



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

Volume 28 Number 10

Fargo ND/Moorhead MN

October 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 October 13th

Next month's meeting is on November 10th

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.

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 sherylcv13@msn.com or mail them to the PO box listed on the back of the Newsletter. Anything sent to the PO Box will be scanned for the website and returned.

Help us save money and paper.....

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*****OCTOBER LOVE GIFT*****

Wallace & Sonia Wateland in memory of their son, Mark Wateland 7/1949 - 11/2001

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

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

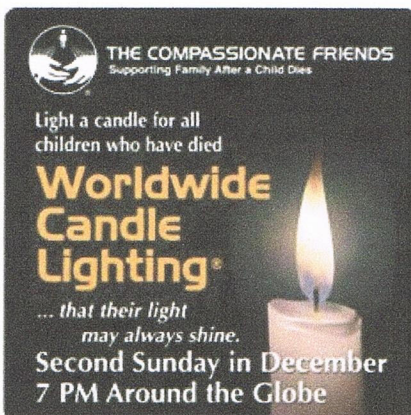
Donations make this newsletter, postage, books, tapes, etc. possible.

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.

Nine Years or Nine Hundred

Sometimes it seems that nobody understands

The pain of losing your child

"Well," they say, "it's been nine years

Shouldn't you be over it by now?

My parents died (or my cousin - or my dog,)

And I did my grieving and got over it," they say.

Nine years— It seems like only yesterday

And I remember the horror:

- The police knocking at the door in the middle of the night
- Making funeral arrangements (funeral arrangements?) for my son.
- Asking his best friends — boys who were just yesterday playing ball and laughing with him — to be his pallbearers.
- That awful empty feeling in the pit of my stomach when the limousine from the funeral home; drove up to our house.
- Seeing his casket poised above the freshly-dug grave.
- Being pulled away from the graveside when the eternity of services was done.
- Waking up every morning for weeks and for a blessed split second thinking everything was right with the world, then the reality crashing in that he is dead.
- Fumbling my way, somehow, through the days and nights.

Yes, my friends, it's been nine years. And still it hurts to say his name.

To think what he might have been doing now with his life.

To realize what a waste of a young life it was.

So, please, don't expect me to be "over it" or "okay."

Not in nine years - Or in ninety - Or in nine hundred

Barbara Koontz Clarihew, TCF/Bucksmont Chapter

A Note To A Newly Bereaved Parent

Memories have no time spans,
one minute, one hour, one day.

The heart will hold forever
what time has taken away.

I know your pain will lift some
with every new minute, hour and day.

No one will replace them,
we will just have to wait.

But our memories will touch our hearts
till we can touch again!

We do survive, my friends, as God is my Witness!

Suzi Southworth, TCF/McMinnville, OR

Am I Healing?

Am I healing? I'm able to gaze at her photograph without that tourniquet tightening around my throat, clamping memory...

I'm beginning to see her in her life, and not only myself bereft of her life...

Piece by piece, I re-enter the world. A new phase. A new body, a new voice. Birds console me by flying, trees by growing, dogs by the warm patch they leave behind on the sofa. Unknown people merely by performing their motions. It's like a slow recovery from a sickness, this recovery of one's self...

Toby Talbot, TCF/Volusia/Flagler, FL

GRIEVING IS A LONELY JOB

I don't care what anybody says, grieving is a very lonely job. Friends and family try to help in their own way, but, sometimes it's almost too much effort to try to explain how you feel inside.

In fact, I'm not so sure that there are words to describe the feeling. It isn't "physical pain," and I don't know if "emotional pain" is any more descriptive. It's just a feeling that's always there. The sadness, the loneliness, the helplessness. On the outside, of course, no one would know. From the beginning people would always tell me how great I looked or how well I was doing. What did they expect? Sometimes I'm tempted to ask, "Well, how do you expect me to look?" But I don't. They mean well. They just don't know what else to say.

