



JUL - AUG 2026

VOLUME XXX, NUMBER 1

ATTENTION:
NEW MEETING TIME AND PLACE!



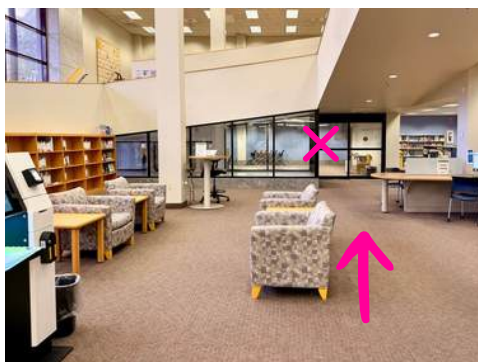
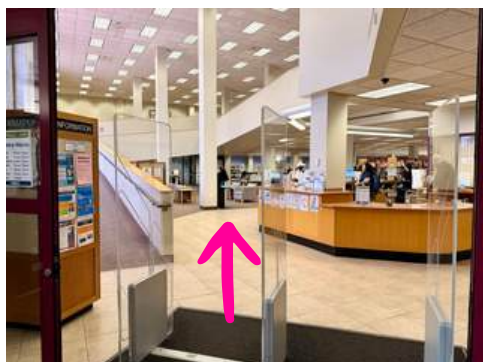
In order to accommodate everyone, we are moving our monthly in-person meetings to the Brandon Library. There is adequate parking and the building, as well as the room itself, is well air-conditioned.

The library closes at 9pm, which means we have to conclude our meeting at 8:45pm.

In order to give everyone adequate time to share, we will start the meeting half an hour earlier, at 6:30pm.

However, come when you can. The door is open.

Enter the Brandon Library and Center Place building (pictured above) and turn left to enter the library through the sliding glass doors.



Walk to the back of the library, in between the ramp on the left and the information desk on the right. You will see the room in the back. It is marked with an X in the photo on the right.

Monthly Meetings

First Thursday of the month

NEW Location

starting July 2

Brandon Regional Library
619 Vonderburg Dr.
Brandon, FL 33511

Time: 6:30 - 8:45pm

Third Thursday of the month

Virtually on Zoom:

Click [HERE](#) to join

Time: 7 - 9pm

Upcoming Events



TCF's 49th
National Conference

July 3 - 5, 2026
Baltimore, MD

for more information visit
compassionatefriends.org

Summer Time Break

The past few months have been full of events that have kept me busy and on my toes. Some are taking me extra time and energy to process. I recognize the signs and am well aware I need to protect my peace, to conserve my finite energy.

I have been looking through my grief toolbox, the place where I started gathering ways to help me work through those times of grief after my daughter's death in 2017, figuring out how I can practice self-care right now. Taking a step back, practicing breath work, and finding quiet spaces seem to be what have helped me in the past few weeks.

For that reason this newsletter is a little lighter.

For the September/October newsletter I would love to include some of your input. How has coming to the meetings helped you? How are they still helping you? Is there anything else that comes to mind that you feel important for us to know? I would love to share your thoughts. Photos are always welcome. My contact info is on page 12.

Sylvia, KK's mom

A Note to the Newly Bereaved

To those of you who are newly bereaved and receiving our newsletter for the first time, we warmly welcome you to The Compassionate Friends. We are a self-help organization of parents, grandparents and adult siblings who have experienced the death of a loved one. We offer understanding and support through our monthly meetings, a lending library, our newsletter, support materials and loving telephone listeners. Please do not be afraid to come to a gathering. Every person in the room has lost a child, grandchild or sibling. They come because they feel the need to be with someone else who understands. We know it takes courage to attend that first gathering, but those who do come find an atmosphere of understanding from others who have experienced the grief that you have now. Nothing is asked of you. There are no dues or fees, and you do not have to speak. We do suggest that you attend at least three meetings before deciding whether or not TCF group meetings are for you. We are glad you have found us.

