

# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Bridgeport, Connecticut Chapter  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

September & October 2021

Newsletter

Volume 21 No.9 & 10

*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 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.

*"I don't remember the day. Was it a child's smile that awoke me, or a sign of sadness exposed in a place I didn't want it seen? Or a sense of responsibility? Or had I finally given up on despair? Perhaps I was simply caught up again in the game of life."*  
-Anne Philippe

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 Address

The Compassionate Friends  
48660 Pontiac Trail #930805  
Wixom, MI 48393  
(630)990-0010 (877)969-0010  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

### Regional Co-ordinator

Mary Lemley  
203 483-9935  
[Mklem43@aol.com](mailto:Mklem43@aol.com)

## Monthly Meetings

Due to Governor Lamont's lessening of the restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Steering Committee of the Bridgeport/Stratford, TCF Chapter has decided to resume in-person meetings at Sterling House Community Center, 2283 Main Street, Stratford, CT06615 beginning in May 2021. Reservations for attending will need to be made. Social distancing and wearing a mask will be required. Information will be sent out to all members.

The in-person meetings will be televised virtually on Zoom. 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  
(Sept. 14, 2021 & October 12, 2021)

**Time:** 6:45 pm - 7:45 pm

**Place:** Sterling House & Virtual Reality  
through Zoom or phone

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

### Zoom Co-ordinator

*Kristen Cable*

Bridgeport Chapter's New E-Mail Address:  
**[contact@tcf-bridgeport.org](mailto:contact@tcf-bridgeport.org)**

TCF Bridgeport's New Website Address:  
**[www.tcf-bridgeport.org](http://www.tcf-bridgeport.org)**

Bridgeport Chapter's Facebook Website:

[www.facebook.com/pages/The-Compassionate-Friends-Bridgeport-Chapter](http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Compassionate-Friends-Bridgeport-Chapter)



# Grieving, Healing, Growing...

## UNDERSTANDING COMMON PATTERNS OF AVOIDING GRIEF

The avoidance patterns identified and described below are as follows:

1. The Postponer
2. The Displacer
3. The Replacer
4. The Minimizer
5. The Somaticizer

**1. The Postponer** is the person who mistakenly believes that if he or she delays the expression of grief, over time it will hopefully go away. However, in reality the grief builds and manifests itself in ways that are destructive to the griever. Society thinks this person is doing well.

**2. The Displacer** is the person who takes the expression of grief away from the loss itself and displaces the painful emotions onto a less threatening person, place, or situation.

**3. The Replacer** is the person who takes the emotions that were invested in the deceased and invests them prematurely in someone or something else.

**4. The Minimizer** may be aware of the feelings of grief, but dilutes them through "rationalizations" - tells others the loved one is better off not suffering

anymore; etc. Convinces self and others that the loss is not painful.

**5. The Somaticizer** is the person who converts his or her grief feelings into physical symptoms. Bereaved people who adopt these avoidance patterns do so unconsciously and for complicated reasons. Generally, the reasons are related to a high need for self-control, an inability to allow oneself to feel, and to express deep feelings of pain and helplessness. Still others may lack a support system that encourages them to express their feelings.

Among some of the more common consequences of adopting grief avoidance patterns are:

1. Deterioration in relationships.
2. Symptoms of chronic physical illness.
3. Symptoms of chronic depression.
4. Symptoms of chronic anxiety.

Grieving is not easy, neither is avoiding grief. Both demand a high price in emotional pain. However, healthy resolved grief brings about a gradual lessening and finally an end to the pain. Grief avoidance must be continued indefinitely. Considerable emotional and psychic energy must be expended to keep the emotions of grief pushed down inside. The task never ends. Instead it complicates itself.

"Understanding Common Patterns of Avoiding Grief" by Dr. Alan Wolfelt from THANATOS, Summer 1987 and "The Avoidance of Grief" by Margaret Gerner from CHRYSALIS Newsletter

*As seen in the Greater Ozarks TCF Chapter Newsletter, Springfield, MO*

## HALLOWEEN MASKS

October is the month for Halloween, a date synonymous with masks! As bereaved parents we have, at various times, worn many and varied masks. We have masked our feelings of despair, sorrow, and anguish for the sake of our loved ones, friends, and acquaintances.