Oh, it's true, the last 15 months since my 17 year old son, Shane was killed in a motorcycle accident with his friend., I've come a long way. Life is good, and I have much to look forward to each day. A challenging job, terrific friends, a great family including Shane's 14 year old brother, Zachary. But there are days when it's just not enough.

It's interesting how your entire perspective about life changes when you're forced to endure a personal tragedy. I call it my "Big Deal Scale". Losing Shane was the "biggest deal" I've ever experienced. It gives me a tool in which to measure the trivial ups and downs of life. We all have the strength to endure a tremendous amount of pain. We just have to get it in perspective.

It doesn't come easy. I consciously work at it every day. I wonder if it will ever go away. Sometimes I hope it doesn't. I guess it's my way of remembering,, holding on.

My biggest source of strength comes from Zachary, though. My heart aches for him; knowing how close he was to Shane. The first few days after the accident, he said, "Shane was my idol. He always helped me and taught me things." It's hard for me to imagine what it must be like for him. Still sleeping in the same room that they shared for 13 years. Although, now he sleeps in Shane's bed, and does his homework at Shane's desk. He says he likes it like that. I guess it's just his way of remembering. Of holding on.

Months ago when Zachary asked when the "hurt" would stop, I didn't have an instant answer. Grieving is a lonely job. To be done in individual time frames. But what I did tell him was, "Trust me. The pain will eventually fade but, the memories will last a lifetime." And just the other day he said to me, "You're right, Mom, The hurt is much better." I can see it in his face, in his eyes. He has matured so much this last year. It seems like he was a baby when all this happened. Now, I can see so much of Shane in him. And, I know that if he can do this "job", he can handle anything. And so can I.

Susan Hedlund, TCF/Portland, OR

QUESTIONS

How do things look from your side of the rainbow?

Are the colors still the same?

Are they dull or bright?

Are the clouds white or gray?

What about the trees?

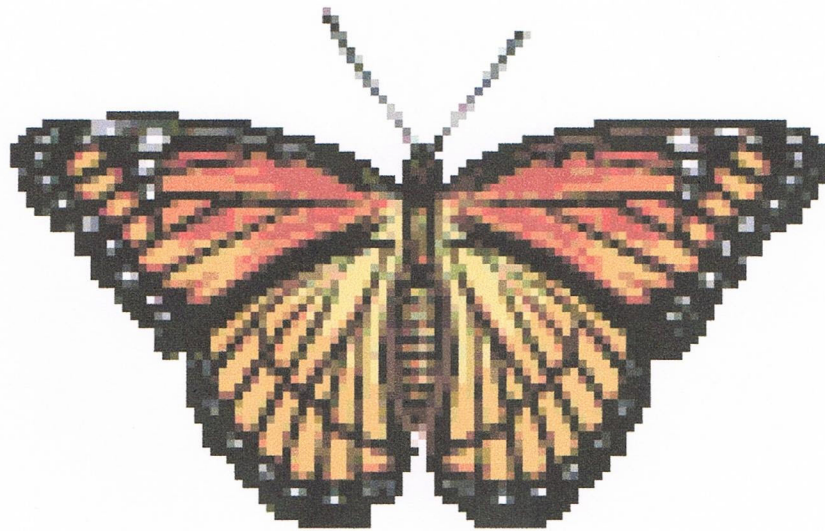
The grass?

The flowers?

