LARRY & MARY HANSON
ALLEN HARRIS	58	DELORES HARRIS
DARRYL ROBERT INFELD	56	ROBERT & ELEANOR INFELD
JOHN CLAYTON JACKSON JR.....	69	NORMA JACKSON
KRISSY KEELAN	37	DONNA QUAM
MICHELLE KUTTER	28	JIM & JODY KUTTER
JAMES ALLEN LAMBRECHT	52	VICTOR & LORETTA LAMBRECHT
CHRISTOPHER LOE	45	MARGARET "MUGS" LOE
ZAYNE WILLIAM MALHEIM OLAFSON	8	BILLY OLAFSON & SHANDRA MALHEIM
JAMIE C OLSON	39	GLENNIS OLSON
ANNIKA QUALLEY	6	MARLYS KESSEL (Great Grandmother)
ANNIKA LORRAINE QUALLEY	6	RHONDA & MICHAEL QUALLEY
ROY DANA RICHMOND	52	THOMAS & AUDREY RICHMOND
TOMMY ROESCH	22	DAVID & LINDA ROESCH
TIMOTHY J SWEENEY	51	MADONNA SWEENEY
ANGELA MARIE WENTZ	46	DAVID WENTZ
KATHRYN (KATIE) ELIZABETH WHELTLE	35	SHARON & MARK WHELTLE
ASHLEY WIGER	30	LARRY & LORI WIGER

ANNIVERSARIES

CHILD		PARENTS
TYSON CHANEY	1	DERRIK & ANDREA CHANEY
NANCY PRATT COASH.....	13	PATRICIA PRATT
DAVID MICHAEL HELFTER.....	13	MARK & HELLA HELFTER
DARRYL ROBERT INFELD	8	ROBERT & ELEANOR INFELD
TODD ALLAN JOHNSON	2	RUSSELL & ANNE JOHNSON
KRISSY KEELAN	3	DONNA QUAM
BENJAMIN GAFFREY KNIER.....	3	FRANK KNIER & MARY GAFFREY KNIER
LIAM PAUL KUMMER.....	1	BLAINE & MEGAN KUMMER
KAREN LAUMAN	5	FRANK LAUMAN
SARAH DEWITZ MARTINSEN	7	DEB DEWITZ
MATTHEW MILLIGAN-OLSON	17	JOHN & KYLENE MILLIGAN
JARAD NILLES.....	5	RALPH & CAROLYN NILLES
ZAYNE WILLIAM MALHEIM OLAFSON	8	BILLY OLAFSON & SHANDRA MALHEIM
CASANDRA (CASY) PERRHUS	2	RAYMOND & JAN MILLER

Please check out our Chapter website's page for 'Our Beloved Children'
(www.teffargomoorhead.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

MY THOUGHTS OF YOU

Another holiday without you
Another wedding without you
Another birthday without you
Another graduation without you
Another day without you.
I miss your goofy laugh
I miss your temper tantrums
I miss your bugging me for money
I miss your punches in my arm
But most of all I miss you.
So I will remember
Our good and bad times
And share them with others
So that I can keep you
Alive in my heart.
You were supposed to be here always
Or till the world came to an end.
I know that we argued and
Seemed to disagree,
But I could always count on you
~ De Ann Kouse, TCF/Louisville, KY

MARK

Some people dread the holidays;
others, anniversary or birthdays.
With me, it's not just these days,
but Spring and Summer.
From the first talk of Spring training to
the last out of the World Series, I MISS YOU.
Baseball was such a big part of your life. I see you in
a baseball uniform in so many of my memories.
How I wish we could catch a Royal's game together!
Did you know they were World Champions in '85?
I know that you have rounded third and slid into
home, but that doesn't ease the pain in my heart.
I love you so much!
~ Tamala Lauffer, TCF/Independence MO

You are struggling...
I see it, I feel it,
I hurt for you.
But I must tell you, dear friend,
I believe with all my heart
That you will emerge
Somehow wiser, stronger,
And more aware.
Hold onto that thought,
Tuck it away in a
Corner of your heart
Until the hurts melts enough
For the learning to have meaning.
~ Sue Mitchell

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

DO NOT OVER PROTECT ME ... LET ME BE ME...

