



Bereaved Parents of the USA

Anne Arundel County Chapter

July, 2004

www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org



4th of July....Independence day.... Every year we welcome the summer with picnics, fireworks and the company of family and friends. The flags and fireworks also remind us of the ongoing struggle against terrorism...and the sacrifices being made by thousands of men and women in our military forces around the world.



So many have made the ultimate sacrifice defending our freedom. The average person reading of these tragedies, or seeing them on the news, feels sorrowed by their loss. I believe for those who have lost children by any means have an awareness of the impact of that loss so much more deeply. Let us keep the families of those that have been lost in our thoughts.

I hope everyone is able to enjoy the holiday weekend and the summer in spite of their losses, and perhaps have some good memories of past summer holidays. Hopefully, those memories will enable us to enjoy the celebrations just a little more than we might have... ahhh, memories!

Rick Tomaszewski

Note: We need to give credit for that great photograph of the balloon release in June's newsletter to Jessica Rohrbaugh who was behind the lens of Fran Palmer's camera.

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 months newsletter has been donated
by

Marlen and Gene Maier in memory of their son **Eric Eugene Maier.**



Bereaved Parents of the USA
Anne Arundel County Chapter
P.O. Box 6280
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-0280

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Editor

Rick Tomaszewski
410-519-8448
akuahi@aol.com

Chapter Leader

Dave Alexander
410-544-3634
dralex@sdaalex.com

Mailing: Barbara Bessling - Programs: VACANT
Librarian: Marti Hill - Thank you notes: Fran Palmer
Mailing List: Dave Alexander - Treasurer: Fran Palmer
Hospitality: VACANT

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.

August submissions are due by July 13th.



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. Drinks, ice, and paper products are provided by the chapter. For questions, contact Dave Alexander at 410-544-3634

**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**

Next meeting: July 1, 2004; Doors open at 7:15 p.m.
Meeting begins at 7:30 p.m.
(Meetings usually occur on first Thursday of month)
Calvary United Methodist Church
301 Rowe Blvd., Annapolis
Park in the back of the church

PROGRAM: Memorializing Our Children

NEXT MONTH: August 5, 2004

PROGRAM: Loss Through Addiction

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:

* **Bereaved Parents of the USA, (BPUSA)**
National contact number (708-748-7866)

* **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@Comcast.net); Harriet Evenson (703-525-9311); Sharon Skarzynski in MD (410-757-5049); website - www.inlovingmemoryonline.org

* **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

July 1: Memorializing Our Children

Many bereaved parents seek ways to memorialize their deceased children and to keep their memories fresh in the minds of family, friends, and the community. Fran Palmer will demonstrate the making of garden stepping stones and lead a workshop for those interested in making the stones during the sharing group period of the evening.

August 5: Loss Through Addiction

Deborah Sheahy, who is a member of our chapter, will provide a mother's story of a family's struggle with addiction.



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!

Chapter Website

To place your child's name on our website, email Dave Alexander (dralex@sdalex.com), or send him a note, (PO box 6280, Annapolis, MD 21401). Include your name, your child's name as you would like it to appear, and your child's date of birth and date of death.

To have a picture of your child on the website, email a digital file with the picture or send a printed picture to Dave. (Photos will be returned.) If you have any questions, please call Dave at 410-544-3634.



EASTERN SHORE BEREAVED PARENTS GROUP

Our Chapter has assisted some bereaved parents who live on the Eastern Shore to form a group there which now meets monthly. The next meeting will be on July 20th at 7:00 pm, at Queen Anne's Hospice, 300 Del Rhodes Avenue, in Queenstown. Subsequent meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesdays of the month starting at 7:00 pm.

Please pass the word since we are trying to increase the turnout which has been low for the initial sessions.

All are welcome to come! For more information, call Angie McKenney at 410-827-7887. or E-Mail to steveandangiemckenney@msn.com

AMAZON.COM BENEFITS OUR CHAPTER

We have a link on the home page of our website which pays a commission of 5% of any purchases made through that link. (This does not increase the purchase price.) Tell your friends, relatives, and colleagues!

To access the site: go to www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org, click on the butterflies on the welcome page, scroll down to the bottom. Find the Amazon.com graphic and click on it. This links our chapter to the site and if a purchase is made, it will be credited to our site. (Purchases made from Amazon.com without going through that link do not get credited.) Since our chapter is a not-for-profit organization and has no dues or fees, we are dependent on donations and fund raisers. We are hopeful these commissions will help fund some of our community outreach activities.

