



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

Volume 27 Number 11

Fargo ND/Moorhead MN

November 2010

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

This month's meeting is on November 11th

Next month's meeting is on December 9th

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.

DATES TO REMEMBER:

December 12, 2010 - Worldwide Candle Lighting 7 pm

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. Also add this email address to your contacts, so when the newsletter is sent to you, it does not go to your junk mail.

*****NOVEMBER LOVE GIFTS*****

Becky Nelson in memory of her son, Ryan Nelson 11/1980 - 6/1999

Clare & Richard Elless in memory of their daughter, Tari Elless Heller 8/1955 - 11/2007

Ambrose & Chloris Steidl in memory of their grandson, Brad Crommett 9/1980 - 6/2004

Jack & June Volk in memory of their sons, Jeffrey Volk 4/1957 - 5/2007 & David Volk 3/1962 - 2/2010

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

Noreen C. Fischer in memory of her daughter, Melissa Fischer 10/1966 - 2/2008

Dean & Jo Allmendinger in memory of their son, Lucas Allmendinger 5/1981 - 11/2009

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

Thankful vs. Thankless

This is the time of year when many bereaved parents start saying out loud what newly bereaved parents have been thinking for weeks and weeks—"I really am dreading the holidays." And why not? When your grief is so new, you haven't had the necessary time to accept life as it is for you now.

On the other hand, there are those of us who have had that necessary time and the proper support who are able to observe the holidays in a less painful way. We have kept some of the old traditions that warm our hearts and thrown out those that are either too painful or meaningless now. We have created a life that doesn't include someone who was a vital part of who and what we were. We're different now, doing different things because losing a child forces you into that position if you are to survive in an emotionally healthy way.

The words *thankful* and *thankless* follow one another in my dictionary; so close together in a book, yet so far apart in meaning. When you think about it, the difference between the two words is *full* and *less*. Though those of us who have had more time do, like the more newly bereaved, have less in the way of family, our lives still do have a fullness because we have learned to be thankful and appreciate that which we have left in the way of people and memories—more so than we ever thought possible.

As you approach this Thanksgiving, if you haven't yet been able to make your adjustment, I hope you will feel what you must for now because whatever you are feeling is okay. It isn't until you have reached the place in your grief where the ability to make good choices returns to your life that you can make some important changes in how you approach the holidays. I hope the transition from thankless to thankful will be soon in coming for you, for that will mean some peace has returned to your life. Above all, I do wish you peace during this holiday season. I wish you more of the same in the new year.

Mary Cleckley, Lawrenceville, GA

Temporarily out to Lunch

We look, but we don't see.

We talk, but we don't hear.

We reach, but we don't touch.

We need, but we don't admit.

You look, but were not the same.

You talk, but we don't respond.

You reach, but we can't feel you.

You need, but we can't provide.

We need your recognition.

We need your conversation.

We need your touch and feelings.

We need your patience.

We need time.

Will we ever again be normal?

Will we regain our senses?

Will we feel again, physically and emotionally?

Yes, with your help, patience and understanding.

~ Charles Brown, Reprinted from *Survivors of Suicide*

New Traditions

New traditions are now permanently woven into the fabric of our lives. The catalyst for these traditions is not a happy addition to our lives; indeed, the catalyst marks a traumatic loss in our lives. That subtraction comes in the form of the death of our child.

The finality is crushing. This overwhelming loss has redefined each of us, changed our perspective forever and brought us close to the abyss of insanity. The new traditions gradually pull us back from the abyss and may eventually provide a sense of comfort, serenity and peace.

And so in June we remember our children. We communicate with them, via a note from our hearts, written on a butterfly shaped paper and tied to balloon. We, the parents of the dead, gather and listen to a poem about our collective and individual loss. We the parents of the dead experience the haunting bagpipe as it fills our senses with the sound and the meaning of Amazing Grace. We, the parents of the dead, once again stand together and remember our children. We speak to them. Our butterfly messages become kisses on the wind as our balloons ascend into the sky, floating southward, floating higher and higher until, we imagine, our children can reach out and grab each message and read it and know that we love them deeply and miss them every day and every night. This is our tradition. Each of us views it from the depth of our souls; our love of our children is demonstrated openly as we weep without shame for the loss we have experienced.

