

## Bereaved Parents of the USA Anne Arundel County Chapter

### **July, 2006**

#### www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org

MOMilies....you know...those words of wisdom from your MOM that she got from her MOM, that she got from her MOM. etc. etc.

"All things happen in their own time."

I remember this MOMilie. I think my MOM was trying to teach me the value of patience and perseverance. Whatever the situation or decision, I would always want immediate results. Let it happen NOW.

But now I am facing a life challenge that is definitely happening in it's own time. *Grief recovery:* 

I can't make recovery and healing happen NOW. I can influence it, but I can't control it. I have to be patient, persevere, and let it happen in its own time.

Yet I am learning to savor the time it is taking. This is a journey that is taking me along a path traveled by the most courageous people I know.

I am truly honored to meet every one of you and am exceedingly blessed to have found true friendship along the way.

Some days I am crushed by the weight of my grief. And I realize this is because I am feeling my loss, and that's OK. Our loss is indeed devastating. Yet I wouldn't trade those times, because then I remember the love and joy I have experienced in my life.

Over the days and months and years, it is getting easier to balance the hard days with the good days. Now, I am able to more easily move from times of despair to times of reflection on the many happy memories, and feel some peace in my soul.

Remember that grief recovery is a process, going up and down, forward and backward, and sometimes round and round. All I can say is ...HANG ON...we're in this together...and it will happen in its own time.

Carol Tomaszewski, Annapolis Chapter BP USA

#### 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 Marlen and Gene Maier in memory of their son **Eric Eugene Maier** 

The mailing of this newsletter has been donated by Diane and Bob Royer in memory of their son **Aaron Sebastian Royer** 

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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.

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.

August submissions are due by July 13.

#### 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 Carol Tomaszewski at 410 519-8448.



#### MEETING INFORMATION

Next meeting: July 6, 2006

Doors open at 7:15 p.m.

Meeting begins at 7:30 p.m.

(Meetings usually held on first Thursday of 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.

<u>Janet Tyler</u>, daughter, 5 and brother, 33, car accident. 410-969-7597

<u>Tia Stinnett</u>, miscarriages and infant death. 410-360-1341

Sandy Platts, infant death. 410-721-6457

#### 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

#### OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED

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.

## 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 <a href="mailto:ChapterLeader@sdalex.org">ChapterLeader@sdalex.org</a>.

#### SUMMER SOCIAL

You, your family and friends are invited to our Chapter Summer Social on Sunday, July 23, at 2:00 at the Beall home, (105 Dales Way Dr, Pasadena). The Chapter will provide the meat, rolls, sodas and ice tea. Please bring a side dish or dessert. There will be swimming, volleyball, badminton etc..

We hope many of you will be able to join us. Even if you haven't been to a meeting for a very long time, we would love to see you. We've been through the bad times together, now let's enjoy some good times.

To RSVP: Call 410-969-7597

#### MEETING TOPICS—ANNAPOLIS

#### July 6: Loss of an Only Child or All Children

This program will explore the special challenges presented to those bereaved parents who have lost an only child or all their children.

#### August 3: Loss of a Child Through Suicide

This program will discuss the special challenges and experiences of those who have lost a child through suicide. It will explore some of the harder parts of this kind of loss and some of the ways to deal with the tremendous range of intense feelings as well as the reactions from others.

#### HELP WANTED/ OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

Opportunities are available for you to help others while helping yourself. Perhaps you can now reach beyond your initial grief and help yourself heal by doing something to help our Chapter continue to reach out to others. Don't think you have to make a major commitment. There are many small services you can provide that will help ease the burden on others. Please consider the following needs, and call to chat with one of us to discuss these and other possibilities that may "fit" you.

#### Our Chapter needs:

**Core Group Members** – attend bi-monthly meetings where Chapter business and plans are discussed.

**Recording Secretary** – take minutes of Core Group meetings and distribute to Core Group members.

**Webmaster** – maintain & update our website with provided information.

Special Event Helpers – help with the October Memory Walk, December Service of Remembrance, or May Hope & Healing Conference.

