



Bereaved Parents of the USA Anne Arundel County Chapter

DECEMBER 2015

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Christmas Candles For Our Children

Christmas candles,
burn our sorrow in your flickering flame.
Let our heart's pain melt into your tallow to be
transformed—
unrecognized—
no longer candle, no longer pain.
Christmas candles, burning with the light of love,
far brighter than the many shades of memories,
rekindle in our hearts and in our lives,
a vigorous joy like that we knew
with sons and daughters,
brothers, too, and sisters.
Christmas candles, ignite the souls of us
who stand here, lost and lonely,
carry us forward with the fire of life.
Inflame us all in celebration
of the lives of those no longer with us here.
And with your shimmering rays,
help us to light the world with love.
--Shirley Ottman, Teri's Mom



Sponsorship of this newsletter has been made by the following family:

Irene and Joey Belcher
In memory of their son
Joey Belcher
April 21, 1975—December 17, 2012

“Living your un-lived life with you and for you every single day of our lives.”

Papa, Mom, Mimi and Riley



“We walk together with hope in our hearts.”

From the CREDO of BP/USA, AA County Chapter

Dear Bereaved Parents:

The holiday season is, for many of us, one of the most difficult times in the journey of our grief. For us, it is even more so as we lost our beloved son Joey on December 17, 2012 just a few days short of Christmas day. Joey was the “planner”, the “architect” of all our holidays, our trips, our family gatherings. And so, when we lost him, we felt as a boat adrift in the middle of the raging storm of our unspeakable sorrow. We have incessantly searched for a semblance of balance in this tsunami of despair, through interminable reading, counseling, support from our friends in our Bereaved Parents group and ceaseless, fervent prayer.



In that search we came upon a book entitled “A Decembered Grief”. The author, Harold Ivan Smith, in response to our e-mail asking for permission to quote some parts of his book, closed with the following thought:

*“ And remember, two things have to happen before Joey is really gone:
You must stop saying his name and you must stop telling stories about him.”*

Thus, we will continue to talk and share with all who want to hear the story of our beloved Joey. And in compass with that we vow to listen and get to know the names and stories of your children. While sharing the sacred part of what still lives in us, and the resolve to not allow their memories to fade, we can walk hand in hand down the path of this tragic journey we must follow until we embrace our children again.

Irene and Joe Belcher, Joey’s parents
BP/USA, Anne Arundel County Chapter

Say his name: Joey Belcher

And tell his stories:

At the funeral home I was downstairs in one of the reception rooms and this man introduced himself to me. “You’ve never met me before. My name is Brandon. I’ve known your son for about two and-a-half years and I owe everything I have to him.”

He showed me a knitted monkey he was wearing in one of his fingers. Joey used to knit and sew stuff, he used it for de-stressing himself of the many, many responsibilities he had since he was about 25 years old. So the little puppet monkey Brandon was wearing was given to him by Joey. I have several and I will show it to you one day.

He told me he worked for this other company and every time he delivered beer to one of the restaurants Joey owned, Joey would ask him why didn’t he go on his own? He said, Joey would tell him, “you create the recipes, you brew the beer, you look for the accounts and you deliver and then...

you give this company 90% of all your work and the credit." He told me Joey said, "I will buy from you and promote you with the business' owners of H Street, believe me, you will succeed beyond what you can imagine right now."

To make the story short, less than two years after, Brandon owns one of the largest, most successful breweries in the DC area. The name is DCBrau. When Joey passed he brewed a beer in his honor and named it, "St. Joseph's Triple".

As told by Irene Belcher, Joey's Mom

"Saint Joseph's Triple"

Joey was a unique sort of fellow. He was full of love. We never met someone who shared their soul quite like he did. Joey lit up when he saw us. He welcomed us with open arms and always made us feel as if we were truly special. His love was unconditional. There are very few people like this in today's world. Most have learned to keep their hearts close to them and away from the hungry society we live in, for fear they will be devoured. Perhaps this is why Joey is more like a Saint. He watched over us all. He encouraged us to go for our dreams and he supported us in getting there. Saint Joseph was a protector and he continues to protect us from afar.

