



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

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WALKING THIS VALLEY- Tucson Chapter Vol. 41 No. 4 July-August 2023

Welcome!

All bereaved parents, grandparents, and adult siblings are welcome at our support group meetings. Here you will find comfort, caring people, and most of all-HOPE. Coming to the first meeting is hard, but you have nothing to lose and much to gain. For many it is the first real step toward healing. Although it may seem overwhelming, we encourage you to come to several meetings to give yourself a chance to become comfortable. The hope of The Compassionate Friends is that those who need us would find us and that those that find us would be helped. TCF also provides information to help members be supportive to each other. We are not professional counselors. We are bereaved families who want to help each other.

We're sorry for the reason you're here, but we're glad you've found us-Tucson TCF
Tucson Chapter Meetings: Christ Church United Methodist 655 N. Craycroft
Second and Fourth Wednesdays, 7-9pm
July 12, 26 August 9, 23 September 13, 27



SOME DAYS ARE JUST HARD

*Posted on May 10th, 2023 on
www.compassionatefriends.org*

Losing a child is indescribably painful. As any bereaved parent will tell you, the death of a child leaves a huge line running through our lives with "before and after" etched forever in our memories.

Days that were previously filled with promise and vitality suddenly seem empty and hopeless. Gradually, we come to accept that our lives will never return to what they once were and that some days are just hard.

In October 2010, we lost our previously healthy 21-year-old son, Matthew, to a form of virulent strep. What initially masked itself as a severe case of pneumonia was, in fact, a form of strep that attacked his bicuspid aortic heart valve, necessitating valve replacement surgery. But when they actually went in, they found the damage was far more extensive than they thought. And while Matthew survived the surgery (mostly due to his youth), he never regained consciousness. He spent the last week of his life in a coma before he died on October 22nd.

Before that ill-fated day in October, I had never known such sadness and hurt. As anyone who has lost a child will tell you, the pain is simultaneously acute and chronic. It's so piercing and constant you can hardly breathe; it's as if a cement block has been

permanently placed on your chest. You don't think it will ever go away. Grieving becomes a way of coping with the tremendous loss that now makes up your life. And while the jagged edges of my own grief have begun to smooth out a bit, I also know that it will always be with me and forever define my family.

One thing I've come to accept over the past two and a half years is that some days are just hard. During the first year, I came to fully expect that every day would be hard. Those early days slogged by at a surreal pace. Grief was ever-present and seemed to hold time at bay. As we approached the first anniversary of Matthew's death in 2011, things shifted a bit, time picked up, and the acute days of grieving became less frequent, although the chronic grief remains.

Now I notice that there's no anticipating when grief will sneak up and wash over me like a rogue wave. It just happens. It can be a song, a special place, a type of food, or just a memory that suddenly slides into my subconscious, and all I can think about is the tremendous hole that now fills my life. I can be having coffee with a friend and laughing one minute, and find my eyes filling with tears the next. And that's okay. In fact, it just brings Matthew closer to me for that moment.

I think for bereaved parents, our grief lies just below the surface. Even when I'm laughing or absorbed in a conversation, if you were to scratch me just a little bit, my grief would come bubbling up. I've come to view grief not as the enemy, but rather as an emotion that I now can acknowledge and move into. I know eventually, she'll go back under and I'll just carry her around with me, hidden from other's view, but always there.

In the movie "Rabbit Hole", there's a scene between Nicole Kidman (Becca) and her mother, Dianne Wiest (Nat), that stayed with me long after the closing credits. Becca and Nat are bereaved parents, and while Becca sees their circumstances as completely different (her four-year-old son was killed in an accident, while her brother died of a drug overdose), she and her mother now share the commonality of being bereaved mothers:

Becca: Does it ever go away?

Nat: No, I don't think it does. Not for me, it hasn't, and that's going on 11 years. It changes, though.

Becca: How?

