



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

Chapter email: [compassionate.friends.tucson@gmail.com](mailto:compassionate.friends.tucson@gmail.com)

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## WALKING THIS VALLEY- Tucson Chapter Vol. 47 No.2 March-April 2025

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**

**March 12, 26**

**April 9, 23**

**May 14, 28**

**Note to Readers: The database of names for  
birthdays and remembrance days is being  
reconstructed. If your child's, grandchild's, or  
sibling's name is missing and you want it published  
please email**

**[compassionate.friends.tucson@gmail.com](mailto:compassionate.friends.tucson@gmail.com)**

**Corrections will be made in the next publication.**

**Apologies and thanks, Diane Allison Editor**



**Deep Feelings** · Follow

5d · ⚙️

I don't really feel like talking  
I lost someone close to me  
There are just some things  
Your eyes cannot un see

Excuse me if I am quiet  
I don't have much to say  
I haven't been the same  
Not since that painful day

The world is too loud now  
My heart cannot cope  
It's broken, I'm afraid  
And there is no antidote

So for now,  
Home is where I'll stay  
Attending to my heart  
Safe and tucked away

Sharyn Marsh



(Shared by Cat Morrow)

**OTHER TUCSON IN PERSON AND ONLINE INFORMATION AND SUPPORT**

- \*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
- \*Survivors of Suicide..... 520-989-0467
- \*www.empactsos.org (suicide loss support group)
- \*Rachel’s Gift (pregnancy and infant loss-national group) [www.rachelsgift.org](http://www.rachelsgift.org)
- \*Miss Foundation <http://www.missfoundation.org/>
- \*babysteps.com
- \*griefwatch.com (books and products)
- \*Pomc.com (families of murder victims)
- \*webhealing.com
- \* thegrieftoolbox.com
- \*whatsyourgrief.com
- \*save.org (suicide awareness)
- \*taps.org (military death)

**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 2025 Jim Click Millions for Tucson Raffle**



???????

**The kick-off was held on February 26 which is when the March-April newsletter is first available. More news coming soon! Tickets will be available beginning in March. The drawing will be in December. We sell through November but appreciate early purchases. Last year we met our**

**goal of \$2000 (actually slightly over) by selling all 100 of our tickets. It would be great if I had to go in to pick up more tickets this year. We appreciate your support. Remember, all money stays with our organization.**

## HOW OUGHT A MAN TO GRIEVE THE LOSS OF HIS CHILD?



*Posted on February 19th, 2025  
(compassionatefriends.org)*

Firefighting is inherently dangerous, and it remains, primarily, a man's work. Yes, women are increasingly joining the US Fire Service, but to this day the profession of firefighting is represented by an overwhelmingly male demographic.

I am a man and I have spent my adult life in the fire service. I lived and moved and found my being with men. Grown men. Aggressive men who channeled their behavior in a positive manner toward protecting life and property in local communities. Compassionate men, who rarely worked alone.

There is biological predisposition and learned behavior firefighters have that expresses itself in what I like to describe as 'John Wayne-ing' it. This looks like fierce determination, grit, problem-solving, and not asking for help. These are behaviors many men learn, certainly, and if we are being fair, are also naturally predisposed to.

What then when we, men, experience the loss of our child?

On October 8th, 2023, we lost our 23-year-old son, Cooper, to suicide. I do not like writing this word, suicide. It pains me deeply, yet it remains ground truth. I cannot undo it.

A micro-atomic bomb was dropped on our house, on our lives. I dropped to my knees and the air was sucked out of me. I could not stand, and I could not breathe. Yes, I cried. I wailed. I still cry. I remember many of the fires I fought. I was never alone; I was with a crew of firefighters. We always practiced the buddy system. We worked in pairs of at least two. If we went into a fire together, we came out together. It was that simple. As the firefighters say in "Backdraft," the movie, "If you go, we go." Meaning, your brother or sister firefighter is not going to leave you in the fire if something happens.

In a fire, in a fire station, in the fire department, firefighters practice a lot of togetherness. Tough times, responding to tough calls, requires "tight togetherness." In a small fire, for example, firefighters can work off the hose line away from each other but within verbal communication range. In a complex, difficult fire, firefighters have a hand on each other's back and do not leave each other. The proximity is dialed to the level of physical touch.

