



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Bridgeport, Connecticut Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

November & December 2022

Newsletter

Volume 22 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.

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.

*Yesterday is History,
Tomorrow is A Mystery,
Today is A Gift,
That's Why We Call
it
"The Present."*

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

Regional Co-ordinator
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:
November 8, 2022 6:45 - 8:45 pm
December 13, 2022 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 parking lot. Use back entrance. We meet in the large room. 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 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

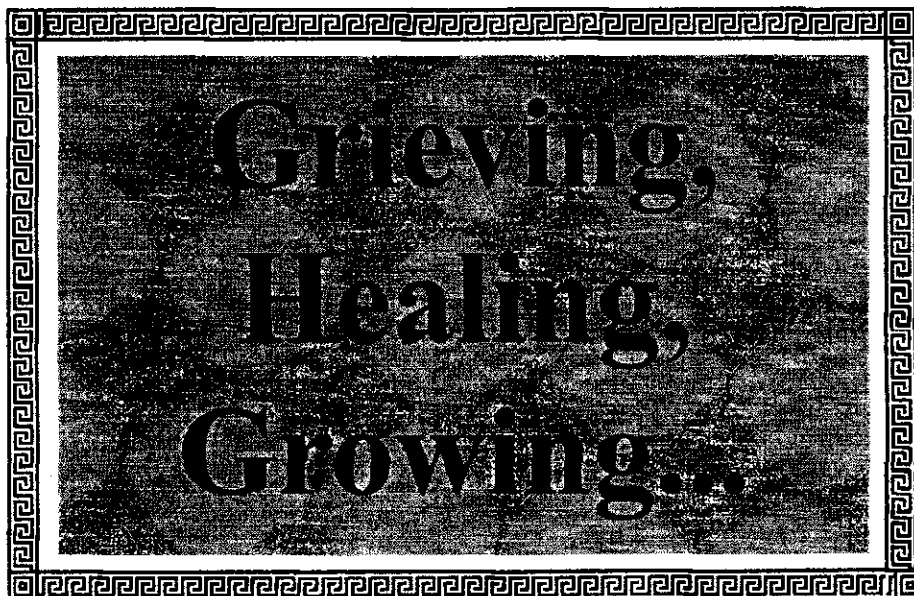
Zoom Co-ordinator

Kristen Cable

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

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

Bridgeport Chapter's Facebook Website:
www.facebook.com/pages/The-Compassionate-Friends-Bridgeport-Chapter



Supporting Yourself This Holiday Season

Refrain from projected suffering, anticipated heartache, or manufactured anguish. Now is the only eternity there is and the only reality. Let the road rise to meet you, rather than jumping ahead to agonize over projected illusion of doom and despair.

Consider allowing this holiday season to become a meditation on life rather than a distraction from it. Trust the mind and psyche to guide you in the direction you need to go. Embrace this moment and give it expression. Make peace with your place in the universe. Feel the feelings that are present now - solve today's problems, receive today's gift.

Make friends with who you are in this instant and give yourself permission to be anyone you need to be tomorrow or next

week or next month. The best gift you can give is infinite gentleness with yourself.

Break down holiday activities into tiny bites for easier consumption. Each day is filled with a series of events and non-events, all chained to one another in a never-ending spiral that flows naturally and spontaneously into the next. Tears while hanging the Christmas stockings need not interfere with the enjoyment and delight of fresh-baked gingerbread cooling in the kitchen. The fresh, clean smell of pine is its own reward and has nothing to do with the absence of a loved one at the dinner table.

Release all that needs to be free. Make choices to allow yourself to feel the hurt, anger, fear, comfort, peace, joy, and excitement of the season. Let the feelings come, and let the feelings go. By letting go of the emotions, we are freed in the process.

Respect the natural rhythms that flow in and around you. Healing energy waits in a gentle touch, in a positive thought, in a tender remembrance, or a soft prayer. The unbearable becomes bearable when we focus on "this moment" --no more and no less. Wrap yourself in love, comfort, and protection as you are carried down the path into tomorrow and beyond.

Love yourself enough to ask for what you need. Listen carefully to yourself and honor each and every internal nudging. Have faith in your thinking, believe in your choices, and trust in your feelings. Realize that it is possible to experience pain, love, anger, joy, death, and rebirth all at the same time and still be OK.

*Bereavement Magazine
September - December 1990*

My Secret

Within days of my son's tragic death in a helicopter crash, it became my sad duty to remove his belongings from his apartment. In the numbing fog of shock and denial, I sifted through the contents of every drawer, cabinet, and closet. The wrenching decisions of what to do with his clothes, his video tapes -even his toothbrush - made my head swim.

