



Bereaved Parents of the USA

Anne Arundel County Chapter

December 2013

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Candles in the Night

A heart broken by the death of a child can never be healed. As parents we try every way that can be thought of to cope with the loss, but the void will always be there. At first that emptiness seems to take your breath away and most times we wish it would.

This becomes different with the passage of time. It never goes away, but at some point we learn to live with it, and in fact this horrible feeling becomes a lifeline of sorts. One of our biggest fears is to forget our children. Forget how they looked or how their voices sounded. The smiles and tears that blur together to make a child. This emptiness in effect becomes a constant yearning to remember our children.

Our hearts force us to find ways to fill that void to maintain our role as parents. Some are as simple as visiting the cemetery and some are as complex as changing our entire lives, dedicated to the memory of our child. In between are the many rituals we create or borrow from others to honor the memories and to keep our child's name alive.

Lighting a candle and saying a child's name keeps their memory burning bright. It means we are struggling to cope with this unwanted role of bereaved parent in the only positive manner we can. We will most certainly shed tears every time and we will still miss our child, but we are doing something that allows the world to hear our child's name and for that one moment the candle means so much more than anyone else could ever understand.



For a fleeting second that is our universe and every memory we have comes flooding back to us as we see the flame through tears, distorting it into something magical. It's the only gift we can give our children. This is as close as we can get to our child now. A tiny, flickering flame that can warm the heart and it's nice to think that perhaps they can see it also. It's a beacon, our light in the window, our shining star in the darkness. It's an opening of our hearts and a way to share our grief.

We gather to honor the memories of our children and to share this bond of lighting a candle for the children all over the world. We miss them so much.

— Jim Lowery (for a Service of Remembrance in 1997)



2013 Service of Remembrance

Please join us for this special Service sponsored by the Anne Arundel County Chapter of the Bereaved Parents of the USA
3 p.m., Sunday, December 8, 2013
St. Martin's-in-the-Field Episcopal Church in Severna Park, MD

The printing and mailing of this newsletter have been donated by

Bob and Phyllis Sinex in memory of their son

Owen Robert Sinex

September 2, 1993 – December 20, 2012



"Lament not, O Mother, and be not grieved; I am not of the lost, nor have I been obliterated and destroyed. I have shaken off the mortal form and have raised my banner in this spiritual world. Following this separation is everlasting companionship. Thou shalt find me in the heaven of the Lord, immersed in an ocean of light."

— Abdu'l-Bahá

Joe and Irene Belcher in memory of their son

Joey E. Belcher

April 21, 1975 – December 17, 2012



Joey, you were more than a gift from God; a catalyst; or an unconditional lover of humankind. You were a brief light of generosity, forgiveness, endless compassion and humility. With no answers to the "Why's" we've come to understand that's the way it had to be.

Forever loved and missed,
Papa, Mom and Mimi

Next Meeting: December 5, 2013

Introducing Our Children – The focus will be on our deceased children, giving everyone the opportunity to tell others about who they were. There will not be a presenter; sharing groups will be the focus. For all who want to participate, bring a picture or memento and introduce your child and describe what he or she was like.

Sharing groups – a key part of each Chapter meeting – will be held as usual for first-time attendees, and the newly and non-newly bereaved.

Calvary United Methodist Church
301 Rowe Boulevard
Annapolis, MD 21401

Meetings are held on the first Thursday of every month beginning at 7:30 p.m. and are open to anyone grieving the death of a child. Come around to the back of the church—there is parking and an entrance directly into our meeting room.

Doors open at 7:15 p.m.

We are a self-help support organization dedicated to assisting parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and siblings toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child. We provide information and education to extended family and friends. Our greatest strength as bereaved families is the unity we find in shared experiences which can lead us out of isolation, give us a place to “belong,” and offer us hope that together – we can make it.

WHAT TO EXPECT AT OUR CHAPTER MEETINGS

Our Chapter gathers one evening a month to address topics and offer support to those who are mourning the death of a child. Our meetings last for approximately 2 hours. Sometimes we schedule a 30-minute presentation at the beginning of our meeting. When the speaker or panel has concluded the presentation, we introduce ourselves and say our child’s name. We then take a short break before dividing into sharing groups.