Nat: I don't know . . . the weight of it, I guess. At some point, it becomes bearable. It turns into something that you can crawl out from under and . . . carry around like a brick in your pocket. And you . . . you even forget it, for a while. But then you reach in for whatever reason and—there it is. Oh right, that. Which could be awful—but not all the time. It's kinda . . . not that you like it exactly, but it's what you have instead of your son, so you don't wanna let go of it either. So you carry it around. And it doesn't go away, which is . . .

Becca: What?

Nat: Fine . . . actually.

This exchange sums up, for me, how so many of us carry the grief of losing our beloved children with us. I bring this up to remind people that for those of us who have lost a child, our grief is present, even if you don't see it. It doesn't go away, even with the passage of time. It doesn't go away even if we seem "better." With time the intense pain subsides, but our grief, like our love, is always there. And that's okay. The beauty of the human spirit is that we have a remarkable ability to continue on, even in the most adverse of conditions. But we will always mourn our children. We don't want them to be forgotten. Ever.

Our memories of them are all we have. Since Matthew died, I've learned that you do begin to put your life back together again, bit-by-bit, piece-by-piece. Its form is different, but it is still a life. It continues to have shape and meaning. And part of that new shape is formed by the memory of your loved one. That memory is present all the time, looking over your shoulder, helping you restructure this new reality. Grief is transformational. My grief has changed me in ways I'm only just beginning to understand. I am more mindful of things, big and small, happy and sad. I don't take anything for granted. I've learned to embrace the paradox of unfathomable loss and profound gratitude for living. I continue to feel Matthew's presence as we all rebuild our lives without his physical body here.

Some days are just hard. Some days grief rises up and reminds me that she's still there. She reminds me that grieving Matthew will always be a pivotal part of my life. That's okay. I also know that I will move through it and feel better soon. I know that life continues on, almost with a renewed sense of purpose. And for that I'm grateful. I've come to embrace yet another paradox of life, knowing that our hearts can be both full and broken at the same time.

ROBIN GAPHNI

Robin and her husband, Israel, live on Bainbridge Island, Washington, and are the parents of Matthew (who died in the fall of 2010), Jordan, and Aviva. Robin writes a blog called "Grief & Gratitude" at www.griefgratitude.com and co-facilitates a grief support group through the Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers. Their local chapter is the Kitsap County Chapter of The Compassionate Friends.

OTHER TUCSON SUPPORT GROUPS

- *Information & Referral Services: <http://www.211arizona.org/>
- *Homicide Survivors, Inc.: 520-740-5729
- *FOOTPRINTS-Pregnancy and Infant loss: 520-873-6590
- *Tu Nidito/Children to Children: 520-322-9155
- *Alive Alone <http://www.alivealone.org/> -for parent(s) who have lost their only child
- *MISS FOUNDATION <http://www.missfoundation.org/>
(website resources, group inactive in Tucson)
- *Survivors of Suicide..... 520-989-0467
- *Rachel's Gift (pregnancy and infant loss-national group) www.rachelsgift.org

The National Conference is the first weekend in July. If you are not attending this year maybe next year will be the right time for you. Here is one person's take on the event from the National Website with a photo of our board.

IN THIS PLACE

Posted on April 15th, 2023

Brave hearts, you are here. You have traveled
a dreadful distance. You have come,
seeking solace, understanding, hope,
threads to patch what death's so cruelly undone.



In this place you can relax and breathe . . .
the coats of others' expectations taken off.
Walk into these few days as into an oasis
where draughts of love and memories can be quaffed.

In this place all names can be spoken;
in this place each one's story can be told.
We will not be discouraged by your sorrow;
in this place ALL feelings, we enfold.

Here laughter does not mean we are forgetting;
we do not count how many tears are shed.
Both fuel us, fellow travelers, give us courage,
for the long and winding road we see ahead.

And those we love are pleased we are together,
smile down on us, and bless these days,
glad for every tiny step we are taking
as they send their light to guide us on our ways.

Traveling with us as we journey onward,
sending strength for what the miles may bring,
they are a part of everything we do that matters -
in every dance we dance, and every song we sing.