Immediately after my son died, my brother flew into town to be with me. He slept on the floor next to the couch where I slept for four nights. We got up at night a few times, cried and hugged each other. He chose to enter the fire with me, and we practiced a lot of tight togetherness. He had a hand on my shoulder. The immediacy of Cooper's death required this level of proximity. I know of a man who has lost a son. He is grieving deeply. He lives near a lake, and he has chosen to focus on his dogs, fishing, and solitude. He is 'John Wayne-ing' it.

I respect this. I respect this man. I honor him. Who am I to suggest how a man ought to grieve? If we are truth telling, I could very, very easily be this man. I could check out, thumb my nose at all the things, and live in solitude. I do not think I would be wrong. Perhaps I should do this.

Despite this impression, my history and behavioral conditioning in the fire service runs deep within me, and I want to be with my brother. I do not want to be alone in my grief. I do not want to walk alone. I know that this is a complex, difficult fire and I need to be working with a crew.

I talk to my wife, my mom, my children, my brother, and my Compassionate Friends frequently. I want to talk about my son, what happened, and how I am feeling. I write. I walk. I breathe. I ground. I lean into tight togetherness and work as a team to help me make sense of this gaping, painful hole in my chest.

To be fair, I think a man needs time alone, processing time, time in the woods with his dogs fishing the lake. We lived in Montana for several years and this resonates with me. As I like to say it, we may need to hole up in a Nepalese cave and drink yak's milk with the shamans to begin to make sense of this tragedy.

A man needs this for a season. Maybe a few seasons. There is no shame in this.

Still, I want to call men to tight togetherness following the loss of their child. When the fire is complex, hot, dynamic, and dangerous, I know it is the time and place to practice tight togetherness. Hands on shoulders.

Knowing men the way I know them, especially working in high-risk operational environments for most of my life, it could be that only other men 'who know' are able to talk with a grieving man who has lost a child. This may be the signal that gets through the noise.

I remember a counselor coming to the fire station after a tragic call that our crew had responded to. The counselor had never worked with firefighters and did not know a thing about fire service culture. We ran the counselor off, as they had no credibility.

If a man has not lost a child and offers to help me, despite his best intentions, it would land flat. I would run him off. To talk to me about the loss of a child, you need to show up with credibility. You need to have lost a child.

The mantra of The Compassionate Friends is, "We need not walk alone." In the fire service, this is a lived reality. Firefighters do not work alone. As the saying goes, "If you go, we go." Men, how ought we to grieve the loss of our child? With rugged determination and grit, certainly, but also, not alone. My humble admonition is this: do not do it alone. Go in together, come out together. Lace your solitude with compassionate family and friends 'who know' and will put a hand on your shoulder and not leave you during the darkest night of your soul. Especially in the loss of a child, practice tight togetherness. You need not walk alone.

### KELLY MCCOY

Kelly McCoy is a retired chief fire officer and educator. He lives in Lawrence, Kansas with his wife, daughter, and three dogs. He has two sons who live in Phoenix, AZ, and Pittsburgh, PA. Kelly lost his 23-year-old son Cooper in October of 2023.

**"The bird is gone, and in what meadow does it now sing?"  
— Philip K. Dick**

**March Birthdays**

**CHRISTOPHER THOMAS ARNOLD  
KRISTIN BAILEY  
OSWALDO BAKER  
MITCHELL BARRINGAR  
PATRICK BENSON  
RENEE BLANCHARD  
CHRISTOPHER BREY  
PAUL BRUMBAUGH  
STEVEN BURR  
ANTHONY BUSS  
WENDY CARBONEL  
RICK CASEJALUR  
EVAN JACOB CUETO  
PHILIP GANOTE  
TREMAYNE GARCIA  
CALUM GAYNOR  
LAURA GORMAN  
KALYN MARIE GREGG  
RICKY M. GRIJALVA JR.  
MELISSA HEYMERS  
KYLE HOLBROOK  
REESE HOTTEN  
DORINDA JONAS DEVAUL  
MELISSA LOPEZ  
ALEXANDER "PEANUT" LUPER  
BRADLEY CHARLES MAPLES  
DANIELLE MARIT-KALLA  
MORGEN McBRATNEY  
RYAN MCCRAY  
MICHEAL MCDANIEL  
BRYAN MCLAUGHLIN  
ERIC MIRANDA  
GARETH OWEN  
CASIMIRO MARTIN PALAFOX  
AVA PASSANNANTI  
JARED PATRICK  
STACY PESSIN  
GRANT J. PIONTEK  
HEATHER RAMIREZ  
JESUS RENE  
NATHAN TYLER ROBERTS  
BRET RUSSEL  
ROSALINA ISABELLA SAENZ  
ANTHONY SIGAL  
CHADWICK "CHAD" SPALDING  
MEGHAN TOLLE  
KRISTA ANN VALDEZ  
DAK SCOT FREDERICK VANTSANT  
STEVIE WEBB  
ANTHONY JOEL WELLS  
ROBBIE MILLER  
EMILY BOOTH  
ROBERT "BOBBY" GONZALES**