A Request of Our Current Members

Take a moment of your time today to think back to the beginning of your grief journey. It's difficult. Do you remember your first TCF meeting? Yet you came, and when you arrived a sweet voice soothed your shattered nerves, talked with you, welcomed you and explained the chapter meetings so you would know what to expect. Someone was there for you. Many "established bereaved" were there to support you as you said your loved one's name for the first time in an open group setting. There was a gentleness and kinship in the room that you found nowhere else in the world.

Your unique perspective is needed by the many newly bereaved who enter our meetings each month for the first time. Each of these new members deserves a gentle welcome and a kindred soul upon whom they can rely. Remember who you were and all that you have become since coming to Compassionate Friends. Please return for them.

The gift of hope is such a precious treasure.

Corporate Workplace Giving Campaigns

Corporate giving occurs when companies financially contribute to nonprofit causes. These types of programs often incentivize employee giving with company donations. Corporate giving programs fall under the wider umbrella of corporate philanthropy, which refers to any support companies provide to nonprofits.

One of the best aspects of corporate giving is that companies of any size can participate. From locally owned neighborhood shops to the largest corporations, all companies can easily establish corporate giving programs and give back to the causes they care about.

**Would your company consider giving support to the Tampa Bay Area TCF Chapter?
Contact your leaders for more information.**

ALWAYS WITH LOVE, WE REMEMBER THEM IN JULY

LIGHTING A CANDLE, CHERISHING A BIRTH...



**3 - Michael Zayas Jr.
3 - Christopher Richardson Jr.
7 - Justin Burks
10 - Robert
10 - Tommy Trujillo
12 - Danny
13 - Ecrú N. Richardson Jr.
13 - Elisa Daniele Nunez
14 - Megan Meredith Isaacs
18 - Johnnie
27 - Sean
28 - Christopher
29 - Robert
29 - Spencer Stephens
30 - Samantha Roberts
31 - Logan Uemura**

Remembering them:

**Lillian and Gary Costa
Evelyn and Chris Richardson
Sparkle Negron
John Vath and Renee Nayhoul
JoAnn Trujillo
Valerie Morris Rodriguez
Monica Vasquez and Ecrú Richardson
Marcolina and Bernardo Almanzar
Margaret Isaacs
Dorothy Wilson
Henry and Jeanette Howard
Joan Sullican
Maria and Bruce McGregor
Juliannah Stephens
Tori and Art Roberts
Jamie Gou**



Birthdays & Remembrances

Birthday and anniversary dates can be difficult times for families as they remember a loved one gone too soon. The days leading up to the date can often be harder than the actual day itself, while for some the days following can also be difficult.

Please take the time to reach out to those chapter members that have their child's birthday and/or anniversary in this newsletter and let them know they need not walk alone!

ALWAYS WITH LOVE, WE REMEMBER THEM IN JULY

LIGHTING A CANDLE,
REMEMBERING A LIFE...



Remembering them:

2 - Kenric
2 - Lilly
2 - No name
6 - Zach Willis
6 - Sean
8 - Alexia
8 - Robert
8 - Justin Burks
9 - Brandon Michael Almanzar
9 - Samuel "Sam" Kroll
10 - John "Johnny" A. Durm
11 - Arami Martinez
12 - Tara Pugh
13 - Arvel D. Pagan Colon
19 - Prechae Wesley Britt
19 - Logan Quenten Atkinson
19 - Jasper Arien Shipley
20 - Randy
21 - Brittany Tann
22 - Alexander Crandell
23 - Olivia August McCormick
23 - Nate Jackson
27 - John Olsen
27 - John Allen
27 - Rustin Lane Noeder

Jacquelyn Mentor
Samantha Mills
Annie Ottaviano
Rhonda Willis
Henry and Jeanette Howard
Ericka Herrington
John Vath and Renee Nayhoul
Sparkle Negron
Marcolina and Bernarda Almanzar
Kristina Maxwell
John and DeLoris Durm
Marisol Morales
Carla Rigby
Ivaleisse Colon and Jorge Rivera
Maxwell (Max) Britt
Quenten and Sunita Atkinson
Adria and Jasper Shipley
Robert (Bob) and Maggie Guzinsky
Faith Tann
Kristin and Michael Crandall
Cookie and Zac McCormich
Nati DeJesus
Mary Seldon
Susan Olsen
Yvonne and Kevin Bahret



Your first meeting

Attending your first TCF meeting can be difficult. Feelings can be overwhelming. We have all experienced them and know how important it is to take that first step. Please attend two or three meetings before deciding if TCF is right for you. There are no dues or fees. If you choose, you need not speak a word at a meeting. We are an international, non-denominational group, offering support and information to bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents. We need not walk alone.

