



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS FARGO/MOORHEAD AREA CHAPTER

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

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The F-M Area Chapter of The Compassionate Friends meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. at FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH 127 2ND AVE E WEST FARGO, ND
Please enter on the West side. Our meeting is in the Fellowship Hall - lower level, west side.

Upcoming Meetings
September 12th
October 10th

Dates to Remember

Mom's meeting - September 26th
Worldwide Candle Lighting® -
7 p.m. December 8th
TCF National Conference -
Chicago, IL July 11-13, 2014

Please check out our Chapter website's page for 'Our Beloved Children' (www.tcffargomoorhead.org/ourchildren.htm). If you would like your child's picture and a poem or story posted on this page, please submit them to us at tcf1313@hotmail.com or mail them to our PO Box (listed on the back of the newsletter). Photos and poems/stories sent to the PO Box will be electronically scanned and then returned to you so please remember to include a return address.

Like Barley Bending

Like barley bending
In low fields by the sea --
Singing in the harsh winds,
Ceaselessly;
Like barley bending
And rising again --
So will I, unbroken,
Rise from pain;
So will I, softly,
Day long, night long --
Change my sorrow
Into song.
by Sara Teasdale

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

Our trailer is beginning to look like a butterfly garden! The trailer was purchased in order to transport materials to our chapter activities but it has also helped make our local chapter better known in the Fargo-Moorhead community. Each butterfly decal holds the first and last name of one of our precious children.

Butterflies are still available in all five colors (yellow, pink, red, blue and green). The cost for 1 butterfly is \$25, 3 butterflies are \$65 and 4 butterflies are \$80. If you wish to purchase more than 4, please contact our chapter leader, John Milligan. Butterfly orders should include the child's name and color of the butterfly. Checks should be made payable to TCF of Fargo-Moorhead and the order mailed to PO Box 10686, Fargo, ND 58106.

You can see pictures of the trailer with butterflies on our website at www.tcffargomoorhead.org/ourtrailer.html.

"Some say you're too painful to remember. I say you're too precious to forget."
Our Mom's group has been meeting on the 4th Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm at the Fryn' Pan Restaurant, 300 Main Avenue, Fargo. Our gatherings are informal as we come together to talk about our children, books that we've read, recipes we've tried, our jobs and whatever else comes up during the course of the evening. We all have times where the listening heart of another mom or grandma is welcome (and necessary). Please join us this month on Thursday September 26th. For more information please contact Sheryl at 701-235-8158 or sherylc13@msn.com.

Our 2013 Walk to Remember was held on Saturday, July 20, 2013. We met at Oak Grove Park in Fargo and walked to the Angel of Hope statue in Island Park. We had 125 participants! Thank you all for joining us!

We had perfect weather for the walk as temps were in the upper 60s/lower 70s. We had a few challenges as the Fargo Street Fair was being held that same weekend. We altered our route a little to avoid the booths and crowds and enjoyed the walk. Upon arriving at Island Park, we were greeted by a Car Show that completely surrounded the Angel of Hope statue. We wended our way between the old time and custom cars and some of us laid down flowers at the Angel's base. Others had a balloon release in an open area of the park in memory of our children. The Northstar Mustangs, hosts of the car show, invited our Chapter Leader, John Milligan, to speak so we were also able to educate people about our group.

Our potluck was delicious and this year we had enough chicken to go around! Thanks to everyone for the wonderful food. Fellowship was warm and friendly. We shared laughter and tears as we shared our children. It's good to get to know one another outside of meetings and it's nice to meet other family members.

Thank you to all who participated! We, literally, "need not walk alone."

What about Parents of Troubled Children?

At one of our meetings we discussed a subject that is not new. "Why did MY child have to die? He was so good. I was a good parent, a good person. There are so many 'bad' kids out there whose parents probably wouldn't care. Why couldn't it have been one of them?" Those thoughts probably sound familiar to many of us. Let's look at them from a different perspective.

Perhaps the child was especially good or gifted. However, it is quite common, in our grief, to remember only the good things, sometimes even putting the child on a pedestal.

In the beginning, there is nothing wrong with that. We need all the comfort we can find. But it is wise for us to remember some of the trying times which humanize our dead children yet do not diminish our love for them one bit.

