



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

Bridgeport, Connecticut Chapter

March/April 2024

Newsletter

Volume 24 No. 5 & 6

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.

“Knowing how much I need sensitive listening will surely help me be a sensitive listener for others.”

-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, 34 Cedar Hill Rd, Easton, CT 06612

Email: contact@tcf-bridgeport.org

TCF Website: www.tcf-bridgeport.org

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

March 12, 2024 6:45 – 8:45 pm

April 9, 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

Michele Peloso

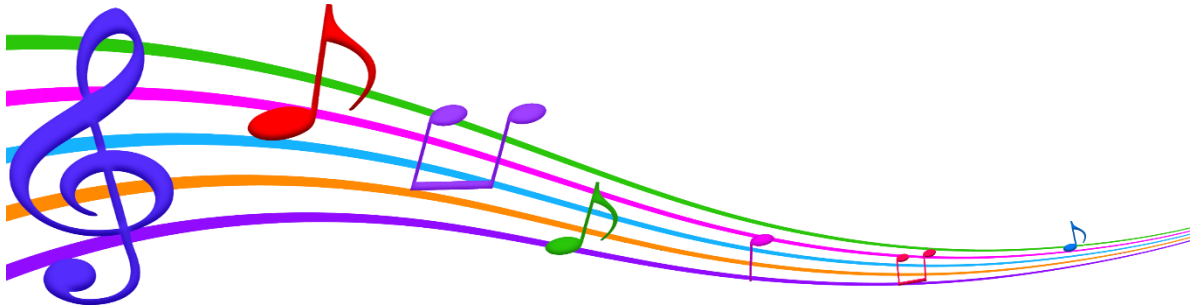
Hospitality: Dee Tutka

Community Outreach and Librarian: Michele Peloso

Memories of Love, Melodies of Hope

By Pamela Hagens, TCF Nashville, TN chapter

We Need Not Walk Alone: The Compassionate Friend Spring-Summer Magazine 2018



You are there and I am here

And I ask the questions:

How do I keep going when the memories are too painful, and the melody has stopped?

How can I dance when the music has been muted?

There are moments – silent moments, unusual moments - that I find myself watching life, not participating, but a spectator watching a hard-fought competitive match. I watch, rooting for no one.

I watch from a far distance, where everything is blurry and small.

How do I welcome the memories, where are the melodies?

I am told to start somewhere – so I look at one picture today, I reflect upon one memory today.

I am told, in time I will navigate the rough, choppy currents with increased strength.

I am told that Love is not lost, and the melody of Hope will write new lyrics upon my heart.

I am reminded that the melody of Hope will sing again, for they are connected: the memories, the love, the melody, the hope.

So I am determined that I will find my way.

I will step out on the dance floor of life once again.

I will find my way, with the encouraged whispers of those who impart wisdom and patience.

I am determined – so I trust that Hope will invite me to slow dance to the music in my soul.

I am determined – so I trust that the Memories of Love will lead me to Melodies of Hope.



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 Loving Memory
of my daughter
Christa-Joenell Luttmann
For her March 12th birthday

Tenderly.....may time heal your sorrow
Carefully.....may friends ease your pain
Faithfully.....may peace replace heartache
and may
warmest memories remain.

Words to Comfort

Words to Heal

*"There is light in this world,
a healing spirit more powerful
than any darkness
we may encounter.*

*We sometimes lose sight of this force
when there is suffering,
too much pain.*

*Then suddenly, the spirit will emerge
through the lives
of ordinary people
who hear a call
and answer in
extraordinary ways."*

-Mother Teresa-

WELCOME FRIEND

Welcome friend, how good of you to come.
What pleasant memories your face recalls.
Pull up a chair and let us sit and talk,
Stay long, for you bring sunlight to these walls.
Welcome friend, the pot is on the stove.
I'll set another place beside my own.

Forget your cares.

Remember two can share a burden
one could never bear alone.

Welcome friend, I say this from my heart.
You take away the chill of winter days.
I hear the warmth of springtime in your voice.
And after you have gone, the wonder stays.
The fact that you have cared enough to come
means more to me than words can ever say.
The light of friendship glows within your eyes,
and that is why I welcome you today.

-Grace E. Easley-

Our Children

Loved, Missed, and Remembered....

