



The Compassionate Friends

Greater New Orleans Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

VOLUME 8, ISSUE 5

MAY 2026

Chapter Leaders: William and Millie Hunton 504-265-0581 Email address: tcfnola@gmail.com

SAVE THE DATE!!

ANNUAL MEMORIAL WALK & AUCTION

Saturday, September 13, 2026

TCF Greater New Orleans Chapter Picnic and Butterfly Release

Our 2026 Picnic and Butterfly Release was a truly beautiful and unforgettable day. Blessed with perfect weather, we were surrounded by an outpouring of love, support, and compassion from our members, friends, families, and community.

It was deeply heart-warming to look around and see so many people gathered together—sharing memories, offering comfort, and honoring the precious children and loved ones who will forever remain in our hearts. The spirit of love and connection could be felt throughout the entire event.

A heartfelt thank you goes to all of our readers and performers who poured so much emotion, tenderness, and meaning into every word and every moment. Your willingness to share from your heart made the ceremony especially moving and memorable.

We would also like to extend our deepest appreciation to our SPECIAL GUEST, bagpiper Jackson Charles, whose beautiful and stirring music touched everyone in attendance. His performance added such grace and emotion to the day, and it was clear by the many smiles, tears, and photographs being taken that his music made a lasting impression.

So many wonderful memories were captured throughout the event. If you have photographs you would like to share, please send them to us at tcfnola@gmail.com. We would be honored to include them in the photo section of our website so that we may continue to remember and celebrate this very special day together. See page 5 for photo highlights.

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 April Birthday Cake was co-sponsored by Christi Vercher in memory of son, John “Jay” Lawson V, and was also co-sponsored by Andree Charvet in memory of her son William “Billy” Laderer, IV. The May Birthday Cake will be co-sponsored by Stacie Coates in memory of brother, Robert “Bobby” Joseph Coates, Jr., and also sponsored by Debbie Glory-Maxwell in memory of her daughter, Christina Margiotta Schnell.**

Grief is hard, and most people won’t know what to do. This will cause some to say the wrong thing. This will cause other say nothing at all. - Liz Newman

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:

May 11, 2026

Lafreniere Park Foundation
Center Conference Room

7:00 – 9:00 pm

2nd 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

NATIONAL OFFICE

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

nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org
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

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
Memorial Park Director	William Hunton
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) 251-1938

TCF National (877) 969-0010

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 20th 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.



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**.

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 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

♥ **SAVE THE DATE** ♥
Children's Memorial Walk & Auction
📅 **Saturday, September 19, 2026**
📍 *Lafreniere Park – Metairie, LA*

🕒 **Registration: 8:30 AM** | 🚶 **Walk Begins: 10:00 AM** | **Auction to follow at the Foundation Center**

The Compassionate Friends invites bereaved families, relatives, friends, and our entire community to come together for a morning of love, remembrance, and hope. On this day, we will **WALK TO REMEMBER** every beloved child who has left this earth too soon — and to show their families they will never be forgotten.

Whether you walk two miles or just a few steps, what matters most is the reason you walk — to honor these precious children and keep their memories alive.

We will wear race-style bibs, each carrying the name of a child loved beyond measure. Some will walk for their own child, others for children whose families cannot be present but want their names spoken and remembered.

Every dollar raised through pledges and donations will help our Greater New Orleans Chapter continue its mission — covering the cost of our monthly newsletter, outreach, and the programs that offer **friendship, understanding, and hope** to grieving families.

Your presence that day will be more than an act of support — it will be a promise to every bereaved parent, grandparent, and sibling that their child's life and love will always be remembered.

Mark your calendar. Walk with us. Remember with us. Hope with us.

Plan Donations you can make for the Auction. Help us collect baskets.

MOTHER'S DAY AND THE GRIEF OF LOSING A CHILD.....

For most of the world, it's a day wrapped in flowers, brunches, and celebration. But for us—for mothers who have lost a child—it can feel like standing on the outside of something we once belonged to, unsure where we fit now.

If you're here, in this space, you already know something others may not understand:

You don't stop being a mother.

Not when the world gets quiet.

Not when your child's room stays untouched.

Not when the cards and phone calls no longer come.