A significant part of each parent died when our children died. Yet, a crucial part of each child lives in the hearts of every mother and father. Neither time nor death will erase that bond. It is solid, it is pure and it is forever.

We hope that one day we will each make some sort of peace with this monster, this nightmare, this void, this pain. We hope one day to heal our open wound but know we will always carry an invisible yet deep scar. The worst loss a person can ever experience has been thrust upon us. The only change will come from within each of us. We may one day feel a serenity that comes only through pure love, pure kindness and pure understanding. We will learn to remember yesterday, live today and anticipate tomorrow.

And we will always have our new traditions – traditions that are now part of who we are, where we have been and where we are going in this life. Our traditions remind us that our children lived, laughed and loved. We linger in the moment for that is all we have.

Annette Mennen Baldwin

The Long Forever

You left us so quickly;
there were no goodbyes.

How long this forever,
your death and our lives.

The sadness, the anger,
the loneliness of three,
preferring four always,
how small, this new we.

Genesse Bourdeau Gentry

From *Stars in the Deepest Night – After the Death of a Child*

JUST FOR SIBLINGS: WHAT SIBLINGS THINK

These thoughts were recorded by a TCF sibling group as they explored their feelings about the death of their sibling. I will print their comments here to help siblings know they are not alone and parents to better understand what their surviving children are feeling.

I would like my father to know:

- It helps to talk.
- What really happened.
- That if anything happened to him, I would feel the same way.
- He is not alone and I want to laugh and cry with him again.
- That his son/daughter knew that he loved him/her.
- That it's okay to talk about my brother or sister when I'm around.
- I do cry, not a lot but I do cry.

I would like my mother to know:

- I love her.
- It's okay to cry and I'm there for her to talk to.
- That I will always love her.
- She has been my example of giving and love.
- That my sibling is at peace with God.
- It's okay to talk about the past.
- I cry.
- I knew my sibling in a different way.
- I think about those times and smile through my tears.

Sibling Group - TCF Lehigh Valley, PA

TO COLLEEN

To a wonderful sister, who was special in every way.
I miss you greatly, but know you are with me everyday.

We had many good times together; those memories
I will treasure forever.

What happen is hard to believe, because it was
much too soon for you to leave.

God needed another angel and we had no clue, all
those years he was watching you.

Now you are in heaven, eternal paradise a place that
always sounded so nice and where we
will meet someday.

Until then, for each of us you will pray, because God
wanted it that way.

Love always, Shaun Hingham - TCF

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

I Am Your Sister and Always Will Be

"I am your sister and always will be." That's how Susie signed her cards to me. After a while, she shortened it to, "I am..." And of course I knew the rest of it Susie was two and one-half years younger than I. She was alive one evening talking on the phone to Mom about the Oscars and to Dad about moving. The next day she was found. Whatever it was--it ended her life and changed mine forever.

There was a wonderful side of my sister that I didn't pay enough attention to. She was a kind and loving person, always ready to shelter lost animals and lost souls. When she was in a good mood, her smiles warmed my heart. Yet I spent most of my life wishing that things were different: wishing that she thought more of herself, wishing that she would take my advice, wishing that she were happier, wishing that we could accept each other.

Now, for two years, I've done nothing but wish she were here so we could have another chance to work at our relationship. Now, I wish that I had been able to give her my unconditional love & support. (She needed it and deserved it.) Now, I wish that I could have been with her that night so she would not have been alone. Now, I wish that I would have held her in my arms and told her how very much I loved her. Because, Susie, I am your sister and always will be.

-Michele Walters, TCF, Baltimore, MD

Reflections

With the death of my sister came some painful realizations: that life isn't always fair or predictable; that sometimes even my best still isn't good enough; and that from the day of her death, the happy events in my life would always be tinged with sadness. Despite the pain and loss, death has also left me with some valuable lessons and precious gifts. As a result of my sister's death, I have a greater appreciation of life and a greater compassion for those who hurt. I have learned to be a survivor and to have a successful career and productive life in the face of tremendous grief and loss. I have been gifted with good friends and special people to help me through the rough times. But most of all, I have been given the gift of time -- time to heal and time to replace those painful memories of death with priceless memories of my sister's life.

