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## WALKING THIS VALLEY- Tucson Chapter Vol. 48 No. 1 January-February 2026

### 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**

**January 14, 28**

**February 11, 25**

**March 11, 25**



### **Marcia's Tree Analogy**

*Posted on September 30th, 2025*

*TCF National Website by Marcia Ashlock*

**I love trees. I always have. I always wanted to live in a house surrounded by lots of large, mature, beautiful trees.**

**When we moved to our beautiful river property, my husband's favorite feature was the river, but mine was all the gorgeous trees. I loved it! Now just because I love trees, don't think I am a tree expert – I couldn't tell you the difference between a maple tree and an elm tree but I just know I love trees.**

**One of our trees, a huge, strong tree by the river, was one of my favorites. I loved it so much that my husband attached a beautiful wooden swing to it so we could sit under its beautiful branches and swing while looking out over the river. Sadly, during one severe thunderstorm, lightning struck that tree, severing one of its biggest, strongest limbs. The limb supporting our swing. The next day, looking at all the damage from the storm, I saw what had happened to this beautiful tree. I felt sick looking at the horrible damage done to this tree. Irrevocable damage. The broken limb on the ground just lay there, never to grace the tree again. The stump of the branch still held the swing but was charred and it was clear that the tree suffered huge damage and would likely die due to the extent of the damage. Knowing I was upset, my husband got some tie down straps he kept in his truck, climbed up a ladder to reach the broken off, charred branch and made a tourniquet type wrap around the branch, just before where the damage started.**

We didn't know if it would work. We didn't know if that gaping wound in the tree could be repaired. Could come together again after such horrible damage. We waited and watched. For quite a while, we didn't see any improvement, any signs that the hard work he put in to repair it was doing any good. I began to think this was it for the tree. That the damage had been too extensive. Then one day, we noted something amazing – new life was growing out of the charred, damaged stump. A tiny, green branch was sprouting! It wasn't very strong and it looked like it was barely hanging on, but it was there! Finally, a sign of life again! As time passed, more and more branches and leaves started sprouting off that tree that seemed to be too damaged to make it. The leaves on the surrounding branches, that had started to wither, got some of their color back! That thick branch was still able to support the swing and we once again were able to enjoy its strength and gift of shade and comfort!

Now that tree, it doesn't look the same. The tree is not as beautiful as it once was. Maybe the tree feels sad that it no longer looks the same. It doesn't look like all the other trees around it that have all their limbs intact. But maybe, just maybe that tree knows that it survived what could have/should have killed it and guess what? It made it. It won't be the same. Won't look the same. Has scars on it that show the trauma the storm caused. But do you know what? It is still standing. It hasn't fallen into the river. It now gives shade again. It is a source of strength again to hold the swing. It is different than it was I bet it wishes it hadn't had the experience it had. But, that tree, that tree made it. It survived.

When we have gatherings at our river, people stand under its shade and feel relief from the hot sun because of it. Bad days have improved when its strong branches allow me to swing in peace from it. It once again is a source of comfort.

Yesterday, as I was walking on our property, deeply mourning the loss of my daughter, feeling more hopeless, exhausted and heartsick as I had ever felt in my life, I stood under that very tree. I looked up at it and saw the awful scar from what it endured. This may sound silly, but that tree, that tree gave me hope.

My life feels like that tree. A huge storm just wrecked me. A searing pain like lightening tore through me, causing irrevocable damage. At times, I don't know how I will stay standing. Just the thought of normal functioning seems way too much. My life, it will never look the same. I may never look the same. I will never be the same. The me from before that horrible phone call on September 2, 2024 to the me now feels completely different. And I hate that. But, looking up at that tree that day, I felt the tiniest spark of hope. I have hope that this deep severing in my own life will be bound by a wrap that can close this gaping wound in my life. Through the comfort of my dear family and friends, through the wise council of my grief therapist, through the acts of love through meals, groceries and flowers, through songs of promise and hope, through my faith, all these things, they wrap my heart, my soul, my broken heart. It aids in the oh so slow healing of the deep gap in my life, in my heart. I mourn that I will never be the same but find hope that a new me will emerge. I will one day be strong enough to support new life: new hopes, new dreams. I have hope that one day I can be a strength to others in grief, in pain. That they can rest under my strength when they have none of their own.

