



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

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WALKING THIS VALLEY- Tucson Chapter Vol. 46 No. 4 July-August 2024

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 10, 24

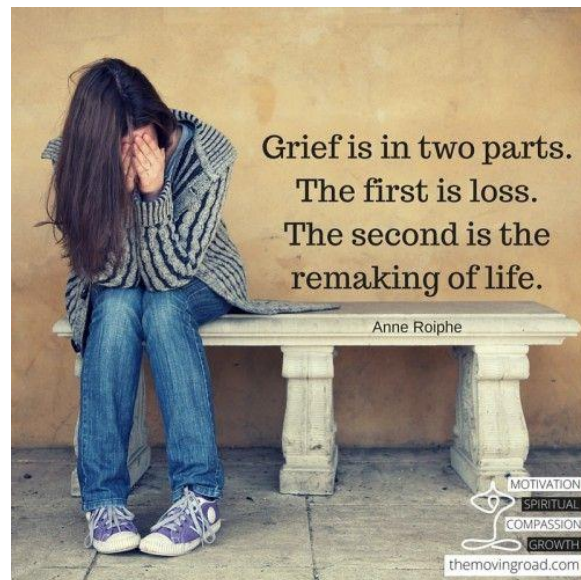
August 14, 28

September 11, 25

Note to Readers: I have computer issues and 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 leave a message on the phone line or email at compassionate.friends.tucson@gmail.com Corrections will be made in the next publication. Apologies and thanks, Diane Allison Editor

Bereaved Parents

Different ages
Different stages
Different issues
Same pain
Daily strain
Occasional tissues
Our children have died
Often is all we know
A fact we fear to hide
Despite our ever-present woe
We live with pride
Though broken-hearted
To love, remember, and grow



Victor Montemurro TCF Medford, NY

Choosing Life

“It will never be the same. Never.” As a bereaved parent, you have often heard or said these words to express grief’s profound feelings of sorrow and disorientation. Your life has suddenly taken an unexpected course that appears both uncharted and endless. Bewildered, you vainly search for pathways back to your former life, until you confront the reality that there is no way back. Your child is dead forever. It is then that you may say, “...never the same.”

This is the aspect of grief that Simon Stephens calls “The Valley of the Shadow.” It is that very long time between the death of your child and your reinvestment in life. Between. It is not supposed to be a permanent resting place. Although some people do take up residence in the valley, it is a transition from the death of your child to life with renewed purpose.

The key to this transition is yourself. You must choose between life and the valley. You and only you can decide. And you must make that decision again and again, each day.

Giving in to the hopelessness of the valley is tempting. Choosing to move on toward life requires a great deal of work. You must struggle with the pain of grief in order to resolve it. It is a daily struggle full of tears, anger, guilt and self-doubt, but it is the only alternative to surrendering yourself to the valley.

Little by little you choose to move on. Little by little you progress toward the other side of the valley. It takes a very long time, far longer than your friends or relatives suspected. Far longer than you had believed – even prayed – that it would be. When one day you find yourself able to do more than choose merely to live but also how to live, you will know you are leaving the valley of the shadow. There will still be more work to do, more struggle and choosing. The valley, however, stretches behind rather than in front of you.

When you have resolved your grief by reinvesting in life, you will be able to realize that nothing is ever “the same.” Life is change. We would not have it be otherwise, for that is the valley of the shadow. Change has the promise of beginning and the excitement of discovery.

Life is never the same. Life is change. Choose life!

