



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

Volume 28 Number 11

Fargo ND/Moorhead MN

November 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 November 10th

Next month's meeting is on December 8th

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.

NOTE: As of January 2012, our meetings will begin at 7 P.M.

DATES TO REMEMBER:

December 11, 2011 - 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 sherylcvl3@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 FMTCFNLTR@LIVE.COM. Please be sure to include your name in the email.

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

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

Joan & Steve Halland in memory of their son, Cole Halland 11/1985 - 5/2010

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

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

Gerald & Delores Beyers in memory of their daughter, Tamera K. Chaput 2/1959 - 8/2006

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

Blanche Harr in memory of her son, Thomas G. Harr 6/1960 - 11/2010

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

Mike & Sheryl Cvijanovich in memory of their son, Matthew Cvijanovich 11/1981 - 1/2005

We are deeply grateful for the LOVE GIFTS given this month.

Our chapter and all chapters, are financed solely through your Love Gifts.

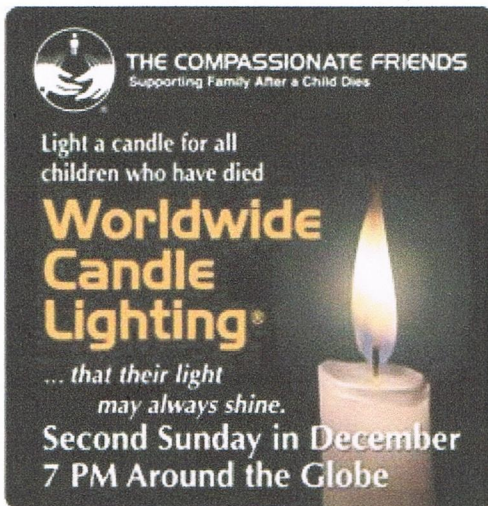
Donations make this newsletter, postage, books, tapes, etc. possible.

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



Worldwide Candle Lighting

The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting, held annually the second Sunday in December, this year December 11th, unites family and friends around the globe as they light candles for one hour to honor and remember children who have died at any age from any cause. As candles are lit at 7 p.m. local time, creating a virtual wave of light, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor the memories of children in a way that transcends all ethnic, cultural, religious, and political boundaries.

Now believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe, the Worldwide Candle Lighting, a gift from TCF to the bereavement community, creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone. Hundreds of formal candle lighting events are held and thousands of informal candle lightings are conducted in homes as families gather in quiet remembrance of children who have died, but will never be forgotten.

Eleven Ways You Can Help a Family During the Holidays After a Child Dies

Oak Brook, IL (December 8, 2008)

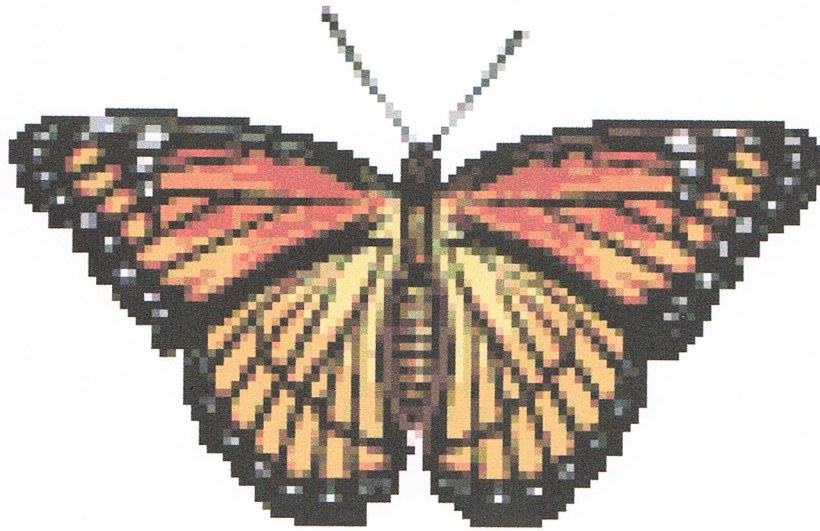
When a child has died, friends and relatives often have no idea how to provide support to the family during the stressful holiday season.

Following are 11 ways **The Compassionate Friends**, the world's largest self-help support organization for bereaved families, suggests ways for you to help families that are going through the natural grieving process after the death of a child.

