



Bereaved Parents of the USA

Anne Arundel County Chapter

February 2014

Copyright © 2014 All Rights Reserved

An Angel's Kiss

We go through life so often
Not stopping to enjoy the day
And we take each one for granted
As we travel on our way.

We never stop to measure
Anything we just might miss
But if the wind should blow by softly
You'll feel an angel's kiss.

A kiss that is sent from heaven
A kiss from up above
A kiss that is very special
From someone that you love.

For in your pain and sorrow
An angel's kiss will help you through
This kiss is very private
For it is meant for only you.

So when your hearts are heavy
And filled with tears and pain
And no one can console you
Remember once again.

About the ones you grieve for
Because you sadly miss
And the gentle breeze you took for granted
Was just an angel's kiss.

— Peggy Bouse

SAVE THE DATE...for our Hope and Healing Conference

Plan to attend the Hope and Healing Conference on April 26, 2014 at Calvary United Methodist Church in Annapolis. This will be a memorable day filled with speakers and workshops on a wide variety of topics, time to meet other bereaved parents, a Memory Board for photos, and gift, book and memory button sales. This promises to be a day that will help you to understand and learn about grief and the journey we are on, and provide insight into ways to help yourself physically, emotionally and spiritually...a day that will instill hope for the future and healing for your heart. For more details, see page eleven.

The printing and mailing of this newsletter have been donated by

Ned and June Erickson in memory of their daughter

Jenna Leigh Erickson

February 12, 1988 – February 5, 2011



You were my friend, not my child only.
Your life cut short, mine doubly lonely.

You'd share with me both tears
and laughter;
no more such talks from here-on-after.

There are great holes where you
have been,
just memories now, of you and then.

~ Genesse Bourdeau Gentry

Joseph and Mary Redmiles in memory of their son

Thomas H. Redmiles

February 22, 1985 – March 14, 2011



It never crossed my mind
That I would have to bury my child
And that my heart would still beat
And that the world would still turn
And that life would go on
It never crossed my mind.

(by Mardi Peaster)

Until we meet again,

Mom, Dad, Kate, Colleen and Matt

Next Meeting: February 6, 2014

Taking Care of Yourself While Grieving -- Tips about how to deal with the unique physical and emotional challenges associated with grieving will be the topic of discussion.

Sharing groups – a key part of each Chapter meeting – will be held as desired 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 beginning at 7:30 p.m. 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.

Doors open at 7:15 p.m.

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 March newsletter due to the Newsletter Team by February 1.

Send an email to: newsletter@aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org.

Chapter Leader:	Tiffany Gordon 405.234.6854 dtleh@yahoo.com
Newsletter Team:	Terre Belt Linda Khadem Eryn Lowe
Treasurer:	Fran Palmer
Correspondence & Hospitality:	Rick & Carol Tomaszewski
Librarian:	Bob and Sandi Burash
Programs:	Mary Redmiles mary.redmiles@gmail.com

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 pm.



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 Newsletter Editor Terre Belt (thbelt@comcast.net), or call her at 410-721-1359, or sign up at a monthly meeting. Say Their Names!!! And help the Chapter, too!

REPRINT POLICY: Material in this newsletter of the Anne Arundel County Chapter/ BPUSA may be copied only: 1) if the article is copied in its entirety; 2) if the person writing the article is identified as noted in the newsletter; 3) if it is clearly stated that it was taken from the newsletter of the Anne Arundel County Chapter/ BPUSA; 4) if our website is cited in the credits. This material is to be used and given to help persons with the grieving process and may not be sold or become a part of something being sold for profit, unless first obtaining the permission of the author of the article and/or the current Editor or Chapter leader as noted in this newsletter.

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

I Would Have

I would have traded places
Jumped through hoops
Fought the fights
Sent in the troops

I would have done anything
For you to have stayed
Made any bargain
Made any trade

I can spend a lifetime
Filled with guilt and blame
Not being able to save you
Seems like my shame

I will forgive myself
For what I could not do
Instead fill my heart
With all my love for you.

