



Bereaved Parents of the USA

Anne Arundel County Chapter

April 2007

www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org

Just my Opinion

Last week my wife brought to my attention an article on Grief in the Feb. 28, 2007 Maryland Gazette. The article states then when a loved one dies, one goes through 5 stages of grieving, including disbelief, yearning, anger, depression, and acceptance.

It further states that if a person has not reached the acceptance stage by 6 months, he or she may need professional help dealing with their bereavement.

It's been 6 years since our son has died, and I'm not sure that I've "accepted" it yet. Thinking that over, it made me realize again, the differences between "losing a loved one" (which is what the article was about) and losing a son or daughter.

Of course they are loved ones, but a parent knows they are far more than that.

The thought I would like to share with those who are relatively newly bereaved in particular, is that as you struggle to "accept" the worst occurrence of your life, understand that there are no easy answers.

We encourage you to attend our monthly meeting and benefit from hearing others and hopefully benefiting from their experience in dealing with their grief journey.

Rick Tomaszewski
Anne Arundel County Chapter BPUA

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

By Rose Marie Carnes and Walter H. Maynard III in memory of their son
Walter H. Maynard IV

and

By Ann and Noel Castiglia in memory of
Renée and Mitch Dudnikov

**Anne Arundel County Chapter
Bereaved Parents of the USA
P.O. Box 6280
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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.

May submissions are due by April 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: April 5, 2007

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.

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

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).
- ♦ **MADD Maryland "Family Forever"**
Weekly support group for family and friends of homicide victims and victims of drunk driving crashes
meets every Monday at 7:30 p.m.
Contact Jan Withers at 301-627-1743



CHAPTER NEWS AND NOTES

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 (dralex@sdalex.com). **For the Newsletter**, in 2007 full sponsorship of an issue of the newsletter is \$200.00. Up to two people or families can sponsor an issue, and the cost will be divided equally – \$100 each. If someone has already signed up for full sponsorship of a month, and another member would like to share in that month, they will be allowed to do so. When there are more than two members or families wishing to sponsor an issue, preference will be given to members who did not sponsor an issue the previous year, otherwise it will be on a “first-come-first-serve” basis. **For the Website**, sponsorship is \$25.00 each month.

DO YOU USE AMAZON.COM?

We have a link to Amazon.com on the home page of our website. Amazon.com gives our chapter a commission of 5% of any purchases which are made *through* that link. Using the link does not increase the cost to the purchaser. Alert your friends, relatives, and colleagues to the link and suggest they use it as well.

You can access the site at:

www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org

Click on the butterflies on the welcome page to enter our site, and then scroll down the first page to the bottom. On the bottom left corner is the Amazon.com graphic. Clicking on the graphic takes you to Amazon.com's site. When it does so, it links information relevant to our chapter to the visit to the site. If a purchase is made, it will be credited to our site

Anne Arundel Co. Chapter Answer Line:

443-57-BPUSA or 443-572-7872

Our chapter has a telephone message line to provide Information about Chapter activities such as meeting time and locations, our website, monthly meeting topics, upcoming special activities and meeting cancellation announcements. You can also leave a message and someone from the Chapter will get back to you to discuss any issues or concerns you may have. Hopefully you will find this an easy way to keep in touch with “What’s Happening” with the Chapter.

Upcoming Meeting Topics

April 5: No program scheduled

May 3: Men and Women Grieve Differently – Or Do They?

We all grieve and express that grief differently. These differences can introduce new stresses into a couple’s relationship. As we anticipate Mother’s and Father’s Days in the coming months, understanding these differences (and the similarities) can be helpful. During the general session there will be a presentation on some of the underlying factors that influence how one grieves and expresses that grief. In addition to the First-Timers Sharing Group and the Newly Bereaved Sharing Group, there will be a separate sharing group for men and another one for women.

MEETING TOPICS NOTE:

Each of our monthly meetings follow the same basic format. We first have a general session attended by everyone. During this first one-half hour we usually have a speaker or panel addressing a topic of interest and value to families mourning the death of a child. Following the general session, we break up into sharing groups. We always have the sharing groups, and the topics they discuss -- particularly for the newly bereaved groups -- do not necessarily focus on the program topic unless it is relevant to the members in the sharing group. We try to cover a range of topics in the programs we schedule, so that over the year we will have covered many topics which are of value to a broad range of members.