Dedicated to all the brothers and sisters of The Compassionate
Friends.
When you are consumed with grief, don't forget about me.
Let me be me ...
I grieve too but different from you, I miss my brother/sister too.
Let me be me ...
Tell me I can't fix your pain. Don't tell me I won't understand.
Please don't overwhelm me with your grief. Just like the real
world mine doesn't want to talk about a dead sister/brother.
Let me be me ...
Tell me often that you love me for being me. Ask me about my
goals and dreams for the future.
Let me be me ...
Don't break my spirit with your grief.
Let me be me ...
Let me follow my dreams. Now they will include some of my
sister's/brother's dreams.
Let me be me ...
Don't overprotect me.
Let me be me ...
Please don't feel every spare moment I have with basketball,
baseball, soccer, music or dance classes, just so you can fill your
spare time and fall exhausted into bed at night. I need free time
to explore who I am.
Let me be me ...
Don't forget to continue to teach me to celebrate life. I need to
know that through all this pain there is hope ... for my future.
Let me be me ...
As young as I am please don't overprotect me ... Love me, guide
me, teach me.
LET ME BE ME ...

~ Colleen, TCF/Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Grief is Not An Enemy

At my brother's funeral a Lady said "You seem to be doing so
well." "No, I'm doing quite poorly thank you." I responded
She did not give up, and said, "Well you don't seem to be
upset." I did not want to get into any discussion, but I had acted as
if nothing had happened as long as I could and I reacted. "If I were
doing so well with my grief I would be over in the corner curled
up in a fetal position crying,
not standing here acting as though no one had died."
We are doing well with our grief when we are grieving.
Somehow we have it backwards. We think people are doing well
when they aren't crying. Grief is a process of walking through
some painful periods toward learning to cope again.
We do not walk this path without pain and tears. When we are in
the most pain we are making the most progress. When the pain is
less, we are coasting and resting for the next steps. People need to
grieve. Grief is not an enemy to be
avoided; it is a healing path to be walked.
~ Doug Manning, From: "The Gift Of Significance"

I'll cry with you, she whispered,
until we run out of tears.
Even if it's forever.
We'll do it together.

There it was a simple promise of connection.
The loving alliance of grief and hope that blesses both our
breaking apart and our coming together again.

~ Molly Fumia

Wanting

I see him standing at the cross walk
books under his left arm
blue jeans, white Element T-shirt
white DC ball cap.

But it's not.

I see him walking
tall thin young man
with short almost shaved head.

But it's not.

I call his cell.

I hear his voice.

I wish his outgoing message was longer.

But it's not.

I sift through a black trash bag
of his unwashed laundry
wanting to smell his essence.

But it's not.

It never will be.

And I want.

~ Wendy Richardson, TCF/Santa Cruz, CA
In Memory of my son, Tyler

Catching Butterflies

It often hurts to come upon reminders of my son
Tho' often since I lost him I would search around for one
Which always brought on sadness and the tears that I'd
shed were caused by names or faces, all things that
I'd dread.

But then one day I came upon a man who'd lost his son
I found that things I ran from, he wouldn't even shun.
But rather he would treasure and I said I wondered why
He told me that he called them "Catching Butterflies."
This view of his intrigued me; I wanted to hear more
And learned that he took all of them and carefully would
store

All of the reminders that I chose to push away
He would tuck deep down inside his heart each and
every day.

Now a name or likeness when catching me off guard
Does not upset me as it did and I don't find it hard
For now instead I see these times as opportunities
To see my son awakened in these new fresh memories.

~ Dottie Williams, TCF/Pittsburgh, PA

EACH LIFE IS LIKE A SONG

A life is like a song we write
In our own tone and key,
Each Life we touch reflects a note
That forms the melody.
We choose the theme and chorus
Of the song to bear our name,
And each will have a special sound,
No two can be the same.
So when someone we love departs,
In memory we find
Their song plays on within the hearts
Of those they leave behind.

By Elma Burns Semko,
Mother to Bobby Burns

*Lovingly lifted from the Northshore/Boston Chapter
August 2005 Newsletter*

CEMETERY VISITS

Are you one of those people who have a need to go to the cemetery often?
The non - bereaved frown on that, as a rule. Many people feel there is
something morbid about those visits; that you're obsessing.

Unless you know the pain of losing someone you love better than yourself,
you can't understand that need.

Some people need to visit every day; others go now and then, and still some
never go back once the funeral is over.

There are no rules. If it makes people uncomfortable when you make your
cemetery visits, go alone. Don't feel you need to get anybody's permission or
approval. Call a friend who won't judge you by the number of miles you travel
to and from.

It is important for you to know that how often you go to the cemetery has
absolutely nothing to do with the length and depth of your expression of your
grief. It is important to know that you have the right to do whatever comforts
you. It may not seem right to your sister, your brother-in-law or your friends,
but that's their problem.

If you try to please everybody by the things you do and say, you'll find you
are not taking care of your needs - and there are no more important ones right
now.

