



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

Bridgeport, Connecticut Chapter

May/June 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.

“The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen nor touched but are felt in the heart; hope is grief’s best music.”

-www.achildofmine.org/uk

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

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:

May 14, 2024 6:45 – 8:45 pm

June 11, 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

Two Wolves

By Grief Beach, TCF South Suburban Chapter, Evergreen Park, IL
May/June newsletter 2014



One evening, an elderly Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside of people.
He said, "My son, the battle is between two 'wolves' inside people.

One wolf is EVIL.

It is anger, envy, jealousy,
sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance,
self-pity, guilt, resentment,
inferiority, lies, false pride,
superiority, and ego.

The other wolf is GOOD.

It is joy, peace, love,
hope, serenity, humility, kindness,
benevolence, empathy, generosity,
truth, compassion, and faith."

The grandson thought for a minute and then asked his grandfather.

"Which wolf wins?"

The elderly Cherokee simply replied,

"The one you feed."



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

Words to Comfort

Words to Heal

Their Song of Love

*Remember on this
Mother's Day or Father's Day
the melody your child etched in your heart,
and the sweet song of love that only your child
could place there.
As this special day brings his or her song
to you,
may the warmth of their eternal love
fill your hearts once again.*

IN
LOVING MEMORY
OF OUR SON
DANIEL QUIRK

Happy Heavenly 21st Birthday
To
Xavier H. Sandor
(March 21)
"Forever 19 to us"

In
Loving Memory of
Aaron M. Hoffman
With love, from his mom **Cathy**

Jake Monroe Beddoe

5/5/1995 – 5/27/2020

"But for now we are young. Let us lay
in the sun and count every beautiful
thing we can see!"

IN MEMORY OF
XAVIER H. SANDOR
ON HIS 2ND YEAR ANGELVERSARY
APRIL 15, 2024
"XAVIER, WE LOVE AND MISS YOU
FOREVER AND ALWAYS"

Our Children Loved, Missed, and Remembered....

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

MAY BIRTHDAYS

Joseph Salomon	May 1	John "Zachary" Naber	May 19
Charles Pataky	May 1	James Carbone	May 20
Paul-John Heron	May 1	David John O'Hare	May 20
James Hrzic	May 2	Jessica Burrows	May 20
Karen Bruno	May 3	Denise Pietrowski	May 22
Amber Kingersky	May 3	Ronnie Hill	May 23
Brian Michael Cancellieri	May 4	Charles Anthony Curcio	May 23
Danny Murphy	May 5	Christopher M. Tokarski, Jr.	May 24
Carl R. Wennerstrand Talbot	May 5	Sabina Elizabeth Ceccarelli	May 25
Jeffrey Brandon Alaska	May 5	Herb Gullberg IV	May 25
Jake Monroe Beddoe	May 5	Neil Heilweil	May 25
Shaun Dowd	May 6	Finley Rhia Maguire	May 25
William Mariano Vargas	May 7	William J. Savo	May 26
Nina Teresa Poeta	May 9	Curtis Bucci	May 26
Kenneth A. Bartek, Jr. (KJ)	May 9	Brian Laneuville	May 27
Patrick J. Dubee	May 11	Jessie Ebstein	May 27
Jeremy Collins	May 12	Ryan Edward Simpson	May 27
William A. Baker IV	May 13	Jennifer D. Gustafson	May 28
Conor Robert Bowen	May 13	Bryce Leo Costawong	May 28
Chelsea Marie Cunha	May 13	Shawn Watson	May 29
Brian Tuzik	May 14	Joseph D. "Trey" Warren III	May 30
Jon Malone	May 16	Francis Apgar	May 30
Joel Alexis Nieves	May 17		
Jose A. Suarez	May 18		

Our Children 

Loved, Missed, and Remembered....

