



Bereaved Parents of the USA

Anne Arundel County Chapter

January, 2004

www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org

I am the New Year.
I am unused, unspotted, without blemish.
I stretch before you
three hundred and sixty-five days long.
I will present each day in its turn,
a new leaf in the Book of Life,
for you to place upon it your imprint.

It remains for you to make of me what you will;
if you write with firm steady strokes,
my pages will be a joy to look upon
when the next New Year comes.
If the pen falters, if uncertainty or doubt
should mar the page,
it will become a day to remember with pain.

I am the New Year.
Each hour of the three hundred and sixty-five days,
I will give you sixty minutes
that have never known the use of man.
White and pure, I present them;
it remains for you to fill them
with sixty jeweled seconds
of love, hope, endeavor, patience
and trust in God.

I am the New Year.
I am here -
but once past, can never be recalled.

Make me your best.

Author unknown

GOALS OF BEREAVED PARENTS OF THE USA

- to educate families about the grief process and all its complexities as it applies to the death of a child at any age and from any cause.
- to aid and support those who are suffering such a loss, regardless of race, creed or financial situation.
- to provide a library at each meeting place where members may borrow books with up-to-date information about the grief process.
- to supply the telephone numbers of other bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents who are able to offer support to other more newly bereaved families.
- to inform and educate members of the helping professions who interact with bereaved parents as to the nature and duration of parent/sibling/grandparent bereavement.
- to provide monthly meetings with sharing groups and occasional informative programs.

*The printing and mailing of this newsletter has been donated
In loving memory of Michael Brian Fitzmorris
son of Tom and Rebecca Fitzmorris
and brother of Tracy Fitzmorris-Kujawa*



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Anne Arundel County Chapter
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Hospitality: Rebecca and Tom Fitzmorris
Programs: OPEN

It is our sincere hope that you will find comfort somewhere in this newsletter. It is our intention to offer you hope in knowing that you are not alone. We encourage you to write about your feelings and to share your feelings with others who understand...your compassionate friends.

Material to be printed "in memory of" must be sent to the editors 6-8 weeks in advance of the newsletter in which you wish the item to be printed. **March submissions are due by January 20th).**

Our **lending library** is available to help you understand and deal with your grief. Most of our materials have been donated in memory of a child. When you have finished with them, please return them at our monthly meeting or mail them to the post office box listed above. Thank you.



The Bereaved Parents of the USA is a non-profit self-help organization. We operate on donations from the community we support and concerned professionals in order to produce our newsletter, Service of Remembrance, library, and other needed services. Donations are tax deductible.

Refreshments at our monthly meetings: A sign-up sheet is on the refreshment table at the meeting or you may call Rebecca Fitzmorris (410-987-9175) to sign up. Drinks, ice, and paper products are provided by the chapter.

Inclement weather on a meeting night - meeting canceled if Phase 1 of the Snow Emergency Plan is in effect at 5:00 p.m. You can also check our website on the day of the meeting for an announcement about cancellations.



MEETING INFORMATION

January 8, 2004; Doors open at 7:15 p.m.
(NOTE THE CHANGE IN DATE)

Meeting begins at 7:30 p.m.
Calvary United Methodist Church
301 Rowe Blvd., Annapolis
Park in the back of the church

PROGRAM: THE MOURNING PROCESS

NEXT MONTH:

February 5, 2004

PROGRAM: USING MUSIC IN DEALING WITH GRIEF

TELEPHONE FRIENDS

Sometimes we feel the need to talk to someone who understands the pain we feel and will listen to us. When you have questions to ask, a need to talk, or have a difficult day, these people welcome your call.

Marie Dyke, single parent, daughter, 17, only child, car accident

410-969-7597 Janet Tyler, daughter, 5 and brother, 33, car accident

410-360-1341 Tia Stinnett, miscarriages and infant death

410-721-6457 Sandy Platts, infant death

OTHER RESOURCES:

* **Baltimore-metro area of The Compassionate Friends** of Maryland and Bereaved Parents of the USA, (410-321-7053).

* Stephanie Roper Committee, **for victims of violent crime**, Anne Arundel County chapter representative is James Donnelly (410-544-1473).

* The Compassionate Friends, **Reston Satellite Group (support group for parents who are now childless)**, second Saturday of the month, 1:00 p.m. at North County Government Center, Reston District Police Station, 12000 Bowman Town Drive, Reston, VA. For info., contact Linda Nielsen (703-435-0608, InLvMemory@aol.com); Harriet Evenson (703-525-9311); Sharon Skarzynski in MD (410-757-5049).

