



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Bridgeport, Connecticut Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

November & December 2020

Newsletter

Volume 20 No.11 & 12

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

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 550 active 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.

"...how complicated and individual mending is; the time required for healing cannot be measured against any fixed calendar."

-Mary Jane Moffat

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
Shari O'Loughlin CEO
P.O.Box 700
Jensen Beach, Florida 34957
(630)990-0010 (877)969-0010
www.compassionatefriends.org

Regional Coordinator

Mary Lemley
203 483-9935
Mklem43@aol.com

Monthly Meetings

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, social distancing and wearing a mask is now the new standard. The steering committee of the TCF Bridgeport/Stratford Chapter is dedicated to the emotional well-being of its members, and we are committed to helping you through this difficult time.

Since the government of CT deems it safe to resume indoor activities, our meetings will be held at Sterling House Community Center, 2283 Main Street, Stratford, CT 06615 and virtually on Zoom until further notice. On the day of the meeting, you will be receiving an email with instructions on how to log on and join the meeting on the app Zoom or from your phone.

Date: Second Tuesday of each month
(November 10, 2020 & December 8, 2020)

Time: 6:45 pm - 8:00 pm

Place: Sterling House or Virtual Reality through Zoom or phone

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out and contact us at: contact@tcf-bridgeport.org

Bridgeport/Stratford & Vicinity Chapter Steering Committee

Chapter Co-Leaders

Dr. Charles Kochan and Claudia Margitay-Balogh

Secretary

Janet Spray

Treasurer

Leslie Minasi

Website Co-ordinator

Leslie Minasi

Newsletter Editor

Claudia Margitay-Balogh

Hospitality

Dee Tutka

Community Outreach and Librarian

Michele Peloso

Resource Facilitator

Anne Castaldo

Bridgeport Chapter's New E-Mail Address:
contact@tcf-bridgeport.org

TCF Bridgeport's New Website Address:
www.tcf-bridgeport.org

Bridgeport Chapter's Facebook Website:

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

A Bereaved Parent's Holiday Wish List

1.

I wish my child hadn't died. I wish I had him or her back.

2.

I wish you wouldn't be afraid to speak my child's name. My child lived and was very important to me. I need to hear that my child was important to you, also.

3.

If I cry and get emotional when you talk about my child, I wish you knew that it isn't because you have hurt me. My child's death is the cause of my tears. You have talked about my child, and you have allowed me to share my grief. I thank you for both.

4.

Being a bereaved parent is not contagious, so I wish you wouldn't shy away from me. I need you now more than ever.

5.

I need diversions, so I do want to hear about you; but, I also want you to hear about me. I might be sad, and I might cry; but I wish you would let me talk about my child, my favorite topic of the day.

6.

I know that you think of and pray for me often. I also know that my child's death pains you, too. I wish you would let me know those things through a phone call, a card or note, or a real big hug.

7.

I wish you wouldn't expect my grief to be over in six months. These first months are traumatic for me, but I wish you could understand that my grief will never be over. I will suffer the death of my child until the day I die.

8.

I wish you wouldn't expect me "not to think about it" or to "be happy." Neither will happen for a very long time, so don't frustrate yourself.

9.

I don't want to have a "pity party," but I do wish you would let me grieve. I must hurt before I can heal.

10.

I wish you understood how my life has shattered. I know it is miserable for you to be around me when I'm feeling miserable. Please be as patient with me as I am with you.

11.

When I say "I'm doing okay," I wish you could understand that I don't "feel" okay and that I struggle daily.

12.

I wish you knew that all of the grief reactions I'm having are very normal. Depression, anger, hopelessness and overwhelming sadness are all to be expected. So please excuse me when I'm quiet and withdrawn or irritable and cranky.

13.

Your advice to "take one day at a time" is excellent advice. However, a day is too much and too long for me right now. I wish you could understand that I'm doing good to handle an hour at a time.

14.

I wish you understood that grief changes people. When my child died, a big part of me died. *I am not the same person I was before my child died, and I will never be that person again.*

15.

I wish very much that you could understand—understand my loss and my grief, my silence and my tears, my void and my pain. BUT, I pray daily that you will never really understand.

Love Gifts

A "Love Gift" is a donation to The Compassionate Friends Local Chapter. It is usually in honor of a child, grandchild, or sibling who has died. There are no fees or dues to belong to The Compassionate Friends. As parents and others find hope and healing within the group, they sometimes make a "Love Gift" to our chapter. "Love Gifts" allow us to offer this newsletter, our website, a meeting place, Zoom, books, brochures, and tapes to assist grieving families.

