



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Bridgeport, Connecticut Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

January & February 2020

Newsletter

Volume 20 No. 1 & 2

Dedicated with love to all children who have died, and their parents, families, friends...

The Compassionate Friends

(TCF) is a national non-profit, self-help support organization offering friendship, understanding, and hope to families grieving the death of a child of any age from any cause. There is no religious affiliation and no individual membership fees or dues are charged.

Founded in England in 1969, TCF was established in the United States in 1972. Presently, under the provision of the not-for-profit national organization, there are more than 700 local chapters in operation throughout the United States.

Mission Statement:

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

*"WITHIN EACH TEAR THAT FALLS
IS A MIRROR...
THAT REFLECTS A SPECIAL MOMENT
IN OUR LIVES.
THE TEARS TRICKLE WARMLY DOWN
AND LAND IN A PUDDLE
IN OUR HEARTS."*

-TAMMY TOBAC, TCF, PITTSBURG, PA

Please contact us at 475-882-9695. Leave your name, number, and message, and we will return your call.

Please send all correspondence to the following address:

The Compassionate Friends Bridgeport Chapter
P.O.Box 112
Stratford, CT 06615

National Office

The Compassionate Friends
P.O. Box 3696
Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696
(877) 969-0010

nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org
www.compassionatefriends.org

Regional Coordinator

Mary Lemley
203 483-9935
Mklem43@aol.com

Monthly Meetings

When: Meetings are held on the SECOND TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH year round. If the Stratford School system lets the children out early or if school is closed due to inclement weather, Sterling House will be closed, and the meeting for the month will be cancelled.

Our next two meetings will be held on: Tuesday,
January 14, 2020 6:45 - 8:45 pm
February 11, 2020 6:45 - 8:45 pm

Where: Sterling House Community Center
2283 Main Street, Stratford, CT 06614

DIRECTIONS:

Take I-95 North from Bridgeport. Get off Exit 32 West Broad Street. At the end of ramp, go straight to the second traffic light which is Main Street. Turn left. Sterling House Community Center is a Victorian Brick House. It will be on the opposite side of the street. Park in Sterling House's driveway. Use side entrance. Phone: 203 378-2606

Please bring a canned good or nonperishable food item to the meeting for Sterling House's Food Pantry.

Bridgeport/Stratford & Vicinity Chapter Steering Committee

Chapter Leader

Claudia Margitay-Balogh

Co-Chapter Leader

Dr. Charles Kochan

Secretary

Janet Spray

Treasurer

Leslie Minasi

Website Co-ordinator

Anne Castaldo

Newsletter Editor

Claudia Margitay-Balogh

Hospitality

Dee Tutka

Community Outreach and Librarian

Michele Peloso

Bridgeport Chapter's E-Mail Address:

contact@tcfbridgeport.org

TCF Bridgeport Website:

www.tcfbridgeport.org

Bridgeport Chapter's Facebook Website:

www.facebook.com/pages/The-Compassionate-Friends-Bridgeport-Chapter

CONTACT NUMBER: 475-882-9695

GRIEVING, HEALING, GROWING...

The Holidays Are Behind Us

It is the new year. The holidays are behind us. We did with them what we could. Whether they were a time of sorrow, a time of joy, or a combination of both, they are now a part of our memories. In a strange way, as a memory in our hearts and in our minds, our child's place is there among all the other memories of the season. There is hurt along with the memory, but also a thankfulness for the memory.

Now we look out on a winter landscape. The earth is cold, the land sharply defined. Yet, underneath the hard crust, the energy and warmth of our earth is guarding and providing life to all that grows. We may personally know the coldness and hardness

of a grief so fresh that we feel numb - a grief so hurtful that our body feels physically hard, our throats tight from tears shed or unshed, our chests banded tightly by our mourning heart.

If we are not now experiencing this, our memories recollect so easily those early days. Yet, as we live these days, like the earth from which we receive our sustenance, we too, in our searching, find places of warmth and change and love and growth within. Let our hearts and minds dwell in these places and be armed and renewed by them, and let us have the courage and love to share them with our loved ones, to talk about even that first dim shape of new hope or of new acceptance or of new understanding or of new love.

These are the new roots, born of our love of our child, that are forming and stirring within, gathering strength so that our lives, at the right time, can blossom once again and be fruitful in a new and deep way.

