



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Bridgeport, Connecticut Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

May & June 2023

Newsletter

Volume 23 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.

*"Comfort comes from knowing
that people have made
the same journey.
And solace comes
from understanding
how others have learned
to sing again."*

-Helen Steiner Rice

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:

May 9, 2023 6:45 - 8:45 pm

June 13, 2023 6:45 - 8:45 pm

**Where: Sterling House Community Center
2283 Main Street, Stratford, CT 06614**

DIRECTIONS:

Take 1-95 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



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• **The Journey of Grief** •
.....

"Grief is like a long valley, a winding valley where any bend may reveal a totally new landscape." C.S. Lewis

Grief is the painful journey that we embark upon when someone we love dies. It is not unlike the recovery period after a serious surgery when our bodies need time to heal and our muscles need time to regenerate. When we lose a loved one, a significant part of our lives is torn away. In trying to describe the severity of the loss, Madeleine L'Engle wrote: "The death of a beloved is an amputation." But unlike a physical amputation where we lose a limb, the death of a loved one is an emotional amputation where we lose a person that we love deeply.

Grief is the process by which we allow ourselves to come to grips with our loss. It is a journey that will be different for each of us, depending on our personalities and our relationship with the person who died.

Some of us will travel through the classic states of grief: shock, denial, anger, sadness, and gradual acceptance. Others will jump back and forth from one stage to another. Some of us may skip some of the stages entirely. There is no right way or wrong way to move through grief.

Grief is not an illness or an abnormality; it is a natural process. We grieve deeply because we love deeply.

.....
• **The Initial Shock** •
.....

"The shock of her death froze something in me"

-Vladimir Nabokov

Whether the death was unexpected or whether we had been anticipating it, there is always a sense of disbelief when it happens. We feel as if we have been frozen in time. We may feel as if we are in a trance-going through the motions of what we have to do and say- but not feeling anything.

Shock in the early stages of grief is a way of

protecting us from the harsh reality of death for a while. We know that our loved one is gone, but the full impact has not gripped us, yet. We keep saying, "I can't believe it...It doesn't seem real...I don't feel anything..."

Some people may interpret our shock as not caring. Others will compliment us on how well we are handling all of this. What these people don't realize is that we have yet to comprehend the immensity of our loss.

Even after the shock begins to wear off, there is a part of us that does not want to believe it is true. We may find ourselves talking to the person, and then remember that the person is no longer here. We may start to do something for the person that we have done every day, and then remember that the person no longer needs us to do that. We may find ourselves waiting for the person to call or come home at a specific time, and then remember that person is not coming home. Shock and disbelief are normal parts of the grieving process. It does not mean that we don't love that person. It does not mean that we don't care about that person.

This initial stage of grief does not usually last long. Eventually, we come to accept the reality that our loved one is gone and will not return. When this happens, we begin to feel the pain of separation.

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• **Telling the Story** •
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"Give sorrow words; the grief that does not speak whispers to the over fraught heart and bids it break."

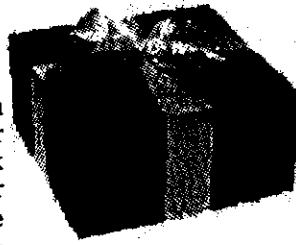
-William Shakespeare

In the first days and weeks after the death of a loved one, we find ourselves telling the story of what happened over and over again. We talk about what happened, how it happened, why it happened, when it happened. We go over and over the details. Each time we tell the story, we bring ourselves another step closer to accepting the death.

Problems arise after the funeral when the reality of the death hits us with full force. We still need to talk, but many of the people in our lives do not want to listen anymore. They want us to go back to being the way we were before. They tell us that we have to move on with our lives. They already know the story, and they do not want to hear about our sorrow, sadness, pain, or our feelings of loss. Talking to someone else about our grief is a crucial part of the grieving process. If we are having difficulty finding family members or friends who will listen, we may want to seek out the help of a bereavement support group or a bereavement counselor.

by Lorene Hanley Duquin

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.

Matthew J. Makar

Our memories of you
are forever cherished!
"We miss you, Matt."

