



The Compassionate Friends

Fargo/Moorhead Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

TCF's National Office
P.O. Box 3696
Oak Brook IL 60522
Toll-free (877) 969-0010
www.compassionatefriends.org

F-M Area Chapter
P.O. Box 10686
Fargo ND 58106
www.tcffargomoorhead.org
September 2016

Volume 33 Number 9

Chapter Leader - John Milligan (701)491-0364

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
September 8th
October 13th

Dates to Remember

Mom's meeting - 7 pm on September 22nd @ Fry'n Pan
Angel of Hope Candle Lighting - December 6th
Worldwide Candle Lighting - December 11, 2016 @ 7 p.m.

LOVE GIFTS

Brenda Kluth in memory of her son, Brandon Kluth
Jim & Judy Kutter in memory of their daughter, Michelle Kay Kutter
Sonia Wateland in memory of her son, Mark Alan Wateland
James & Shawn Miller in memory of their daughter, Kelsey Grace Miller and their son, Tony Miller
Keith & Sandra Kiser in memory of their son, Cordell Kiser
Clare & Richard Elless in memory of their daughter, Tari Elless Heller
Diane Fenske in memory of her son, Nathan Anderson
Ellen Pazdro in memory of her grandson, Matthew Cvijanovich
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

"When our special sadness comes to call, when we remember more than we can bear, when courage falters – shadows everywhere: Then let us reach and touch and share, we, who are friends." ~ Sascha Wagner

Our Mom's group generally meets on the 4th Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm at the Fry'n Pan restaurant, 300 Main Avenue, Fargo. Our gatherings are very informal as we meet to talk about our children, books, recipes, jobs and whatever else comes up in conversation. We all have times when we need the listening heart of another mom or grandma. Please join us this month on Thursday September 22nd. For more information please contact Sheryl at 701-540-3287 or sherylcw13@msn.com.

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, in Memory of my son Steven

When grief is new you need not find a reason
however good and brave - to temper your despair.

When grief is new, the heart accepts no answer
however wise and kind - to ease your mourning.

When grief is new your life can only know
disintegration, overwhelming pain...

My friend, try to believe what other grievers learned:
You will not always hurt as you hurt now...

Time will restore the soundness of your mind.

All other words are shadows on the wind when grief
is new.

~ Sascha Wagner

RE-ENTRY INTO LIFE

May of brilliant greens, harbinger of summer,
mother of daffodils and tulips, warm my soul in your sun
glow!

I am in need of that warmth, ready again to feel
alive. For so long I have shut out life, unwilling to see
beauty in a world without my child, unable to feel joy or
love or laughter, longing only for him. I cared naught for
life and would have welcomed death.

It has been a long climb, my re-entry into life. IN
that climb I did not lose the pain of separation, but rather
learned to assimilate it into my soul as a part of my life. I
here...he there. And so I chance life again, mindful of its
brevity, welcoming its brilliant colors, the song of birds,
the grace of love.

~ L. Dolan, TCF/Greenland, NH

Taking the Journey of Grief with Hope

As you interact with friends, here are some important things to
avoid:

1. Avoid saying "I'm okay" or "I'm fine." If this is not true, it
will impair their ability to care for you. If it is true, give them
more information about what is going better so they can join
in your encouragement.
2. Don't feel like your answers have to be a little better every
time you see them. Change doesn't occur on an uninterrupted
incline. Don't give in to the temptation of thinking you're
going to disappoint them if you admit you're not doing as well
as you were last time.
3. Pray honestly; not "spiritually." Prayer is an easy time to
become fake and cliché. It can be refreshing and strengthening
to pray honest prayers to God. That is what a large number of
the Psalms are—honest, public prayers during seasons of
suffering.
4. Avoid those who think they can cheer you up. The
journey through grief is about more than being happy again. If
that is someone's primary focus at this stage, then they are
likely not the best companion for this journey.
5. Don't hurry yourself. Structure so that you have an idea of
what is "next" but it contains no pacing guide. Trying to
measure the process is most often counterproductive. If you
"gave yourself" two months to grieve, how would you know if
you were half way there in one month? Chances are, pace
would become a distraction from the process.

~ Brad Hambrick, M.Div. Th. M

BRANDON W.T. KLUTH
(Our Beautiful Angel)

My Angel

*Too my dear angel in heaven
I just want you to know
That you are always in my thoughts
And how much I love you so*

*I know you are in gods care
That is how it should be
But when I get to heaven
He will give you back to me*

By John F Connor

Happy 1st birthday in heaven Brandon my son.
Mom Loves You!