Sharing groups are facilitated by fellow Chapter members and are completely confidential. During this time, the issues that are discussed—particularly for the newly bereaved—focus on the issues facing participants today.



Submissions for the January newsletter due to the Newsletter Team by December 1.
Send an email to: newsletter@aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org.

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Do You Use Amazon.com?

If so, AND you enter through our Chapter’s website (www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org), the Chapter will earn a commission of five percent on your purchases. Using the link does not increase your cost (and information about your purchase is not shared with the Chapter), but it does earn the Chapter a commission from Amazon. It’s an easy way for you to support our Chapter’s activities.

Go to the Chapter’s home page, click on the butterflies on the welcome page, and then scroll down the first page to the bottom, where there is an Amazon.com graphic that takes you to Amazon’s site. Entering Amazon’s site in this manner – through the Chapter’s website – ultimately credits the Chapter with the five percent commission on any purchases that follow.

Thanks in advance for your help!

Would you like to sponsor the Chapter’s newsletter or website (www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org) for one month in memory of your child? It’s a wonderful way to honor your child’s memory – to say his or her name for all the world to hear -- while providing financial support to the Chapter and its many activities offered to all those mourning the loss of a child.

Newsletter sponsorship is \$75 and website sponsorship is \$25. Just send an email to Newsletter Editor Terre Belt (thbelt@comcast.net), or call her at 410-721-1359, or sign up at a monthly meeting. Say Their Names!!! And help the Chapter, too!

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BPUSA/AA County Chapter
P.O. Box 6280
Annapolis, MD 21401-0280



Announcing the Chapter's Gift Giving

For many mourning the loss of a child, holidays are difficult days, and gift giving loses its luster. This year, consider buying a gift in memory of your child and bringing it to our monthly meeting in DECEMBER. We'll donate these "love gifts" to children in need through local charities. Doing good deeds in memory of your child lets you stay connected to them while providing for children who have very little.

Thoughts for the Bereaved during the Holidays

Plan Ahead. Bereaved individuals who experience the most difficulty with the holiday season are those who have given little thought to the challenges they will encounter. Consider ahead of time what may be expected of you, both socially and emotionally, as well as your own preferences.

Accept Your Limitations. Grief consumes most of your available energy no matter what the season. The holidays place additional demands on your time and emotions. Plan to lower your expectations to accommodate current needs.

Make Changes. Your circumstances have changed. Expect to make necessary alterations in holiday plans to accommodate those changes. Consider changing your surroundings, rituals, and/or traditions. Things may be somewhat different.

Trim Down to Essentials. Limit social and family commitments to suit your available energy. Shop early or use catalog sales. Re-evaluate priorities and forego unnecessary activities and obligations.

Ask for and Accept Help. Accept offers for assistance with holiday shopping, decorating, cleaning, cooking, etc. Chances are loved ones are looking for ways to lessen your burden at this time of year. Allow those who care about you to offer their support in concrete ways.

Inform Others of Your Needs. Give family and friends the tools they need to help you through the holidays. Be specific about your preferences and desires, and keep them up to date when those needs change.

Build in Flexibility. Learn to "play it by ear." There is no concrete formula for learning to deal with loss. You are the foremost authority on what is best for you, and your needs may legitimately change from day to day. Accept the fluctuations that must occur when walking in unknown territory and learn to take each moment as it comes.

Give Yourself Permission "To Be." Allow breathing space and expect fluctuations in mood and perspective. The bereaved work overtime. Not only is life more complicated, but all energy is siphoned into mental and emotional resolution. Grieving is nature's way of healing the mind and heart from the greatest injury of all. Allow yourself the privilege of limping till your wounds have healed and you can learn to run again.

— Reprinted from *Bereavement magazine*,
November/December 1989



Give Me a Special Gift This Year – Let Me Weep

The mother of a dead child will always weep at Christmas time
On that you can depend.

No matter how many people or presents,
The pulsating void that seems too large for her heart to hold
Keeps drawing her attention back to the child who's missing.
As others laugh and play,
Her thoughts fly away to Christmases past, or to a snowy cemetery;
To a face her heart aches to be kissing...
The face of the child who's missing.