Many of you who receive our **newsletter** were referred by a friend, physician, or clergy. You may have never attended a meeting. In this case, it is likely that your child's name does not appear in our **monthly list of "Children Remembered"**. This is because we require your permission to do so. If you would like your child's name added, please send a note to our post office box. List your child's name, your name (s), and the dates of your child's birth and death. Please allow 6 weeks to be sure it arrives in time for the appropriate month.

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:

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

Kenneth A. Smith, in memory of
Tracy Fotino

CHAPTER SUMMER SOCIAL - SUNDAY JULY 18

Marlen and Gene Maier wish to invite all bereaved parents from the Anne Arundel County Chapter to a midsummer picnic at their home on River Bay Rd., Cape St. Claire, on Sunday, July 18, 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. The Chapter will supply hamburgers and hot-dogs, drinks, and tableware. **Come join this leisurely get-together and bring your families and a side dish or dessert.** Bring a swimsuit and towel if you would like to take a dip in their swimming pool.



Directions: Take Rt.50 east toward the over Rt.50, continue straight through the traffic light on Cape St. Claire Rd. into the Cape. Go past the fire hall and Graul's shopping center until the road ends on River Bay Rd. Turn left. The Maier's house is the 8th one on the left at 1173 River Bay Rd. Park on the front hill or on the street. Please call 410-757-1594 for information and to let us know you are coming.

Chesapeake Bay, exit at 29B. After crossing

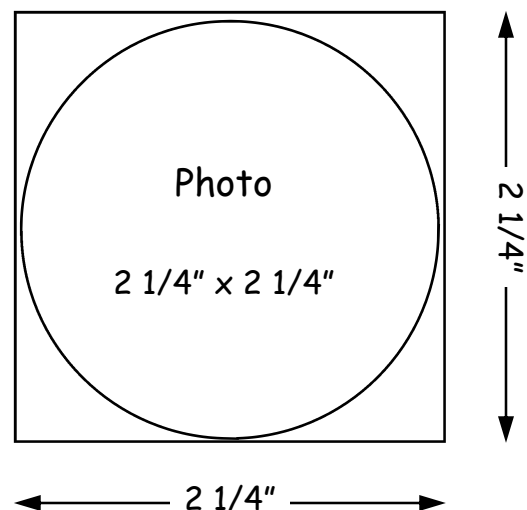
July 1 Meeting - Photo Buttons

While attending our bereavement meetings and functions, you may have noticed buttons with photos of our loved ones being worn.

Bobbi Remines has volunteered to bring the button-making kit and will be available to transform your photos into a great keepsake for you to display.

Just bring a photo that can be trimmed to a 2 1/4" diameter circle, and Bobbi will do the rest.

The \$2.00 donation fee per button will be given to the chapter. Bobbi is most graciously donating all of the materials.



SIBLING PAGE



With each passing year my grief is absorbed deeper inside of me. It's not something strangers can readily see anymore. It's not an excuse for friends to avoid the topic. It doesn't bring sympathy. It's in me, but it's part of me, unrecognizable. If I didn't tell you, you would never know. My body has adjusted to the extra weight, and my mind has learned to acknowledge it but not to give into it.

Seven years. Ten years. Thirty years. We know we're functioning and smiling and making new memories. We may feel guilty when we catch ourselves lingering a little less in front of our lost one's photograph. We make commitments to renew our attention to the memory. We remember our siblings while we talk to people over lunch, but we pretend like we're listening. The feelings go through us like a rush, but it doesn't happen as often as it used to happen. And no one knows. Has anyone made sense of it yet?

I never knew my mind could be dominated by a single thought every day for years and still not get in the way of the progress of my life. The hands on the clock continue to turn, and the sun rises every morning. I'm thinking, "I wish Chris were here", and I'm thinking it constantly. Even though the grief is not on the surface, the missing is as strong as it ever was. We can't explain it, but we want to share it. We might not break down, but the strength of the grief never fades. We just keep on living with it and do the best we are able to do. I miss my brother.

*Scott Mastley, TCF/Atlanta- In memory of his brother,
Chris Mastley - Sept. 2, 1967 - Dec. 5, 1994*





OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED

Love shared can bring comfort to a broken heart.



