



Bereaved Parents of the USA Anne Arundel County Chapter

March 2008

www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org

When I was young, I was fascinated by ancient Greek mythology. The stories had everything that appealed to my imagination – tales of bravery and heroism, romance and undying love. One favorite myth of mine was about the goddess Demeter and her daughter Persephone that was supposed to contain an explanation of why the seasons change. As I reflect on this story now, many years later since I first heard it, I know that I have a different appreciation of this myth as winter turns to spring -- and I face the anniversary of the death of my child.

Demeter was the goddess of the harvest - it was because of her that the world had natural beauty all year long. Trees always had thick, full crowns and the grass was always lusciously soft and green. While she reigned from her throne on Mount Olympus, her beloved daughter Persephone sat on her lap and was never out of her sight, even when they traveled down to earth. As her mother would proudly watch, her daughter would laugh and run about the fields and wherever set foot, colorful flowers would bloom.

One day, the feared and hated lord of the underworld, Hades, saw the beautiful Persephone and instantly fell in love with her. He kidnapped her and took her down into darkness below the earth where he lived. Her mother frantically looked for her, not knowing what had happened to her beloved child. While she looked, the earth grieved

with her. Flowers wilted, leaves fell and fields became brown and shriveled. Finally, Demeter discovered where her daughter was and she begged Zeus, the god of all gods, for his help to get her daughter back from the underworld. An agreement was reached to return the girl to her mother but, sadly, a crucial rule of the truce was broken. Zeus then decreed that Persephone was to forever divide her time between life on earth with her mother and life in the underworld with Hades. And so it was that every year, for all eternity, Demeter's time away from her daughter would bring the bleak days of fall and winter; but, when the mother was joyfully reunited with her child, the earth too would reflect this happiness with the warmth and color of spring and summer.

As I look at the upright green shoots of spring bulbs peeking out from my garden bed, I once again think of this mythical mother who seemed to only live when her daughter was at her side. I too feel like I've been mournfully wandering the earth in the years since the loss of my son in the spring of 2003, seeing no color, no hope. But now, I am somewhat relieved that for the first time since Christopher died, I can take some comfort in the promise of warmer, longer and more colorful days - even as I wish he was here to enjoy them with me.

Carole Gilmour
Anne Arundel County Chapter/BPUSA

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Russ, Denise and Nick Calo, Virginia Potts, and Karen Brown
in memory of their son, brother, grandson and nephew
Russell Joseph Calo Jr.



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of Bereaved Parents of the USA**
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It is our sincere hope that you find some comfort within the pages of this newsletter. You are not alone in your grief. We encourage you to write about your feelings and share them with others through this outlet.



**Submissions for
April newsletter due
to editor by March 3**

Telephone Friends Sometimes we may have the need to talk to someone who can understand our pain. If you feel the need to talk, have questions to ask, or had a difficult day, these people will welcome your call and are willing to listen to you.



Bob Bramhall 410.867.4956 Daughter (19), drunk driver; men's grief.

Marie Dyke Daughter (17), single parent, only child; car accident.

Sandy Platts 410.721.6457 Infant death.

Tia Stinnett 410.360.1341. Miscarriages and infant death.

Janet Tyler 410.969.7597. Daughter (5), and brother (33); car accident.

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MEETING INFORMATION

Next Meeting: March 6, 2008

Doors open at 7:15 P.M. Meeting begins at 7:30 P.M.
(Meetings usually held on 1st Thursday of each month.)

Calvary United Methodist Church
301 Rowe Boulevard
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**** Please park in lower lot behind church ****

If there is **inclement weather** on a meeting night, our meeting is cancelled if Phase 1 of the Snow Emergency Plan is in effect that same day at 5:00 P.M. You can also check our Chapter website for last minute information on possible cancellations.



Refreshments at our monthly meetings are donated by Chapter members. To make a contribution, please see the sign-up sheet on the refreshment table (drinks, ice, and paper products are provided). For information contact Carol Tomaszewski at 410.519.8448.