We have masked our feelings of anger and bitterness. Most importantly, we have masked the person we have become: the person that has evolved after living through the death of a child.

Let us celebrate the month of October by beginning to take off some of our masks. A very positive and helpful way to begin this process is to attend the next

Compassionate Friends meeting. Share your sorrow, your fears, your bitterness, and disappointment. Above all, share your progress and triumphs through the arduous journey of grief. When you enter a room full of caring and supportive people who have shared your grief, there is no reason to wear a mask.

*Cathy Crawford, PROPS, Erie, PA*



# 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 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.

In Loving Memory  
and Honor  
of  
**Kevin Michael Kochan**  
on his  
Anniversary  
with love,  
from his dad and mom  
Dr. Charles and Sharon Kochan

The Poems of Sascha Wagner  
A TCF Mother  
of her son Nino and daughter Eve

Right now...  
take a moment,  
close your eyes  
and remember  
the smile of  
your child!

When autumn lingers in the gleaming trees  
with painful beauty,  
golden melancholy -  
when we recall the wealth of bygone harvest  
and wait the haunting of a lifeless winter -  
hope is so far away,  
spring is so far away.  
But spring will come!

SEPTEMBER: MONARCHS  
Time between summer and winter.  
Time under changing skies -  
muted and heavy with foresight,  
or endless blue, smiling at butterflies.

Time between summer and winter.  
Time between laughter and tear -  
harvest of beauty remembered  
and voices (where are you?) to hear.

Time between summer and winter,  
thoughtful and painful and wise -  
muted and heavy with losing  
but smiling at butterflies.

TCF Bridgeport Chapter "Love Gift" Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Message \_\_\_\_\_

Love Gift \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you!



# Our Children

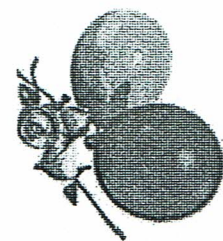
## Loved, Missed, and Remembered...

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 September and October in your thoughts and in your hearts.

DARRELL BENNETT	September 2	JERESA JUNE MINCEY	October 1
SINCERE PETTWAY	September 2	DEXTER HILL	October 1
JOSEPH VITTORIO, JR	September 4	GABRIELLA JOSIE MARIN-RINO	October 4
SCOTT NISHBALL	September 4	MARIYAN MIYLENA NAKHOUNE	October 5
STEFANA MONHOLLEN	September 5	MICHAEL SCOTT LOFARO	October 6
DANIELLE R. METATOS	September 6	CHRISTOPHER WALLING	October 7
JOSEPH CONRAD TURSI	September 6	JASON WALOWITZ	October 8
MICHAEL JAMES JR.	September 7	ROCCO BONAVITA	October 12
NICOLE LAQUESSE	September 7	LAWRENCE MORRELLI	October 12
CHUCKIE ROTOLO	September 8	LINDA MEDINA	October 13
DAVID E. CILENTO	September 8	JENOE VARGA	October 14
MICHAEL WRIGGLESWORTH	September 8	VIVIANA ROSE CAVALLI	October 14
ROBERT YOUNG	September 10	JAMES (TOMMY) STUART	October 14
JOSEPH MCFADDEN	September 11	LORENZO Z. DEADERICK	October 15
MARYBETH ESPOSITO/HERR	September 12	DAVID EHMAN	October 17
DANIEL SOUZA	September 13	CARL ANTHONY JOHNSTON	October 17
CRAIG ARSENAULT	September 15	JASON GLATZ	October 17
WILL RYAN	September 16	RYAN PATRICK FORD	October 17
ROBERT CARBONE	September 17	WILLIAM POTZ	October 18
JONAS BLACKWELL	September 17	DION PROKOP	October 19
DAVID SAMPSON	September 19	MASHA ROBINSON	October 19
TEVIN GORDON	September 19	ALLAN BARNETT WEINER	October 21
VINNIE MALIANO	September 20	PETER BUTANOWICZ	October 26
ALEX PAUL FAKHOURY	September 20	JOSEPH KOWALCZYK, JR.	October 28
ERIK JASON DOBYNS	September 21	DEBRA NAPOLITANO	October 30
STEPHEN F. ZURAW	September 22	TIMMY GAROFALO	October 30
JUSTIN JOSEPH MARGITAY-BALOGH	September 25	MATTHEW JOHN EVANS	October 30
ROBERT SMUNIEWSKI	September 25	DARREN ROBBINS	October 31
ANTHONY EDWARDS	September 27		

