



Bereaved Parents of the USA

Anne Arundel County Chapter

May 2007

www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org

In considering what to talk about this month, the thought that Mothers and Fathers day will soon be here – days that have a special meaning to most people – was on my mind. But when the tragedy that occurred at Virginia Tech unfolded, I realized that the lives of so many mothers and fathers were suddenly impacted in a way that we are so painfully familiar with.

I know that I struggled to watch the media frantically trying their best to be the first to speak with parents and other family members. I'm sure that all of us have many different thoughts on how the media confronted the grieving parents and siblings just hours after the tragic event. The best we can do is perhaps just shake our heads and realize that most of the

people doing the interviews have not had to face the awful reality that the victims' parents and families just endured.

Some of you reading this may know of someone that was affected directly by these events. If you do we offer you our condolences. For the families of the children that were killed, we silently understand your loss, and with compassion, offer our support. The support may only come through thoughts or prayers, but they come from our hearts.

Rick Tomaszewski
Anne Arundel County Chapter BPUSA

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 by Ken Smith

In memory of his niece

Tracy Ann Fotino

and

By Debby and Kenny Fiscus in memory of their daughter

Andrea Faith Fiscus

And in memory of their nephew

Carl Michael Crane

**Anne Arundel County Chapter
Bereaved Parents of the USA
P.O. Box 6280
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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.

Material to be printed "in memory of" must be sent to the editor 6-8 weeks in advance of the newsletter in which you wish the item to be printed.

June submissions are due by May 13.

Library:



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.

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 information, contact Carol Tomaszewski at 410 519-8448.



MEETING INFORMATION

Next meeting: May 3, 2007

Doors open at 7:15 p.m.

Meeting begins at 7:30 p.m.

(Meetings usually held on first Thursday of month)

Calvary United Methodist Church

301 Rowe Blvd., Annapolis

Please park in the lot behind the church

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.

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

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

Sandy Platts, infant death. 410-721-6457

OTHER RESOURCES:

- * **Bereaved Parents of the USA, (BPUSA)**
National contact number (708-748-7866)
- * **Stephanie Roper Committee, for victims of violent crime, Anne Arundel County chapter**
representative is James Donnelly (410-544-1473).
- * **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).
- ♦ **MADD Maryland "Family Forever"**
Weekly support group for family and friends of homicide victims and victims of drunk driving crashes
meets every Monday at 7:30 p.m.
Contact Jan Withers at 301-627-1743



CHAPTER NEWS AND NOTES

Sponsor Our Monthly Newsletter or Website

You can help underwrite the costs of our newsletter or our website by sponsoring a monthly issue of the newsletter or by sponsoring a month of the website. To sponsor either one, contact Dave (dralex@sdaalex.com). **For the Newsletter**, in 2007 full sponsorship of an issue of the newsletter is \$200.00. Up to two people or families can sponsor an issue, and the cost will be divided equally – \$100 each. If someone has already signed up for full sponsorship of a month, and another member would like to share in that month, they will be allowed to do so. When there are more than two members or families wishing to sponsor an issue, preference will be given to members who did not sponsor an issue the previous year, otherwise it will be on a “first-come-first-serve” basis. **For the Website**, sponsorship is \$25.00 each month.

DO YOU USE AMAZON.COM?

We have a link to Amazon.com on the home page of our website. Amazon.com gives our chapter a commission of 5% of any purchases which are made *through* that link. Using the link does not increase the cost to the purchaser. Alert your friends, relatives, and colleagues to the link and suggest they use it as well.

You can access the site at:

www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org

Click on the butterflies on the welcome page to enter our site, and then scroll down the first page to the bottom. On the bottom left corner is the Amazon.com graphic. Clicking on the graphic takes you to Amazon.com's site. When it does so, it links information relevant to our chapter to the visit to the site. If a purchase is made, it will be credited to our site

Anne Arundel Co. Chapter Answer Line:

443-57-BPUSA or 443-572-7872

Our chapter has a telephone message line to provide Information about Chapter activities such as meeting time and locations, our website, monthly meeting topics, upcoming special activities and meeting cancellation announcements. You can also leave a message and someone from the Chapter will get back to you to discuss any issues or concerns you may have. Hopefully you will find this an easy way to keep in touch with “What’s Happening” with the Chapter.

Upcoming Meeting Topics

May 3: Men and Women Grieve Differently – Or Do They?

We all grieve and express that grief differently. These differences can introduce new stresses into a couple’s relationship. As we anticipate Mother’s and Father’s Days in the coming months, understanding these differences (and the similarities) can be helpful. In addition to the First-Timers Sharing Group and the Newly Bereaved Sharing Group, there will be a separate sharing group for men and another one for women.

