



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Bridgeport, Connecticut Chapter  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

November & December 2021

Newsletter

Volume 21 No.11 & 12

*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.

*May the Memories  
of this Season  
Come on Gentle Wings  
to Bring You  
Love and Peace*

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 **resumed in-person meetings at Sterling House Community Center, 2283 Main Street, Stratford, CT06615.** On-line reservations for attending the meeting will need to be made. Social distancing and wearing a mask throughout the meeting will be required. 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  
(November 9, 2021 & December 14, 2021)

**Time:** 6:45 pm - 8:45 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)



# Editor's Notes

**T**idings of peace are sent to you as we once again embark upon the two months of holidays! Holidays are synonymous with gift giving. What are the gifts that you are planning to give to others and to yourself throughout the months of November and December? What is the gift that you will give in honor of your deceased child?

Before my only child died, I loved to shop for the holidays. I began early and ended late. There was always that last special gift that would be fun to receive. Needless to say, holiday shopping for me has lost its luster. I no longer need or desire to comb through the catalogs or fight the crowds in the specialty shops. My priorities have changed. I believe that assessing priorities and making changes especially for the holidays come with the territory of being a grieving parent.

I no longer deem material goods important. My son was my treasure, and nothing can take his place. So gift giving has a new meaning for me! Ralph Waldo Emerson, the American transcendental philosopher and writer said it well when he wrote: "Rings and jewels are not gifts. The only true gift is a portion of thyself." When we give of ourselves, we can give gifts of the mind (ideas, principles, plans, projects, poetry) or gifts of the spirit (prayer, peace, faith). We also give of ourselves when we give

the gift of time and when we give words of encouragement, inspiration, or guidance.

In fact, the top ten gifts that can be given are **hugs**...to someone who is lonely, **love**...to someone who has nothing to give in return, **patience** ...to someone who is struggling with life, **freedom**...to someone who needs to find his own destiny, **guidance**...to someone drifting in a sea of anxiety, **understanding**...to someone who is confused, **tolerance**...to someone who doesn't see things as you do, **kindness**...to someone in pain, **forgiveness**...to someone you feel has harmed you, and **softness**...to someone who has not yet removed his hard shell.

As a faithful participant in the Bridgeport chapter of The Compassionate Friends, I witness gift giving at every meeting. We in TCF give of ourselves every time we gather in our meeting room when we share our innermost thoughts, allow our tears to fall, and give each other encouragement and strength as we listen. We give the gift of time by listening compassionately to each other's sacred stories. We give the gift of words which encourage, inspire, and guide. We give each other hope to carry on with our shattered lives - hope that there really is a future for each of us. Together we go forward month after month, continually giving of ourselves to each other. Remarkable, isn't it? No doubt about it. That is what TCF is all about.

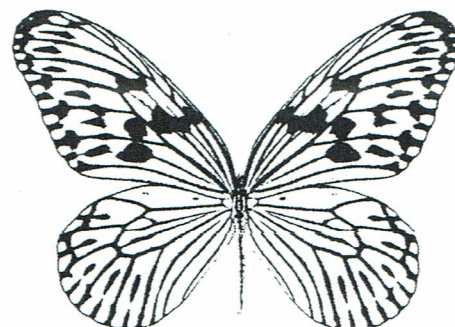
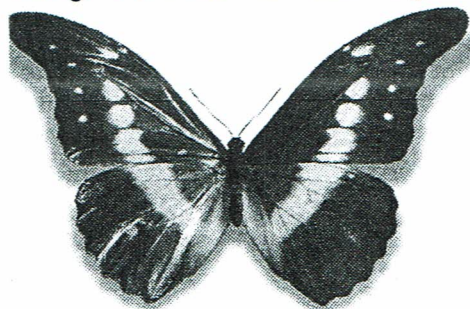
It is also evident that coping with the holidays is very difficult for the bereaved parent. It is especially a devastating time for the newly bereaved. I suggest that the most important gift to give is to yourself. Set limits for yourself.

Grief is exhausting work. You need to have quiet time to rest and to reflect. Allow yourself time to think about and acknowledge your grief and realize that your holiday may have both happy and sad moments. Decide on how much of the holiday you can or want to handle and modify your traditions. Once you have thought the holiday through, have a conference with family members and or friends to let them know your plans and to hear theirs. Be prepared to compromise a bit to reach a plan that everyone in your family can accept.

If others in your family are willing, take time out to talk about your beloved child who has died. You may decide to honor your child by having a photo of him/her in a special place decorated with evergreens and brightly colored balls. Or perhaps a miniature tree could be purchased and tiny decorations added every year in his/her memory. Let your family know your idea and get their input.

Whatever gift you give to yourself or to others, know that you are giving this gift in honor and memory of your beloved child. Above all, the best gift which will honor our children is our determination to work through our grief so that we may live our lives to the fullest.

*Taking one step at a time,  
Claudia Margitay-Balogh*





# 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  
 of  
**Jamey Dina**  
 (November 5 B'day)

*The world is a better place  
 because  
 you were here.*  
 Love,  
 Mom & Dad

*In Memory of  
 our daughter  
**Dawn Kosarko***

*Seasons of snow, then seasons of new,  
 Seasons of seashells, and soon pumpkins too...  
 And throughout all the rhythms  
 And throughout all the change  
 The love for our children will  
 forever remain... (DRK)  
 Love, Mom and Dad*

**Joseph,**

You are forever with us!

Happy Birthday  
 in Heaven

Love, Mom & Dad

**Happy Birthday, Carlo**

You are in our hearts always.  
 Love and miss you  
 every minute of every day.