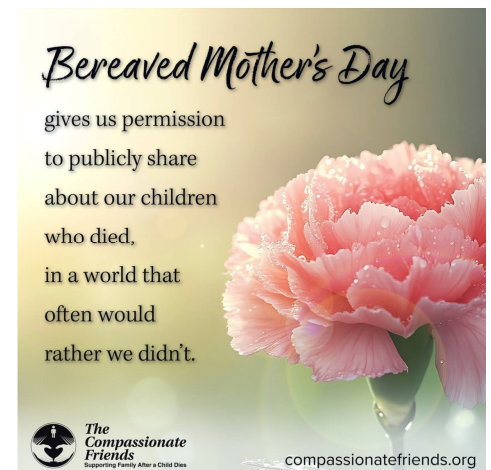
You are still a mother—just one carrying love in a different way.

Mother's Day can bring a flood of emotions. Some of us feel deep sadness. Some feel anger. Some feel numb. And some feel moments of peace followed by waves that knock the breath out of us. There is no "right" way to move through this day.

Grief doesn't follow rules, and it certainly doesn't follow holidays.

You might find yourself avoiding social media, turning off the TV, or declining invitations. Or maybe you choose to be surrounded by others, holding tightly to connection. Both are okay. What matters is giving yourself permission—to feel, to step back, to lean in, to simply be.

In our bereavement group, there is something sacred in the shared understanding. We don't have to explain why this day is hard. We don't have to pretend we're okay when we're not. We can say their names. We can tell their stories. We can remember them out loud.



Because they mattered. They still matter.

And so do you.

Some mothers create rituals on this day—lighting a candle, visiting a special place, writing a letter, planting something that grows. Others get through it hour by hour, doing only what they can manage. There is no measure of strength here except honesty.

If today feels heavy, it's because your love is deep.

If today feels quiet, it may be because your heart is protecting you.

If today brings a small moment of warmth—a memory that makes you smile instead of cry—hold onto it without guilt. Joy does not betray your child. It honors the love you shared.

And if today feels unbearable, please remember: you are not alone in that feeling.

Look around this circle—whether it's a room, a message board, or simply the knowledge that others exist who understand. We are connected by something no one would ever choose, but within it, there is compassion, strength, and a kind of love that never fades.

Motherhood did not end with their passing.
It changed shape.

It lives now in memories, in quiet conversations, in the way you carry their name in your heart every single day.

So on this Mother's Day, however you move through it—whether with tears, silence, remembrance, or even a moment of peace—know this:

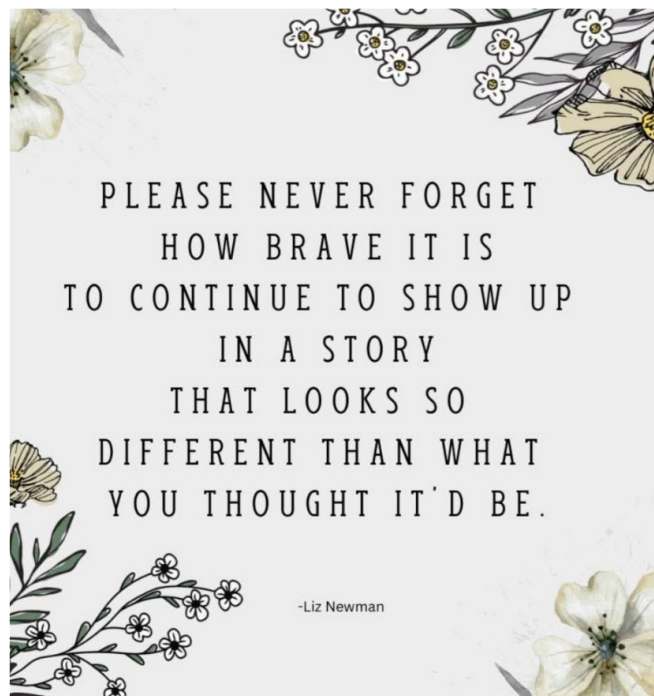
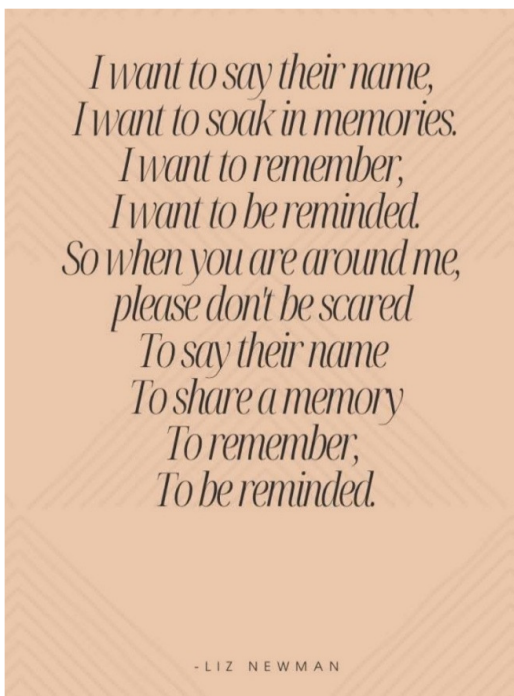
You are still a mother.