June 7: No program scheduled

MEETING TOPICS NOTE:

Each of our monthly meetings follow the same basic format. We first have a general session attended by everyone. During this first one-half hour we usually have a speaker or panel addressing a topic of interest and value to families mourning the death of a child. Following the general session, we break up into sharing groups. We always have the sharing groups, and the topics they discuss -- particularly for the newly bereaved groups -- do not necessarily focus on the program topic unless it is relevant to the members in the sharing group. We try to cover a range of topics in the programs we schedule, so that over the year we will have covered many topics which are of value to a broad range of members.

We Can Always Use the Help!

There are dozens of tasks that go into running our chapter and our special events, from helping set up the chairs...to greeting new members when they first come in the door...to facilitating sharing groups...to identifying potential articles and poems for the newsletter...to mailing out invitations to one of our events...to working on public relations.... We can always use the help. If you feel you are now in a place in your grief journey where you can help and give back to the chapter in little or large ways, please contact Dave at 410-544-3634. Most of us find that when we reach a point of giving back to those who come after us, we gain far more than we give.



Donations: THANK YOU!



Donations may be made to offset the cost of printing and mailing the newsletter, the Chapter website, the annual Remembrance Service, the annual Conference of Hope and Healing, books and other materials for the Chapter Library.

We gratefully acknowledge the following donations made in the last month:

Judy Bolly in memory of her daughter **Wendy Jean Bolly**
Ken and Debby Fiscus in memory of their daughter **Andrea Faith Fiscus**
and their nephew **Carl Michael Crane**
Charlotte & Donald Scott in memory of their daughter **Michelle Inez Scott**
Ken Smith in memory of his niece **Tracy Ann Fotino**

CONFERENCE OF HOPE AND HEALING **Saturday, May 19, 2007**

There will be 12 workshops to choose from including

Sudden Loss
The role of medications in dealing with grief
Loss of a child through suicide
Dealing with Anger
Loss of a child through drug abuse
Creating special items with your child's belongings
Where was God when my child died
Healing with music
Reducing the stress from grief
How men and women grieve
Use of writing to remember your child
Issues of long-term grieving

Pre-registration requested by Saturday May 5th

You can register by email by going to our website at
www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org

For information:
Debi Wilson-Smith, Conference Leader
410-757-8280
debiws@verizon.net





SIBLING PAGE



My Five Senses

I was reminiscing a few days back about my brother Gary and after I had thought of all the things that were helping me in my memories, I was somewhat amazed at the fact that my five senses was what aided me in the reminiscence.

It started by hearing the sound of the racing style sport exhaust and it took me back to times in his Camaro. Hearing carnival games and rides from a distance brought me back to the last carnival we went to with my Son and those two riding the big yellow slide on potato sacks. The sight of the morning sun peaking through the blinds reminded me of days where Gary would want to take off to Ocean City without a care in the world. I could see us at the picnic table or in my dining room after a long day on the pier crabbing when I smell seafood, especially crabs steaming. When walking past a guy in the mall and noticing the cologne he is wearing is the same as Gary's. Or smelling rain and knowing that these were the days Gary could not work and would be home with Mom all day. Tasting Mom's potato salad and

sloppy-joe takes me back to when Gary was little and would have his sloppy-joe mustache on after digging right into his sandwich; those were some of his favorite home made dishes. Touching the quilt our Mom made for me out of his clothes reminds me of how stylish he was and how perfectly dressed he had to be.

After all this, I realized that my five senses, though at times aren't as evident in my daily routine help me to keep my Brother close to me at all times. I would have never guessed something that simple, the senses we use constantly with everything we do would give me such help in remembering all the good there is to remember. Though there will always be tears of missing him, I now have found a way to make sure laughter and smiles come along as well.

Written in Memory of my Brother
Gary Lee Downey, Jr.
October 30, 1980 – December 24, 2005
Lovingly submitted by Melissa Barnhart
Anne Arundel County Chapter BPUSA

Remembrance

You can shed tears that he is gone
Or you can smile because he has lived.

You can close your eyes and pray that he'll come back,
Or you can open your eyes and see all he has left.

Your heart can be empty because you can't see him
Or you can be full of the love that you shared.

You can turn your back on tomorrow and live
yesterday,

Or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday.

You can remember him and only that he's gone,
Or you can cherish his memory and let it live on.

You can cry and close your mind,
Be empty and turn your back,
Or you can do what he would want:

Smile, Open Your Eyes, Love, and Go On!

Author Unknown

OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED

Please remember the following families this month.

