



# The Compassionate Friends

Greater New Orleans Chapter  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

VOLUME 8, ISSUE 2

February 2026

Chapter Leaders: William and Millie Hunton 504-265-0581 Email address: [tcfnola@gmail.com](mailto:tcfnola@gmail.com)

## SAVE THE DATE!!

**ANNUAL BUTTERFLY RELEASE**  
**Saturday, April 11, 2026 at 10:30 a.m.**

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## MISSING OUR VALENTINE

Valentine's Day is a day for love, and a day to celebrate with those you love. It's also another holiday to remember your child, who can no longer celebrate with you. It is a difficult day for all of us who grieve the loss of our child or children.

So I say, embrace Valentine's Day as a special day to commemorate your child and celebrate your love for him or her. Death may end our child's life, but it does not end the relationship we had and still have. Bonds of love are never severed by death, nor is the love we shared with our child.

See Valentine on Page 4

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## A Special Valentine

A touch of your hand, a smile on your face,  
another time, another place.

You are my child, I am your Mom,  
together we met the world head on.

Death cannot dim the memories so fine.

Your place is there, this world is mine.

But you will always be  
my SPECIAL VALENTINE!!



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**BIRTHDAY RECOGNITION:** Birthdays can be found on "Our Children Remembered" page. We do encourage both you and your family to come when it is your child's birthday month, to share your child with all of us with photos and memories. You will receive a special birthday gift in memory of your child. Bring that treasured picture of your child that always makes you smile so we may smile with you. **The January Birthday Cake was sponsored by William Hunton in memory of his step-brother Kevin Minchew. The February Birthday Cake will be sponsored by Eileen Brocato in memory of her daughter Lauren Brocato.**

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## Brick Orders Due March 1, 2026

See Page 11 for Brick Form to have a brick laid in our beautiful Children's Memorial Garden

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**The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.**

### NEXT MONTHLY MEETING:

**February 9, 2026**

**Lafreniere Park Foundation  
Center Conference Room**

**7:00 – 9:00 pm**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of every month**

### UPCOMING MEETINGS:

12 Jan 26	9 Feb 26	9 Mar 26
13 Apr 26	11 May 26	8 Jun 26
13 Jul 26	10 Aug 26	14 Sep 26
12 Oct 26	9 Nov 26	14 Dec 26

### REGIONAL COORDINATOR

William Hunton  
504-251-1938  
[tcfnola@gmail.com](mailto:tcfnola@gmail.com)

### NATIONAL OFFICE

The Compassionate Friends  
48660 Pontiac Trail # 930808  
Wixom, MI 48393

[nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org](mailto:nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org)

[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

877-969-0010

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

#### **Butterfly Release**

**April 11, 2026** – held in the Children's Memorial Garden in Lafreniere Park

#### **Memorial Walk and Auction**

**September 19, 2026** – held in the Children's Memorial Garden in Lafreniere Park

#### **WorldWide Candle Lighting**

**December 13, 2026** – Held in the VFW Post 3267, 1133 Hickory Ave., Harahan.

## Our Monthly Meetings

To all those newly bereaved, who are receiving this newsletter for the first time and to all our Compassionate Friends, we wish you were not eligible to belong to this group, but we want you to know that you and your family have many friends. We, who received love and compassion from others in our time of deep sorrow, now wish to offer the same support and understanding to you. Please know we understand, we care, and we want to help. **You are not alone in your grief.**

**Meetings are held the 2nd Monday of each month at the Foundation Center Conference Room in Lafreniere Park at 7:00 P.M.** We are a self-sustaining organization with no funds except what we receive through donations from members and newsletter recipients. Please join with us at a meeting.

### Grief support after the death of a child

The Compassionate Friends is a national non-profit, self-help support organization that offers friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. There is no religious affiliation and there are no membership dues or fees.

The secret of TCF's success is simple: As seasoned grievers reach out to the newly bereaved, energy that has been directed inward begins to flow outward and both are helped to heal.

The vision of The Compassionate Friends is that everyone who needs us will find us and everyone who finds us will be helped.