REMEMBERING BRYCE

2000 - 2020

Love,
Mom and Dad

Words to Comfort, Words to Heal

*One step forward,
I do try.
One step back,
Oh, why did you have to die?
One step forward,
I see the sun shining in the sky.
One step back,
The storm clouds gather, and I cry.
One step forward,
I somehow have to try.
One step back,
But I miss you so much, I sigh.
One step forward,
One day I'll be able to say Hi!
One step back,
I refuse to ever say goodbye.
-Marie Ste, The Grief Toolbox*

In honor of the birthday
of our son

Kevin Kochan

With love,
Sharon & Charles

Happy Heavenly
20th birthday

to our son

Xavier Sandor

We miss you so very much.
Love you, Dad & Mom

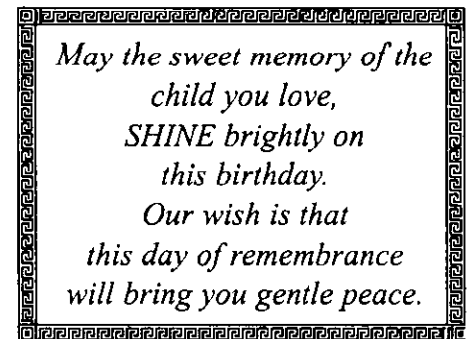
On March 9, 2023, our Bridgeport & Vicinity Chapter of The Compassionate Friends was notified that we were chosen as part of Town Fair Tire Foundation's 2023 Community Giving Program to receive a financial donation to support our commitment and dedication to help bereaved parents, grandparents, and adult siblings find hope and healing within our meetings and from our compassionate friendships. We thank the foundation for their generosity.

Love and Miss
You
Every Single Day,
Sean!
Love, Mom xoxo

Our Children Loved, Missed, and Remembered...

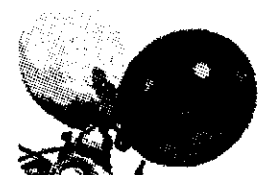
We ask that you keep parents, siblings, and grandparents observing such dates during May and June in your thoughts and in your hearts.

JOSEPH SALOMONE	May 1
CHARLES PATAKY	May 1
PAUL-JOHN HERON	May 1
JAMES HRZIC	May 2
KAREN BRUNO	May 3
AMBER KINGERSKY	May 3
BRIAN MICHAEL CANCELLIERI	May 4
DANNY MURPHY	May 5
CARL R. WENNERSTRAND TALBOT	May 5
JEFFREY BRANDON ALASKA	May 5
JAKE MONROE BEDDOE	May 5
SHAUN DOWD	May 6
WILLIAM MARIANO VARGAS	May 7
NINA TERESA POETA	May 9
KENNETH A. BARTEK, JR. (KJ)	May 9
PATRICK J. DUBEE	May 11
JEREMY COLLINS	May 12
WILLIAM A BAKER IV	May 13
CONOR ROBERT BOWEN	May 13
CHELSEA MARIE CUNHA	May 13
BRIAN TUZIK	May 14
JON MALONE	May 16
JOEL ALEXIS NIEVES	May 17
JOSE A. SUAREZ	May 18
JAMES CARBONE	May 20
DAVID JOHN O'HARE	May 20
JESSICA BURROWS	May 20
DENISE PIETROWSKI	May 22
RONNIE HILL	May 23
CHARLES ANTHONY CURCIO	May 23
CHRISTOPHER MICHAEL TOKARSKI, JR.	May 24
SABINA ELIZABETH CECCARELLI	May 25
HERB GULLBERG IV	May 25
NEIL HEILWEIL	May 25
FINLEY RHIA MAGUIRE	May 25
WILLIAM J. SAVO	May 26
CURTIS BUCCI	May 26
BRIAN LANEUVILLE	May 27
JESSIE EBSTEIN	May 27
RYAN EDWARD SIMPSON	May 27
JENNIFER D. GUSTAFSON	May 28
BRYCE LEO COSTAWONG	May 28
SHAWN WATSON	May 29
JOSEPH DONALD "TREY" WARREN III	May 30
FRANCIS APGAR	May 30



