



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

Bridgeport, Connecticut Chapter

March/April 2025

Newsletter

Volume 25 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.

I will not allow my sorrow to be a barrier between me and the people I love. Sometimes it may even be a bridge.

Martha H. 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, 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
P.O. Box 46
Wheaton, IL 60187
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:

March 11, 2025 6:45 – 8:45 pm

April 8, 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 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 Center's 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

Online newsletter: Claudia Margitay-Balogh

Michele Peloso

Hospitality: Dee Tutka

Community Outreach and Librarian: Michele Peloso

The First Day of Every Month

By Bob McCollough, TCF Burlington, Vermont Chapter

The first day of any new month seems reason enough to pause and reflect on the significance that each of us might associate with a new month. For me, March has always signified a time of transition, a slow but steady emergence from the dark depths of winter into the first, but sure, signs of spring. Something like the “light at the end of the tunnel.”

This spring will have a different meaning for each of us. For some, especially the newly bereaved, there will be a reluctance to accept it – a feeling of longing for the child with whom we would have liked to share it. You may wish to ignore the signs of this year’s spring, but it will happen anyway. But you don’t have to enjoy it. Your sorrow is too new to let you enjoy anything. I understand this feeling. It’s part of the guilt we feel for surviving the loss of a child. It just won’t seem fair to you that the world goes on much the same as before.

Others of us, with the aid of time, sometimes much time, can face spring with a little more resolve. The resolve to accept things the way they are. Somehow, we learn to recognize our limitations, and we stop hurting ourselves with guilt or with the responsibility to change things.

There is no way to change the fact that our children have died.
The only thing we can change is ourselves. Those children will always be with us in our minds and in our hearts.

When we become secure in that belief, we will have changed.

The changed person can accept life again
and still be faithful to the memory of his or her child.





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 (or) use the QR code below.



In Loving Memory of
Brianna Rose Sabol
on her Birthday
Love Ways, Dad, Mom and
Hailey

Words to Comfort, Words to Heal

**I know that you are struggling,
now that I am not around.**

I am everywhere you go.

I am the voice without a sound.

I am every step you walk.

Meet me in a memory!

I am there both day and night.

I am the feather at your feet.

The wind that blows your hair.

I am the whisper’s kiss.

I am always there.

I am the robin in the tree.

I am tomorrow’s butterfly.

**But one thing I’ll always be
is your angel in the sky.**

By Joanne Boyle



Happy 22nd
Heavenly Birthday
Xavier
We love and miss you so very
much!

In loving memory of
Xavier Sandor
Three years without you,
We miss you every single day!
Forever in our hearts,
Mom, Dad, & Patrick

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

*May the sweet
memory of the child
you love,
SHINE brightly on this birthday.
Our wish is that
this day of remembrance
will bring you
gentle peace.*

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Amy E. 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		
Emily Claire Vonick	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

Jason William Cannon	March 1	Eric Allen	March 19
Roy H. Smith, Jr.	March 1	Brian Tuzik	March 19
Angel Grace McManus	March 1	Joshua R. Wright	March 19
Grace Marie Evanko	March 2	Tamika Cameron	March 20
John Napolitano	March 3	Brandon Sean Lynch	March 21
Karen Wiegman	March 4	Laurie Povinelli	March 21
Michael James, Jr.	March 4	Carl Wennerstrand Talbot	March 21
Leo Farrell	March 6	John Stempert	March 21
Charles Pataky	March 8	Keith Drap	March 23
Brandon Giordano	March 9	Allison Grace Edwards	March 24
Christie Lea Endre	March 10	Kim Thibodeau Chiaraluce	March 26
Ryan Phillips	March 12	Jenoe Varga	March 26
Joseph McFadden	March 13	Michael Rowley	March 27
Christopher Tokarski, Jr.	March 13	Dawn Ann Kalman	March 27
Alex Recupino	March 14	Jimmy Pifer	March 27
James (Jamey) G. Dina	March 14	Diana-Alexandra Breaz	March 28
Ryan Edward Simpson	March 14	Corey Michael Cerrone	March 29
Victoria "Tori" Koetsch	March 16	Timmy Garofalo	March 30
Jeresa June Mincey	March 17	Christopher McEttrick	March 30
Jared Arthur Levine	March 17		
Erik Jason Dobyms	March 17		
Bernard E. Koetsch II	March 18		
Thomas Vazzano	March 18		
Dawn Kosarko	March 18		