Glori Aran
Daughter of Sandra Aran
July 26, 1989 - November 11, 2001

Cito Aran
Son of Sandra Aran
December 2, 1978 - July 11, 2000

Cortney Belt
Daughter of Terre and John Belt
Granddaughter of Dorothy and Norm Heincelman
August 26, 1979 - July 9, 1996

Edward C. Blakeney III
Son of Bonnie and George Hughes
July 2, 1976 - July 14, 2001

Elizabeth Caitlyn Carr
Daughter of Sandy and Bill Carr
July 13, 1989 - February 24, 2003

Tria Marie Castiglia
Daughter of Ann and Noel Castiglia
July 6, 1963 - October 14, 1984

O. Steven Cooper
Son of Elsie Cooper
July 5, 1954 - September 26, 1998

Ronald E. Cordell, Jr.
Son of Darlene and Ronald Cordell
July 3, 1973 - May 28, 2003

Ashlea Marie Cranston
Daughter of Mary and Thomas Cranston
July 4, 1984 - February 25, 1985

James Cranston
Son of Mary and Thomas Cranston
July 2, 1974 - July 2, 1974

John Cranston
Son of Mary and Thomas Cranston
July 2, 1974 - July 2, 1974

Andrew Thomas Cutter
Son of Jim and Anne Marie Cutter
July 12, 1997 - July 12, 1997

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

Phillip Wayne Gray, Jr.
Son of Joan G. Gray
July 8, 1970 - December 22, 1986

Matthew Haines
Son of Peggy and Gordon Haines
May 3, 1977 - July 4, 1996

McKayla Hall
Granddaughter of Mike and Julie Hall
July 22, 2000 - September 20, 2003

Michael Robert Leger
Son of Elizabeth and Daryl Leger
July 11, 1986 - December 29, 2000

Eric Eugene Maier
Son of Marlen and Gene Maier
August 8, 1961 - July 5, 1984

Paul Brian Michael
Son of Debbie and Paul Michael
November 23, 1971 - July 19, 1991

Kathleen "Katie" O'Connor
Daughter of Anne and Jim O'Connor
September 21, 1986 - July 11, 2003

Emily Marie Parker
Daughter of Valerie Nowak and Brian Parker
May 9, 2002 - July 18, 2002

Dennis Richard Rohrback
Son of Joan and Dennis Rohrback
October 8, 1964 - July 3, 1988

Anthony John Schafer
Son of Luann Schafer
July 13, 1979 - September 26, 2003

Emily Ann Schindler
Daughter of Charlie and Jane Schindler
July 27, 1985 - January 27, 2004

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

Laura Smith
Daughter of Lois and Joel Smith
July 30, 1985 - June 7, 2003



OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED

(continued)

Gregory Adam Thorowgood
Son of Margie Strong and Wayne Wenk
July 24, 1975 - April 8, 2004

Darin Lacey Valerio
Sharie and Gerard Valerio
July 26, 1967 - March 18, 1991

John Kirkpatrick Wallace
Son of James and Catherine Wallace
March 3, 1953 - July 14, 1971





“Death has no scissors to cut the cords of Love”

Peter Marshall

My Brief Rainbow

Rainbows appear only on dreary, rainy days.
 They beautify the world for a few brief moments.
 These moments, however, can be spectacular.
 YOU were my brief rainbow.
 You entered my life
 And stayed for but a short while.
 Nonetheless, the memories of those moments
 When you blessed us with laughter and delight
 Joy and smiles, charm and beauty,
 Gaiety and happiness,
 Mischief and silliness, sunlight and moonbeams,
 Giggles and love (ad infinitum)...
 Made the deluge, the tears of pain and anger,
 Helplessness and fear, insanity and agony,
 Sadness and heartbreak, emptiness and loneliness
 Bearable.

Rainbows, however brief,
 Make the world a brighter, lovelier place.
 How grateful I am that I had you,
 My brief rainbow.



Peggy Kociscin, Albuquerque, NM
Food for the Soul

The “Veteran” Bereaved Parent

Have you ever attended a TCF meeting to see a “veteran” bereaved parent shed a tear or openly show grief? And have you wondered why after all this time? Please don’t get the wrong idea. The wrong idea being:

1. You won’t ever cry after 10 years.
2. You won’t feel a need to still attend TCF meetings.
3. You won’t feel like sticking with TCF in case a newly bereaved parent needs you.
4. You won’t care enough to stay and help organize future meetings.
5. You won’t feel compassionate enough to hear a newly bereaved parent talk of their grief.