We will always remember what a kind soul Joey was and how he always was thinking about helping others -- the mentorship he provided and the way he cared about everyone in this world.

Brandon Skall, in honor of Joey Edward Belcher

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 how many presents

the pulsating void that seems too large for her heart to hold

keeps on drawing her attention back to the child who is 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 is missing.

—Fay Harden



Next Meeting: Thursday, December 3, 2015 at 7:30 p.m.

We will have our 'Introducing Our Children' evening, through pictures and stories of our children, and gifts to be donated in their memory.

Calvary United Methodist Church • 301 Rowe Boulevard • Annapolis, MD 21401
Sharing groups, a key part of each Chapter meeting, will be held as desired for first-time attendees, and the newly and non-newly bereaved. **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.**

****Inclement weather on a meeting night**** - Meeting cancelled if Phase 1 of the Snow Emergency Plan is in effect at 5:00 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 Jan./Feb. newsletter are due to the Newsletter Team by December 10th.
Send an email to: chapterleaderaacounty@gmail.com.



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Do You Use Amazon.com?

If you enter Amazon through our Chapter's website (www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org), the Chapter will earn a commission of 5% on your purchases. Using the link does not increase your cost (and information about your purchase is not shared with the Chapter). It's an easy way to support our Chapter's activities. Go to the Chapter's home page, click on the butterflies on the welcome page, and 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 through the Chapter's website credits the Chapter with the 5% 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 Mary Redmiles (mary.redmiles@gmail.com) or call her at 410-721-6671, or sign up at a monthly meeting. Say Their Names!!! And help the Chapter, too!

REPRINT POLICY: Material in this newsletter of the Anne Arundel County Chapter/ BPUSA may be copied only: 1) if the article is copied in its entirety; 2) if the person writing the article is identified as noted in the newsletter; 3) if it is clearly stated that it was taken from the newsletter of the Anne Arundel County Chapter/ BPUSA; 4) if our website is cited in the credits. This material is to be used and given to help persons with the grieving process and may not be sold or become a part of something being sold for profit, unless first obtaining the permission of the author of the article and/or the current Editor or Chapter leader as noted in this newsletter.

Holiday Pointers

A few things I have learned over the years.

1. **The apprehension is often worse than the holiday.** The days leading up to the holiday are also stressful, and sometimes more so than the holiday itself. Know this, and consider ways to alleviate the apprehension, because the holiday will come and you will be OK. Perhaps make time to spend in quiet reflection, just you and your child.
2. **Make a plan.** Having a plan will add some structure to follow for the day. Your plan can be simple. Like going away, lighting a candle for the day, doing nothing, reading, watching TV, going to a movie, spending time with family, etc. And your plan can always change, even at the last minute.
3. **Take care of yourself.** Grief affects you not only emotionally, but physically as well. So listen to your body and if you are tired, then rest. Try to eat healthy. Let others do more, like cooking, shopping, decorating, etc.
4. **Adjust your traditions and celebrations.** Life will never be the same for you, so expect to change the way you celebrate the holidays. Do not let others tell you what to do, in terms of socializing and celebrating. Start new traditions, no matter how small, such as light a special candle, start a memory box, buy an ornament, donate gifts in your child's memory. Do things that soothe your soul.



And remember that our children are with us always. We can no longer reach out with a hug or a kiss, for now they reside in our heart, soul and mind. In some ways, they are closer than ever.

Carol Tomaszewski, Dave's Mom
BP/USA, Anne Arundel County Chapter

Connect With Us on Facebook

We are on Facebook. It is a closed group where we can continue our discussions in private. Your other Facebook friends will not be able to see what you post there, and you will not be able to share postings by others. You have to join Facebook first before you can become a member. Please go to <https://www.facebook.com/groups/BPUSAAAC/> and ask to join. You will be approved within 24 hours. If you have any questions or problems, please contact June Erickson at JuneErickson@aol.com.