Call POCs: Carol Tomaszewski 410 519-8448 Sandi Burash 410 551-5774 Dave Alexander 410 544-3634

#### Let them not be forgotten. ...

After the shock, numbness, and utter denial our child has died subside, many bereaved parents begin to think of a way to honor their child's memory. To many this may be an overwhelming and daunting experience, for we are still just trying to make it through each day without falling apart. But the need to say "My child lived, my child made a difference", to a world going on without us, and our child, becomes almost an obsession. At least, I know it did to me, when our youngest son, Aaron, was killed on July 5, 2001. Aaron was only eighteen, just graduated from high school, and planned on attending Valley Forge College, after first serving in the Army Reserves. He was funny, very loving, and generous. It took time, patience, and guidance from Aaron's spirit to our hearts and mind, before we knew as a family what he would like us to do in his memory. Our personal choices to keep Aaron's memory alive bring us comfort. We continue to be proud of Aaron, and know Aaron would be proud, too, of how he continues to be a positive force in the world.

Just two weeks before the fatal accident that took Aaron's young life, he made the decision to "Give the Gift of Life". Aaron went to the MVA and changed his driver's license status to organ donor. When he came home to show us his new license, with a huge grin on his face, he proudly announced that if anything were to happen to him, he wanted to be an organ donor. Aaron was proud of his decision, and we were very proud of him. Ultimately, when the unthinkable time came, Aaron spared us the difficult decision some families face pertaining to organ donation, truly one of the greatest gifts a person can give.

It seems such a common fear among bereaved families, their child, their sister, or brother will be forgotten, therefore, some way of commemorating the memory of our beloved child, is a very natural response, to an unnatural situation. In their own time, most bereaved parents find a way to keep their beloved child's memory alive. They do it through memorials, scholarships, or donations made to charities in their child's name . . . but, always in generous ways which benefit others. So, acknowledge the courage you show as you give of yourself during this most painful time of your life. It is a credit to the person you are, and have become. Indeed, it is a credit to the person your child was, and always will be . . . in spirit. Our children will always be remembered, and loved, as long as we continue to be a positive participant in life.

"To know even one life has breathed easier, because you have lived . . . this is to have succeeded." - Ralph Waldo Emerson

-by Diane Royer Anne Arundel Co. MD Chapter BPUSA

#### **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:

Ken Smith in memory of his niece **Tracy Ann Fotino**Dorothy and Norm Heincelman in memory of their granddaughters **Cortney Belt** and **Traci Heincelman**Carol Brothers in memory of her son **David Jonathan Frame**Bob and Sandi Burash, in memory of their son **Paul Burash**Renee Dudnikov in memory of Sue Alexander's mother, **Betty Leonard**Dorothy and Donald Farley in memory of their son **Ronald Wesley Farley**Jane Schindler in memory of her daughter **Emily Ann Schindler**Cdr. Kenneth D. Via in memory of **Scott Thomas Palmer** 



## SIBLING PAGE





www.hospicechesapeake.org

For one weekend during the months of July and August, the Hospice of the Chesapeake staff and volunteers give grieving teens and children the gifts of hope and healing through

Phoenix Rising and Camp Nabe.

## CAMP NABE August 11-13, 2006

A weekend camp for children ages 6 to 13 who are grieving the death of a loved one.



Camp Nabe (pronounced nah-bee) is the Korean word for butterfly. This metaphor is used to illustrate the possible transformation children experience through their grieving process: In time from the darkness and isolation of a cocoon, children, like the caterpillar, emerge as a beautiful butterfly, forever changed and unexpectedly strengthened by the grief experience.

### PHOENIX RISING July 14-16, 2006

A weekend retreat for teens entering 9th through 12th grades who are grieving the death of a loved one.

At Phoenix Rising teens learn through the symbolism of the mythical bird, the Phoenix, that all who are born to life must die. And that death changes everything, but death can not destroy love.

