



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Bridgeport, Connecticut Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

January & February 2023

Newsletter

Volume 23 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.

*"Choosing to have joy
is not naively thinking
everything will be easy.
It is courageously believing
that there is still HOPE,
even when things get hard."
Morgan Harper Nichols*

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:

January 10, 2023 6:45 - 8:45 pm

February 14, 2023 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

Zoom Co-ordinator

Kristen Cable

Newsletter Editor

Claudia Margitay-Balogh

Hospitality

Dee Tutka

Community Outreach and Librarian

Michele Peloso

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

CONTACT NUMBER: 475-882-9695

GRIEVING, HEALING, & GROWING...

One Day At A Time

from the editor of the TCF St.Louis, Missouri chapter newsletter

The holidays are over. We have survived one more hurdle. Now a whole new year faces us, three hundred and sixty-five days. It's rather frightening, isn't it? Would it be less frightening if I suggested you have only one day to face? It's true. All you have to face is today--this twenty-four hours.

There isn't much we can't do if we only have to do it for 24 hours. We can get through the next 365 days, one day at a time. In order to take one day at a time, we must learn to keep ourselves in the NOW. When our minds start wandering back to yesterday and the painful yesterdays before that, we need to make every effort to consider that yesterday with its pains, hurts, yes, and even its mistakes, are gon, and there is absolutely nothing we can do about them. When our minds wander to tomorrow, and we begin to panic at the thoughts of another day of torment, we must block out those thoughts, too. We must bring ourselves back to NOW. It takes practice, but it can be done. Once I heard a man say, "Wherever you are; be there." This is how you stay in the NOW; by paying strict attention to what is going on in the immediate present.

What if you are thinking about your child, and it hurts. That is O.K. Don't fight it. Damn it, your child died; you have a right to hurt. Let yourself feel what you feel NOW. What if our

responsibilites right now won't allow us to give in to our pain? Our other children need our attention, or our job demands our attention. Then we must force ourselves to focus only on what we have to do at that moment. We can only think of one thing at a time. If we concentrate on that thing, we can put our pain aside for a time. This will not only keep us in the NOW, but it will actually give us a short respite from our grief.

What if we are having one of those rare moments of enjoying ourselves. Then we should enjoy! We deserve it. Emotionally, we have been battered. It is essential for us to have a few moments of relief occasionally. By laughing or having a few forgetful seconds, are we really betraying our child?

And what if we are having just a crazy mixed up, hurting, enjoying, crying, laughing, getting things done in the morning, nothing in the afternoon, kind of day. So what! Maybe the next 24 hours will be different

By concentrating on the NOW, we add up the minutes and the hours, eventually, we complete a day. Days become weeks, then months. Then one day we will realize, Gee! I'm feeling a little better - a whole lot better. By taking it one day at a time, living in the present, I guarantee that life will take on meaning once again.

"I Resolve..."

"I resolve to try to be happy about something for some part of every day, knowing that at first I may have to force myself to think cheerful thoughts so that eventually they can become a habit."

"I resolve that I will reach out at times and try to help someone else, knowing that helping others will help me to get over my depression."

"I resolve that though my child has died, I will opt for life, knowing this is what my child wants me to do."

Nancy A. Mower, TCF Honolulu, HI

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.

Happy 40th Birthday
in Heaven to
Joseph Anthony Peloso IV
"Forever in our Hearts"
Love you, Mom & Dad

In loving memory
of
Justin & Steven Spray
Forever in my heart until
we are together again.
Love, Mom

Words to Comfort, Words to Heal

There's a duality in life.
We are fragile and yet resilient.
We can be confident and still afraid.
We can be grieving
and still find moments of laughter.
The duality can be seen
within releasing and receiving.
When we let go, perhaps,
it creates space to receive something new.
To surrender and release isn't easy.
Many people are afraid to let go.
We want to grasp onto things and hold them close:
whether it is people we loved,
or the hurt and resentments
we cultivate and suppress.
Holding on and grasping at things
can be exhausting.
What if we said, *"I'm tired of holding onto this
anger, fear, hurt, regret, and pain. IF I were to
release this, what could happen?"*
Please remember:
Releasing is also another way of receiving.
written by - Paul Denniston
(paul@grieffyoga.com)

"Carlo,
You are in our hearts
every minute of every day.
Forever missed until we are together
again."
Happy Birthday in Heaven
Love, Mamma & Papa

