



Bereaved Parents of the USA

Anne Arundel County Chapter

January 2012

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New Year

The new year comes when all the world is ready
for changes, resolutions – great beginnings.

For us, to whom that stroke of midnight means
a missing child remembered,
for us the new year comes
more like another darkness.

But let us not forget that this may be the year

When love and hope and courage

Find each other somewhere in the darkness

To lift their voice and speak:

Let there be light.

— Sascha Wagner (from *The Sorrow and the Light*)

A sincere and heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed to a most beautiful Service of Remembrance.

Your efforts were very much appreciated by all who attended. From the music to the readings to the inspirational message of hope, it was an incredibly wonderful way to honor the memories of our children and to usher in the holiday season with them at our side.

A very special thank you to Ann Castiglia and Janice Kunkel for leading the effort on our behalf – and thanks to all of the others who spent countless hours to bring us this Service.

The printing and mailing of this newsletter have been donated by
Chuck, Marta and Mike Williams in memory of our son and brother

Matthew Tyler Williams

May 9, 1986 – January 13, 2011



A quote from Matt's facebook read...
We all die. The goal isn't to live forever,
the goal is to create something that will.

He created a life and memory that no one
will ever forget. He loved life and his family
and friends with all of his heart.
He will forever be our Guardian Angel and
always live in our hearts until we meet again.

We love you ...Mom, Dad and Mike

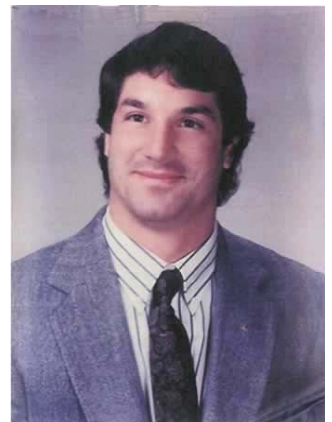
He will forever be our Guardian Angel
and always in our hearts...

Juliet and Leonard Rothman in memory of their son

Daniel Maurice Rothman

January 20, 1971 – September 17, 1992

Our son Daniel wanted to
dedicate his life to healing those
who were struggling and in pain.
We dedicate this newsletter in his
memory, that it may bring solace
and healing to us all. He would
have liked that.



Next Meeting: January 5, 2012

Happy New Year, or Is It? Beginning a new year without our deceased children with us physically can be very challenging. The January program will focus on looking ahead to the new year, as we continue to deal with the loss of our children.

Sharing groups – a key part of each Chapter meeting – will be held as usual for first-time attendees, and the newly and non-newly bereaved.

Calvary United Methodist Church
301 Rowe Boulevard
Annapolis, MD 21401

Meetings are held on the first Thursday of every month and are open to anyone grieving the death of a child. Come around to the back of the church—there is parking and an entrance directly into our meeting room.

We are a self-help support organization dedicated to assisting parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and siblings toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child. We provide information and education to extended family and friends. Our greatest strength as bereaved families is the unity we find in shared experiences which can lead us out of isolation, give us a place to “belong,” and offer us hope that together – we can make it.

WHAT TO EXPECT AT OUR CHAPTER MEETINGS

Our Chapter gathers one evening a month to address topics and offer support to those who are mourning the death of a child. Our meetings last for approximately 2 hours. Sometimes we schedule a 30-minute presentation at the beginning of our meeting. When the speaker or panel has concluded the presentation, we introduce ourselves and say our child's name. We then take a short break before dividing into sharing groups.

Sharing groups are facilitated by fellow Chapter members and are completely confidential. During this time, the issues that are discussed—particularly for the newly bereaved—focus on the issues facing participants today.



Submissions for the February newsletter due to the Newsletter Team by January 1.
Send an email to: newsletter@aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org.

Chapter Leader:	Terre Belt 410.721.1359 tbelt@nahbrc.com
Newsletter Team:	Terre Belt Kathy Ireland Eryn Lowe
Treasurer:	Fran Palmer
Correspondence & Hospitality:	Rick & Carol Tomaszewski
Librarian:	Bob and Sandi Burash
Programs:	Paul Balasic

Do You Use Amazon.com?