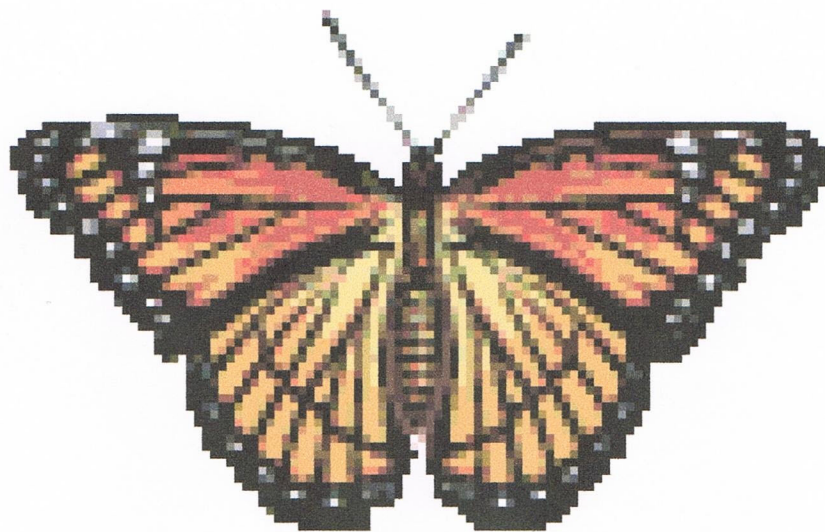
Do you see me kneeling at your grave?

Mary Vandever, TCF/Long Beach, CA

OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED



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



David's Surprise

Jan. 31, 1974, was an incredibly sunny, warm day. It was also the day my perfect life came crashing down around me. My husband, Lee, and I were at home with our 7-year-old son, David, when the horrible news came: our Angie, 11, had been killed in an accident, along with a teenage girl my two daughters had been visiting.

What anguish ... what unimaginable devastation.

Immediately, amid the deluge of loss, I pictured David and Angie bike riding together over sandy trails during the six months we'd lived in Shiloh, South Carolina, or playing Old Maid, or embarking upon Password's more serious challenge. While our independent Pat, 13, sought privacy, the two younger siblings had bonded closely in this tranquil rural setting. Gentle patience marked Angie's attitude toward her sometimes bumbling little brother. Now what would David do without his doting sister?

What would I do without my little nursemaid? Oh God, how would I get through it? How could I let go?

The following days blurred as family rallied and loving, caring people came and went. Slowly, I noticed that David seemed set apart from the grim drama. His face gave no indication that he felt the enormity of what had happened.

Fear hit me. Would he forget her? From my fog of pain, I honestly didn't know what to say to him, and when I tried, something always stopped me.

Days later, I noticed he'd moved on to more play activity. Annoyance pierced my haze of grief when I noticed him digging on our property's back corner, actually a low-country sand hill with marshy sod in places. His area of interest sloped away and downward, out of sight from the kitchen window. Amid visits from condolence bearers, I was aware of the backyard toil and wondered, vaguely, what make-believe fantasy held him captive.

At first, his solitary activity didn't seem extraordinary, since David now had no steady playmate. It's simply a time-passing, energy-spending diversion, I concluded, and proceeded with life motions and the grieving process.

Day in, day out, David continued to trudge over the hill, digging from sunup till sundown. Perplexed, I asked him, "What's going on?"

"It's a surprise," he informed me matter-of-factly. He'd always been the fun-seeking adventurer of the family. But now, quite frankly, his enthusiasm stirred my anger. After all, he never even mentioned Angie. I certainly didn't expect him to anguish as I did, but it didn't seem right, somehow, that he ignored her absence.

One day, young friends visited. David merely put them to work. From the window, I gaped at kids scurrying about like beavers, toting buckets of water and split timber pieces (from a stack of firewood) and disappearing over the slope. When David ran in for a drink of water, I caught him by his muddy sleeve.

"What in the world are you guys doing?"

He smiled that enigmatic smile now so familiar. "You'll see, Mom."

Finally, days later, David dashed into my room. "Mama! It's ready!" His blue eyes danced with excitement. He grabbed my hand, pulling me from folding laundry, through the hall, out the door, his grin stretching wider and wider. "Wait till you see it!" He continued to tug me up the hill, down the slope, then right to the digging site.

I stopped dead in my tracks. My mouth fell open in wonder.

He looked up at me, beaming with pride. "I made it for Angie."

There before my eyes was a miniature pond. A small bridge of stacked split logs formed a crude ramp, big enough for one to walk right out to the center of the water.