THE SCENT OF MY BABY

When we think of babies
We think of that certain scent.
The scent that newborns seem to have,
or me-that came and went.
The scent of my baby
s a different one.
It's not shampoo or baby powders
It's not that "newborn scent".
But that of fresh cut flowers.
For God chose my son to be with Him
And leave me down below.
So the flowers I place upon his grave
Are the only scent I know.
So when I smell a flower
My son always comes to mind
And the delicate scent of a flower
Seems to suit my son just fine.
For my son touched and brightened my life
Just like a flower may.
And the true beauty of a flower
Was my son in every way.

~ Debby Root, TCF/Fox Valle

If love could have saved you, You would not have died.
If tears could bring you back, You'd be by our side.
It broke our heart to lose you, But you did not go alone;
For part of us went with you, The day God called you home.
God take us one by one, And breaks the family chain,
But somewhere in a better land
Our chain will link again.
~ John & Jill Gaffney

Searching for Her Smile

Twice a week she walked to the corner grocery store for warm donuts and coffee. She loved their donuts; none better in the whole city. She started walking on the advice of a friend who thought it might help her feel better. Her loneliness was beginning to consume her. Her life was dark and empty.

Heading home one day, she noticed an old man sitting on a park bench. She slowed and studied him, not remembering ever seeing him in her neighborhood. His expression was inviting; his skin aged and wrinkled; while his eyes were spirited, and a lively smile graced his face. Whatever he was thinking, was bringing him great pleasure.

Sitting next to him on the bench, the lady asked, "Old man, may I buy your smile? Whatever you're feeling is what I want to be feeling too."

Turning to the lady, he said, "Why do you want my smile? Where has yours gone?"

"My heart is broken. I doubt I will ever smile again," she answered with a sigh, as she leaned back, closing her eyes.

"This smile you see on me can't be sold, so it can't be bought either. A smile must be earned," the old man said. "A broken heart is very sad. Your smile must be far away."

Opening her heavy eyes, and looking into his, she said, "Yes, old man, my smile is far away. I lost it when my son died. He was just a little boy when a car went off the road and hit him while he was playing in our front yard. He died instantly. The last thing I remember is the horror on his face as the car crushed him."

A tear rolled down her cheek.

"I'm very sorry to hear that," the old man said, placing his hand on hers. "Life must be very difficult for you. How long has it been since your son died?"

Her voice shaking, she said, "My beautiful boy was taken from me 5 years ago. Sometimes it seems like just yesterday I saw him take his last breath. At other times, it feels like it's been years. I can still feel his hugs when he headed off to school. His joyful voice continues to play in my mind. I miss him so, so much. His death has at times overwhelmed me." The lady leaned forward, placing her head in her hands. More tears came.

"I can see your pain is deep. Weren't you once happy enough to smile?" the old man asked.

"Oh yes," the lady said, as she sat up. "When my son was alive, my smiles were broad and many. He was a wonderful son, handsome and bright. I miss smiling. I want to smile again, but I don't know how."

"Why did you say your son 'was' wonderful?" he questioned. "Because he's no longer here, does that mean he's no longer wonderful?"

"I've never thought of it like that, old man," she said, her voice a bit brighter. "I guess you're right. Even though his body isn't here, he *is* still a wonderful son."

"With that in mind," the old man said, "do you think of your son as forever dead or forever living?"

I don't know," she sighed. "That's a question I've never been able to answer."

"Yes, that's one to ponder," he said. "Let me see if I can help you find that answer. I want you to close your eyes, think of your son, and tell me what you see."

The lady leaned back on the bench, closed her eyes, and folded her hands in her lap. The old man saw her shoulders relax, and hoped a good thing would happen. A minute passed, and a small smile came alive on her face. "I see him running down the beach," she said, "his blond hair flying in the wind as he chases our dog. He's running very hard. I can hear his laughter and see the sand flying."

"How does that make you feel?" the old man asked.

"It makes me feel both sad and happy," the lady answered. "I want him back so we can make more memories. I want to touch him, hold him; and I'm sad I can't do these things. But memories like that make me happy."