If so, AND you enter through our Chapter's website (www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org), the Chapter will earn a commission of five percent on your purchases. Using the link does not increase your cost (and information about your purchase is not shared with the Chapter), but it does earn the Chapter a commission from Amazon. It's an easy way for you to support our Chapter's activities.

Go to the Chapter's home page, click on the butterflies on the welcome page, and then scroll down the first page to the bottom, where there is an Amazon.com graphic that takes you to Amazon's site. Entering Amazon's site in this manner – through the Chapter's website – ultimately credits the Chapter with the five percent commission on any purchases that follow. Thanks in advance for your help!

Inclement weather on a meeting night? Our meeting is cancelled if Phase 1 of the Snow Emergency Plan is in effect that same day at 5:00 p.m.



Would you like to sponsor the Chapter's newsletter or website (www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org) for one month in memory of your child? It's a wonderful way to honor your child's memory – to say his or her name for all the world to hear -- while providing financial support to the Chapter and its many activities offered to all those mourning the loss of a child.

Newsletter sponsorship is \$75 and website sponsorship is \$25. Just send an email to Chapter Leader Terre Belt (tbelt@nahbrc.com), or call her at 410-721-1359, or sign up at a monthly meeting. Say Their Names!!! And help the Chapter, too!

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BPUSA/AA County Chapter
P.O. Box 6280
Annapolis, MD 21401-0280

A Hope for Myself

(This is what is called a group poem, where each line is written by a different person responding to a prompt, and together they make up a poem.)

To accept my child's death
 our Grandkids to win their soccer game tomorrow!
 creativity to Blossom
 to know you're in God's hands
 peace, less emotional drain because of loss
 less anxiety, less stress
 continued strength
 I can let the tension go from my body, to feel restored
 that I can get to a place where I know you are at peace so I can be at peace.

— Parents, BP/USA, Anne Arundel County, MD



Hope

Hope is the melancholy angel of grievers,
 Elusive and beautiful.
 Hope is the light from nowhere,
 Telling us that we must reach
 For the unknown promise that
 Waits to be fulfilled,
 In a future we do not yet understand.

— Sascha Wagner



Just for a Moment

Just for a moment
 We held in our hands
 A gift so precious, so rare.

Just for a moment
 We beheld with our eyes
 Her face so lovely, so fair.

Just for a moment
 Her sensitive touch;
 Just for a moment
 Her lyrical songs;
 Just for a moment
 She really was here
 With us, where she belongs.

Just for a moment
 We heard with our ears
 Her laughter thrilling the air.
 The echoes are lingering still;
 They always will.

Now, just for a moment
 She lives in our hearts
 Cherished with tenderest care.

For as long as we live,
 For as long as we love,
 She will always be there.

— Philip Jones, Calgary, Canada



Emily Schindler

Welcome to the New Year. For the bereaved it may be too much to hear the joyful expression Happy New Year, but it is, none-the-less, a new year and what does that imply? Hope, new beginning, renewal, resolutions are all words used to describe the New Year. For the bereaved parent the New Year may mean simply that you made it through the winter holidays. It is just another way to mark the passing of time.

New Year has new significance to bereaved parents. We now have two New Year's to acknowledge. One is the calendar year beginning on January 1st and the other is the day of our child's death – the beginning of our new and unasked for life and a new year without our child's physical presence.

A New Year also brings a chance to take stock of where we have been and where we are going. For some looking back on the past year may be filled mostly with pain and sadness; some may fear looking ahead because of the belief that the future will be filled with more of the same. My child is gone and I will always feel this miserable.

A New Year will not get you "over your grief" nor will it help you accept the death. What a New Year may provide is the time to incorporate your child's life and death into your life story.

As the book, Tuesdays with Morrie, reminds us: "Death ends a life, not a relationship."

The question I ask myself every day – not just at the beginning of the year – is, "How do I maintain my relationship with Emily?"

How will I face the New Year with my grief without suffocating from it? Some may measure the amount of pain to the love they have for their deceased child. They may question their love if they feel less pain. One may ask, will I dishonor my child by living my life fully and growing spiritually and emotionally? As long as you do both, attend to your relationship with your child and live your life, you have done what your child would want.

