



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

FARGO/MOORHEAD AREA CHAPTER

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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F-M Area Chapter
P.O. Box 10686
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Chapter Leader - John Milligan (701) 282-4794

Newsletter Editor - Nancy Teeuwen (701) 730-0805

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.

Upcoming Meetings
October 11th
November 8th

Dates to Remember in 2012
December 9th - Worldwide
Candle Lighting 7 pm

If you have any pictures, stories, or poems of your child, grandchild or 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.

LOVE GIFTS

Sandra & Charles Klinkhammer in memory of their son, Alex B. Klinkhammer
Darold & Lyla Rath in memory of their son, Mitchell D. Rath
Jerry & Delores Beyers in memory of their daughter, Tammy K. Chaput

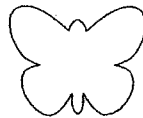
We are deeply grateful for the LOVE GIFTS given this month. Our chapter and all chapters, are financed solely through your Love Gifts. Donations make this newsletter, postage, books, tapes, etc. possible. Thank you for your tax deductible gifts.

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



Butterfly Decals



The F-M Chapter has recently purchased a trailer, in order to transport materials to our chapter activities. We are selling butterfly decals, which will be placed on the trailer. The butterflies are 4 x 6 and available in five colors: yellow, pink, red, blue and green.

Each butterfly will contain the first and last name of a child.

If you wish to purchase a butterfly in the memory of a child, please send your name, the name of the child, butterfly color, and a check payable to TCF of Fargo-Moorhead, P.O. Box 10686, Fargo, ND 58106.

Butterflies are \$25 each, 3 for \$65 or 4 for \$80. If you wish to purchase more than 4 butterflies, please contact our chapter leader, John Milligan.

LOVE

"...Grief is the price we pay for love. We did not lose our children. They died, taking with them our hopes and dreams for the future, but, never, never taking away their love. Though death comes, love will never go away. Hold it tight, the love our children gave us. Hold it tight through the storms of grief and bring it with you into today. Love never goes away..."

-- Darcie Sims

Have Others Forgotten?

The first several weeks following the death of a child are usually filled with lots of emotional grief support. Friends drop by your home with food. Cards arrive daily. Phone calls of encouragement come quite often. Then, almost as suddenly as the support began, it ends. Friends become scarce, and when they are around, they don't know what to say so they often remain silent. As a parent, it feels like everyone has forgotten your child, and that leaves a parent with a lonely, empty feeling.

The death of a child makes others feel very uncomfortable. Friends and family members alike often are afraid to mention the name of the deceased child for fear of bringing up sad memories to the parents. What others fail to realize is that it is very healing for parents to hear the name of their child spoken, as well as to hear stories that bring warm memories to mind. Parents long to hear about their child from others. Fond remembrances are comforting and aid in healing.

As a parent, it often helps to talk about your child to others, breaking the ice of being uncomfortable. Remind others that you love to hear your child's name spoken in a warm way. It will often be up to you to lead the way with talking about your child. Once you make the effort, others will know that they, too, have permission to talk about times spent with your child. They will find that it's healing to them to talk about your child, too. The bond of friendship you share will become even stronger as you walk through this journey of grief hand-in-hand.

Be prepared for the few who might suggest that you should be ready to "move on" with your life, though. Many simply will not understand that your loss presents a continuing empty void that needs attention. The absence of support leads a parent to believe that their precious child has been forgotten. Actually, others have not forgotten, but they might feel that enough time has elapsed to provide healing. What most people don't understand is that grief, while it does get better, is a slow, difficult journey that takes lots of time and hard work.

How can a parent cope when others are not providing adequate support? It's a great idea to find a local support group, if at all possible. Face-to-face support can be the one thing that keeps a parent going during those lonely, dark moments. It helps to find a group where you can talk freely about your feelings, vent openly without fear of someone making you feel inadequate, and where you can mention your child's name without being made to feel uncomfortable.

When it seems like others have forgotten, bring your child's memory alive by talking about past experiences. Invite some of your child's friends to your home and plan something like an informal get together and perhaps have your child's friends help you begin a memory book or some sort of scrap book. An activity like this can be quite healing to all involved.

Others have a tendency to forget special days, anniversaries, and occasions such as your child's birthday. Rather than waiting for others to send a card, plan a meal and something such as a balloon release, candle lighting, or planting of a flower or tree in memory of your child. Ask your friends and family members to join you for these special occasions for additional support.

Have others forgotten? Not always. Most times they are afraid to bring up memories for fear of adding more pain. When you openly remember your child, so will others. And, you will soon have a built-in support system that can carry you through the difficult days into healing.

~ Clara Hinton

Hiding behind the Mask

I think we as bereaved parents wear masks 12 months out of the year, not just on Halloween....perhaps on Halloween we should just wear our own grief stricken face and not be noticed.