Marcia F. Alig

TCF, Mercer Area Chapter, New Jersey

***“Those whom we love are no longer where they were before.
They are now wherever we are.”
– St. John Chrysostom***

July Birthdays

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

ANTHONY ORANTEZ PALINA ALDECOA JACK ATKINSON CHRISTOPHER BREY JENNIFER BUNNELL WENDY CARBONEL ALEAH CRUCE KAREN FORD TIMOTHY HESKIN CLAYTON LEVIS PAIGE LOVE ROLANDO MONGE CASSIE RAI0 ALYSSA RILEY JAMES SELBY GEOFFREY STENSON ROBERT ERIC TURNER CODY HOOVER CHERIL AGUILAR ASHLEY ANGEliQUE HUBER CAMACHO HANNAH ELIZABETH PAIRRETT	TABATHA VEAZEY SEBASTIAN ALDECOA JENNIFER BAIN PAUL BRUMBAUGH SELENA BURNEY SHANTI CARLISI DREW DAVIS MICHELLE HALEY ROLAND JAMES GABRIEL LOPEZ SCOTT MILLER BLIXA PARDEE JOE ROMMEL KATHERINE RILEY AMANDA SUMAN KATHLEEN TEMPONE JAMES TURNER RUDY URIAS JR. JESSICA GRACE WING	JAMIE ARNOLD MARTY BEDELL BOB BRUMMETT ASHLEY CALLAHAN JORDAN CHRISTENSON COLETON DAVID DORMAN MARTHA HARRINGTON DEVIN KAMBER JOSEPH (JAY) KAPLINSKI SANTINO MARTINEZ-PACHO TODD PIERCE REBEKAH MARIE RAY MAURICIO B. SALAZAR BABY TSOSIE SIQUIERUS JAMES THELEN MATHEW VYBORNY MARINA MAY WALDRIP ROBERT "BOBBY" GONZALES CHRISTOPHER THOMAS ARNOLD
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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
- *Miss Foundation <http://www.missfoundation.org/>
- *babysteps.com
- * thegriefftoolbox.com
- *griefwatch.com (books and products)
- *whatsyourgrief.com
- *Pomc.com (families of murder victims)
- *save.org (suicide awareness)
- *webhealing.com
- *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 2024 Jim Click Millions for Tucson Raffle

The Raffle has begun! Grand Prize New 2024 Jeep Wrangler Rubicon 4xe Plug-In Hybrid. Actual vehicle is white which is preferred for our hot summers! 2nd prize Two Round-Trip First Class Airline Tickets to anywhere in the world! 3rd Prize \$5000!

Due to Popular Demand Jim Click brought back the 5 for \$100!! (Of course if you want individual tickets they are still \$25 each.) Please support our chapter. This is our main fundraiser for the year. Tickets available at meetings or leave a message on our phone line and we will be in touch. Remember all money for tickets stays with the charity.

A Personal Evolution Through Grief

I have been a bereaved parent now for three and half years. I have learned a few things during that time, and I have much to learn in the future. I am evolving. Evolving from what I once was...a person who had reasonable expectations of a life that included my son, his children, graduations, holidays, birthdays and special occasions. Now I have become a person who has virtually no expectations that are similar to the ones I had before my son died.

I have evolved into a more sensitive person. I know what some people are thinking before they even say the words. I feel others' joy as if it were my own. I cheer for the success of others. I feel their sorrow, their failures, their missteps. I watch children play and remember my childhood, my son's childhood and I think of the joy that is childhood. I sit for hours watching birds at our feeders, marveling at the beauty of the natural world.

I have slowed down the pace. I no longer feel the pressure to be here or there, to do this or that, to call this one or that one, to wear certain clothes, to "put on the best face" for strangers. I have liberated myself from the mundane and the materialistic. Instead, I simply feel deeply about others. I have become extremely sensitive to all that surrounds me.

I believe the loss of my child has changed me in many different ways. I see this in the attitudes of those who are in The Compassionate Friends as well. While few of us will broach no nonsense in our lives because it is meaningless compared with our experiences, we will listen intently for long periods to the weeping, hysterical cries of a newly bereaved mother. Or we will nod quietly as a parent who is far into grief has a sudden flash of sorrow that is overwhelming. We have a heightened sensitivity to others through no choice of our own. It came with the loss of our beautiful children.

I wonder about what my son would think of events that have unfolded since his death. I have come to conclusions about others that aren't, quite frankly, flattering. Yet, he had come to these conclusions before he died. While I tried to mollify his perception of the dysfunctional people with whom he was burdened, he just said, "that's how it is, mom." And he was right. That's how it is. I have learned to accept people for what they are. If I can help, I will certainly do so. If I can't help, I accept that some things can't be changed, and some people won't change. There is no magic here. It's a simple fact of life. "That's how it is, mom."

I volunteer more these days. I give of myself, my knowledge, any wisdom I may have acquired on life's path to others who are in need. I give of my time, my talents and my labors to those who don't ask as well as those who do. I am comfortable with this.

I have less appreciation for money than I once had. Perhaps that is the best thing to come out of this. What was I chasing? What was my son chasing? What was the point? Bigger, better, faster, farther, more, more, more. It's a shallow existence when one is so focused on the material things that one is defined by materialism. I have

learned to let go of preconceptions, and in that letting go, I have been pleasantly surprised by many people.