My life certainly does not look like how I pictured it. Definitely not how I wanted it to look. I could drive myself crazy in thinking about how this is not how I planned it, how unfair it is, how much the unfairness of this infuriates me...or, I can just sit with this grief. Allow myself time to both grieve and start to heal. Let the binds wrapped around me help me. Allow others to help me – even though receiving gracious gifts from others is oh so hard. Allow myself the time. Allow myself the grace I give others. Practice acts of self love. And wait. Know that my roots are deep and that I can survive this. I may emerge different than I was but I will still emerge. This is what I learned from my tree.

## January Birthdays

JACK ATKINSON	ROBERT BREMOND	ALEX GRADIAS
TIMOTHY BYMP	SHANTI CARLISI	LARRY CASTAÑEDA
KAREN FORD	ZAC CLARK	COLLEEN CONTER
GARY DURRENBERGER	KATIE EDMONDS	KATHRYN EIDE
RYKEN EVERETT	EDNA HERRERA	TIMOTHY HESKIN
ROLAND JAMES	MEGHAN JONES	SWAIN TAYLOR KOENIG
KYLAH RAE MARTINEZ	MIA MATHESON	SEBASTIAN MEYER
AARON MILLER	PENELOPE OSWALT	DONN OWENS
MICHAEL JOHN PADILLA	KYLE PETTEYS	CHRISTOPHER PULLEN
DAVID RADTKE	GREGORY RAMIREZ JR.	BECKA ROSENWALD
MICHEAL P SHEATS	NICHOLAS SIMS	ERIC TAYLOR
ANTHONY THOMASON	EMILY TRENT	ROBERT ERIC TURNER
RUDY URIAS JR.	RAMES VALENZUELA	MARIO VERDUGO JR
LINDSAY WAKEFIELD	PHILIP WORKMAN	CHRISTIAN KNOTT
JOVAN ANTONIO ESCARCEGA	KETZIA AMAIRANY FLORES	
NICHOLAS A. BUONAVOLONTA	ANDREW INGARGIOLA	
JOSEPH (JAY) KAPLINSKI	CHADWICK THOMAS KENYON	
JAMESON GILES PERSONIUS	ANGEL PAZ GARCIA	

## January Remembrance Days

DANIELLE BARNETT	GEORGIA COLEHOUR	LUKE DAINS
PHILLIP BECKER	ANDREW GAINES	MICAYLA JASMINE FULLER
MICHAELA ELINAH BENITEZ	BRIAN JOEL HARPER	EDNA HERRERA
JAKE BOUDREAU	TYGE IRSKENS II	AMY KRUPPENBACHER
ERICA LYN BOWDEN	STEPHEN MAHAFFEY	MIA MATHESON
CLYDE BURKEY	DANIEL J. McCLAIN	ALEX ANDRU MENDOZA
JOHN JOSEPH CEPIN IV	JARED PATRICK	JASON PHANCO
STEFAN ENRIQUEZ	LUKE RUTHERFORD	JANESSA JACLYN SMITH
LAURA GORMAN	SHERYL SCHUBERT	CLINT SMITH
SEAN HOLDEN	OLANDO TRUJILLO	IAN CHRISTOPHER SMITH
KENNETH LUIKART	ANTHONY THOMASON	MARCOS RENE TORRES
DAMION MATTHEWS	ANTHONY JOEL WELLS	CHRISTOPHER
MARIELLE MENTZER	MATEO GONZALES	ANDREW THOMAS REPP
TRACY ANN POLLINS	CESAR TIZOK GONZALEZ	ZEKE ZAVELA
MICHELLE RENEE QUIHUIS	NICHOLAS A. BUONAVOLONTA	JOSHUA GRABENBAUER