TCF Bridgeport Chapter "Love Gift" Form

Name _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____ Phone _____ E-Mail _____

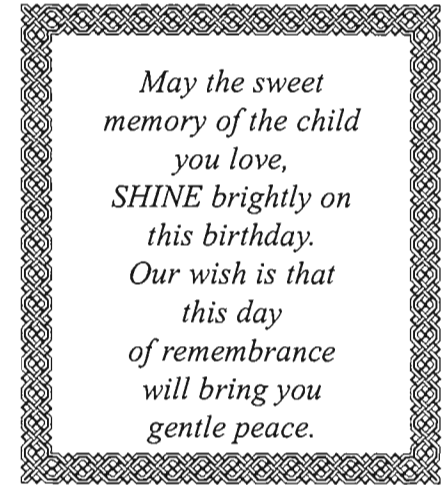
Message _____

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 January and February in your thoughts and in your hearts.

ADAM JARVIS	January 1
RYAN JOYCE	January 2
JOANN SIMKO PASANELLA	January 3
JENNIFER McLEOD	January 5
JAMES BLOMBERG	January 5
LAURIE POVINELLI	January 6
AUSTIN BUONI	January 7
VICTOR M. MARELLA, JR.	January 8
RYAN PHILLIPS	January 8
WENDY JOAN CARPENTER	January 8
MARIA SKENDERIS ISOLA	January 9
BERNARD E. KOETSCH II	January 9
SCOTT LAWRENCE BOOS	January 10
KAYLENE CERCONI	January 10
FRED A. POPPA, JR.	January 11
JOHN NAPOLITANO	January 11
MARISSA IRENE IRWIN	January 11
DENISE GLOVER	January 13
CIARA O'DRISCOLL	January 13
BRIA MARIE McCONNELL VILLANUEVA	January 14
KADEELYN KONSTANTINO	January 15
RYAN CHARLES BRENNAN	January 18
STEPHEN M. CESLIK, III	January 18
BRIAN WATCKE	January 19
ROY H. SMITH, JR.	January 20
HENRY ROGER GIRARD, JR.	January 20
LISA MARIE MANCINI	January 21
JARED ARTHUR LEVINE	January 21
KEVIN KUCZO	January 21
JOSHUA R. EHMAN	January 21
SARAH CYNTHIA KOURY	January 22
DJ ART	January 24
CHRISTOPHER REYES PEREZ	January 24
JOHN R. JONES, IV	January 26
STEPHEN D. TOMASKY	January 26
JOHN BRADY CHAPIN	January 26
SEAN GARRETT RICE	January 29
KATHLEEN ELLEEN BAYE	January 29
CHRISTOPHER HUBINGER	January 30
SARA BETH ROBINSON HUSZAR	February 1
CAITLIN LOGAN	February 4
MICHELLE PETERS	February 4
ANDREW JAMES DONNELLAN	February 5



BIRTHDAYS

CHRISTOPHER MULLIGAN	February 5
BRENNA MCMENAMEY	February 5
KAREN WIEGMAN	February 7
BRENDAN THOMAS MURREN	February 7
THOMAS CHISHOLM	February 10
AMANDA LYNN DAIGLE	February 10
GRACE MARIE EVANKO	February 13
BRIAN JAMES CHEPYA	February 13
DAWN KOSARKO	February 14
ALEX RECUPINO	February 14
DONNA CARPENTER	February 15
VALERIE F. POPPA	February 15
ALYSSA ANNE MUSHIN	February 17
JENNIFER ANN BATTISTA RUSSO	February 18
EVON EDWARDS	February 19
ASHLEY JOY	February 19
ANDREW BOBKO	February 20
BRANDON MICHAEL VELEZ	February 22
ADELE ADESUWA IYAMU	February 23
GARY SALVATORE BELLARD	February 23
SEAN RUSSELL	February 24
MITCHELL ELLIOT HARRIS	February 24
MARCUS RAMOS	February 24
HOWIE TASSITANO	February 24
WILLIAM CLEARY	February 25
JEAN PHILLIPE LOMINY	February 29
ROBERT S. MURPHY	February 29

Our Children Loved, Missed, and Remembered...