**Big Thanks to  
Our Steering Committee**



## Contact:

**Phone: (504) 265-0581**

**Email: [tcfnola@gmail.com](mailto:tcfnola@gmail.com)**

[www.tcfneworleans.com](http://www.tcfneworleans.com)

**1104 Colony Rd, Metairie, LA 70003**

Chapter Leader	William Hunton
Chapter Co-Leader	Millie Hunton
Treasurer	Isabel Vigne-Miranda
Facilitator	Millie Hunton
Newsletter Editor	William Hunton
Webmaster	Jason Vicari
Database Management	Jerrie Vicari
Outreach Committee	Dena Peters
Hospitality	Jan Dutilh
Coffee Hostess	Patsy Ashton
Memorial Park Director	Jacques Bitoun
Memorial Brick Director	Peggy Boardman
Memorial Brick Installer	David Ashton

**Steering Committee: William Hunton, Millie Hunton, Jan Dutilh, Dena Peters, Isabel Miranda-Vigne, Patsy Ashton, and Christi Vercher.**

**Regional Coordinator – William Hunton**

(504) 460-2970

TCF National (877) 969-0010

[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

### The Meeting Agenda

**7:00 p.m.** - The meeting will begin with a short introduction followed by lighting of candle and then reading of the Credo. Remembering our children's birthdays of the month. Then followed by smaller groups of sharing.

**8:45 p.m.** - Meeting will close by recognizing our children's names. Feel free to visit with each other and check out a book from our library.

**Newsletter Submissions:** TCF Greater New Orleans welcomes all submissions to our newsletter. Send articles, poetry, love messages and scanned photos to: **TCF GNO, 1104 Colony Rd., Metairie, LA 70003**. You may also text photos and messages to 504-251-1938. As our chapter is only funded by your donations, we ask for a donation of **\$15** or more for a dedication for our newsletter. This is tax-deductible. We reserve the right to edit for space and/or content. Deadline for submissions is listed below. TCF Chapters may copy articles from this publication provided credit is given to the author and the original source. Errors and Omissions: Please notify me if any of your information is incorrect. Thank you!

**Newsletter Dedications to be put in our newsletter are due the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month.**

**A Newsletter Dedication:** is a special page dedicated in memory of your child with a poem or writing that you submit.

**A Love Gift:** is a short one or two sentence message in your child's memory.

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**BIRTHDAY CAKE:** Our child's birthday is still such an important day to us bereaved parents. In TCF this is where we can celebrate our child's birthday and remember the love we still have for them no matter how long it has been since they died. Our members are welcomed to sponsor our cake to recognize their child's birthday. Please notify me if you wish to sponsor our Birthday Cake, **William Hunton (504) 265-0581**.

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## TCF Greater New Orleans Memorial Candles and 3" Photo Buttons

We are asking for donations of \$20 per candle. Candles will have 3 photos, name, dates, and an LED insert.

We are asking for donations of \$5 for each button or \$12 for three buttons.

Email Your Child's Photo to [tcfnola@gmail.com](mailto:tcfnola@gmail.com) or call William Hunton (504) 265-0581 for info.

Candles and/or photo buttons will be delivered to the next meeting if info is received 72 hours before meeting.

Please make checks payable to: TCF – GNO, 1104 Colony Road, Metairie, LA 70003

*From the Desk of your Chapter Leaders, William and Millie Hunton*

## **WHEN LOSS BECOMES A LIGHT FOR CHANGE**

In October 2023, as Louisiana entered gubernatorial election season, conversations across the state were focused on leadership and change. My wife, Millie, and I were invited to attend a Stop Fentanyl town hall meeting aimed at developing a plan to reduce fentanyl overdoses in our community. It was an opportunity for elected officials and community leaders to demonstrate their concern for the well-being of their constituents. The room was filled with concern, determination, and a shared desire to protect our children and families from the devastating impact of this drug.

Several members of our Compassionate Friends family were also present, courageously sharing their stories alongside ours. Parents held framed photographs of their children gone too soon, some placing them on the head table, facing the audience with quiet pride and deep love. Each parent sat with a story ready to be told — a story of loss no family should ever have to share.

During the event, Millie and I were asked if we would be willing to step into a back room for an interview to speak about how fentanyl had so tragically affected our family. Though difficult, we agreed, hoping that Chelsea's story might help raise awareness and make a difference for others.

After the interview, we returned to the meeting where guest speakers were addressing the audience. One man, seated at the front table, caught our attention. His name was Tony. As he looked at the photos displayed on the head table, his expression changed. He recognized one of the faces.

Out loud, he said her name — Chelsea.

In shock, my wife stood and asked, "You knew Chelsea?" Tony then shared how he had known her in school. He went on to tell his own story — a painful journey into drug use, a long and difficult road out of addiction, and how he now dedicates his life to advocating for drug prevention and recovery in our community.