Although I gave many of his things to his roommate, other friends and family, and Goodwill, I kept the special things for myself- school yearbooks, pictures, certain items of clothing - and his collection of crazy T-shirts. I put this strange assortment of things in his foot locker, a remnant of his boarding school days.

What I didn't tell anyone was that I never laundered the t-shirts I found in the dirty clothes hamper. I just folded them and put them in the footlocker with my other memories. And from time to time during those first months of agonizing pain, I would sit on the floor, open the foot locker, and sort through the treasured remnants of a life that had been such a large part of me.

Then I would take the unwashed t-shirts and bury my face in them, inhaling the combined scents of his cologne, deodorant, and perspiration mixed with the wetness of my tears. It made me feel

for just a moment that he wasn't really so far away. "What a perverse thing to do!" I thought. "I'm sure no one else would ever understand my doing such a thing - they would surely think I had gone off the deep end." So I never told anyone about this strange behavior - and the odd comfort it gave me.

Months later at a National Conference, I heard a speaker tell hundreds of bereaved parents assembled about a mother whose baby had died suddenly and how she refused to wash the soiled shirt the baby was wearing but found comfort in holding it close to her and smelling it.

"My gosh," I thought. "Maybe I'm not so crazy after all." Since that experience I have discovered that this is not an uncommon as I had thought. The scents of a loved one are as much a part of them as the sound of a voice, the touch of a hand, or the tenderness of a kiss. There is nothing perverse in wanting to cling to these precious memories.

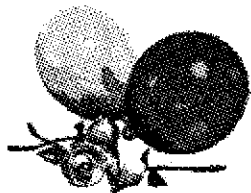
If it were not for The Compassionate Friends, I might never have known that my actions, rather than strange, were perfectly normal. This is just another example of the many ways TCF can help us through this difficult journey.

*Carol Ragland
TCF Houston - West, Texas*

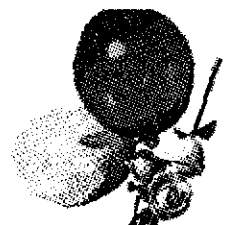
Our Children Loved, Missed, and Remembered...

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.

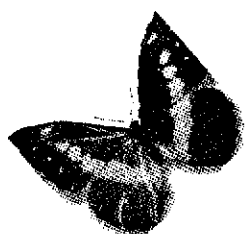
November 1	NINA TERESA POETA
November 1	BARBARA ANNE MINAR
November 4	ANTHONY EDWARDS
November 4	FRANCIS JOSEPH O'HARA
November 7	MATTHEW MAKAR
November 7	MICHAEL DAVID BUGLIONE
November 9	AMY E. CLEVELAND-JOHNSON
November 11	SARA BETH ROBINSON HUSZAR
November 13	MITCHELL ELLIOT HARRIS
November 13	RON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

"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



A Gift From Them To Us

“In The Light”

A shadow of joy flickered: it is me. I told you I wouldn't leave. My spirit is with you. My memories, my thoughts are imbedded deep in your heart. I still love you. Do not for one moment think that you have been abandoned. I am in the Light.

In the corner, in the hall, the car, the yard - these are places I stay with you. My spirit rises every time you pray for me, but my energy comes closer to you. Love does not diminish; it grows stronger. I am the feather that finds you in the yard, the dimmed light that grows brighter in your mind: I place our memories for you to see. We lived in our special way, a way that now has its focus changed. I still crave your understanding and long for the many words of prayer and good fortune for my soul. I am in the Light.

As you struggle to adjust without me, I watch silently. Sometimes, I summon up all of my strength of my new world to make you notice me. Impressed by your grief, I try to impress my love deeper into your consciousness. As you should, I call out to the Heavens for help. You should know that the fountain of youth does exist. My soul is now healthy. Your love sends me new found energy. I am adjusting to this new world. I am with you and I am in the Light.

Please don't feel badly that you can't see me. I am with you wherever you go. I protect you, just as you have protected me so many times. Talk to me and somehow I will find a way to answer you. Mother, father, son, or daughter, it makes no difference. Brother, sister, grandchild, friend, husband or wife, it makes no difference. Whatever our connection, I see you with my new eyes. I am learning to help wherever you are, wherever I am needed. This can be done because I am in the Light.

When you feel despair, reach out to me. I will come. My love for you truly does transcend from Heaven to Earth.

Finish your life with the enthusiasm and zest that you had when we were together in the physical sense. You owe it to yourself. Life continues for both of us. I am with you because I love you, and I am in the Light.