## 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 Jim Click Millions for Tucson Raffle 2025 edition is now over*

**Congratulations to all the winners and charities!**

**You can see the names of the winners on the Millions for Tucson homepage. We did not sell any winning tickets in 2025. We are due!**

**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: Cat Morrow

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)

### THE GIFT OF SOMEONE WHO LISTENS

Those of us who have traveled a while  
Along this path called grief  
Need to stop and remember that mile,  
That first mile of no relief.  
It wasn't the person with answers  
Who told us of ways to deal.  
It wasn't the one who talked and talked  
That helped us start to heal.  
Think of the friends who quietly sat  
And held our hands in theirs.

The ones who let us talk and talk  
And hugged away our tears.  
We need to always remember  
That more than the words we speak,  
It's the gift of someone who listens  
That most of us desperately seek.

Nancy Myerholtz  
TCF Waterville/Toledo, OH



## THE BONDS OF SHARED GRIEF

*Posted on October 9th, 2025 by Shari O'Loughlin  
TCF National Website*

Divisiveness and intolerance for others' views seem prevalent all around us today. We see it in our political beliefs, social justice concerns, and health environment. It is apparent within families, workplaces, and organizations. When we are grieving the painful death of a child, grandchild, or sibling, this divisiveness creates walls that can make our sorrow even deeper. It's difficult enough when we're grieving to feel connected to the people around us, and these dividing walls can further isolate us.

**The Compassionate Friends credo begins with these words:**

*We need not walk alone.*

*We are The Compassionate Friends*

*We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope.*

*The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us.*

Uniting people who share this deep grief was the premise that started The Compassionate Friends. The death of our brother, sister, child, or grandchild permeates all aspects of our being. It's something that can't easily be explained to those who have not experienced it, while those who have, possess a deep and compassionate understanding that requires little explanation. The bonds within our TCF community can bridge these chasms we see around us. Rather than being further isolated in our grief, we can feel surrounded by understanding, community, and shared hope that can be lifesaving during this time.

While none of us would choose to be a part of this community given the reason that brought us, we are connected at a deeply meaningful level. It's hard to see someone across the table with a similar loss and stay in a place of intolerance and anger. When we remember what binds us as a group and honor our shared losses, we focus on supportive and comforting connectedness. When we reach for the love in our hearts that's bolstered by our shared sorrow, we can model a greater energy that's needed in our world. Our child, grandchild, or sibling who died and brought us to TCF is honored each time we choose this path of connection through our differences rather than more division because of them.

## February Birthdays

JASON BAKE  
DAVID BAKER  
WESTON FOARD  
BRIAN FRAZIN  
JOSHUA BEDELL  
LUKE DAINS  
KEVIN GEIS  
DANIEL LEE GEIS  
JOSHUA GIBSON  
CHANCE MORGAN ALLISON  
LAUREN AUFDENKAMP  
ISAIAH BATES-SCOTT  
NATHAN ANDREW BRALY  
JEREMY BRIGHT  
CHRISTOPHER SCOTT CURTIS  
AISLYNN TIANA DAVIS  
JENNIFER DUTTON  
ROGER PAUL EAGLE  
MATTHIAS EDWIN ENLOW  
D. FRANCES ENRIQUEZ  
SAHARA FAHMY  
PETER JAMES "PJ" FARRELL  
RAUL (BUDDY) GARCIA  
CHARLES A. (CJ) GRAHAM  
SHAY EMMA HAMMER  
BRIAN JOEL HARPER  
KYLE HENSON  
CHRISTOPHER J.R. HESSE  
SEAN ALEXANDER KINCAID  
PETER KJOLSRUD  
ERIC SETH KOVITZ  
JOSE EDY LEYVA  
PAIGE LOVE  
DANIEL LOWE  
AISLYNN TIANA MAGUIRE  
BRIDGET MEMBRILA  
ROLANDO MONGE  
JOSHUA MOSS  
ALYSSA GUNN MULDONADO  
THOMAS WILLIAM NEAL  
MICHELLE VICTORIA PADILLA  
NICHOLAS PUTNAM  
CASSIE RAIO  
AZAR IAN RUST  
NICHOLAS ANDREW SAN ANGELO  
REBECCA SIEGEL  
DAREK SLAYTON  
IAN CHRISTOPHER SMITH  
KATELYN NICOLE STANES  
ANTONIO TIRADO  
JAMES TURNER  
HOLLY VICKERS  
GABRIEL NATHANIEL AGUILAR  
RICHARD HISLOP