In that moment, two paths crossed — one marked by unimaginable loss, the other by hard-earned recovery. What could have been only sorrow became something more: connection, understanding, and purpose.

Chelsea's life, and her death, are now part of something larger. Her story is helping bring people together — parents, advocates, survivors, and leaders — to confront the fentanyl crisis and work toward protecting our children from this terrible addiction.

**At The Compassionate Friends, we know that no family should have to walk this journey alone. Our shared stories — though born from pain — have the power to bring awareness, inspire change, and offer hope to others who are struggling.**

**If you or someone you love has been impacted by the loss of a child, sibling, or grandchild, we invite you to reach out, attend a meeting, or simply listen. Together, we honor our children by supporting one another and by working to create a safer, more compassionate community.**

Sometimes, even in our deepest grief, love continues to ripple outward — and our children continue to change the world.

*Story told by William and Millie Hunton, parents of Chelsea Hunton*

## Cont from Page 1 – VALENTINE

What can we do to celebrate this day? I am a writer and what better way than write about my child. I can do a poem, an anecdote, a letter, a song, or a story about something memorable she did for me on Valentine's Day. As an example, my daughter never forgot to give me a card. Nor did she ever let her dad forget. She then had to check out not only the card he bought but also the gift as well. A stamp of approval meant we could all go out for dinner to celebrate. I wish I had kept all the cards she gave me. I only have a few. Usually, they were cute cards with a touch of humor, while her father's cards were more on the romantic side.

Another thing you can do is to go on a short trip to a special location you both loved. I remember one year, Valentine's Day fell on a weekend, so we all went to romantic Sedona, AZ, to celebrate with my daughter and her boyfriend at the time. I have gone back to Sedona on special occasions and immerse myself in the healing power of remembrance.

This Valentine's Day, light a special candle for your child. Perhaps do it every Valentine's Day and continue that tradition as you remember the good times you shared. Or make it a holiday where you decide that since it is February, and Arbor Day is around the corner, you will plant a tree at your child's school.

Talk about your child to anyone who will listen. You will find that people do care and do remember him or her. They may even contribute to the conversation something they, too, remember about your child. Recently, I had that experience, and it made my day.

Volunteer some time to an organization that could use your help. Do it in honor of your child. It could be a child-related organization, a pet organization (if your child had special pets), or a local hospice group. Doing something good for others can help ease your pain.

If you work in an office, show your thoughtfulness to colleagues by cooking a nice dish and bringing it. If cooking is not one of your strengths, buy a Valentine cake to share. There is nothing wrong with celebrating the occasion with those whom you work with all year long. It can also strengthen your workplace relationships.

For those who work for you (for example, the newspaper boy, your doctor, your housecleaner, or the postal worker), present each with a small token gift like a white rose or a little chocolate box. The smile you get in return will make the gesture worthwhile.

Finally, be creative on this day and make a Valentine's Day craft, like your child used to do for you. It can be a home decoration item for the rest of your family to enjoy or even given as a gift for a loved one. Use materials easily available around the house.

My wish for all of you on this holiday is that you always have wonderful memories, accented with a smile, a laugh, or a giggle, and remember your child, who cannot be with you physically on this day but will always be with you in your heart.

*Sandy Fox - TCF National Spokesperson*

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## GRIEF

Grief takes on so many forms and takes so much from us: our expectations, our hopes, our energy. We can grieve the loss of a relationship, person, opportunity, role. The closing of a chapter is often painful and something we can't prepare our hearts to experience. It takes time and space to navigate this place.

May we process at our own pace. May we journey at our own pace.

And remember that even when chapters end, they are still part of our story. They can be remembered and honored and revisited and carried forward into the stories we tell in our next chapters.

That's the beauty of storytelling with our lives: each chapter can be one of deep love and enduring legacy.

May we carry our stories and theirs with courage.

Because it sure is a beautiful story. 🙏🌟 -Liz Newman

**NEWSLETTER DEDICATION IN LOVING MEMORY OF**

***Dominic Joseph Avella***

**February 4, 1997 ~ September 24, 2018**

***Valentines in Heaven***

Are there Valentines in Heaven?  
Are there Red Hearts everywhere?  
Do they line the golden streets,  
Or is that very rare?  
I wish that I could send you one,  
Right through Heaven's Gate,  
To say how much we miss you,  
On this special date.  
I'd like to send a Candy Heart,  
That is printed, "I Luv U,"  
And maybe you would whisper back,  
"I know, I Luv U too."