* **Seasons, a suicide support group**, 3rd Tuesday, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Lutherville (Dorothy Schanberger, 410-803-2098).

* **Survivors of Suicide Group (SOS)** meets the 1st Tuesday of each month from 7:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m., at Severna Park United Methodist Church, 731 Benfield Road, Severna Park (410-987-2129).

CHAPTER NEWS AND NOTES

Upcoming Meeting Topics

January 8: “The Mourning Process”

****NOTE THE CHANGE
IN DATE****

****FOR THIS MEETING****

How do we survive the tears, confusion, depression and other emotions following the death of our child? Answer: through healthy mourning. Telling your own story can be an important aspect of mourning. The act of telling your story is part of the healing process you use to put your life back together. Fran Palmer

will discuss the characteristics of mourning, the common myths of mourning, factors of healthy mourning and warning signs of danger.

February 5: “Using Music in Dealing with Grief”

Some bereaved parents find music can be helpful in dealing with their grief. Paula Muehlhauser will relate her experiences with music in her grief journey and talk about the role she believes music can play in the grief process. Members are urged to bring CDs or cassette tapes with music they have found particularly

meaningful and helpful as they deal with their grief. We will use these as part of the discussion in our non-newly bereaved sharing groups.

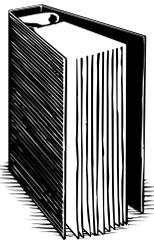
**Sponsoring a monthly
newsletter in your child’s
name can be arranged
through Lisa Beall
(bealls@erols.com).**

**Newsletter printing costs
\$150 and mailing is \$50
each month.**

Thank you!

TREASURE HUNT

Over the years, our chapter has built a substantial sharing library of books, articles, pamphlets and tapes for all bereaved family members to use. Many of our materials were donated by bereaved parents, in memory of their children. When members found a particularly helpful resource, they often donated it to our library as a way of helping others.

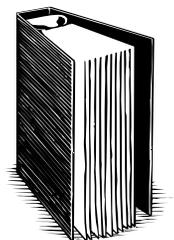


We have just completed an inventory of our library and we need your assistance. Our library is missing 14 audiocassettes and 190 books. We would appreciate your taking a look around your home, office, car, or wherever you keep your reading and listening material. If you have any of these materials, but are still using them, that’s great. Keep on using them, but do let us know that you have them so we can update our records. However, if you are finished with them, we would appreciate your returning them at your earliest convenience, so that others may benefit from these books and cassettes. If you cannot easily return them at one of our monthly meetings, just drop the book or cassette in the mail, addressed to TCF/BPUSA, P. O. Box 6280, Annapolis, MD 21401.

For your information, we have posted a list of the missing audiocassettes and books on our website. You can see the list by going to the site at: www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org, and clicking on the button labeled “Library.”

We will attempt to collect these books over the next three months. After that time, we plan to put together a wish list for our chapter. The wish list will include both missing books and newer materials. We are designing a special bookplate for all new materials to indicate in whose memory the item was donated. We also plan to place a label on the binding to identify each book as belonging to our chapter in hopes that individuals can more easily recognize our materials. You may find donating a book to our library on a birthday, anniversary, or holiday is a rewarding way to remember your child.

Please help us “hunt” for our “treasured” materials.





Announcing the arrival of
Clara Mei Lian Campbell
daughter of Cathi and John Campbell.
Clara arrived from China on Nov. 7th
and celebrated her first birthday
on November 11th with her family,
including big sister, Lindley.
Congratulations!

*I neglected to acknowledge Noel Castiglia
as the author of
"The Twelve Days of Holiday Wishes"
in the December newsletter.
Sorry Noel - and thank you for this poem,
it has become a holiday classic.*

Lisa

I CAN'T DO IT

As I was reading the October TCF newsletter, I thought about the words "I can't do it". These were the words I had heard over and over again when I was trying to teach my 8-year-old granddaughter how to ride a bike this past weekend. As she kept telling me "I can't do it", I thought back to a time when I said the same words over and over again.