ROBBIE MEINDL  
ABEL RUSSELL

## February Remembrance Days

BILL ANDERSON  
DAVID BAKER  
NICK BARNETT  
TAMARA DAWN BASS  
PHILIP BIGGERS  
JADEN ELIJAH BLUE  
KELLI BONN  
CALEB CANDLER  
CARM-IDRELLE CASSEUS  
JOHN PATRICK CLINE  
JENNY CRIM  
KATIE DECKER  
ALAN DOYLE  
TROY EADLER  
ELISA GASTELLUM  
DONALD GREENE  
RAAD HALABY  
CINDY HARTRANFT  
JAY JOHNSON  
GREGGORY RYAN KAISER  
REBECCA KATZ  
CHARLES JOSEPH KEEN  
CHRISTIAN LAWSON  
ZEMIRA BAYLA LENC  
ANGEL LEON  
KYLAH RAE MARTINEZ  
BRIDGET MCCABE  
DALE MELLBERG  
PAUL METZGER  
SHAWN NOBLE  
NATHAN NOWECKI-HUBBLE  
TIMOTHY O'DONNELL  
PENELOPE NOELLE PADILLAS  
AVA PASSANNANTI  
CHRISTOPHER PULLEN  
SHAWN DOUGLAS RAMON II  
PAUL ROBOLD  
BENJAMIN ROHEN-TRAPP  
AZAR IAN RUST  
DANIEL SCHNEIDER  
DAREK SLAYTON  
JARED SMITH  
EMILY RENEE SORKIN  
KATELYN NICOLE STANES  
JULIO C. VERGARA  
KENNETH WALTER  
JA-MUS WHITFIELD  
ORION WORLEY  
NOAH ZACARIAS  
RANDY ZIMMERMAN

## Year End Events: October and December Candle Lightings



## Holiday Get Together



## For the New Year

Where there is pain,  
Let there be softening  
Where there is bitterness,  
Let there be acceptance  
Where there is silence,  
Let there be communication

Where there is loneliness,  
Let there be friendships  
Where there is despair,  
Let there be hope.

Ruth Eiseman TCF Louisville, KY

## 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

## Valentine Message

I send this message to my child  
Who no longer walks this plane,  
A message filled with love  
Yet also filled with pain.  
My heart continues to skip a beat  
When I ponder your early death  
As I think of times we'll never share  
I must stop to catch my breath.  
Valentine's Day is for those who love  
And for those who receive love, too  
For a parent the perfect love in life  
Is the love I've given you.  
I'm thinking of you this day, my child,  
With a sadness that is unspoken  
As I mark another Valentine's Day  
With a heart that is forever broken.

Annette Mennen Baldwin  
TCF Katy, TX In Memory of my son, Todd Mennen





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

### **The Unfinished Path**

When we were young, under your wing I was kept.  
As I grew older, on your shoulder I wept.  
With a problem I could come to you, day or night.  
Just knowing your answers would always be right.  
You joined the Marines and "Semper Fidelis" you barked.  
I could see right then my path was marked.  
It was a path to perfection or so I thought.  
To be like you is what I sought.  
Since your prints have ended, I don't know where to go.  
I've asked Mom and Dad, but they don't quite know.  
So I ask your advice just one more time.  
Because your prints have ended,  
The rest must be mine.

Tim Maloney, USMC  
TCF Hingham, MA  
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January-February 2026