Cathy Schanberger

from *This Healing Journey - An Anthology for Bereaved Siblings* ©The Compassionate Friends

Get Well Soon Poem

I know our loss is very great
but I'm sure many people can
relate

I know its hard to say good-bye
don't hold back your tears! It's ok
to cry

Just hold my hand and we will
stand up high

We will gather strength from one
another

hugging and holding each other
we will find each other and
together we will be
once again, a family

By Alyssa Flora, age 13

In memory of her brother Bryson, age 9

You'll Excuse Me

You'll excuse me if the bounce is gone from my step. Or the depth of my laughter has changed. Issues that were once monumental now seem so insignificant.

Please excuse me if I don't commiserate that your car needs repair or the faucet leaks; my focus on life has forever changed.

You'll excuse me if my spirit seems lost during holidays of any kind. They are now days "to hear," rather than days to share and enjoy.

You'll pardon me if I bring you down or make you feel discomfort, and I'll pardon you for not understanding that my life will never be the same; that although I'll survive, there will always be sorrow.

Joan Fischer ~ TCF/Nassau County Chapter, NY

Thanksgiving Prayer

I'm thankful this Thanksgiving
That my grief is not so new.
Last year it was so painful to
Think of losing you.
Death can't claim my love for you
Tho we are far apart,
Sweet memories will always be
Engraved upon my heart.
Time can never bring you back
But it can help me be
Thankful for the years of joy
You brought our family.
To all the parents with grief so new
I share your loss and sorrow
I pray you find with faith and time
The blessings of each tomorrow.
Charlotte Irick ~ TCF/Idaho Falls, ID

SNOW

Every snowflake that falls is unique and has its own individual design. There are beautiful patterns in each snowflake and even the tiniest of flakes have their own markings. These patterns change again and again even after the flake touches the ground. Each snowflake is a cause for wonder, each flake is one of a kind. No two are exactly alike. Like the snowflake, our beautiful children were each unique and special; some we only dreamed about and some danced upon the earth. They filled our lives with wonder and transformed our world. We held them too briefly, but we will hold them in our hearts forever. We shall remember them always. At this time of remembering, it may help to reflect upon how our lives have been enriched by the love we have given and the love we have received from our children. Our children leave treasures behind that time can never take away.

Written by Denise Falzon, TCF Lake Area, MI
In loving memory of her son, Brian Falzon

IF TOMORROW NEVER COMES

If I knew it would be the last time
that I'd see you fall asleep,
I would tuck you in more tightly
and pray the Lord, your soul to keep.
If I knew it would be the last time
that I see you walk out the door,
I would give you a hug and kiss
and call you back for one more.
If I knew it would be the last time
I'd hear your voice lifted up in praise,
I would video tape each action and word,
so I could play them back day after day.
If I knew it would be the last time,
I could spare an extra minute or two
to stop and say "I love you,"
instead of assuming you would KNOW I do.
If I knew it would be the last time
I would be there to share your day,
well I'm sure you'll have so many more,
so I can let just this one slip away.
For surely there's always tomorrow
to make up for an oversight,
and we always get a second chance
to make everything right.
There will always be another day
to say our "I love you's",
And certainly there's another chance
to say our "Anything I can do's?"
But just in case I might be wrong,
and today is all I get,
I'd like to say how much I love you
and I hope we never forget,
Tomorrow is not promised to anyone,
young or old alike,
And today may be the last chance
you get to hold your loved one tight...
So if you're waiting for tomorrow,
why not do it today?
For if tomorrow never comes,
you'll surely regret the day,
That you didn't take that extra time
for a smile, a hug, or a kiss
and you were too busy to grant someone,
what turned out to be their one last wish.
So hold your loved ones close today,
whisper in their ear,
Tell them how much you love them
and that you'll always hold them dear,
Take time to say "I'm sorry," "please forgive me,"
"thank you" or "it's okay".
And if tomorrow never comes,
you'll have no regrets about today

Anonymous

*If Tears Could Build a Stairway,
And Memories a Lane,
I'd Walk Right Up To Heaven
And Bring You Home Again.*

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
 OF THE F-M AREA
 PO BOX 10686
 FARGO ND 58106

NON-PROFIT
 U.S. POSTAGE PAID
 PERMIT #1625
 FARGO, ND

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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

FARGO-MOORHEAD COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS BOARD

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN THE BOARD AT ANY TIME!

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

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

TELEPHONE FRIENDS

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

- 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 _____