



Bereaved Parents of the USA

Anne Arundel County Chapter

August, 2004

www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org

SUMMERTIME

Summer vacation time has begun. This is perhaps a time that we looked forward to with as much anticipation as our children. Many of us may struggle to keep alive that enthusiasm because we remember so vividly the good times shared with the child that isn't here this year.

There are several articles in this month's newsletter that share the topic "vacation". They look at this time from different perspectives....as we grieve from so many different directions. I hope that as we read them, that we consider taking some time away from the daily stresses of work and our life. We may not be able to take a true vacation from our grief, but if we can relax a bit both physically and mentally, we may be better equipped to deal with the sometimes exhausting job of grieving.

Our wishes to all of our readers for a safe summer... and our hopes that you and your loved ones can find some time to relax and enjoy as best as you are able, this beautiful time of the year.

Rick Tomaszewski



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.
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The printing and mailing of this month's newsletter has been donated by Terre Belt- *In loving memory of the lives of Cortney Belt and Traci Heincelman*



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Anne Arundel County Chapter
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Annapolis, Maryland 21401-0280

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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...your compassionate friends.

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

September submissions are due by August 15th.



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.

* **September meeting note:** Fran Palmer will be organizing a T-Shirt activity at the September meeting, in time for the Annual Memory Walk in October. She suggested we also have the button machine at that meeting since members will be bringing in pictures for the T-Shirts. More info will be in next month's newsletter.

Refreshments at our monthly meetings:

A sign-up sheet is on the refreshment table at the meeting. Drinks, ice, and paper products are provided by the chapter. For questions, contact Dave Alexander at 410-544-3634

**Inclement weather on a meeting night :**

Meeting canceled if Phase 1 of the Snow Emergency Plan is in effect at 5:00 p.m. You can also check our website on the day of the meeting for an announcement about cancellations.

**MEETING INFORMATION**

Next meeting: August 5, 2004; Doors open at 7:15 p.m.
Meeting begins at 7:30 p.m.
(Meetings usually occur on first Thursday of month)
Calvary United Methodist Church
301 Rowe Blvd., Annapolis
Please park in the back of the church

PROGRAM: Loss Through Addiction

NEXT MONTH: September 2, 2004

PROGRAM: Holidays and Special Days

TELEPHONE FRIENDS

Sometimes we feel the need to talk to someone who understands the pain we feel and will listen to us. When you have questions to ask, a need to talk, or have a difficult day, these people welcome your call.

Marie Dyke, single parent, daughter, 17, only child, car accident

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

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

410-721-6457 Sandy Platts, infant death

OTHER RESOURCES:

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

* **Baltimore-metro area of The Compassionate Friends** of Maryland and Bereaved Parents of the USA, (410-321-7053).

* Stephanie Roper Committee, **for victims of violent crime**, Anne Arundel County chapter representative is James Donnelly (410-544-1473).

* The Compassionate Friends, **Reston Satellite Group (support group for parents who are now childless)**, second Saturday of the month, 1:00 p.m. at North County Government Center, Reston District Police Station, 12000 Bowman Town Drive, Reston, VA. For info., contact Linda Nielsen (703-435-0608, InLvMemory@Comcast.net); Harriet Evenson (703-525-9311); Sharon Skarzynski in MD (410-757-5049); website - www.inlovingmemoryonline.org

* **Survivors of Suicide Group (SOS)** meets the 1st Tuesday of each month from 7:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m., at Severna Park United Methodist Church, 731 Benfield Road, Severna Park (410-987-2129).

CHAPTER NEWS AND NOTES

Upcoming Meeting Topics

August 5: Loss Through Addiction

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

September 2: Holidays and Special Days

The holidays, particularly those in November and December, can be very difficult for bereaved parents. Carol Benjamin, a professional therapist, will discuss these issues and offer suggestions on preparing for and dealing with holidays and significant dates such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, Chanukah, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Valentines Day, the birthdate of the child, the deathdate of the child, the day the child would have first gone to school, etc.