*From The Grief Toolbox
Submitted by the Redmiles family
in loving memory of Tommy Redmiles*

I Will Love You

As long as I can dream,
As long as I can think,
As long as I have a memory...
I will love you.

As long as I have eyes to see
And ears to hear
And lips to speak...
I will love you.

As long as I have a heart to feel,
A soul stirring within me,
An imagination to hold you...
I will love you.

As long as there is time,
As long as there is love,
As long as I have a breath
To speak your name...
I will love you.

Because I love you more than anything
In all the world.

— Daniel Haughian, TCF, Massillon, OH

From My Heart to Yours

The holidays are over and the rest of winter awaits us. It seems the days are long and the nights longer during the frosty season. The holidays may have been a time of dread, but at least they did take up some time.

Now it seems each day lingers and the cold temperatures make it seem more unbearable. We see less sunlight, which doesn't do much good for our already depressed moods. All of a sudden, we can understand why hibernation sounds like a good alternative to getting up each morning.

If this is your first winter without your child or other loved one, it may seem like it takes an extra effort just to lift one foot in front of the other. You may be depressed, your body may be tired and run down, and you probably had a bout or two of illness along the way.

Everyone else has gone back to their normal life activities following the holiday season, but for you nothing seems to fall back into place. Regardless of any New Year's resolutions, it's difficult to get over the grief you are experiencing.

Winter depression is normal for many people. Add the heavy burden of grief to that condition and it's no wonder you feel the way you do. Other people's expectations may be a hardship, as well, to add to your load. Are you wondering when the heaviness of winter will be lifted?

You don't have to wait for spring and the warmth of sunshine. Surround yourself with those things that make you feel safe and warm. Listen to soothing music, have a cup of your favorite hot drink, light some candles, and wrap a soft blanket around yourself. Close your eyes and breathe. Breathe deeply and slowly because you are alive. Think about your child or loved one and let your memories flood your mind. Cry if tears come. Let them heal you.

Your "spring" will come. Your aches will dissolve. Your tears will come less often. It is then you will be ready to open your arms to life again. Soon you'll be warmed with your precious memories.

— Cathy Heider, TCF, Figona, IA



The Beginning of the End of Winter

When February comes, there is finally an end in sight to the long winter. Sometimes, melting snow reveals the green tips of an early crocus or even the exquisite blossom itself, a soft flower of hope invading a harsh landscape of graying snow and biting wind and ominous sky. A small promise of new life to come.

My heart, grieving for my son who died, was like that image of winter. For somehow, even during the darkest, coldest moments, an unexpected sign of hope would intrude. And as the hours and days and months dragged on, my heart finally learned, once again, to be open to the promise of new life. Painful memories melted into loving ones. Life that seemed forever

dormant once again sprang forth from my heart.

In living hopefully and lovingly, the seasons of the heart can change. The loving memories of your special child, like the flower in the snow, can be the beginning of the end of winter.

— Maryann Kramer, TCF, Arlington Heights, IL



Broken Heart + Mended Heart = February

Valentine's Day marks the first day of the second month of the death of my daughter Cathie. Isn't it funny how, when after you have lost a child, you note the holidays? The first year I still had not really realized she was "dead." In fact, I could not even say the word "dead." I was just numb. I can remember wondering if I was going crazy and then I thought I must have not been a good mother...just because I had not – could not – cry. I was a totally empty vessel, devoid of any and all feelings.

The second year I think I made up for all the crying I did not do that first Valentine's Day as I bought only one set of those cute little Valentine's Day cards for my only living daughter, Carie, to give to her little schoolmates. I knew I was not going crazy. I knew I had been as good a mother as I could have been. I knew I had loved them both very much. I knew I STILL loved both of them.