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	HENRY ROGER GIRARD, JR.
CHRISTOPHER JOSEPH HALEY	January 4	STEPHEN D. TOMASKY
KENNETH (KJ) A. BARTEK, JR.	January 4	MICHELLE PETERS
BRIAN JOHN LILLY, JR.	January 4	GINA DECHELLO
JOHN SCINTO	January 6	CIARA O'DRISCOLL
ROBERT SMUNIEWSKI	January 8	ADAM JARVIS
DENISE PIETROWSKI	January 9	JULIAN CERRATO
CHELSEA MARIE CUNHA	January 10	JASON WALOWITZ
SCOTT MILO	January 11	ALAN BARNETT WEINER
KEVONNA EDWARDS	January 12	WILLIAM MARIANO VARGAS
JAMES CARBONE	January 12	JESSICA ELIZABETH KOLARIC
BRENDAN THOMAS MURREN	January 12	VICTOR MARELLA, JR.
BRIA MARIE McCONNELL VILLANUEVA	January 14	JAMES HRZIC
		JONAS BLACKWELL
		OZZY ZACK
		STEPHEN M. CESLIK, III
		GEORGE W. JULESON, IV
		WILLIAM (BILLY) RUDOLPH
JAMIE RITTER	February 2	
DEBRA NAPOLITANO	February 4	
KRISTIN ANN CARVETH	February 4	
MASHA ROBINSON	February 4	
KEVIN KUCZO	February 4	
AMBER KINGERSKY	February 5	
CHARLES ANTHONY CURCIO	February 5	
COLIN J. BUSSOLARI	February 6	
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 or 11?	
BEVERLY BRUNO	February 12	
BOBBY BONACCI	February 12	
MICHAEL WRIGGLESWORTH	February 13	
LORENZO ZACHARIAH DEADERICK	February 14	
ZOE ELIZABETH ANYAN	February 16	
DONNA CARPENTER	February 17	
JOSEPH KOWALCZYK, JR.	February 18	
MARCI BYITECK	February 19	
DARRELL BENNETT	February 20	
DAVID EHMAN	February 21	
NATHAN BURROWS	February 22	
ERIN BABINEAU	February 22	
ERIC S. HULTZERG	February 26	
KEITH McCARTHY	February 26	
PAUL-JOHN HERON	February 28	
ALEXA RAE HERON	February 28	
RYAN CHARLES BRENNAN	February 28	

Hope

is the whisper in our soul
that tells us
all will be well.

Angelversaries

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Candle Lighting Memorial Service Highlights

Our chapter's Candle Lighting Ceremony was held on Sunday evening December 11, 2022 at the Paradise Green Gazebo in Stratford. The Green as well as the Gazebo were decorated with beautiful shining white lights, and although it was snowing in northern towns, the temperature in this coastal town allowed for just rain to fall. Even though it was a cold damp night, over 40 parents, siblings, grandparents, family members, and friends came together to light a votive candle as they heard their loved one's name mentioned. The votives and battery operated candles were donated to our chapter in loving memory of Carlo Minasi.

Special appreciation must be given to our chapter's Steering Committee for once again creating this beautiful tribute. As with all organizations, there are a handful of volunteers who work diligently and lovingly. It is only proper to acknowledge them. Thank you to Michele Peloso, Kristen Cable and Leslie Minasi for being the co-chairs of this event. Many hours were needed to create the slide show of photos that went along with reading of the names as well as the streaming photos video. Leslie and Kristen are indeed our computer wizards!

Having an outdoor event which requires

technical equipment can be a challenge, but thanks to our chapter member Mark Mushin, we were able to have all the equipment and expertise we needed.

The highlight of the evening occurred when we were able to listen to the beautiful voice of Julie McClenathan. As she sang Alan Pedersen's "Tonight I Hold This Candle," our hand-held lit votives were shining brightly. When Julie sang "Get Me Through December", the lyrics of that Alison Krauss song made us remember how hard this month can be for those who grieve. Yet, even in this song, there is hope: "Get me through December, A promise I'll remember, Get me through December So I can start again."

At the end of the event, each participant was given a ruby red, glass cardinal to hang in a special place. The cardinals were donated by another Steering Committee member, Dee Tutka in loving memory of her daughter Viviana Rose. For many, seeing a cardinal is a spiritual sign.

Thank you to everyone for making this 2022 Candle Lighting event a truly beautiful tribute to our children, siblings, and grandchildren.