Written by Genesse Bourdeau Gentry for the 2004 Compassionate Friends National Conference in Hollywood, CA on 7/23/2004 for the National Conference First Timers.



July Birthdays

ANTHONY ABNEY
JAMIE ARNOLD
DANIELLE BARNETT
MARK BATES
JENNIFER BUNNELL
JAMES THOMAS BUSEY
DEANA CAPPuccio
CARM-IDRELLE CASSEUS
ELLILAH ROSE CHICO
JENNY CRIM
JOHN CROCI
ANGELA DILLON
COLETON DAVID DORMAN
ANDREW GAINES
RYAN GRIFFIN GAMBLE
FRANK GARCIA
ELISA GASTELLUM
DONALD GREENE
SEAN HOLDEN
ZACHARY TAYLOR JONES
JONATHAN KALOS
DAVID KETTUNEN
JASON KRAUSE
RAUL "RULLY" JR LOPEZ
GABRIEL LOPEZ
MORGAN LOR
CHRIS MAIER
DANIEL J. McCLAIN
RYLIE MCREYNOLDS
DALE MELLBERG
MARINA ESTRELLA PALOMO
TIMOTHY PARFREY
BOBBY PARKINSON
JASON PHANCO
SHAWN DOUGLAS RAMON II
EDWARD VINCENT ANDREW RAMOS
ALYSSA RILEY
KATHERINE RILEY
ERIC ALEXANDER RUBOYIANES
LANCE SENICK
JOSEPH SHIELDS
BABY TSOSIE SIQUIERUS
NATHAN SPANGENBERG
LINDA STUBBINS
TARA SWAIN
CINDEE TURNER
BRYSE VASQUEZ
JESSICA GRACE WING
ASHLEY HOWARD
JOSHUA GRABENBAUER

July Remembrance Days

PALINA ALDECOA
SEBASTIAN ALDECOA
JAMIE ARNOLD
CHRISTOPHER THOMAS ARNOLD
JACK ATKINSON
JENNIFER BAIN
MARTY BEDELL
CHRISTOPHER BREY
PAUL BRUMBAUGH
BOB BRUMMETT
JENNIFER BUNNELL
SELENA BURNEY
ASHLEY CALLAHAN
WENDY CARBONEL
SHANTI CARLISI
JORDAN CHRISTENSON
ALEAH CRUCE
DREW DAVIS
COLETON DAVID DORMAN
KAREN FORD
MICHELLE HALEY
MARTHA HARRINGTON
TIMOTHY HESKIN
ROLAND JAMES
DEVIN KAMBER
JOSEPH (JAY) KAPLINSKI
CLAYTON LEVIS
GABRIEL LOPEZ
PAIGE LOVE
SANTINO MARTINEZ-PACHO
SCOTT MILLER
ROLANDO MONGE
BLIXA PARDEE
TODD PIERCE
CASSIE RAIO
REBEKAH MARIE RAY
ALYSSA RILEY
KATHERINE RILEY
JOE ROMMEL
MAURICIO B. SALAZAR
JAMES SELBY
BABY TSOSIE SIQUIERUS
GEOFFREY STENSON
AMANDA SUMAN
KATHLEEN TEMPONE
JAMES THELEN
ROBERT ERIC TURNER
JAMES TURNER
MATHEW VYBORNY
MARINA MAY WALDRIP
JESSICA GRACE WING
CODY HOOVER
HANNAH ELIZABETH PAIRRETT
RUDY URIAS JR.
ROBERT "BOBBY" GONZALES
CHERIL AGUILAR

Fundraising:

You can link your Fry's card to also help with our expenses.

The 2023 Jim Click Millions for Tucson Raffle has begun! Jim Click has



announced that this year's grand prize is one of the most in-demand vehicles today, a 2023 Ford Bronco Raptor, a highly sought-after SUV which is expected to generate interest and ticket sales from across the country. The second prize in this year's raffle is two first-class, roundtrip airline tickets to anywhere in the world (some restrictions apply), and the third prize is \$5,000 in cash.