— Fay Harden, TCF, Tuscaloosa, AL

A Holiday Message: Special Handling, Please

I was handed a package the other day.
It was wrapped securely to be mailed away.
Attached to the outside as plain as could be
Was a simple note for all to see:

Please rush through the holiday season;
Too painful to open for any reason!
Contained within, find one bereaved heart
Fragile, broken, falling apart.

Tried to go shopping the other day;
The hype of the season blew me away.
Sat down to write cards,
That was insane.
Couldn't find the list
Or think of my name.
People say, "Come over,"
"Be of good cheer."
"Celebrate the holidays,"
"Prepare a New Year."

But my grief overwhelms me
Like waves in the sea.
Can they cope with my crying;
An unsettled me?
I don't have any holiday cheer,
Decorations, traditions, big family meal,
I can't do it this year.

Do you know how I feel?
Guilty and frustrated!
I've let everyone down!
Our holiday celebrations
Used to be the best in town!

So just ship me away
Address unknown
When my grief is over,
I might fly home.

Signed: Bereaved Heart

— Mary J. Pinkava (published
in *Bereavement magazine*,
November/December 1990)



The Gift of a Dead Letter

It is rare when I interject my experiences as a funeral director into this column, but to properly relate this Christmas article it is necessary to mention that the most trying times of my career have been helping parents who have lost a child. Nothing, absolutely nothing, is as devastating as the death of a child and the agony is the same whether the child is five or fifty.

Frank Andrews was a dead letter clerk at the post office. His job was to try and find any scrap of information on or in an undeliverable letter so that it could be sent to its intended receiver or returned to the sender. Frank was good at his job and one of the great delights in his relatively simple life was to come home at night to his modest home, light up his pipe, eat a hearty supper and then sit in the family's comfortable living room and tell his wife and small son and daughter stories of his sleuthing at the post office. Frank's life was simple, but it was rewarding.

Suddenly disaster struck. Frank's son took ill and in spite of all the doctors could do, the child grew worse and died within a few days. The father's world fell apart. He went to work each day almost in a trance, speaking only when spoken to. When Frank Andrews returned home at night, it was a totally different Frank Andrews. He ate his supper in silence and then went to bed. His wife knew that all through the night he pretended to sleep but most of the night he lay with his eyes open staring at the dark ceiling. He could do nothing to lift himself out of his pit of despair.

Several months later when Christmas was nearing, Frank sat at his desk sorting dead letters. In the stack was a crudely written letter, addressed to Santa Claus, North Pole. He started to throw it in the trash can, but something stayed his hand. Frank Andrews sliced open the envelope and read a child's rough black letters which were drawn on inexpensive ruled paper. The letter read:

Dear Santa Claus,

Our house is very sad this year, and I don't want any presents. My little brother went to Heaven this year. All I want you to do this year is to take my brother's toys to him in heaven. Don't leave me anything, but if you could leave Daddy something to make him like he used to be, make him smoke his pipe again and tell me stories. I heard him tell Mother that only Eternity could cure him. Could you leave him some of that and I will be your good little girl.

Mary

Frank Andrews put the letter down and stared out the window at the bleak December afternoon. Going home that afternoon, there was a new spark in his gait. He was a man whose soul had risen from the dead. Standing in the doorway of his little home, he lit his pipe and smiled at his wife and his daughter. An undeliverable letter to Santa Claus had given Frank Andrews a little piece of Eternity.

— *Bill McCarty*



What Do I Do with My Child's Things?

This is a problem that faces all bereaved parents. We discuss it from time to time at our meetings. Some of us keep the child's room just as it was before the death. We don't want anything moved or touched.

Some of us find solace in giving things away to close friends or relatives. Knowing that someone we love is wearing our child's clothes or playing with his toys brings us a comfort.

Some of us find that we can deal with only a few items at a time: clothes one month; books another; toys, perhaps, a few months later.

Some of us find that, as times goes on and we would have gotten rid of the things anyway, it becomes easier. For instance, after a while, we realize that if the child were still alive, he would have outgrown his clothes, so it is easier to give them away. If he would have graduated from college this year, and therefore would no longer use the study desk or clock radio, we can give these things away in the normal time sequence.

The important thing is not to let others rush you into doing something before you are ready, and not to let yourself feel guilty about the amount of time it takes to make decisions.