You won't always required visits this often, and when you no longer feel
this urge to go so often, don't feel guilty. It just means you are getting better.
Accept is as that and move forward with your life when you are able. For right
now, do what make you feel better.

~ Mary Cleckley, TCF/Atlanta, GA

Feed the Cat?

My son is dead—and you expect me to feed the cat? Isn't it amazing how
society is so rigid in their expectations? There are rules you know ...steps we
must all take..." Whoever set these standards obviously has never lost a child,
the core of your heart and soul. It just doesn't work that way.

Simple every day tasks are impossible to complete. The only constant in
your upside down world is pain, unlike any pain you have ever known. Shortly
after your child's death, you are expected to return to your job, take care of your
household, pay the bills, and yes, feed the cat! It has been a year for me, since I
lost my son, and I still go blank mid act. I stand in a store with no idea what I
came in for, or I cry over bananas because Lee loved them. I can go from
laughter to tears in 1.1 seconds.

The Compassionate Friends has been a life saver (or perhaps a heart saver)
for me. Only those who have experienced the same heartache will understand
when you say I need to be alone, but I can't stand to be alone! Each grieving
parent must heal in his or her own way, in his or her own time. One step
forward, 15 back, spin around and start over, only to repeat the same progress,
one step forward, 15 back, spin around... You get the picture. But you don't have
to heal alone. You need not walk alone. Join us, we know you're not crazy—just
a grieving parent. We do care.

~ Ann, TCF/Roseburg, OR

Beautiful Dream

Eyes open wide
I awake from a beautiful dream
Within seconds the painful reality of my life sets in
I find myself wanting to scream
Grief so strong
Impossible to explain
Living with a broken heart
Struggling with the pain

Eyes closed tight
I pray for that beautiful dream
A short escape from the painful reality
That makes me want to scream

~ Robert Willis, TCF/Frederick, MD

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: _____

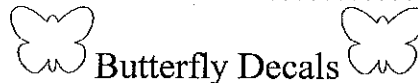
Child's Name: _____ Relationship: _____

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)



"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.

Stepparents - The Invisible Grievers

When our 28 year old daughter died in an automobile accident I was devastated. What I did not realize was that my wife was equally devastated. I assumed that she was sad too, but that since she was just "our daughter's stepmother, she would not feel the same depth of grief that I and my ex-wife felt JUST... It wasn't until several months later that I came to realize how wrong I had been. Immediately after the accident, my ex flew into town. She was of course in deep pain and highly emotional; she could hardly stop crying.

All through the immediate weeks after our daughter's death, my wife remained in the background, doing all she could to support me, my ex-wife, and our other children. But showing few outward signs of her own grief. I totally missed that she was feeling as much pain as my ex-wife and I were.

My wife and I were lucky. A couple of months later she flew back to her hometown and spent a long weekend with a group of long-time women friends with whom she had remained close over the years. They spent the weekend talking about our daughter, the accident, the terrible loss, and supporting my wife and allowing her to fully express and outwardly experience her own deep grief.

After that weekend my wife began to talk to me about how deep her grief was. I began to realize that she and I felt the loss much the same.

The research into bereaved parents indicates that the depth of one's grief is directly related to the length and extent of the relationship the person had with the child who has died.

In our case, my wife and I married when our daughter was just 7 years old. Our daughter lived with us until she moved out to live on her own 15 years later. My wife had the primary role of raising our daughter, helping her with school, with her social life, everything. They had a wonderful relationship. Of course, in retrospect, it is no wonder that my wife deeply misses and grieves the death of our daughter.

~ R&D, BP/USA Maryland

The Wounded Heart

Children have preceded their parents in death for eons of time. We are not the first, nor will we be the last, to enter the realm of Bereaved Parents. But for now right now it is OUR HEARTS that are freshly wounded and OUR HEARTS in need of mending.

Wounded hearts must be allowed to mourn and lament their loss; to pour out their pain, agony, sadness, hurt, and anger; and to release their well of tears. Wounded hearts need to be wrapped in quietness, gentleness, and compassion, away from the turmoil of daily life.

A wounded heart, not allowed to mend from the depth of its agony, will be as an abscess to swell and undermine, erupting at a distant time. Or, suppressed, will slowly choke the spirit of its host. Only the bearer will know when his heart has healed.

The wounded heart, encouraged and given the time and freedom to mend, will carry in its chambers the memory and shared love of a precious child.

~ Nancy Green, TCF/Livonia, MI

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
OF THE F-M AREA
PO BOX 10686
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 701-491-0364	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 & son, 45-cancer) ...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.