**March Remembrance Days**

**CHANCE MORGAN ALLISON  
KRYSTAL ARNOLD  
LAUREN AUFDENKAMP  
MARTHA BATES  
CHRISTOPHER BAYZE  
JOSHUA BEDELL  
RICHARD BLAU  
DEVANTE CARRANZA  
KENNETH CHESTER  
THOMAS CLARK  
JASMINE COOMBS  
AUDIANNA MARIE COTA  
EVAN JACOB CUETO  
ANGELA DILLON  
EMILIA F DOYLE  
KATIE EDMONDS  
MATTHIAS EDWIN ENLOW  
WESTON FOARD  
JIMMIE GANIS  
TREMAYNE GARCIA  
ANNA CECELIA GAXIOLA  
TESSA LEIGH GRIGGS  
SHAY EMMA HAMMER  
DANIEL HART  
KYLE HENSON  
DANIEL GENE HILL  
CHERIE HILL  
ROBERT HORSTMAN  
ANDREW INGARGIOLA  
JONATHAN KALOS  
NICOLE LAJALLEE  
ALEXANDER "PEANUT" LUPER  
CHRIS MAIER  
MEADOW CENTER MARSTON  
MICHEAL MCDANIEL  
ZACH MORGAN  
JOSHUA MOSS  
RUSSELL SCOTT NEWSOME  
MARINA ESTRELLA PALOMO  
HEATHER RAMIREZ  
TYLER SAX  
ANTHONY SIGAL  
PAIGE JAYDEN STOUT  
DANIEL TATTRIE  
MARLA THYE  
LUIS JAMES TIFFANY  
KRISTA ANN VALDEZ  
HOLLY VICKERS  
CHRISTOPHER VIVIAN  
GENE WATKINS  
PHILLIP JOHN WATTERS  
MORGAN WISE  
ERIN FLATLAND  
ROBBIE MILLER  
HUNTER BERGNER  
AMANDA DEVILLERS  
DIEGO ZELL**



## **Post Traumatic Growth**

*Posted on January 10th, 2025*

*(compassionatefriends.org)*

The shock and the pain blew me out of my world. All of the necessary activity of those days kept me connected with others, those who knew and cared. Then, all of the rituals of death were over.

Everyone went home. Their lives returned to normal.

Normal no longer existed for me. The regular world felt surreal. Everyone was behaving like they did before, and I was no longer a part of that world.

Surreal – real but not felt as real anymore. In most cultures, people are assumed to be in deep grief for the first year after a death, and then they emerge from that state, and slowly re-integrate into their community. Space is given for grief. Grief is honored and respected.

In this Western culture, grief gets immediate attention and then it's somehow supposed to be something to move past. People do not move past their past traumas. They grow larger emotionally to be able to know, feel, and remember their traumas while also becoming more capable of being present in their current lives. This is called Post-traumatic Growth. When people are allowed the space they need to grieve, when their grief is not curtailed, they will learn to hold both the painful reality of loss along with the love they still feel for the person who died. From there, their lives expand to hold both past, present, and future. Their emotional world deepens, compassion and wisdom grow.