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

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Boston Grimm Stibel	March 1	Nancy P. Keller	March 11
Miles Jon Jenness	March 1	Christa-Joenell Luttmann	March 12
Angel Grace McManus	March 1	Matthew Perry	March 17
William (Billy) Rudolph	March 1	Michael Roe	March 17
Joseph David Longo	March 3	Joan P. Burby Tellone	March 17
Brandon Sean Lynch	March 4	John E. Murphy, Jr.	March 18
Matthew Makar	March 5	Gregory Hartz	March 19
Linda Poppa	March 6	Jessica Elizabeth Kolaric	March 21
Steven Spray	March 6	Christiano Mateus Cabase	March 21
Parker Lily Koltchak	March 6	Thomas Patrick Dalling	March 22
Joseph Minnix	March 7	William (Billy) A. Slossar	March 22
Beth Logan	March 7	Ozzy Zack	March 23
Paul Steven Keeler	March 7	Christopher Joseph Haley	March 24
Brianna Rose Sabol	March 7	David Michael Vogt	March 24
Sherri A. Munz	March 8	Xavier Hunter Sandor	March 26
Kevin Michael Kochan	March 8	Marissa Nicole Argueta	March 27
Tony Brown	March 9	Johnny Corsa	March 27
Bridget Grace Cable	March 9	Melissa Stupak Montuori	March 29
Deidre Stewart	March 10	Baby Ott	March 31
Jovanni Natal	March 10		



Our Children

Loved, Missed, and Remembered....

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Amy Elizabeth Cleveland-Johnson	April 3	Justin Smith	April 24
Marc Rosen	April 3	Antonio Goncalves	April 25
Ryan Thomas Walsh	April 3	Erica A. Jones	April 25
Jalyn Francis	April 4	Tate Arletta Scheer	April 25
Charles Berszakiewicz	April 6	Michael Patrick Gianola	April 26
Kevin Sutherland	April 8	Leigh Sabo	April 28
Michael Joseph Hurta	April 9		
Christine Ann Soltis Filakovsky	April 9		
Scott Milo	April 11		
Brian John Lilly, Jr.	April 12		
Corey Michael Cerrone	April 13		
Jake Panus	April 13		
Seth Roberts	April 15		
Amber Phillips	April 16		
Joshua Galpin	April 19		
Scotty Thomas	April 23		
Jolene DeCiucis	April 23		
Nick Felisko	April 24		



OUR CHILDREN LOVED, MISSED, AND REMEMBERED...