What about the parents of a troubled child? Do they really hurt less or care less? I think not. It is the nature of a parent to nurture, to care for and to love their offspring. To love them more than life itself. The parent of a troubled child might have a harder time adjusting to their loss. Their parenting job may have been very difficult and heartbreaking. Their list of "if onlys" may be longer than ours.

What are their memories? The immediate ones may be very sad and painful. They may have to dig deeper into the past to remember the good times. For these parents, the desire to go back in time may be very intense.

Guilt may also be more intense. We all make mistakes, some wrong decisions; we are not perfect. Why do we expect it of ourselves? We are human beings, subject to all the human frailties. So, if some children go through rebellious times, it does not make them bad kids, or their parents bad, either. Learn to forgive yourself for being human!

We tend to forget that our children's lives are influenced by many things outside the family. Peer influence and pressure is tremendous. Once children enter school, it becomes more difficult to "control" and influence them. They are pulled from all directions. Yet parents assume responsibility for all of the problems.

I hope that parents who have gone through troubling times with a child who has since died will realize that no harm is meant by bereaved parents expressing thoughts such as those cited earlier. There is not one bereaved parent who would wish this pain on anyone else. Although we hear those words spoken, what we are really hearing are the sounds of pain and anguish. Another form of the old question "WHY?"

No matter how your child lived, and no matter how he died, our hearts go out to all parents who are suffering. The bottom line is, we love our children no matter what. That is what unconditional love is all about.

~ Mary Ehmann, TCF/Valley Forge, PA

GUILT---IF ONLY...IF ONLY...IF ONLY

You may hear yourself using those words. Most parents whose child had died have periods when they feel guilty. A part of the guilt is wanting to undo what has been done...to stop time...to re-do a day or a minute that might make a difference.

Our culture teaches people to be hard on themselves and blame themselves when anything goes wrong. We tend, then, to feel responsible when children died, too. "If only I had kept him in longerIf only I had been there... If only I had known...If only...If only." we are people who want answers. It goes against all our beliefs, hopes and dreams when children die. You will search and look for answers to questions, which sometimes have no answers. Feeling guilty is one way of getting some kind of meaning into a situation, which makes no sense, of trying to answer the unanswerable WHY questions. When you feel guilty, recognize it for what it is...a sense of guilt and a searching for an answer. If you could have prevented your child's death, you would have. You and your family are not to blame.

~ Joy & Mary Johnson from the booklet "Children Die"

Suicide: How Do We Say It?

From the moment we learned of our daughter's death, I knew that the word "suicide" had the power to erase her life while emblazoning her death in neon letters in the minds of her friends and colleagues. During the unremitting misery of those early days, I even toyed with the idea of telling no one she was gone, willing her to stay alive in the thoughts of those who knew her, forgetting that I'd already notified our family and closest friends. It was a fairy tale wish I contrived as a way of allowing myself a momentary escape from the unthinkable reality of her death. If her death were never acknowledged, would she still be here?

My fantasy vanished in the cold light of the days that followed. I knew that we could never dishonor Rhonda's memory by concealing her suicide. I wrote a letter to friends and relatives, informing them of the events leading up to her death. I hoped my letter would quell the inevitable whispers by openly acknowledging her depression and her decision to end her own life. I implored them to speak often and openly about her to us; to do otherwise would deny her existence.

I never intended to embark on a campaign to confront, let alone eradicate, the stigma of suicide. What mattered most was that we who loved Rhonda must not let the circumstances of her death diminish her memory or her accomplishments. I explained that she had "taken her own life" or that "she died of suicide." An expression I refused to use then and refuse to use to this day, is the despicable "committed suicide," with its implications of criminality. Historically, that term was an instrument of retaliation against the survivors, and it has no place in today's enlightened society.

Many people prefer to say, "completed suicide," but as a parent who witnessed my child's 20-year struggle against the demons of clinical depression, I don't care much for that, either. "Died of suicide" or "died by suicide" are accurate, emotionally-neutral ways to explain my child's death.