Sponsoring a monthly newsletter in your child's name can be arranged through

Lisa Beall (bealls@erols.com).

Newsletter printing costs \$150 and mailing is \$50 each month.

Thank you!

Chapter Website

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

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



EASTERN SHORE BEREAVED PARENTS GROUP

Our Chapter has assisted some bereaved parents who live on the Eastern Shore to form a group there which now meets monthly. The next meeting will be on August 17th at 7:00 pm, at Queen Anne's Hospice, 300 Del Rhodes Avenue, in Queenstown. Subsequent meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesdays of the month starting at 7:00 pm.

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

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

AMAZON.COM BENEFITS OUR CHAPTER

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

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

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

Donations may be made to offset the cost of printing and mailing the newsletter, the memorial service, library books, and other literature. We gratefully acknowledge the following donations:

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

Barbara M. Hale, in memory of
Elizabeth Sinton Archard

Kenneth A. Smith, in memory of
Tracy Fotino



Photos of
memory stepping stones
taken by
Donna Rohrbaugh



Friday, July 02, 2004

Dear James Ryan,

Last night many memories were cast
In concrete
Where they will remain forever and
ever and ever.

Grieving hands were finding ways to
continue to heal,
And honor their heart to heart
connections.

Until we meet again.
Love,

Mom



The 50 Year Vigil of the Grave

Ten years ago, a grave in the cemetery caught my wife's attention. It was close to the graves we visited... my wife went to read the inscription. It was the grave of a girl named Marjorie. She was only 3 years old when she died in 1935.

My wife's name is Marjorie also, and that may have been a small reason for our interest in the grave. But it was the date of death that struck us. Although the child had died in 1935, forty two years later... there were beautiful, tended flowers growing on the grave.

Whenever we went to the cemetery we visited this grave. We saw flowers growing there every summer for the next eight years. We never saw the person who planted and tended the flowers. We guessed it to be the girl's mother, whose date of death was yet unwritten on the family stone.

The flowers appeared until 1985, 50 years after the child had died.

That summer there were no flowers.... And the date of death appeared on the mother's headstone.



Anthony Fon Eisen, *The Hartford Courant*, seen in a Cincinnati newsletter, April 1994

SIBLING PAGE



PLEASE DON'T OVERLOOK ME

I know my size is smaller
 My hands are littler
 My legs are shorter,
 But my heart can hurt just like yours.
 I'm a CHILD, you're an adult...
 Please don't overlook me!

I know my vocabulary isn't the greatest,
 My attention span lacks longevity
 My logic sometimes seems irrational.
 But my mind can question death just like yours can.
 I'm a TEENAGER, you're an adult...
 Please don't overlook me!

I know my needs seem less important,
 My feelings seem less controlled,
 My actions are hard to understand,
 But my body needs a hug just like yours does.
 I'm YOUNGER, you're older...
 Please don't overlook me!

I know tears are hard to show
 Fears are different to face,
 Death means not coming back.
 My soul searches for reassurance just like yours does.
 I'm HURTING
 And you're hurting too..
 Please don't overlook me!

*Bonny Bright, TCF Salt Lake City TCF
 Lovingly lifted from Winona, MN/ LaCrosse, WI, WI Newsletter*

Sometimes

Sometimes something clicks.
 And with a tear, remembrance
 Of the pain and loneliness
 Flood the heart



Sometimes something clicks.
 And with a smile, remembrance
 Of the Love and Laughter
 Flood the senses.

And then there are times
 When nothing clicks at all.
 And a voice echoes through
 The emptiness and numbness
 Never finding the person
 Who used to fill that space.



And sometimes, the most
 Special times of all,
 A feeling ripples through
 Your body, heart, and soul
 That tells you that person
 Never left you and
 He's right there with you
 Through it all.