From atop a tall pole on the shallow shore flapped a white banner. Meticulously printed in David's neat handwriting, it read: ANGIE SHILOH POND.

"Well, Mama, what do you think about it?" He gazed expectantly at me.

I was so choked I couldn't say anything. Emotions invaded, pummeled me. Grief, pride, love, admiration... shame. How could I have questioned David's depth of love for Angie? I felt like sinking into the marsh and never coming up.

Suddenly, I understood why I'd not been able to talk with him about it: God was telling me to entrust David into his capable hands.

I swallowed audibly and groped for words. "I think it's a very sweet gesture. Angie would be so proud to know that you built this in her honor." Oh, so proud.

Later that night, David called me to his room, and as he dressed for bed, I sat beside him. The warmth of the shared afternoon lingered.

"Mama, you know why I built that pond, don't you?" As he tugged off his sock, I noticed the grubby, calloused little hands.

"I think so, honey, but why don't you tell me anyway."

"Well—I just had to do something, y'know—big." Blue eyes turned up to my face. And that's when I saw the sorrow in their depths. And the dark shadows beneath them.

"She didn't have much of a life, did she?" he asked.¹³

"What do you mean?"

"Eleven years isn't long to live, is it?" He grimaced as he pulled off his other sock. "That's why I couldn't just do a—dime thing. I wanted to do a—dollar thing." He grew still for a long moment, reflecting solemnly on that. "I think she knows, Mom."

I nodded, too choked to speak, grasping his second-grade logic. Such was his love for his sister.

For at least a month after our talk that night, David carried water daily to Angie's pond, as soft sand rather quickly soaked it up. Of course, I knew this could not

continue indefinitely. As his "do something" grief phase ebbed, Angie's little pond eventually dried up. David moved on to yet other healing and acceptance stages.

For months, I allowed the banner and the roughhewn bridge to remain on our yard's secluded back corner. I couldn't bring myself to part with it. Rain faded the letters and the wood began to crumble, but the message remained alive. Time passed and it continued to comfort me.

Late one afternoon, I stood on the ramp in the silence. And then birdsong penetrated my haze, sweetly transporting me to a plane of peace. I knew in that moment that though David's grief was not always visible, his tribute to Angie surpassed all others combined. I knew also that his gift extended to me.

If David could turn loose, so could I. A soft breeze ruffled my hair and drew my damp face upward. I looked beyond the tall pines into frothy white clouds and infinite blue.

I realized this visit to the pond would be my last.

Because I knew what David, with a child's simplicity, already knew: in the Lord, we never truly lose someone we love.

I blew a kiss and whispered, "I love you, Angie." I turned and walked away.

~ Emily Sue Harvey, Lyman, SC

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We Need Not Walk Alone, Fall 2000

The Water Lily

A lonely young wife in her dreaming discerns
A lily-decked pool with a border of ferns
And a beautiful child, with butterfly wings,
Trips down to the edge of the water and sings;
"Come, mamma, come! Quick, follow me!
And step on the leaves of the water Lily!"
And the lonely young wife, her heart beating wild,
Cries, "Wait till I come, till I reach you, my child!"
But the beautiful child with butterfly wings
Steps out on the leaves of the lily and sings;
"Come, mamma, come! Quick, follow me!
And step on the leaves of the water Lily!"
And the wife in her dreaming steps out on the stream
But the lily leaves sink and she wakes from her dream.
Ah, the waking is sad, for the tears that it brings,
For she knows it's her dead baby's spirit that sings;
"Come, mamma, come! Quick, follow me!
And step on the leaves of the water Lily!"
"Come, mamma, come! Quick, follow me!
And step on the leaves of the water Lily!"

~ Henry Lawson



THE TOP TEN GIFTS

HUGS....to someone who is lonely

LOVE....to someone who has nothing to give in return

PATIENCE....to someone who is struggling with life.