The Family Tree That Ends With Me

Reclaiming legacy as a childless, childfree woman

Nina Rodriguez

March 26, 2026



© 2025 Nina Rodriguez. All Rights Reserved. This Ceiba tree located in Vieques, Puerto Rico, is over 400 years old.

When my only sibling died, he didn't leave behind children. Neither do I.

Somewhere between the death certificates and the "he's in a better place", it dawned on me. I'm the remaining child, therefore, ***the family tree ends with me.***

In the eyes of family-tree logic, I became a dead end. The last branch. The full stop at the end of a sentence nobody asked to end. That felt like a heavy burden to carry.

Society has a very tidy story about what a woman's life and legacy should look like: children who carry your eyes, grandchildren who carry your recipes, and a family name meant to ripple forward through generations.

It's a beautiful story.

It's just not the only one.

And for those of us who are childless or childfree (by circumstance, by health challenges, by loss, by choice, by the strange and winding roads our lives took), the absence of that story can feel less like a different path and more like a verdict.

I've been sitting with that verdict. Wondering whether it actually belongs to us, or whether we inherited it from a world that never quite had room for women like us.

But what if legacy was never meant to be measured that way?

We talk about family trees as if growth only counts when it extends into the next generation. As if continuation must look like replication. As if permanence is the goal.

But permanence has always been an illusion. In time, everything changes and fades.

Even today, a lost password, an obsolete platform, a corrupted drive, and there go years of preserved memories. We stream instead of own. We store our memories in corporate clouds. Entire lives now exist in formats that may not be accessible in fifty years.

The promise of being remembered was never as stable as we imagined.

So perhaps the deeper fear isn't that the family tree ends. Perhaps it's that we were taught our worth depends on being extended.

Women, especially, have been conditioned to equate legacy with reproduction, biological or otherwise. To nurture, to pass down, to ensure continuity. If you do not produce the next branch, the cultural script implies you have opted out of meaning itself, and you are treated as such.

But legacy is not the same thing as lineage.

Lineage is biological continuation. Legacy is relational transmission.

One moves downward. The other moves outward.

What if legacy is less about who carries your last name and more about who carries your influence?

Less about who inherits your eyes and more about who inherits your courage?

Less about being remembered in records and more about being felt in rooms you once entered?

Think about the people who shaped you, who are not related to you by blood.

A teacher who changed how you see yourself. A colleague who modeled leadership without diminishing herself. An aunt, neighbor, or mentor who lived fully in her own skin and, without ever saying so, gave you permission to do the same.

They may not be etched into your genealogy chart. But they live in your behavior, your tone, your decisions. They ripple outward through you. That is legacy.

When I say "the family tree ends with me," I am speaking in the language of lineage. But when I look at my actual life (the conversations I've held, the spaces I've created, the humans who have thanked me for helping them through) **I see the ripple effect of my existence echoing in eternity.**

Grief has a way of clarifying this.

When someone dies, what remains isn't their DNA. It's the imprint. The way they laughed. The way they showed up. The way they made you braver, or softer, or more honest. You carry them not in your cells but in your choices. And you do the same for others, whether you realize it or not.

The myth of being remembered assumes legacy requires recognition. A name spoken generations from now. A photograph labeled correctly. A story told accurately. But what if being remembered isn't the point?

What if the real question is:

Did my presence alter anything meaningfully while I was here?

We are living in a time when traditional milestones are shifting. Marriage is no longer guaranteed. Children are no longer inevitable. The structures that once organized a woman's life are bending.

For some, this feels destabilizing.

For others, liberating.

