



Bereaved Parents of the USA

Anne Arundel County Chapter

June, 2005

www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org

Stress Management

A lecturer, when explaining stress management to an audience, raised a glass of water and asked, "How heavy is this glass of water?"

Answers called out ranged from 20g to 500g. The lecturer replied, "The absolute weight doesn't matter. It depends on how long you try to hold it."

"If I hold it for a minute, that's not a problem. If I hold it for an hour, I'll have an ache in my right arm. If I hold it for a day, you'll have to call an ambulance. In each case, it's the same weight, but the longer I hold it, the heavier it becomes."

He continued, "And that's the way it is with stress management. If we carry our burdens all the time, sooner or later, as the burden becomes increasingly heavy, we won't be able to carry on."

As with the glass of water, you have to put it down for a while and rest before holding it again. When we're refreshed, we can carry on with the burden."

"So, before you return home tonight, put the burden of work down. Don't carry it home. You can pick it up tomorrow. Whatever burdens you're carrying now, let them down for a moment if you can. Relax; pick them up later after you've rested. Life is short. Enjoy it!"

Hammond, LA TCF Newsletter

The above article was written to address stress management in general. As we well know, stress is one very real part of the grief scenario and this article is very insightful.

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.

The printing of this newsletter has been donated by Willard and Marian Johnson in memory of their son
Kurt Johnson

The mailing of this newsletter has been donated by Samantha and Darrell Sistek in memory of their son
Christopher "Chris" Logan McFeely

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Anne Arundel County Chapter
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***note - as you can see we have several vacancies... we hope someone will consider helping!**

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.

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

July submissions are due by June 12th.

Library:

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.



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 information, contact Dave Alexander at 410-544-3634



MEETING INFORMATION

Next meeting: June 2, 2005

Doors open at 7:15 p.m.

Meeting begins at 7:30 p.m.

(Meetings usually occur on first Thursday of the month)

Calvary United Methodist Church

301 Rowe Blvd., Annapolis

Please park in the lot behind the church

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.

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

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

Sandy Platts, infant death. 410-721-6457

HAS YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS CHANGED?

If you change your email address, please send a note with your new email address to WebMaster@sdalex.org so we can update our records

OTHER RESOURCES:

- * **Bereaved Parents of the USA, (BPUSA)**
National contact number (708-748-7866)
- * **Stephanie Roper Committee, for victims of violent crime, Anne Arundel County chapter**
representative is James Donnelly
(410-544-1473).
- * **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

PLEASE! PLEASE! PLEASE HELP US SAVE ON PRINTING AND POSTAGE

If you *move*, please let us know your new address. If you *don't want* to receive our newsletter any more, please let us know. If you would rather read the newsletter on our website, please let us know, and send us your email address, and we will send you a reminder each month when the newsletter is put on the website. (The newsletter is loaded on the website as soon as it has been produced — about 10 days before it is delivered in the mail.)

You can contact us by mail at our address at PO Box 6280, Annapolis, MD 21401-0280 or by sending us an email at ChapterLeader@sdalex.org.

It costs us over 50¢ per copy to print and mail the newsletter. The Postal Service will not forward the newsletter since it is sent by Bulk Mail. However, for 37¢ a copy they will return any non-deliverable copies which are sent to an old address. That means we have spent 87¢ to find out someone has moved. Not much on a case by case basis, but it adds up. So please take a moment before you move or if you decide you no longer want to receive the newsletter, and let us know.

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 "Our 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.

MEETING TOPICS—ANNAPOLIS

June 2 - Memorializing Our Children: Garden Memorial Stones

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 discuss the making of garden memorial stones and, during the sharing group period of the evening, will lead a workshop for those interested in making the stones

If you plan to participate in the workshop, bring with you small items to personalize your stone. These items should be mementos which remind you of your child. E.g., Fran's stone has a small plastic baseball from one of Scott's birthday cakes. It has a small rubber turtle, that looks like his pet. It has small shells he had in his room from their many trips to the beach, which she used to make the shape of a butterfly. Be sure the objects are waterproof if you are going to use the stone outside. Fran will bring some things with her (e.g., cement, round and square pans, little objects).