My first encounter with suicide occurred many years ago when my dentist, a gentle family man in his mid 30's, took his own life. Since that time, I have known neighbors, relatives, friends and other hardworking, highly respected individuals who died this way. I've facilitated meetings in which grieving parents declined to speak about their children because they couldn't handle the group's reactions to the dreaded "s" word. I've known parents who never returned to a chapter meeting because of negative comments about the way that their child died.

Rhonda was a gifted scholar, writer and archaeologist who, like my mother, suffered from adult-onset manic depression (also called bipolar disorder). She made a lasting contribution in her field, and a wonderful tribute to her life and her work appeared in *American Antiquity, Journal of the Society for American Archaeology* (October, 1994).

Both my daughter and my mother suffered tremendously in their struggles to conquer and conceal their illness. Neither of them won that battle, but my mother responded to medications that minimized the highs and lows, and she died of cancer at 87. Sadly, doctors never discovered a magic formula that could offer Rhonda the same relief. She ended her own life at age 36, after a year of severe depression that was triggered by life stresses beyond her control. I saw her battle firsthand, and I witnessed her valiant struggle to survive. She wanted desperately to live; she died because she thought she had no alternative.

In his revealing book, *Telling Secrets*, the great theologian Frederick Buechner describes his father's suicide, which occurred when Buechner was just a boy. The conspiracy of silence that was imposed on Buechner and his brother had a profound effect on their development and their relationships with other family members. "We are as sick as our secrets," he concludes.

We whose children have taken their own lives must do all that we can to help eradicate the secrecy and stigma that surround their deaths. If we allow these to persist, we allow their lives to be diminished. We owe our children more than that.

© 1999 by Joyce Andrews

You are My Star

There may be many stars at night
Or there may be a few
But in their soft and silvery light
I always dream of you.
Because you are my special star
In every sky I see
Regardless of how near or far
Your loving smile may be.
Regardless of the heavy clouds
That cover up the sky
Or of the shadows and the shrouds
Before the human eye.
I dream of you in every rain
And in the falling snow
And in the winds that blow in vain
Where love and beauty grow.
Because no matter where you are
My heart belongs to you
The glorious and guiding star
Of everything I do.
James J. Metcalfe

"You don't heal from the loss because time passes, you heal because of what you do with the time."
~ Carol Crandall

OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED



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



A Grandparent's Point of View

The death of a child is the most tragic thing that can happen to anyone. It affects so many lives – family, friends, and even strangers.

I lost my grandchild through death, and only a grandparent can understand the love a grandparent has for a grandchild and the loss that is felt when the child dies. For a grandparent, it is a double loss. Not only is your grandchild gone, but you also watch your child die each day. The smile that was always on her face is no longer there.

The hurt is so deep and the questions so many. You feel helpless as a parent. You can't kiss the hurt away as you did when she was a child. You have no answers for her questions, for you don't understand the many feelings that you are experiencing yourself. Each day you hope and pray for a little ray of sunshine to show on her face. You search for a little something to say or do that will comfort her. It seems that there is no end to the suffering.

As time goes slowly by, the healing process begins. In time, a ray of hope will show on her face and a smile will make her eyes light up again. She will turn to you for what little comfort you can give her. There will always be a part of you that is gone, but in time you can learn to live with the part that is still here.

~ Ruth Eaton, TCF/Savannah, GA

School Starts

Strange things happen to you when your child dies. You'll fail if you try to make sense of most of it.

Both my children had finished high school when my son died, yet I found the beginning of school—especially that first year—to be difficult. The bus stops in front of my home for the neighborhood children. Suddenly, as they all gathered to wait for the bus, I found myself reliving those simpler, happier days of old; longing for them actually. It was a painful time.

Now, if I, whose children are grown and gone, had a problem with school starting, those of you who do have school age children must know that your pain is normal. It's another reminder that life goes on—with or without our children—and acknowledging that it hurts! I came to the conclusion that it was all right to pine for happier times and it was nothing to get upset about. As with many remnants of grief, I recognize it, allow it and then get on with my life.

Maybe you're like me, you'll always be a little nostalgic about school starting. That would probably have been true even if my son had lived. Maybe you, too?

