

TV CORE

March 2026

Monthly Newsletter



TARA TENENBAUM

Tara grew up in the San Fernando Valley before making her way to San Diego, where she earned her B.S. in Psychology from UC San Diego. She brings nearly a decade of experience in HIV and infectious disease research and is currently finishing her M.S. in Epidemiology at San Diego State University, with plans to graduate in May 2026. Her thesis explores how mutual aid can shape access to sexual and reproductive health services among marginalized women.

Tara joined the lab in October 2024 as a Data Manager and Data Analyst, though her connection to the Last Gift Study goes back to its beginning in 2018 through her work at the AVRC. In her role, she builds and maintains research databases that allow participant data to be collected, stored, and used with care and integrity. Through her graduate training, she has also taken on statistical analyses and is excited to continue growing in that area. One of her favorite parts of her work is seeing research publications come together from data she helped organize. For Tara, that is a meaningful way to honor study participants and contribute to work that can make a real impact!

Outside of work, Tara's life centers around her family. She loves spending time with her partner, her son, and their dog Wednesday, named after the Addams Family character. A recent highlight was taking her son to his first big music festival in Seattle, where she got to share her love of live music with him. She enjoys reading, especially horror and fantasy novels, and is currently watching The Boulet Brothers' Dragula.

Tara is also someone who enjoys trying new things and stepping outside of her comfort zone. Earlier this year, she took her first archery lesson and loved it so much that she is already planning to sign up again, this time with her son. She is especially looking forward to having more time for hobbies like this after finishing her master's program.

Over the past few years, Tara has balanced full-time work, graduate school, and family life, which she describes as both challenging and deeply rewarding. She credits her partner, family, and colleagues at the TV-Core for their constant support along the way and for helping make it all possible. We are so proud of Tara and all that she has accomplished!

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT PMID: 41766328

Niamh Higgins et al., 2026

"Enhancing Compassion to Self and Others Through the Use of a Compassion Training Program in End-of-Life Research Professionals" examined whether a four-week compassion training program could improve well-being among professionals working in emotionally demanding end-of-life HIV research. Conducted with 24 members of the UC San Diego "Last Gift" team, the intervention included weekly sessions on mindfulness, self-compassion, and empathy, along with daily meditation practices. Surveys administered before, immediately after, and 12 weeks post-intervention assessed changes in self-compassion, burnout, and workplace experience.

The program led to targeted improvements, including reduced emotional over-identification, increased workplace joy, and a stronger sense of a supportive work environment. Participants also significantly increased and sustained their meditation practice. However, broader measures such as overall burnout did not significantly change. Overall, the findings suggest that brief compassion training is feasible and may enhance emotional resilience and team dynamics, though larger studies are needed to confirm its long-term impact.

SHOUTOUT!

Aleks was a panelist at Harvard's Inter-CFAR Collaboration on HIV Research in Women Working Group Webinar where he gave a presentation titled "HIV Persistence in Female Genitourinary Tissue:

Transcriptional Signatures Shaped by EBV and Cancer."

Great job Aleks!





COMING UP

April 1-9: Passover

April 5: Easter Sunday

April 15: Tax Day!

April 22: Earth Day!

April 23-26: UCSD WOW festival

- interactive performance festival featuring immersive and experimental experiences

April 25-26: Adams Avenue Unplugged

- A free, neighborhood music festival featuring live performances across local venues.

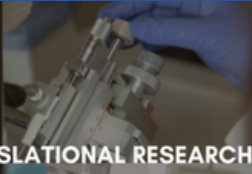
April 25-26: Mission Federal ArtWalk (Little Italy)

- One of the largest art festivals in SoCal with artists, live music, and interactive exhibits.

Throughout April/May:

- Carlsbad flower fields with blooming acres of colorful ranunculus flowers
- Padres home games at Petco Park are back!

UC San Diego Health
Department of Medicine
4th Annual Research Day
April 29, 2026



**DISCOVERY TO DELIVERY:
REAL-WORLD IMPACT OF TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH**

Upcoming birthdays:

Rita: April 17th

QUOTES FROM "THE COST OF SILENCE: A CALL TO PROTECT THE FUTURE OF HIV RESEARCH AND CARE"

"These funding cuts make no sense. They will cause devastating harm to the HIV/AIDS community. People will die without the lifesaving medications that have taken years of research to develop."

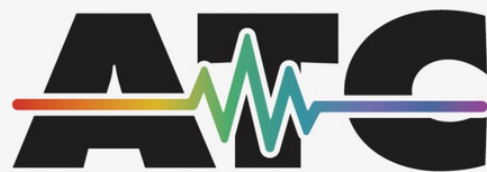
— **Michael Jentes**, Long-Term Survivor and Ryan White Medical Case Manager

"We are in the fourth quarter. The scoreboard reflects decades of sacrifice, innovation, protest, and perseverance. And just as we are closing in on a win... we're told to step back. That the funding isn't there. That the timeline no longer matters."

— **Orbit Clanton**, Long-Term Survivor and Community Advocate

ATC CORE TEAM PARTY!

Launching April 1st is the new Advanced Technology Core (more in next month's newsletter). To celebrate, the team had a fantastic lunch made so special by the guest of honor, Dr Doug Richman! Doug started our lab 50 years ago and hearing his stories and reflections was so special and inspiring.



Woman Who Inspires presented to:

Sara Gianella

During Women's History Month, the 38th Senate District honored Sara as a 2026 Woman Who Inspires. This recognition from Senator Catherine Blakespear celebrates the positive impact Sara has made on our community and reflects her many achievements! Congratulations Sara-- we are so proud of you!