



**The
Compassionate
Friends**
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Bridgeport, Connecticut Chapter

January & February 2024

Newsletter

Volume 24 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.

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 I honor and trust the process of grief and of healing, knowing, that in time,
a new day will come”

-Martha W. Hickman

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:

TCF c/o Leslie Minasi, Cedar Hill, Easton, CT 06612

Email: contact@tcf-bridgeport.org

TCF Website: www.tcf-bridgeport.org

Facebook: www.Facebook.com/pages/The-Compassionate-Friends-Bridgeport-Chapter

National Office Address:

The Compassionate Friends
48660 Pontiac Trail #930805
Wixom, MI 48393
630-990-0010 877-969-0010

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:

January 9th, 2024 6:45 – 8:45 pm

February 13th, 2024 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 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 the Food Pantry.

Bridgeport/Stratford & Vicinity Chapter Steering Committee

Chapter Co-Leaders

Dr. Charles Kochan and Claudia Margitay-Balogh

Secretary: Janet Spray

Treasurer/Website Coordinator: Leslie Minasi

Zoom Coordinator: Kristen Cable

On line newsletter: Claudia Margitay-Balogh and

Michele Peloso

Hospitality: Dee Tutka

Community Outreach and Librarian: Michele Peloso

The Stubbornness of Lady Grief

By Heather Rubia, Sydney's Mom
The Compassionate Friend Winter 2023 Magazine



Grief has become an unwelcome and unwanted guest in my home. She barged in one hot and sunny July afternoon, screaming at me, and commandeered my favorite seat at our family dinner table.

I tried to scare her away...I yelled, screamed, begged, and bargained for her to leave, and she screamed even louder at me while tears of fire streamed from her eyes.

Afraid that she would tear my home asunder and set the ruins ablaze, I turned to my china cabinet and grabbed the prettiest of my pieces. A cup of tea I then made and a slice of cake I cut. I laid out my offerings to the screeching grief banshee, set beside her, and slowly took her hand. I, even more slowly, embraced her...her screams settled. Her eyes met mine as she slowly sipped her tea and nibbled her cake. It was at that moment I realized that she, though unwelcome, angry, and intense was in my home to stay forever.

In beginning to accept this and her chaos, I've learned that she will be my constant partner, and that setting her a place at my table to share my tea and cake is much better than trying to fight her off. She is not leaving, no matter what I do, and the harder I try to make her leave, the hotter she burns...and the more she destroys.

So, I have befriended her, my Lady Grief, however difficult and however loving she may, sometimes seem. She is mine and I am hers and we are the only ones who can walk this lonesome path together.

I have made her an honored guest and gifted her the seat where Love still sits (they can fight over it later). Because of this pact, we have the combined strength to search for her lost sister, Peace, and we go out looking for her every day after tea.



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

Please make out your "Love Gift" check to:

The Compassionate Friends Bridgeport Chapter
c/o Leslie Minasi, treasurer
34 Cedar Hill Road, Easton, CT 06612

In Memory of
Carlo

We love you with
All of our being.
You are always with us in
Our hearts and our souls,
Love, Mamma & Papa

In Memory of
Jamey Dina

"Part of our hearts always belong to you"

Love, Mom and Dad

Words to Comfort, Words to Heal

*Those we love don't go away
They walk beside us every day,
Unseen, unheard, but always near,
still loved,
still missed
and very dear*



In Memory of
Joseph

**Forever in our hearts. We cherish our memories of you. Wishing you a Heavenly Birthday.
With so much love,
Mom and Dad**

In Memory of
Derick

We continue to love and miss you every day. You have 4 nephews, now. Please watch over them.

**With love, Then, Now and Always,
Mom and Dad**

In Memory of
Dawn

**Our Forever Valentine!
Love, Mom and Dad**



*In Loving Memory
of my daughter*
Christa-Joenell Luttmann
"You are forever missed"

Our Children

Loved, Missed, and Remembered...

May we keep parents, siblings, and grandparents observing these birthdays during January and February in our thoughts and in our hearts.

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Adam Jarvis	January 1	Bria Marie McConnell Villanueva	January 14
Ryan Joyce	January 2	Kaydeelyn Konstantino	January 15
Joann Simko Pasanella	January 3	Ryan Charles Brennan	January 18
Jennifer McLeod	January 5	Stephen M. Ceslik, III	January 18
James Blomberg	January 5	Brian Watcke	January 19
Laurie Povinelli	January 6	Roy H. Smith, Jr.	January 20
Austin Buoni	January 7	Henry Roger Girard, Jr.	January 20
Victor M. Marella, Jr.	January 8	Lisa Marie Mancini	January 21
Ryan Phillips	January 8	Jared Arthur Levine	January 21
Wendy Joan Carpenter	January 8	Kevin Kuczo	January 21
Maria Skenderis Isola	January 9	Sarah Cynthia Koury	January 22
Bernard E. Koetsch II	January 9	DJ Art	January 24
Scott Lawrence Boos	January 10	Christopher Reyes Perez	January 24
Kaylene Cercone	January 10	John R. Jones, IV	January 26
Fred A Poppa, Jr.	January 11	Stephen D. Tomasky	January 26
John Napolitano	January 11	John Brady Chapin	January 26
Marissa Irene Irwin	January 11	Sean Garrett Rice	January 29
Denise Glover	January 13	Kathleen Elleen Bye	January 29
Ciara O'Driscoll	January 13	Christopher Hubinger	January 30

