



Bereaved Parents of the USA

Anne Arundel County Chapter

March, 2004

www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org

Today we celebrated the 11th birthday of my sons. In the course of the day, several thoughts have introduced themselves alongside the joy and satisfaction that birthdays bring. One is a recognition of "the other side of the fence" and another - the incredible passage of time.

When my brother, Fred, and my niece, Brittany died in August of 1992, I had only recently found out that I was expecting a baby (I didn't know it was twins at the time). I went through the bargaining that most of us do - asking God to take my baby and allow Brittany to live. My brother was already gone. So it was that these two little lives came into being six months later. My children lived - but Brittany died. Experiencing their birth was like walking a tightrope - balancing the joy of new motherhood with the pain and guilt of being a survivor. I find that I still feel that pain and guilt eleven years later. Today, along with celebrating my sons' birthday I remembered the little girl who was like a daughter to me and felt the regret of her

lost birthdays. There really is no way to separate their birth from her death - it is a part of my life that will forever be linked.

The Compassionate Friends has been part of my life since we found our way to a meeting just three weeks after the accident. Eleven years of support, compassion, and understanding. Eleven years of friendship, talking, and listening. Who could have known what an important place this group would have in my life eleven years after I thought my life was over. You have celebrated with me as my children were born and you have watched them grow. You have helped me find a new way to live and have nurtured me as I grew into a fully functioning human being again. I've never made the connection between a compassionate friend and a loving parent before this moment - but I like the sound of it. Thank you my compassionate friends!

Lisa Beall

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.

*The printing and mailing of this newsletter has been donated
In loving memory of Paul John Burash
brother of Andrea and John Campbell
and uncle of Matthew, Zachary, and David*



Bereaved Parents of the USA
Anne Arundel County Chapter
P.O. Box 6280
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-0280

Newsletter is published monthly
Copyright 2004 All Rights Reserved

Editor Chapter Leader

Lisa Beall (410-315-9883) Dave Alexander (410-544-3634)
bealls@erols.com dralex@sdaalex.com
Barbara Bessling (mailing)

Librarian: Marti Hill Thank you notes: Fran Palmer
Mailing List: Dave Alexander Treasurer: Fran Palmer
Hospitality: Rebecca and Tom Fitzmorris
Programs: OPEN

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. **May submissions are due by March 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 or you may call Rebecca Fitzmorris (410-987-9175) to sign up. Drinks, ice, and paper products are provided by the chapter.

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

March 4, 2004; Doors open at 7:15 p.m.
Meeting begins at 7:30 p.m.
Calvary United Methodist Church
301 Rowe Blvd., Annapolis
Park in the back of the church

PROGRAM: I NEED HELP...WHERE ARE YOU?

NEXT MONTH:

April 1, 2004

PROGRAM: HELPING OUR SURVIVING 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

Hope and Healing Conference

Saturday, May 15, 2004

at

Calvary United Methodist Church

Keynote Speaker: Father Joe Breighner,
heard every Sunday morning on WPOC and WCAO

Workshops to include: early bereavement, journaling,
now childless, sibling group, art therapy for grief, and
others...

Please make plans to attend.

To help out with the conference, please call or email
Pat Schultz (410-255-7760; jim.n.pat@juno.com)

**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.

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.

Upcoming Meeting Topics

March 4: "I need help...where are you?!" Dealing with Family, Friends, and Colleagues"

Bereaved parents find that many friends, family and work colleagues are not very supportive in our grieving; in fact some can be harsh and hurtful. A panel of Chapter members will discuss their experiences and offer suggestions on dealing with friends, family and colleagues. The panel will explore such issues of how one might respond to those who are supportive and how one might respond to those who are not. The panel will try to offer insights as to how we can help our friends, family, and colleagues to help and support us.

April 1: Helping Our Surviving Children

The surviving children in our families often have issues of their own. These issues can be vastly different depending on the age of the surviving child, his/her location in the order of the family, etc. Karen Frank, Hospice of the Chesapeake will discuss the issues faced by the siblings of deceased children, and offer ideas on how we might help them

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.

SPRING CLEANING

It began with merely an urge to clean closets and drawers - to straighten and clean out years of accumulated stuff that no longer had any meaning or use. It ended with sobs and tears, long buried deep inside me.

One of the boxes that was sorted out that day was labeled "Children's School Papers". This box was started in 1969 when my daughter began kindergarten. The last entry into the box was in 1989 from my son who died while he was a senior in high school. The box contained a wonderful assortment of 20 years of the best school accomplishments from three children. There were the first efforts at making circles and square valentines, Mother's Day cards, handwriting exercises, special reports, artwork and self portraits.