Our Children Remembered

<p>Cito Arán Son of Sandra Arán December 2, 1978 - July 11, 2000</p> <p>Dora Baldwin Daughter of Aurelia Ferraro December 11, 1964 - May 2, 2012</p> <p>Stephanie Noell Banchemo Daughter of Bill Banchemo December 16, 1985 - April 9, 2012</p> <p>Joey E Belcher Son of Joseph and Irene Belcher April 21, 1975 - December 17, 2012</p> <p>Aris T. Carpenter Son of Kim Carpenter November 20, 1985 - December 4, 2013</p> <p>David Brian Clutter, Sr Son of Barbara Orndorf July 23, 1968 - December 25, 2000</p> <p>Jackie Cheyenne Foy Daughter of Mike and Cat Foy January 21, 1999 - December 24, 2008</p> <p>Melissa Ireland Frainie Daughter of Kathy and George Ireland December 12, 1971 - February 12, 2007</p> <p>Kole William Hoffman Son of Erin and Jim McKinney McDonald December 23, 2007 - March 7, 2010</p>	<p>Kurt Willard Johnson Son of Willard and Marian Johnson December 9, 1963 - August 11, 2003</p> <p>Michael Robert Legér Son of Daryl and Elizabeth Legér July 11, 1986 - December 29, 2000</p> <p>David M Murnane Son of Jennifer Murnane March 7, 1987 - December 9, 2008</p> <p>Kevin Alan O'Brien Son of Lorrie and Keith O'Brien December 24, 1986 - June 29, 2012</p> <p>Ryan Patrick O'Connor Son of Robyn and Kevin O'Connor November 9, 1986 - December 22, 2014</p> <p>Michael Henry O'Malley Son of Margie and John O'Malley August 25, 1971 - December 7, 1991</p> <p>Joshua Aaron Prosper Son of Terre Prosper August 30, 1986 - December 16, 2011</p> <p>Lynda Jo Quigley Daughter of Betty Quigley April 2, 1967 - December 13, 2011</p> <p>Megan Frances Richardson Daughter of Karen Richardson July 24, 1983 - December 4, 2004</p>	<p>Gregory Robert Sears Son of Rob and Marilyn Sears December 11, 1975 - January 6, 2012</p> <p>Owen Robert Sinex Son of Phyllis and Bob Sinex September 2, 1993 - December 20, 2012</p> <p>Mark Edward Smeltzer Son of Peggy Smeltzer December 11, 1969 - March 15, 1997</p> <p>Joseph (Joey) Scott Sudo Son of Joe and Suzanne Sudo December 3, 1999 - April 23, 2012</p> <p>Richard C. Watts Son of Tom and Fran Cease December 28, 1966 - October 28, 1998</p> <p>Nariyah Gabrielle Wheeler Daughter of Tarica Carpenter December 26, 2006 - January 2, 2007</p> <p>Miriam Luby Wolfe Daughter of Larry and Rosemary Mild September 26, 1968 - December 21, 1988</p>
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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.

Our New Reality

Dedicated to those who've gone before, those who dwell here now and those yet to come.

We have been taught there are only 3 dimensions. More learned people believe there is a fourth and maybe even, a fifth. But I know there is another science has not yet defined.

When your child dies, "ceases to inhabit this Earth in bodily form", "lives on the other side of the rainbow", or however you want to say it, a whole entire other dimension or universe is immediately opened up to you. It is as if your reality has been slammed or hammered in the gut by an astronomically humongous bat and the result is an alternate, yet coexisting, terribly unwelcome, universe you must now and forever live in.

You can't enter it if your brother or sister dies; you can't enter it if your father or mother dies; you can't even enter it if your husband, wife or long-term partner dies. The only way to gain entrance is if your child dies. It doesn't matter whether your child is old or young, healthy or ill, all that matters is that they are taken from you.

This universe or dimension is filled with unimaginable and seemingly unrelenting pain. This dimension seems to have no bounds. The ostensibly ever-present emotional tribulation comes from every direction.

There often is no warning as to when it will strike. When you are fortunate enough to be graced by some reprieve you may find yourself blasted right back into this dimension of terror. You can take action to protect yourself, but no matter how hard you try there will be times when the dimension sneaks up on you, engulfs you, and takes you as its prisoner.

