



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

Bridgeport, Connecticut Chapter

January/February 2025

Newsletter

Volume 25 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.

“You don’t heal from the loss of a child because time passes; you heal because of what you do with the time.”

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

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 14, 2025 6:45 – 8:45 pm

February 11, 2025 6:45 – 8:45 pm

**Where: Sterling 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 Community Center is a Victorian Brick House on the opposite side of the street. Park in Sterling Community Center’s parking lot. Use back or side entrance. We meet in the downstairs 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

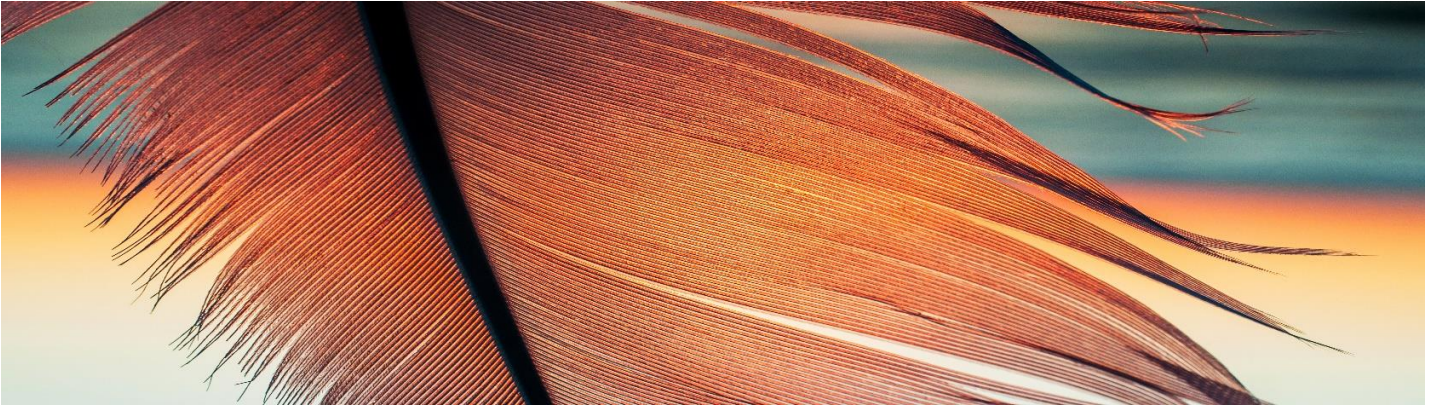
Michele Peloso

Hospitality: Dee Tutka

Community Outreach and Librarian: Michele Peloso

FALLING FEATHERS

By Joan Moss, Robin and Sara's Mom
The Compassionate Friends' Winter 2021 Magazine



Memories are as unpredictable as birds. For bereaved parents, memories can arrive as cheery guests or painful tormentors. In the years since cancer took our daughters, Robin and Sara, my memories are often mixed - both welcome and dreaded – firing up explosions of joy, gratitude, intense longing, and sorrow. They come swarming in when I look at photos, hear a certain song, or visit a favorite place. Other times they appear out of the blue, barging in like uninvited raucous ravens, catching me by surprise or as gently as a falling feather. I believe that memories are blessings. They speak to the history of our love.

Although our children are gone from this world, our memories can help ease them back into our hearts and bring us hope. Emily Dickenson's poem "*Hope is the Thing with Feathers*" speaks of birds that "*perch in the soul.*" They are there to sing and keep us warm "*in the chilliest land and on the strangest sea*" which is certainly where we are now. So, we hang onto our memories fiercely, gratefully, because they remind us of who we are and where we have been. And we need that now more than ever.

We can be creative in holding those memories. We can write journals or make scrapbooks about our life with our child or write letters to him or her, expressing sentiments we never got to say. One mother I know often has a party to celebrate her son's birthdays where his friends enjoy memories of their happy times with him. Shared memories and stories keep our children with us and ease our grief. In the telling and the hearing, we can find strength.

So when memories arrive, we can welcome them as well as all the emotions that tag along. Greet them with tears or smiles. Maybe even a good laugh. Gently hold these pieces of your life as you look back and remember. And in those memories, see all the love that has carried you and yours through past generations. In remembering the former years, we gain hope for the future – a hope that knows without a doubt that even in the worst of times, love will not leave us.

The little bird may fly off but will soon return to be shared with others. This sharing can be at a support group table with other parents who need our touch, our understanding, and the hearing of our hope. In this way, we help keep many warm as they navigate through the grief journey.



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
Sean Garrett Rice
on his birthday
Love, Mom
xoxo

For my son Brian James Chepya~
You are gone but thank you for all the
sweet things you have left behind
Your poems, your music, your jokes,
your love of your family & friends,
and your zest for life.
You live on in my home, my head, and
my heart.