We Can Always Use the Help!

There are dozens of tasks that go into running our chapter and our special events, from helping set up the chairs...to greeting new members when they first come in the door...to facilitating sharing groups...to identifying potential articles and poems for the newsletter...to mailing out invitations to one of our events...to working on public relations.... We can always use the help. If you feel you are now in a place in your grief journey where you can help and give back to the chapter in little or large ways, please contact Dave at 410-544-3634. Most of us find that when we reach a point of giving back to those who come after us, we gain far more than we give.



Donations: THANK YOU!



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, books and other materials for the Chapter Library.

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

Sonja Bell in memory of her son Lacy "Danny" McDaniel
Rose Marie Carnes in memory of her son Walter H. Maynard IV
Ann and Noel Castiglia in memory of Renée and Mitch Dudnikov
Elsie Cooper in memory of her son Steven Cooper and her nephew Scott Thomas Palmer
Marla and Michael Dickens Sr. in memory of their son Michael J. Dickens Jr.
Rhonda and Norman French in memory of their son Brandon Robert French
Janet Goldberg in memory of Russell Calo Jr.
Norm Heincelman in memory of his granddaughters Cortney Belt and Traci Heincelman
Lillian Mueller in memory of her daughter Leslie Gae Davis
Diane and Robert Royer in memory of their son Aaron Sebastian Royer
and their friend's son Thomas "Tommy" Michael Howard
Anna and Eric Smith and family in memory of Stephen William Killian
Ken Smith in memory of his niece Tracy Ann Fotino
Peg and Lou Stevens in memory of their son William Henry Stevens
Dawn & Terry Watkinson in memory of her son Sydney Mark Hardesty Jr.



Tears are the silent language of grief.
Voltaire

A Solitary Journey By Helen Steiner Rice

Grief is a solitary journey. No one but you knows the gaping hole left in your life when someone you know has died. And no one but you can mourn the silence that was once filled with laughter and song. It is the nature of love and of death to touch every person in a totally unique way. Comfort comes from knowing that people have made the same journey. And solace comes from understanding how others have learned to sing again.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR **Conference of Hope and Healing**

Saturday, May 19, 2007

For information:
Debi Wilson-Smith, Conference Leader
410-757-8280
debiws@verizon.net



SIBLING PAGE



PLAYING IN THE SHADOWS

We grew up together big sister, little brother. I took care of you until you were old enough to care for yourself. Though you didn't say it. I knew you loved me. We played in the sunlight, you and I; Remember the games of "mother-may-I" and "hide and seek"? Sure we had our fights as all siblings do. But through it all we never lost our love for each other. Now you're gone. I'll never see you again except in the memories of those sunny days. You will forever be sixteen far too young to die. You had your whole life to live. I'll always grieve, but I must go on. Still, without you, I play alone in the shadow.

Cheryl Larson, Pikes Peak TCF

My Sister Watches Over Me...

My sister's up in Heaven
Not underneath this stone,
Not buried in the ground
All quiet and alone.

She's with the other angels
As happy as can be,
And from her lofty window
She watches over me.

And so I bring her flowers
She'll see them from above,
For though I cannot see her
My heart can feel her love.

Jessica Bryan BP/USA, Augusta GA

A TRAGEDY THAT WILL LAST FOREVER

On June 8, 1989, my life changed drastically. I was extremely excited that morning since I was getting my driver's license later in the day. Upon arriving at school, my brother Neil and I went our separate ways. Neil turned back and said, "Good Luck! Don't mess up!" Those words will remain with me for as long as I live. They were the last words my brother said to me.

I left school early to get my driver's license. On the way home, my mother told me that Neil was sent home from school with a headache and chills. When we arrived at home, Neil was sleeping. My mother left for her law study group. Later, while I was on the phone, I heard a tremendous crash. I raced to my brother's room to find him having convulsions and in a coma.