You may and will, at times, feel annihilated. You will, in all likelihood, at times feel hopeless. There will be times when this wretched dimension overtakes you to the point that you feel you should just give in and let it.

But take heart, dear wayfarer. There are others who have gone before you into this vast, torturous wasteland. We have walked where your shredded heart now treads. We will take your hand and guide you through those treacherous, razor blade mountains to more peaceful valleys where you might rest your weary head. We will guide you through that very narrow, and seemingly infinitely, blazing tunnel of despair to the other side where you will be able to glimpse hope and maybe even smile or laugh awhile.

Yes, oh forlorn one, there is hope to be had. This dimension - our dimension- is real, but we need not abide there all alone and lost. Our grief need not destroy us nor define us. Our children are our lives; our children are our heroes. Let us carry on together to let their memories live, in spite of this new reality. Let us turn this seemingly all-encompassing horror into one in which our children and our love for our children, shine through us. Let this new dimension be not only one of pain, but one of joy for the love that once was, that is, and that always will be.

In our precious children's names we wish you peace. In their precious memories we wish you hope.

Written in loving memory of my sweet son, William
October 24, 1984 - April 6, 2012
By Linda Khadem

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

Annabelle Belcher & Sergi Ferre in memory of Joey Belcher
 Robert & Barbara Bessling in memory of Richard Bessling
 Bob & Sandi Burash in memory of Paul Burash
 Rachel Hand in memory of Adrian B.A. Ortega
 Linda & Yoosef Khadem in memory of William Khadem
 Morrow family in memory of Matthew Morrow
 Redmiles family in memory of Thomas Redmiles
 Margie Schwartz in memory of Zachary Schwartz
 Phyllis & Bob Sinex in memory of Owen Sinex
 Sisler, Rodriques, & Fairchild families in memory of Brandon Sisler
 Gary & Desirae Smith in memory of Joseph Claude Smith
 Rick and Carol Tomaszewski in memory of Dave Tomaszewski

Chapter Notes: Upcoming Meetings & Announcements

Our Memory Walk

Because of the hurricane threat, our Memory Walk was rescheduled for November 7. So this year we had a true Fall stroll at Quiet Waters Park. The morning was a little overcast, it was a little cool, the leaves crunched under our feet, and the light was still shining from each child's picture along the way.

Being with other Bereaved Parents, and communing with Nature, is healing to the heart, mind and soul.

Our children have shown us a path which we must follow, though not by choice. And that has made all the difference.

*I shall be telling this with a sigh
 Somewhere ages and ages hence:
 Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
 I took the one less traveled by,
 And that has made all the difference.*

From "The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost



Newsletter Changes

Our Chapter Newsletter is going through a transition. Starting in 2016, we will be publishing the Newsletter **bi-monthly**. So you will receive the January/February Newsletter at the end of December, and the March/April one at the end of February, and so on throughout the year.

If you want to Sponsor the Newsletter in your child's honor, you may have to provide the information two months in advance.

In addition, a new Newsletter Team is forming. Tawny Stitely will be doing the graphic design and publishing. And we are in **need of volunteers to work on the content**. Ideally, this would be several people who either write articles themselves, find items of interest on the internet, copy from other documents, write book reviews, etc. Please consider helping, even if it's only once in a while and not every other month. For if you find something that is helpful to you then it will also be helpful to others. For now, send items to chapterleaderaacountymd@gmail.com.

A tremendous THANK YOU to June Erickson and Katie Redmiles for creating and publishing our Chapter Newsletter for the past two years.

Newsletter Submissions – by December 10, 2015

If anyone has a story to tell, a poem to share, a bereavement book they read, an upcoming grief conference, a photo they took of an event, or an article they thought was particularly helpful in their grief journey, please pass them on to others through our Newsletter. These personal submissions will make the newsletter more interesting for everyone. NOTE: All submissions should be made by the 10th of each month for the following month's newsletter. That includes those sponsoring the newsletter in memory of their child. Sponsorship submissions should include a photo, poem/saying, parents' name, child's full name, birthday and angel date. Email to chapterleaderaacounty@gmail.com.