Since 2003, Jim Click, Jr. has initiated 13 raffles* for charities in the Greater Tucson area and has donated a vehicle as the raffle prize*. Eligible 5Mr Click 201301c3 charities have been encouraged to sell tickets for the raffle with each charity keeping 100% of the proceeds raised. The raffle has been one of the many way the Click family has been able to give back to the community that has given his family so much since they came to Tucson in 1974. (From the Millions for Tucson website)

Tissues, Tears & Treasures

A circle of chairs and boxes of tissues,
A roomful of tears and emotional issues.
Frightening at first, I did not want to enter
Into this strange group, and be in the center.

What I soon learned, as we sat side by side,
We were bound by the love of our children who died.
Each shattered heart,
desperately seeking a moment of peace,
from the pain and weeping.

So many things different, and yet all the same,
Hearts lost in a fog of loss and pain.
Those who have journeyed, much further than me,
Reached out in comfort, listened quietly.
Each shattered heart spoke, and the tissues were passed,
We never avoid speaking of the past.

This circle of friends, have found a bond,
And here I'm still known
As "Tony's Mom."
Slowly, I've found
I can reach out to others
Who are newly bereaved, fathers and mothers.
Strength I have found in this
Circle of chairs,
To grieve and to heal
And to show that we care.

Diane Barta
TCF Portland, OR
In Memory of my son, Tony

August Birthdays

MADISON ANGUIANO
CARRIE ANNE ATKINS
TAMARA DAWN BASS
KELSEY ELIZABETH BEITEL
JADEN ELIJAH BLUE
BARRY BOYLE
CLYDE BURKEY
CALEB CANDLER
BILL CARSON
MORGAN COLE
AIDON COPFER
JOHN DALLIES
ASHLEY DENEEN
ALAN DOYLE
RACHAEL EDWARDS
EBERT S.R. EISSENSTAT
MARISA GALLEGRO
RONALD GARDY
GABRIEL ADRIAN GASTELUM
JARED GIDDINGS
RICHARD HAYES
NATHANIEL LEWIS HEDGES
ROBERT HORSTMAN
MARKO JAKSIC
MERCER JOHNSON III
ANGELINA KNOX
NANCY KONERTH
DAVID LESSER
BRIDGET MCCABE
SHAUN MOORE
JAMIE MULLINS, III
RUSSELL SCOTT NEWSOME
NATHAN NOWECKI-HUBBLE
CHRISTOPHER PALACIO
LOGAN PALMER
BLIXA PARDEE
JAMISON PESSIN
TRACY ANN POLLINS
MADISON RODRIGUES
BENJAMIN ROHEN-TRAPP
JEFFREY SEWELL
DANIEL TATTRIE
OLANDO TRUJILLO
LINDA VARGAS
SAVANNAH GRACE WATSON
PRESTON WERNER
ALEXANDER WHEATLEY
JA-MUS WHITFIELD
MAXFIELD LANE WILLIAMS
GLENN HARRISON WILLIAMS
OHN WOOD
ALEXANDER FIGUEREDO
ISABEL VILLEGAS