- Marie Andrews, TCF, South Maryland Chapter

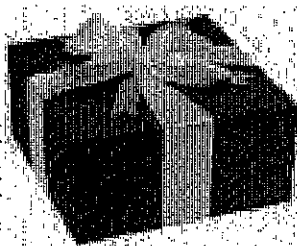
A New Year of Hope and Peace

Instead of the old kind of New Year's resolutions we used to make and break - let's make some this year and really try to keep them.

1. Let's not try to imagine the future...take one day at a time.
2. Allow yourself time to cry, both alone and with your loved ones.
3. Don't shut out other family members from your thoughts and feelings. Share these difficult times. You may all become closer for it.
4. Try to be realistic about your expectations...of yourself, your spouse, other family members and friends. Each one of us is an entity, therefore different. So, how can there be perfect understanding?
5. When a good day comes, relish it; don't feel guilty and don't be discouraged because it does not last...it will come again and multiply.
6. Take care of your health. Even though the mind might not care...a sick body will only compound your troubles. Drink lots of water...take stress-type vitamins, rest(even if you don't sleep), and get moderate exercise. Help your body heal as well as your mind.
7. Share your feelings with other Compassionate Friends and let them share with you. As you find you are caring about the pain of others, you are starting to come out of your shell...a very healthy sign.

I know these won't be easy, but what has been? It's worth a try, don't you think? Nothing to lose and perhaps much to gain. -Mary Erhmann, Valley Forge, PA TCF Newsletter

Love Gifts



A "Love Gift" is a donation given in memory of our children by family or friends who wish to support the work of our chapter. There are no fees or dues to belong to The Compassionate Friends. All contributions are voluntary. Our Bridgeport & Vicinity Chapter depends solely on donations to fund our meetings. A Love Gift will help pay for expenses such as our website, meeting place, newsletter, telephone, Candle Lighting Event, books, brochures, and supplies which help to assist grieving families. These gifts are much needed and are always welcome. "Love Gifts" are acknowledged every two months in the newsletter. Your gift(s) is tax deductible to the extent allowed by the law.

The Compassionate Friends is a registered 501(c) (3) organization.

The Compassionate Friends Bridgeport Chapter
c/o Leslie Minasi,
P.O. Box 112, Stratford, CT 06615
Please make out the check to:

The Compassionate Friends Bridgeport Chapter.

Since the newsletter is published 6 times a year, please note that if you want to commemorate a birthday or anniversary in the exact month, **please send the love gift in advance.** All love gifts will be acknowledged as promptly as possible. The chapter leadership is grateful for your contributions of any amount.

Compassionate Verse

*The New Year Comes
When All The World Is Ready
For Changes, Resolutions - -
Great Beginnings,*

*For Us, To Whom
That Stroke Of Midnight Means
A Missing Child Remembered,
For Us, The New Year Comes
More Like Another Darkness.*

*But Let Us Not Forget
That This May Be The Year
When Love And Hope And Courage
Find Each Other Somewhere
In The Darkness
To Lift Their Voice And Speak:
Let There Be Light.*

Sascha Wagner
Des Moines, Iowa TCF Chapter

In memory of
Sean Garrett Rice
on his 21st birthday,
(January 29, 1999)
Love, Mom

In memory of
Carlo Minasi
on his birthday December 3,
With love from his mother and father

In loving memory of
Steven Spray
on his Angel Day (12-8)

In loving memory of
Dawn Kosarko
for her birthday February 14
from mom Dolly Rice-Kosarko
and dad Ronald Peter Kosarko

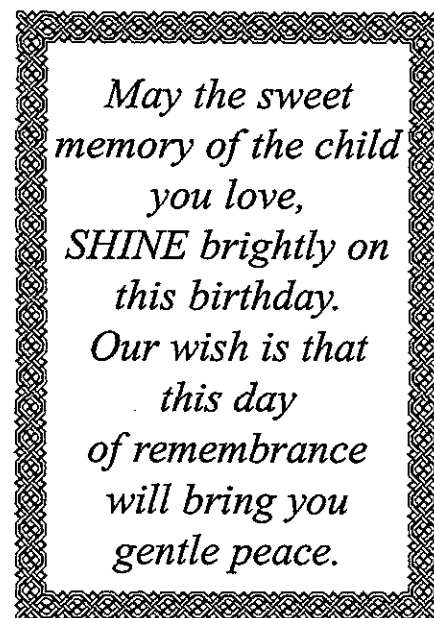
TCF Bridgeport Chapter "Love Gift" Form

Name _____
Address _____ City _____
State _____ Zip Code _____ Phone _____ E-Mail _____
Message _____

Our Children Loved, Missed, and Remembered...