At every monthly meeting we display materials from our **lending library** that are offered to help you understand and deal with your grief. Most of our materials have been donated in memory of a child. You are welcome to borrow them and when you are finished, please return them at our next **monthly meeting** or mail them to our **post office box** listed above.

By any chance, do you have one of our lost treasures? Our lending library is missing 14 audio cassettes and 190 books. Please look around your home, car or office and if you find you're finished with an item you can return it in one of two ways - bring it to our next **monthly meeting** or drop it in the mail addressed to our **post office box** listed above.





Music and Grief - One Man's Journey

Paul Balasic

Anne Arundel County Chapter/BPUSA

Editor's note: The following is an adaptation of the presentation made by A.A. Co. Chapter member Paul Balasic who was the main speaker on the topic of last month's meeting, "Using Music in Dealing with Grief".

Grief over the loss of our child creates a gigantic hole in our lives, so how do we fill it? Well, it is a hard process and an individual journey. There are some good ways and some bad ways to accomplish this; one way that worked for me was music. I was teaching my 15 year old daughter, Bethany Anne, to play the guitar when she was died in a car accident on April 5, 1996. Her death killed my enjoyment of life and music but in time BPUSA and Dr. Wayne W. Dyer* helped turn that around for me. (*Wayne W. Dyer, Ph.D., is an author and speaker in the field of self-development. - Editor)

How did BPUSA help me? They helped me survive - just by being there. At one of the monthly meetings, I sat through a "Music and Grief" presentation and thought about how I hadn't played the guitar since my daughter was killed. The session encouraged me to pick up my guitar and start to enjoy it again.

As for Dr. Dyer, he helped me by writing about his "10 Rules for Living":

1. Have a mind that is open to everything but attached to nothing.
2. You can't give away what you don't have.
3. Send blame out of your life.
4. Embrace the silence.
5. Give up your personal history.
6. You can't solve a problem with the same mind that created it.
7. Treat yourself as if you already are what you want to become.
8. Treasure your divinity.
9. Wisdom is avoiding all thoughts that weaken you.
10. Don't die with your music still inside of you!!

My suggestions? Be kind and gentle to each other. Enjoy and savor the bits of sunshine and joy when they occur. Find and enjoy music that speaks to you and touches your heart and soul! Make music, don't just enjoy it! Find new meaning in music you know and enjoy. Share the music and its message. Don't die with your music locked inside you!

Suggested Songs

"Lord, I Hope This Day is Good" - Don Williams
(Don Williams Greatest Hits; MCA Nashville; 1987, 1990)

"Wurlitzer Prize (I Don't Want to Get Over You)"
Willie Nelson with Nora Jones
(Willie Nelson & Friends, Live and Kickin';
Lost Highway Records; 2003)

"Who You'd Be Today" - Kenny Chesney
(The Road and the Radio; Bria Entertainment; 2005)

"One More Day" - Diamond Rio
(One More Day; Arista Records; 2001)

For Bethany

(sung to the tune of the Janis Joplin song,
"Me and Bobby McGee")

From the hills of New Jersey
to the Anne Arundel sun
we shared the secrets of Bethany's soul.
Through all kinds of weather,
through everything she done,
we tried to keep Bethany from the cold.

One day on Ritchie Highway, Lord,
she went and slipped away.
She was looking for some joy
and I hope she found it.



But I'd trade all my tomorrows
for one single yesterday -
holding Bethie's body next to mine.

Freedom's just another word
for nothing else to lose.
And nothing don't mean nothing
if it's not free.
And feeling good was easy
when Bethany sang the blues.
Feeling good was good enough for me,
good enough for me and my Bethany.

Paul Balasic
Anne Arundel Co. Chapter/BPUSA
in memory of his daughter,
Bethany Anne Balasic
February 13, 1981 - April 5, 1996

Just a Thought - A Clean House

Since my daughter Malena died almost three years ago, my house is not as clean as it once was. I used to clean it constantly; even the baseboards were dusted on a regular basis. When Malena died I just did not have the energy to do as much housework, so I did what I could and hoped that no one would notice the baseboards.

