



Bereaved Parents of the USA

Anne Arundel County Chapter

June, 2004

www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org



This inspiring photo of the balloon release was taken at the Annual Hope & Healing Conference by Fran Palmer on May 15, 2004. If you would like a color copy e-mailed to you, please send e-mail to Rick at akuahi@aol.com.

The Annual Hope and Healing Conference was held on May 15, 2004 Calvary United Methodist Church. The conference was a success to which the 81 attendees can attest.

The keynote speaker, Father Joe Breighner was as insightful, comforting, and humorous as he is on the radio. It was certainly a highlight of the day for me. The sessions were outstanding, as was the interaction by many and the thoughtful sharing by others.

There are so many to thank that it would not be possible in this space. But thanks must be given to all who attended, all who assisted in so very many ways, to the ladies who provided the wonderful food, to all the volunteers and workshop contributors; but especially to the person most responsible, Pat Schultz, along with Jim, always there to help. To everyone that contributed to the success, thank you and bless you!

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.

Printing of this newsletter has been donated by **Dorothy & Norm Heincelman** in memory of their granddaughters **Cortney Belt** and **Traci Heincelman**

Postage has been provided by **Laura & Curtis Miller** in memory of their two sons, **Benjamin James Miller** and **Calvin Russell Miller**



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Anne Arundel County Chapter
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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.

June submissions are due by June 20th.



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.

The Bereaved Parents of the USA is a non-profit self-help organization. We operate on donations from the community we support and concerned professionals in order to produce our newsletter, Service of Remembrance, library, and other needed services. Donations are tax deductible.

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: June 3, 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
Park in the back of the church

PROGRAM: Writing as a form of healing

NEXT MONTH: July 1, 2004

PROGRAM: Memorializing Our Children

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:

* **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

* **Seasons, a suicide support group**, 3rd Tuesday, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Lutherville (Dorothy Schanberger, 410-803-2098).

* **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

June 3: Writing as a Form of Healing

As a newly bereaved parent Donna Rohrbaugh needed to know when if ever she might expect to experience some relief from the dark sadness and physical pain of her loss. She just needed to know that it would get better because she felt she certainly could not live for an extended period of time feeling as she did after burying her baby boy, James Ryan. Writing was always a form of relief for Donna, but after James Ryan there simply no words that could describe who she was or what she was feeling so she read the words others were able to write. When she was able to put pen to paper the depth of her words stunned her. Donna will talk to us about how writing can help in our grieving process.

July 1: Memorializing Our Children

Many bereaved parents seek ways to memorialize their deceased children and to keep their memories fresh in the minds of family, friends, and the community. Fran Palmer will demonstrate the making of garden stepping stones and lead a workshop for those interested in making the stones during the sharing group period of the evening.

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 June 15th 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.



LOSS OF A FOUNDING MEMBER OF BPUSA



Mitch Dudnikov died on Tuesday, April 27, with Reneé, the love of his life, his wife of almost 55 years, at his side. You may not have had the opportunity to know Mitch, but those who attended National Gatherings or who were active in the early days of our chapter certainly did.

Mitch and Reneé were founding members of BPUSA, and they helped support the establishment of our Anne Arundel County chapter 19 years ago. Mitch was a National Board member and a member of the Baltimore chapter. He and Reneé received the Roy & Juanita Peterson Award in 2001 for their endless and tireless work for BPUSA.

When their beloved son, Marc, died, his ashes were spread on top of a mountain in Washington state and Mitch's ashes will be spread in the same place. Reneé requests that each person who knew Mitch remember him in her or his own way, with a prayer or a thought of a special time spent with him. We mourn Mitch's death and our thoughts and prayers are with Reneé.



Stepping-Stone Making (July)

A reminder that for the *stepping stone making as a memorial*, bring the treasures that you would like to press into the stepping stones with you. Fran Palmer will try to bring some things with her. Her son Scott liked turtles and baseball, so there is a turtle and mini-baseball in his stone. Fran used those little beads with letters on them to spell out his name and used dominos for his birthdate.

We encourage you to use your imagination and also, bring rubber gloves. We will probably be making 8" round stones so bring nothing too big to use in that size stone.