Marilyn Rollins  
TCF Lake-Porter, IN  
For All Our Children



**Our Dearest Dominic  
We all miss you so much.**

***With love always, Mom and Dad***

Dedication sent in by Maria Nicholson

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***Chapters come to an end and change, bring us new stories to tend to, to  
carry with us long after the ink dries and the book is closed.***

***But I wasn't ready for the ending. I wasn't ready.***

***Is anyone ever ready?***

- Liz Newman

**NEWSLETTER DEDICATION IN LOVING MEMORY OF**

**Aliesha Narain**

**February 6, 1977 – November 4, 2010**

Happy Birthday to our Precious Star in Heaven.

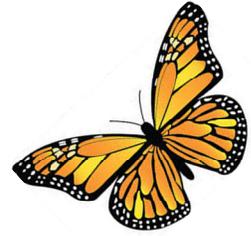
We're sending a Dove to Heaven  
With a special package on its wings.

Be careful when you open it,  
Inside is filled with beautiful things.

It is wrapped up in a million hugs and kisses  
To say how much we miss you.

Have a Happy Heavenly Birthday our Love Angel!

**We Love you Forever!**



*Mom, Dad, Sister, Nephews, Family and Friends.*

Dedication sent in by Farida Narain

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**NEWSLETTER DEDICATION IN LOVING MEMORY OF**

**Alina Ezzo**

**February 7, 2010 – September 24, 2017**

**Memories**

The certain special memories  
That follow me each day,  
Cast your shadow in my life  
In a certain way.

Sometimes the blowing wind  
Or the lyrics of a song  
Make me stop and think of you  
Sometimes all day long

Memories are good to have  
To share and keep in my heart,  
Just knowing that you're still inside  
Makes sure we'll never part.

By Collette Covington  
TCF Lake Charles, LA

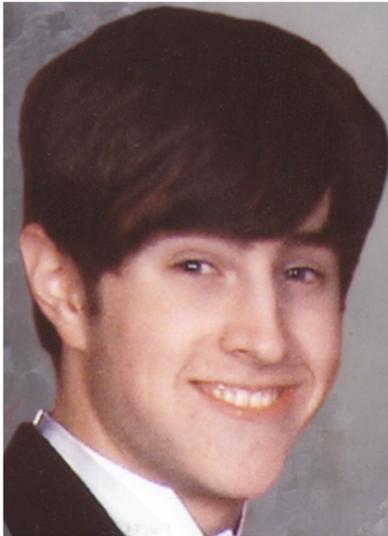


*With all of my love, Teta*

Dedication sent in by Sahar Chifci

**NEWSLETTER DEDICATION IN LOVING MEMORY OF  
Cody Martin**

February 27, 1989 ~ September 22, 2006



You left us with "Nights That Never End"  
And taught us a heart breaking lesson.  
"There is a last time for everything"  
Yet we cry and beg for "One more time with You."



We love and miss you so very much!!

*Mom, Dad, Kate, and Meaux*

Dedication sent in by Betty and Charles Boudreaux

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**NEWSLETTER DEDICATION IN LOVING MEMORY OF  
Dennis Duhon**

February 24, 1961 ~ January 1, 2003



30TH BIRTHDAY WITH SUZETTE AND MORGAN

*I thought of you with Love today  
But that is nothing new  
I thought about you yesterday  
And days before that too  
I think of you in silence  
I often speak your name  
All I have are memories and  
Your picture in a frame  
Your memory is my keepsake  
With which I'll never part  
God has you in His keeping  
I have you in my heart.*



*One Day Closer!*

Dear Dennis,

You are in my thoughts every day, but on your birthday Feb. 24, I remember all the birthdays when you were here, and we celebrated. I only wish we could have those times again. We all miss you so much.

*With love always, Mom, Dad, Bruce and David*

Dedication sent in by Melva and L.J. Duhon

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The loss of your precious child is a loss felt by many. May the love and memories you shared bring you some measure of comfort during this difficult time.