December Monthly Meeting – Thursday, December 3, 2015

7:30 p.m. at Calvary United Methodist Church, 301 Rowe Blvd, Annapolis, MD

We will have our 'Introducing Our Children' evening, through pictures and stories of our children, and gifts to be donated in their memory. This year we are donating to Angels of Addiction, through the ministry of the Ferndale United Methodist Church.

The gifts will go to the children of Baltimore who are in a poor situation because their parents are addicts. Just a little way we can brighten up a child's life. Or some may be donated to children at local low income elementary schools. The Church is also collecting hats, scarves and children's books to give to local low income children if you would like to donate. Sadly, there are so many children in poverty right now that we can't even break the surface, but hopefully we can cause a ripple.

Chapter Notes: Upcoming Meetings & Announcements

Annual Service of Remembrance – Sunday, December 6, 2015

3 p.m. at St. Martin's-in-the-Field Episcopal Church, 375 Benfield Road, Severna Park, Maryland 21146. Since its beginning in 1985, the Anne Arundel County Chapter's Annual Service of Remembrance has provided an opportunity for parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts and uncles, and friends to remember our precious children. Please join us in this celebration of our children's lives as we face the Holiday Season with Love, Compassion, and Hope for all.

January Monthly Meeting – Thursday, January 7, 2015

7:30 p.m. at Calvary United Methodist Church, 301 Rowe Blvd, Annapolis, MD

Longtime member and previous Chapter Leader, Janet Tyler, will discuss reasons and methods for writing letters to our children. The letters written at the meeting will be sealed in an envelope, addressed, and mailed to you next year.

In Loving Memory Conference – April 7 to April 10, 2016

"Finding your Lifeline", Hyatt Fairfax Hotel, Fairfax, Virginia

This four-day conference is for bereaved parents who have lost their only child or all their children. Grandparents, bereaved parent support group chapter leaders, friends and the professionals, who assist parents in walking through their grief, are also encouraged to attend. Mark your calendars now as this is the only Conference that focuses **entirely** on the needs of parents who have no surviving children. Kay Bevington, from Alive Alone will be participating, as will many other speakers and workshops to be announced. Register at <http://www.inlovingmemoryconference.org/>



Bereaved Parents of the USA 2016 National Gathering June 29 – July 3, 2016

"Crossroads of Your Heart"

Wyndham Indianapolis West, 2544 Executive Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46241



39th TCF National Conference

July 8 – 10, 2016

"Hope Rises on the Wings of Love"

The Compassionate Friends is pleased to announce that Scottsdale, Arizona, will be the site of the 39th TCF National Conference on July 8-10, 2016. "Hope Rises on the Wings of Love" is the theme of next year's event, which promises more of this year's great national Conference experience. The 2016 Conference will be held at the The Fairmont Scottsdale Princess. We'll keep you updated with details here, on the national website as well as



on our [TCF/USA Facebook Page](#) and elsewhere as they become available. Plan to come and be a part of this heartwarming experience.

**Presented by The Living Legacy Foundation
A Free Workshop for Grievors and Those Who Support Them**

Free and open to the public.

When grieving the loss of a loved one, the holiday season can be especially difficult. We will share strategies for managing the stress of the season and discuss ways to communicate your need to others.

December 1st, 6:45-8:15pm Randallstown Public Library (8604 Liberty Rd, Randallstown, MD 21133)

December 3rd, 6-7:30pm Essex Public Library (1110 Eastern Blvd, Essex, MD 21221)

December 8th, 6-7:30pm Rosedale Public Library (6105 Kenwood Ave, Rosedale, MD 21237)

To register, please contact Erin Gillard, Community Grief Counselor at (410) 245-9110 or egillard@thelf.org.

GRIEF RESOURCES:

For Grief Resources, please visit our Chapter website at:

<http://www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org/HTML/Resources.htm>

Also try this useful website at <http://grievingparents.net>

Those we love don't go away.
They walk beside us every day
unseen, unheard, but always near
still loved, still missed and very dear.