We all know how difficult these special days - Birthdays and Death Anniversaries - can be. This Feature in our newsletter helps us to be aware of who is facing these special days each month. We ask that you keep parents, siblings, and grandparents observing such dates during January and February in your thoughts and in your hearts.

ADAM JARVIS	January 1
RYAN JOYCE	January 2
JOANN SIMKO PASANELLA	January 3
JENNIFER McLEOD	January 5
JAMES BLOMBERG	January 5
LAURIE POVINELLI	January 6
AUSTIN BUONI	January 7
VICTOR M. MARELLA, JR.	January 8
RYAN PHILLIPS	January 8
WENDY JOAN CARPENTER	January 8
MARIA SKENDERIS ISOLA	January 9
BERNARD E. KOETSCH II	January 9
SCOTT LAWRENCE BOOS	January 10
FRED A. POPPA, JR.	January 11
JOHN NAPOLITANO	January 11
MARISSA IRENE IRWIN	January 11
DENISE GLOVER	January 13
BRIA MARIE McCONNELL VILLANUEVA	January 14
KADEELYN KONSTANTINO	January 15
RYAN CHARLES BRENNAN	January 18
STEPHEN M. CESLIK, III	January 18
BRIAN WATCKE	January 19
ROY H. SMITH, JR.	January 20
LISA MARIE MANCINI	January 21
JARED ARTHUR LEVINE	January 21
SARAH CYNTHIA KOURY	January 22
DJ ART	January 24
CHRISTOPHER REYES PEREZ	January 24
JOHN R. JONES, IV	January 26
STEPHEN D. TOMASKY	January 26
JOHN BRADY CHAPIN	January 26
SEAN GARRETT RICE	January 29
KATHLEEN ELLEEN BAYE	January 29
CHRISTOPHER HUBINGER	January 30
SARA BETH ROBINSON HUSZAR	February 1
CAITLIN LOGAN	February 4
MICHELLE PETERS	February 4
ANDREW JAMES DONNELLAN	February 5
CHRISTOPHER MULLIGAN	February 5
BRENNA MCMENAMEY	February 5
KAREN WIEGMAN	February 7
BRENDAN THOMAS MURREN	February 7



BIRTHDAYS

THOMAS CHISHOLM	February 10
GRACE MARIE EVANKO	February 13
DAWN KOSARKO	February 14
ALEX RECUPINO	February 14
DONNA CARPENTER	February 15
VALERIE F. POPPA	February 15
ALYSSA ANNE MUSHIN	February 17
JENNIFER ANN BATTISTA RUSSO	February 18
EVON EDWARDS	February 19
ASHLEY JOY	February 19
ANDREW BOBKO	February 20
BRANDON MICHAEL VELEZ	February 22
ADELE ADESUWA IYAMU	February 23
GARY SALVATORE BELLARD	February 23
SEAN RUSSELL	February 24
MITCHELL ELLIOT HARRIS	February 24
MARCUS RAMOS	February 24
HOWIE TASSITANO	February 24
WILLIAM CLEARY	February 25
JEAN PHILLIPE LOMINY	February 29
ROBERT S. MURPHY	February 29

Our Children Loved, Missed, and Remembered...

A life that touches the hearts of others goes on forever.