They learn that love, like the Phoenix, can rise from the ashes. It is through this story of the Phoenix and specially planned activities that the teens gain strength and inspiration.

#### **Accommodations**

Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center is nestled in a wooded setting on the Severn River in Millersville, Md.

All participants stay in secure, comfortable, airconditioned cabins. Meals are provided. Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center 975 Indian Landing Road Millersville, MD 21108

To register or for more information, please call Hospice of the Chesapeake's Spiritual & Bereavement Care Center at 410.987.2129 or 800.745.6132.





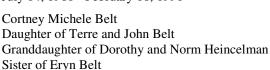
#### **OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED**

Please remember the following families this month.

Cito Arán Son of Sandra Aran December 2, 1978 - July 11, 2000

Glorimar Arán Daughter of Sandra Arán July 26, 1989 - November 11, 2001

Susan Lawrence Barr Daughter of Bryant and Missy Lawrence July 14, 1961 - February 16, 1991



August 26, 1979 - July 9, 1996 Lisa Marie Bishop

Daughter of Diane and Michael Eye January 29, 1966 - July 20, 2004

Edward Calvin Blakeney III Son of Bonnie and George Hughes July 2, 1976 - July 14, 2001

Nicholas Allen Bowling Grandson of Jack and Audrey Bagby December 27, 1980 - July 31, 1985

Elizabeth Caitlyn Carr Daughter of Sandy and Bill Carr July 13, 1989 - February 24, 2003

Tria Marie Castiglia Daughter of Noel and Ann Castiglia Sister of Carla Castiglia July 6, 1963 - October 14, 1984

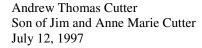
Chrystal M. Clifford Marilyn Mabe's son's fiancé July 17, 1978 - February 17, 2001

O. Steven Cooper Nephew of Thomas and Ethel Cleary Cousin of Frances Palmer July 5, 1954 - September 26, 1998

Ashlea Marie Cranston Daughter of Thomas and Mary Cranston July 4, 1984 - February 24, 1985

James Joseph Cranston Son of Thomas and Mary Cranston July 2, 1975 - July 2, 1975

James William Cranston Son of Thomas and Mary Cranston July 2, 1975 - July 2, 1975



Michael J. Dickens Jr. Son of Michael and Marla Dickens Sr. July 7, 1968 - March 29, 1996

Theresa Karen Gardner Daughter of Joan F. Gardner July 28, 1962 - January 7, 1994

John Joseph Goetz Sr. Son of John and Mary Goetz May 6, 1958 - July 21, 1996

Phillip Wayne Gray Jr. Son of Joan Gray July 8, 1970 - December 22, 1986

Matthew Gordon Haines Son of Gordon and Peggy Haines May 3, 1977 - July 4, 1996

McKayla Raeanne Hall Daughter of Tammey Decker Granddaughter of Mike and Julie Hall July 22, 2000 - September 20, 2003

Ty'Lik De'Shawn Jenkins Son of Tonya Lyons July 28, 1999 - October 16, 2001

Roger Wallace Johnson Son of Shirley and Walter Johnson Brother of Jeanne Jones July 10, 1947 - August 23, 1986

Charles William Kelm Son of Kathy Kelm July 17, 1974 - February 26, 1995

Michael Robert Leger Son of Daryl and Elizabeth Leger July 11, 1986 - December 29, 2000

Angela Dawn Leone Daughter of Garnet and Roland Leone July 26, 1974 - June 16, 2001

Alexis Michelle LoPinto Daughter of Denise LoPinto July 19, 2004 - January 14, 2005

Zachary Laurence Luceti Son of Linda East April 20, 1978 - July 5, 2003







#### **OUR CH ILDREN REMEMBERED** (continued)

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

Paul Brian Michael Son of Deborah Michael November 23, 1971 - July 19, 1991

Daniel "Dan" Michael Milord Son of Mike Milord July 15, 1982 - May 5, 2004

Kathleen "Katie" O'Connor Daughter of Anne and Jim O'Connor September 21, 1986 - July 11, 2003