When the time is right, and the decision is right for you, you'll know what to do.

— *Nancy Mower, TCF, Honolulu, HI*

Grief

There is no right way.

There is no wrong way.

I must learn to do it my way.

And you, my friend, must learn to do it your way.

— *Tina Goodale, TCF, Valley Forge, PA*



“What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others.”

— *Pericles*

May I Grieve?

In the daytime, I walk and work, and all;

But at home, in the evening, I stumble and fall.

The office says, “Function, smile and get control.”

But at home I can grieve to cleanse my soul.

Must I be two people for the rest of my life?

If I could be just one person for more than one day,

My freedom to grieve would help light the way.

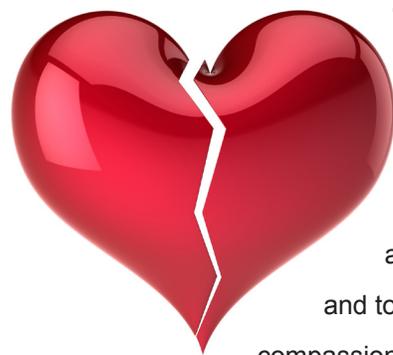
But society tells me not to be sad,

They say, “She’s at peace now and you should be glad.”

When grieving the loss of a child is perceived,

How much easier it is for we the bereaved.

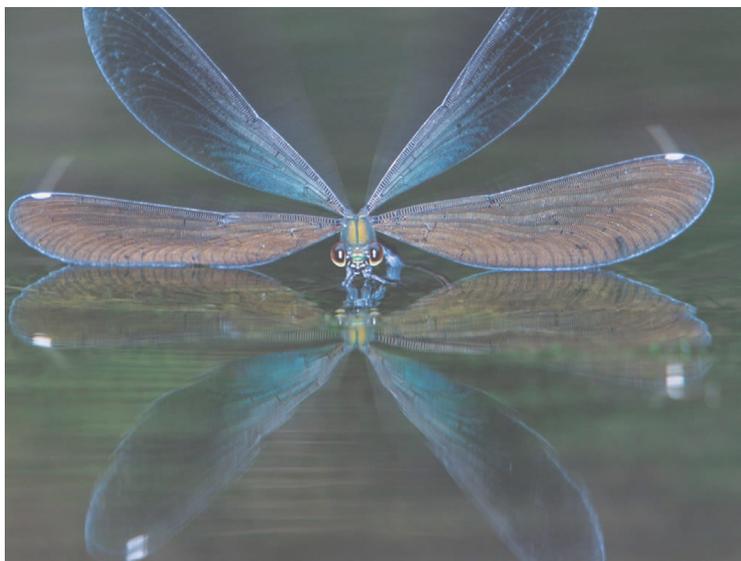
— *Susanne Demars, TCF, Hingham, MA*



The Wounded Heart

Children have preceded their parents in death for eons of time. We are not first, nor will we be the last to enter the realm of “bereaved parents.” But for now – right now – it is OUR HEARTS that are freshly wounded and OUR HEARTS in need of mending. Wounded hearts must be allowed to mourn and lament their loss, to pour out their pain, agony, sadness, hurt and anger, and to release their well of tears. Wounded hearts need to be wrapped in quietness, gentleness and compassion, away from the turmoil of daily life. A wounded heart not allowed to mend from the depth of its agony will be an abscess – to swell and undermine – erupting at a distant time. Or, suppressed, it will slowly choke the spirit of its host. Only the bearer will know when his heart has healed. The wounded heart, encouraged and given the time and freedom to mend, will carry in its chambers the memory and shared love of a precious child.

— *Nancy Green, TCF, Livonia, MI*



Being Human

Grief is a vital part of being human.

Your life as you once lived it seems to have been blown apart like a bomb. During your time of grieving, however, the world doesn't stop. Life moves along at its own fast pace. Things may not seem real to you at times.

Each death is very different, yet shares a similar grief response. Grieving is individual and personal. Dealing with the reality of your loss requires patience. Don't try to rush this process or discount what you are feeling. Discover your own style of grieving and coping, and use it to your advantage.

Your human nature gives you all the inner resources you need to survive this loss.