ETHIAN THORNTON	June 2
WILLIAM GAGLIARDI	June 2
STEPHEN JOSEPH MEDEIROS	June 4
CHRISTOPHER ROBERT ETES	June 5
JONATHAN SIMKO	June 5
JOHN SCINTO	June 6
CHERYL PETRETTI	June 9
SUSAN WOLSSNER	June 10
TORIN GREGORY BOND	June 11
JENNIFER LEIBOWITZ ANTONIER	June 11
JOHN SAMUEL SMITH	June 11
RON CRISTIANO	June 12
BRIAN PETER PETRUCCELLI	June 12
MARGARITA B. RAMOS	June 13
EDWARD J. STAMPER IV	June 15
KATIE FONTNEAU	June 18
BRIAN CASTRILLON	June 18
ADAM EDWARD NDREU	June 18
THOMAS JOHN LEE	June 18
ANNETTE KEMEZA	June 20
HALLE ROOT	June 20
HOLLY FLANNERY	June 22
ANGELINA JOY PEARSON	June 22
JORDAN PIERSON	June 22
CHRISTOPHER MICHAEL McETTRICK	June 23
ROGER NEALLEY	June 26
JAFAR KARZOUN	June 30
JOSEPH DAVID GAGLIARDI SR.	June 30

BIRTHDAYS



Our Children Loved, Missed, and Remembered...

JAFAR KARZOUN	May 1	MARISSA NICOLE SANDERS	May 29
MICHAEL JOSEPH HURTA	May 2	CRAIG ARSENAULT	May 29
KATHLEEN ELLEEN BAYE	May 3	BRIAN LAN EUVILLE	May 29
KAREN BRUNO	May 4	RONALD ALLEN, JR.	May 30
STEVEN WALL	May 5	CRYSTAL LYNN HAYDEN	May 30
ERIC DAVID JOHNSON	May 6	JUSTIN JOSEPH MARGITAY-BALOGH	May 31
CHRISTOPHER REYES PEREZ	May 6	LAWRENCE MORRELLI	May 31
JEREMY COLLINS	May 7	JOSEPH SALOMONE	June 1
BRYCE LEO COSTAWONG	May 7	SCOTT McCLENATHAN	June 2
DAVID E. CILENTO	May 8	PETER RONALD RADZWILLAS	June 2
CARL ANTHONY JOHNSTON	May 9	CHRIS LEAHY	June 4
JEREMIAH S. SALVATORE	May 9	FRANCIS APGAR	June 6
DERICK JAMES SPRINGER	May 10	ADELE ADESUWA IYAMU	June 7
BRIDGET GRACE CABLE	May 10	JONATHAN SIMKO	June 7
EDWARD J. STAMPER IV	May 11	BARBARA YOUNG	June 8
WILLIAM (BILLY) A. SLOSSAR	May 12	CHRISTIAN FERRIS RAKOCZY	June 9
FINLEY RHIA MAGUIRE	May 12	HOWIE TASSITANO	June 10
RYAN THOMAS WALSH	May 13	JESSIE EBSTEIN	June 10
CHRISTOPHER PAPP	May 14	NEIL HEILWEIL	June 11
EDWARD ANGELO PIPKIN	May 15	Senior Airman LAWRENCE P. MAN LAPIT IV	June 16
TIARRA WEB	May 15	STEVEN C. BELENCHIA	June 17
MARIYAH MIYLENA NAKHOUNE	May 15	ASHLEY JOY	June 17
JOSEPH DONALD "TREY" WARREN III	May 16	CHRISTOPHER R. VIERA	June 17
SEAN GARRETT RICE	May 16	JOSEPH ANTHONY PELOSO IV	June 18
TORIN GREGORY BOND	May 16	ALAN RICHARD HOFFMAN, SR.	June 20
JASON GLATZ	May 17	ANNA MARIA RINO	June 22
ROBERT YOUNG	May 17	GABRIELLA JOSIE MARIA RINO	June 22
DAVID SAMPSON	May 17	SEAN EAREL	June 23
DANIEL LAWRENCE TOOLE	May 18	PAUL STEVEN KEELER	June 23
PETER BRADFORD KOVACS	May 19	DANNY STEIN	June 25
TATE ARLETTA SCHEER	May 19	STEPHEN F. ZURAW	June 25
SARAH CYNTHIA KOURY	May 20	ROGER NEALLEY, JR.	June 26
PETER BUTANOWICZ	May 22	BRIAN CASTRILLON	June 28
JOHN BRADY CHAPIN	May 24	JOANN SIMKO FASANELLA	June 28
JUSTIN MICHAEL SPRAY	May 25	DAVID JOHN O'HARE	June 29
DAVID MICHAEL VOGT	May 26	ANDREW JAMES DONNELLAN	June 29
JOAN P. BURBY TELLONE	May 27	JUSTIN SMITH	June 29
MELISSA STUPAK MONTUORI	May 27	RICHARD ELIOT BONOSKY	June 30
JAKE MONROE BEDDOE	May 27	STEPHEN JOSEPH MEDEIROS	June 30
JEFFREY BRANDON ALASKA	May 27	LORI ARGONESE	June 30
KASANDRA SANDERS	May 28		
DANIEL QUIRK	May 28		