I am a psychologist specializing in working with people who have been severely traumatized. What I already knew about trauma helped me enormously when my son died. I let myself grieve deeply. I didn't try to 'move on'. I knew our culture's response to death was inadequate, superficial, and, at times, harmful to the grieving person. I keened, wailed, sobbed, and cried, the intensity coming down over time, naturally. Meanwhile, I knew I needed to integrate this loss into my life and future, so that my son's legacy in my life would be a good one, in honor of him. Deep grief makes those around us very uncomfortable. They want to fix it, make it better, and that actually makes it harder because it tells the grieving person that they're 'too much'. So, the grieving person has a choice – grieve alone or stifle the grief and maintain contact with others. This is a horrible dilemma, because when people are traumatized, they need the presence of others. They need good, warm, comforting contact with people who know and care about them. Human contact helps people heal. When there is no one around, the grieving person suffers in isolation or becomes numb to their own pain in order to stay in connection. Sadness slides into depression. Friendships become distant. Some people may feel the world isn't real anymore, or the world is real and they're not. Those are dissociative mechanisms – derealization and depersonalization. They are like circuit breakers in the nervous system, lowering the 'charge' by disconnecting the emotions.

Many people experiencing deep grief are also very familiar with the symptoms of PTSD, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder – intrusive thoughts, avoidance, numbing out, nightmares, problems with sleep. It would be helpful to take the “Disorder” off of that diagnosis. It’s Post Traumatic Stress. It’s a human response to trauma. It would be inhuman to not have a response to this kind of huge trauma. The responses are normal. The problem is finding ways to help calm the nervous system and integrate the all-too-intolerant emotions of loss, anguish, and try to build a life without someone who is now gone.

One of the common traps for people who have lost others is the “I should have” trap. “I should have known.” “I should have been able to stop this.” This is a normal first level thought process. It happens commonly right after the death. For a short time, it may be helpful, backtracking in the mind to find clues that may have been missed, or possible solutions that weren’t tried, etc. That’s a way the mind tries to learn what can be learned to prevent this from happening again. It normally goes away with time. However, sometimes it doesn’t. Sometimes it gets stuck. When that happens, it’s usually a wish in disguise. “I wish I had known.” “I wish I had been able to stop this.” The wish is real, and if it is experienced as a wish, it doesn’t tend to cause distress. It expresses a truth – a wish that this loss could have been prevented. It can be harmful, however, if it’s felt as a ‘should’. “I should have known,” and “I should have been able to stop this” turn into an assumption of omnipotence. None of us has that kind of all-knowing and all-powerful control. We are all simply human, doing our best with what we do know and actually can do, and that’s limited. We do have influence over others, sometimes a lot. However, none of us has control over others. We just don’t. So, we use our influence as best we can, and our knowledge and whatever power is available, and sometimes that’s enough. And, sometimes it’s not.

The feeling of everything being surreal that comes after the funeral, when everyone returns to their normal life, and we no longer have a normal life, marks the start of a new way of living in this world. We are part of it, and often feel apart from it. The challenge is to expand – to honor our grief, deepen our compassion for ourselves along with everyone else, and notice how we grow. Post traumatic growth is what we can do for ourselves, in honor of those we lost, so that their legacy in our lives is a good one.

**Lynette Danylchuk**

Lynette Danylchuk, PhD., is a Clinical Psychologist who has worked in the field of trauma and dissociation for over 30 years. She is a past president of the International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation (ISSTD) and has received ISSTD’s Lifetime Achievement Award. She has just completed the second edition of the book she and Kevin Connors co-authored, "Treating Complex Trauma and Dissociation: A Practical Guide for Navigating Therapeutic Challenges."

**“Look closely and you will see almost everyone carrying bags of cement on their shoulders. That’s why it takes courage to get out of bed in the morning and climb into the day.”**

**— Edward Hirsch**

## Upcoming Events: Butterfly Release and Ice Cream Social



**April 6 1-3pm at the Ramada at the church. You can bring friends and family of all ages! Please bring a photo or memento for the sharing table.**



## 48th National Conference in Bellevue/Seattle, WA

July 11 @ 8:00 am - July 13 @ 12:00 pm

Our conference is a place for bereaved families to find community and hope, while learning and sharing with others. Lifelong friendships are often made at the conference through meeting others who truly understand the painful loss of a child, sibling, or grandchild. This eagerly anticipated event will take place in Bellevue/Seattle, Washington, during the weekend of July 11-13, 2025. -Registration opening soon-

### Tucson Chapter Steering Committee:

Leader/Facebook: Kirsten Bice Co-Leader: Sharon Farrell

Treasurer: Nancy Richards New Attendee Coordinator: Cat Morrow

Editor: Diane Allison Contributing Editors: All members- contributions wanted!