— Joseph Robert Pfeiffer (from *A Different Season*)



The Little Things

Often even the simple tasks of everyday living seem to drain every ounce of one's energy. Remember going to the grocery store even months after your child's death and the feelings you had as you passed up his

or her favorite cereal? Or watching another child the same age as yours in a restaurant and trying to swallow your food – you probably didn't even taste it. Or hearing a certain song in public and fighting back the tears? Sometimes even getting through the day in your own home makes you feel like you've run a marathon and leaves you in worse shape. You probably never dreamed that doing the laundry could make you cry or getting a piece of mail in your child's name could suck your breath away.

Even the best of friends and families can't possibly know the strength you must summon day after day after day. We shouldn't expect them to understand completely, but it does get lonely.

Perhaps this quote puts it in a nutshell: "One sad thing about this world is that the acts that take the most out of you are usually the ones that other people will never know about."

— Anne Tyler, *TCF, Sacramento Valley, CA*

Grief Triggers

It occurred to me that a good part of traveling our journey is spent managing "grief triggers." In the beginning, after our child's death, life itself is a trigger. Just breathing and going through the motions of everyday life triggers the gut-wrenching sadness and emptiness of life without our child.



Then as time goes on we start to notice that not every minute of the day is consumed by grief. We start to spend time crawling out of the pit of darkness into the light. We start to realize that we CAN live and that while even though we think of our child all the time we recognize the situations that "trigger" our grief. It may be seeing another child who reminds us of ours or discovering a picture of our child or a note or a video. At first these triggers completely take us off guard and throw us back in the pit.

But after awhile, we learn how to "manage" these triggers. Some of us avoid them altogether, such as not going to the cemetery or putting away the pictures. Some of us purposely look for the triggers because now we are strong enough to handle the emotion. Some of us cautiously make sure we always have a way out of a situation that might throw us into the grief pit. There is no one right way to manage the triggers of grief. Our journey is as individual as we are.

— Celeste Hardy, *BP/USA, Hinsdale, IL*

SIBLING PAGE



Who Am I Now?

You and I were a team
It seems we fought
against the odds

You and I, we'd paint rainbows when
The world would fall apart
We'd laugh and play all day
And make angels in the snow
We were two, you and I, me and you

Who am I now without you
Who will I turn out to be
I stand alone, I'm broken in two
Does anyone realize how much
I'm missing you.

You and I we'd play the music box
And giggle in the sand
You and I we'd look for shooting stars
When our tears got out of hand
We'd close our eyes real tight
And make a secret plan
We were two, you and I, me and you.

You're still with me, like the air I breathe
And the sun that fills the sky
Forever you and I.

— *Paul Alexander*

Snowflakes are Falling

As I look out the window at the snow falling
softly to the ground, I remember a time when I
held you in my arms and sang a soft melody to
you. It is cold outside and yet we are wrapped
in the warm cloak of love as I remember. You
are like the falling snowflakes, unique. There
is not another little sister like you on earth, just
as each snowflake is not like any other. My
memories are the warmth to nurture me when I
am cold and lonely. I can picture your smile, as
you taste the first snowflake falling on your tongue. I can hear your laughter as you run and twirl in the snow and I remember the
love we shared. Just as the snow forms a blanket on the ground, so does our love wrap a blanket around us and I remember. Are
you remembering as I am the snowflakes and the warmth of our love?

— *Betty C. Farrell, TCF, Arlington, VA*

Thank You

Thank you for...

- Not telling Mom when I stayed out late
- Hiding behind the sofa when I had a date
- Letting me try to sell you for money
- Being embarrassed when I called you Honey
- Having too many on my wedding day
- The rotten jokes on Christmas day
- Giving me some memorable times
- Being last in a long, long line
- Being my little baby brother
- My first chance at playing mother
- Being there at your beginning
- Holding your hand at the ending
- All the love I hope you knew was always in my heart for you.

Please, dear God, thank him, too, for he had honest faith in you.

Give him riches, make him shine, and show him, Lord, a real good time.

— *Karen, TCF, Savannah, GA*



If Only I Had Known

If only I had known
It was our last walk in the rain,
I'd keep you out for hours,
I'd give you a lifeline to my heart.
Underneath the thunder,
We'd talk for hours.
If only I had known,
I'd never hear your voice again,
I'd memorize each thing you said,
And on those lonely days at home,
I could think of you once more,
Keep your words alive inside my head.
If only I had known,
I'd never hear your voice again.