FREEDOM....to someone drifting in a sea of anxiety

UNDERSTANDING....to someone who is confused

TOLERANCE....to someone who doesn't see things as you do

KINDNESS...to someone in pain

FORGIVENESS....to someone you feel has harmed you

SOFTNESS.....to someone who has not yet removed his hard shell.

~ Lifted with Love from the TCF Fox Valley Newsletter

The Gate to Tomorrow

There is a gate that each of us has unknowingly passed through. This gate opens only one way.....once we have passed through this gate we cannot return to the other side. Each of us stepped through the gate at a different time and in a different way. This gate opens to the world of parents whose children have died; it is their gate to every tomorrow.

There is no other place that compares with life in this world beyond the gate; there is no sorrow like the sorrow inside the gate. The numbing pain and perpetual agony we experience when first stepping through this gate are so overwhelming that we often don't immediately realize that there will be no return. But we will never return to life before the gate.

The new world inside the gate is populated with friends who are strangers and strangers who are friends.

Our perspective on life has changed forever. Few of our friends from life before the gate will linger with us now; these people are now the strangers. Our pain is all encompassing; they have lives to live, things to do, plans to make, happiness to capture. We are no longer part of their picture. Rare is the friend who stands by us inside the gate.....stands by us until one of us dies and leaves the world inside the gate.

The strangers who are now friends live inside the gate with us. Some have just come through the gate; others have been here a long, long time. But these strangers who are now friends share our experience; they understand our need to talk about our children, each life and each death. They applaud our tiny advances toward acceptance and serenity and peace. Although we can never go back to life before the gate, we now have our compassionate friends.....once strangers but now kindred souls who share our lives and our world.

Life will not be the same again, yet life can be good again. Inside the gate we will each find ourselves with the help of our compassionate friends. They listen carefully to stories about our child. They know our child's name better than they know our name. And that's how we want it to be....remember our children. Remember with us.

~ Annette Mennen Baldwin, TCF/Katy, TX
In memory of Todd Mennen

SIBLING PAGE

LOOKING TO THE LIGHT

It is difficult to articulate thoughts and feelings about a life-altering event such as the death of a brother. For a long time, the only thing I could do to find any solace was to read about the tragic experiences of others. I was often moved to tears, so strong was my identification with their anguish.

I never suffered from denial. My brother's death was always a very tangible thing. It was my grief. I owned it. In accepting it, I feel that the healing was somehow expedited. I don't mean to imply that I am now returned to the unaffected individual that existed prior to his death, that my acceptance of his death is now clear.

I don't think you ever "get over" such a loss. What happens is the incorporation of that loss into your daily life. In my case, that process brought a number of changes in attitude and priority which, as it turned out, were in my best interest. I had become centered on myself and my career to such an extent that I was armed against life's disappointments. When meeting me, it became clear to others that "career" was what it was all about.

I keep pictures of my brother all around so that I can see him several times each day. In doing so, I am alternately both comforted and saddened. But mostly, I am comforted. I know he is in heaven, and I believe he looks in on me and is aware of the magical events that have taken place in my life. When I look upward through my kitchen skylights, I can see the sky and the top of the big old elm in the lights. I talk to him in my heart and I know he is near. I still shed my tears, for I miss him and will the remainder of my life.

Given a choice, I wish he had never become ill and that he hadn't ended his life. Today, some two years after his death, I can accept it and understand his choice. The love we feel for a loved one never has to leave us, even though our loved one has departed physically.

~ Rhonda St. John, TCF/Grosse Pointe Woods, MI

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

You left us so suddenly that I think most of us just felt shock. Did you know of everyone's love for you? We used to have lots of fun playing basketball, talking about diesel trucks and dragsters, and playing videos. You lived for scouting, you lived for animals and nature -- you lived for us all. I got to know your corny jokes, your adolescent fears (although for you they were understandably real), the simplest way with which you saw life, the joy you placed in other's hearts.