Emily Marie Parker Daughter of Valerie Nowak and Brian Parker May 9, 2002 - July 18, 2002

Michael A. Persetic Son of Joan Persetic March 26, 1968 - July 2, 1986

Michael Louis Rixham Son of Susan and Louis Rixham July 5, 1977 - October 8, 2004

Dennis Richard Rohrback Son of Dennis and Joan Rohrback April 8, 1964 - July 3, 1988

Aaron Sebastian Royer Son of Diane and Robert Royer December 21, 1982 - July 5, 2001

Anthony John Schaefer Son of LuAnn Schaefer July 13, 1979 - September 26, 2003

Emily Ann Schindler Daughter of Charles and Jane Schindler July 27, 1985 - January 27, 2004

Kelly Ann Schultz Daughter of Jim and Pat Schultz July 19, 1964 - January 1, 1996

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

Scott Talbott Son of Deb and Stan Talbott July 19, 1989 - August 3, 2003

Gregory Adam Thorowgood Son of Margie Strong and Kenneth W. Wenk July 24, 1975 - April 7, 2004



Catie Lynne Thrift Daughter of Sheila and John Thrift July 24, 1995 - November 27, 2004

Darin Lacey Valerio Son of Sharie and Gerry Valerio July 26, 1967 - March 18, 1991

John Kirkpatrick Wallace Son of Catherine and James Wallace March 3, 1953 - July 14, 1971

David W. Whitby Son of Rita and Albert Whitby Sr. July 14, 1954 - July 4, 1987

Alisa Joy Withers Daughter of Jan Withers July 7, 1976 - April 16, 1992

Jeffrey Kevin Withers Son of Jan Withers July 30, 1975 - September 28, 1975

Samuel Kingsley Wood Son of Melanie Loughry April 14, 2003 - July 26, 2005

Eryn Noel Wright Daughter of Vincent and JoAnn Wright September 24, 1982 - July 5, 2001



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@sdalex.com.







#### A Decade is a Long Time

Written in Loving Memory of Cortney Michele



A decade. A measure of time that actually has a name... a name because 10 years is a lot of years; a name because it signifies the passage of a lot of time. Married couples mark the milestone with special celebrations and special gifts. Children celebrate with great energy their entry into double digits.

It makes me wonder -- what about bereaved parents? What are we to do with this milestone? How are we to mark the passing of 10 years since our beloved child died?

Because I haven't found any written guidelines on the subject, I've decided to just give in to the experience. I figure I'm going to cross the 10-year marker on my grief journey whether I like it or not, so I may as well just open my eyes and my heart and see and feel whatever there is to be seen and felt. Just like every other part of this journey, there's no way around the dips in the road – I just have to walk through them.

So, for one bereaved mom at the 10-year mark, here's what my experience with this special milestone is stirring in me.

- I find myself reflecting on the past 10 years...reflecting on those first minutes in the late afternoon of July 9, on the first hours, on the first days. Reflecting on all the painful firsts, all of the new realizations. All of the memories that I have struggled to suppress since that horrible day...all of the memories that are once again invading my mind and are transporting me to a place I don't want to be. I find that some of the memories are incredibly vivid and crisp and overwhelmingly painful; others are vague and shapeless and leave me numb again. I find myself reliving the grief experience year by year by year, and thinking about all of the lessons learned.
- This milestone, and the corresponding self-reflection it brings, has re-enforced for me the realization that I'm in a far different place 10 years later, that I have changed and grown, that I am not standing still, that I am not stuck in the mud of deep, incapacitating grief. Some would call this movement progress I would concur begrudgingly, but I would prefer to call it movement in an uncertain direction. But, I do find comfort in having moved. No longer is my daughter's death front and center 24/7. It's now something less than that. In that, I find comfort.