Jordan Edward Ambrozewicz
Son of Steven and Beverly Ambrozewicz
May 27, 1993 - May 10, 1995

Veronica "Ronnie" Anne Arata
Daughter of Rick Arata
June 12, 1968 - May 25, 2000

George Alfred Bold IV
Son of Brenda and George Bold
May 23, 1969 - May 17, 2005

Christopher Lewis Borngesser
Son of Diane Borngesser
December 21, 1961 - May 28, 2001

Paul Shane Brough
Son of Theresa and Steve Bleemke
May 18, 1982 - April 4, 2003

Darius JoVan Brown
Son of Victoria and Robert Brown
February 1, 1992 - May 30, 2004

Brenda Leeann Costello
Daughter of Tana and David Duley
August 29, 1983 - May 28, 2002

Kathleen "Tink" Yvette Denevan
Daughter of Gregory J. Denevan
August 10, 1970 - May 13, 1971

Michelle Marie Dyke
Daughter of Marie Dyke
May 19, 1975 - November 10, 1992

Mary Senier Egan
Daughter of Mary M. Senier
Sister of Terri Hayden-Molton
May 8, 1951 - June 24, 1993

Joseph Fredrick Errichiello Jr.
Son of Susan and Joe Errichiello
April 6, 1979 - May 29, 2004

R. Daniel Ferrer
Son of Anna Ferrer Severn
May 25, 1972 - August 26, 1986

Tracy Ann Fotino
Daughter of Martha Murphy
Niece of Kenneth Smith
May 14, 1971 - August 25, 2000

Andrew Thomas "Drew" Gawthrop
Son of Brenda Gawthrop
May 25, 1990 - August 12, 2002

John Joseph Goetz Sr.
Son of John and Mary Goetz
May 6, 1958 - July 21, 1996

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

Devin Arthur Hall
Son of Cyndia Hall
November 10, 1985 - May 17, 1990

Ronald Michael Hall III
Son of Mike and Julie Hall
May 17, 1980 - September 20, 2003

Sidney Mark Hardesty Jr.
Son of Dawn Watkinson
March 10, 1979 - May 17, 2003

Todd Stafford Henschen
Son of Linda Stafford
May 16, 1970 - August 31, 1988

Thomas "Tommy" Michael Howard
Son of Thomas and Donna Howard
May 27, 1984 - February 10, 2000

Brian Keith Jones
Son of LeRoy and Jeanne Jones
May 22, 1974 - May 22, 1974

Traykia Melisa Jones
Daughter of Rochelle Kennedy
February 19, 1988 - May 11, 2004

Brice Charles Kelley
Son of Hannah and Chris Kelley
September 24, 2002 - May 31, 2004

Stephen Aaron Luck
Son of Paul and Charlette Koehler
August 2, 1966 - May 27, 1985

John F. Marinelli
Son of William and Annette Marinelli
May 30, 1964 - December 19, 1986

Kyle Patrick McDonough
Son of Judy McDonough
February 25, 1982 - May 15, 2005

Graham Kendall Miller
Son of Ken and Abby Miller
February 3, 1981 - May 4, 1999

Joseph A. Miller
Son of Mary J. Miller
Brother of Marlene Miller
December 13, 1956 - May 12, 1977

Daniel "Dan" Michael Milord
Son of Mike Milord
July 15, 1982 - May 5, 2004

OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED (continued)

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

Sydney Elaine Patronik
Daughter of Holly and Michael Patronik
March 26, 2002 - May 11, 2002

Wendy Dawn Saunders
Daughter of Ronald and Aljuana Saunders
May 20, 1972 - May 14, 1998

Stanley "Jerry" Schisler
Son of Stan and Pam Schisler
May 31, 1980 - May 9, 2001

Donald "Donny" Lee Seyfferth Jr.
Son of Jody Seyfferth
December 16, 1977 - May 8, 2000

Ryan Michael Sheahy
Son of Deborah Sheahy
May 4, 1977 - March 16, 2001

Rachel Beth Showacre
Daughter of Daynie Showacre
May 7, 1980 - October 30, 2002

Donna Jean Shrodes
Daughter of Lydia Shrodes
February 5, 1974 - May 23, 2002

Christopher Lewis Strader
Son of Lewis and Peggy Strader
May 27, 1979 - June 21, 1997

Russell "Rusty" J. Tarr
Son of Lorraine A. Tarr
December 22, 1963 - May 12, 1994

John Leroy Waters Jr.
Son of Stella and Roy Waters
September 19, 1970 - May 23, 2000

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

Note: If your child's name appears in the printed version of our newsletter but does not appear in this online version, it is because we have not received explicit permission from you to list it online. If you would like your child's name to also appear in future online editions of the newsletter, please send an email to dralex@sdalex.com



We Need Each Other

Many living things need each other to survive. The Colorado aspen tree does not grow alone. Aspens are found in clusters, or groves. The reason is that the aspen sends up new shoots from the roots. In a small grove, all the trees may actually be connected by their roots!