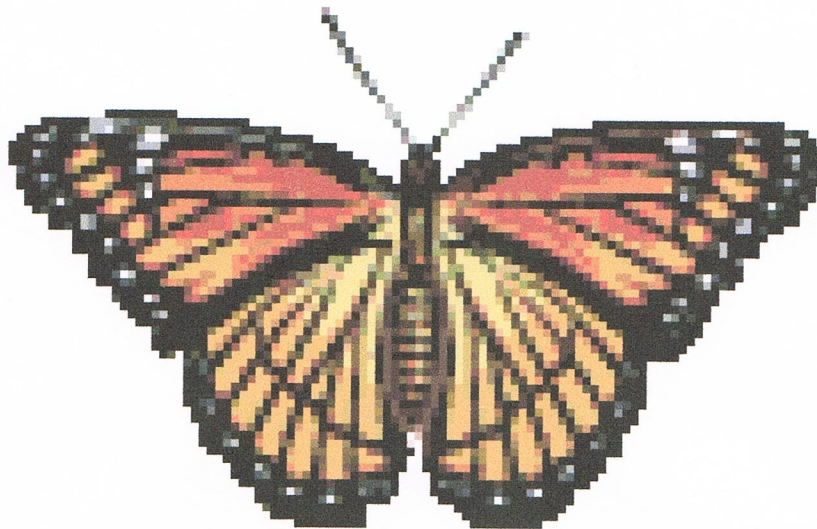
- 1) **Expect the unexpected.** The family has no road map of how to survive the holidays when they are living the nightmare of losing a child. Show patience and understanding.
- 2) **Take up a collection to give the family.** The unexpected expenses involved with the death of a child may stretch the family budget to the limit during the holidays.
- 3) **The family has no doubt had its share of casseroles.** Why not offer to provide them a holiday dinner with all the trimmings? You may cook it with love yourself or you can order and then pick one up at many grocery stores for as little as \$50.
- 4) **If their home is where everyone** would have gathered to celebrate the holidays, ask them if they would mind if you host the get together.
- 5) **If there are surviving children**, the parents may feel the need to decorate the home as they've done in the past. Offer to help them with this task. If there are no plans to decorate, you may offer them a battery powered or electric candle and suggest that they place it in their window, in memory of the child who died.
- 6) **Make a donation in memory** of the child to a non-profit organization that has special meaning to the family.
- 7) **Offer to assist** with holiday shopping.
- 8) **Make the family aware** of special remembrance services where they might want to participate such as The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting the second Sunday in December.
- 9) **Even if several years** have passed since the child died, send the family a card and mention the child by name. If you have it in your possession, enclose a picture or videotape of the child the family may not have seen or possess. This will mean more to the family than you can possibly imagine.
- 10) **Don't try to talk the family into** doing something they simply don't want to do. Be there with understanding and compassion. With your help, the holidays may be a little gentler for the family grieving the death of a child.
- 11) You might find yourself a **Remembrance Tree**, and have a ribbon ceremony to remember your child or sibling. Friends can bring a white ribbon with the name of their child written on it so that it may be tied to a branch. This will be a reminder during the winter holidays that their children's light continues to shine.

"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

OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED



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



SIBLING PAGE

IT'S THE MUSIC THAT BONDS THE SOUL

The room you once lived in
Doesn't look the same.
The people, who used to call you,
Never mentioned your name.
 The car you used to drive,
 They may not make any more.
 All the things you once treasured,
 Are boxed behind closet doors.
The clothes you set the trends by,
Are surely out of date.
The people, you owed money to,
Have wiped away the slate
Things have changed and changed
Again since you went away.
 But some things have remained the same
 each and every day.
 Like this aching in my heart...
 A scar that just won't heal,
 Or the way a special song
 Can change the way you feel.
Brother, you must know that the "music" bonds us
and will always keep us close.
 Because, secretly, I know deep in my
 heart, it's the music you miss the most.
So let the world keep on turning
And "time" can take its toll.
For as long as the music keeps playing,
You'll be alive and dancing in my soul.
 ~ Stacie Gilliam, TCF/Oklahoma City, OK

GRIEF IS LONELY

Grief is lonely. When my sister died two years ago, everyone knew about it and talked about it. Everyone was in shock – but now, two years later, the anniversary of her death came and went without even a card in the mail. No one at work remembered the day. No one called to say, “I am thinking of you.” No one asked, “How are you feeling?” My family has stayed in close contact and we talk about Susan all the time. But when it comes to grieving over Susan, everyone grieves alone. No one knows how I feel about my little sister and how it hurts me so deeply to know she is not here. Everything else in life can be shared with someone else, but not grieving. No one can fully understand the pain because everyone's pain is different. When the pain is the greatest, the loneliness is the greatest too. I never thought I could feel this much pain and still survive. I am alone in my grief. There is no one else here with me.

Susan was born when I was almost 11. She died by suicide when she was 16. The baby of the family, the youngest of four kids; our hearts are broken forever.

~ Cherie Bagadiong, TCF/St. Mary's County

*Look at yourself in the mirror. Say to yourself,
"It is hard to lose a child." Say to yourself,
"It is reasonable to hurt." Say to yourself,
"Healing takes time." Be good to yourself
~ Sasha Wagner, TCF/Des Moines, IA*

IN LOVING MEMORY OF JOEL

I sometimes sit and wonder how
Life can go on without you now
Somehow this month it will be five years
Yet many nights I still shed tears
Siblings we were that much is true
But friends as well, that's hard to do
Sometimes your missed, more now than ever
The shock's worn off, the pain forever
Although for now, our journeys apart
Forever in my mind, my soul, my heart
 ~ Robyn Mather, Alberni BC

COURAGE

My brother died three years ago, when he was seventeen years old. It was an accident, when he fell, while hiking in the mountains. I was fifteen and my brother was my hero. I would do anything to make him proud. When I lost him, I could have just given up. I have the courage to love people even though I know that I could lose them. I had many opportunities to just forget everyone else and lose myself. My brother was my best friend and when he died I could have too.