These gifts are much needed and are always welcome. "Love Gifts" are acknowledged every two months in the newsletter. *The Compassionate Friends is a registered 501(c)(3) organization.*

Please send your request and check to our treasurer at:

The Compassionate Friends Bridgeport Chapter

c/o Leslie Minasi, treasurer

P.O. Box 112

Stratford, CT 06615

Please make out "Love Gift" checks to:

The Compassionate Friends Bridgeport Chapter.

TCF Bridgeport Chapter "Love Gift" Form

Name _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____ Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Message _____

Love Gift \$ _____

Thank you!

"...how complicated and individual mending is; the time required for healing cannot be measured against any fixed calendar."

All kinds of factors go into the matter of how long it takes to pass through the heaviest stages of grief. The end of the first year is an important milestone: one has then passed every anniversary, every special holiday.

But some have suggested that this is just the beginning: now that the fact has sunk in, occasion by occasion, and there is still the rest of one's life to live.

Four years after my daughter's death, I realized one day that this is beginning to feel different. Not that the intense grief had left, but it was no longer such a preoccupying burden, the

dominant fact of each day. Another writer says it takes seven years to recover from a death

These are discouraging numbers to contemplate when one is first plunged into grief and a week looms ahead full of sadness. Time extends itself, stretches.

That will not always be the case. But there's no predicting. We must feel our way along, trusting the process to reveal its own wisdom.

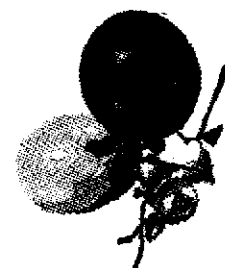
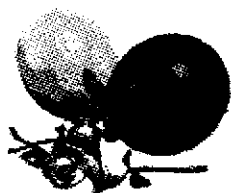
Healing After Loss: daily meditations for working through grief by Martha W. Hickman

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 November and December in your thoughts and in your hearts.

EDWARD ANGELO PIPKIN	November 2	DANIEL HOWIE MARTINEZ, JR.	December 3
DERICK JAMES SPRINGER	November 2	KEVONNA EDWARDS	December 3
ZOE ELIZABETH ANYAN	November 3	CARLO MINASI	December 3
KRISTIN ANN CARVETH	November 4	BEVERLY BRUNO	December 4
EDWARD GLOVER	November 4	DAWN ANN KALMAN	December 4
JAMES (JAMEY) GUENTER DINA	November 5	MICHAEL ROWLEY	December 4
JULIAN CERRATO	November 8	LEO FARRELL	December 7
KEITH RONALD BERRY	November 9	STEVEN WALL	December 9
DAVID L. CARLSON	November 9	EVAN MCNAMARA HUGHES	December 9
PHILLIP DIVINCENZO, JR.	November 9	NOEL LUCINA SENERCHIA	December 10
BRIAN STAPLETON	November 12	JOSEPH MICHAEL KLINKO	December 11
RONALD ALLEN, JR.	November 12	RICHARD C. BENNETT, JR.	December 11
SARAH FOLEY	November 14	NEIL GEORGE SWEETMAN	December 14
TIARRA WEB	November 15	ZAIRE D. HALL	December 14
GREGORY ROBERT SANTOS	November 16	ALAN RICHARD HOFFMAN, SR.	December 15
CARLOS CARMONA	November 21	FRANK THOMAS FROUGE	December 16
ROBERT MICHAEL FROUGE	November 24	THOMAS VAZZANO	December 19
JAMES WORSHAM	November 25	CHRIS LEAHY	December 20
HEATHER ROSE RARO	November 29	JAVIER DANIEL COSME	December 20
KEVIN RASCOE	November 30	JOSEPH ANTHONY PELOSO IV	December 22
		NATHAN BURROWS	December 25
		CRYSTAL LYNN HAYDEN	December 26
		AALIYAH GABRIELLE DUNN	December 26
		DAVID STANCZYK	December 27
		GEORGE W. JULESON IV	December 27
		GRAZIANO SOLLENNE	December 30
		KYLIE FLANNERY	December 30
		BOBBY BONACCI	December 31
		JOHN McPADDEN	December 31

BIRTHDAYS



Our Children Loved, Missed, and Remembered...