Kirsten Hansen
 TCF, Kentfield, CA



OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED

Love shared can bring comfort to a broken heart.



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

Paul J. Burash
Son of Sandra and Robert Burash
January 18, 1972 - August 8, 1992

William F. Carter, Jr.
Son of Dorothy Carter
Brother of Lisa Beall and Janet Tyler
April 24, 1959 - August 16, 1992

Alexandra Ann Denevan
Daughter of Gregory Denevan
September 18, 1985 - August 21, 2002

Kathleen Yvette Denevan
Daughter of Gregory Denevan
August 10, 1970 - May 13, 1971

Isaac Paul Elliott
Son of Paul and Deborah Elliot
August 24, 1979 - April 27, 2003

Barbara Jean Fennessey
Daughter of Kay and Ray Fennessey
August 30, 1960 - August 4, 1989

R. Daniel Ferrer
Son of Anna Ferrer Severn
May 25, 1972 - August 29, 1986

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

Craig Robert Galyon
Son of Susan Galyon Pyle
August 23, 1979 - October 11, 2001

Kimberly Judith Gardner
Daughter of Joan Gardner
February 2, 1968 - August 16, 1992

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

Michael G. Hartline
Son of Kathleen Hartline
August 27, 1975 - August 16, 2001

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

Jeremy Scott Jones
Son of Leroy and Jeanne Jones
August 4, 1976 - August 21, 1986

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

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

James Allen McGrady
Son of David and Shirley McGrady
January 15, 1968 - August 10, 1987

Brian Richard Melcher
Son of Norma and Don Melcher
Brother of Cheryl Lewis
August 30, 1960 - June 14, 2002

Benjamin Mogil
Son of Kate and Allyn Mogil
August 12, 2002 - August 12, 2002

Ryan John Mulloy
Son of Susanne and John Mulloy
August 19, 1975 - August 12, 1993

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

Scott Thomas Palmer
Son of Frances A. Palmer
August 3, 1983 - September 1, 1996

James Ryan Rohrbaugh
Son of Donna and Doug Rohrbaugh
August 30, 1983 - September 5, 1983



OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED

Gary Lee Ryon, Jr.
Son of Betty Ryon
August 24, 1989 - December 1, 2002

Donald L. Severe, Jr.
Son of Issy and Chuck Mattis
August 23, 1956 - December 13, 1984

Luther Stowe, II
Son of Agnes and Luther Stowe
August 27, 1963 - November 12, 2001

Brittany Nicole Tyler
Daughter of Janet and Dan Tyler
October 12, 1986 - August 23, 1992

Roy James Wyrick
Son of Patricia Wyrick
August 8, 1962 - January 10, 2002



An Open Letter from a Mother to Her Daughter in Heaven on Her Birthday

Skyward. Skyward. Nine years of looking for a special star that I can call your very own for just a little while in the wee hours of the morning of August 26th, as I commemorate your early morning birth each year. This year marks twenty-five years since that glorious event. I have always wanted to be the first to wish you a Happy Birthday, and the year 2004 will be no different. I'll be out looking for that star.

I can't believe I've lived this long. Truthfully, I haven't lived this long, but I think I'm living now. I don't know when my life engine restarted after you died, but it did, almost in spite of me, I think. There is hope. I see that now. Sometimes I can't help but resist it. It's just easier for me – so strong is the force of grief and of my missing you. But, I'm beginning to see what I didn't know before – that at some point in my grief journey, it becomes my choice, whether to live and how to live. Not every day, and certainly not in the early years when I won't apologize for not having had control of anything, but at some point in my grief and life journey, it is my choice. I'm going to try and make some good choices in your memory; I'm going to try to do some "living for two," as I did 25 years ago.

That doesn't mean that life is the same. It will never ever be the same. I'm not even yet sure if it will ever be as good. Even after eight years, for me it's too early to tell. But, at least I know my life engine is revving much of the time, and for now, I'll take that as progress. As you know, I've relaxed my standards since your death.