I also realized that my surviving children did not care how clean the house was, but they really seemed to enjoy that mommy spent more time with them – reading, talking, snuggling and playing. Before Malena died, I felt that a clean house and dinner on the table were what made me a good mom. After she died, I wished for more time to read and play with her. I changed my priorities very quickly - the house will be clean when the children go to college or get married. I will never live in a Martha Stewart or “Better Homes and Gardens” house.

A few weeks ago I was cleaning the house because guests were coming that night. I cleaned the common areas of the house, only what the guests would see, the rest would be hidden behind a closed door; and I hoped that no one would notice that I haven't dusted or mopped for a while. As I cleaned, I realized that this house is now a reflection of my life. My life fell apart when Malena died - I have worked to put it back together. The end result is a life that seems “normal” on the outside to the casual observer.

If you look really close, the hurt and the pain are still there. What the world sees is a person who has triumphed over the death of her child, because they only glance. Those who look closely, in the cracks and crevices where the dust settles, see that there is forever a changed person who will never be complete again until she is reunited with her child.

Traci Cooley
Tampa Bay Chapter/BPUSA



I Am Spring

I am the beginning
I am building promise
I spill cleansing tears of life
from cloudy vessels
creating muddy puddles
where single cell creatures abide
and splashing children play
I am new green growth.
I softly flow from winter's hand.
on gentle breeze I fly – embracing sorrow.
with compassion, we feather nests
where winged voices sing winter-spring duets.
as frozen ice transforms to playful stream
I whisper truth – life is change
I am spring.
I bless long, dark wintry days.
I crown mankind's pain
with starry skies
in deepest night
lighting solitary paths from sorrow to joy
as the wheel of life turns 'round and 'round.

Carol Clum
St. Paul, MN Chapter/TCF
Newsletter Number 613
Spring 2006



Four-Leaf Clover Poem

I know a place
where the sun is like gold
and the cherries bloom
forth in the snow;
And down underneath is
the loveliest place,
Where the four-leaf clovers grow.
One leaf is for FAITH,
And one is for HOPE,
And one is for LOVE you know;
And GOD put another in for LUCK
If you search you will
find where they grow.

Ella Higginson
Tampa Bay Chapter/BPUSA
March 2004

*Love's gentle spring
doth always fresh remain....*

- William Shakespeare
Venus and Adonis

SIBLING PAGE

Who Am I Now?

Who am I now that my sibling has died? I have asked myself that question many times over the last four years. When I think of my brother, Sean, I think of how things used to be. I also think of all the things that he will miss. For example, my husband or my children will never know Sean. Sean will never have children. There are just so many things that he will miss.

I began to question who I was about a month after Sean died. He and I shared a great love of music. When I think of music, I think of Sean. As first, every song I heard made me cry. After a while though, I began to try to find a deeper meaning in the songs. I know that a lot of teenagers and young adults identify important times in their lives by music. I am one of those people. Now I am trying to figure out what place the music has in my life.

After Sean died, music took on new meaning for me. The music I sing and listen to is my special connection to my brother. The song, "Because You Loved Me" by Celine Dion was especially powerful for me. I came to realize that through simply loving and supporting me, my brother had helped to shape the person that I was becoming and who I want to become. I have realized now that my life's direction has taken a slight detour. I have had to reroute my image of myself. When I see music, I see my brother and I hope that will never change. When I saw myself in the past, I saw Sean by my side. That picture has now been altered. The biggest part of the question, "Who am I now?" is also "Am I still a sister?" The answer to that is a simple yes! Sean will always be my brother and I will be his sister. Forever.