Our relationship with our child is as unique and individual as each one of us. We will never forget our children and part of them will remain a part of us. Take time in the New Year to consider the special memories you have, what did you learn from your child and what part of their legacy do you want to carry on? How you choose to remember them is a personal decision. You may visit the grave, plant a garden, establish a scholarship, bake special foods, you may even wear a tiara. What is important is to remember and acknowledge the loss and celebrate the uniqueness of your child.

What I hope for everyone in the New Year is that you have moments of peace and a balance between grief and joy, darkness and light, moments when you can breathe easier and have peace, moments when you can think about your child and not cry or feel pain. I hope that you may even laugh at a memory. The New Year doesn't mean you will never hurt again. Grief is like the ocean; at times it will be smooth and calm, the next minute a huge wave knocks you off your feet and you are in the midst of a storm just trying to hang on, and then it is calm again. When in the midst of the storm, I hope you remember the calm.

— Jane Schindler, BP/USA
Anne Arundel County, MD



Tears

Guess what? What women have known for a long time and maybe men are beginning to discover – crying really does make you feel better. And for good reason. Now we are learning that crying has helpful physiological as well as psychological effects.

Researchers at the University of Minnesota have found that emotional tears (as opposed to those shed from exposure to wind, say, or a cut onion) contain two important chemicals, leucine-enkephalin and prolactin, and they are natural pain-relieving substances. Tears are, they tell us, an exocrine substance – like sweat, or exhaled air – and one of the functions of such processes is to help cleanse the body of substances that accumulate under stress.

Then why are we embarrassed by our tears? Why are we fearful they will make others uncomfortable? Often, when people can cry, the work of healing can begin.

No more apologies. No more uneasiness. My tears are for my healing. Perhaps, too, my tears will give others permission to cry when they feel the need.

— Martha Whitmore Hickman (from *Healing After Loss*)

SIBLING PAGE

All the Things I Miss

I sometimes think about all the things I miss about my brother.

There are a lot – some painful, some I never would have believed at the time that I would miss. And I find that what I miss the most are the things that should have been.

I bought my first car the year he would have turned 16. He should have been here to ask to borrow the keys (not that I would have given them to him), but he should have been here to ask.

He should have been a senior this year, getting ready to face a world with no more summer vacations, and deciding what to do with his life.

All the things that should be:

He should be here when I fall in love, to tease me and give me his opinion of the man I choose.

He should be here when I have a child, to be godparent and uncle, friend and confidant.

He should be here to get married and have kids of his own, so that I can be an aunt and sister-in-law.

He should be here to celebrate when things are good, and to commiserate when things are bad.

My brother was my friend and my foe, in a way that only little brothers can be. And as I sit here and think about my brother, what I think the most is that he should be here.

I love and miss you, little brother.



— Sharon Odessa Stiener, Lowell, IN



Big Part of Me

You're my big brother,
The one who's always there.
But because I've never met you,
No one realizes how much I care.

God called you back home,
Before I was even alive.
How could he let this happen,
When you were only five?

My love for you is unconditional,
Though we've never met.
When I think about never meeting,
I can't help but get upset.

You give me courage,
And help me to stay strong.
You give me the confidence to keep going,
When my days seem way too long.

And even when I don't show it,
And no one else can see.
You're always on my mind,
You're a big part of me.

— Natasha B. McFadden

QUESTIONS

I'm weak. I try to cry, but the tears don't come. I want to scream! I want to break something! I'm so tired of feeling like this. I'm tired of waking up every morning.

I'm tired of pretending to be okay. I'm tired of being strong. I'm scared. I'm scared of what just happened. I'm scared of what will become of us. I'm scared

of the future. I'm scared of losing someone else. I'm scared to live. I'm scared

to love. I find myself living in constant fear. The fear of what? Of life and all

life has to offer. I just want to be happy. I want to laugh again. I want us to be

normal. I want this horrible feeling deep inside just to go away. I wish I could

understand. I want to know why! I want to understand it. I wish I could have

him back. Why! Why him! What's the purpose! When will the pain go away? I

pray for strength. We all need strength. I want to smile again. I want to know the

meaning of happiness. It seems that in one second all my happiness and the life I

had always known was totally destroyed. We all have to start over. Where do we

begin? How do we begin? My heart is broken. My world has fallen apart.