Your friends are thinking babies and careers and how you juggle the two. It's a challenge you'll never face, but you are influencing their choices as they sort out their lives. Your friends and mine tell me all the time of how your life and death have made a positive difference in their lives. For that I am sincerely thankful, but I wish there had been some other way. Someday I hope I can just be thankful, but I'm not there yet, and there always seem to be the "but I wish" endings for my thoughts.

Your blonde curly hair. Your gorgeous smile. Your contagious giggles. Your outrageous laugh. Your loving ways. Your generous nature. Your gift of sincere friendship. You. I miss you, birthday girl. The best I can do is to send my love and to hope that it reaches you somehow. Happy Birthday, my dear Cortney. I love you. (Hope you get a kiss from Traci, although I wish she were sending her love as I am.)

P.S. Watch out for the love thoughts coming your way – there are so many who still remember you on your birthday.



Terre Belt
Anne Arundel County Chapter
Annapolis, MD

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 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 firsthand the importance of reaching out to help because others had reached out to us during that crucial time.

Barbara Bush

NO VACATION

There is no vacation from your absence.
Every morning I awake, I am a bereaved parent.
Every noon I feel the hole in my heart.
Every evening my arms are empty.
My life is busy now, but not quite full.
My heart is mended, but not quite healed.
For the rest of my life every moment
Will be lived without you.
There is no vacation from your absence.

Kathy Boyette, TCF
MS Gulf Coast Chapter, MS

SUMMER VACATIONS

There is not a lot written about vacation time even though this can be a very difficult time. I remember so well the first July vacation we took after Ruthie's death in April. I could not face going and "leaving her" and going to all the places we had been in the past with her. That is one of the firsts - here are some hints that may help if you are dreading vacation time. By the way, there is never a time that you don't think of vacations past but the memories get less painful and you begin to forge new memories.

WHERE DO WE GO? There is no good answer for that. Yes, if you go where you have always gone on vacations, memories will flood in. But if you choose a totally new place, we found that you wonder how she would have liked it here, what would she have done, etc. So, you take your choice and expect the feelings and plan for them!

WHAT DO WE DO IF WE VISIT RELATIVES? Talk to them. Tell them that it is hard and that it is all right to talk about your child - when they see that you welcome hearing the name and Having them share memories they have, everyone can relax.

WILL I FORGET HER/HIM? Don't fear! You can never forget just because you are away from home memories. Don't be afraid to talk about her/him and let them be part of things

TRAVELING COMPANION. Remember that you can not really leave your grief at home when you go on vacation. It will go with you. Plan for it and pack for it. Don't overschedule the days and activities - you won't feel like doing as much perhaps, as usual and you may tire more easily. Take along some reading material - perhaps on grief, but take some light reading too.

Just remember that bereaved families and people need a respite from the daily stresses of work and of life and grief. Also know that often the anticipation is worse than the actual event. If you have been through Christmas, a birthday or death anniversary, etc., you may remember that the weeks or days before may be worrisome and you may not be sure how you will get through it but, suddenly the day is there and over and it wasn't as bad as you expected... even if it was bad.

So just decide when and where the vacation will be, plan ahead, and go. Allow yourself to enjoy it! Often we feel guilty if we have a good time.

Remember how much your child enjoyed trips and life and know that she or he would want you to do the same!

By Betty Ewart

Betty is the editor of *A Journey Together*, the BP/USA national newsletter and wrote this in 1996

REMEMBRANCE

I see your smile in the brightness of the
summer sun.

A gentle breeze is the touch of your hand
on mine.

A wave breaks softly on the shore, and I
hear you whisper, "Remember me."

A winged bird begins it's flight into the
distant sky.

The sound of children's laughter fills
the air.

The evening stars become your eyes,
and I reply... "You are ever near."

Priscilla D. Kenney



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Bereaved Parents of the USA CREDO

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

We welcome you.