ANGELVERSARIES

MOTHER'S DAY

As I write this, I am very much aware that Mother's Day is coming soon. That will be a doubly difficult day in countless homes. For all the thousands of Mothers who will be glowing with a radiant kind of pride and happiness on that day, there will also be those of you whose hearts are arching for that phone call that will never come, that special visit, that one Mother's Day card that will not arrive. For us, the reading and re-reading of that one last card - - "Mom, you are the greatest, and I love you" will have to last a lifetime. How does a Mother face a lifetime of silence on "her" day? Ask those of us who have "been there" already, and we will tell you of lonely Mother's Day visits to spring-green cemeteries where the sweet clear notes of a single spring bird, perched nearby, float over our heads and seem surely to have been intended as a divine comfort for a heart full to breaking. You will hear of yellow roses being sent to a small church - "in memory of" - and a cherished story of a kind and sensitive friend who sent a single rose that first Mother's Day "in remembrance."

Always we struggle with the eternal question- how does life in fairness exact from us the life of a beloved child in exchange for a clear bird call in a spring-green cemetery, a slender vase of yellow roses, or even the kindness and sensitivity of a friend who remembered our loneliness and pain on that day? Where is the fairness and justice of such a barter?

The answer comes back again and again - - life does not always bargain fairly.

We are surrounded from birth to death by those things which we cannot keep, but which enrich, ennoble, and endow our lives with foretaste of Heaven because we have been privileged to behold, to experience, to wrap our arms around the joyous and the beautiful.

Can we bottle the fragrance of an April morning or the splendor of winter's sunset and take it home with us to place on our fireplace mantle? Can we grasp and hold the blithesome charm of childhood laughter? Can we capture within cupped hands the beauty and richness of a rainbow? Can we pluck the glitter of a million stars on a summer night, or place in an alabaster box the glow and tenderness of love?

No, we cannot. But to those who have been given the splendor, the blithesome charm, the glory, the glitter, the tenderness and the love of child who has departed, someday the pain will speak to you of enrichment, of compassion for others, of deeper sensitivity to the world about you, of a deeper joy for having known a deeper pain. Your child will not have left you completely as you thought. But, rather, you will find him or her in that first clear, sweet bird call, in those yellow rosebuds, in giving and in receiving, and in the tissue-wrapped memories that you hold forever in your heart.



- Mary Wildman
TCF Moro, IL

Changes

Mother Nature is working her wonders in the greening of our landscape. With the present lighter, warmer, longer days, and with the renewal of life all about us, I hope this will have a positive effect on all of us. I hope you will find a new awakening of interest, enjoyment, and peace in the beautiful days of May and June.

Mother's Day will occur, and we will remember our children who are absent and yet so much a part of us, filling our hearts and renewing our memories. I wish for each of you a peaceful day. It will be bittersweet for many of us and for the newly bereaved, painful. We remember our children with gratitude for having given us that most precious of all gifts ... their love.