July 7 - No Topic Scheduled At this time.

EASTERN SHORE BEREAVED PARENTS GROUP

The Queen Anne's County Bereaved Parents Group meets on the *First Wednesday of each month*. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, June 1st at 7:00 pm. The Group meets at the *Calvary United Methodist Church in Queenstown*. The Church is located at the intersection of Maryland Avenue and Steamboat Lane in Queenstown.

All are welcome to come. Please pass the word to other bereaved parents. For more information, contact Joan Gray at 410-827-7471 or Dave Alexander at 410-544-3634 or send an email message to QueenstownGroup@sdalex.org

Sponsor Our Monthly Newsletter or Website

You can help underwrite the costs of our newsletter or our website by sponsoring a monthly issue of the newsletter or by sponsoring a month of the website. To sponsor either one, contact Dave Alexander (dralex@sdalex.com) Newsletter printing costs \$150 and mailing is \$50 each month. Website sponsorship costs \$25.00 each month.

Donations

Donations may be made to offset the cost of printing and mailing the newsletter, the Chapter website, the annual Remembrance Service, the annual Conference of Hope and Healing, and books and other materials for the Chapter Library.

We gratefully acknowledge the following donations made in the last month:

Website

Cori Boyce in memory of her daughter Linda Lou Boyce, to sponsor the Chapter website for May and November
Jan & Leo Hylan in memory of their daughter Alison Marie Hylan, to sponsor the Chapter website for September

General

Ken Smith in memory of his niece Tracy Fotino
Dorothy & Norm Heincelman in memory of their granddaughters Cortney Belt and Traci Heincelman

This is how I feel a year and 4 months after my daughter died.
Do you not see me?
I am still here.
In all of my sadness and all of my tears.
Please tell me you see me and are thinking of her too.
Do you still miss her the way that I do?
I need you to remember and tell me you do.



Jane Schindler
Bereaved Parents of the USA
Anne Arundel County
June 2005

"Some people, sweet and attractive, and strong and healthy, happen to die young. They are masters in disguise teaching us about impermanence"
Author Unknown

In times of darkness, Love sees..
In times of silence, Love hears..
In times of doubt, Love hopes,
In times of sorrow, Love heals..
But in all things,
Love remembers.

Author Unknown



Sometimes the light goes out,
but is blown again into flame
by an encounter with another
human being.

Each of us owes the deepest thanks
to those

Who have rekindled this inner light.

Albert Schweitzer
Nobel Peace Prize winner, 1952



SIBLING PAGE



WHAT ABOUT ME?

Have you ever felt that, as a surviving brother or sister, we are often forgotten? I have felt this way quite often in the last six years. Over time, the feeling becomes less and less. Our parents' grief is so much different from ours. No more or less hurtful than ours, but different. They lost their child. I hope that, in my lifetime, I never have to know how that feels. I know how painful it was when Sean died. I don't want to know the pain of having a child die.

But, often times, we are the "forgotten mourners". I love my brother very much and miss him just as much. I think that people sometimes forget that we are hurting also.

My parents were offenders of that too.

I know they know my sister and I were hurting, but they were so wrapped up in what they were feeling that they didn't have time to worry about what we were feeling. I tried so hard to make my parents well again that I neglected my grief. Pretty much denied it. We really want to make our families "normal" again.

I have had some awful things said to me over the last six years. Two weeks after Sean died, someone said to me, "Well, you do still have a sister."

Well, yes, I do still have a sister, but that still doesn't lessen the pain of my brother's death and my sister can't possibly replace my brother. Probably the worst thing anyone has said to me is "Why aren't you over this? Sean has been dead for six months." Well, it is not something you just "get over."

I have learned a lot of things over the years and if I hadn't been in such a state of shock, maybe I would have had some good responses. When I think back on it, I wish I had. I have decided that, from what I have learned, I need to educate people and make them understand that siblings and friends have the right to grieve too.

As surviving siblings and friends, we also have to realize that we need to find a new "normal." We also need to know that it's okay to feel all of the things that we feel, be it anger, sadness, guilt or any other emotion.. Just know that you're not crazy or wrong to grieve. Know also that it is all right to think and talk about them when you're ready, not when someone else says or thinks you should be ready. Death and grieving are, unfortunately, a part of life.