August Remembrance Days

ARI BLATTSEIN
BARRY BOYLE
ROBERT BREMOND
TIMOTHY BYMP
ANNABELLE CAMP
BRANDIE CAMPBELL
DEANA CAPPUCCIO
TORRE LYNN CARLS
SEAN KELLY CATAUDELLA
KATIE CLARK
ZAC CLARK
ROBERT GLEN CREWS
ASHLEY DENEEN
ANTHONY JESUS DURON
SARAH ESPINOZA
LILY FAIRCHILD
KATERI LAURA JOANN FRANCISCO
SAMANTHA FULCO
PHILIP GANOTE
RONALD GARDY
JARED GIDDINGS
TYLER GROVE
SHANE HARVEY
NATHANIEL LEWIS HEDGES
WILEY HERREN
CHRISTOPHER J.R. HESSE
KYLE HOLBROOK
DANIEL HUGHES
MATTHEW KAUFMAN
JOE KEELING
CHADWICK THOMAS KENYON
ERIC SETH KOVITZ
AMY LOGAN
RAUL "RULLY" JR LOPEZ
MELISSA LOPEZ
BRIAN MOHN
JUSTIN MOHN
SCOTT NEVINS
DONN OWENS
MICHEAL PESQUEIRA
NEAL REINACHER
CARMEN MARTINEZ RUSSO
BRODIE SCHMICH
NIKOLAUS SMITH
ETHAN STRASSMAN
WILLIAM TIDWELL
TINA VALENZUELA
JUSTIN WITT
OHN WOOD
CARIE LEE SHAFFER
MICHAEL SCARDAVILLE
DEVIN JACKSON
COLTON* ROBERTS
NATHAN ANDREW BRALY
ISABEL VILLEGAS
IAN LEE ROGERS

The following poem references Christmas but I think can refer to Christmas in July or any day.

Some Days Are Like This

Some days are like this:
Loss shows up and takes over.
It snares and envelopes my soul
A leaden net draping over me, heavy and relentless
Every part of my body pulled down, every limb, every digit, every organ
Dulled
Slow to move
Immobilized

With heavy arms, and still body I feel the pull of loss
Quietly I sit, not sure if I own it, or if it owns me
My racing pace of circling thoughts winds down
Gradually spinning slower and slower
Time stretches out, almost to a stop.

Why is loss such an oppressor, squeezing breath and life away?
Why does this oppressor possess me when I know only too well how precious life's
spark is?
And how limited my time is to have it?

Of course there are other days, too, when loss has melted away
And the leaden net has lifted just magically, or so it seems
On those days my feet walk lightly
And laughter comes easily.

Today is Christmas
So we gather with our loved ones, embracing each other
Maybe warmly, maybe tentatively
Yet each embrace is shadowed by who is missing
And what has been lost
And all that we miss.

The shadows never leave us
Such loss cannot be outrun or outwitted
It only can be held and felt, merged and submerged in a deep pool of wisdom
And so we gather, we hold, we wonder, we ache.

Some days are like this.

Charles Eadie
TCF, Santa Cruz, CA
In Memory of my son, Austin

CRISIS HOTLINE INFORMATION

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	1-800-273-8255
Suicide Hotline	1-800-Suicide
Depression & Crisis Hotline	1-800-784-2433
The National Institute for Trauma & Loss in Children (TLC)	1-877-306-5256
Families Anonymous (Addiction/Recovery)	1-800-736-9805
Al-Anon Family Groups (Addiction/Recovery)	1-888-425-2666
Post Partum Depression	1-800-944-4773

The Compassionate Friends National:

ONLINE SUPPORT information is available on the National Compassionate Friends Website at www.compassionatefriends.org. (NationalOffice@compassionatefriends.org)

The Compassionate Friends offers “virtual chapters” through an Online Support Community (live chats). This program was established to encourage connecting and sharing among parents, grandparents, and siblings (over the age of 18) grieving the death of a child. The rooms supply support, encouragement, and friendship. There are general bereavement sessions as well as more specific sessions.

FACEBOOK GROUPS: The Compassionate Friends offers a variety of private Facebook Groups. These pages are moderated by bereaved parents, siblings, or grandparents, and may not be accessed unless a request to join is approved by a moderator. Please click on the link next to the group you wish to join and answer the screening questions so they can confirm your request.

Remembrance Cards To receive remembrance cards for your loved ones birthday month and the death anniversary month, sign-up with your complete information, for the memorial book (<https://www.compassionatefriends.org/find-support/to-the-newly-bereaved/>).

Tucson Chapter Steering Committee

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A National self-help, non-profit organization for families who have experienced the death of a child

THE TUCSON CHAPTER
P.O. 30733
Tucson, AZ 85751-0733

Return Service Requested



July-August 2023