~ Mary Cleckley, TCF/ Stone Mountain, Georgia

SIBLING PAGE

Going Back to School

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 while, changes with each groups occur. Those who did not know what to say start to speak or begin to talk. Those who kept away stop ignoring you. The people who gave you a lot of support slowly return to their own affairs. After a while, everything goes back to normal, and it is over to everyone except you. This is 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 that 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 for my mother and me.

~ Jordan Ely, TCF/Albany/Delmar NY

I Will Miss You

I feel great anxiety now that your time is growing short.

Seven weeks since we first heard the word "Cancer".

The time is way too early—

Days, weeks, and years too early.

What of our plans?

I love you. I want you to stay.

Please Lord let her stay with us.

But I also feel your pain.

I see it on your face.

I see it in your body.

Your sad eyes say you want to stay.

With all your might you want to stay.

But the pain is great—overpowering.

How helpless I feel.

Sitting by your bed.

Holding your hand.

Watching you sleep.

I will miss you.

Memories come to me.

I smile then sadness washes over me.

I cry.

Finally I realize...

Your breathing is quieter and much slower now.

Peace has relaxed the anxious lines on your face—

Your beautiful face.

At last relief has come to you...but not to me.

Your soul spirit is lifted.

He has taken you home.

I will miss you. Oh, how I'll miss you.

~ Linda Jo Palo

In loving memory of my sister, Corinne (1950 – 2007)

NAMASTE - THE LIGHT IN ME SALUTES THE LIGHT IN YOU

I believe that we are here on this planet to experience what it means to be a Spirit in a physical body. The greater the experience, the deeper it touches our soul. This includes pleasure and pain, happiness and sadness, hope and despair, lightness and darkness. For we cannot know one without the other. This is a time to experience our grief. I pray that we all give ourselves that right and honor our grieving process. Through grief we heal. These are the things that I grieve for:

- I grieve for the loss of my only brother.
- I grieve that I will never come home to see him sitting in the living room to say hello.
- I grieve that we will never laugh together again, that I will never again experience that rich and unique humor that only he and I shared.
- I grieve that this world will no longer get to enjoy his humanness and his many gifts.
- I grieve that I will never see my brother in love, that I will never see him as a father or with a family of his own.
- I grieve that we will no longer share and inspire each other with the music that we love.
- I grieve that we will never get to work on a creative multi-media project together. This was a vision I held for the future.
- I grieve that I didn't share enough of my life experiences with my brother, and that I could have opened my heart even more.
- I grieve for all the people that Jason touched and the feelings of pain and loss that they are experiencing.

This is what I grieve for. Through death new life is birthed and though we cannot see it now, from Jason's death we will all experience new life. If we allow ourselves to grieve fully, this new life will become apparent. I love the spirit who gave me the privilege and pleasure of being my brother and I am grateful to experience 24 years of his beauty on this planet.

~ Jeff Curnutt

Grief is OK

Grief is normal, grief is OK.

Grief is the way your body has to say that
you love the son, daughter, brother,
sister, even a friend that died;
But sometimes it makes you cry.

Steve Horn, Age 10
TCF/Hinsdale, IL

I'll cry with you, she whispered,
until we run out of tears.

Even if it's forever.

We'll do it together.

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

~ Molly Fumia

BRANDI ROSE IRENE TEEUWEN

August 2002

This week marks the eleventh year of your birth
and death, my sweet angel.

Some days it feels like it was yesterday and others
it feels like it has been an eternity.

Today my thoughts are wondering what you would look like,
would you look like a combination of your sisters?

Would you be excited for school to start
(like your brother, John)?

So many what if's and unanswered questions that won't be
answered until the day we see you again in heaven.

Even though you were here for a short time, you remain on
our hearts and thoughts forever!!!

We miss and love you!

Love Mommy, Daddy,

Nichole, Karina, Vyron

& John Michael

~ Nancy Teeuwen, written 8/26/2013, TCF/Fargo, ND

Almost a Whisper

There was almost a whisper that solemn night

All happenings frozen in time

For a woman who had so long dreamed

All shattered as crystal on cement

For this was to be the most magical of days;

A daughter to be born unto her

A daughter to love

A daughter to watch grow

A daughter to nurture

A daughter to hold

On this day a daughter was born unto her

This woman was given a chance

She had her daughter to hold

If only for a few short moments

She had her daughter to love

This love will be forever in her heart

This love will never die

This little girl was given the time to say her final goodbyes

At the same time as she said her first hellos

The life-filled, long awaited scream of virgin lungs

Was not heard

Instead there was almost silence

Almost because this little girl could not leave unheard

There was a whisper, or almost a whisper on those tiny lips

That night

A whisper louder than any crack of thunder to the ears of the
Loving Mother

A whisper that said, "I am here, acknowledge me, and don't
forget me, for I must go, I must say goodbye."