"My friend," the old man said, "I think you know your son will never be with you in the way you had him before he died. His body can't come back, and nothing can change that. I know that's a hard thing to acknowledge, so you must decide how you want to carry your son with you now. Which way will your memories take you — to a tear, or to a smile? Your son's death has certainly earned you a tear, but your son's life has given you a smile."

Sitting quietly, the lady stared deeply into the old man's eyes, trying to understand what he was saying — trying to decide which will rule her life: the tear because of her son's death, or the smile because of his life. The tear was easier, because it had become normal and familiar. To smile again would take work. "Old man," she finally said, "which should I choose? You have lived long and learned many lessons. Counsel me."

"Dear sad lady, your son's physical death cannot be changed. Time moves forward, not back," he said. "I can see your love for him, and feel your broken heart. Your love 'is' strong, not 'was' strong. When you closed your eyes, you saw your son's life, not his death. Do you prefer his life or his death to be more powerful in you?"

It was then that the lady realized what the old man had done. He had shown her that even though a part of her would always be sad because of her son's death, she could also smile because of his life. In that instant, she made the decision to begin to live again and work at finding her smile — the smile that can return because of the life of her child; a life that will live forever through her memories.

Hugging the old man, she said, "Thank you, my new friend. I will now work at letting go of my son's death and seeing his life more clearly. I want the wonderfulness of him back with me, and back in my heart." She stood to leave, but turned, put her hand on the old man's shoulder, and asked, "How is it you came upon such wisdom? How did you know it's possible for me to get my smile back?"

Reaching into his coat pocket, the old man pulled out an envelope. As he did so, the lady thought she saw the glint of a tear in his eye, but also a gentle smile on his face. He carefully withdrew a photo from the envelope. Cupping it tenderly in his hands, he showed it to the lady. "You see, my beautiful angel daughter brought my smile back to me, so I know it's possible for you also."

The lady never saw the old man again, but in those few short minutes he taught her that the beauty and power of her son's life will never leave her, if she won't let it leave.



OUR BELOVED CHILDREN REMEMBERED BIRTHDAYS

CHILD		PARENTS
NATHAN ANDERSON.....	39	DIANE & JAY FENSKE
ROBERT (BOB) TODD DUGGAN	54	GARY & CAROL DUGGAN
MATTHEW JOHN GAFFNEY	34	JOHN & JILL GAFFNEY
KENT ALAN HANSEN	27	DOUGLAS HANSEN
CORRINE HOEPKER	53	MARY VASECKA
ADYSON JEAN KNUDSEN	2	KRISTIN & MICHAELKNUDSEN
ANNIE PAGE LEGGIO.....	18	JOSEPH LEGGIO
SARAH DEWITZ MARTINSEN	28	DEB DEWITZ
HENRY LUCAS NERAT	1	MORGAN NERAT
JACOB ALLEN OCHSNER.....	30	ALLAN & MARLENE OCHSNER
ALIVIA LEA PLUTOWSKI.....	2	TIFFANY & JARED PLUTOWSKI
RONALD ROBERT POEHLER.....	47	ROBERT POEHLER
DYLAN ROMAINE.....	5	AARON & TRICIA ROMAINE
SCOTT ANTHONY TOBOLT	40	JOHN & MARY TOBOLT

ANNIVERSARIES

CHILD		PARENTS
NICHOLAS LEE BAILEY	7	PAUL & KARA BAILEY
KELLY ANN BOYES.....	8	KAREN BOYES
BRANDON WILLIAM THOMAS KLUTH.....	1	BRENDA KLUTH
ADYSON JEAN KNUDSEN	2	KRISTIN & MICHAELKNUDSEN
BENJAMIN KOTTA.....	14	ARLEN & JULIE KOTTA
MICHELLE KUTTER	11	JIM & JODY KUTTER
JILL MCNEAL-GALL.....	3	MAXINE MCNEAL
JEFF MUNIGHAN.....	6	JERALD & ARLENE MUNIGHAN
HENRY LUCAS NERAT	1	MORGAN NERAT
JAMIE C OLSON.....	4	GLENNIS OLSON
RONALD ROBERT POEHLER.....	2	ROBERT POEHLER
SCOTT WARNECKE	16	DOUG & JOAN WARNECKE

Please check out our Chapter website's page for 'Our Beloved Children'
(www.tcffargomoorhead.org/ourchildren.html). 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

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

SIBLING PAGE

The Aftermath of Suicide (A Sibling's Viewpoint)