Your child is still loved.

And your grief is a reflection of a bond that cannot be broken.

We walk this path together.

***By Debbie Glory-Maxwell in memory of her daughter, Christina Margiotta Schnell. Forever loved and forever missed.
TCF-Greater New Orleans Chapter***



TCF Greater New Orleans Chapter Picnic and Butterfly Release Photos

Our Butterfly Release on Saturday, April 11th was a breathtaking and deeply moving remembrance of our children, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, and all of our precious loved ones gone too soon. More than 100 people gathered together, united in love, remembrance, and hope.

The Painted Lady butterflies filled the air with wonder and beauty. They soared high into the sky, then gently landed on people's hair, clothing, arms, and hands, creating unforgettable moments that touched every heart present. It felt as though our loved ones were all around us.

As we watched the butterflies take flight, we were reminded that they are signs of new life and powerful symbols of hope — a gentle reminder that our children are living in another dimension filled with even greater beauty, peace, and freedom.

The weather could not have been more perfect. Beneath a brilliant sky and surrounded by warmth and love, the entire day became a beautiful celebration of the unbreakable bond we will always share with those we miss so dearly.



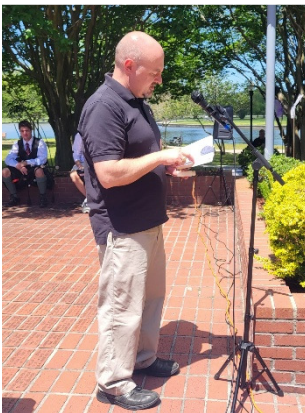
Butterfly Release Stage



Dominic and Judy, our Memorial Garden Founders



Chapter Leadership



Blessing of the bricks



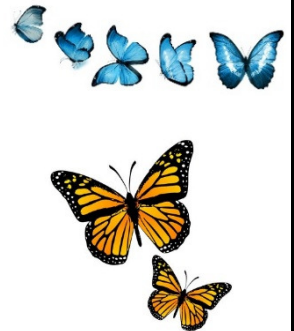
Poem reading by April



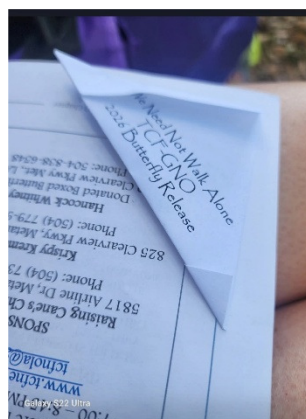
Susan singing



Special Guest – Jackson Charles the Bagpiper



Opening Butterfly Box



Butterfly Envelope



Released Butterfly



Our Beautiful Children and Siblings

NEWSLETTER DEDICATION IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Lauren Ann Brocato

May 30, 1985 – February 27, 2016

Happy Heavenly Birthday Lauren!

Lauren made me laugh, made me proud,

Made me cry, seen me cry, and cried with me,

Hugged me tight, seen me fail, and cheered me up,

Kept me on my toes and has driven me crazy at times.

Lauren was always there for me when I needed her

She will live in my heart forever and I miss her every day



Love Mom, Dad, and Jake



Dedication sent in by Eileen Brocato



NEWSLETTER DEDICATION IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Robert J Coates, Jr.