Traci Morlock
Bereaved Sibling
St. Louis, MO/BPUSA
from *A Journey Together*
www.bereavedparentsusa.org



Because You Loved Me

For all those times you stood by me
For all the truth that you made me see
For all the joy you brought to my life
For all the wrong that you made right
For every dream you made come true
For all the love I found in you
I'll be forever thankful baby
You're the one who held me up
Never let me fall
You're the one who saw me through it all

Chorus

You gave me wings and made me fly
You touched my hand I could touch the sky
I lost my faith, you gave it back to me
You said no star was out of reach
You stood by me and I stood tall
I had your love I had it all
I'm grateful for each day you gave me
Maybe I don't know that much
But I know this much is true
I was blessed because I was loved by you

Chorus

You were always there for me
The tender wind that carried me
A light in the dark shining your love into my life
You've been my inspiration
Through the lies you were the truth
My world is a better place because of you

Chorus:

You were my strength when I was weak
You were my voice when I couldn't speak
You were my eyes when I couldn't see
You saw the best there was in me
Lifted me up when I couldn't reach
You gave me faith 'cause you believed
I'm everything I am
Because you loved me

I'm everything I am
Because you loved me

Celine Dion
on her album, "Falling into You"
Sony Records; 1996

Our Children Remembered

Please remember the following families this month.

Hope Barber
Daughter of Douglass and Vonda Barber
March 11, 2003 - April 25, 2003

Jay W. Barnett
Son of Virginia Barnett
March 13, 1988 - June 15, 2005

Richard Allen Bessling
Son of Robert and Barbara Bessling
March 18, 1982 - March 15, 1995

Linda Lou Boyce
Daughter of Cori Boyce
Sister of Lisa Schell
March 29, 1967 - November 30, 2004

Preston Leon Bromley
Son of Sandy and Leon Bromley
March 30, 1982 - September 2, 2003

David Ronnie Cain III
Son of Ginny and Donald Bussink
March 17, 1983 - January 31, 2003

Russell Joseph Calo Jr.
Son of Denise and Russell Calo
Grandson of Virginia Potts
Nephew of Karen Brown
March 15, 1983 - December 30, 2006

Emilia Morgan Claytor
Daughter of Ruthi and Ken Claytor
March 6, 2007 - March 6, 2007

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

Michael J. Dickens Jr.
Son of Michael and Marla Dickens Sr.
July 7, 1968 - March 29, 1996

Brian Edward Durner
Son of Lynn and Bill Durner
Brother of Jamie Durner
March 24, 1983 - July 8, 2005

Rebecca Lynn Faires
Daughter of Georgia Nelsen
March 16, 1985 - December 18, 2003

Brian Jeffrey Haley
Son of Jerry and Pam Haley
October 26, 1973 - March 4, 1990

James Michael Hall
Son of Pat and George Hall
November 4, 1965 - March 28, 1992

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

Eric Paul Haynal
Son of Nancy Doherty
March 7, 1969 - September 13, 2005

Traci Jeanne Heincelman
Daughter of Ed and Jeanne Heincelman
Granddaughter of Dorothy and Norm Heincelman
Niece of Terre and John Belt
Cousin of Eryn Belt
October 6, 1980 - March 10, 2002

Daniel Embert Hinton Jr.
Son of Dan and Pam Hinton
September 23, 1970 - March 7, 2003

Charles "Chip" Marshall Hodges
Son of Betty and John Hodges
October 24, 1954 - March 14, 2005

Matthew James Katz
Son of Bob and Sue Katz
March 13, 1982 - September 7, 2003

Gary Wayne Keats
Son of Delores Shuey
December 3, 1964 - March 8, 2004

Stephen William Kilian
Son of Billy and Aimée Kilian
Grandson of Andre and Anne Denault
Grandson of Jay and Debbie Kilian
January 15, 2004 - March 18, 2006

Darin Michael Kilton
Son of Gil and Twanda Kilton
March 21, 1974 - June 5, 1985

Troy Matthew Kotsol
Son of Kathy and Bill Boob
March 2, 1971 - September 3, 2005

Our Children Remembered

Please remember the following families this month.