How could it be that you're gone now while others seemingly less deserving live on? I'm not sure. Life isn't fair - everyone has said it - but why? Why does the sun rise? Why are we here? What is the purpose of life? I haven't been alive very long, but the only response I can come up with is love. Love has to be the answer to this question.

I love you. We all love you. We shall meet again someday, and that day will be a day of joy for me, a day that we shall again be companions. By that time, we will have a lot to share. It already seems a lifetime since you've gone. So it goes.

We live, we love, we learn. Our biggest task to learn is to let you go and never Forget.

~ Scott T. Anderson, TCF/Omaha, NE

An Essay On Love

Many things have affected my life during my short seventeen years. I have seen myself undergo several changes, and pass through different stages. However, the event that, without a doubt, has had the most profound effect on my life, was the death of my brother Doug on July 23, 1994. Because of this, I find myself to be a completely different person than ever imagined I would be, and my entire outlook on life has changed.

At the time of Doug's death, he was only at the young age of 19. I was only five years younger at 14. Because I was at the age when I began to share many of the same interests as him, we had become closer than we had ever been. The memories of our playful wrestling-matches, and frequent games of softball or basketball, are forever implanted in my mind. He was more than just my brother; he was truly my best friend. There were so many things that I wanted to do with him, or anticipated to see him accomplish, and it all seems so unfair that he had to slip away just when we realized our special relationship.

Since Doug's death, I have come to realizations that some people take years to come to, and those that some people never will. The most important of these is that we must cherish every moment we have with those we love, because nobody is promised to be alive when they wake up. This may seem drastic, however, when I woke up at 1:00 in the morning and found out my brother was gone, it seemed anything but drastic. Looking back, I wish I could change words I spoke to him, and actions, which at the time seemed harmless. The only thing in life that I feel is necessary for everyone to learn is how to love without limits, and to appreciate what we have.

It has taken me much time, and many tears to accept this tragedy which has been placed so suddenly in my life. I fear, however, that I would never have been who I am now if the one I so dearly cherished had not fallen into God's grace. It is sad to realize that sometimes only a tragedy can change a person's heart forever.

~ Kari Brown, TCF/Warrington, PA

FOREVER 13

He would have been a junior
He should have been on the football team
He could have been a wrestler
He might have been.....
He would have been 17 this year
He should have been laughing and running
about
He could have been chasing the girls
He might have been.....
He would have been blowing his French horn
He should have been giving his teachers
a hard time
He could have been learning how to drive
He might have been.....
Except now he is forever 13.....

~ Lorie Beyl, TCF/Colorado Springs, CO.



Nibbling At Life's Pleasures

Most mothers I know are pretty selfless creatures. When there's not enough meat to go around, Mom takes a second helping of beans. There's probably nothing she'd rather do than iron Missy's cheerleader uniform at midnight. And why would she want a new Easter dress when the old polka dot polyester still fits? Altruism aside, every mom needs a smidgen of pleasure in her life to help maintain her sweet disposition.

To reward myself for being a hardworking wife and mother of three active boys, I allowed myself an occasional indulgence ... a long, hot bath in a tub filled to the brim, a good book (preferably one that would make me laugh), and my favorite guilty pleasure, a Skor bar. I liked to eat it a piece at a time, sucking off the chocolate before I crunched down on the tooth-jarring English toffee. If I managed to finish a Skor with fillings intact, it was a triumph. And if I could read a good book while soaking in a hot tub and munching on a Skor bar, well, life just didn't get any better.

Then one day I found out how life couldn't get any worse, when my 3- year-old son, Blake, died suddenly from meningitis. Guilt and self-hatred overwhelmed me. What kind of mother wouldn't recognize how sick her child was and rush him to the hospital? How could I have been so blind, so stupid? As his mother, he trusted me to care for him, and I let him down.