Giant California redwood trees may tower 300 feet into the sky. It would seem that they'd require extremely deep roots to anchor them against strong winds. But we're told that their roots are actually quite shallow – to capture as much surface water as possible. And they spread in all directions, intertwining with other redwoods. Locked together in this way, all the trees support each other in wind and storms. Like the aspen, they never stand alone. They need each other to survive.

People, too, are connected by a system of roots. We are born to family and learn early to make friends. We are not meant to survive long without others. And like the redwood, we need to hold one another up. When pounded by the sometimes vicious storms of life, we need others to support and sustain us.

Have you been going it alone? Maybe it's time to let someone else help hold you up awhile. Or perhaps someone needs to hang on to you.

Steve Goodier

Men Do Cry

I heard quite often "men don't cry"
Though no one ever told me why.
So when I fell and skinned a knee
No one came by to comfort me.

And when some bully boy at school
Would pull a prank so mean and cruel
I'd quickly learn to turn and quip
"It doesn't hurt" and bite my lip.

So as I grew to reasoned years
I learned to stifle any tears.
Though "Be a big boy" it began
Quite soon I learned to "Be a man."

And I could play that stoic role
While storm and tempest wracked my soul.
No pain nor setback could there be
Could wrest one single tear from me.

Then one long night I stood nearby
And helplessly watched my son die.
And quickly found to my surprise
That all that tearless talk was lies.

And still I cry and have no shame
I cannot play that "big boy" game.
And openly without remorse
I let my sorrow take its course.

So those of you who can't abide
A man you've seen who's often cried
Reach out to him with all your heart
As one whole life's been torn apart.

For men do cry when they can see
Their loss of immortality.
And tears will come in endless streams
When mindless fate destroys their dreams.

unknown

A NEW SELF

Mourning a child is a journey that changes you. The grief diminishes gradually, reappearing on anniversaries, holidays, and all kinds of occasions that might have been significant, had your child lived. These flashbacks have been called “shadow grief.” You may feel them for the rest of your life. But you will also feel pleasure in living again – as unlikely as that may sound.

“One day it just happened,” Elisa Glatz reported. “Instead of waking up and saying that my child was dead, I looked at a blue sky and I actually thought that it looked like a pretty day. I started to whistle and sling again and I even laughed. I felt guilty for laughing. I had read somewhere that there comes a time when ‘grief softens.’ It didn’t go away but it was not the harsh, cold feeling it started out to be.” Eventually, the agony subsides. Parents become less obsessed with the death. They begin to feel energetic, to take an interest in other areas, to feel pleasure and purpose in living.

But they are changed. “I am a different person now – as completely after his death as I was after his birth,” states Californian, Deborah Ryan, whose older son was killed by a drunk driver, “I think much of my personal anguish is the birth struggle of that new person.”

The new self is shaped by grief. People who have experienced a loss so immense, a crisis so major in its proportions, become larger, more empathetic people. They grow. Their values change. They change their priorities. They learn to appreciate the present. “My son taught me a lesson, and that lesson is that life is good. We should live it to the fullest, making every second count,” said Wayne Montgomery of South Carolina, whose sixteen-year-old son, Richard, died of leukemia. “Not only did he teach me how to live, he taught me how to die. Still, the greatest lesson of all is that you don’t know how much you love someone until they are not with you anymore.” To live, to die, to experience the full sweep of love – that is a compelling gift for a child to leave a parent.

Bereaved parents feel weakened by a loss they had never imagined. Paradoxically, that grief can also make them stronger. “Once people survive this insult to their lives, this deadly wound, they can’t sweat the small stuff. They’re more direct. They know they have a right to be treated with respect. They believe in their own dignity. They become more forceful,” states therapist Susan Faber-Brook. “In a strange way,” said Malibu realtor Paul Grisanti after his baby died, “this has made me more powerful.” That’s because once you survive the death of a child, you feel you can survive anything.

From Giving Sorrow Words
By Candy Lightner

“The death of a child is so painful, both emotionally and spiritually, that I truly wondered if my own heart and spirit would ever heal. I soon learned that I could help myself best by helping others. It wasn’t until Robin died that I truly threw myself into volunteer work. That precious little girl left our family a great legacy.

I know George and I care more for every living person because of her. We learned first hand the importance of reaching out to help others because others had reached out to us during that crucial time.”



Barbara Bush.
(Robin died from cancer at 4 years of age.)
From Barbara Bush’s book
In memory of their daughter, Robin

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DATED MATERIAL



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.