I rushed Neil to the hospital, where he was diagnosed with meningitis, a disease in which the membrane around the brain swells. On June 10th my brother was pronounced brain dead. The doctors told us we would have to make a decision as to whether or not to keep him on life support. Previously, Neil told us that if he were ever on life support, he would want us to turn off the machine. On June 11th the life support systems were disconnected and my brother was officially pronounced dead.

At first I blamed myself for my brother's death, and for months I was in a horrible state of depression. The questions "What if I...?" and "If I could have..." went through my mind over and over again. I felt that if one of us had to die, it should have been me. I would have changed places with him in a heartbeat.

Finally I realized that there was nothing I could have done, and my life had to go on. But everything was different and I changed. I saw life through different eyes and judged people and things differently. I work harder now and I take life more seriously. You could say I try to do enough for both of us – to do everything my brother is no longer able to or never did. I feel as if Neil is still here, watching over me. I try to accomplish things that would make him proud of me.

I have grown up a lot. I joined the sibling group of The Compassionate Friends, where I am able to talk to others who understand what I am going through. No matter what people say, they cannot understand unless they have gone through it. I have also started a bereavement group at my school to help others talk about their feelings regarding the loss of a parent, sibling or friend. Now when someone loses a loved one, he or she can come to me and know that I am willing to listen. I understand. It makes me feel great knowing that I can share my experience and help others overcome a tragic loss and want to go on with their lives.

The hurt never goes away. The sharp memory of my brother will never fade. I will never forget the love, the frustration, and even the arguments we had. No one can ever take his place in my heart. When Neil died, a part of me died too.

Madelyn Heilweil
TCF/ Stamford, CT



OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED

Please remember the following families this month.

Bethany Anne Balasic
Daughter of Paul and Claudia Balasic
February 13, 1981 - April 5, 1996

Jeff Baldwin
Son of Aurelia Ferraro
April 27, 1967 - April 26, 1991

Hope Barber
Daughter of Douglass and Vonda Barber
March 11, 2003 - April 25, 2003

Patrick John Bennett Jr.
Son of Patrick and Deborah Bennett
September 27, 1975 - April 15, 1999

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

Alexandra Elizabeth Bolander
Daughter of Tom and Susan Bolander
April 1, 1996 - April 1, 1996

Wendy Jean Bolly
Daughter of Judith and Louie Bolly
April 6, 1977 - October 11, 2002

Paul Shane Brough
Son of Theresa and Steve Bleemke
May 18, 1982 - April 4, 2003

John Christopher Campbell
Son of Kathy and Jeff Campbell
April 18, 1981 - October 9, 2002

Faith Campbell
Daughter of John and Cathi Campbell
April 5, 1994 - April 5, 1994

William Frederick Carter Jr.
Son of Dot Carter
April 24, 1959 - August 16, 1992

John Scott Droege
Son of Teri Droege
April 30, 1984 - April 5, 2002

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

Joseph Fredrick Errichiello Jr.
Son of Susan and Joe Errichiello
April 6, 1979 - May 29, 2004

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

Sherri Leigh Fant
Daughter of Vern Pierce
January 24, 1958 - April 1, 2003

Andrea Faith Fiscus
Daughter of Debby and Kenny Fiscus
April 27, 1982 - October 9, 1993

Donald Richard Forbes III
Son of Janet Lynn Hall
August 3, 1975 - April 12, 2002

Zachary Jay Forman
Son of Marge Forman
February 11, 1977 - April 10, 2005

David Jonathan Frame
Son of Carol Brothers
April 12, 1967 - September 11, 2001

Christopher George Gilmour
Son of Carole and Paul Gilmour
Brother of Sean Gilmour
October 17, 1997 - April 2, 2003

Andrew Thomas Gwaltney
Son of Hope Dorman
October 1, 1987 - April 6, 2004

Mallory Heffernan
Daughter of Dianne and Edmund Heffernan
December 19, 1985 - April 18, 2003

Alison Marie Hylan
Daughter of Jan and Leo Hylan
April 24, 1986 - January 9, 2005

Chrystal Lynn Isaacs
Daughter of Tish and Darrel Isaacs
April 12, 1984 - February 1, 2003