- Author Unknown

**NEWSLETTER DEDICATION IN LOVING MEMORY OF**

**Hassaan Riles**

February 19, 1998 – March 13, 2020



Hassaan Riles  
2/19/1998 - 3/13/2020  
Remembered by Hishaunda Riles

*Happy Heavenly Birthday*

*We miss you so much, your son, your brother, and your Mom.*

Dedication sent in by Hishaunda Riles

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**NEWSLETTER DEDICATION IN LOVING MEMORY OF**

**Jenny Ann Kimball**

June 13, 1988 – February 23, 2001



**Sister**

*Until we meet Again*

*A light from my life has gone*

*A voice I loved is still*

*A place is vacant within my heart*

*Which never can be filled*

*A bouquet of beautiful memories*

*Sprayed with a million tears*

*I wish that God could have spared you*

*If just for a few more years.*

*I hold you close within my heart,*

*And there you will remain*

*To walk with me throughout my life*

*Until we meet again.*

*So rest in peace dear loved one*

*And thanks for all you have done*

*I pray that God has given you*

*The crown you be truly won.*

*Your vacant place*

*no one can fill*

*I miss you now*

*and always will.*

Dear Jenny,

*I can't believe it's been 25 years now. A lot of stuff has happened since you have been gone. You will always be in my heart. I loved being your sister. And thank you for the signs I get from you and mom letting me know that ya'll are watching over me.*

*Love always, Jaimie*

Dedication sent in by Jaimie Kimball



Author Unknown

**NEWSLETTER DEDICATION IN LOVING MEMORY OF  
Nicholas Joseph Pezant**

**November 8, 1984 ~ February 5, 2005**



**Remembrance**

What do we do when we love someone  
But they have gone away  
When all our days of bright sunlight  
Have turned to shades of gray?  
What do we say when no comfort comes  
From words of love and hope  
When efforts made seem pointless  
As we fight each day to cope?  
How do we act when we hear their name  
And we cannot help but cry  
This isn't fair, they were barely here  
It's not time to say goodbye!  
We promise them that they have made  
A place within our hearts  
Where they will live forever  
Though we are far apart  
We call upon the memories  
As time allowed and then  
Tuck them safely in our minds  
To visit now and again  
We cherish them as best we can  
Each smile, each word, each look  
We write the story they want told  
On the pages of life's book  
For most important is the vow  
We honor when they're gone  
Of sharing all they've given us  
From that moment on.



Dear Nicholas,

This February 5, 2026 will be 21 years since you left us. I really do not know how I survived this long without seeing you. When you first left I couldn't imagine going a few months without seeing you and now....it's 21 years!!

I used to worry that I would forget things about you...your laugh and your voice mostly. But, I can still recall both, thank goodness.

Life is not the same without you here. There is a lonesome feeling too hard to explain. Many of your friends still talk about you, how funny you were. You brought a lot of laughter and good memories to many friends and family. Your cousins Jennifer, Jason and Cameron miss you tremendously. And of course, your sister Emily misses you. I have the belief that I will see you again and look forward to the day we will be united once again. Until then I will continue to love you and miss you.

*All my love, to my son, Nicholas!! Mom*

Dedication sent in by Denise St. Pierre

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**NEWSLETTER DEDICATION IN LOVING MEMORY OF  
Aubrey Pitre**

**June 16, 1987 – February 19, 2018**



**I love and miss you so much Aubrey, my angel,**

**Love you Forever! Mom**



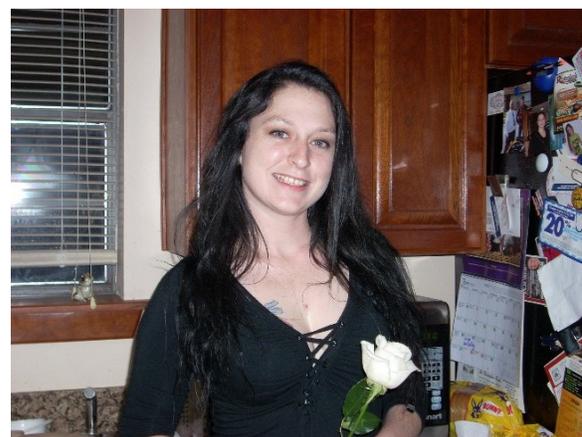
Dedication sent in by Kathy Perkins

**NEWSLETTER DEDICATION IN LOVING MEMORY OF**  
*Lauren Ann Brocato*  
May 30, 1985 – February 27, 2016



*I miss you every day but I remember how much you enjoyed  
Mardi Gras. Thoth Sunday was the day we spent together  
every year.*