You were the treasure in my heart,
You were the one who always stood beside me.
So unaware I foolishly believed
That you would always be there.
But then one day I turned my head, and
You were gone.

—*Cortini, TCF, Valley Forge, PA*



Our Children Remembered

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

Dora Baldwin
Daughter of Aurelia Ferraro
December 11, 1964 - May 2, 2012

Stephanie Neoll Banchemo
Daughter of Lillian and Bill Banchemo
December 16, 1985 - April 9, 2012

Joey E Belcher
Son of Joseph and Irene Belcher
April 21, 1975 - December 17, 2012

David Brian Cutter Sr.
Son of Barbara Orndorff
July 23, 1968 - December 25, 2000

Melissa Ireland Frainie
Daughter of Kathy and George Ireland
December 12, 1971 - February 12, 2007

Nicole Pearl Hawkins
Daughter of Joe Hawkins
December 12, 1987 - June 26, 2009

Kole William Hoffman
Son of Erin and Jim McKinney McDonald
December 23, 2007 - March 7, 2010

Kurt Willard Johnson
Son of Willard and Marian Johnson
December 9, 1963 - August 11, 2003

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

David M Murnane
Son of Jennifer Murnane
March 7, 1987 - December 9, 2008

Kevin Alan O'Brien
Son of Lorrie and Keith O'Brien
December 24, 1986 - June 29, 2012

Michael Henry O'Malley
Son of Margie and John O'Malley
August 25, 1971 - December 7, 1991

Joshua Aaron Prosper
Son of Terre Prosper
August 30, 1986 - December 16, 2011

Megan Frances Richardson
Daughter of Karen Richardson
July 24, 1983 - December 4, 2004

Gregory Robert Sears
Son of Rob and Marilyn Sears
December 11, 1975 - January 6, 2012

Owen Robert Sinex
Son of Phyllis and Bob Sinex
September 2, 1993 - December 20, 2012

Jason Edward Skarzynski
Son of Benjamin and Sharon Skarzynski
December 19, 1977 - December 14, 1995

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

Joseph (Joey) Scott Sudo
Son of Joe and Suzanne Sudo
December 3, 1999 - April 23, 2012

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

Richard C. Watts
Son of Tom and Fran Cease
December 28, 1966 - October 28, 1998

Miriam Luby Wolfe
Daughter of Larry and Rosemary Mild
September 26, 1968 - December 21, 1988

*This is for all the caterpillars that never became butterflies.
All the butterflies that never caught the wind in their wings.
And all the hearts that had hopes and dreams of a
wondrous flight together.*

Donations may be made to offset the costs of our local Chapter's events and communications.
We gratefully acknowledge the following donations made recently:

Phil and Madeline Ammon in memory of Christopher Thomas Ammon
Douglas and Shirley Baer in memory of Douglas Lee Baer III
John and Terre Belt in memory of Cortney Belt and Traci Heincelman
Judy Bolly in memory of Wendy Jean Bolly
Bonita Boone-Adamecz in memory of Traci Lynn Boone
Carol Boslet in memory of Ryan Boslet
Cori Boyce in memory of Linda Lou Boyce
Bob and Sandi Burash in memory of Paul John Burash
Noel and Ann Castiglia in memory of Tria Marie Castiglia
Thomas and Ethel Cleary in memory of Scott Thomas Palmer
Thomas and Ethel Cleary in memory of O. Steven Cooper
Karen Coulson in memory of Craig Steven Nelson
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Marie Dyke in memory of Michelle Marie Dyke
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Joseph and Susan Errichiello in memory of Joseph Frederick Errichiello, Jr.
Aurelia Ferraro in memory of Jeff and Dora Baldwin
Norman and Rhonda French in memory of Brandon French
Rhonda French in memory of Stacy L. Perry
Joan Gardner in memory of Kimberly Judith Gardner and Theresa Karen Gardner
Phyllis James in memory of Cindy Sue Walker
Willard and Marian Johnson in memory of Kurt Willard Johnson
Leroy and Jeanne Jones in memory of Jeremy Scott Jones
Leroy and Jeanne Jones in memory of Roger Wallace Johnson
Chris and Janice Kunkel in memory of Jason Todd Easter
Dave and Maryann Lombardo in memory of David A. Lombard
Eugene and Marlen Maier in memory of Eric Eugene Maier
Don and Kathleen McGlew in memory of Jennifer Lynn Hamilton
Donald and Norma Melcher and Cheryl Lewis in memory of Brian Richard Melcher
Rosemary Mild in memory of Miriam Luby Wolfe
Bruce and Joan Para Miller in memory of Brian James Para
Rich O'Donnell and Fran Palmer in memory of Scott Thomas Palmer
Rich O'Donnell and Fran Palmer in memory of O. Steven Cooper
Sharon Poe in memory of John Christopher Poe
Bart and Vickie Rankin in memory of Samantha Rankin
Robert and Linda Rasmussen in memory of Steven Craig Rasmussen
Suzzette Reid in memory of Kenneth "Chuckie" Jones
Bobbi Remines in memory of Joseph William Remines
Bobbi Remines in memory of Romana Alice Hale
Karen Richardson in memory of Megan Frances Richardson
Dennis and Joan Rohrback in memory of Dennis Richard Rohrback
Kathleen Savage in memory of Robert M. White
Kristin Silva in memory of Kelsey Rae Silva
Benjamin and Sharon Skarzynski in memory of Jason Edward Skarzynski
John and Glenda Skuletich in memory of Abigail Helen Skuletich
Lewis and Peggy Smeltzer in memory of Mark Edward Smeltzer and Robert William Rey II
Kenneth Smith in memory of Tracy Fotino
Kevin and Tawny Stitely in memory of Tori Stitely
Lewis and Peggy Strader in memory of Christopher Lewis Strader
Jim and Mary Ellen Young in memory of Zachary Daniel Robertson
Zancan Press, Inc. in memory of all of our children

Chapter Notes

Urgent News: We are going green!

In order to save time, money and waste, our Chapter has opted to move to electronic newsletters instead of paper copies beginning in May of 2014. If you would like to continue receiving your paper newsletter in the mail each month, or if you do not currently receive our newsletter in your e-mail each month, we need to hear from you. Please feel free to email us at chapterleader@aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org or at aabereavedparents@gmail.com or send a note to PO Box 6280, Annapolis, MD 21401.

Also please remember that you can help honor your child and sponsor the monthly newsletter for \$75, or sponsor the website for \$25 a month. Our Chapter is able to support the community thanks to you and your generous contributions.

Have a peaceful holiday season,
Tiffany Gordon, Chapter Leader

Conference News

The Hope and Healing Conference is scheduled for April 26, 2014. This is going to be a wonderful day filled with speakers and workshops, time to meet other bereaved parents, a Memory Board for photos, and gift, book and button sales.

We are currently lining up speakers and presenters for the day. If there are any topics that you would like us to consider, or if you know of someone you feel would be a good addition as a presenter, please let us know. We are looking for suggestions and confirmation that the topics we are considering are indeed ones that you are interested in.

Prior to the Conference, we will need volunteers to help with:

- Registration materials: typing, printing and collating
- Name Tags: layout, print and assemble
- Signs for the workshops & hallways: Design and printing
- Picture Memory Board: Design, set up & oversee display
- Request Donations: for paper goods, breakfast items, water, office supplies
- Gift Sales Donations: Items for resale with proceeds to our Chapter
- Book Sales Donations: Gently Used Books on relevant topics
- Give-Away Memento: suggestions for a small item for each attendee
- Centerpieces: suggestions for the lunch tables, then give away

There are many small jobs to be done, so please consider volunteering and together we will make the Conference a success. We can help ourselves by helping others. To volunteer, please call Carol, **410-519-8448**, or email hopeandhealing2014@gmail.com.

Won't You Consider Volunteering?

(Submitted by our Treasurer, who lives by example! Scott is proud!)

Volunteers help improve the lives of others. And, while it may not be the reason they serve, most would probably agree — it feels good. But, pitching in provides more than that, research shows. It can also have lasting positive effects on a person's mental and physical health.