My once-carefree existence became a series of gray days followed by black, sleepless nights. I ate, but only to stay alive. I took short, cool showers, but only to get clean. I never picked up a book unless it dealt with grief. Driven by guilt, I convinced myself that I no longer deserved any of life's pleasures. Besides, how could I ever enjoy anything again with Blake gone?

One night, some months after Blake died, my husband, Jeff, left to take our boys to basketball practice. The dishes were done, the house was spotless, and the long, empty evening loomed ahead of me. I went into the bedroom, flopped on the bed and curled up with the cat. On the nightstand I spotted a book a friend had given me. "*Funny*," she had said. "*A great read*." Well, it wasn't a grief book so I wasn't interested. Idly, I picked it up anyway and read the first page. Before I knew it, I was hooked. Suddenly, I heard a strange sound, somewhere between a hack and a hoot. The cat jumped and looked at me in alarm. I had laughed! It was a creepy, creaky laugh, rusty from months of disuse, but a laugh nonetheless. Did I just have fun? Yipes! I couldn't do that! I snapped the book shut and shoved it under the bed.

The next morning I took a shower as usual, only this time I lingered for three minutes instead of two and I turned the temperature up a notch so it was almost warm. I dressed and headed for the grocery store, where I careened down the aisles grabbing stuff from the shelves and trying not to look at the treats I used to buy for Blake. While reaching for a package of sugarless gum at the checkout, I caught sight of a display of Skor bars. I quickly looked away, but to my amazement, a Skor bar leaped onto the conveyor belt with my other groceries. Before I could put it back, the sacker had bagged it and it was mine.

I broke the speed limit getting home, dashed inside, and guiltily pitched the Skor bar on the highest shelf of the pantry. Later, when I opened the pantry to get a can of tuna for my lunch, a small voice from above called out, "Pat, oh Pat, I'm here. Come and get me." I slammed the door and started furiously chopping pickles for tuna salad. But the voice in the pantry became more insistent. "Pat, I'm here and I'm delicious!" A Skor-deprived woman can only stand so much. I flung open the pantry, stood on tiptoe, snatched the talking Skor bar, and ripped the wrapper open with my teeth. In a frenzy, I broke off a piece and popped it in my mouth. Hungrily, I sucked the chocolate off and crunched down on the rock-hard toffee. Lord, it was good! To my amazement, the heavens didn't open and swallow me.

Lightning didn't strike me dead. For the first time in months, I REALLY enjoyed myself! I chucked the tuna back on the shelf and piece by piece, I relished the rest of the Skor bar. Then, with chocolaty fingers, I grabbed a handful of Cheetos and a couple of Oreos, and washed them down with a Yoohoo. It was the best lunch I'd had in months.

Later, as I was putting clean towels in the linen closet, I heard a familiar voice echoing from the bathtub, "Pat, I've missed you. Wouldn't a hot bath feel good? Why don't you fill me up?" Trying not to be alarmed that voices were orchestrating my behavior, I obediently ran hot water in the tub, but only half-full. I didn't want to go overboard. Peeling off my clothes, I hopped in. And as I sank into the heavenly, steamy water, I closed my eyes and thought of Blake. He knew how to live! He packed more living into three years than some people do into thirty. He ran faster, climbed higher, laughed louder than any little kid I ever knew. He savored life, every aspect of it. No nibbling at life for him! He broke it off in chunks and devoured it.

Right now, because of my grief, I could only nibble at life's pleasures. But I knew Blake wouldn't want me to live a guilt-ridden, joyless life. He would want me to buy a SIX-PACK of Skor bars, fill the tub to the brim with the hottest water, grab a good book, and soak and eat and read until the water turned cool and I was all pruny.

And, by golly, some day I'd do just that. *For Blake. For Blake's mommy.*

~Patricia Butler Dyson, TCF/Beaumont, TX
We Need Not Walk Along, Fall 2000

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
OF THE F-M AREA
PO BOX 10686
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 Milligan 701-282-4794
Newsletter Editor	Nancy Teeuwen701-730-0805	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 _____