How many masks do you wear - even in a week ... or a day. Do you wake up in the morning feeling the pain, with the knowledge that your child is no longer here? Do you "mask" that face with your old normal face to say good morning to your spouse? You can take the mask off and cry in the shower....it somehow feels so good to release some of those tears. Time to wake the children for school, put on the cheerful, positive mom mask. After dropping the children off at school you can once again remove the mask and feel. Soon you will be pulling into the parking lot at work....get the next mask out....the most of the competent professional. WOW! That's a lot of mask changing in a short time.

Strange isn't it how the MONSTER pain of grief makes us put on masks to cover the pain often to those who really care and who perhaps are putting on their masks to cover their pain when they see us.

Maybe we could all be so much better off if we removed our masks and let the monster pain out.

~ lovingly lifted from Bereaved Parents USA/Orange County

Love's Lasting Touch

Don't weep for me when I'm gone,
Because I'll always be there.
My spirit will exist in all the earth,
In the water, trees, and air.
You'll hear me say, "I love you,"
In the whisper of a breeze.
You'll know that I'm beside you,
With the rustling of the leaves.
You'll feel my arms caress you,
In the warmth of each sunrise.

The moon will be my goodnight kiss,
The stars my watchful eyes,
Your life will be my legacy,
Your memories my epitaph.
These ties will bind us together,
Till we meet on heaven's path.
I'll not ever desert you,
We'll never be far apart.
I'll live within you always
Nestled deep inside your heart.

~ Jacquelyn M. Comeaux

Pennies From Heaven

I found a penny today just laying on the ground.
But it is not just a penny this little coin I found...
Found pennies come from Heaven
that's what my Grandpa once told me. He said Angels toss them down . Oh, how I loved that story...
He said when an Angel misses you, they toss a penny down.
Sometimes just to cheer you up and make a smile out of your frown.
So don't pass by that penny when you are feeling blue.
It may be a penny from Heaven that an Angel has tossed to you!

~Author Unknown

OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED



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



SIBLING PAGE



Re-Entering School After the Death of a Sibling

Going back to school after the death of your brother or sister is a hard thing to go through. At first there are three groups of people to deal with: People who give you a lot of support, people who don't know what to say, and those who give you weird looks and stay away from you. This lasts for a little while. After a short time, changes with each group occur. Those who didn't know what to say start to speak or begin to talk. The group who kept away, stops ignoring you. The people who gave you a lot of support slowly return to their own affairs. After about a month and a half, everything goes back to normal and is over to everyone except you. This is very difficult to accept and makes you feel all the more alone. After a long while, the shock for you goes away and it is then when you need the support from your friends, peers, and teachers. This month is the first anniversary of the death of my brother. Most people will have forgotten and everything is right with the world. But it is not! Certainly not to my mother and me.

~ Jordan Ely

Missing You

I just can't believe it...
The sun still rises and sets,
The moon and stars still shine,
The flowers still bloom, the birds still sing.
I expected a change in everything
I just can't believe it...
It still gets dark and light,
The ocean still has waves,
The rain still rains, the wind still blows,
Is it because they do not know?
I just can't believe it...
I thought the world would stop
When in my house I found
an empty chair, a missing smile
I thought it would stop for just a while.
I just can't believe it...

~ Gretta Viney, TCF/Yakima, WA

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'm missing you

I'm missing you –
All day, every day.

On a bright summer morning,
or when the moon is full,
In the golden days of fall,
as the storm clouds build
and it's snowing

When the willows begin to turn green
You are always with me,
in my mind and in my heart.
My brother, my good friend,
I'm missing you.

~ Kris Cunningham, TCF/Moro, IL

"One whose sister or brother has died has a special view of this loss. There is the loss itself, hard enough to bear, and often no one inquires how a bereaved sibling is doing with the grief. And as I've heard one sibling put it, 'I lost my brother, and my parents are so changed that I feel as if I lost them too.' Much is changed within our surviving family. Many of us have found the company of other bereaved siblings to be very valuable, a group of listeners who truly and fully understand." -

~ Charley Kopp, Contra Costa TCF Sibling Member

Twin Rainbows

Yesterday, I saw a glorious sight, a true vision of nature. I saw a double rainbow. The first rainbow, closest to earth, was very bright, colors clearly defined. The second rainbow, the one closer to heaven, was misty and loosely formed.

My dear brother, I thought of you. You represented the second rainbow. You were sent down to show me your presence, to show your closeness to me. I was told in a dream that you are never far away from me.

My life has changed. I have had to redefine and challenge myself - to make strong my weakness, because you always "took up the slack" for me. You always did for me what I could not do for myself.

This past year, one of our friends finally let go of his sorrow. He was able to talk and hug me, without breaking down or weeping over the memories of us. It has been difficult for our friends and family to separate you and me. They still say our names together. They have commented: "Where you see one, you'll soon see the other."

It has been hard for me to help all of these folks to heal; to let them know that they can still love me. I am the same person, but without you. At times, it has seemed an overwhelming task, but I can only try and be the friend that you taught me to be. Then, maybe, they'll see you are still here. All that you are - your spirit, love, and friendship - live through me.