*May the sweet memory  
of the child you love,  
SHINE brightly on this birthday.  
Our wish is that this day of  
remembrance  
will bring you gentle peace.*

## BIRTHDAYS

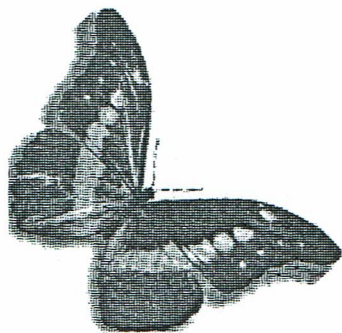




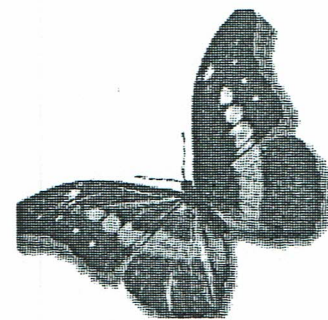
# Our Children Loved, Missed, and Remembered...

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

GRAZIANO SOLLENNE	September 1	VALERIE F. POPPA	October 2
NOEL LUCINDA SENERCHIA	Found Sept. 3	JAMES (Jamie) MEDVEGY	October 3
JEREMY SAXE	September 4	THOMAS PATRICK DALLING	October 4
SHAWN WATSON	September 5	MICHAEL ESPACH	October 4
RICHARD C. BENNETT, JR.	September 5	DEIDRE STEWART	October 5
BRIAN WATCHKE	September 5	THOMAS J. HENTHORN JR.	October 5
SHERRI A. MUNZ	September 7	JOHNNY CORSA	October 12
CHRISTOPHER WALLING	September 7	WILL RYAN	October 13
HOLLY FLANNERY	September 7	SCOTT NISHBALL	October 14
KYLIE FLANNERY	September 7	ROBERT CARBONE	October 14
NICOLE LAQUESSE	September 8	JOSEPH VITTORIO, JR.	October 16
DARREN ROBBINS	September 8	DION PROKOP	October 16
MATTHEW PERRY	September 11	LEIGH SABO	October 16
GREGORY ROBERT SANTOS	September 11	ANDREAS (AJ) JUSTESEN	October 18
CHRISTINE ANN SOLTIS	September 13	JOSE A. SUAREZ	October 18
PAUL WILLIAM MINAR	September 14	DOUGLAS C. COLE, JR.	October 19
MICHAEL ROE	September 15	JAMES WORSHAM	October 19
BRIAN PETER PETRUCCELLI	September 16	JENNIFER A. BATTISTA RUSSO	October 20
MELISSA ERIKA MANCINI	September 22	LISA MARIE MANCINI	October 21
ANTONIO GONCALVES	September 22	JOSEPH CONRAD TURSI	October 21
KIRA MICHELLE DAVIS	September 22	KATRELL BOHANNAN	October 23
SETH ROBERTS	September 23	MATTHEW SCOTT LOFARO	October 23
BRANDON MICHAEL VELEZ	September 23	CONOR ROBERT BOWEN	October 25
LINDA A. POPPA	September 24	ROBERT J. MURPHY	October 26
SEAN RUSSELL	September 25	JALYN FRANCIS	October 27
MARC ROSEN	September 25	JOEY CLANCOLA	October 27
MICHELE BROADLEY	September 28	CARMINE J. MUNZ, JR.	October 29
ADAM EDWARD NDREU	September 29	KOREY JORDAN	October 31
MILES JON JENNESS	September 29		



## Angelversaries





# WHAT I HAVE LEARNED FROM THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

I HAVE LEARNED... What love and a hug can do to bring balm and a measure of healing to an open and very deep wound.