When my son, Paul died twelve years ago in a car accident, I thought to myself that I simply could not go on in life. While I had a younger son at home and a solid marriage, everything dimmed in my life while comparing it to the death of my son. My mind and body were clouded with constant pain and after making it through the first holidays, birthday and anniversary, I thought to myself, "I can't do it" anymore. Simply put, I didn't think any mother or father could continue on living through this devastating time. I read all the grief books, attended a Baltimore County vehicular and homicide support group, visited therapists, attended counseling sessions through my work and counted on friends and family for their support, but the words still rung out in my head- I can't do it anymore.

I honestly thought in the beginning that no one could possibly understand my pain because no one loved a child as much as I had loved my son, but I soon realized I was terribly wrong. After attending the Compassionate Friends support group, I began to see people who were exactly like me. I hated to be part of a group that was full of so much sadness, but I couldn't stay away. Never in my life would I have volunteered to work with a group of bereaved parents unless I had become one myself. Attending these meetings and talking to others very much like myself was where I began my road to recovery.

Everyone has a different timetable for grieving, but for me it was three years to even begin to feel that I could possibly go on with life and not until the fifth year that I decided that I was the only one who could choose happiness for myself. Parents never get over the loss of a child, but they can choose whether or not they want to find happiness once again in their lives. After twelve years I can tell you that I laugh alot more and especially at myself. I still cry sometimes, but the ravishing pain that constantly attacks you in the beginning has gone. I also

can plan ahead and look forward to a new future, where in the beginning I couldn't plan from one moment to the next. My heart and mind continue to miss my son each day, but I am more thankful than ever that I was able to share time on earth with him for those nineteen years. So if you are newly bereaved, I just want you to remember that "you can do it" even if you think you can't. If you are constantly swimming upstream against the current of grief, allow yourself time to float. In other words, give yourself a break from all the hard work that grief takes out of you. Floating during difficult times can give you an inner peace that is much needed and will allow you time to renew your strength before you have to swim upstream again and face another holiday, birthday, or special occasion without your child. So bless each and every one of those bereaved parents and just remember that "You Can Do It".

In memory of Paul Michael
Debbie Michael
TCF, Anne Arundel
Co., MD



The world may wonder: are we bound by death, we who have lost the child whose breath we shared?

The world should know: though we may cry at night, we are not strangers to the art of laughter.

And sometimes we reach deeper into life.

Has death, then, left us with a finer ear for listening to the song of other children?

Sascha Wagner

SIBLING PAGE

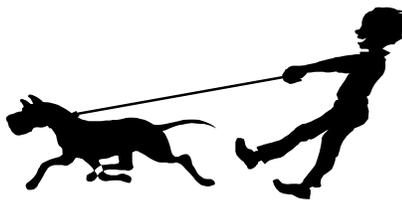
THE HOUSE THAT JOSH BUILT

My older brother (by 13 months), Josh, and I had always wanted a dog, but Dad's pat reply was "wait until you are older." When our next door neighbors announced that their St. Bernard was about to give birth to puppies fathered by the Emerson's roving black Great Dane, we were ecstatic! Since the pups were going to be "free" and we were now 12 and 13, Dad surely could not refuse.

After much coaxing, Dad finally agreed, but there was one stipulation - we had to build a dog house for the pup. That would be no problem for two guys who had built bird houses in Industrial Tech. School was out for the summer, and we began our task. We drew up the plans, pulled out all the scrap lumber from the garage and set about to build the house. Mr. Emerson gave us some leftover shingles for the roof. (I think he was feeling guilty about the escapades of his Great Dane.) We had the greatest time building that dog house together. Mom would even bring lunch out to us on occasion.

On July 20th, Moby Dick came live with us. He thought he had the coolest dog house in the neighborhood. What fun we had with Moby that summer and fall.

October 20th started out just as



Author unknown

any other day. Josh and I had just come in from feeding Moby, and we were sitting down to breakfast. Suddenly, Josh fell from his chair. The resulting seizure lasted for what seemed like an eternity. All efforts to revive him failed. Josh died in Mom's arms. My whole world fell apart that day. Nothing was the same at our house after that. Moby became my best friend. He seemed to understand each time I crawled into his dog house to cry. He would lick my tears and nuzzle into my arms.

During the next few months as people came to our home, Mom would take each one to the kitchen window and show them "the house that *Josh* built" for *his* dog. She never mentioned me.

That was 2 1/2 years ago. Moby has grown to the size of a small pony and is the only coal black St. Bernard in the county. Having him is like having a piece of Josh living with me. Maybe someday Mom will remember what fun Josh and I had building the dog house together, but for now it will remain "the house that Josh built".