In a whisper was said what many cannot achieve in a
lifetime

In a whisper a little girl's life was lived.

~ Unknown

Beginnings

The incredible pain of some ritual of the daily....

Your clothes came back from the cleaners. Your dentist
appointment is still tacked onto the refrigerator. The spaces
in my calendar are full not only of the things we have done,
but the things we still have to do. How could I have been
so fooled? When I noted each event on the page, I had
thought its certainty to be assured.

As I touch again and again the still warm body of life we
had, I torture myself with longing for the lost reality. Yet I
endure each pain patiently, believing somehow that a new,
more gracious reality awaits me.

Sleeping, which used to relieve the fullness of the day, has
become just another difficult task.

I first avoid my bed, knowing that if I stop moving,
memories will sneak into my fading consciousness and force
a sob up into my throat.

Other nights I lie awake for hours - feeling nothing, but still
unable to capture sleep. Or I wake in the pre-dawn
darkness, hoping desperately that the clock has moved
toward morning.

I was not prepared for sleep to be an enemy. What I need
now is a friend, and a way to rest my weary spirits.

From TCF Atlanta Website Reflections

Words from Heaven

We weren't ready yet to say goodbye,

And if only we could hold each other

Just for one more hour

I would wipe all the tears from your eyes.

If I could say one thing to you it would be,

Mom, Dad, Brother, please don't worry about me.

I'm in a place so great I can't begin to explain

A place where I wish everyone could come and see

Momma, when you think of me don't cry,

Cause you would smile so big if you saw me now.

I have asked the Lord to take your pain away,

And give you all peace somehow.

The hardest thing was leaving that day in the room,

But I was needed by God, even more than you.

Know always that I will be here in this beautiful heaven,

Waiting on the day when I will see you.

John Pope

You give yourself permission to grieve by recognizing
the need for grieving.

Grieving is the natural way of working through the loss
of a love.

Grieving is not weakness, nor absence of faith.

Grieving is as natural as crying when you are hurt,
sleeping when you are tired or sneezing when your nose
itches.

It is nature's way of healing a broken heart.

~ Doug Manning

We must have your written permission on file to use your child's name in the newsletter. Permission may be withdrawn at any time by written request. This information is used to maintain our Chapter Database. It is confidential and is only utilized for Chapter activities such as the newsletter.

Your Name: _____

Child's Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Birth Date: _____ Death Date: _____

(Signature) Date: _____

Please return to: The Compassionate Friends of F-M Area, P.O. Box 10686, Fargo ND 58106
(Please note that if you have already submitted a permission slip, you do not need to submit another one)

A TIME TO GRIEVE

Compassionate Friends aids parents after a child's death.

By Tresa McBee News-Leader Staff - Springfield, Missouri

Originally published January 21, 2005

For many people, the first day of spring heralds renewal, when winter fades and life blossoms. For Wayne Loder, the first day of spring marks the day his two children were killed.

On March 20, 1991, the car holding 8-year-old Stephanie, 5-year-old Stephen and their mother, Pat, was struck by a high-speed sports motorcycle. The car was bent like a banana. The children's seat belts were no match for the impact. And so the Loders joined an exclusive group to which no one seeks membership: parents whose children have died. "It's the worst grief you can have," Loder says.

Loder, who lives in Michigan, is public awareness coordinator for The Compassionate Friends, a nonprofit with about 600 chapters nationwide. It was founded in England in 1969. Based in Oak Brook, Ill., the organization offers understanding and hope to bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents. Pat Loder is the executive director. Her grief, her husband says, was compounded by survivor's guilt: Pat suffered only minor injuries. For a while, she wondered why she didn't die. For a while, she wished she had. Loder felt guilty, too. Parents have a hard time accepting they were not able to keep their children safe, he says. Searching for a way to handle their grief, the Loders first attended a general bereavement group, but it did not help. The members' grief, while tragic, just was not the same. "When we did find The Compassionate Friends, we started relating to them and hearing the same words coming out of their mouths," Loder says.