The tenth year I found a bereaved parents' support group. I found a name for all the feelings I had been going through in these past years. I found out I was a BEREAVED PARENT. I discovered that I was not alone on this roller coaster of emotions. I was not alone anymore. I learned to smile with warm memories as I watched other small children buy their packs of Valentine Day cards. This is my seventeenth year as a Bereaved Parent. I don't cry much anymore...just once in awhile...and not for Cathie; I cry for me and the loneliness for her. Instead, I smile a lot with all the happy memories I have of the Valentine Days I was able to have with her. Now, when I cry on Valentine's Day, it is for the newly bereaved parents who must suffer this day, this month without their children. Yet, I also find comfort in knowing that they NEED NOT WALK ALONE either, for support groups and I are here for them. In fact, I think I will go out and buy a pack of those small Valentine's Day cards and send them to all my bereaved parent friends. Cathie would like that...yes, she would.



— Cherie Gordon, TCF, North Dade/South Broward, FL



The Club

In January 1987, my husband and I became members of a very exclusive club. We had been only vaguely aware of its existence, and we thought that surely a chapter in a city the size of ours wouldn't have many members.

We had seen a few people who belonged to the club, but we didn't seem to have anything in common with them, so we didn't really get to know them. Occasionally, we read stories in the newspaper about new members being initiated into the club, but it didn't seem likely that we would ever be eligible to join, so we paid no attention.

The price of membership is so dear that we couldn't imagine being a part of the club. We must have realized in the backs of our minds that people didn't choose to join and pay dues – it was done for them somehow. In fact, no one really has any idea of how members are selected. There are a lot of theories; but much of the time, the theories come from non-members who don't understand much about the situation.

The "club" we are now in (although it is not an organized group), is known as "bereaved parents." The cost of our membership was the life of our son; and we, like all other members, have no idea why we were selected for membership.

No one wants to be in this club. Even now, months afterward, inside our hearts and minds we continue to fight membership, but there is no resigning from it. It is an automatic lifetime membership. There was no way to avoid it – we did the best we could to keep our son safe. For 14 years, we guided him through dangers, only to have him die in a seemingly minor auto accident. Though we lay awake night after night, and think of it day after day, there is no answer as to why we have been thrust into this select group. We hate it and we cry out in protest, but there is no way to change it.

We have learned a lot since our membership began. We now understand much about the other members. In fact, we seek to be with them, to have regular get-togethers, to discuss our membership, and try to understand its value.

Sometimes, those outside the club are afraid of us, fearing that if they come near us or talk with us, they will be selected to become members, too! Acquaintances often try to ignore the membership, pretending that it doesn't exist. They seem to think that will make things easier, and then the members won't feel "different," but it really only makes things much worse.

So many times, I have wanted someone to say hello or to tell me she has been thinking of me or to mention something about the absent child who still lives inside me and overshadows all my thoughts. I have heard people say, "I don't want to upset her, or remind her of her son, or say something that will make her cry."

I want to tell them: "The only way you can make me feel worse than I already do is to pretend that it doesn't exist or that it isn't as deep and painful as you surely know it is."

"Have you ever experienced the feeling of having one terrible incident go through your mind, day after day, week after week, month after month, wondering why it happened and how you could have prevented it? Well, don't worry about reminding me of my son. I am thinking about him nearly 24 hours a day."

"Sure, sometimes my mind is temporarily distracted – it would have to be to function at all. But if you think there is even one day that goes by without my child's death tearing up my heart, then you have no idea what this club is all about."

"I appreciate your talking about my child, or at least letting me talk about him. He was a very large part of my life, and ignoring him now will really hurt me. It makes me think that you feel he's no longer important because he's gone. It hurts to think that people don't want to think about him or remember good things about him, just because he has died."

"I understand that you don't want to say anything that will make me cry. That sounds kind, and I used to feel that way, too, but now I know better. I'd rather the tears didn't come when you talk to me because I know they may scare you away, or at least make you very uncomfortable. But I've learned how useful and necessary they are. If I go too long without tears, my body builds up a terrible pressure from the pain of the grief. If you will allow me to cry in your presence, perhaps I won't have to cry alone, wondering if anyone else remembers, or even cares, about my loss."