I separated the items into three piles. One for my daughter who now has children of her own and might enjoy sharing her school years with them. The second pile was for my son, recently married and now with a home of his own - to keep for sharing with his children someday. The third pile was for me, since I have no one to pass it on to.

I placed all these papers and projects in a box, along with the cards, notes and calendars from my son's year long battle with brain cancer. Also into the box went the sympathy cards and funeral memorabilia received six years ago. As I put the box on a shelf, I cried because I will never be able to give these school memories to my son so he can share them with his children. The box and the memories will be mine alone.

How does one deal with the thought that a complete life has been condensed into a box on a shelf in the basement? I deal with it by being forever grateful that I shared that life for 18 years. I deal with it by being glad I have good memories of my son for what he taught me about life and death. I deal with it by knowing what a wonderful experience I would have missed if my son had never been born. I know I also will deal with it by taking the box down off the shelf from time to time, and crying again for a future lost.

JoAnne Tappan, TCF, Livonia, MI

YESTERDAY

Yesterday, I heard your voice
Today that voice is still.
I yearn to hear it once again.
I guess I always will.

Yesterday, I touched your face
As you lay safe in bed.
If I could kiss you just once more
And stroke your precious head.

You touched my life so briefly,
And the magic lingers on.
It blesses me at twilight,
And it wakes me with the dawn.

If I live until forever,
Til my eyes no longer see,
My mind will e'er remember
What you were, and are, to me.

Marcia Dyke, Bereavement Magazine

HOLD ON

Hold on to what is good
Even if it is a handful of earth.
Hold on to what you believe
Even if it is a tree which stands by itself.
Hold on to what you must do
Even if it is a long way from here.
Hold on to life
Even when it is easier letting go.
Hold on to my hand
Even when I have gone away from you.

Author unknown

LET'S TALK ABOUT DEATH

"I would tell my children there's a baby on the way. We would talk about names for boys or girls; we would talk about whether we should paint the bedroom pink or blue - or if you're not sure, yellow. It's the most normal thing in the world.

If we can talk about death the same way, then I think we would live differently."

Elisabeth Kubler Ross, M.D.

SIBLING PAGE

THERE ARE TIMES

There are times
When I see a fiery sunset
Or the silver glow of the moon,

And I see my brother and feel the
peace that he still exists.
But these times are few,
And most of what I see is -
What he is missing.

Cry now, my silent tears,
Quietly, so no one hears.
They don't know the pain I go through
Day after day,
And through the years.

Alissa Roeder, TCF, Pikes Peak, CO

A MEMORY HUG

Your loss has left a hole in your heart
That hole never goes away...
You learn to live with it.
With acceptance of the loss
And changes in your life,
The pain lessens.
Eventually memories fill up the space,
but it never goes away.
Then when you least expect it,
A memory spills out
Of the hole in your heart
And washes you clean again with tears
Think of it as a "MEMORY HUG".

Author Unknown



A SISTER'S PRAYER

Dear Lord, please hug my brother
As I often long to do,
Kiss his cheek and tell him
"Your sister's missing you."

Tell him of the memories
That dominate each thought
Of he and I together
And of the love that he once brought.

Tell him of the tears
That pour from my heart
At the painful realization
That we'll always be apart.

Tell him that I'm trying
As hard as it may be
To move ahead, love again
And live successfully.

And tell my precious brother
Just how much his short life meant
He gave me a deep understanding of life
That could only be heaven sent.

And lastly, loving God
Make sure Anthony can see
How much I'll always love him
And how much he means to me

Johanna DeAngelis, TCF, Austin, TX

MY THOUGHTS OF YOU

Another holiday without you,
Another wedding without you,
Another birthday without you,
Another graduation without you,
Another day without you.

I miss your goofy laugh,
I miss your temper tantrums,
I miss you bugging me for money,
I miss your punches in my arm,
But most of all, I miss you.

So I will remember
Our good and bad times,
And share them with others,
So that I can keep you,
Alive in my heart.