I had never experienced the death of a close loved one before my brother died. When David died, my world came crashing down around me, shattering me into a million pieces. My brother and I were close, but I had no suspicion that he was contemplating suicide and had been for a long time. The night my sister called to tell me he was dead is etched into my memory forever. If I shut my eyes, I can go back to that time and place almost three years ago and still hear her voice. It is a very painful memory and one that I don't call up, but it is there, nonetheless. The overwhelming feelings of shock, disbelief, numbness, despair and sadness are very vivid. At the same time, I was outraged at what he had done to us, to me. How dare he do this? I couldn't even begin to guess how many times I said, I can't believe this is happening. The first six months was a confusing and emotionally draining period for me. I was obsessed with wanting to have answers, especially from him. I read many books on suicide and finally, after reading Iris Bolton's book, "My Son, My Son", I came to realize that what she said was true: You can ask why a million times, but you finally have to let it go, because the person you need the answers from is not here to give them to you. If only for the sake of your own sanity, you have to stop asking, "Why?"

"I couldn't even begin to guess how many times I said, I can't believe this is happening".

Our family drew closer together from this tragedy, and it made me more aware of how much I value and love them. I also had the support of a good friend who was willing to spend hours talking and crying with me. I still get very angry at my brother for changing our lives so irrevocably. That anger inevitably turns to sadness. I cannot see his smiling face, or hear his laughter, or watch him grow into adulthood. Yes, I had dreams of him too. He was an intelligent, warm, sensitive and caring young man, and I was eager to see what direction his life would take. I can't help but wonder what he would be like today. I miss him very much. I will never agree with his solution, but it was his choice to make and I have to learn to live with it. I am absolutely certain beyond a shadow of a doubt that I will be with him again. Only then will I get answers to my questions. I have no choice but to wait until that time.

~ Nicki Wright, TCF/ MO-DAN, KS
Reprinted from ICE, Orange Coast, Oct. 1998

ON YOUR BIRTHDAY

I wrote the date this morning,
Paused,
And felt the room grow cold.
It always does
When I remember
All of it –
Down to the last petal
Tossed by winds
Above the upturned earth.
This time the child
Does not leave so easily.
It would have been your birthday.
Soon, I shall be
As old as you will ever be.

~ Wanda Trawick, TCF/Acme, PA

THEY DON'T WEAR PURPLE HEARTS IN HEAVEN

I lost my brother to a foreign land;
I was too young to even understand
There was a knock at the front door,
Then Momma wasn't smiling anymore.
The man at the door was a Marine;
The first I've ever seen.
Momma told me to go out and play,
Then the preacher came and they started to pray.
Tears ran down Momma's eyes, and
I heard her say, "Why, Lord, Why?"
Father stood there seemingly mindless, all he said was,
"We've lost another of America's finest."
The Marine handed Momma a small velvet case,
Inside was a Purple Ribbon, attached to
a gold heart with Washington's face.
I asked Momma if it were mine,
But she said "It's your brother's, Sunshine."
"Momma can we send it to Kevin?"
She answered, "They don't wear Purple Hearts in Heaven."

Author unknown

Lifted from TCF Atlanta Linked Together Newsletter

BELOVED BROTHER: LOSING YOU IS LOSING ME

Dearest Justin,
To lose a sibling is to lose one's self,
For a part of me is gone...
And now I'm left to reminisce
As now I try to carry on.
The thought of you not being here
Has torn my world apart...
Yet every day I feel you near;
Is a blessing to my heart.
Your memory comforts me today
In ways I wish you knew...
But tears are falling from the pain
That comes from losing you.

I see your face in the morning sun
And in the moon at night...
I wonder how you're feeling now,
I pray that you're alright.
And one day when my time has come
To soar with eagle's wings...
We will be joined forevermore.
I Love You Forever & Always.

~ Charlie Clakley, TCF/Tyler, TX

SIBLING LOSS

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 understands.

~ Charley Kopp, TCF/Contra Costa, CA

PARTING IS NOT ALWAYS SUCH SWEET SORROW

by Louise Marie Gaskin TCF East Aurora NY
-lovingly lifted from "We Need Not Walk Alone"
TCF Newsletter Oak Brook IL. Vol 18, #3.