"You can't know what will make me cry – sometimes I don't know myself. Some days I stay dry-eyed through nearly everything. Other days, the slightest thing will start the tears – things you could not possibly imagine or anticipate. Not all the tears are tears of sorrow. Even in the midst of my anguish, I sometimes cry tears of joy and relief because you have reached out; because you have confirmed that my son was special; perhaps because you have shared with me some precious memory about him which I had not known before."

"Please don't run away from me. Don't pretend his death never occurred, or even worse, that he never lived! I still love him, think of him, need to remember. Please share with me and we will both feel better."

I have to experience the grief. I can't pretend it doesn't hurt, or hurry it along. That's what membership in this club is teaching me. I am choosing to allow God to take an unspeakable experience and use it to start life again...in a new and better way.

I do not ask that you forget our dear departed. I want you to remember. I only ask that you remember more than the moment of death, more than the funeral, more than the house of mourning. Remember life! Remember the whole of life, not the final page of it.

— Rabbi Maurice Davis, Baltimore, MD

French Toast

I stand here before the stove.

All the ingredients are here –

The eggs, the milk, vanilla, cinnamon and sugar.

The frying pan is heating slowly –

Melting the butter

And still I stand in my robe and slippers.

I pick an egg to break it in the bowl –

But I just can't do it.

I want so much to fix French toast,

Because my husband loves it so –

Just like my son did all his life

Right up until he died.

I've lived this scene so many times since then,

Always with a tear and a sigh.

We'd had French toast at least once a week

For more years than I can remember.

How they ate!

I'd laugh and complain,

Because I had to cook so much.

Once in Florida,

When we had French toast for breakfast

In a restaurant with friends, he said:

"This is OK, but you ought to taste my Mom's!"

I can still hear him saying it.

Now I just can't do it –

I cannot cook French toast!

My husband never asks,

And while I stand before the stove and weep,

He pretends not to notice.

But I know he understands –

I just can't cook French toast –

Not yet...

— Fay Harden, TCF, Tuscaloosa, AL



To My Miscarried Baby

Out of love you came,
Planned, wanted, welcomed.

Your announcement created excitement, joy.

Friends and family inquired,

Do you want a girl or boy?

Will you take Lamaze?

What colors for the nursery?

Then suddenly you're gone – and silence.

No one talks about a baby that won't be.

Were you real or a dream?

I feel alone and empty.

Where can I put my love that was for you?

Now what does it mean?

— Betty Ruder, TCF, North Shore, IL



Native American Prayer

Hold on to what is good,
Even if it is a handful of earth.

Hold on to what you believe,
Even if it is a tree which stands by itself.

Hold on to what you must do,
Even if it is a long way from here.

Hold on to life,
Even when it is easier letting go.

Hold on to my hand,
Even when I have gone away from you.



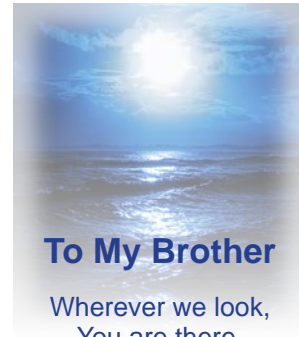
SIBLING PAGE

My Silent Companion



I see you in my dreams –
 Laughing happily, free from sorrow,
 And safe from life's misfortune.
 The joy that lights your eyes fills me with comfort,
 And I know that every step I make,
 You also take.
 Guiding me down life's path, through obstacles in my way –
 You are my silent companion.
 When God took you back – it changed our lives
 And our perspective.
 We now see the vibrant glow
 That lives in every one of His creations,
 And it reminds us of you.
 I hear your laugh in the crashing surf
 And feel warmed by your hugs in the soaking sun.
 You are everywhere –
 You are my silent companion.
 Though I want to reach out to you
 And hold you tightly in my sorrow,
 I know you can feel my tears on your shoulder
 As you surround me in your soul.
 You sprinkle my life with tokens and treasures,
 Reminders and reassurances of how much you love me.
 I know you'll live inside my heart
 And walk with me until I can join you –
 Forever as my silent companion.