How did I get to this place? One minute, one hour, one day, one week, one month at a time. It is a slow journey from crawling through the pits of hell in deep grief to coming back to the reality of here and now. It's as close to a near death experience as I can imagine. Instead of great epiphanies, there are moments of clarity. Instead of instant gratification, there is much work to achieve tiny steps forward. But the effort is well worth making. When I came out from the pits of hell, I realized that my reality was changed; I realized that I was a different person. I discovered that the world doesn't run on the dollar. I found that all people have a capacity for goodness, but that many will never use this capacity.

But most importantly, I discovered that after leaving the pits of hell, there is a road toward hope that is traveled by each of us. Some walk more quickly, some more slowly. But we each walk that road to hope. Hope represents a life that is tolerable once again. Hope represents the acceptance of our child's death and the acknowledgement that we will keep our children alive in our hearts for all eternity as we continue into our tomorrows. Hope is reconciling those two elements: yesterday and tomorrow.

I have learned to adjust to change, because change is inevitable. I have learned to stand up for what is right because that is our duty as human beings. I have learned much about the fears of others and even more about my own fears. I have conquered my phobias as a result of my son's death. Nothing my imagination could conjure would equal that gripping pain, the ache that hangs in my heart forever because my child has died.

But most of all, I have learned that my son was right. "That's the way it is, mom." Shortly before he died, he said he wanted to give me a copy of *Who Moved My Cheese?* He never had the opportunity. But I will read it. I have a feeling I know what it will say. Perhaps Todd gave me the plot line when he died. I'd like to think that he was subconsciously preparing me.

Annette Mennen Baldwin

In memory of my son, Todd Mennen

TCF, Katy, TX

"Grief is akin to praise; it is how the soul recounts the depth to which someone has touched our lives." – Francis Weller

August Birthdays

MADISON ANGUIANO
KELSEY ELIZABETH BEITEL
CLYDE BURKEY
MORGAN COLE
ASHLEY DENEEN
EBERT S.R. EISSENSTAT
GABRIEL ADRIAN GASTELUM
NATHANIEL LEWIS HEDGES
MERCER JOHNSON III
DAVID LESSER
JAMIE MULLINS, III
CHRISTOPHER PALACIO
MADISON RODRIGUES
DANIEL TATTRIE
SAVANNAH GRACE WATSON
JA-MUS WHITFIELD
GLENN HARRISON WILLIAMS
RUSSELL SCOTT NEWSOME
ANDREW THOMAS REPP

CARRIE ANNE ATKINS
JADEN ELIJAH BLUE
CALEB CANDLER
AIDON COPFER
ALAN DOYLE
MARISA GALLEGU
JARED GIDDINGS
ROBERT HORSTMAN
ANGELINA KNOX
BRIDGET MCCABE
LOGAN PALMER
JAMISON PESSIN
JEFFREY SEWELL
OLANDO TRUJILLO
PRESTON WERNER
OHN WOOD
ISABEL VILLEGAS

TAMARA DAWN BASS
BARRY BOYLE
BILL CARSON
JOHN DALLIES
RACHAEL EDWARDS
RONALD GARDY
RICHARD HAYES
MARKO JAKSIC
NANCY KONERTH
SHAUN MOORE
BLIXA PARDEE
TRACY ANN POLLINS
BENJAMIN ROHEN-TRAPP
LINDA VARGAS
ALEXANDER WHEATLEY
MAXFIELD LANE WILLIAMS
ALEXANDER FIGUEREDO
NATHAN NOWECKI-HUBBLE



August Remembrance Days

ARI BLATTSEIN
TIMOTHY BYMP
DEANA CAPPuccio
KATIE CLARK
ASHLEY DENEEN
LILY FAIRCHILD
PHILIP GANOTE
RONALD GARDY
SHANE HARVEY
DANIEL HUGHES
CHADWICK THOMAS KENYON
RAUL "RULLY" JR LOPEZ
JUSTIN MOHN
MICHEAL PESQUEIRA
NIKOLAUS SMITH
TINA VALENZUELA
CARIE LEE SHAFFER
COLTON ROBERTS
KATERI LAURA JOANN FRANCISCO
CARMEN MARTINEZ RUSSO