- taken from
St. Vincent's Swim Across the Sound
13th Annual Interfaith Memorial Service
Captain's Cove Seaport, Bridgeport, CT
Sunday, August 8, 2010



THE GRIEVER'S HOLIDAY BILL OF RIGHTS

by Bruce H. Conley © 1992

You have a right to say "TIME OUT" anytime you need to do so.
Time out to let up, blow off some steam, step away from the holiday, huddle and start over.

You have a right to TELL IT LIKE IT IS!
When people ask, "How are you?" you have the right to tell them how you really feel, not just what they want to hear.

You have a right to DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY!
There is no law that says you must always do Christmas (or other holiday) the same way. You can do 10 cards instead of 100. Or you can do no cards at all. You can open presents at somebody else's house. You can do without a tree. You can have pizza instead of turkey. The list is endless.

You have a right to BE WHERE YOU WANT TO BE!
Be at home or with friends or relatives. Be in any city, any state you choose. There is no law that says you must stay at home.

You have a right to SOME FUN!
When you have a day that isn't so bad and you feel like doing something just for fun, do it. Don't be afraid of what someone else will say if they see you laughing and having a good time. Laughter is every bit as important as tears. As hard as it is to believe, you will laugh again.

You have a right to CHANGE DIRECTION IN MID-STREAM!
Holiday grief is unpredictable. You may be all ready to go somewhere or to do something and suddenly be overwhelmed. When that happens, it is OK to change your mind. There will be plenty of times in life to be predictable. Exercise your right to change your mind.

You have a right to DO THINGS AT DIFFERENT TIMES!
Go to church at a different time. Open presents at a different time. Serve your holiday meal at a different time. Go to bed and get up at a different time. Don't be a slave to the holiday clock. You may even choose to celebrate on a different day.

You have a right to REST, PEACE, and SOLITUDE!
You don't need to be busy all the time. Take a nap whenever you need one. Take time to pray and/or meditate, to recharge your spirit.

You have a right to DO IT ALL DIFFERENT AGAIN NEXT YEAR!
Just because you change things one year, doing something different does not mean you have written it in stone. Next year you may want to change it back or still do things another new way.

TCF's World Wide Candle Lighting Event

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 sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and grandchildren who left too soon. As candles are lit on **December 11th, 2022 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 (WCL), 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. TCF's WCL started in the United States in 1997 as a small internet observance and has since swelled in numbers as word has spread throughout the world of the remembrance. Hundreds of formal candle lighting events are held, and thousands of informal candle lightings are conducted in homes, as families gather in quiet remembrance of children who have died and will never be forgotten.

Bridgeport's TCF Chapter's Candle Lighting Event

<p>On Sunday evening, December 11, 2022 at 6:30 pm, our chapter will hold its Candle Lighting Service to honor our children, siblings, and grandchildren at the Paradise Green Gazebo, 121 Huntington Rd, Stratford, CT. There will be a continuous photo stream</p>	<p>as well as the reading of names and the lighting of battery run candles at 7:00 pm. More information will be sent out via email as the time draws near. Please dress appropriately for the cold weather as we will be outside.</p>
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The Circle of Love Together

We shall join hearts and hands across the earth and decorate the world with hope and healing and remembered laughter. We shall remain forever linked through the love of our absent children, parents, husbands and wives, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends- all of our loved ones who dance across the rainbows ahead of us.

**WE ARE A FAMILY CIRCLE-
BROKEN BY DEATH,
MENED BY LOVE.**

May this day, and every day, be days for us to laugh and sing, to dance and dream. May this day, and every day, be days of celebration and the chance to give one more hug, to say one more, "I love you."

MAY LOVE BE WHAT WE REMEMBER MOST!

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.

To:

Jamey Dina

With love from his parents

**"The world is a better place
because
You were here!"**

In honor of

Xavier H. Sandor

"We love and miss you, Xavier."

Words to Comfort, Words to Heal

Perhaps Love

Perhaps love is like a resting place, a shelter from the storm;
It exists to give you comfort; it is there to keep you warm;
And in those times of trouble when you are most alone,
The memory of love will bring you home.
Perhaps love is like a window, perhaps an open door;
It invites you to come closer; it wants to show you more;
and even if you lose yourself and don't know what to do,
The memory of love will see you through.
Oh, love to some is like a cloud, to some as strong as steel;
For some a way of living, some a way to feel;
And some say love is holding on and some say letting go;
And some say love is everything; some say they don't know.
Perhaps love is like an ocean, full of conflict, full of pain;
Like a fire when it's cold outside, thunder when it rains;
If I should live forever, and all my dreams come true,
My memories of love will be of you,
Memories of you. **Perhaps love.**
(-St. Vincent's Swim Across the Sound Memorial Service)

TCF Bridgeport Chapter "Love Gift" Form

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