Lilith "Lily" Sappho Kelm
Daughter of Kathy Kelm
April 4, 1973 - April 6, 1973

Steven J. Landis
Son of Edwin and Susan Landis
April 4, 1968 - October 10, 1991

Zachary Laurence Luceti
Son of Linda East
April 20, 1978 - July 4, 2003

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

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



OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED (continued)

Melanie Carol Murphy
Daughter of Fred and Phyl Murphy
April 21, 1966 - October 17, 1985

Craig Steven Nelson
Son of Karen Coulson
April 2, 1974 - January 31, 1995

Jonathan Michael Noon
Son of John Noon
February 3, 1982 - April 18, 2004

Glynn Allen Owens
Son of Michael Owens
October 21, 1973 - April 2, 2003

Lee Ann Platts
Daughter of Sandy and Jeff Platts
April 21, 1999 - April 21, 1999

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

Anthony John Schaefer
Son of LuAnn Schaefer
July 13, 1979 - April 7, 2003

David Michael Schell Jr.
Son of Betty and Joseph Jones
April 7, 1981 - March 20, 2005

Matthew Jason Temple
Son of Jim and Karen Temple
October 6, 1987 - April 23, 1995

Heather Brooke Tepper
Daughter of Michelle Tepper
June 11, 1986 - April 3, 2005

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

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

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

Austin Wolfe
Son of Bonnie and James Wolfe
April 3, 1999 - April 6, 1999

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

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

I believe that imagination is stronger than knowledge -
That myth is more potent than history.
I believe that dreams are more powerful than facts -
That hope always triumphs over experience -
That laughter is the only cure for grief.
And I believe that love is stronger than death.

Robert Fulghum
Author of All I really need to know I learned in kindergarten



Spring Holidays

Many special days soon are coming our way
Called Easter, Passover, Mother's and Father's Day
How do we react when non-bereaved people ask,
"How was your holiday?" as the weekend passed.
We nod, we smile, we say "Okay, just fine."
But you and I know it's just a good line.
No holidays are happy, for our sweet child has gone
Our family togetherness plan is definitely all wrong.

So what do we do, how do we pay
Homage to those who celebrate that day
Our voices stay quiet, and our stories are sad.
We just have to get through the days that are bad.
Eventually we do come up with plans A and B
Spending time with kind people who really do see
We're desperately trying to give it our best.
Our mourning style differs from all of the rest.

As survivors we reinvent our careers and our goals
Patching new ideas with our bodies and souls.
We look for quiet places, safe harbor, retreat
Sometimes we reach out, sometimes take a back seat
But somehow through it all Springtime will renew
A strong sense of hope that we will get through

With the blooming of flowers, the greening of trees
Our strength returns and the harsh pain does ease.
Let our feeling, continue to grieve
Soon you will see life's tapestry reweave.

– Lionel and Sandy Chaiken, T.C.F. Potomac, MD

In three words I can sum up everything I've
learned about life: it goes on.

Robert Frost

It's so curious: one can resist tears and 'behave'
very well in the hardest hours of grief. But then
someone makes you a friendly sign behind a
window, or one notices that a flower that was in
bud only yesterday has suddenly blossomed, or
a letter slips from a drawer... and everything
collapses.

Sidonie Gabrielle Colette

A Daddy's Love

You will always live in your daddy's heart,
And he will always hold you there.
In his eyes there will always be a tear,
But in his eyes you will be there.

His hand will always remember
The last time your tiny hand was in his.

His arms will always ache
From when he held you last
Now only filled with emptiness.

Your daddy's heart will never
Forget his little girl.

Author unknown

Forgive Until Forever

By Don Hackett, Hingham, MA

Grieving is a fierce and overwhelming expression of
love thrust upon us by a deep and hurtful loss.
Grieving is an entanglement of feelings and ultimately,
forgiveness must be an integral part of our
grief and our healing. For what is love if forgiveness
is silent within us?

We learn to forgive our children for dying, ourselves
for not preventing it. We begin to forgive our
God or the fate we see ruling our universe. We start
to forgive others for abandoning us in their own
bewilderment over the onslaught of emotions they
sense in our words and behavior.