Richard McKinney Jr.
Son of Richard and Ellen McKinney
March 6, 1975 - February 19, 1998

Matthew David Miles
Son of David and Donna Miles
March 24, 2000 - April 7, 2000

Edwin Brandon Molina Jr.
Son of Carole and Edwin Molina
July 6, 2005 - March 3, 2007

Kevin Michael Morris
Son of Gayle and David Morris
October 7, 1982 - March 30, 2007

Jennifer Margaret Neafsey
Daughter of Beth Neafsey
March 20, 1969 - February 25, 1984

Michael Dwayne Nokes
Son of Ellen Foxwell
November 9, 1963 - March 15, 1988

Brian James Para
Son of Joan Para
February 19, 1970 - March 19, 1991

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

Michael Alfred Persetic
Son of Joan Persetic
March 26, 1968 - July 2, 1986

Zachary Daniel Robertson
Son of Mary Ellen and Jim Young
March 3, 1978 - October 26, 2006

Daniel Keith Rogers
Son of Thomas and Lauri Rogers
June 16, 1981 - March 18, 2000

Philip Francisco Saff
Son of Jeff and Teri Saff
March 12, 2001 - March 16, 2001

Timothy A. Scaggs
Son of Bette and Tim Scaggs
December 29, 1996 - March 23, 2005

David Michael Schell Jr.
Son of Betty and Joseph Jones
April 7, 1981 - March 20, 2005

Scott Christopher Shaffer
Son of Barbara Shaffer
March 17, 1967 - June 5, 2004

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

Mark Edward Smeltzer
Son of Peggy Smeltzer
December 11, 1969 - March 15, 1997

Christopher John Smith
Son of Debi Wilson-Smith
March 27, 1981 - June 30, 2000

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

Darin Lacey Valerio
Son of Gerry and Sharie Valerio
July 26, 1967 - March 18, 1991

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

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

Kite Memories



Marcia Alig
Mercer Area Chapter, NJ/TCF

Brushed golden by the sun
a kite flies free above greening
meadow drifting lazily until it
turns to catch the eddy of a flock
of trumpeting geese homeward
bound.

Fragrance of early spring flowers
makes me giddy with the thought
that you too fly unfettered to
drift or chase dreams beyond
imagination, unrestrained by
life or expectations.

Now I cherish each kite that rises
to the wind because it fills me
with memories of your gifts for
love but – only sometimes –
I wonder whether you
remember, too.

Joe's Easter Basket

As I got out my Easter decorations, it took me back to happier years, when my kids were small and the Easter Bunny was still “real”. Joe was the youngest of our four children, and when he died two and a half years ago I felt as though it was time to put the Easter baskets away. I asked my other kids if they minded if we skipped the baskets from now on. They agreed; they were “too old” for the Easter Bunny. But it was impossible for me to put away Joe's. When I got Joe's basket out the first year after his death, it still had a few jelly beans, etc. in it - and a small surprise for me.



The year before, Joe had seen commercials on television for a new spiral-handled toothbrush. He bugged the daylight out of me to buy him one. I was very stubborn, telling him they weren't worth the money. I used the excuse that he was a “big kid” and should be using an adult sized toothbrush. The battle went on each time he was with me at the store or when he saw the commercial on television. It was fun to “ruffle” his feathers and heckle him; he took it so well.

For Easter that year, I bought him a spiral-handled toothbrush. I remember buying it at the store and laughing to myself thinking about how Joe would react when he found this silly toothbrush hidden in his basket. I knew he would say, “I knew I would win!” And he did.

My “surprise”? In the bottom of his basket, I found the box from that crazy toothbrush. I cried, then I had to laugh remembering the fun I had picking on him. I wondered to myself, why hadn't he thrown the box away? Why was it tucked down under the grass? It was as if he wanted me to find it and to have just one more chuckle over that silly toothbrush!

Yes, his toothbrush is still in the bathroom. As I reminded myself, my other kids have moved out and yet their toothbrushes remain. So, why not Joe's? Everyone wonders what to do with the Christmas stocking; my dilemma was what to do with the Easter basket. As I looked at the Easter basket, I decided then and there to use it. I now use it to decorate my kitchen table. I also use it to take snacks along to a gathering. A nice seasonal touch and a small, quiet reminder of my wonderful son! Happy Easter, Joe.