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

NINA TERESA POETA	November 1
BARBARA ANNE MINAR	November 1
ANTHONY EDWARDS	November 4
FRANCIS JOSEPH O'HARA	November 4
MATTHEW MAKAR	November 4
MICHAEL DAVID BUGLIONE	November 7
AMY E. CLEVELAND-JOHNSON	November 9
SARA BETH ROBINSON HUSZAR	November 11
MITCHELL ELLIOT HARRIS	November 13
RON CRISTIANO	November 13
ALYSSA ANNE MUSHIN	November 13
CIARA O'DRISCOLL	November 16
THOMAS CHISHOLM	November 17
VIVIANA ROSE CAVALLI	November 20
CAITLIN LOGAN	November 21
SCOTT LAWRENCE BOOS	November 23
LISA REED	November 27
CHRISTOPHER MULLIGEN	November 28
JOHN R. JONES IV	November 29
HEATHER MARIE RARO	November 29
JEAN PHILLIPE LOMINY	November 29
VINNIE MALIANO	November 30
ANTHONY MICHAEL TEIXEIRA	November 30
CHRISTIAN LAURENCE RUTTER	November 30



"Love lives on in the memories
that are forever woven
in the fabric
of our hearts."

-Alan Pedersen

CHRISTOPHER HUBINGER	December 2
RYAN JOYCE	December 3
MATTHEW JOHN EVANS	December 3
FRANK THOMAS FROUGE	December 4
EVON EDWARDS	December 4
WILLIAM GAGLIARDI	December 5
HALLE ROOT	December 8
STEVEN SPRAY	December 8
AVA JANE HOWERTON	December 8
MARY BETH ESPOSITO/HERR	December 9
DANIELLE R. METATOS	December 10
KEITH RONALD BERRY	December 13
ROBERT MICHAEL FROUGE	December 14
DAVID TYLER	December 14
DANIEL HOWIE MARTINEZ, JR.	December 15
EVAN MCNAMARA HUGHES	December 16
ROCCO BONAVIDA	December 19
JOVANNI NATAL	December 21
WILLIAM POTZ	December 23
BRENNA McMENAMEY	December 23
JOHN PATRICK FLANAGAN	December 24
ETHAN THORNTON	December 24
JOSEPH DAVID GAGLIARDI, SR.	December 24
PATRICK J. DUBEE	December 26
JENNIFER LEIBOWITZ ANTONIER	December 26
JOHN E. MURPHY, JR.	December 28
JAMES BLOMBERG	December 31

Angelversaries



The Red Feathers by Michele Peloso

My 34-year old son passed away in June of 2017. I was devastated and wanted only to know that he was safe, happy, and still with me. Two weeks after his passing, visits from friends and family dwindled as they had to return to their lives of work and family. I found myself lonely and afraid.

To keep busy, I cleaned and straightened the house. The floors were so clean, you could eat off of them. The only comfort I would get was from my three fur babies. They, too, were looking lost, especially my son's dog Sammy.

I mustered up some energy, and I decided to take all of the dogs for a walk. When I returned, I walked into my house and there, right in the middle of the kitchen floor, was a big feather. I couldn't understand where it had come from because I had just swept and mopped the floor that morning. No one was in or out, not even the dogs.

The feather became my sign from my son. Each day, I would wait for another sign. I watched a feather billow down on me while I stood on my deck. I would go to the store

and find one in my path.

After a few months, I questioned my signs. Was I just looking for the signs in order to make myself feel better? How could I prove it was my son sending me the feathers? I asked specifically for a red feather. I had never ever found a red feather in my life, so it seemed that I would be proven wrong.

Later that week, I went to my yard to just smell the flowers, and there was a red feather sticking straight up in the grass! I was so elated. I knew that the feather was from my son and meant for me.

Again, after a few weeks, I began to wonder was it just a coincidence? So I asked again for a red feather and waited.

Then, on Mother's Day, in a crack in my driveway, there was a red feather. In the months and years to follow, I have come across 12 red feathers. My daughter and daughter-in-law have found them, as well. We all know that the red feather is his way of letting us know that he will never leave us!

Because of This Story

There is a section in the *Woman's World Magazine* called "My Guardian Angel." People write in with beautiful stories of how they connect with their loved ones in Heaven. Anyone can submit a story and if chosen, the story will be published in the magazine.

Michele Peloso, who is on the Steering Committee of the Bridgeport Chapter of The Compassionate Friends, will tell everyone she knows about the red feathers. She realizes that not everyone gets signs, but because she truly believes in them and her signs have brought her peace and comfort, she decided to submit her story to the magazine in early April 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic.