BARRY BOYLE
ANNABELLE CAMP
TORRE LYNN CARLS
ZAC CLARK
SARAH ESPINOZA
SAMANTHA FULCO
LORRAINE GUPPY
JARED GIDDINGS
WILEY HERREN
MATTHEW KAUFMAN
AMY LOGAN
MELISSA LOPEZ
SCOTT NEVINS
NEAL REINACHER
ETHAN STRASSMAN
JUSTIN WITT
MICHAEL SCARDAVILLE
NATHAN ANDREW BRALY

ROBERT BREMOND
BRANDIE CAMPBELL
SEAN KELLY CATAUDELLA
ROBERT GLEN CREWS
ANTHONY JESUS DURON
CHRISTOPHER J.R. HESSE
ISABEL VILLEGAS
TYLER GROVE
KYLE HOLBROOK
JOE KEELING
ERIC SETH KOVITZ
BRIAN MOHN
DONN OWENS
BRODIE SCHMICH
WILLIAM TIDWELL
OHN WOOD
DEVIN JACKSON
IAN LEE ROGERS
NATHANIEL LEWIS HEDGES
CARTER GARRICK HERNE

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. (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.

Tucson Chapter Steering Committee:

Leader/Facebook: Kirsten Bice Co-Leader: Sharon Farrell Treasurer: Nancy Richards
Editor: Diane Allison Contributing Editors: All members- contributions wanted!
Outreach/ Correspondence: Kirsten Bice, Nancy Richards, Kenny Allison
Website: Julie Shulick New Attendee Coordinator/email blasts: Cat Morrow
Library: Debbie Russell Treasurer: Nancy Richards
Regional Coordinator: Denise (Dean) Amore

The Compassionate Friends (TCF) 47th Annual National Conference in New



Orleans! TCF's National Conference is an enriching and supportive event for many newer and long-time bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings. Attendees come and find renewed hope and support, as well as strategies for coping with grief. Participants create friendships with other

bereaved people who truly understand the heartbreaking loss of a child, sibling, or grandchild. Lifelong friendships are often formed and rekindled each year at TCF conferences. **Register at www.compassionatefriends.org**

There are opportunities to sponsor different aspects of the conference and to participate in the auction even if you are not attending this year. There are also remembrance boards for photos. If you want to send one with the Allison's they will need it before they leave on the 10th.

Waiting for Answers

Years ago, I left my first meeting of The Compassionate Friends and drove home in tears. My son, Max, had died a few short weeks before and I had been anxiously awaiting this evening. These people must have some answers, I thought. With paper and pen in purse, I was ready to take notes and do as they prescribed. I would do anything to ease the ache in my soul.

But when I walked out into the spring, air later that night, I felt betrayed. I hadn't heard any answers. Instead of learning how to leave my grief behind, it had been confirmed, made more real with expression. I knew I would miss Max forever. Now I wondered if I would grieve forever. Would it always be this way, a flash of pain aligned with every memory?

During the next months and years, I attended TCF meetings and conferences, read books, raged, kept busy, sometimes spent the day in bed. I wrote, cried and talked about Max. Slowly, I discovered the answers I had long feared were true: yes, I will grieve forever, and yes, my memories will often provoke tears. But something had changed.

My grief was now more forgiving, my tears almost sweet with memory. Max's life took shape again as the anguish of his death began to recede. If I would always miss him, I would also always have him with me in so many ways. I wanted to carry his memory into the future: the joy, the lessons, and the inevitable pain. How could I do otherwise?

As I walked to my car after that first meeting, the TCF chapter leader caught up with me. "How can I stop this pain?" I asked. She put her arm on my shoulder. "Just do what feels right to you," she said, "Listen to your heart. And we'll be here to listen, too."

Sometimes the best advice is none at all.

Mary Clark
In memory of Max
TCF, Sugar Land-SW Houston Chapter, TX

His Room

Sun splinters through
The stained-glass unicorn Still on the sill
Splattering black walls with color
Few things are as forlorn as a vacant room
Furniture gone, awaiting definition
Bare, yet there on the carpet
Imprints of chair and waterbed
And there is the hole he
Accidentally shot through the wall
And there and there and there
Nail holes that held pictures and posters
And eight-point antlers
And there... God, how can a place
So empty, be so full?

- Richard Dew From *Rachel's Cry—A Journey Through Grief*



Non-Profit Org.
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Tucson, AZ
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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 2024