- Thinking about the past 10 years has made me realize that I have finally acknowledged and succumbed to (I can't yet say "accepted") the fact that Cortney's death left a gaping hole in my heart and in my life that will never ever be filled in the way it was before July 9, 1996. I have integrated that fact into the fabric of my life and I have accommodated it. The edges around the hole aren't as raw and sensitive as they once were, and the hole has been filled in with new and joyful experiences, so it is not as large as it once was. But still, the hole remains, and I have acknowledged and succumbed to my new normal. I have learned to live with the hole, just as amputees learn to live without their limbs. Through the really good times and through the really bad times, and through everything in between, I know that the sense of loss is never very far away and that it will forever color the lens through which I look at life. Sometimes the lens is very dark; other times it is as clear as glass. But it is always there.
- I am so glad that after 10 years I have finally and gratefully realized that the love between my daughter and me could never die and will never even fade. The mother-daughter bond we shared is a forever bond. As Vincent Van Gogh said, "Love is something eternal; the aspect may change, but not the essence." I know now that I love my daughter as I always have, and as I always will, and I know that's a love Cortney and I share.
- I'm filling with a sense of dread as the "black anniversary" particularly this special milestone draws near. I am resisting making a plan. I just want to sleep deeply through the week before and the week after. I know I will survive it. I also know that I will hate it.
- I'm feeling sorry for my daughter and for me and for everyone who loved her. I'm feeling sorry for all that we have missed these past 10 years and for all that we will miss in the next 10. I'm granting myself permission to wallow in these feelings for the time that I need, because that's what I need (lesson learned on the grief journey don't be afraid or embarrassed to just surrender sometimes).
- I'm wanting to share this milestone with those who loved my daughter, because I know they feel her loss, too, but I lack the strength to reach out the possible judgment by just one person is too much to risk, because no, I am NOT over "it" yet. But, I would like to shout from the roof tops does anyone else remember that is has been 10 years since the day the music died at the Belt's?

(Cont'd next page)



#### A Decade is a Long Time (cont.)



Now that I've reached and am about to go past the 10-year marker, what next? Here's what I see between years 10 and 20. Time will tell.

- I expect that I will still miss my daughter beyond words. I know that I'll still love my daughter, and that I'll continue to ponder what would have been, if only there had never been a July 9, 1996. I'll bring my daughter and my memories of her with me. I'll find new ways to remember her, and I'll smile more than I'll cry at those memories. I'll live in a way that would make my daughter proud.
- I'll still be Cortney's mom and she'll still be my girl.
- I'll continue to work on how to give and receive spiritual hugs, especially as I replay images of the physical hugs I was lucky enough to get from my daughter in the 80s and early 90s. I'll see if I can replicate their warmth and love.
- I'll search for and will find more "memory nuggets" like the one I have of my last embrace with my daughter. They sustain me.

- I'll be more open to good times; perhaps I'll even go looking for some I can almost hear my daughter singing the line in the song: "Life may not be the party we hoped for...but while we are here, we might as well dance." I know what she would want me to do. I will try to honor her wishes during the next decade without her.
- My belief will be strengthened in the concept articulated by many, including Emily Dickinson, when she wrote: "And if I go while you're still here...know that I live on, vibrating to a different measure, behind a thin veil you cannot see through. You will not see me, so you must have faith. I wait for the time when we soar together again, both aware of each other. Until then, live your life to its fullest and, when you need me, just whisper my name in your heart. I will be there."

I love my Cortney Michele. I wish this milestone were just a dream. A decade is a long time.

Terre Belt Anne Arundel Co. MD Chapter BPUSA

#### THOUGHTS

There are two ways
To live your life...
One as though
Nothing is a miracle
The other is as though
Everything is a miracle
Albert Einstein

#### **ALWAYS**

Remember, you still have a child.
He is no longer with you.
He is simply in a different place.
But you will always be his
Mother or father,
And he will always be
Your child
NOTHING CAN CHANGE THAT



### Bereaved Parents of the USA Anne Arundel County Chapter

P.O. Box 6280 Annapolis, MD 21401-0280 www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org

#### RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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.