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

Ethan Thornton	June 2	Thomas John Lee	June 18
William Gagliardi	June 2	Annette Kemeza	June 20
Stephen Joseph Medeiros	June 4	Halle Root	June 20
Christopher Robert Etes	June 5	Holly Flannery	June 22
Jonathan Simko	June 5	Angelina Joy Pearson	June 22
John Sinto	June 6	Jordon Pierson	June 22
Cheryl Petretti	June 9	Christopher Michael McEttrick	June 23
Susan Wolssner	June 10	Jafar Karzoun	June 30
Torin Gregory Bond	June 11	Joseph David Gagliardi, Sr.	June 30
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		



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

Jafar Karzoun	May 1	Jason Glatz	May 17
Michael Joseph Hurta	May 2	Robert Young	May 17
Kathleen Elleen Baye	May 3	David Sampson	May 17
Karen Bruno	May 4	Daniel Lawrence Toole	May 18
Steven Wall	May 5	Peter Bradford Kovacs	May 19
Eric David Johnson	May 6	Tate Arletta Scheer	May 19
Christopher Reyes Perez	May 6	Sarah Cynthia Koury	May 20
Jeremy Collins	May 7	Peter Butanowicz	May 22
Bryce Leo Costawong	May 7	John Brady Chapin	May 24
David E. Cilento	May 8	Justin Michael Spray	May 25
Carl Anthony Johnston	May 9	David Michael Vogt	May 26
Jeremiah S. Salvatore	May 9	Joan P. Burby Tellone	May 27
Derick James Springer	May 10	Melissa Stupak Montuori	May 27
Bridget Grace Cable	May 10	Jake Monroe Beddoe	May 27
Edward J. Stamper IV	May 11	Jeffrey Brandon Alaska	May 27
William (Billy) A. Slossar	May 12	Kasandra Sanders	May 28
Finley Rhia Maguire	May 12	Daniel Quirk	May 28
Ryan Thomas Walsh	May 13	Marissa Nicole Sanders	May 29
Christopher Papp	May 14	Craig Arsenault	May 29
Edward Angelo Pipkin	May 15	Brian Laneuville	May 29
Tiarra Web	May 15	Ronald Allen, Jr.	May 30
Mariyah M. Nakhoun	May 15	Crystal Lynn Hayden	May 30
Joseph "Trey" Warren III	May 16	Justin J. Margitay-Balogh	May 31
Sean Garrett Rice	May 16	Lawrence Morrelli	May 31
Torin Gregory Bond	May 16		

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

Alexander J. (AJ) Aguilar	June 1	Sean Earel	June 23
Joseph Salomone	June 1	Paul Steven Keeler	June 23
Scott McClenathan	June 2	Danny Stein	June 25
Peter Ronald Radzwillas	June 2	Stephen F. Zuraw	June 25
Chris Leahy	June 4	Roger Nealley, Jr.	June 26
Francis Apgar	June 6	Brian Castrillon	June 28
Adele Adesuwa Iyamu	June 7	Joann Simko Fasenella	June 28
Jonathan Simko	June 7	David John O'Hare	June 29
Barbara Young	June 8	Andrew J. Donnellan	June 29
Christian Ferris Rakoczy	June 9	Justin Smith	June 29
Howie Tassitano	June 10	Richard Eliot Bonosky	June 30
Jessie Ebstein	June 10	Stephen J. Medeiros	June 30
Neil Heilweil	June 11	Lori Argonese	June 30
Senior Airman Lawrence P. Man Lapit IV	June 16		
Steven C. Belenchia	June 17		
Asley Joy	June 17		
Christopher Riviera	June 17		
Joseph Anthony Peloso IV	June 18		
Alan Richard Hoffman Sr.	June 20		
Anna Maria Rino	June 22		
Gabriella Josie Maria Rina	June 22		



Mother's Day Revisited 1998

By Barbara Atwood in memory of Jacob, TCF Tucson, Arizona

Many of us in TCF do not look forward to Mother's Day. On this holiday, when the whole nation is celebrating the joys of parenthood, grieving parents often feel a special anguish.

Mother's Day this year looms as a particularly difficult milestone for me. Sunday, May 1998, is not only Mother's Day but also the second anniversary of the death of my ten-year-old son, Jacob. Because this day of private sadness also happens to be a day of public celebration, I decided that I should start thinking early about the occasion. I engaged in a little research about the holiday and learned a story that I think is worth sharing.