She was hoping that her story would be published so that others will believe and start noticing the signs meant for them.

In October 2020, Michele received an email from *Woman's World Angels* congratulating her. Her story was chosen to be featured for the November 9th issue of *Woman's World* which is on the newstands in supermarkets and pharmacies beginning on October 29th.

Needless to say, Michele and her family are thrilled as well as all of her TCF friends. Hopefully, Michele's success will prompt many of you to submit your grief journey writings not only to this newsletter but to major publications. Good luck!

Reflections On The 2020 TCF Conference

by Gwen Rice

Gwen Rice, a member of the Bridgeport Chapter of The Compassionate Friends, is the mother of Sean Rice. Through the years, Gwen has attended TCF's National Conferences throughout the United States in memory and honor of her son. This year's conference was held virtually because of the Covid-19 pandemic during the weekend of July 31-August 2, 2020. There were over 70 workshops that were offered. Gwen has chosen one workshop and one sharing session to write about. On National's website, there is still time till November 30, 2020 to view the recorded workshops for yourself.

The 43rd National Compassionate Friends Conference was well organized and contained most of the elements of an in-person conference. A lot of time and effort was put into this virtual conference, and I was very impressed.

At the in-person conferences I have attended, I have always enjoyed the musical entertainment, the candle lighting, and awards presentations. I was not disappointed with any of these events this year. I attended "An Hour with Nathan Peterson" whose voice, guitar playing, and original songs were beautiful to listen to.

I did miss physically attending the conference where I could explore a new place, and actually be with people. I found that I still tried to do numerous things at home that weekend such as tending to unexpected guests whereas in the past, the conference weekend would be solely dedicated to me spending time with my son and being in the company of others who were pleased to learn about Sean.

TCF 7/31/20 Losing an Only Child by Crystal Webster

I was late logging onto the Losing an Only Child session, but I didn't want to miss it entirely. This workshop had a sharing component other than the chat box. Participants could ask questions and talk about what was on their minds. Crystal did a great job facilitating so that numerous people had a chance to speak and to honor their child. The chat box was filled with bereaved parents wanting to exchange emails so that they could connect with others with no surviving children. There is a great need for sharing within this group as our situations are a bit different without other children to care for, to celebrate milestones with, or potentially have grandchildren from. The consensus was that those TCF members with no surviving children need more of this kind of workshop and/or sharing session.

I am currently reading Crystal Webster's book entitled *Confessions of a Griever: Turning a Hot Mess into a Haute Message (Laughable Lessons for When Life Just Sucks)*. It is a very open and honest account of her grief journey.

TCF 7/31/20 Signs from Heaven by Christine Duminiak

I attended the Signs from Heaven workshop which I have attended at a past conference. Christine, a Certified Grief Recovery Specialist, began receiving signs from her in-laws and began researching this topic. After the heart-breaking loss of loved ones, one of the most comforting experiences can be to receive a sign from them. Because signs are often subtle, it is not unusual to overlook signs you may be receiving. She mentioned how it is important to pray for signs from our loved one, and she provided various tips concerning signs. Christine talked about unpleasant visits and/or signs and said that these are not from your loved ones. She has written numerous books on after-death communications. The chat box was filled with book recommendations. Christine is a charismatic speaker and has a very calming presence.

The Compassionate

Corner

Poem written by Patty Quirk who is a member of our Bridgeport/Stratford TCF chapter in honor of her beloved son Daniel Quirk.

•••••
 • "My son Danny died in May 2005. This poem was
 • inspired by a song that I heard on the radio as I strug-
 • gled to sleep one night in September 2020. I have
 • never felt so inspired to write before, but this poem
 • is meant to be shared - maybe to help someone else
 • in his or her journey."
 •••••

Of You

At night
 The best part of you continues to soar
 But I am fond of the other parts, too
 Those I knew, that made you real

That light
 The part that goes on and leaves me
 To fumble with our words and spaces
 Compressed, yet trying to stretch and move

So loved
 Aching silent, twisting, gaping
 Tied to treasure that does not keep
 Just one glance I had been granted

All right
 This order and flow, though not my stride
 I am better with feet in the dust
 Until I feel Him tug at me

New sight
 He has led and followed your every step
 Fool to think that it was me!
 He gifted me with that deception

New bright
 Floating to the One who waits
 He has a place, a plan, a purpose
 Yet this, He chooses to conceal

Some life!
 Taking flight in dreamlike sparks and flame
 Leave the rest for me to tend
 These parts that I am fond of
 These I know, that make you real