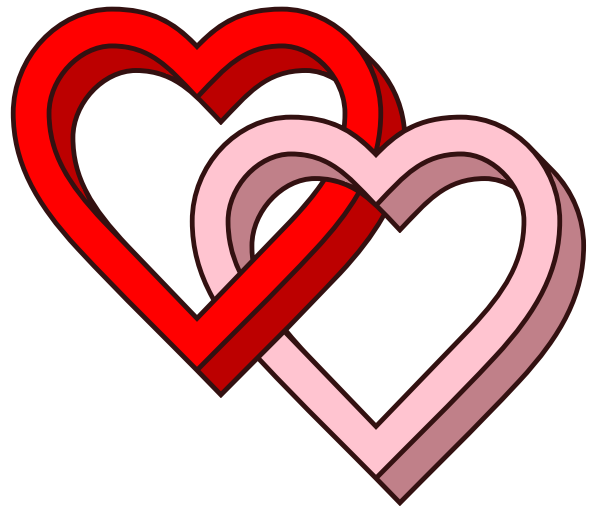
MARCH ANGELVERSARIES

		Eric Allen	March 19
		Brian Tuzik	March 19
Jason William Cannon	March 1	Joshua R. Wright	March 19
Roy H. Smith	March 1	Tamika Cameron	March 20
Angel Grace McManus	March 1	Brandon Sean Lynch	March 21
Grace Marie Evanko	March 2	Laurie Povinelli	March 21
John Napolitano	March 3	Carl R. Wennerstrand Talbot	March 21
Karen Wiegman	March 4	John Stempert	March 21
Michael James, Jr.	March 4	Keith Drap	March 23
Leo Farrell	March 6	Kim Thibodeau Chiaraluce	March 26
Charles Pataky	March 8	Jenoe Varga	March 26
Brandon Giordano	March 9	Michael Rowley	March 27
Christie Lea Endre	March 10	Dawn Ann Kalman	March 27
Ryan Phillips	March 12	Jimmy Pifer	March 27
Joseph McFadden	March 13	Diana-Alexandra Breaz	March 28
Christpher Tocarski, Jr	March 13	Corey Michael Cerrone	March 29
Alex Recupino	March 14	Timmy Garofalo	March 30
James (Jamey) G. Dina	March 14	Christopher McEttrick	March 30
Ryan Edward Simpson	March 14		
Victoria "Tori" Koetsch	March 16		
Jeresa June Mincey	March 17		
Jared Arthur Levine	March 17		
Erick Jason Dobyys	March 17		
Bernard E. Koetsch II	March 18		
Thomas Vazzano	March 18		
Dawn Kosarko	March 18		

OUR CHILDREN LOVED, MISSED, AND REMEMBERED... APRIL ANGELVERSARIES

David Stanczyk	April 1
Bobby Provenzano	April 1
Dan O'Sullivan	April 2
William J. Savo	April 4
Joseph Sante Cajigas	April 4
Daniel Souza	April 4
Frank Argonese	April 5
Annette Kemeza	April 7
Paolo Guevera	April 7
John Samuel Smith	April 9
Joseph F. Minnix	April 10
Austin Buoni	April 12
Xavier Hunter Sandor	April 15
Thomas Redgate	April 18
John "Zachary" Naber	April 18
Jennifer McLeod	April 20
Gary Salvatore Bellard	April 21
Andrew Bobko	April 23
Marcus Ramos	April 24
Aaliyah Gabrielle Dunn	April 24
Scotty Thomas	April 24

Christopher R. Etes	April 24
William A. Baker IV	April 26
Lynette Daniel Swanson	April 26
John McPadden	April 27
Thomas John Lee	April 28
Adam Gardner	April 29



The Month of March

From the Kansas City Region TCF Newsletter

March is a month of renewal. The dormant trees begin to stir; the birds optimistically sing of spring; the winds, sometimes violent, wake us up; perhaps we need a “shake” out of our winter lethargy - an awakening.

There is that urge to plant, to nourish, to grow a tree or a flower. There is the primordial urge to feel your hands digging in the warming earth. Perhaps, we plant because we know that someone will see the result, as we have enjoyed the results of others’ work. It could be called a debt of renewal, a repayment for that which we have enjoyed. As we nourish seedlings, we visualize the end result. The tree may die, as our children did. That tree may flourish beautifully, or it may meet ultimate disaster, but if that tree does well it could be a source of great pleasure and of beauty for many coming years. We can believe that spring will be a glorious tree enjoyed by many. It’s a nice dream.

“To all things there is a season,” and as life goes by, we simply cannot afford to miss the seasons, the renewals, the chances for new growth. Regardless of our griefs and regrets, life goes on, and we must try not to miss a season. Life simply **will be**, whether we participate or not. Someone will benefit from constructive growth if we can find the energy to make the effort.

Severe grief, for a time, reduces our interest and our ability to participate fully in life. With a low energy level and little initiative and with our hopes for the future severely damaged, it requires great effort for the bereaved to learn to again enjoy the small things that make up most of our lives. Our hopes for the future are so damaged that there is little incentive to work today for the future. The things that exist today comprise the basics for our future. We run a risk and a danger of missing the good things that are



to be because we do not have the wish to participate in the things that are today.

Although we need a time of withdrawal, some time to ponder the unanswered questions, and some time to heal, we also need to be aware of the lives that are passing. Regardless of our grief, life simply goes on, and there is much good that we risk losing if we stay too long in a state of suspense of the present and a sad review of the past. A part of learning to “accept the unacceptable” is to learn to make the effort to sort out the good memories and take them with us into a future that will be happy again.

There comes a time when the harsh winter of our damaging grief will give way to some awakening; a time when we, like nature, can shake off some of the lethargy and see and feel the renewals life offers. Our choice is to remember that we could not control the advent of disaster. We can only control our response. Our choice is now only in the way we respond to the necessity to pick up the threads of our life and **go on**.

We owe it to ourselves, Compassionate Friends, to make a positive effort. We can hope that those buffeting winds of March can help us awaken to the renewals of spring and put the “winter of our discontent” in its place, now a part of our **on-going lives**.