By Traci Morlock
St. Louis Chapter BP/USA

OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED

Please remember the following families this month.

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

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

Merwede Baker
Son of Anna Baker and Paul Reid
January 15, 1978 - June 24, 2004

Travis Brandon Beyerle
Son of Maren Sheidy
April 17, 1981 - June 23, 1995

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

Ryan Christopher Copeland
Son of Meg Holthaus
September 4, 1981 - June 27, 2004

Joseph William Cranston
Son of Mary and Thomas Cranston
June 11, 1971 - June 11, 1971

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

Joe A. Esterling Jr.
Son of Michelle and Joe Esterling
June 7, 1967 - April 27, 1990

Bill Evans
Son of Marlene and Walt Evans
June 5, 1964 - October 12, 1990

Ronald Wesley Farley
Son of Dorothy and Donald Farley
September 15, 1955 - June 28, 2000

Christina A. Fisher
Son of Rick and Carol Wilson
December 17, 1985 - June 30, 2001

Sara Elizabeth Hohne
Son of Donald and Karen Hohne
January 2, 1980 - June 13, 2003

Colin David Humphrey
Son of Julie and Robert Humphrey
August 23, 1998 - June 16, 2001

Derra Jones
Son of Helen Jones
June 8, 1982 - November 24, 2001

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

Mark Charles 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

Deneen Leigh Lins
Son of Audrey and Jack Bagby
June 21, 1957 - August 6, 1987

Michelle Anna Markey
Son of Shirley and Rick Markey
Sister of Robert Markey
June 19, 1992 - June 9, 2004

Christopher Logan McFeely
Son of Samantha and Darell Sistik
Brother of Taylor Sistik
June 27, 1987 - January 15, 2005

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

Kyle Brenner Millman
Son of Susan Millman
October 27, 1976 - June 10, 1989

Gavin Alder Moore
Son of Karen Fedor and Jerry Moore
June 11, 2004 - June 11, 2004

OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED (continued)

Julia Lyn Moore
Son of Dorothy Becker
August 22, 1973 - June 19, 2002

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

Daniel Keith Rogers
Son of Lauri and Thomas Rogers
June 16, 1981 - March 18, 2000

David C. Schmier
Son of Gordan and Virginia Schmier
June 26, 1964 - February 10, 1992

Mary Senier-Egan
Son of Mary M. Senier
Sister of Terri Hayden-Molton
May 8, 1951 - June 24, 1993

Scott Christopher Shaffer
Son of Barbara Shaffer
March 17, 1967 - June 5, 2004

Jeffrey Steven Simpson
Son of Stephen and Linda Maszgay
June 3, 1972 - June 21, 2002

Christopher John Smith
Son of Debi Wilson-Smith
March 27, 1981 - June 30, 2000

Laura Ann Smith
Son of Lois and Joel Smith
July 30, 1985 - June 7, 2003

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

Kassie Vaughn
Son of Lisa Vaughn
June 22, 1985 - January 2, 2003

Michael Shane Wheeler
Son of Lita Volejak
June 22, 1976 - January 11, 1997

Albert W. Whitby Jr.
Son of Rita and Albert Whitby Sr.
April 25, 1951 - June 2, 1981

Sean Amaro Wilcox
Son of Anne and DeWitt Wilcox
June 25, 2003 - June 24, 2003

Wayne Wilson Jr.
Son of Needra Gorman
November 22, 1968 - June 24, 2003

Note: If your child's name appears in the printed version of our newsletter but does not appear in this online version, it is because we have not received explicit permission from you to list it online. If you would like your child's name to also appear in future online editions of the newsletter, please send an email to dralex@sdaalex.com



Your voice no longer I hear...
Your smile I no longer see...
I cannot touch your hand or feel
Your kiss upon my cheek,
But I have captured you, my son...
In a web of memories.

Alice Osborn
TCF—South Central MO



The following poem is dedicated to the memory
of Aaron Michael Howes.