May 25, 1981 ~ January 20, 2018

Always in my Heart

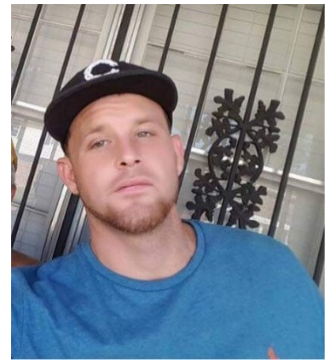


Sometimes in life there are losses. Losses that can never really be replaced. Losing you has been the hardest thing I've ever had to live with. I wasn't ready to say goodbye. I wasn't ready to let you let you leave. I would give anything for just one more day, just one more second. But I've learned to trust in unconditional love. Because the one profound thing about death is that love never dies. Some bonds cannot be broken. Because even though you're not physically here, your heart is - it lives on within me. I carry your heart inside mine. I carry it on days when I discover something new. I carried on days when beauty unfolds in the most unexpected places. I carry it on days when I find courage to heal and to grow. I carry it with me – always. Someday we will meet again - and we will no longer be separated by time or space. But until that day, I'll find comfort in knowing you are still with me. Your heart safely tucked inside mine. Some hearts just belong together and nothing will ever change that. I loved you then. I love you now. Always did. Always will. Forever in my mind. Forever in my heart. I will carry you.

Bobby, You will always be a part of everything I do. No passage of time will ever change that. You are loved & missed, beyond measure.

Love, Your Big Sis, Taylor, Chloe & Ryan

Dedication sent in by Stacie Coates



Dark & Light

That grief sneaks up on you when you least expect it.
It doesn't care what you're doing or where you are or who you're with.
It surprises you when that darkness seems to be in every corner of your vision.
That darkness knows when you're seeming to have a good day.
It becomes an old friend that you see once in awhile out of the blue.
That darkness we all feel is like a dark passenger just waiting in the shadows for us to slip up.
But we're afraid to completely let it go.
We're afraid because if we do will we lose all those memories?
Grief is just as strong as happiness.
Darkness is just as needed as the light.
Some days we can squint through the brightness and the light.
But the bad days we can barely see a sliver of the light.
Just keep breathing.
We can't let the darkness envelop us.
We won't let the grief swallow us.
Grief is alive but so is LOVE and so are we.
Let's live in the LOVE for them.
You are not alone.

Jerrie Vicari, Mother of Zane Rainier Vicari, TCF-Greater New Orleans Chapter





NEWSLETTER DEDICATION IN LOVING MEMORY OF *Christina Margiotta (Schnell)*

May 14, 1979 – July 29, 2024



Christy's second birthday in heaven feels different... but not easier.

There is something about birthdays that makes the absence louder. Maybe it's because this day is meant to be filled with celebration, with laughter, with candles and wishes and all the little traditions that once made it hers. And now, instead of planning a party, I find myself holding memories.

I still count the years.

I still say your name.

I still celebrate you—just in a different way.

Christy, I imagine heaven marking your birthday in a way we never could. No pain. No worries. Just light and peace and a joy that doesn't fade. I picture you smiling, maybe even laughing that familiar laugh, surrounded by love in a way that is whole and complete.

But here... down here... you are missed in ways words can't fully hold.

Two years.

It feels impossible that it's been that long, and at the same time, it feels like forever since I've heard your voice. Time

doesn't move the way it used to. It stretches and folds around grief, making moments feel both distant and painfully close.

On your birthday, I don't just remember the day you were born. I remember all the days you lived—the way you loved, the way you made others feel, the light you brought into every room. That doesn't disappear. It never will.

So today, I celebrate you, Christy.

Not with balloons or candles, but with a heart full of love that still reaches for you. I celebrate the gift of being your mother, even now. Because that didn't end—it just changed.

I'll probably cry today. I'll probably smile too. I'll talk to you, like I always do. And I'll carry you with me, like I always have.

Happy 2nd birthday in heaven, my sweet daughter.

You are loved beyond measure.

You are missed beyond words.

And you will always, always be my daughter.