Yes, veteran bereaved parents move on and I wish them peace. But I am personally grateful for veteran bereaved parents who stay with TCF. What would newly bereaved parents do if they attended their first meeting and no one was there to help?

- Sandy Smith, Greater Cincinnati OH TCF Chapter

⌘ Wise Quotes ⌘

“We are not human beings on a spiritual journey. We are spiritual beings on a human journey.”

Dr. Stephen R. Covey

“There is no more ridiculous custom than the one that makes you express sympathy once and for all on a given day to a person whose sorrow will endure as long as his life. Such grief, felt in such a way, is always “present”, it is never too late to talk about it, never repetitious to mention it again.”

Marcel Proust

Forget those calls for 'closure'

There was an editorial in the Atlanta Journal Constitution entitled "As we move on, forget those calls for 'closure'". With a headline like that, I had to read the article & found I agreed with nearly everything the author, E.R. Shipp, wrote. I'm not going to include the entire editorial, but I would like to share a few paragraphs:

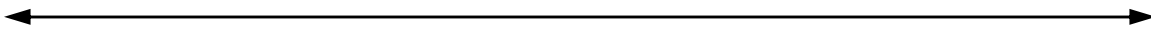
She starts with "Let's bring closure to 'closure' Events of the past days are tragic reminders that the word is more wish than reality."

In the middle she writes "In Connecticut, where Michael Skakel is finally on trial in the long-unsolved 1975 murder of Martha Moxley, her mother may be pleased that the prosecution has gotten this far, but even a conviction can never be her balm in Gilead. Her daughter is, and has been for nearly 27 years, dead, lost to her entirely. The pain will never subside; the memories will never be erased; the anger will only be tempered. And yet we talk of "closure".

She ends with: "My colleagues in the media should drop the word "closure", which they bandy about almost from the start of any tragedy. Rather than admit they are seeking ways to move on to something more immediate, they claim that what the rest of us want is "closure". But we cannot close ourselves off. We can never stop asking Why? Yes, we shall move forward. But forget "closure".

I just wanted to share this because I know there's been a lot of discussion here about closure and moving on. However, I preferred the author's terminology of "moving forward" which to me seemed very different from "moving on". I resent when someone tells me they expect me to move on. As though I could brush my hands of this disaster, put it away in a closet or the corner of the basement, way back to the deepest depths of my mind, and leave it there to "move on" to whatever else life holds. I can't move on in that manner of speaking, but moving forward, yes, there is little choice about that. With my son's spiritual presence as much a part of me as my hands and legs, with the past memories that I talk about although not nearly as much as the present goings on, with the tragedy of his death always with me, which has provided me with a new perspective & view of life, with the lessons I've learned from his life & death, moving forward becomes a reality, moving forward and taking tragic events & making triumphant changes, moving forward becomes a way of life. Moving on vs. moving forward - it may all be just a matter of semantics, but it is the way it is.

Meg Avery, Lawrenceville TCF
In memory of her son James Avery



TO SINK OR SWIM

To sink or swim are not the only alternatives in life. Many survive by just FLOATING. There were many times after my son died that I did feel as though I was sinking below the waves of grief and I was just too exhausted to try and swim to the other side of that lake of pain. It was at those times that I just floated.

By floating, it may have taken me longer to reach the shore than it would have if I had tried to swim, but the shore seemed just so far away that I wouldn't have made it by swimming anyway.

But with just floating along with the current, I did not sink and the other side is getting closer all the time.

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Bereaved Parents of the USA CREDO

We are the parents whose children have died. We are the grandparents who have buried grandchildren. We are the siblings whose brothers and sisters no longer walk with us through life. We come together as Bereaved Parents of the USA to provide a haven where all bereaved families can meet and share our long and arduous grief journeys. We attend monthly gatherings whenever we can and for as long as we believe necessary. We share our fears, confusion, anger, guilt, frustrations, emptiness and feelings of hopelessness so that hope can be found anew. As we accept, support, comfort, and encourage each other, we demonstrate to each other that survival is possible. Together we celebrate the lives of our children, share the joys and triumphs as well as the love that will never fade. Together we learn how little it matters where we live, what our color or our affluence is or what faith we uphold as we confront the tragedies of our children's deaths. Together, strengthened by the bonds we forge at our gatherings, we offer what we have learned to each other and to every more recently bereaved family. We are the Bereaved Parents of the USA.

We welcome you.