— Amy Young, TCF, N.E. GA

Our Children Remembered

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

Michael Allen Barker
Son of Diane and Seth Barker
January 18, 1990 - February 10, 1999

Morgan Jane Elizabeth Beverly
Daughter of Kimberly and Wayne Beverly
August 17, 1992 - January 25, 2009

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

Emily Ann Blazejewski
Daughter of Lee Ann and Doug Blazejewski
January 27, 1997 - January 2, 2004

David A. Boss
Son of Ron and Sally Boss
January 6, 1968 - November 5, 2000

Paul John Burash
Son of Robert and Sandra Burash
January 18, 1972 - August 8, 1992

David Ronnie Cain III
Son of Ginny and Donald Bussink
March 17, 1983 - January 31, 2003

Scott Eric Caplan
Son of Nancy Caplan
September 20, 1986 - January 6, 2006

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

Mark Allen Craft
Son of Marika Bates
January 24, 1961 - January 20, 2004

Kevin Michael Crine
Son of John and Jean Crine
January 30, 1974 - February 8, 2006

David Michael Cutter
Son of Jim and Anne Marie Cutter
September 16, 2002 - January 2, 2003

Emily Christina Davidson
Daughter of Fran Smith
July 24, 1972 - January 13, 2011

Jason T. Easter
Son of Janice and Chris Kunkel
January 30, 1973 - September 9, 1999

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

Leah Madison Fosdal
Daughter of Shannon and Jonathan Fosdal
January 27, 2009 - November 25, 2009

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

Xavier William Garrett
Son of Lisa Grant
July 3, 2002 - January 22, 2009

Steven Joseph Garvey
Son of Mark and Cheryl Sylce
January 21, 1985 - February 1, 1985

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

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

Sandrine J. Ingulia
Daughter of Michele Ingulia
January 17, 1965 - February 14, 2003

Mark Edward Keefe
Son of Debra and Mark Keefe
September 13, 1974 - January 8, 1991

Kevin Murray Kerr
Son of Debra and Richard Kerr
January 19, 1980 - September 4, 2001

Stephen William Kilian
Son of Billy and Aimée Kilian
Grandson of Jay and Debbie Kilian
Nephew of Cortney and Wade Kilian
January 15, 2004 - March 18, 2006

Ethan Matthew MacPherson
Son of Kim and Scott MacPherson
January 22, 1994 - February 13, 1995

Walter H. Maynard IV
Son of Rose Marie Carnes and Walter Maynard III
January 2, 1965 - April 14, 2006

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

James Allen McGrady
Son of David and Shirley McGrady
January 15, 1968 - August 10, 1987

Michele Noble McKinley
Daughter of Louisa and Sheldon Noble
August 25, 1956 - January 29, 2005

Our Children Remembered

William A. Miller
Son of Mary J. Miller
Brother of Marlene Miller
September 1, 1964 - January 18, 2004

Richard "Todd" Mohr
Son of Jeannie and Ron Anderson
January 12, 1974 - September 25, 2007

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

Robert Adam "Robby" Ostrowski
Son of Denise Crouse
January 30, 1995 - September 11, 2010

Nicholas Grant Poe
Son of Karen and Michael Willey
Son of Nelson and Shirley Poe
November 9, 1982 - January 23, 2002

Kevin Eric Reichardt
Son of Carol and Karl Reichardt
January 20, 1975 - January 26, 1995

Joseph William Remines
Son of Bobbi Remines
November 16, 1980 - January 3, 1994

Charles "Charlie" Hubner Rice
Son of Doug and Stephanie Rice
January 11, 2002 - January 12, 2002

Phillip "PJ" Bernard Riek Jr.
Son of Pamela and Tracy Peterson
December 29, 1989 - January 17, 2000

Daniel Maurice Rothman
Son of Juliet and Leonard Rothman
January 20, 1971 - September 17, 1992

Thomas Jeffrey Schall
Son of Tom and Joyce Schall
January 16, 1963 - January 7, 2002

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

Jonathan Miles Schuppe

Son of Martha and Jim Schuppe
January 18, 1982 - January 3, 2005

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

Reece Nelson Tolbert
Son of Jamie Tolbert
January 7, 2005 - November 6, 2005

Justin James Watts
Son of Jan and Jim Watts
February 15, 1985 - January 14, 2006

Michael Shane Wheeler
Son of Lita L. Ciaccio
June 22, 1976 - January 11, 1997

Daniel Alfred Whitby
Son of Rita and Albert Whitby Sr.
January 10, 1959 - August 15, 1974