-Claudia Margitay-Balogh

Donations During the Holiday Season

Gregory and Stefanie
Rakoczy
in loving memory
of their son
Christian

Dr. Charles and Sharon
Kochan
in loving memory
of their son
Kevin

Elena
Miller
in loving memory
of her son
John

*"Those we love remain with us, for love itself lives on,
and cherished memories never fade because a loved one is gone.
Those we love can never be more than a thought apart;
for as long as there is memory, he or she will live on in the heart."
-Anonymous*

On the Echo of Love written by Andy Gillette (stillstandingmag.com)

Love comes before grief. Love comes before grief. Love comes before grief. It's an easy thing to forget, that **love comes before grief.**

During those first horrible days...during those early numbing weeks...during those initial months where there seems to be no bottom to the depths of your pain, it seems that desperate sadness has always been with you and always will be with you. It's hard to imagine a world in which grief isn't all encompassing. **But, love comes before grief.**

It seems that the pain of grief is the strongest emotion you've ever felt. It's not. Grief is merely an echo of the louder love that came before. Grief is no more than a paler reflection of the vivid love you felt initially.

Grief is but a shadow. Sometimes an infinitely dark, black shadow with sheer edges that cut you from the rest of the world. But, remember, there is no shadow without

light, and the brighter the source, the more defined the line of shade. The initial bright love inside of you for your son, for your daughter, was there first and is still there now.

A child came before death; love-between two people-came before our children and brought them into this world, however briefly; and the love of our parents brought us here before.

As Tolstoy said, "Only people who are capable of loving strongly can also suffer great sorrow, but this same necessity of loving serves to counteract their grief and heals them." Please know that as painful as the grief may be at a given moment, that emotion can never be stronger than the love that was there first; that love is still there and can be a source of strength. It's proof that your a loving parent.

**Love comes before grief...
...And love will be there after.**

A Monetary Portion of Your Purchases from Amazon Will Be Given to Our Chapter!

In order for our chapter to receive a small portion of your order **every time you purchase online**, you must follow these instructions. **Every time you order, you must use the smile.amazon.com website** instead of just the amazon.com If you currently have a charity that you donate to, you must click "Change Charity." If you do not, click "Select Charity" and or "Or pick your own charitable organization" Then type:
Compassionate Friends Inc-Bridgeport

You will see:

Compassionate Friends Inc

Chicago,IL-Health-General and Rehabilitative N.E.C.

Select that and you are all set!

All TCF chapters are self-sufficient and operate on charitable donations from participants. Leslie, our treasurer, worked with TCF National to set this up for our chapter. We have to use National's address in IL .

We hope you will consider making our chapter your go-to-charity when you make purchases on Amazon. **THANK YOU!**

FIRST ANNIVERSARY

I know the world
is still the same
and life goes on.
The hours run
with ancient speed
from day to day.
I know.

And mornings are
the same new wonder still
and music moves
the mind with secret hand.
And flowers grow
and children sing.
I know.

But you are gone
and I am not the same
-am only half,
And half of me
is gone away with you.
I know.
I know.

New Year's Resolutions for the Bereaved

By Tanya Lord

This year I resolve to:

- ♥ Not put a time limit on my grief. Loving someone means loving them for my life time whether they are physically present or not.
- ♥ Tell their stories, the happy and the sad; they will live on through me.
- ♥ Encourage others to share memories.
- ♥ Teach others that they cannot "make" me cry; tears are only an external expression of how I am feeling all the time.
- ♥ Understand that crying or otherwise expressing my pain is healthy and normal. "Doing well" means expressing my feelings.
- ♥ Understand that others will not understand my pain, and it isn't fair to expect them to do anything but listen.
- ♥ Recognize that asking for help from those that love us is a really a gift that we give to them.
- ♥ Help others; reaching out to others in pain will help me to heal.
- ♥ Do something nice for myself every day.
- ♥ Know that if today I can not do *everything* that needs to be done, tomorrow is another chance to get it done.
- ♥ Cry when I need to, laugh when I can, and to not feel guilty about either one.
- ♥ Let go, bit by bit, of the guilt, regret, and anger because I know holding on to these emotions can be so damaging.
- ♥ Take a risk and let others into my life and heart.
- ♥ Take care of my physical, emotional, and spiritual health.
- ♥ Reinvest in life a little bit each day...