I HAVE LEARNED... What patience and reaching out by phone or in person can do to lessen the loneliness and isolation of grief.

I HAVE LEARNED... What laughing and crying with others who grieve can do to ignite a spark buried so deep that only love can reach it.

I HAVE LEARNED... What the kindness of quiet listening, a touch on the arm, or a knowing look can do to bring reassurance that one is "not going crazy."

I HAVE LEARNED... What the sharing of fears and anticipation of "the first" can do to make the way less scary for all.

I HAVE LEARNED... What the joy of sharing the memories of those we loved most can do to make life seem more bearable.

I HAVE LEARNED... What saying their names and hearing their words echoed in the stories shared can do to make their presence known and to instill within that feeling the realization that they will never ever be far from us.

I HAVE LEARNED... What sharing of self with another can do to lighten the darkness of despair.

I HAVE LEARNED... What a sunshiny day and seeing a child at play can do to bring the flood of tears and memories -- at first drowning, then later, much later, washing over and cleansing - bringing a smile amid the tears.

I HAVE LEARNED... What reading an obituary and seeing the age of the one who died and knowing there are parents who grieve can do to add salt to your wound.

I HAVE LEARNED... What courage it takes to write a note or go to the funeral home for one fresh in grief and what hours of tears result from this act of kindness to another who hurts as you do.

I HAVE LEARNED... What focusing your energy in life giving activities can do to assure your child did not die in vain and what it can do to bring healing in knowing that your child can live again in other ways through your efforts.

I HAVE LEARNED... What fears that no one will remember your child after you are gone can do to increase pain and despair and what finding creative ways to memorialize can do to release you from these fears.

I HAVE LEARNED... What joining hands in thanksgiving for our loved ones can do to bring back some of the joy of the past, knowing it is only because we love and were loved that the pain is so great.

I HAVE LEARNED... What sharing of life's greatest sorrow, the loss of a part of one's very body and soul, can do to bring a feeling of unity, kinship, and comfort.

I HAVE LEARNED... What the unspoken words of "I too know" can do to release a bit of the burden which weighs so heavily on the body and soul.

I HAVE LEARNED... What learning to forgive yourself for not being able to do the impossible, save your child or die for him or her, can do to rekindle the flicker of life within you.

I HAVE LEARNED... That a mother is a mother is a mother always and that a father is a father is a father always- even if a child is lost before birth or shortly after, we were/are part of God's holy creation, and from us we are still called to "Be."

I HAVE LEARNED... What continuing to "Be" in spite of our woundedness can do to give strength to others who do not yet wish to "Be."

I HAVE LEARNED... That the loss of a dream, a future, is devastating and that without our children we must work at creating a future for ourselves and others.

I HAVE LEARNED... That we must learn to dream again, to be all of who we are...that that which is no longer physically part of our lives here is forever with us and can, if we allow, make us more of who we are!

I HAVE LEARNED... What loving each other and risking the pain of new grief can do to bond us, the most fragile of creatures, with invisible threads to each other and our God.

I HAVE LEARNED... What The Compassionate Friends' cocoon of love, friendship, and care can do to help us emerge as beautiful butterflies carrying the colors of courage, pain, love, hope, and... because we dare to love our children and each other!

THANK YOU...

-for teaching me about love.

-for allowing me to share my woundedness.

-for sharing your tears and allowing mine to mix with yours.

-for providing shade from the sun and shelter from the rain. We've been part of an arbor offering respite and renewal for each other.

-for loving me and allowing me to love you.

I thank God for our being able to reach out and touch each other in ways which can nourish and comfort.

Peace and love to all...

*Jerry Redditt*

*TCF, Murfreesboro, TN*