Meet your

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

A drop-in bereavement support group for teens, ages 13-18, sponsored by Hospice of the Chesapeake. This group is for teens who are grieving the loss of a loved one. Share the feelings related to loss and learn about grief with others who have had a similar experience. The group will be facilitated by professionals and will be adequately supervised.

Circle of Friends meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month from 7-9 pm at the Holy Grounds Youth Center, 617 Baltimore-Annapolis Blvd. in Severna Park. Parents are welcome to meet the facilitators prior to the meeting. For more information, call Karen Frank, at Hospice of the Chesapeake, 410-987-2003



OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED

Love shared can bring comfort to a broken heart.
Please remember the following families this month.



William P. Anthony
son of Linda and Bill Anthony
June 1, 1965 - January 2, 1999

Michael Allen Barker
son of Diane and Seth Barker
January 18, 1990 - February 10, 1999

Paul J. Burash
son of Sandra and Robert Burash
January 18, 1972 - August 8, 1992

David Michael Copeland
son of Jay and Lois Copeland
March 27, 1978 - January 30, 2000

Jason T. Easter
son of Chris and Janice Kunkel
January 30, 1973 - September 9, 1999

Sherri Leigh Fant
daughter of Vern Pierce
January 24, 1958 - April 1, 2003

Theresa K. Gardner
daughter of Joan F. Gardner
July 28, 1962 - January 7, 1994

Steven Joseph Garvey
son of Mark and Cheryl Sylce
January 21, 1985 - February 1, 1985

Sara Elizabeth Hohne
daughter of Donald and Karen Hohne
January 2, 1980 - June 13, 2003

Sandrine Inguilia
daughter of Michele Ingulia
January 17, 1965 - February 14, 2003

Kevin Murray Kerr
son of Debra and Richard Kerr
January 19, 1980 - September 4, 2001

Ethan Matthew MacPherson
son of Kim and Scott MacPherson
January 22, 1994 - February 13, 1995

Anne Elizabeth Martin
daughter of Kerby and Chris Martin
January 22, 2003 - November 27, 2003

James A. McGrady
son of Mr. and Mrs. David McGrady
January 15, 1968 - August 10, 1987

Craig Steven Nelson
son of Karen Nelson
April 2, 1974 - January 31, 1995

Nicholas Grant Poe
son of Karen and Mike Willey
son of Nelson and Shirley Poe
November 9, 1982 - January 23, 2002

Kevin Eric Reichardt
son of Carol and Karl Reichardt
January 20, 1975 - January 26, 1995

Joseph William Remines
son of James and Bobbi Remines
November 16, 1980 - January 3, 1994

Charles Hubner Rice
son of Stephanie and Doug Rice
January 11, 2002 - January 12, 2002

Daniel Maurice Rothman
son of Juliet and Leonard Rothman
January 20, 1971 - September 17, 1992

Tommy Schall
son of Joyce and Thomas Schall
January 16, 1963 - January 7, 2002

Kelly Ann Schultz
daughter of Pat and Jim Schultz
July 19, 1964 - January 1, 1996

Misty Dawn Smith
daughter of Anne and DeWitt Wilcox
March 15, 1976 - January 12, 1997

Michael Shane Wheeler
son of Lita L. Volejak
June 22, 1976 - January 11, 1996



Carole Anne Wilford
sister of Aljuana Saunders
January 7, 1944 - May 4, 1998

Roy James "Jay" Wyrick
son of Patricia Wyrick
August 8, 1962 - January 10, 2002



I learned a long time ago that you don't count your friends on a sunny day,
when the world is bright and beautiful and there's a song in your heart.
You wait for a storm, when the clouds are dark and threatening and you think you'll never smile again...
and if someone is still beside you, despite the thunder, the cold and the torrents...

THAT PERSON IS A FRIEND.