Mother's Day was the creation of a woman names Anna Jarvis in the early years of the 19th century. Anna, who never married and never had children of her own, devoted herself to establishing a national Mother's Day as a way of honoring her beloved mother, who died on May 9, 1905. In Anna's view, her mother deserved a memorial because she had lived selflessly and endured considerable suffering – seven of her eleven children had died in early childhood. According to historians, Anna's mother mourned the deaths of her children throughout her life.

Anna insisted that the holiday always fall on a Sunday so that it would retain its spiritual moorings. Because of her efforts, President Woodrow Wilson finally proclaimed the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day. Although Anna couldn't prevent the new holiday from quickly becoming a marketing phenomenon, she did try. Speaking out against "the mire of commercialization" that threatened to engulf Mother's Day, Anna attempted to preserve her creation as a true "holy day," a time for a solemn reflection and prayer.

Mother's Day, then, was borne of a daughter's grief and love. More importantly, it was intended



as a tribute to a bereaved mother: a brave woman who lost multiple children, but who managed to live with an abiding kindness and generosity toward others.

I like knowing this background, and my attitude towards Mother's Day has been colored by the knowledge. The holiday now makes me think of the common sorrow that links all bereaved parents. I feel a bond with Anna's mother that stretches over time and space. In a broader sense, the woman for whom the holiday was founded reminds me of people I've met at TCF who have continued to live productive, meaningful lives in the face of unthinkable loss.

Finally, Mother's Day in its origins symbolizes both the joy and the vulnerability inherent in parenthood. Anna's mother knew all too well that from the moment a child is born, hope and the possibility of tragedy go hand in hand. She understood the fragility of life. Enriched in its own history, Mother's Day is easier for me to tolerate. The coincidence of dates this year—Mother's Day and the anniversary of my son's death—is not as jarring as it once seemed. Although the commercial images of the modern Mother's Day still make me wince, I can turn off the television and envision the kind of day that Anna Jarvis had in mind: a time for quiet reflection and the sharing of cherished memories.

“If I am what I do, and I don’t, then I’m not.”

These words have been spinning around in my head ever since I heard someone comment on how we tend to define ourselves by what we do, rather than by who we are. I thought about those words incessantly, almost to the point where they became nonsensical. But, they aren’t.

Until the day of my son Bryan’s death, I’m afraid I was guilty of defining myself by my roles in life: computer marketer, husband, father—and without really being aware of it, most often in that order. I was caught up with “bringing home the bacon,” “making a name for myself,” and the tunnel vision that goes with all of that. My sense of self-worth was wrapped up with these ideas. One of my friends used to call me “Rapid Robert” because of my pace in going places—or was it a treadmill? I was a workaholic, and only too often by the time I’d gotten around to family matters, I’d run out of steam.

Then my son Bryan died. The superficiality of my life smashed headlong into a brick wall. For months I felt I was sitting in the middle of a field scattered with pieces of my life: job pieces askew here, family relationships trailing off there, dreams piled akimbo over here, hopes rent asunder over there. As I listened to my son’s friends at the two remembrances for him, it dawned on me that at nineteen a young man doesn’t have a long list of credits and accomplishments. Bryan hadn’t “made a name for himself.” Bryan was Bryan, no more, no less. His many friends loved him for who he was, not for what he was.

*Strange the lessons
Fathers learn from sons—
To care...
To share...
To be there...*

I wrote these words blinded by pain, and I could sense what it was that brought together people from all over in a common bond of shared grief--Bryan cared about them. I wondered if I were to die suddenly, after more than fifty years of life, how would I be eulogized? “A true computer marketer, a real professional, a dedicated employee...?” I now realized I’d settle for two words: “He cared.”

I’ve tried to put the pieces of my life back together again, but I’ve tried to be selective. I’ve left many pieces lying in that field because they don’t fit anymore. And I’ve fashioned new pieces, each in some way inspired by the lesson of Bryan’s life. The writer Ernest Hemingway wrote, “Sooner or later life breaks everyone, but afterwards some are stronger at the broken pieces.” I’ve tried to put the pieces of my life back together selectively. I’ve fashioned new pieces. Some pieces no longer fit.

As bereaved parents, we have a choice: we can fixate on the death, or we can affirm life. *I know which my son would have wanted for me!*

*-Bob Rosenberger
TCF, Burke, VA*