Janet Keller
Springfield, IL/BPUSA
from “Sharing the Journey”
Volume 9, Number 3

Unable are the loved to die,
For love is immortality.
~ Emily Dickinson



We gratefully acknowledge the following donations:

Sonja Hughes Bell in memory of her son Lacy "Danny" McDaniel
Rhonda and Norman French in memory of their son Brandon Robert French

Donations are gratefully accepted to offset the costs of our local Chapter's events and communications.
Please contact Chapter leader Dave Alexander for more information at 410.544.3634.

You Can Sponsor Our Newsletter or Website

If you are looking for a way to honor the life of a child who died, please consider sponsoring a month of our newsletter or website in their memory. Currently our Chapter newsletter is mailed to over 400 homes locally and all around the country. Your sponsorship helps to underwrite the costs associated with the printing, labeling and mailing of our newsletter and maintaining our space on the World-wide web.

For the website, sponsorship is \$25.00 for the month. Your child's name will appear at the bottom of the home page on our website (www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org). For the newsletter, full sponsorship of one issue is \$200. Two people or families can sponsor an issue and the cost will be divided equally.

Please contact Chapter leader Dave Alexander for more information.

We Can Always Use Your Help!



There are dozens of tasks that go into running our Chapter and 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 in little or large ways, please contact Dave Alexander.

OTHER RESOURCES

Bereaved Parents of the USA (BPUSA)

National Headquarters
708.748.7866, www.bereavedparentsusa.org

M.A.D.D. (Mothers Against Drunk Driving)

Provides emotional support, professional referrals, publications, information about criminal justice system, drunk driving and victims' rights laws, etc. Contact Jan Withers at 301.627.1743.

S.O.S. (Survivors of Suicide)

Meets first Tuesday of each month at Severna Park Methodist Church located at 731 Benfield Road in Severna Park, Maryland 21146. For more information call 410.987.2129.

Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc. (formerly known as The Stephanie Roper Committee for Victims of Violent Crime)

For more information please call 410.234.9885 or go to their website, www.mdcrimevictims.org. Located at 14750 Main Street, Suite 1B in Upper Marlboro, Maryland, 20772.

SAVE THE DATE:



Bereaved Parents
of the USA
- Anne Arundel County Chapter -

Hope and Healing Conference
Saturday, May 17, 2008
7:30 A.M. until 5:00 P.M.

Bereaved Parents of the USA Anne Arundel County Chapter

P.O. Box 6280

Annapolis, MD 21401-0280

www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org

NEXT MEETING MARCH 6, 2008



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED
DATED MATERIAL



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UPCOMING MEETING TOPICS:

Helping Our Surviving Children

Thursday, March 6, 2008

The surviving children in our families often have issues of their own. These issues can be vastly different depending on the age of the surviving child, his/her location in the order of the family, etc. Jane Schindler will talk about her experience in dealing with the issues faced by the siblings of deceased children and offer ideas on how we might help them.

Thursday, April 3, 2008

Program to be announced.

WHAT TO EXPECT AT OUR MEETINGS

Each of our monthly meetings follows the same basic format. We open with a general session attended by all for the first half hour of the evening. We usually schedule a program with a speaker or panel to address a topic that may be of interest and value to families mourning the death of a child. After this talk, everyone in attendance is invited to introduce themselves and say their child's name if they are able. Then, after a short break, we divide into sharing groups.

We always have these sharing groups and - particularly for the newly bereaved - the issues that are discussed do not necessarily have to focus on a program's topic, unless it is relevant to the members in the sharing group. We try to cover a range of topics in our scheduled programs that we hope are of value to a broad range of our Chapter members. We appreciate your feedback and suggestions for future program topics. Please contact our Chapter's Program coordinators Paul Balasic or Jane Schindler.