Donations may be made to offset the cost of printing and mailing the newsletter, the memorial service, library books, and other literature. We gratefully acknowledge the following donations:

Contributions through United Way, Central Md.:

Deborah and Paul Michael, in memory of Paul Brian Michael

Peggy and Gordon Haines, in memory of Matthew Haines

Paul and Claudia Balasic, in memory of Bethany Balasic

Donna and Doug Rohrbaugh, in memory of James Ryan Rohrbaugh

JeanMarie O'Sullivan, in memory of Cortney Belt

Sandra Shockey, in memory of Daniel R. Shockey

Contributions:

Kenneth A. Smith, in memory of Tracy Fotino

Diane Borngesser, in memory of Christopher

Borngesser

Karen Willey, in memory of Nicholas Grant Poe

Mary Jo and Jack D. Martin, in memory of Kimberly Jo Clarke

Paul and Charlotte Koehler, in memory of S. Aaron Luck

Pam and Jerry Haley, in memory of Jeffrey Haley

Lucille and John Peoples, in memory of Cedric John Peoples

Carol and Rick Tomaszewski, in memory of David W. Tomaszewski

Twanda Kilton, in memory of Darin Michael Kilton

Deborah and Patrick Bennett, in memory of Patrick John Bennett, Jr.

Joseph and Rebecca DeMeo, in memory of Joseph R. DeMeo, Jr.

Chere and Greg Trehey, in memory of Marie Rose Trehey

Norma and Don Melcher, in memory of Brian Richard Melcher

Chuck and Issy Mattis, in memory of Donald L. Severe, Jr.

Karen Coulson, in memory of Craig Steven Nelson
Laura and Curtis Miller, in memory of Benjamin James Miller and Baby Boy Miller

Kim MacPherson, in memory of Ethan MacPherson
Mary and Tom DiLego, in memory of Andrew Thomas DiLego and Alexandra DiLego

Judy and Louie Bolly, in memory of Wendy Jean Bolly
Lewis and Peggy Strader, in memory of Christopher Lewis Strader

Peggy Smeltzer, in memory of Mark Edward Smeltzer
Cheryl and Mark Sylce, in memory of Steven Joseph Garvey and Jennifer Marie Garvey

Marla and Michael Dickens, in memory of Michael J. Dickens Jr.

Clara Pajak, in memory of Edmond R. Pajak

Paula Muehlhauser, in memory of Chad William Muehlhauser

Pat Hall, in memory of James Michael Hall

Norm and Dorothy Heincelman, in memory of Cortney Belt and Traci Heincelman

Marjorie Tennant, in memory of Billy Bettis

Aurelia Ferraro, in memory of Jeff Baldwin

Rebecca and Tom Fitzmorris, in memory of Michael Fitzmorris

Benjamin and Sharon Skarzynski, in memory of Jason E. Skarzynski

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

1. I will try not to expect so much understanding from others who have not walked the same path.
2. I will be kind to myself - health, appearance and time to be alone.
3. I will remember that I owe it to myself to try to enjoy life.
4. I will try to be more considerate of my spouse, children and parents. They, too, are coping and deserve my help.
5. I resolve in memory of my child to do something to help someone else.
For I know that in doing this, my child will live on through me.





WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE... written by Paul Balasic

The Anne Arundel Chapter of The Compassionate Friends and Bereaved Parents USA held its first Annual Memory Walk on Saturday, October 18, 2003 at Quiet Waters Park in Annapolis. Approximately 65 walkers participated and completed a 2-mile walk through the park. Many sported customized shirts with a photo of their children, which had been made at the chapter's October meeting. A fellowship/gathering time, with refreshments, preceded the walk. A dedication and tree planting at the Calvary United Methodist Church, our meeting host site, followed up the walk.

As part of the tree dedication clip-on butterflies were personalized by the participants and clipped to the tree. Everyone agreed it was a simple, touching service.



As this was our chapter's first walk, we were unsure what to expect. In the end, however, it turned out to be what can only be described as a glorious, sharing, healing event. The walk turned out to be a very appropriate model of our journey through the grief process. Going into the event this wasn't apparent.

Coming out of the event the observations and comments of many of participants were insightful in this view. We'd like to share some of them:

In the walk as in our grieving process:

Sometime we walked alone, and sometimes we walked with our family and friends.

Sometimes the walk was easy, along a straight, level path, and sometimes it was difficult, going up and down hills.

Sometimes we walked in the warm sun, and sometimes we walked in the cool breeze.

Sometimes the path ahead was clear and visible, and sometimes it twisted and curved so we were not quite sure where we were going.

Sometimes we walked in the living forest, and sometimes we were walking among dead and fallen trees.



And as in the rest of our life since our children have died, **we participated in this walk with them in our hearts.**

And we cried... and smiled...
and remembered.

So yes, our first Memory Walk was a great success and model for our grief process, an example of how our Chapter can help bereaved parents through the grief process and an example of The Compassionate Friend's credo...

*We need not walk alone, we are the
Compassionate Friends.*



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