SINCERE PETTWAY	January 3	
CHARLES ROBERT MARTIN	January 4	
DAVID L. CARLSON	January 4	
CHRISTOPHER JOSEPH HALEY	January 4	
KENNETH (KJ) A. BARTEK, JR.	January 4	
JOHN SCINTO	January 6	
ROBERT SMUNIEWSKI	January 8	
DENISE PIETROWSKI	January 9	
SCOTT MILO	January 11	
KEVONNA EDWARDS	January 12	
JAMES CARBONE	January 12	
BRENDAN THOMAS MURREN	January 12	
BRIA MARIE McCONNELL VILLANUEVA	January 14	
STEPHEN D. TOMASKY	January 15	
MICHELLE PETERS	January 16	
GINA DECHELLO	January 16	
ADAM JARVIS	January 17	
JULIAN CERRATO	January 19	
ALAN BARNETT WEINER	January 20	
		WILLIAM MARIANO VARGAS
		JESSICA ELIZABETH KOLARIC
		VICTOR MARELLA, JR.
		JAMES HRZIC
		JONAS BLACKWELL
		OZZY ZACK
		STEPHEN M. CESLIK, III
		GEORGE W. JULESON, IV
		WILLIAM (BILLY) RUDOLPH
		January 22
		January 26
		January 27
		January 27
		January 29
		January 30
		January 30
		January 31
		January 31
JAMIE RITTER	February 2	
DEBRA NAPOLITANO	February 4	
KRISTIN ANN CARVETH	February 4	
MASHA ROBINSON	February 4	
AMBER KINGERSKY	February 5	
COLIN J. BUSSOLARI	February 6	
DANNY MURPHY	February 7	
DEXTER HILL	February 7	
KADEELYN KONSTANTINO	February 7	
NICK FELISKO	February 8	
NANCY KELLER	February 8	
BEVERLY BRUNO	February 12	
BOBBY BONACCI	February 12	
MICHAEL WRIGGLESWORTH	February 13	
LORENZO ZACHARIAH DEADERICK	February 14	
ZOE ELIZABETH ANYAN	February 16	
DONNA CARPENTER	February 17	
JOSEPH KOWALCZYK, JR.	February 18	
MARCI BYITECK	February 19	
DARRELL BENNETT	February 20	
DAVID EHMAN	February 21	
NATHAN BURROWS	February 22	
ERIN BABINEAU	February 22	
ERIC S. HULTZERG	February 26	
KEITH McARTHUR	February 26	
PAUL-JOHN HERON	February 28	
ALEXA RAE HERON	February 28	
RYAN CHARLES BRENNAN	February 28	

Hope

is the whisper in our soul
that tells us
all will be well.

Angelversaries

Bridgeport TCF Chapter's Memorial Worldwide Candlelighting Event

On December 8, 2019, at the Huntington Congregational Church in Shelton, CT our Chapter held its Candlelighting Event to honor all who had the love, courage, and heart to attend and remember the love of their child, grandchild, sibling, spouse, parent, or friend who no longer is physically present in their lives.

Many thanks go to Anne Castaldo who chaired the event and to her Steering Committee helpers: Michele Peloso, Dee Tutka, Dr. Charles Kochan, Leslie Minasi, Janet Spray, and their family and friends, as well. A special thank you goes to Bob Edwards, the father of Anthony and Evon Edwards, who performed musical selections on his guitar during dinner.

The following is the poem that was written and read by Holly Konstantino in honor and memory of her daughter Kadeelyn Nicole.

"As we gather tonight with family and friends, We hold your memories so dear in our hearts. Wishing so badly that we were not apart. Your presence it's here; It's felt tonight, in every candle burning bright. You may be out of our sights, but you will always be our bright

beautiful lights.

You hold a place so deep in our hearts. You always did right from the start.

Your special ways, the things you did, and all your kind words are forever in our heads.

No one can take these memories away. We just pray each day they won't fade away.

As these candles burn tonight, we honor your memory as we light up the night. Hoping you can see each and every one shining so bright.

As we think about the days gone by and the ones still to come, We wish in every moment that you were still part of them.

Our love is forever. It won't fade away. We will see you again surely one day. But for now may these lights forever shine bright. We will cherish you all for the rest of our lives. To all of our beautiful children in heaven above, May you rest in peace, knowing how dearly you are loved.

Your presence it's here; it's felt tonight, in every candle burning bright. You may be out of our sights, but you will always be our bright beautiful lights."

Love Gifts Given in Memory at the CandleLighting Event

Bob and Jean Puglia
for

Derick Springer, Sarah Drew, Noel Senerchia

Kristen and Andrew Cable
for

Bridget Grace Cable

Konstantinos
for

Kadeelyn Nicole Konstantino

Dee & Peter Tutka
for

Viviana Cavalli

Teisha & Carole Capozzi

Nicole & Michael Smith
for

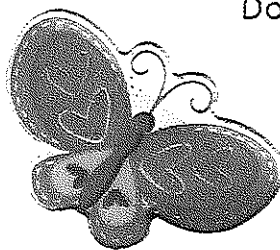
Joseph Peloso IV

Janice Corsino
for

Kadeelyn Nicole Konstantino

Doug and Theresa Sutherland
for their son

Kevin Sutherland



Snowflakes drift silently to earth.

A new year has dawned. The revelry of the old year has quieted and the holiday hustle and bustle has ended.