— Jennifer Forrest, TCF, Orange Coast, CA



To My Brother

Wherever we look,
 You are there.
 You are the light
 On the water.
 You are the blossom
 On the tree.
 You are a thought,
 And you are a feeling.
 Wherever we are,
 You are.

— Martha Dubinsky, Chappaqua, NY

Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

Yesterday...You were here and I took it for granted that you would always be here. Telling you I loved you and was proud of you seemed unimportant. There would be time for that when we were older – when we fought less and talked more.

Today...I know that time will never come, and I will never have the chance to say these things face to face. So I write them and think them and hope you know I mean them now and have always felt them.

Tomorrow...each day the pain and regrets of things left unsaid get easier to deal with. I have begun to realize that you knew how I felt because you felt the same way. And as more tomorrow's turn into yesterday's, I will find peace in that knowledge. Someday, somewhere, we will meet again and I will have my chance then.

— Shannon Odessa Stiener, TCF, Lowell, IN

Everything is a First

Everything is a first. Many moments must be faced. There are the first holidays, the first anniversary, the first birthday. Thoughts about my brother Dave will always be with us. It's never more than a sentence away from me – NEVER! The ordinary cannot be ordinary. A certain phrase, a look, or an article of clothing can trigger thoughts and emotions. The joy of my senior year in college was interrupted by sad reality. FORGET? How is this possible? The days and months following my brother's death were filled with grief. Flowers and food were everywhere – love and concern were translated into strength that kept me moving one step at a time. People don't know what to say – nothing is NORMAL. Tragedy has brought a seriousness to my life. Thoughts about the meaning of life and the unimportance of a lot of things I have previously found important are circulating in my mind. I think about my own funeral now. When will it be? Tomorrow, next week, next year, before or after my parents? There are good days and bad days. I am learning to deal with all of this. People ask me "How are you?" Here is my answer: "I am mad Dave died at the age of 17. I am angry that my parents have to go through this. I am confused about my role in the family. I am jealous of other families. I am sad. I am fearful about the future. I am hopeful things will get better. I am courageous. I think about my brother every day. I will be strong."

— Lisa Ann Jones, Avoca, PA



Our Children Remembered

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

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

Christopher Ryan Boslet
Grandson of Carol N. Boslet
October 23, 1985 - February 20, 2003

Amber Marie Calistro
Daughter of Patti and John DiMiceli
February 28, 1976 - October 30, 1980

Chrystal Marie Clifford
Marilyn Mabe's son's fiancé
July 16, 1978 - February 17, 2001

John Mario DeMichiei Jr.
Son of John and Linda DeMichiei
February 24, 1979 - October 23, 2008

Zachary Lee Dukes
Son of Cindy Dukes
February 12, 1989 - March 31, 2010

Jenna Leigh Erickson
Daughter of June and Jed Erickson
February 12, 1988 - February 5, 2011

Manuel Junior Esparza
Son of Dianna McKinnon
March 20, 1987 - February 14, 2012

Melissa Ireland Frainie
Daughter of Kathy and George Ireland
December 12, 1971 - February 12, 2007

Katie Fritz
Daughter of Carol Fritz
October 29, 1977 - February 27, 1993

Kimberly Judith Gardner
Daughter of Joan F. Gardner
February 6, 1968 - August 16, 1992

Carolyn A Griffin
Daughter of Rick and Jan Griffin
February 15, 1983 - June 1, 2011

Richard Arland Jackson
Son of Margaret Jackson
February 9, 1990 - October 22, 2010

Timothy Jarrett Mabe
Son of Marilyn Mabe
October 29, 1977 - February 18, 2001

Jolene Dawn McKenna
Daughter of Charlene Kvech
February 8, 1967 - November 22, 1971