I believe we must be open to the balm of forgiveness,
through its expression in our lives. Whether
through thought, word, or deed, we find small ways
to seek life once more. Deep within us, forgiveness
is capable of treading the wasteland of our souls to
help us feel again the love that has not died.

It begins release from the pain, not from the hurt of
missing, but from lacking the fullness of the love we
shared with our child. That love lives with the
strength inside ourselves, and yet our beings are so
entrapped in a whirling vortex of anger, despair,
frustration, abandonment and depression that we
often feel it only lightly.

How Do We Celebrate Our Children's Birthdays?

In thinking about my son Eric's birthday which is on March 7, I begin to wonder exactly how I will "celebrate" – if that is the word. I know I need a plan for how I will spend that day without crying or staying in bed all day. I remember watching the Disney adaptation of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*. I recall a scene at the Mad Hatter's tea party where they were singing, "A very merry un-birthday to me." Is this how we feel about our child's birthday now? It really isn't an un-birthday, but would it be easier for me to celebrate an un-birthday?

Last year my son's birthday was only 9 months after he died, I knew it would be a difficult day for me. I spent the day with my daughter-in-law and grandson. We made a day of it at the Baltimore Aquarium. My grandson had such a wonderful time. While watching the dolphin show, the handler asked for a volunteer from the audience. To our surprise, the volunteer's name was Eric. I turned to my daughter-in-law, and said, "I think we know where we were supposed to be today." I then came home, talked about Eric, looked at his pictures, read the poem that I had written for him – and cried.

This year, I decided to buy cupcakes for three of the classes of students in the elementary school where I do volunteer work. I also made an ophthalmologist appointment for my friend, Bob, who stays with us. Somehow, keeping busy during the day seemed to be a good thing to do.

We used to have birthday parties, dinners, cakes with candles. Now instead of those happy times, we have the pain of grief. We try to find a way to handle the loss of our child. On the day our child was born, we embraced him with hope, love, joy, without much thought of the future. We shared that wonderful gift of life with each one. Now that life is over, we relive every moment. For some of us there were years, for some others, months, days or even less. It isn't the length of the life that is important now. It is the fact that we had that life with us at all.

When we look at the calendar, as one more year has passed, the birth date is approaching. Our child isn't getting older; he or she has just been gone longer. For that, we now remember the date of his or her death. So, what are we supposed to do on the day that our child was born? As Eric's birthday approaches, I find myself at a great loss. Instead of celebrating his birthday, I am learning how to cope with a day that is filled with loss and grief.

So, here I am asking that question again. How do we "celebrate" the birthday of our child? I am sure each of us has tried different ways. There is no one best way. Each of us has to find what gives us comfort and honors our child's memory. I choose to remember the day that Eric was born by recalling his birth, his first few days, weeks, months, years. I look at his baby pictures again. I look at pictures of him as an adolescent and then as a young man, finally, as a husband and a father. I try to fill my mind with comforting thoughts of the loving words we said to each other over the span of his short life of 36 and a half years. I try to remember his face and his voice.

The past year and a half since he died has been an extremely difficult one. But out of the sadness, I have found some joy. Without Eric, at first I had no idea what to do with myself. But somehow, since his death, I have been able to find an activity to fill the emptiness. A few months ago I began to volunteer at the local elementary school. I have found that gives me the opportunity to touch other children's lives as I touched Eric's. Even though I have a husband, step-son and grandson, all of whom I love, the pain of missing Eric was just so overwhelming. The time I spend at school each day is a reprieve from the loneliness and sadness that fills my mind. As difficult as it is for each of us to live without our child, we find we must accept that this is the way it is. But we have a choice to make. We cannot change what was. We can only change the now. We can embrace life in any number of fulfilling ways, or we can try and hide from it. The choice is ours to make. I choose to live in the memory of Eric, reaching out to the children with love and kindness, just as I did to Eric.

Happy Birthday, Eric. In my heart, you will be 38. You will always be here with me. I am so thankful for all the love we shared. The wonderful gift of your birth. I will remember this today and always.

— Written by Nancy Doherty
Anne Arundel County Chapter/BPUSA
In loving memory of Eric Paul Haynal
March 7, 1969 – September 13, 2005

Bereaved Parents of the USA

Anne Arundel County Chapter

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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.