Mary Ann Hale understands. In November 1989, 20-year-old Debbie Hale drowned in a bathtub at her parents' home. Although an autopsy was not done — one of Hale's regrets — Debbie likely had a seizure or aneurysm. "My husband and I had to break down the door," remembers Hale, who has three other children. "It was very traumatic." Living in Kansas City, Hale attended a TCF meeting. She did not like it. Initial meetings, particularly if grief is fresh, may not be what bereaved parents expect, says Hale, leader of the Greater Ozarks Chapter. That's why the organization recommends people attend meetings at least three times. People must make decisions at their own pace, Loder says. Some people attend one meeting and don't return for a year. "Each meeting's different," Hale says. "Three gives you a chance."

After moving to Springfield in 1990, she tried TCF again. "I was so desperate, because I had no one to talk to." Who else could grasp the guilt of a mother who heard a thump — like a dropped shampoo bottle — and didn't think anything amiss? Who else but another bereaved parent would understand how difficult 8:30 a.m. on Saturdays can be — the time and day Debbie was discovered? "I don't think you ever resolve your grief. You learn to live with it," Hale says.

Carol Simmons hopes she can help other parents. It's been two years since the death of her only child, 25-year-old Angelic Ruth, and Simmons knows how different life becomes. "My daughter is the first thing I think of in the morning and the last thing I think of before I go to bed. I miss her terribly." Simmons, of Willard, says TCF provides comfort of a common bond: the knowledge that there is no such thing as closure. "I can go there and talk and don't have to worry about anyone judging me. They know how I feel, because they've lost a child." Simmons also finds the chapter's resource library and newsletter helpful.

Loder says bereaved parents love hearing their child's name, not cliché — "You can have other children" or "God needed an angel" — however well-intentioned. He explains: "We still think about Stephen and Stephanie every day and will the rest of our lives." And remember the No. 1 thing bereaved parents don't like hearing: "I understand." "If they haven't been through it, no one understands," Loder says. How can you help? A genuine "I'm sorry" and a heartfelt hug do wonders, Loder says.

And another thing: Forget the myth about high divorce rates following a child's death. A 1999 survey conducted by a research company for TCF found 72 percent of parents married at the time their child died were still married. Most couples who divorced had problems before their child's death, Loder says. Another survey is planned. The often-repeated statistic is that 90 percent of marriages end following a child's death — as Pat Loder heard from a friend. "She was told that in the hospital," her husband says. "She told me later she thought, 'My children have just died, and now I'm being told I'm going to lose my husband. How will I survive?'" Parents who grieve together — even if they do so differently — often become closer, Loder says. And while newly bereaved parents might not envision a future, things do get better, he says.

"Life is worth living — even though a lot of people don't feel that way and may not like hearing me say it," Loder says. Even if he and his wife hadn't had Chris, 12, and Katie, 11, the couple would have found meaning in honoring Stephanie and Stephen, Loder says. The siblings are remembered on their birthdays, and Christmas ornaments are hung in their honor. Chris and Katie know all about their big brother and sister. Loder thinks they all would have been great friends.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
OF THE F-M AREA
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THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

FARGO/MOORHEAD AREA CHAPTER
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

MISSION STATEMENT: When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

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

FARGO-MOORHEAD COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS BOARD

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN THE BOARD AT ANY TIME!

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|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Chapter Leader | John Milligan 701-491-0364 | Secretary | Sheryl Cvijanovich 701-235-8158 |
| Treasurer | Chuck Klinkhammer 701-298-2929 | Initial Contact | Jamie Olson 701-219-3865 |
| Newsletter Editor | Nancy Teeuwen..... 701-730-0805 | Newsletter Database | Mike Cvijanovich 701-235-8158 |
| Website Administrator | Sheryl Cvijanovich..... 701-235-8158 | Librarian | |
| 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) 701-491-0364
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.