Carole Anne Wilford
Sister of Aljuana Saunders
January 7, 1944 - May 4, 1998

Faith Jordan Williams
Daughter of Nicole Hawkins
September 26, 1998 - January 11, 1999

Michael Tyler Williams
Son of Marta and Chuck Williams
May 9, 1986 - January 13, 2011

Edward Williams, Jr
Son of Burnell Williams
January 23, 1959 - November 7, 2010

Roy James "Jay" Wyrick
Son of Patricia Wyrick
August 8, 1962 - January 10, 2002

*This is for all the caterpillars that never became butterflies.
All the butterflies that never caught the wind in their wings.
And all the hearts that had hopes and dreams of a
wondrous flight together.*

Donations may be made to offset the costs of our local Chapter's events and communications. We gratefully acknowledge the following donations made in the last month:

DONATIONS:

Douglas Blazejewski in memory of Emily Ann Blazejewski

Linda Huey East in memory of Zachary Laurence Luceti

Jed & June Erickson in memory of Jenna Leigh Erickson

Katharine Lawrence in memory of Susan Lawrence Barr

Eugene & Marlen Maier in memory of Eric Eugene Maier

Michael Milord in memory of Daniel Milord

Joan Para Miller in memory of Brian James Para

Fran Palmer in memory of Scott Palmer

Leonard & Juliet Rothman in memory of Daniel Maurice Rothman

Kathleen Savage in memory of Robert M. White

Gordon & Virginia Schmier in memory of David C. Schmier

Kenneth A. Smith in memory of Tracy Fotino

Michael & Karen Willey in memory of Nicholas Grant Poe

Chuck & Marta Williams in memory of Matthew Tyler Williams



Why?

Why am I a thousand-piece puzzle when everyone else is already put together? Why is the rest of the world a size 10? Why do their kites fly so high? Why does the grass grow greener next door? Because I am a thousand-piece puzzle.

Who am I NOW? Who am I, now that my loved one has died? Who am I, now that I have survived the holiday season and find myself deep into the gloom of winter? Why do I feel so scattered? Why am I a thousand-piece puzzle when everyone else is so put together?

Why does January seem so empty? Why do the seasons reflect my moods and why do I take on the cast of the weather outside? Just as the world is stiff and frozen outside my window, I feel dead and cold and scattered inside myself. Who am I NOW?

I managed to make it through the holiday season, though the how's of that feat are truly beyond my recollection. I can't even remember eating the holiday meals.

In those glittering days I managed to smile and even to find a few moments of peace and joy; but here in the gloom of January, all I seem to see are the scattered pieces of my life cast before me on the card table, waiting for me to pick them up and make the picture.

But what picture do all these pieces form? I used to think I knew. I used to know who I was and where I was going and how I was going to get there. But now, now in the chill of January, I can't even remember where the puzzle begins and I end.

I think I'm still grieving, and that surprises me. It's been... (too long, regardless of the time frame you insert), and I should be getting better. Why do I still ache from a sunburn I got years ago when we were together on the beach? Why is there still sand in my shoes and why does your name still stick in my throat? Who am I now that the memories grow cold in January's chill?

Am I still a mother if there is no child to tuck in at night? Am I still a dad if there is no one to loan the car keys to? Am I still a wife if there is no one to snuggle up to in my bed? Am I still a husband if there is no one waiting at home for me at the end of the day? Am I still a sister or brother if there is no one to tease? Am I still a child if my parent has died? Am I still a human being, capable of loving and being loved, if the one person I loved more than anything has become frozen in time? Who am I now that my loved one has died?

The gloom has permeated even my toes, and my whole body seems icy. Why can't January be warm and gentle after the struggle of the holidays? I need some sunshine, some warmth, some help in turning over the puzzle pieces and putting them back together. I need some spring. But spring is a way off and I must (somehow) get through these days. If you're feeling like I am, perhaps these few suggestions will help you find the pieces to your new puzzle.