DeAnn Kouse, TCF, Louisville, KY



OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED

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



Hope Barber
daughter of Doug and Vonda Barber
March 11, 2003 - April 25, 2003

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

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

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

Brian Jeffrey Haley
son of Pamela and Jerry Haley
October 26, 1973 - March 4, 1990

Sgt. James Michael Hall
son of Patricia and George Hall
November 4, 1965 - March 28, 1992

Traci Jeanne Heincelman
daughter of Ed and Jeanne Heincelman
niece of John and Terre Belt
granddaughter of Dorothy and Norm Heincelman
October 6, 1980 - March 10, 2002

Daniel Enbert Hinton, Jr.
Son of Pamela Hinton
September 23, 1970 - March 7, 2003

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

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

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

Scott Joseph Mohan
son of Sheila and Jim Mohan
December 9, 1976 - March 15, 1993

Michael D. Nokes
son of Ellen Foxwell
November 9, 1963 - March 15, 1988

Brian James Para
son of Joan and Carl Para
February 19, 1970 - March 19, 1991

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

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

Ryan M. Sheahy
son of Deborah L. Sheahy
May 4, 1977 - March 16, 2001

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

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

John Kirkpatrick Wallace
son of Kay and James Wallace
March 3, 1953 - July 14, 1971





DREAM CATCHERS

From then on I lived at Viareggio, finding courage from the radiance of Eleanora's eyes. She used to rock me in her arms, consoling my pain, but not only consoling, for she seemed to take my sorrow to her own breast, and I realized that if I had not been able to bear the society of other people, it was because they all played the comedy of trying to cheer me with forgetfulness. Whereas Eleanora said: "Tell me about Deirdre and Patrick", and made me repeat to her all their little sayings and ways, and show her their photos, which she kissed and cried over. She never said, "cease to grieve", but she grieved with me, and, for the first time since their death, I felt I was not alone.

Isadora Duncan, from *My Life*
on the death of her two children
taken from *Only Spring* by Gordon Livingston

The person who resists grieving may successfully ward off intense pain, but a nagging ache will likely take its place. **Denied feelings of grief will be expressed in hidden ways...** moodiness, irritability, restlessness, nervousness, abuse of alcohol or other drugs, conflicts in relations with others, physical ailments, accident-proneness, reckless spending, or general dissatisfaction with life. Grief doesn't go away just because it is ignored. **Healing involves being willing to hurt more in order to hurt much less.**

Ann Kaiser Stearns, [Living Through Personal Crisis](#)

OUR FAMILY PORTRAIT

Having our family portrait taken now is a bittersweet experience. We are proud of our family, especially our new baby son. But you see only three of us in the picture, and we are a family of four. Our first son you never see, but he is there with us in our hearts. The camera is limited and cruel; it only takes a picture of what it sees.

It cannot see our absent son or all the love we have for him; or our memories, our pain, or our longing.

I wish the camera could take a portrait of the heart, then other people would see Jonathan Andrew there. You only see one precious son - we always see two.

LouAnn Tennant, Share Newsletter

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:

Contributions through United Way, Central Md.:

Deborah and Paul Michael, in memory of Paul Brian Michael

Peggy and Gordon Haines, in memory of Matthew Haines

Paul and Claudia Balasic, in memory of Bethany Balasic

Donna and Doug Rohrbaugh, in memory of James Ryan Rohrbaugh

JeanMarie O'Sullivan, in memory of Cortney Belt
Sandra Shockey, in memory of Daniel R. Shockey

Contributions:

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

Kenneth A. Smith, in memory of Tracy Fotino

Carol N. Boslet, in memory of Christopher Ryan Boslet

Ann Landers / on life 1985

Dear Anne Landers: In a recent column you wrote: "No heartache can equal that of putting one's child in a grave." I have saved this piece since August 26, 1940. It appeared in the Chicago-American, written by a columnist named Elsie Robinson. I hope you will find room for it, Ann.

♦ **Mrs. A.V., Harwood Heights, Ill.**

Dear Mrs. A.V., It will take the entire space but it's well worth it. Thank you for sharing..

LISTEN, WORLD!

God, all night long I miss him.

Lying half asleep - my conscious memory lost.

I wonder if he tossed the blankets off.

Or if the rain is blowing on his sill.

Or if he's ill - my baby.

And often waking, I find myself beside his bed.

Stooping to kiss the little tousled head that is no longer there.

I stand and stare with streaming eyes.

At that smooth pillow and unruffled spread.

Remembering slowly, that my son is dead.

All day long I listen for his step,
His whistle and his sweet, uncertain song.

I listen until the silence tightens
'round my throat.

Oh God, you know I'd give my life to
hear his voice again

To feel, once more, the touch of his
young, eager hand

To stand and watch him play.

And feel the pride leap in me like a
flame.

I'd give my life, I say - and yet I
wouldn't.

I must stay right here and do my job,
till I have

Earned the right to go away. The past
has passed

I loved him - yes! But love is not a
toy

To satisfy one's private pride and joy.

No - love's a part of that eternal plan

By which God manifests himself to
man.