AND GOD SAID

I said, "God, I hurt."
And God said, "I know."

I said, "God, I cry a lot."
And God said, "That is why I gave you tears."

I said, "God, I am so depressed."
And God said, "That is why I gave you sunshine."

I said, "God, life is so hard."
And God said, "That is why I gave you loved ones."

I said, "God, my loved one died."
And God said, "So did mine."

I said, "God, it is such a loss."
And God said, "I saw my son nailed to the cross."

I said, "God, but your loved one lives."
And God said, "So does yours."

I said, "God, where are they now?"
And God said, "Mine is on My right and yours in in the Light."

And I said, "God it hurts."
And God said, "I know."

Posted on the wall at the Oklahoma bombing site by
K.C. and Myke Kuzmic, Stockton, CA

SIBLING PAGE

DO I HAVE TO?

Mom, do I have to stop loving my brother
because he's not here?

Will I forget about him because
he's not near?

I remember all the things we did together,
even though we were very young.

I laugh and feel warm each time I think
of a particularly funny one.

Sometimes I get so angry that he's no
longer here to share,

But I know he knows it's only because of
how much I still care.

I miss him so, even though at times
we don't agree.

Just knowing he was there made things
feel safe for me.

He always felt he had to be my strong,
protective big brother.

And that's a bond we'll always share
forever with each other.

He tried to protect me even when he, too,
was just scared.

No, I won't stop loving that big brother
of mine.

Not now, not ever, not till the end of time.
He will always be a part of what makes
me be me.

And that's the part of our love that
will live eternally.

Jackie Rosen
TCF/N S. Broward, FL



“Healing happens as you allow
feelings to happen.”

unknown



“I'll lean on you
and you lean on me
and we'll be okay”

Dave Matthews Band



OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED

Love shared can bring comfort to a broken heart.
Please remember the following families this month.



William P. Anthony
son of Linda and Bill Anthony
June 1, 1965 - January 2, 1999

Veronica Anne Arata
daughter of Rick Arata
June 12, 1968 - May 25, 2000

Owen F. Carr IV
son of Peggy Carr
June 29, 1978 - February 18, 2003

Joseph Cranston
son of Mary and Thomas Cranston
June 11, 1974 - June 11, 1974

Jack Turner Dumont
son of Jill and Dave Dumont
June 26, 2003 - June 26, 2003

Ronald Wesley Farley
son of Dorothy Farley
September 15, 1955 - June 28, 2000

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

Mark C. Knepper
son of Patricia and Joe Knepper
June 28, 1968 - October 17, 1988

Nicholas Paul Liberatore
son of Pat and Larry Liberatore
September 27, 1980 - June 9, 1997

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

Benjamin James Miller
son of Laura and Curtis Miller
June 2, 2003 - June 6, 2003

Robert Antonio Morgan Jr.
son of Kathy and Paul Waters
April 23, 1984 - June 21, 2003

Connor S. Persons
son of Dierdre Persons
June 19, 1990 - October 16, 2002

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

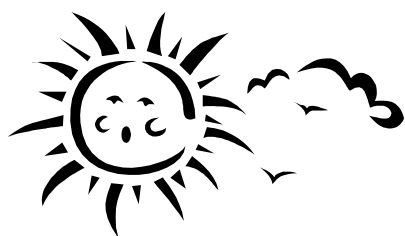
Deon J. Summers
son of John E. Summers
June 5, 1989 - September 2, 2003

Michael Shane Wheeler
son of Lita and John Wheeler
June 22, 1976 - January 11, 1997



OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED

(continued)



The highest privilege there is,
is the privilege of being allowed
to share another's pain. You talk
about your pleasures to your
acquaintances; you talk about
your troubles to your *friends*.

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

Lillian G. Mueller in memory of her
daughter, Leslie Davis

DeWitt & Anne Wilcox in memory of
Misty Dawn Smith and Sean Amaro Wilcox.