Love Mom and Emma Jane

*The children who were with us
in the rush of life,
let them now be with us
in the peace of spirit.*

For **Viviana**~
"Forever and always in my
heart.
Love, Mom"

Jorge- You are the shining star of my
life
that remains visible even when
my nights are darkest.
With love, Mami Miryam

In honor of Darren Reidy
We carry you in our hearts and pray
you are at peace.
Love, Mom and Dad

*In loving memory
of our son
Jonathan Simko*

Happy 30th Heavenly Birthday
to our beautiful angel
Kadeelyn Nicole Konstantino!
Love, Mom, Dad, & Cassie

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	Kadeelyn 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
Jayden Chetlen	January 12	Kathleen Elleen Bye	January 29
Denise Glover	January 13	Christopher Hubinger	January 30
Ciara O'Driscoll	January 13		

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Sarah Beth Robinson Huszar	February 1	Jorge Ospina	February 18
Angel Valle	February 2	Evon Edwards	February 19
Caitlin Logan	February 4	Ashley Joy	February 19
Michelle Peters	February 4	Andrew Bobko	February 20
Andrew James Donnellan	February 5	Brandon Michael Velez	February 22
Christopher Mulligan	February 5	Adele Adesuwa Iyamu	February 23
Brenna McMenamy	February 5	Gary Salvatore Bellard	February 23
Karen Wiegman	February 7	Sean Russell	February 24
Brendan Thomas Murren	February 7	Mitchell Elliot Harris	February 24
Thomas Chisholm	February 10	Marcus Ramos	February 24
Amanda Lynn Daigle	February 10	Howie Tassitano	February 24
Grace Marie Evanko	February 15	William Cleary	February 25
Brian James Chepya	February 13	Jean Phillippe Lominy	February 29
Dawn Kosarko	February 14	Robert S. Murphy	February 29
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	Angel Valle	January 20
Charles Robert Martin	January 4	William Mariano Vargas	January 22
David L. Carlson	January 4	Jorge Ospina	January 22
Christopher Joseph Haley	January 4	Jessica Elizabeth Kolaric	January 26
Kenneth (KJ) A. Bartek, Jr.	January 4	James Hrzic	January 27
Brian John Lilly, Jr.	January 4	Jonas Blackwell	January 29
John Scinto	January 6	Ozzy Zack	January 30
Robert Smuniewski	January 6	Stephen M. Ceslik, III	January 30
Denise Pietrowski	January 9	George W. Juleson, IV	January 31
Chelsea Marie Cunha	January 10	William (Billy) Rudolph	January 31
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		
Lauren Alexandra Tvardzik	January 14		
Stephen D. Tomasky	January 15		
Michelle Peters	January 16		
Gina Dechello	January 16		
Ciara O'Driscoll	January 16		
Adam Jarvis	January 17		
Conor Poholek	January 18		
Julian Cerrato	January 19		
Jason Walowitz	January 19		
Alan Barnett Weiner	January 20		

“Love’s heart that was
once broken by loss
is restored to love again
by the heart compelled
to love.”

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	Alexa Rae Heron	February 28
Dexter Hill	February 7	Ryan Charles Brennan	February 28
Kadeelyn Konstantino	February 7		
Nick Felisko	February 8		
Nancy Keller	February 8		
James (Jimmy) Casey	February 8		
Christa Joenell Luttmann	February 10		
Beverly Bruno	February 12		
Bobby Bonacci	February 12		
Michael Wigglesworth	February 13		
Lorenzo Z. Deaderick	February 14		
Zoe Elizabeth Anyan	February 15		
Donna Carpenter	February 17		
Joseph Kowalczyk, Jr.	February 18		



Shared Thoughts Concerning Our New Year's Resolutions



This time of year, we are inundated with suggestions for changes we can make to greatly improve our lives in the new year. New Year's resolutions to improve health and surroundings may be useful and even beneficial. However, for those of us who have experienced the loss of a child, grandchild, or sibling, the typical sentiments may ring hollow as the calendar turns to January 2025. Perhaps it would be fitting to consider a different sort of resolutions – a set of suggestions suited especially for those of us who are grieving. Since it is traditional to make resolutions as well as to break them after a few weeks, **let's try to really keep these.**

1. Let's try not to imagine the future but to take one day at a time.
2. Let's allow ourselves time to cry, both alone and with our loved ones.
3. Let's not shut out other family members from our thoughts and feelings. We need to share these difficult times. We may all become closer for it. It is not too late if our communication with family members has broken down. We can try to openly talk about issues that have been bothering us and try to become close again.
4. Let's try to be realistic about our expectations - of ourself, our spouse, other family members, and friends. Each one of us is an entity, therefore different. So how can there be perfect understanding?
5. When a good day comes, let's relish it, and let's not feel guilty or discouraged because it doesn't last. A good day will come again and begin to multiply.
6. Let's take care of our body, mind, and emotions through resting, eating properly, hydrating, exercising, and sitting with our feelings.
7. Let's also share our feelings with other Compassionate Friends and let them share with us. As we find ourselves caring about the pain of others, we are starting to come out of our shells which is a very healthy sign.

I know trying to keep these resolutions won't be easy, but what has been? It's worth a try. There is nothing to lose and perhaps much to gain. Good luck!

Written by Mary Ehmann, Valley Forge, PA TCF

Brian's Poem

At our chapter's November 2024 meeting, Sheila Hughes, mother of Brian Chepya, shared her son's insights about the power of music, and she gave her permission to include it in our newsletter.

Be that self which one truly is.
Music is well said to be the speech of angels.
There's nothing like music to relieve the soul and uplift it.
Music is the soul of language.
Music is an outburst of the soul.
Music is the harmonious voice of creation, an echo of the invisible
world.
Music can name the unnamable and communicate the unknowable.
Music is what our feelings sound like.
I fell in love with music because it gave me an escape;
it gave me strength & it gave me confidence.
Try to be a rainbow in someone's cloud.
Yeah, we all shine on like the moon & the stars & the sun.