Outreach/ Correspondence: Kirsten Bice, Nancy Richards, Kenny Allison

Website: Julie Shulick Library: Debbie Russell

**Regional Coordinator:** Denise (Dean) Amore

**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/>).

### The Compassionate Friends National:

Online Support information is available on the National Compassionate Friends Website at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://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.

**Name Badges:** If you would like a name badge to wear on a lanyard at meetings please send your name, your child's, grandchild's, or sibling's name, and a photo of your loved one to our email at [compassionate.friends.tucson@gmail.com](mailto:compassionate.friends.tucson@gmail.com)



**April Birthdays**

KRYSTAL ARNOLD  
BEN ARRELLIN  
MARTHA BATES  
PHILLIP BECKER  
HUNTER BECKHORN  
ALLIE BURCH  
ASHLEY CALLAHAN  
JOHN CARSTENS  
ROBERT GLEN CREWS  
LIAM GULYAS  
MATEO GONZALES  
LEAH GOODMAN  
RICK HAMILTON  
TRAVIS HEGERLE  
STACY ANN HEMESATH  
WILEY HERREN  
CHERIE HILL  
JAY JOHNSON  
DEVIN KAMBER  
CHARLES JOSEPH KEEN  
RYAN KNOTT  
FRANCISCO "CISCO" KNUDSON  
CHRISTOPHER LAWSON  
MELISSA QUINN MADONNA  
MEADOW CENTER MARSTON  
DAMIEN MELZER  
DANIEL MERENS  
SCOTT MILLER  
SCOTT NEVINS  
JOSHUA PARMETER  
JEREMY BRYANT PATRICK  
MICHAEL PENNA  
KASEY PIKE  
LUKE MICHAEL RICHARDS  
COLTON ROBERTS  
LUNA SAYURI ROMERO  
JOE ROMMEL  
JONATHAN ROSS  
ARIELLE IRENE RUBEN  
LUKE RUTHERFORD  
SUSANN SALMON  
TYLER SAX  
JAMES SELBY  
MATTHEW TESCHNER  
JAMES THELEN  
PAUL (ALAN, JOY) THOMPSON  
WILLIAM TIDWELL  
MARCOS RENE TORRES  
EMILY KATELYN ARRIAYA TORRES  
TINA VALENZUELA  
JULIE ANN VONDERSAAR  
DELLVON WATSON  
GAVIN LEE WEBB  
TONY WINFIELD  
CHARLOTTE WU



**CHRISTOPHER**

**April Remembrance Days**

AARON THOMAS ATHERTON  
NANCY BATES DIETZ  
HEATHER BERTSCHY

SUSAN M. BIEGER  
W. JARED BLAIR  
NINA BODEN  
MARK BRIDGEMAN  
JAMES K. BROWN JR.  
GORDON BRYAN  
STEVEN BURR  
JOE CRAWFORD  
RACHAEL EDWARDS  
EBERT S.R. EISSENSTAT  
D. FRANCES ENRIQUEZ  
JULEE FRASER

JASON FROST  
MARISA GALLEGO  
FRANK GARCIA  
DORINDA JONAS DEVAUL  
ANGELINA KNOX  
NANCY KONERTH  
GAGE LA FONTAINE  
RICHIE LOPEZ  
DANIELLE MARIT-KALLA  
BRIDGET MEMBRILA  
PANCHITO MEZA  
AARON MILLER  
ZACHARY ORMAN  
LIEM MICHAEL O'ROURKE  
MICHAEL JOHN PADILLA  
CHRISTOPHER PALACIO  
LOGAN PALMER  
STACY PESSIN  
KYLE PETTEYS  
BEN-DAVID PFLUG  
AARON JAMES "AJ" RACHUY  
GREGORY RAMIREZ JR.  
JANET ROSS  
STEVEN A SCANNELL  
DREDAN SEGUNDO  
JOSEPH SHIELDS  
EMILY RACHEL SILVERSTEIN  
ELIZABETH SMALL  
NICHOLE STAMPER  
DAVID THORSON  
RAMES VALENZUELA  
BRYSE VASQUEZ  
PETER VELAZQUEZ  
SAVANNAH GRACE WATSON  
GAVIN LEE WEBB  
ALEXANDER WHEATLEY  
GABRIEL NATHANIEL AGUILAR



*The  
Compassionate  
Friends*  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Tucson, AZ  
Permit No. 2296

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



March- April 2025