- 1. Identify specific feelings.** Do not generalize. Try to figure out exactly what's bothering you. Look for the tiny grains of sand that are still hiding in the bottom of your shoes. Acknowledge them. Be honest with those feelings, whatever they are. If you're angry, be angry. If you're sad, be sad. Be specific in your sadness!
- 2. Pick your worries.** Focus on only one worry at a time. Give up being worried about being worried. Prioritize your worries. This helps combat feelings of being overwhelmed and you can decide which worries to keep and which to send to your mother, children, family, neighbor, enemy.
- 3. Keep a picture or two of the sand castle where you can enjoy it every day.** You may decide not to make a shrine out of your memories, but don't lose the joy that you had in making that marvelous moat! Keep the sand you found in the shoes – you just don't have to keep it there! That's what memories are for...a place to stash the important stuff that we need.
- 4. Become as informed and as knowledgeable as possible about this new world in which you live.** We fear what we don't know, what we can't see, what we can't touch. Read, listen, learn all you can about grief. It's not where you planned on being this winter, but it is where you are. Look around.
- 5. Listen to everyone.** You will receive enough advice about how to do it (grief) to sink a fleet of battleships. Be grateful...at least someone is talking with you! But, FOLLOW YOUR OWN MUSIC.
- 6. Be kind to yourself.** You survived the holiday season, and now it is the beginning of another season, another way of living. Learn to forgive yourself for living.
- 7. Set small goals first.** Accomplish them. Then, set bigger goals. Try starting with getting the garbage out on the RIGHT day. Then, open the closet...the drawers...the heart. Try going out. The next time you might be able to get farther than the driveway. You'll get there again...someday.
- 8. Remember that life requires effort on your part.** Make friends with the vacuum, the checkbook and the car. Become determined to learn to remove the box before microwaving the dinner.
- 9. Don't wait for happiness to find you again.** Make it happen. Build another sand castle, maybe on a different beach this time. Don't lose the memories just because they hurt. Look at the pictures, listen to the song, remember the love...you haven't lost that. How could you possibly lose the love you shared?
- 10. Keep turning the puzzle pieces over.** But don't keep trying to put them back into the same picture. That picture is gone. There is a new picture to be made of those scattered pieces. Search for that scene. Search for the new you...search for the new person you are becoming.
- 11. Don't forget how to dream, how to laugh, how to dance.** The music is different, but so is the season. The room may be empty, but the heart is not. The spirit may be filled with sand, but the shoes remember the steps. One day at a time is OK if you can manage it, but know that some days all you can manage is one minute at a time. But minutes add up to years, eventually, and each grain of sand adds to the strength of the castle. Build the sand castle again...if only in your memory. Just because it's January, doesn't mean the beach is closed forever. Build your new castle in the middle of the winter. Find the new occupant...the new you.
- 12. Be gentle this winter season.** Turn the pieces over slowly, experiencing each piece as a newly found treasure. We can fill our days with bitterness and anger that the picture will never be the same. Or, we can hope for the spring that will surely come if we let it.



I know there are good things on the horizon. Winter can't last forever. If those things turn out to be less than we hoped, we will simply have to make whatever we get into something livable. Perhaps that is the secret to melting winter into spring: The challenge is to always carve out something beautiful from the icicle. There is joy in living...if we allow time in the winter to reassemble this thousand-piece puzzle.

— Darcie D. Sims



If Only

"If only" is the whip with which we lash ourselves.

If only I had not bought him a motorcycle...
 If only I had not let her cross the street alone...
 If only I had forbidden him to drive while he was so tired...
 If only I had not permitted the surgery...
 If only I had allowed the surgery sooner...
 If only I had not waited for the ambulance...
 If only I had waited for trained personnel to move her...

If only I were an all-knowing, all-powerful God,
 I would not have allowed my child to die.

But I am only human.

— Theresa Hutchinson, TCF, Norman, OK

A Forever Baby



At quiet times, when there is just me, I find myself dreaming and planning for the three of us. Then I am brought back to reality, and realize that for now there are just two of us. I wonder what I am to do with all the hopes, plans, and dreams I had for you, for the family we would have been.

I wonder about you. I try to picture you in my mind. When I do, my eyes sting, my throat gets tight, and I know all I want is to have and hold you. Then I am brought back to reality, and realize now I can only hold you in my mind and heart.