Love. your sister,
Meria Rae Martin, Swinomish, WA



My Cover-Up Mask

I wake in the morning with tears in my eyes. I have to face another day without my child. I prepare to go to work and put on my "cover-up mask" as I go out to face the world.

I get my work done and even chat and sometimes smile at my co-workers. And they say, "My, how well she seems to be handling her loss." If they only knew what I am suffering under my "cover-up mask." My work day is over, and I go home and remove my "cover-up mask," and the tears come again.

I go to bed, as the darkness of night envelopes me and sleep eludes me, the tears come again. I have gotten through another day with my child. I have learned I must take one day at a time for the rest of my life, since it will never be the same again.

~ Joan Watson, TCF/Salisbury, MD

AS FALL APPROACHES...

As I type this newsletter, there is a suggestion of fall in the air. If this is your first fall without your child, and you have been having a few "good" days, but now you seem to be slipping, know that it is normal. If this is your first seasonal change, this expected mood swing may seem frightening. Change of seasons can be very difficult; even before the tragedy, our bodies reacted to seasonal change. The psychiatrists call it "seasonal blues." Add grief, and it compounds it.

If it is not your first, but you are still affected, don't be discouraged. That, too, is normal. It takes quite a few years before they can be handled better. In addition to how our body is affected, each season has its own set of memories with which we have to deal. With fall, there is the beginning of school. No matter what the age of our child, our thoughts can turn to the start of school. If they were very young, we may think about missing the fun of picking out clothes, lunch box, note-books, etc. If they were still in school, a pattern is broken in mid-sentence. If they were older, and the school years were finished, the memory of those years are still there, and we are taken wistfully back to those days.

Fall also means the holidays are coming closer and it is easy to slip into anticipating them. Try your best not to. Take it one day at a time; don't look ahead, particularly if you are in your first year. Today is what you should try to handle at this time. The tomorrows you will handle when they get here.

~ Mary Ehmman, TCF/Valley Forge, PA

The "Veteran" Bereaved Parent

Have you ever attended a TCF meeting to see a "veteran" bereaved parent shed a tear or openly show grief, and have wondered why after all that time?

Please don't get the wrong idea—the wrong idea being:

1. You won't ever cry after ten years.
2. You won't feel a need to still attend TCF meetings.
3. You won't feel like sticking with TCF in case a newly bereaved parent needs you.
4. You won't care enough to stay and help organize future meetings.
5. You won't feel compassionate enough to hear a newly bereaved parent talk of their grief.

Yes, some veteran bereaved parents move on and I wish them peace. But I am personally grateful for veteran bereaved parents who stay with TCF. What would newly bereaved parents do if they attended their first meeting and no one was there?

~ Sandy Smith, TCF/Greater Cincinnati Area, OH

DEATH IS NOTHING AT ALL

Death is nothing at all. It does not count.

I have only slipped away into the next room.

Nothing has happened. Everything remains exactly as it was. I am I, and you are you, and the old life that we lived so fondly together is untouched, unchanged. Whatever we were to each other, that we are still. Call me by the old familiar name. Speak of me in the easy way you always used to.

Put no difference in your tone. Wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow.

Laugh, as we always laughed at the little jokes that we enjoyed together.

Play, smile, think of me, pray for me. Let my name be ever the household word that it always was. Let it be spoken without an effort, without the ghost of a shadow upon it. Life means all that it ever meant. It is the same as it ever was.

There is absolute and unbroken continuity.

What is this death but a negligible accident?

Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight?

I am but waiting for you, for an interval, somewhere very near, just around the corner.

Be well.

~Sir Henry Scott Hollander

THE FALL OF FALL

What is it about the season

That takes me back in time

Everything I do,

I find you are on my mind.

Haunting dreams find me

At night when I try to sleep

And every little detail is replayed,
and the sadness falls so deep.

Something about the close of summer

Seems to bring it back

Making it so hard to move onward and stay on track.

Something about the dying and fading of the trees

Brings my heart to sorrow, with the falling of the leaves.

How I long to stop it, to keep the fall away

But time marches on, and summer just won't stay.

I know with the fall, winter's not far behind

Another lonely season, and the memories flood my mind.

I cry my tears of sorrow, and pray for spring to come

A rebirth of the earth, and the warmth of the sun.

It makes the memories softer and gentler to recall

But now my life is saddened with the nearing of fall.

~Sheila Simmons, TCF/Atlanta Online Sharing

AUTUMN

In the fall

When amber leaves are shed,

Softly-silently

Like tears that wait to flow,

I watch and grieve.

My heart beats sadly in the fall;

'Tis then I miss you Most of all.

~ Lily deLauder, TCF/Van Nuys, CA



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**THE
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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 701-282-4794	Secretary-Treasurer	Sheryl Cvijanovich 701-235-8158
Librarian		Initial Contact	Kylene Milligan 701-282-4794
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
Lois Gangnes (son, 24 - accident) 701-282-4083
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 _____

NOTE: By giving a love gift, you are giving us permission to include your child(ren) in our monthly birthdays and anniversaries.