In February of 1990 my 14 year old daughter, Brigitte, died suddenly. One situation I found very difficult was sorting through her personal belongings. Knowing that we all grieve in our own way, you should never feel that you have to go through your child's belongings if you do not want to. You will know when and if the time is right. If you do decide that the time is right, the following suggestions are some that you might find helpful:

Golden Rules/Getting Started

1. DO NOT PUSH YOURSELF

When my daughter first passed away, I never thought I would touch anything in her room. Three months later I found myself going through her personal items. My normal spring cleaning and rearranging a room or two helped get me in the mood.

2. TAKE ONE STEP AT A TIME

Do not expect to do it all at once. As you begin sorting through your child's possessions, do not get upset if you cannot part with any of his or her belongings. It took me three attempts to just be able to stop crying long enough to go through them.

3. ASK FAMILY MEMBERS OR CLOSE FRIENDS FOR HELP

Having someone there to help is a good idea. I invited a friend to help me go through my daughter's hat and t-shirt collections. She sat and listened to the stories about how and where we acquired each hat and t-shirt. It was so much fun talking about my daughter and having someone there to listen. After it was all over, she thanked me for letting her help!

4. THE DECISION ON WHAT YOU WANT TO KEEP SHOULD BE YOURS

Do not feel guilty about what you want to do. I sold my home approximately a year and a half after my daughter passed away and once I began packing, I found that there were many items that I did not want to move. If you decide you want to part with some of your child's belongings, I suggest that you get them out of the house on the same day or very soon after. I found that if I left the items in my home more than two days after I had initially gone through them, I was going through them again and again. Remember, letting go is very difficult.

5. SET A PLAN FOR ACTION

Set up a schedule and write down the items that you would like to go through. It gives you something to start with. Be sure to note your progress! It will make you feel better.

For Those Items You Decide to Keep:

1. FIND NEW USES AND PLACES

My daughter's red wagon was converted into an indoor garden. A favorite worn-out sweatshirt of hers became a pillow cover. I had some of her gold jewelry melted down and made into a pendant that I wear often. A shelf in the guest room proudly displays her doll collection, her shell collection is in the family room, and one wall of my study proudly displays her pictures.

2. KEEP THEM NEAR AND DEAR

I bought a cedar chest that is filled with many little remembrances from my daughter. I organized some of the remembrances in clear storage boxes that I labeled so that they are easy to get to. The cedar chest is a beautiful addition to my home and it keeps many loving memories secure and near.

3. PACK THEM AWAY

There were some items that I needed to keep, if only for the comfort of knowing that I still had them. For the items, I packed them securely in boxes and then stored the boxes in a safe, dry place.

4. RECYCLE ITEMS

By recycling, I mean changing which items I leave out. My daughter collected small boxes, teddy bears, sea shells and other items. Sometimes I will have the teddy bears out on my bed or maybe her little boxes arranged nicely on my dresser. I find it comforting when I get to go through one of her collections.

NOTE: I keep a 3" x 5" card catalog with cards listing all of her items and where they are. This saves time and panic when I need to locate something of hers.

For Those Items You Decide To Give Away:

1. KEEP THE MEMORY.

Parting with many of my daughter's possessions was extremely difficult. I knew that once they were given away, I might not ever see or remember them again. Prior to giving some of her things away, I wrote down my thoughts and notes about the items in the 3x5 card catalog. Now, whenever I want or need a memory, I just go to my file and pick one.

2. SPECIAL OCCASIONS AND HOLIDAYS

Holidays and family affairs are always so difficult to get through without your child. Some of her handmade Halloween costumes were given away as presents along with a picture of her in the costume. They made for very special and unexpected presents. The children loved receiving the costumes and it helped me to get through Halloween. Her pearl earrings were given to my best friend's daughter for her First Holy Communion. It is still very difficult to attend these events without my daughter. As the little girl went around and showed everyone her earrings, I felt my daughter's presence there with us. My mother received her birthstone ring. It was over 12 years old and had been resized at least five times. I wrote a story to accompany the ring and gave it to my mom for Christmas. Although it was difficult to part with this ring, my mother takes great pride in wearing it and that has helped her to deal with the loss.

3. RETURN ITEMS TO THOSE THAT GAVE THEM.

Whenever I gave any items back to the people who originally gave them to her, they were overjoyed. Over the years some of my daughter's school friends had given her little stuffed animals, posters and other gifts. I asked the children if they would like to have these items back. They were so appreciative of my kindness. I know it helped them with their grief.

4. NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

There are many not-for-profit organizations that help others. You may have some organizations that you are fond of or maybe one that your child chose to acknowledge. Whichever agency you choose, most are very grateful for any donated items. All donations to nonprofit organizations are tax deductible. Remember, there is no right way or wrong way when it comes to dealing with the loss of a child. Each person is unique and so is each person's grief. Maintain a network of honest friends and/or family members to whom you can talk. Above all, remember to be patient with yourself. You have been through a very difficult experience.

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: _____

Date: _____

(Signature)

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)



Butterfly Decals



"Butterflies are the heaven sent kisses of an angel." ~ Author Unknown

Butterfly decals are available to help personalize our trailer. The trailer is used to carry items to and from our Walk to Remember and other chapter events. It has also given us some visibility in the Fargo/Moorhead community. Each butterfly decal holds the first and last name of one of our beloved children.

Butterflies are available in five colors (yellow, pink, red, blue and green). The cost is as follows: \$25 for 1 butterfly, \$50 for 2 butterflies, \$65 for 3 butterflies and \$80 for 4 butterflies. If you wish to purchase more than 4 butterflies please contact John Milligan at 701-491-0364.

Butterfly orders should include the child's first and last name (middle name is optional) and the 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.

Living Life Is Still an Effort

My husband's family held a reunion in July. We planned to attend and told the family to count on us. But when it came time to buy the tickets and make a commitment, I found I couldn't do it. I simply did not want to deal with the hassles of traveling, leaving home, getting out of my daily rhythm.

I am a different person since my child died. I am a different person than I was six months after my child died. And, I will be a different person in another year.

I find that I am evolving; my basic personality is still intact, most of my mind works well enough, my perception of life, love, people and events is probably heightened but fairly unchanged. Still I am a different person.

Now I work at living my life. I make myself do the things that I once took for granted...such as getting dressed each day, going to work, handling a number of responsibilities I have chosen to accept. I make myself laugh at silly jokes. Sometimes I even have to force myself to really listen to others. I am surprised when I laugh spontaneously, smile for no particular reason or say something "prophetic". What is going on here? Who am I? Why has the joy of life disappeared?

I believe I have found the answer to these questions and even to questions I haven't yet asked. It lies in the nature of losing one's child to death. Initially we work very hard to maintain sanity. Gradually we expand the boundaries of our lives. Carefully we add events, people, responsibilities and simple enjoyment. But our progress is measured in months and years, not days and weeks.

My awakening to this new reality came at a meeting of The Compassionate Friends. It has been rekindled at each meeting since then. I learn about myself by observing others. I note the change in their voice, their body language, their perspective. I see the sorrow in each parent. I see parents whose children have been gone for many years still weep openly and later talk about a special event they are planning. Then I see parents whose loss was recent yet they appear to be normal, controlled and sociable on many levels and they suddenly and mysteriously crumble before my eyes.

That's the journey. We set our own limits as to what is acceptable for us. Over time we shift from minimalist boundaries to a good representation of the person we once were. We have major setbacks: birthdays, holidays, death anniversaries. We have minor setbacks: a picture, a forgotten scent, a baby shoe, a poignant memory. We sob, we scream, we withdraw. But we do go on. With the help of our Compassionate Friends, we move forward and are supported when we suffer a setback. We each deal with the many facets of our grief. We learn from others. We teach others. We grow from the dialogue. Our kindred spirits bring questions, answers and peace.

Who am I today? A fairly well balanced mother of one beautiful child who no longer is alive. I am where I should be. When will I stop evolving? Probably never.

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

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

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



**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!

Chapter Leader	John Milligan..... 701-491-0364	Newsletter Editor	Nancy Teeuwen 701-730-0805
Meeting Facilitator	Paul & Kara Bailey..... 701-261-0668	Newsletter Database	Mike Cvijanovich 701-235-8158
Secretary	Sheryl Cvijanovich 701-540-3287	Website Administrator	Sheryl Cvijanovich 701-540-3287
Treasurer	Chuck Klinkhammer 701-298-2929	Newsletter Printing	Joyce at Olivet Lutheran Church
Initial Contact	Jamie Olson 701-219-3865	Mailing Committee	Contact Us to Join
Librarian	Contact Us to Volunteer		

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
- Lois Gangnes (son, 24 - accident) 701-282-4083
- Nancy Teeuwen (daughter, 15 hours - illness) 701-730-0805
- Mark & Hella Helfter (miscarriage, son, 35-accident & son, 45-cancer)... 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.