-Helene Prokop

former leader and newsletter editor
of TCF Bridgeport, CT chapter

Father's Day

A day of remembrance, first thought of in 1903 by Mrs. John Bruce Dodd of Spokane, WA, to honor her father William Smart, who had reared six motherless children with love, sacrifice, and never ending devotion. The idea spread, and in 1924 President Calvin Coolidge recommended an annual observance of Father's Day on the third Sunday of June.

Father's Day will arrive in the month of June, and we must keep in mind that although this holiday doesn't quite command the attention that Mother's Day receives ... we should know ... that fathers too are grieving ... most of them in their silent, controlled manner. For years the male has been conditioned to keep a stiff upper lip ... not give in to any tearful expression of his feelings ... "BE STRONG."

Society is finally starting to realize that men, too, need to express their grief, and they are being allowed to go "PUBLIC." There is a changing attitude, and along with it the freedom to allow one's self to be one's self. This is evident in our younger male generation. Far too long in coming.

- Helene Prokop,

former newsletter editor of the Bridgeport chapter of TCF

"Grief is not an enemy -- it is a friend. It is the natural process of walking through hurt and growing because of the walk. Let it happen! Stand up tall to friends and to yourself and say "Don't take my grief away from me. I deserve it, and I am going to have it."

-Doug Manning (from his book Don't Take My Grief Away From Me)

Come On, Dad! *by Carol Cichella, TCF Rockford, IL*

*The sun 's shining, not a cloud to be seen,
A day made in heaven, isn't it keen?
Wow, can you believe such a glorious sight,
A dream come true, a fantasy delight!*

*Dad! Hey, Dad! Something's not right.
Mom's upstairs crying. Did you have a fight?
No one is laughing or having fun.
Have you forgotten? Is this our same place?*

*I'm here, Dad! Can't you see I'm right here?
I'm here in your heart; isn't that clear?*

*I'm in your thought and all that you do.
I've never been gone from any of you.*

*Our love lives forever. It won't go away.
That's why we'll always share this day.
Put on a smile, not an ugly ole frown.
Come on, Dad ... Don't let me down!
Enjoy your day. Share it with me.
Laugh and love our whole family.
I'm here, Dad, like I'll always be,
Come on, Dad. Do it! Do it for me!*



In Compassionate Appreciation and Gratitude

Mrs. Irene Kostzewski from Stratford, CT chose our TCF chapter for her annual Lenten fundraising project this year. She reached out to her friends from The Catholic Daughters: Court St. Cecelia #75, St. Mark's Ladies Guild, and St. Mark's Bible Study. Not only did Mrs. Kostzewski spread the word about The Compassionate Friends' mission, but the \$583.00 that was donated will greatly help our chapter in our important work. The love and generosity which prompted this gift is greatly appreciated. We thank all of the women who helped Mrs. Kostzewski reach her goal.

Joyce Baran
Beverly Benedetto
Doris Berke
Anne Fahy
Lorraine Faiella
Flo Feher
Nancy Foote
Mercy Ingersoll

Clara Kikta
Marion Krafick
Irene Kostzewski
Nancy Lou Maco
Janelle Marchini
Marie Nutolo
Theresa Palmieri

Patricia Ross
Elaine Sansonetti
Jane Santa
Rosemary Spitz
Amy Stavola
Carol Swarbrick
Mary Ellen Williamson
Arlene Wojnarowski

Compassionate Verse by Sasha Wagner

Lilacs

Come, look at May with me,
The world is music.
The lilacs laugh
and every meadow sings.

Your heart forgets to think
of spring or summer,
forgets the grief
that happened in the snow.

Until a memory
moves into sunlight
to bring the child,
the child who is not here.

Still, look at May with me
and hear the music
And - for a moment-
hear the lilacs weep.

Now

Right Now...
take a moment,
close your eyes
and remember
the smile
of
your child!!

Easter Thoughts

One more winter *overcome*,
One more darkness
turned to *light* and *promise*.
Winter is the price for *spring*
Struggle is the price for *life*.
Even in sorrow, *remember*
to prepare your heart
for celebration -
next spring perhaps.
Or the spring after that!