Love Mom

Dedication sent in by Debbie Glory-Maxwell





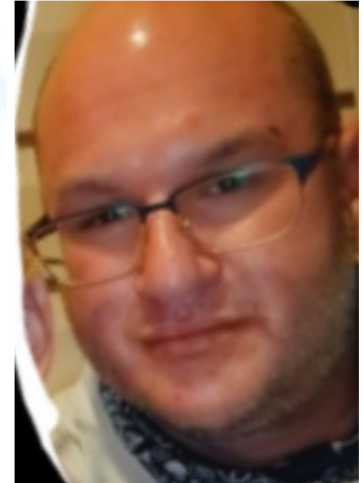
Memorial Newsletter Dedication
Ray Keith Constantine, Jr.
 September 28, 1978 ~ May 29, 2021

*May 29th will be 5 years since my son,
 Ray Keith Constantine Jr passed away.*

*With all my heart
 With every inch of my soul
 With every breath I take
 I promise to love you forever.*



Always Missed, Always Loved
Love Mom



[Dedication sent in by Mom, JoAnn Giovingo](#)

There are names that still live in the deepest chambers of our hearts, names we long to speak aloud because love does not end when a life does. We want to soak in the memories, to tell the stories, to remember the laughter, the smile, the little things that made them ours. So please, do not be afraid to say their name or to share a memory, because every remembrance is a gift and every story keeps their spirit close. And in the midst of grief, when life looks so different from the one we imagined, we must never forget how brave it is simply to keep showing up each day. It is an act of extraordinary courage to continue living, loving, and remembering while carrying such profound loss. We honor them not by forgetting, but by speaking their names, holding tight to their memories, and finding the strength to move forward with them forever a part of our story.

By William Hunton, Chelsea's Dad, TCF-Greater New Orleans Chapter Leader

Our Children Remembered



Angel Birthdays

Damion McCall	May 5	Son of Shannon McCall
Brandon Sensebe	May 6	Daughter of Patricia Sensebe
Rene James Rachel	May 8	Son of Kathy Rachel
John "Buddy" Kemna Jr.	May 9	Brother of Donna Marie Smithey
Jarrold Christopher	May 11	Son of Myra Santos
Everleigh Mae Moser	May	Daughter of Maddie Nixon; Granddaughter of Kathleen Bernard-Nixon
Christina Margiotta Schnell	May 14	Daughter of Debbie Glory-Maxwell
Beau Charles Tedesco	May 21	Son of Madelyn and Ted Tedesco
D. Conrad Dyer	May 22	Son of Linda Doussan
Richard "Ricky" Smith	May 24	Son of Carole A. Clark
Andre Eskine	May 25	Brother of Carmen Snow
Ronald J. Wroten	May 25	Brother of Melanie and Jim Boudreaux
Robert J. Coates, Jr.	May 25	Brother of Stacie Coates
Gabriela "Gabby" Hebert	May 28	Daughter of Rachel and Todd Hebert
Mario Anderson	May 29	Son of Trinetta and Herbert Anderson
Lauren Ann Brocato	May 30	Daughter of Eileen Brocato
Dennis George Wedge	May 30	Son of Lori Wedge; Grandson of Jeri McMullen; Nephew of Patti Goens; Cousin of Jennifer and Stefany Goens

Angel Anniversaries

Mary Lee Bonura	May 1	Daughter of Judy and Dominick Bonura
Ty'shaunda Riles	May 6	Daughter of Hishaunda Riles
Niva Rosa Murillo	May 10	Sister of Millie Hunton
David Allen Ashton, Jr.	May 10	Son of Patsy and David Allen Ashton, Sr.; Sister of Julie
Jarrold Christopher	May 12	Son of Myra Santos
Tynia C. Alexander	May 14	Daughter of Charlene Alexander; Sister of Rickie, Jr. and Tiphane Alexander
Kerry Arnold Degeyter	May 17	Daughter of Dee Arnold
Luke Joseph Orgeron	May 17	Son of James Orgeron, Jr.
Brady Michael Palmer	May 17	Son of Kerri Palmer
Rachel Marie Scillitani	May 19	Daughter of Samuel Scillitani
Dennis George Wedge	May 25	Son of Lori Wedge; Nephew of Patti Goens
John Paul Sicotte	May 25	Son of Steven & Barbara Sicotte
Chester Joseph Reeder, III	May 26	Son of Deborah and Chester Reeder
Ray Keith Constantine, Jr.	May 29	Son of JoAnn Giovengo
Kevin Michael Flock	May 31	Son of Janice and Jim Flock



**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