A Million Times
~By Ann Herndon

A million times we've needed you,
A million times we've cried.
If love alone could have saved you,
You never would have died.
In life we loved you dearly,
In death we love you still.
In our hearts you hold a place,
No one will ever fill.
It broke our hearts to lose you,
But you didn't go alone.
Part of us went with you,
The day God took you home.

On Picking Up the Pieces



Had someone say to me not too long ago that she was glad to see that I was “picking up the pieces and going on.” Well, I am picking up the pieces all right – but what she doesn’t know is that they’re almost a whole set of new pieces! I haven’t been able to go on as though nothing about me has changed since my child died. I am a different me, and I am still learning how the new me reacts to old situations. I am finding that this new set of pieces doesn’t exactly fit together all nice and neat like a jigsaw puzzle. Some of the old pieces are still hanging in there, but they don’t quite mesh with some of the new pieces. I am in the process of grinding off the rough edges now, hoping eventually for a better fit, one that I can live with more comfortably. Time, patience and hard work are helping me accomplish this.

How are the rough edges on your new pieces coming along?

Mary Cleckley
TCF, Atlanta, GA

The bond among grieving parents is close. It is unfathomable. It cannot be entered into by outsiders, but it is known to each of us. A quick look, an acknowledgment, and we know immediately the agenda of suffering we have in common and that there is no fact of our lives more important than this:



I had a child who died.

I Will Not Leave You Desolate
~By Martha Whitmore Hickman

He who does not understand your silence
Will probably not understand your words

Elbert Habberd
Bereaved Parents of the USA
Coeur d' Alene, ID



The Class of 1996

Spring has finally arrived. The sun is warm, the grass is green, the trees have leaves and the world once again seems to have come alive. As a bereaved parent this has traditionally been a difficult time of year for me. Somehow all the signs of spring were not able to warm my heart and I often found myself hating the fact that they tried.

One sign of spring that was always painful was school graduations. You see my daughter died as a freshman in high school and never did get to graduate. The excitement of graduation, the moving on to a new era, another stage of life was something that she looked forward to. She was excited to graduate from elementary school and move on to middle school. She was ecstatic about graduating from middle school to moving on to high school and, although she was only a freshman, was already getting excited about and looking forward to graduating from high school and going on to college. Since her death however there wasn't a new era for me to move on to.

I became a member of BPUSA in the spring of 1996. That same year was the graduation year for several other members of our chapter. We all graduated from a "normal life" into one that was full of unknowns, grief and darkness. I think of this group as my "graduating class" or the "Class of 1996."

My graduating class started its journey on New Years Day and finished it up on Labor Day weekend. We seemed to have hit most of the holidays of the year including Easter and the 4th. As I look back on that year, somehow this seems to have added some extra significance to our losses.

It has now been nine years since our class was "formed up." During those nine years we've all been on a journey none of us wanted but one which we've all traveled and learned from. Many times we've learned from each other. Many times we've learned from "classes" that came ahead of and behind ours. I think in our own minds we don't think that we've come very far. But this graduation season I've taken the time to reflect on our class and our journey and my observations have been surprising.

In actuality I find that we've all grown probably to a much greater extent than any of us would give ourselves credit for. We've addressed legal challenges to gain access to our grand children, we've gone back to school and earned advanced degrees, we've become active in lobbying the state legislature to improve the driving laws of our state and we've taken on new and more responsible job challenges. We've had many success and some failures. We've had some victories and some defeats. We've had some joys and also some new sorrows but somehow we've kept moving forward. And through it all we've remained active in our chapter. To a large extent I think that the special bonds that are developed and the support we have been able to receive and give through our BPUSA Chapter has been one of the biggest factors that has gotten us to where we are. Still standing and moving forward!!!

So in this graduation season of 2005 I'd just like to say Congratulations and Thank You to my fellow class members and to those in the classes that have come ahead and behind ours. Ours is a hard road but it is the one we must travel. We have all graduated with the loss of our children into a life we did not choose but to one in which we have somehow found a way to not just live and survive but also in some way to thrive.

Paul Balasic
Bereaved Parents of the USA/AA County
June 2005

Bereaved Parents of the USA

Anne Arundel County Chapter

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DATED MATERIAL



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.