Ann & Noel Castiglia, in memory of
Mitch Dudnikov

At the Hope and Healing Conference, ladies at the registration desk sold angel cards to build an angel wall. The following children were named by family members as "special" angels:

Jamie Alexander
Ricky Bessling
Gary W. Keats
Jeffrey McGinness
Julie McGinness
Scott Thomas Palmer
Joseph William Remines
Tanager Ricci

James Ryan Rohrbaugh
Kelly Schultz
Misty Smith
Gary Spirt (Jake)
David Tomaszewski
Sean Wilcox
Grant Williams
Samuel Williams



CHANGES IN OUR LIVES

The death of a child brings many changes to our lives and lives of our families. The first change is death itself. Our child is dead-there is nothing we can do about that change. We mourn for this loss, saying "if only" and "why didn't we..." as we struggle with acceptance of the finality of death.

Then the changes in our daily life stand out. The extra place at the table, our child's room, their possessions, their clothes, and the phone calls and letters that are no more. Each one of us has experienced these agonizing and desperate changes, feeling helpless and frightened. Our anger and sense of unfairness over these changes can make our lives miserable, but we can do something about these changes.

Once you realize nothing or no one can bring you peace but yourself, you will begin to search for your personal peace.

A person who needs but refuses the painful physical therapy exercise to correct an injury will remain a cripple for life. The same is true of emotional therapy. We must do some things that are painful at first if our emotional state is to become stable again. If we avoid all situations that might be painful, we may end up as an emotional cripple. Our progress is slow and very painful but we can finally learn to use our grief in a positive way. Misery is optional - there is another way.

We have experienced not only death, but also life. Death has brought us closer to life and more aware of the living. This awareness of living makes us aware of the needs of others. Our compassion is expanded, our understanding of life is changed and given time, we reach out to others in their time of need. We cannot have coped with such a devastating loss and not be changed.

MEMORIES



The walk down the street
 The smile, Dad, how was your day?
 Dad, will you teach me to drive?
 The hug, the kiss, sitting on my knee.
 Dad, I saw a pretty dress today
 Dad, I know you will like him.
 I told him all about you.
 The football games in the cold.
 Dad's taxi that was always busy.

The boyfriend sitting with her on the sofa.
 The first time you see him kiss her.
 All the love you shared with each other.
 The pride that is my daughter.
 How pretty and only sixteen.
 Memories, Memories all I have
 Are Memories.

Larry Warren, TCF/ North Georgia

OLD YELLOW TRUCK

Several weeks ago I sold my old, rusty, yellow pickup truck. I placed an ad in the Baltimore Sunpaper; it read: For sale - '78 Toyota pickup truck, 119k miles, auto, as is, \$450, Call. Someone called, paid me \$400, and drove away with it all in the same day. I should have been happy to get rid of it, but instead I ended up feeling depressed.

If I could have advertised the truck in our TCF Newsletter, the ad would have read: For sale (regretfully) '78 Toyota pickup truck, used by a college student when he was home for the weekends or semester breaks. Provided safe transportation through a snowstorm on his last New Year's Eve. Four speaker Craig stereo radio (brand name the same as the college driver's name) with rock music stations selected. Ash tray clean except for old bank receipts from his accounts. Truck used by father to haul things while thinking about his son. Price: \$-Priceless, don't call.

It has been 18 months since my son died and yet it is still difficult to part with certain things—even things that did not belong to him. This is a problem which we're all faced with. What to keep? What to let go? The practical side of us says these things are no longer needed so we should get rid of them. The heart says my son or daughter owned these things or used these things; they bring back memories so we should keep them.

There is not a right or wrong answer as to what we keep or what we let go. I reassure myself by noting that these memories of my son didn't leave with that old yellow truck, but will remain locked in my heart forever.

Gary, TCF, PA-MD Line



Ed. Note: the above article struck me deeply. My son had an old Ford pickup truck that he was working on and kept it at our house. He was trying to get it into good enough shape so he could get plates and use it for work. I remember him beaming after he got it running and would drive it on the little dirt road in front of our house, not able to take it out on the main road. After David died I had to wait about the same amount of time the father in article had waited before I could have it taken from our property...and felt the same about the value of the truck; it was priceless.

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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.