I have many feelings inside. Some I share, others I hide, but they are mine. They are okay. They are about you. At times I wonder why, instead of being a baby in our lives and the world, you were chosen to be a forever baby in a life and world of eternity. It is hard for me to understand why. In fact, I don't.

At times life seems difficult and even unfair, and pulling through seems like an impossible task. But when we do, our sense of accomplishment is great. It gives us hope and courage to go on with life. I am finding hope, courage, and strength in God to carry on and to try to handle whatever lies ahead. I will never forget the precious and powerful way you entered and left my life in only a moment of time. I love you even though you could not stay.

— Elena Baker, TCF, Pottstown, PA



Winter Blues, Blahs and Grief

I can't tell you how many times in the past few weeks I have run into people who are just feeling blue. They just feel low and don't exactly know why. Is it the post-holiday let down? Is it winter blues? Is it the uncertainty of the economy? Is it grief?

The answer is – it could be any or all of the above. So many of us do all we can to just pull off the holidays and make it nice for our kids or family. This is especially true in families who have experienced a loss. During the holiday season, we have no idea what our own

needs are. We just go on auto-pilot, put our heads down, and do whatever it takes to pull the season off.

It is only natural that when the holidays are over, we feel tired and more emotional. We give everything to get through the holidays, and don't have anything left in the tank. Also, we no longer have "tasks" to distract us from feeling what we really may be feeling about missing our loved ones during the holidays. Throw in the seemingly endless gray, gloomy and cold days of January/February and it becomes even harder to run from these feelings.

I think the general population gets the "winter blahs" too. But we need to be extra sensitive to it when we are grieving. We may need to expect the winter blahs annually (like an unwanted house guest – "Oh you?" You're back again? How long will you stay this time?").

We may need to plan for it and go on a vacation during that time, or a weekend getaway, or find activities we enjoy to keep ourselves busy. Also, let good friends know you may need them to be there for you a little more during the post-holiday winter time. You can also challenge yourself to do something that commemorates your loved one this time annually.

Instead of dreading the winter blahs, use this time of year to do some "winter grieving," similar to spring cleaning, but getting out the grief that has built up over the year. Allow yourself to sit down and let it out.

Most of all, don't be hard on yourself if you are feeling this way. It isn't fun, but it IS normal. Remember to be good to yourself until spring finds its way to you. Grief is similar to changing seasons – the bleakness of winter never goes away for good, but the grey days that seem endless truly do have an end. Spring is right around the corner...closer and closer with each fading grey day.

— Lynne Hughes

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*Wishing You A
Peaceful New Year*



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NEXT MEETING: January 5, 2012



Time sensitive

Must be delivered by JANUARY 5, 2012

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS:

Happy New Year, or Is It?
Thursday, January 5, 2012

Beginning a new year without our deceased children with us physically can be very challenging. The January program will focus on looking ahead to the new year, as we continue to deal with the loss of our children.

Sharing groups will be held for first-time attendees, the newly bereaved, and the non-newly bereaved.

Using Music in Dealing with Grief
Thursday, February 2, 2012

Some bereaved parents find that music can be helpful in dealing with their grief. A bereaved father will relate his experiences with music in his grief journey and talk about the role he believes music can play in the grief process. Members are urged to bring CDs or cassette tapes with music they have found particularly meaningful and helpful as they deal with their grief. We will use these as part of the discussion in some of our sharing groups.

RESOURCES:

Bereaved Parents of the USA
www.bereavedparentsusa.org or 708-748-7866

Hospice of the Chesapeake
www.hospicechesapeake.org or 410-987-2003

Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center
www.mdcrimevictims.org or 410-234-9885

Suicide Support Group
410-647-2550; meets the first Tuesday of each month in Severna Park, MD

MIS Support Group (miscarriage, infant death or stillbirth)
443-481-6114; meets the first Monday of each month in Edgewater, MD

Grief Recovery After a Substance Passing (GRASP)
www.grasphelp.com or 843-705-2217

The Compassionate Friends of Prince George's County
Meetings are on the second Thursday of each month at 7 p.m., United Parish of Bowie, 2515 Mitchellville Road, Bowie, MD

We appreciate feedback on our Chapter meetings. If you have suggestions for future topics of discussion, please contact our Program coordinator: Paul Balasic at pjbस्पmd@gmail.com or **443.566.0193**.