*Mama & Papa*

TCF Bridgeport Chapter "Love Gift" Form

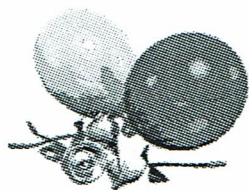
Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_  
 State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_  
 Message \_\_\_\_\_  
 Love Gift \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Thank you!



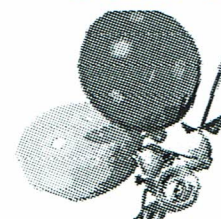
# Our Children Loved, Missed, and Remembered...

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 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) GUENTHER 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
LYNETTE DANIEL SWANSON	November 27	JAVIER DANIEL COSME	December 20
HEATHER ROSE RARO	November 29	CHRISTIE LEA ENDE	December 21
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
		JOSHUA R. WRIGHT	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
K AYLENA CERONE	November 28
JOSHUA R. EHMAN	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 BONAVITA	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





## Holiday Sadness

When you have lost someone very dear to you, the most difficult obstacle to cross is getting through the holidays - surviving the days when everyone around you is celebrating and spreading good cheer while your mind is filled with memories and your heart is heavy with loneliness. It's difficult just making it through what used to be the happiest days that once shared your child, and today carries only emptiness. The greatest challenge is to remain in the company of others who love you when you really want to be alone with your sadness.

It makes no difference whether the loss took place last week, several months ago, or even last year. The holidays always send those deep emotions flooding right to the surface.

Just as how you deal with grief is personal and individual, so is the way you handle the holidays. Remember to be true to yourself, and don't take on too much responsibility. Let people know that your plans may be subject to change, and you can't make long term commitments just yet. Be honest with yourself and with your friends and family and how you're feeling.

Some people find it best to start new traditions because the past ones hold memories too difficult to deal with. Talk with your family about setting expectations. Plan together any modifications you will all make to the "normal" holiday festivities. You may want to have a church service dedicated to the memory of your loved one. Or make an annual

donation in his/her name. Perhaps join the Hospice Tree Lighting ceremony. Bring joy to another child by purchasing a special toy for the Angel Tree in memory of your child.

Some people heal best by helping others. Try volunteering at an organization who help people with a greater need than yours -- a soup kitchen, a homeless shelter, orphanages, etc. Often the best therapy is helping others. Aside from the obvious benefits of keeping your mind occupied..., charity work gives you a tremendous feeling of fulfillment. It can give you a renewed sense of purpose, so important during times of sadness.

Above all else, give yourself permission to enjoy yourself, to laugh, and to find peace. Each of these things are part of healing. Your life will never be the same, but it will go on, and it can be good.

I want you to close your eyes for just a moment. Bring into the room with the clearest image of your child that you have lost. Now say, "I love you, and I miss you. You will always be in my heart. I need you to know... is it okay for me to be happy again?"

Now imagine the answer that you receive. If you remember your loved one in his or her true light, I'm confident the answer will be **YES**. Find peace over the holidays, and be good to you.

*Brigitte Synesael*

*Printed in the Rockland County (NY) chapter  
Newsletter Winter 2012-13*

One day you wake up and realize you must have survived it because you are still here,  
alive and breathing. But you don't remember the infinitely small steps  
and decisions you took to get there.

Your only awareness is that you have shed miles of tears  
on what seems to be an endless road of sorrow.

One day...

One glorious day,  
you wake up and feel your skin tingle again,  
and you forget just for an instant  
that your heart is broken -  
and **IT IS A BEGINNING.**

*-Susan Borrowman TCF Kingston, Canada*



## Compassionate Event

On October 2, 2021, Mr. Chris Nevins, former director of the Connecticut Audubon (Birdcraft Museum) guided seventeen members of our chapter, The Compassionate Friends of Bridgeport/Stratford, on a family nature walk through the Connecticut Audubon Center in Fairfield, CT.

The group wound through a mile long path with Chris. As a knowledgeable and experienced bird enthusiast, Chris explained to the group when to look for particular birds, what happens during the migration season, and how birds gather food through their hunting practices and survival skills. He also discussed the vegetation, plants, and places that sustain birds.

All those present enjoyed a clear blue sky and the warm sunshine of a perfect autumn day. All questions from the curious participants were answered and much information was gained.

To be in nature, to be escorted by a lover of nature, and to be with friends from our chapter proved to be a remarkable experience. Those who said, "Yes, I will come to this event" gave themselves permission to enjoy the beauty of nature and the joy of companionship.

Please remember that it is our responsibility to bring our child, sibling, or grandchild with us in spirit and in love as we continue forward living our life.

## Worldwide Candle Lighting

The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting on the 2nd Sunday in December unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor the memories of the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and grandchildren who left too soon. As candles are lit on December 12th, 2021 at 7:00 pm local time, hundreds of thousands of people commemorate and honor the memory of all children gone too soon.

Now believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe, the annual Worldwide Candle

Lighting, a gift to the bereavement community from The Compassionate Friends, creates a virtual 24 hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone. Families gather in quiet remembrance of children who have died and will never be forgotten.

This year The Compassionate Friends will offer a **Virtual Worldwide Candle Lighting** on December 13, 2021 starting at 6:45 pm for Eastern, Central, Mountain, and Pacific time zones. Register now at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org) to attend the candle lighting at 6:45pm for each time zone.

### Gift

The **gift** of sunshine to brighten your day  
 The **gift** of joy to lighten your way  
 The **gift** of laughter to make you less tense  
 The **gift** of insight when nothing makes sense  
 The **gift** of love to fill your cup  
 The **gift** of patience to never give up  
 The **gift** of compassion for those who won't see  
 The **gift** of forgiveness to help set you free  
 All these I would give you had I them to give  
 Instead, I will offer a heart filled with love  
 For as long as we live.

-Ruth Eiseman