As bereaved parents, for many of us this will be our first full year without our children. For others, the upcoming year will be another thread in the garment of life. A thread connecting the memories of our old life with the hope for "recovery" in our new life.

How often our thoughts wander back to another day and time when we were happy and full of the vitality that makes up life - a time when our child made our life complete and worth living.

Though many years have passed since becoming a bereaved parent, I still think about my children every day of my life. As I sat watching the ball atop Times Square descend, my thoughts jumped back to a time when my children lay safely in their beds as we brought a new year into existence.

Does *this* new year bring with it time when we will hurt less - when there will be a new ray of hope? Or does it bring even more heartache because of the sadness and loneliness we find difficult to leave behind?

The answers lie deep within each of us. How we approach this new year will make the difference.

Can we be kind to ourselves? Just because others place demands on us to do whatever they feel will help us, does not mean they are right. They have not walked in our shoes. We can say NO!

Can we enjoy life again? Though we cannot be physically with our child(ren), they would want us to enjoy living again...and yes, they would want us to love again!

Can we help parents who are more newly bereaved to clear the same hurdles that seemed so insurmountable to us such a short while ago? By reaching out to others and making their burdens a little lighter, we are helping our own open wounds to heal.

Inside of me are all the answers. Everything I need to know lives inside of me.

Come behold my miracle. Come and hear my story. Come and paint a memory with me.

-Wayne Loder, TCF Lakes Area

*"Be my ray of hope,
be my ray of laughter.
Be my song to sing that guides me
on my way.*

*Be the arms that hold me.
Be the love that enfolds me.
Be my light,
Be my ray of hope today."*

- Paul Alexander, songwriter

January Warmth

Like a tree in winter which has lost its leaves,
We look ahead to spring for new growth
and the warmth of the sun to heal the pain
in our hearts.

Let us make January a time
we reach out to each other
and give that warmth from our hearts
and in return...

We will all show new growth.

-Pat Dodge, Sacramento Valley, California TCF Chapter

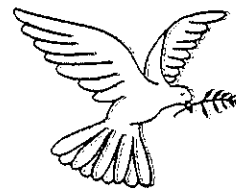


NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS FOR BEREAVED PARENTS

I RESOLVE:

- That I will grieve as much and for as long as I feel like grieving and I will not let others put a timetable on my grief.
- That I will grieve in whatever way I feel like grieving, and I will ignore those who try to tell me what I should or should not be feeling and how I should or should not be behaving.
- That I will cry whenever and wherever I feel like crying, and that I won't hold back my tears just because someone else feels I should be "brave" or "getting better" or "healing by now."
- That I will talk about my child as often as I want to, and that I will not let others turn me off just because they can't deal with their own feelings.
- That I will not expect family and friends to know how I feel, understanding that one who has not lost a child can't possibly know how it feels.
- That I will not blame myself for my child's death, and I will constantly remind myself that I did the best job of parenting, I could possible have done. But when feelings of guilt are overwhelming, I will remind myself that this is a normal part of the grief process and it will pass.
- That I will not be afraid or ashamed to seek professional help if I feel it is necessary.
- That I will commune with my child at least once a day in whatever way feels comfortable and natural to me, and I won't feel compelled to explain or justify this communion with others.
- That I will try to eat, sleep and exercise every day in order to give my body strength it will need to help me cope with my grief.
- To know that I am not losing my mind and I will remind myself that loss of memory, feelings of disorientation, lack of energy, and a sense of vulnerability are all normal parts of the grief process.
- To let myself heal and not to feel guilty about feeling better.
- To remind myself that the grief process is circuitous that is, I will not make steady upward process and, when I find myself slipping back into the old moods of despair and depressions, I will tell myself that "slipping backward" is also a normal part of the grief process and these moods too, will pass.
- To try to be happy about something for some part of every day, knowing that, at first, I may have to force myself to think cheerful thoughts so that eventually they will become a habit.
- That I will reach out at times and try to help someone knowing that helping others will help be get over my depression.
- That even though my child is dead, I will opt for life, knowing that is what my child would have wanted for me.

-Nancy A. Mower TCF Honolulu, HI



*We survive the unthinkable-
 We survive for others-
 And then, very slowly,
 we survive for ourselves
 Because only though the good we do for
 others in her name
 will the beauty of
 spirit, mind and body-
 that was our daughter-
 live forever.*

Kay Lokoff, TCF Valley Forge, PA