*It is now Ten years since you have been gone and life is not the  
same. I pray for you every day and I hope you are at peace.*



*Love, Mom, Dad and Jake*

Dedication sent in by Eileen Brocato





# Our Children Remembered



## Angel Birthdays

Dominic Avella	Feb 4	Son of Maria Nicholson and Francisco Avella
Aliesha Narain	Feb 6	Daughter of Farida Narain
Alina Ezzo	Feb 7	Granddaughter of Sahar Chifici
Kristen Lee Nye	Feb 9	Daughter of Barbara Nye
Dean Thomas Laurent	Feb 10	Son of Victoria and Terry Laurent; Brother of Natasha, Troy and Josh
Ann Margaret Eaker	Feb 12	Daughter of Helene Toney
David Paul Castaneda	Feb 16	Son of Patricia Castaneda
Taylor Friloux	Feb 16	Daughter of Jamie Reaves and Suzi Guerin
Akeem Davis Jr	Feb 17	Son of Myya Brown and Akeem Davis
Erskine Rockie Webster	Feb 17	Son of Charisma Bennett; Grandson of Sandra Webster
Sheri Bundy	Feb 18	Daughter of Carita and Buddy Arnold
Hassaan Riles	Feb 18	Son of Hishaunda Riles
Julie Ann Marino	Feb 21	Daughter of Sherry Marino; Sister of Sharon Nami
Adrien Aucoin	Feb 23	Son of Alix and Zach Aucoin
Hiram John Joseph Greer	Feb 24	Son of Alice and Hiram Greer
Dennis Duhon	Feb 24	Son of Melva and L.J. Duhon; Brother of Bruce and David
Nicole "Niki" Gustin	Feb 25	Daughter of Annette Gustin; Niece of Ann and Richard Folk
Harper Amiri Theard	Feb 25	Daughter of Katlyn Dawson
Eric Hansen	Feb 26	Son of Marilyn Hansen; Brother of Karen Hansen
Cody Patrick Martin	Feb 27	Son of Jill & Rob; Brother of Kaitlyn, Grandson of Betty & Charles

## Angel Anniversaries

Clint Butler	Feb 4	Son of Marilyn Strecker
Nicholas Joseph Pezant	Feb 5	Son of Denise St. Pierre; Brother of Emily
Eric Lanus	Feb 8	Son of Linda Lanus
Priscilla Giraud	Feb 8	Daughter of Paige Leysath
Marc Lundberg	Feb 10	Son of Olie and Anna Lundberg
Selena Smith	Feb 11	Sister of Dena Peters
Julie Elizabeth Durr	Feb 13	Daughter of Ginny & Hank Durr
Jayla Rae Cook	Feb 14	Daughter of Bobbie Mason; Sister of Jessica
Lisa Ann Eschmann	Feb 15	Daughter of Nancy and Dennis Eschmann
Dylan Conor Burns	Feb 16	Son of Michele Burns
Michelle "Shelly" Haensel	Feb 17	Daughter of Cookie and Bill Haensel; Sister of Nicole and Natalie
Mason McStay	Feb 18	Son of Donna and Ross McStay
Stephan Osbourn	Feb 19	Son of Jessica Lauer
Aubrey Pitre	Feb 19	Daughter of Kathy Perkins
Jarrett David Maldonado	Feb 21	Son of Lydia and Edward Hill
Adrien Aucoin	Feb 23	Baby Child of Alix and Zach Aucoin
Jenny Ann Kimball	Feb 23	Daughter of the late Claudia Kimball; Sister of Jaimie
Lee Russell Centanni, Jr.	Feb 23	Brother of Judy Bonura
Khalil Harvey	Feb 24	Daughter of Garrinell Southall
Harper Amiri Theard	Feb 25	Daughter of Katlyn Dawson
D. Conrad Dyer	Feb 25	Son of Linda Doussan
Michael Bonura	Feb 26	Son of Judy and Dominick Bonura
Jack Garitty	Feb 27	Son of Arthur and Kathryn Garitty
Lauren Ann Brocato	Feb 27	Daughter of Eileen Brocato



**Phone  
Friend  
List**

*Our listeners are willing to listen, understand, and share.*

504-456-8248 – Patsy Ashton, son, 24, drug overdose

504-559-2438 – Jaimie Kimball, sibling, 12, vehicle accident

504-265-0581 – William and Millie Hunton, daughter, 30, accidental overdose