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Sarah Beth Robinson Huszar	February 1	Evon Edwards	February 19
Angel Valle	February 2	Ashley Joy	February 19
Caitlin Logan	February 4	Andrew Bobko	February 20
Michelle Peters	February 4	Brandon Michael Velez	February 22
Andrew James Donnellan	February 5	Adele Adesuwa Iyamu	February 23
Christopher Mulligan	February 5	Gary Salvatore Bellard	February 23
Brenna McMenamy	February 5	Sean Russell	February 24
Karen Wiegman	February 7	Mitchell Elliot Harris	February 24
Brendan Thomas Murren	February 7	Marcus Ramos	February 24
Thomas Chisholm	February 10	Howie Tassitano	February 24
Amanda Lynn Daigle	February 10	William Cleary	February 25
Grace Marie Evanko	February 15	Jean Phillipe Lominy	February 29
Brian James Chepya	February 13	Robert S. Murphy	February 29
Dawn Kosarko	February 14		
Alex Recupino	February 14		
Donna Carpenter	February 15		
Valerie F. Poppa	February 15		
Alyssa Anne Mushin	February 17		
Jennifer Batista Russo	February 18		



OUR CHILDREN LOVED, MISSED AND REMEMBERED JANUARY ANGELVERSARIES

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
Brian John Lilly, Jr. January 4
John Scinto January 6
Robert Smuniewski January 6
Denise Pietrowski January 9
Chelsea Marie Cunha January 10
Scott Milo January 11
Kevonna Edwards January 12
James Carbone January 12
Brendan Thomas Murren January 12
Bria Marie Villanueva January 12
Henry Roger Girard, Jr. January 14
Seaphen D. Tomasky January 15
Michelle Peters January 16
Gina Dechello January 16
Ciara O'Driscoll January 16
Adam Jarvis January 17
Julian Cerrato January 19
Jason Walowitz January 19
Alan Barnett Weiner January 20
Angel Valle January 20
William Mariano Vargas January 22

James Hrzic January 27
Jonas Blackwell January 29
Ozzy Zack January 30
Stephen M. Ceslik, III January 30
George W. Juleson, IV January 31
William (Billy) Rudolph January 31

Love's heart that was
once *broken* by loss
is restored to love again
by the heart compelled
to love.

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OUR CHILDREN LOVED, MISSED AND REMEMBERED FEBRUARY ANGELVERSARIES

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

Jamie Ritter	February 2	Marci Byiteck	February 19
Debra Napolitano	February 4	Darrell Bennett	February 20
Kristin Ann Carveth	February 4	David Ehman	February 21
Masha Robinson	February 4	Nathan Burrows	February 22
Kevin Kuczo	February 4	Erin Babineau	February 22
Amber Kingersky	February 5	Eric S. Hultzberg	February 26
Charles Anthony Curcio	February 5	Keith McCarthy	February 26
Colin J. Bussolari	February 6	Paul-John Heron	February 28
Danny Murphy	February 7		
Dexter Hill	February 7		
Kadeelyn Konstantino	February 7		
Nick Felisko	February 8		
Nancy Keller	February 8		
Christa Joenell Luttmann	February 10		
Beverly Bruno	February 12		
Bobby Bonacci	February 12		
Michael Wigglesworth	February 13		
Lorenzo Zachariah Deaderick	February 14		
Zoe Elizabeth Anyan	February 15		
Donna Carpenter	February 17		
Joseph Kowalczyk, Jr.	February 18		



AFTER THE HOLIDAYS ARE OVER

Written by Helene B. Prokop

Former Bridgeport Chapter Leader and Newsletter Editor

With the rush of the holidays and their “busy-ness” now over, many may find themselves with “let-down” feelings that are often present in the aftermath of the holiday season.

Winter and its bleakness is for many a time of feeling blue...often with a sense of depression. The combination of these factors may be more pronounced in many of us (and with good reason) which may create an even more difficult period of days to just “get through.”

If this occurs, we need to make the extra effort to set routines, get involved, and not “wait the hours away”. There are reserved strengths in us that we are not even aware of having, and if we just tap into them...we will be amazed at how the human spirit will awaken and in turn energize the body to take an active role in resuming some of life’s activities. Certainly, this may not apply for the recently bereaved but for others we will start to rebuild our former interests...ever so slowly...perhaps two steps ahead and then one back...but we are still one step ahead. We must try to keep up our effort, and we will soon be surprised at our success.

Remember, the winter season doesn’t last forever and neither will these, winter stages, of our life. Even though we may be experiencing sadness, emptiness, loneliness, depression, frustration...(I could go on and on), the important fact to remember is that ...IT DOES GET BETTER AND IT WILL BE BETTER.