For many, both.

But in the absence of a prescribed path,

we are being asked to define legacy for ourselves.

The family tree that ends with me can feel heavy to carry.

And yet, the more I sit with it, the more I see that a tree

is only one metaphor for continuity. There are also rivers,

currents, and fields where seeds scatter without permission

or planning. Legacy might be less about extension and more

about diffusion. Less about permanence and more about participation.



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I'll likely never be a mother or an auntie. I am the last branch in a particular biological line. And still, I have influenced humans. I have loved and been loved. I have altered conversations. I have witnessed and been witnessed. I have made space in rooms that might otherwise have been smaller.

Maybe the family tree ends with me.

But the energy does not. The influence does not. The kindness does not.

Long before we diagrammed ancestry, legacy was the ripple effect of a life lived in relationship.

It was never guaranteed to be permanent. It was only ever guaranteed to be shared.

And shared meaningfully, even briefly, is **enough**.

ALWAYS WITH LOVE, WE REMEMBER THEM IN AUGUST

LIGHTING A CANDLE, CHERISHING A BIRTH...



Remembering them:

1 - Sky
1 - Evan Godwin
3 - Liana Moyer
4 - Allison
6 - Logan Quenten Atkinson
9 - Matthew
9 - Rebecca (Becca) Mitchell
9 - John "Johnny" A. Durm
10 - Kiara Brito
12 - J. Aaron Wolfe
15 - Claye
16 - Cody
19 - Jason
19 - Robert Mitchell Lyons
20 - Kyle Bradley Kramer
21 - Molly Langer Gutcher
23 - Olivia August McCormick
23 - Emily
26 - Hannah
26 - Jameson "Hunter" Lucier
29 - Sister
30 - Justin Stanfield Thomas
30 - Vonda Nadine Bowman
30 - Xavier Richardson
31 - Tessa Louise Wiseman
31 - Thomas Carl (TC) Capell III
31 - Austin Lee Gravette

Andrew DeLisle and Carla Skye
Kelly Godwin
Charla Moyer
Amy Scott
Quent and Sunita Atkinson
Kathy Hoverman
John and Wendy Mitchell
John and Deloris Durm
Judy Caminero
Idalea Rubin
Patty Medley
Bonnie and Scott Warfel
Brian Asci
Julie and Bruce Lyons
Veronica Alexandra and Aloysius Kramer
Robert and Nancy Langer
Cookie and Zak McCormick
Heather and Jonathan Black
Shawn Marx
Celestee and James Lucier
Natalie West
Marilyn and Don Andreatta
Bernadine M. Howard
Heather Harris
Robin and Todd Wiseman
Thomas Capell
Pamela Gravette



We sincerely apologize for any errors or omissions in our Special Days section.

To have your child, grandchild, or sibling remembered on these pages, or with any corrections, please call Debbie at 813 690-4448 or email her at TampaCompassionateFriends@gmail.com.

ALWAYS WITH LOVE, WE REMEMBER THEM IN AUGUST

LIGHTING A CANDLE,
REMEMBERING A LIFE...



Remembering them:

1 - Kyle Bradley Kramer
1 - Ian William Hobbs
5 - Elisa Daniele Nunez
7 - Brandon Beres
8 - Ashton
8 - Nick
13 - Tessa Louise Wiseman
14 - Jared Lee
14 - Jackson Fabritus
16 - Chris Maikil Mora
17 - Joshua
19 - Rachael Butts
21 - Kayleigh Rose McKeon
22 - James Aaron Hope
24 - Claye
27 - Makayla
30 - Bryanna Jael Michota

Veronica Alexandria Kramer
Jenni and Troy Hobbs
Marcolina and Bernardo Almanzar
Lori and Rick Tubaugh
Madeleine Tellekamp
Elaine Molyneux-Lehman
Robin and Todd Wiseman
Noelani Lee
Robert and Heather Fabritus
Syntia and Michel Mora
Denise Dean
Sherry Lovett
Debbie McKeon
Laurie Lynn Nock Hope
Patty Medley
Christy and Price Jones
Dawn Michota