And we who love must also dare to
keep the faith

When
those we
love are
lost,

Lest

weaker spirits, watching, should cry
out that

Love's not worth the cost.

And so, my Father, take my grief to-
day as tribute to

The glory you sent away.

I lay my little son within your arms,
safe now,

Forever, from the hurt and harm

He would have known, had he lived.

I give him up. I drink the bitter cup
reserved for

Those who dare to love and lose.

Forgive our fears

There is a nobler duty facing us than
tears.

It is our proud and shining mission to
express

Love's rare, abiding pride and loveli-
ness.

We, only, who have lost, can know
that love is worth

Whatever it may cost.



WHO AM I TO QUESTION?

Who am I to question how you grieve
Or place a limit on your sorrow?
Though still you linger at his grave
Who died five years ago tomorrow.

Hayley's stone lies barren still
These six years without a flower.
From a mother who can't bear that hill
That saw her darkest hour.

Karen Harter, in memory of Hayley Jean, 1985

FOR THE SAKE OF THE MORE NEWLY BEREAVED PARENTS, THERE ARE POINTS THAT ARE WORTH REPEATING FROM TIME TO TIME.

Most bereaved parents experience some or most of the following:

- * Feel physically exhausted.
- * Have difficulty sleeping.
- * Do not want to go to sleep nor get up.
- * Feel tightness in the throat, heaviness in the chest, or a lump in the stomach that turns over like a rock.
- * Have an empty feeling with appetite loss.
- * Wander aimlessly, forget in the middle of a sentence, neglect to finish tasks. Feel restless, look for activity but can't concentrate.
- * Have respiratory reactions - excessive yawning, gasping, hyperventilating.
- * Experience feelings of anxiety.
- * Think they are losing their mind.
- * Feel the need to take care of others who seem uncomfortable around them by politely not talking about their pain.
- * Say to themselves, "If only I had..."
- * Keep asking "Why?"
- * Feel that the loss isn't real; that the child will return.
- * Sense the loved one's presence by expecting the child to walk in the door or phone at the usual time. Hear the voice or see the face.

*Look for the child in a crowd or see reminders unexpectedly.

*Need to tell and retell and remember things about the child and the experience of death.

*Feel a mood change unexpectedly.

*Cry at unexpected times.

*Feeling able to cope and then falling back again - a see-saw type of reaction.

*Feeling depressed.

*Feel they don't want to go on.

All of these reactions are natural and normal. It is important not to deny one's feelings, but to learn to express them. Realizing that you are not alone in having these reactions is helpful. One's balance is regained slowly through understanding and working through the grief stages.

Earl Grollman has said that bereaved underestimate their ability to survive and "if there is darkness when you turn back, there is still enough light to go forward" to a healthy readjustment.

Ruth Eisman
TCF, Louisville, KY

THE MYTH

Many devastating experiences face newly bereaved parents - none of which has been prepared. The loss of a child is a catastrophic loss - cruelest in nature. To that, unfortunately, are added other demands; among them - identifying the body that was your child, or watching helplessly as your child's life slips away from you.

This is followed by the need to select a funeral home, casket services, plot, etc.; all tasks to which we gave no heed previously. If we did think of them, fleetingly, it was for ourselves, not our children. To have to attend to such chores at a time when the sense of loss engulfs our being in grief or numbness is inhuman. Too often, a further burden we carry is the quiet but persistent notion that somehow, someday, we should have been able

to prevent this awful act. After all, isn't that what parents are supposed to do - protect their children? How could we have failed? What more could we have done to prevent it?

I truly believe that, whether we realize it or not, the feeling that we have failed sometimes causes us to direct our anger outward towards God, or the doctors, etc., in our unconscious effort to reduce the guilt we feel. If, after all, God (or the doctors, etc.) were responsible, then we may be less so. So we ventilate against others in the search for self-absorption. This protection of guilt is usually short-lived. We return again and again to blame ourselves -

UNLESS we accept the fact that parenthood does not ensure omnipotence;

UNLESS we come to realize that as parents we are not all-knowing and all-powerful;

UNLESS we understand that our control over our children's welfare is as limited as our control over the events of our own lives.

When we can achieve this level of knowledge, we are finally free of that debilitating myth of power of parents. The grieving process can proceed, and bereaved parents need no longer be burdened with guilt unfairly self-directed. We are free to mourn, to regret, to heal, to move toward a new "normalcy" of life, and to help others meet us there.

Pearl Mann
Louisville, KY

Bereaved Parents of the USA
Anne Arundel County Chapter
P.O. Box 6280
Annapolis, MD 21401-0280
www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org



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.