Emotional rewards

People who donate their time have lower rates of depression. In fact, those who volunteer report increased feelings of:

- Purpose
- Accomplishment
- Satisfaction
- Happiness

Volunteering can make you feel better about yourself — and more connected to others. You may find it provides perspective. And, it helps you forget about your own worries for a while.

Physical benefits to boot

Beyond personal satisfaction, your physical health can also improve from giving to others. In fact, some research shows that you may actually live longer. Volunteering has also been linked to lower rates of heart disease.

It may even help ease other conditions. In one study, people with chronic pain were peer volunteers for others living with pain. Besides helping others cope, the volunteers reported a decrease in their own discomfort.

Just give — the power of an hour

Anyone can volunteer. Even if you're busy, consider devoting a little time. Research shows that people can experience positive health effects from volunteering between 40 and 100 hours a year. So, even carving out one hour a week could be a boon to your well-being — that's along with all the good it could do others.

Plus, if your children see you giving, that's all the better. You'll be setting a wonderful example for them.

And, you don't have to do formal volunteer work. You might help a neighbor in need with shopping or yard work, for instance. Look for an opportunity that's meaningful to you — and something you'll enjoy doing all year round.

We're On Facebook

Chapter Members can join our group at <https://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/BPUSAAAC/>. Everyone must be a member of Facebook to join this group. We are a CLOSED group for privacy purposes, so nothing posted on our group's wall will go into your regular NEWS FEED to your regular FB friends - only other members of our group will be able to see what you posted there. When you get to our page, you must request to JOIN the group and approval will be sent when the page is checked each day. Then you will have full access to read all postings, and post your own comments or pictures for other members to read and respond to 24/7. Like our meetings, please do not share postings outside of this group. AGAIN, this is a CLOSED group. If anyone has a question, suggestion, problem or just needs someone to walk them through the Facebook process, please contact June Erickson at 410-451-8637 or email juneErickson@aol.com.



*May the spirit of the child who lives so deeply
within your heart help you through this month and
through every moment of re-establishing your life.
And may the memories of this season come on
gentle wings to bring you love and peace.*



**The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting®
December 8, 2013 at 7 p.m.**

“...that their light may always shine.”

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NEXT MEETING: December 5, 2013



Time sensitive
Must be delivered by November 29, 2013

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS:

Introducing Our Children
Calvary United Methodist Church, Annapolis, MD
Thursday, December 5, 2013

The focus will be on our deceased children, giving everyone the opportunity to tell others about who they were. There will not be a presenter; sharing groups will be the focus. For all who want to participate, bring a picture or memento and introduce your child and describe what he or she was like.

Happy New Year. or Is It?
Calvary United Methodist Church, Annapolis, MD
Thursday, December 5, 2013

For bereaved parents, going into a new year can present new and special challenges. Identifying and dealing with those challenges will be discussed, and those who wish to participate will be guided and encouraged to write letters to mark this moment in their grief journey, to be held confidential and shared with you one year later.

Service of Remembrance
St. Martin's-in-the-Field, Severna Park, MD
Sunday, December 8, 2013 @ 3 p.m.

Worldwide Candle Lighting
December 8, 2013 @ 7 p.m.
Sponsored by The Compassionate Friends

RESOURCES:

Hospice of the Chesapeake
www.hospicechesapeake.org or 410-987-2003

Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center
www.mdcrimevictims.org or 410-234-9885

Suicide Support Group
410-647-2550; meets the first Tuesday of each month in Severna Park, MD

MIS Support Group (miscarriage, infant death or stillbirth)
443-481-6114; meets the first Monday of each month in Edgewater, MD

Grief Recovery After a Substance Passing (GRASP)
www.grasphelp.com or 843-705-2217

The Compassionate Friends of Prince George's County
Meetings are on the second Thursday of each month at 7 p.m., United Parish of Bowie, 2515 Mitchellville Road, Bowie, MD

The Compassionate Friends, Reston Satellite Group (for no surviving children)
North County Government Center
Reston District Police Station
12000 Bowman Towne Drive
Reston, VA
Second Saturday of each month; 2pm - 4pm

We appreciate feedback on our Chapter meetings. If you have suggestions for future topics of discussion, please contact our Program coordinator: Mary Redmiles at Mary.Redmiles@gmail.com.