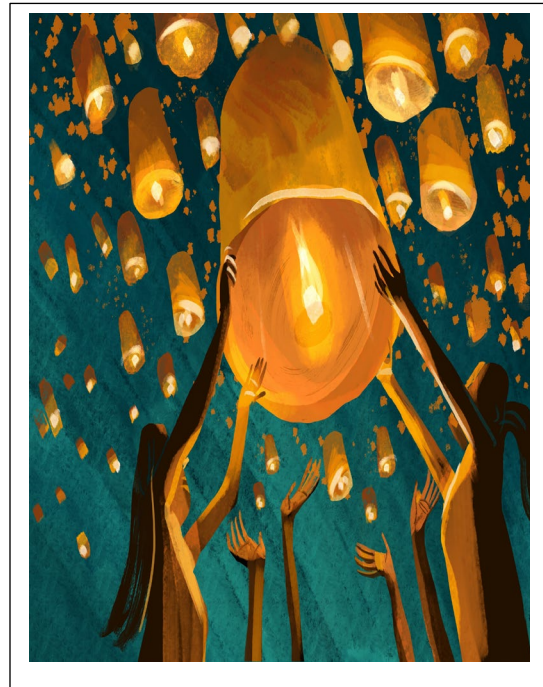
LOVE LIVES ON
IN THE MEMORIES
THAT ARE FOREVER WOVEN
IN THE FABRIC OF OUR HEARTS!

APRIL ANGELVERSARIES

A life that touches the hearts of others goes on forever...

David Stanczyk	April 1
Bobby Provenzano	April 1
Dan O'Sullivan	April 2
Emily Claire Vonick	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
Aalliyah Gabrielle Dunn	April 24
Scotty Thomas	April 24

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



Recognizing Unsuccessful Grief

**Written by Libbyrose D. Clark, Deep East, Texas TCF chapter
From information provided by Vera Baron, LPC and Ray Johnson, CSW**

All of us who have searched for healing following the death of a child, grandchild, or sibling know the roller coaster of emotions that are part of our grief process. We know that there is no “quick fix” that magically lets us get on with our lives, and that grief is physically, mentally, and emotionally exhausting. We cannot go back to what was! And we begin to understand that time, in and of itself, does not heal.

Although there is no set schedule for grieving, and there will always be a hole in our hearts, many of us in TCF have found that within a year to 18 months, we are beginning to make some progress-granted the progress may seem minute to the bereaved. Grief therapists have learned that if a death is from a prolonged or serious illness, grieving has already begun during the illness. We have also learned that the second year of grief may be as intense or even more emotionally devastating than the first year. Furthermore, we understand that no two people have the same grief timetable. Grief is as individual as people are.

However, if you feel that you are not making progress, is there some way to determine, whether you may need professional help, evaluation, or at least reassurance?

The following considerations may help you decide:

- Are you experiencing extended withdrawal from the world around you and a prolonged inability to accomplish normal tasks or participate in everyday activities?
- Have you self-imposed isolation where you do not want to be around anyone-friends, family or others?
- Are you becoming too scared to be alone and desire to have someone around you all the time?
- Are you experiencing anger or guilt that (a) is out of proportion, (b) does not fit the circumstances, (c) extends for a long time without retreating, or (d) may be directed toward or imposed on others close to you?
- Do you have depression that is exaggerated, unremitting, prolonged, and still occurring in its original intensity years after the loss?
- Are you depending on alcohol or medications to cope or forget?
- Is an emotional “logjam” resulting from an accumulation of losses over the years?
- Are you placing your child on a pedestal and forgetting his/her imperfections? Conversely, are you unable to redirect your activities or shift your focus so that you can honor your child in a positive way?
- Do you feel that talking does not seem to help or that you have no one able to listen?
- Are you regularly contemplating suicide to “get away from it all” or to join your child?

The above considerations are symptoms of unresolved or complicated grief. They must be regarded as serious problems. Please honor your child, grandchild, or sibling by seeking professional help so that you can live a life that allows you to grow positively on your grief journey.