I decided that he would not have wanted me to throw my life away. I try my hardest to work hard in school and live up to what his expectations would have been. I am not living just for him. I am living for myself. A lot of people like to escape their problems by drinking or doing drugs. Alcohol and drugs only make problems worse because escaping a problem is not solving the problem. Self-respect means knowing who you are and treating yourself with dignity. I want people to look at me and to respect me. Staying in school and, working to my potential is essential for respect. People cannot respect those who do not respect themselves. As Shakespeare said: "This above all else, to thine own self be true."

I do not like choices based on what the popular decision is. I base my thoughts and ideas on what I believe are right and important. I know that my brother would have been proud of me, because I made it through the most difficult time in my life, without him. I kept living when I lost the most important person in the world to me. Courage is to keep fighting even though it looks like you are going to lose. When he died, I felt the world crash down on me. Everything I ever hoped for just seemed empty. Even now sometimes it will just hit me that my brother is gone.

I have to keep on living and facing the world because that is what life is all about. Sometimes things happen that seem impossible to face. If I do not face my problems, who will?

Life is not supposed to be easy but it is not devastating either. There are so many wonderful things that happen and I have to have the courage to realize it. Life is not just a long line of problems. It is also a long line of answers. I need courage and self-respect to find these answers. I have to trust myself and my future that everything will work out. It always does. The answers to life's problems can only be found through hard work and belief in yourself. My belief in myself comes from a big brother who always had faith in me.

In loving memory of my brother Sean
8/1976 - 8/1993

~ Patricia Kelley, TCF/Richmond, VA

Thankful Versus Thankless

This is the time of year when many bereaved parents start saying out loud what newly bereaved parents have been thinking for weeks, "I am really 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 the necessary time and the proper support, who are able to observe the holidays in a less painful way. We have kept some of those old traditions that warm our hearts and thrown out those that are either too painful or meaningless now. We have created a life that does not include someone who was a vital part of who and what we were. We are 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 the 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, but our lives have fullness again 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 have not 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 is not 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 to 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

WE ARE THE CHILDLESS PARENTS

By Sascha

I am the childless mother
lost between loving and pain
lost to the promise of children
searching for answers in vain.

I am the childless mother
caught between courage and fears
left without bridge to the future
finding no sound for my tears.

I am the childless father
caught between courage and fears
left without bridge to the future
finding no sound for my tears.

I am the childless father
lost between loving and pain
lost to the promise of children
searching for answers in vain.

We are the Childless Parents
sharing the grief and the night
sharing the darkness together
waiting to walk in the light

When someone you love becomes a memory, the memory becomes a treasure. ~Author Unknown

THE EMPTY CHAIR

The table is set, and ready with food to delight the eye
Everyone is waiting, with anticipation high.
But one place is empty, void of a loved one dear
And as we pause to remember, we wipe away the tear.
Your chair may be empty, and your presence no longer there
But your memory is with us, as we gather around this fare.
Someone recalls something you once said, and the memories start to
flow

And in this magic moment, your spirit upon us glows
Gone but never forgotten, as with us you'll always be
And if I look close, your presence, in the empty chair I see.

~ Sheila Simmons, Dallas, GA

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

RECIPE FOR RECOVERY

As many of us go about preparing our Holiday dinners, don't we wish we had a "Recipe for Recovery?" "Just add a cup of boiling water, stir well and drink," and our grieving would be over. Our society seems to crave "instant answers," but bereavement is a long process, and there are no easy solutions. Yet, I couldn't help imagining what I would put in my own "Recipe for Recovery,"

Start with one cup of the MILK OF HUMAN KINDNESS - all those dear friends who did not turn away from me when they heard of Steve's suicide; but helped in many practical, caring ways to make the first months easier.

Add several GOOD EGGS - helping professionals like my minister, the counselor who suggested TCF and the young funeral director couple who organized the TCF Chapter I attended in New York.

Throw in a few heaping tablespoons of READING MATERIALS - Books and pamphlets from the TCF Library that started my thoughts going in a positive direction.

Add THE SALT OF THE EARTH - wonderful new friends I met through TCF and other support groups. Maybe we should call them THE CREAM OF THE CROP, because eventually they rise to the top.

Sprinkle liberally with TEARS - because it's okay to cry and generously with LAUGHTER - because we can learn to smile again.

Bake in a warm oven of TENDER LOVING CARE. Be sure to make enough to share with others and freeze some for later. That's my recipe - what's yours?

~ Cynthia Kelley, TCF/Cincinnati, OH

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

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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 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 _____