Consider making a Love Gift to support The Compassionate Friends. Your gift will help defray the cost of chapter expenses and allow us to provide outreach in our community related to the unique needs of those who are grieving the death of a child or grandchild. The Compassionate Friends is a 501c(3) non-profit organization and your donations are fully tax deductible. To make a love gift to the chapter, make the check payable to:

Love Gifts



Compassionate Friends of Tampa Bay Area
#2407
Debbie Rivera, Chapter Leader
310 Bryan Oak Ave
Brandon, FL 33511



Telephone Listeners

**Do you feel you need a little extra support, someone to talk to,
or to just listen? These friends are just a phone call away.**

Don't hesitate to reach out.

Molly Liff, Jackson's mom: 727-742-2587

Maxwell, Prechae's dad: 347-423-0535



As it turns out, when the
excruciating pain of early
grief becomes more
manageable and tolerable,
that isn't your connection to
them disappearing. Quite
the opposite - that is when
space opens up to
strengthen and deepen your
connection.

WYG
What'sYourGrief.org

Contact Info

Tampa Bay Area Chapter

Chapter Leader: Debbie Rivera
813-690-4448
TampaCompassionateFriends@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor: Sylvia Bosma
615-260-0379
zonnetje301@gmail.com

Treasurer: Molly Liff
727-742-2587

Fundraising: Jim Cook
615-260-2939

Website:
tampabaycompassionatefriends.org

Regional Coordinator

Linda Wallace
ljwallace16@yahoo.com
612-812-0186

National Office

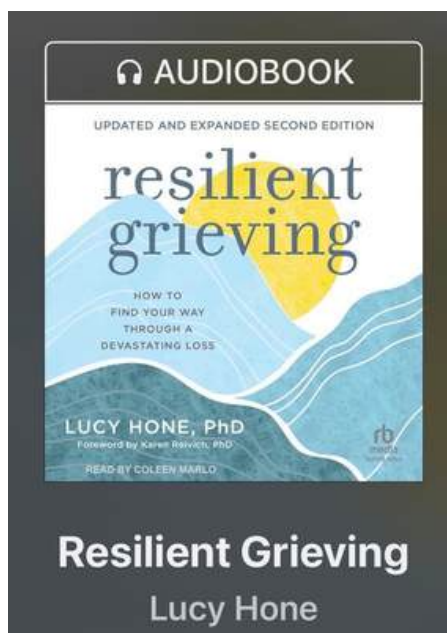
The Compassionate Friends
48660 Pontiac Trail
#930808
Wixom, MI 48393

Phone: 877-969-0010
Website:
compassionatefriends.org

notes from the editor

BOOK RECOMMENDATION:

Resilient Grieving HOW TO FIND YOUR WAY THROUGH A DEVASTATING LOSS by Lucy Hone, PhD



Full disclosure: I have only just started this audiobook. I have read several of Lucy's articles, and heard her story on a few podcasts in the past years. After listening to the Imperfects podcast episode with Lucy, I looked up her latest book, only to discover that she had written this one a few years ago, in 2017.

Since the Hillsborough Public Library has her latest book "How Will I Ever Get Through This" on order, I thought I would start with this one. I will be writing a review in the next newsletter.



February 8

Dr Lucy Hone - A Life Worth Grieving

 The Imperfects >

HAVE A LISTEN

The Imperfects podcast is hosted by 3 Australian men: Hugh, Josh, and Ryan. They explore mental health, vulnerability, and the idea that nobody is perfect. The subject of grief is a thread that runs through most of the episodes. The podcast is in my Top Five, and the episode with guest Lucy Hone is one of my favorites. Not only is Lucy a legitimate expert in grief, resilience and wellbeing, she is able to blend the science with her own lived experience of having lost her daughter.

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-  National: <https://www.youtube.com/user/compassionatefriends>

Did you know that you can connect with both our local chapter and the National Organization online? Join the conversations at:

-  Local: www.Facebook.com/TCFTampaBay
-  Local: [pinterest.com/TCFTampaBayArea](https://www.pinterest.com/TCFTampaBayArea)