Graham Kendall Miller
Son of Ken and Abby Miller
February 3, 1981 - May 4, 1999

John David "JD" Openshaw
Son of David and Lily Openshaw
November 9, 1994 - February 21, 1997

Adrian Bernard Andrew Ortega
Son of Rachael Hand
August 28, 1964 - February 17, 2005

Brian James Para
Son of Joan Para
February 19, 1970 - March 19, 1991

Marco Pena
Nephew of Dianna McKinnon
November 28, 1989 - February 14, 2012

Thomas H Redmiles
Son of Mary and Joe Redmiles
February 22, 1985 - March 14, 2011

Tanager Rú Ricci
Son of Kathy Franklin
October 19, 1977 - February 16, 2004

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

Michelle Inez Scott
Daughter of Charlotte and Donald Scott
February 1, 1969 - May 1, 1987

Patrick F. Smith
Son of Fran and Len Smith
February 20, 1978 - June 23, 2000

Adam Christopher Sutton
Son of Janet Sutton
February 1, 2009 - October 1, 2009

Jacob Stephen Sutton
Son of Janet Sutton
February 1, 2009 - March 1, 2009

Jason William Tarr
Son of Lorraine A. Tarr
July 8, 1969 - February 20, 2012

David William Tomaszewski
Son of Richard and Carol Tomaszewski
September 4, 1974 - February 6, 2001

Timothy Allen Umbel
Son of Richard and Mary Ann Umbel
February 16, 1982 - September 15, 2002

Evyn Bryce Wygal
Son of Pam and Bill Wygal
February 15, 1991 - February 24, 1994

*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 recently:

Judith Bolly in memory of Wendy Bolly

Carol Fritz in memory of Katie Fritz

Ned and June Erickson in memory of Jenna Erickson

Gordon and Virginia Schmier in memory of David Schmier

Kenneth Smith in memory of his niece Tracy Fotino

The Woman Dressed in Black

She is dressed all in black
And I see her through the window
As she stands, bent with age,
Knocking at my door.
I know at once that she is Grief
And I hide,
Fearing that she brings only sorrow
And a pain I cannot bear.

She knocks again
And then comes in,
Her hooded eyes scarcely grazing my face;
As nimble fingers set to work
On the hole that Death has left behind.

The pain is sharp
And I bite my lip,
Trying not to cry out,
Trying to be brave.
But it hurts too much.

Like trapped game,
I kick and scream
And struggle to be free.
But I am weak
And prove no match.
How easily she weighs me down.

A pungent stench fills the room
As she drains my wounds,
Then washes them in tears.
I beg her to cover over the worst,
But she shakes her head,
Looking at me now
As she lifts me into bed.

In the dark, I hear the rhythmic creaking
Of the old rocking chair
As she sits watching over me,
Softly crooning
Mournful songs from long ago.
It seems the night will never end.

When finally I awake,
The sun is shining on my face.
She is gone.
How long I cannot say,
But when again I see the woman dressed in black
Knocking at my door,
I'll know at once
She comes to heal.

— Jasmin Lee Cori



Forever Changed

After experiencing the death of a child, our lives are forever changed. The way we view “things,” our compassion for others, and our priorities are forever changed. Some of the “things” that were important are no longer, only our family and loved ones. It is difficult for those around us to understand that we are forever changed. Our grief changes, it does not go away. Please be patient and accept the changes in our lives that you see. The “old” person is gone, but your loving care will help us on our journey.

— Karen Cantrell, TCF, Frankfort, KY

Aquarius child

Sparkles of stardust born with the sun,
Aquarius child, amethyst one.
Golden curls dancing or still in my arms,
lap-snuggling sweetness, storybook charmed.
Flowers and firelight, laughter and love,
calmness and storm clouds, magic and hugs.
Butterflies, angels, a song in the night,
sunsets and rainbows, an egret in flight.
Rain on the rooftop, ocean in storm,
ancient oak's mystery, a dog curled up warm.
Stars shooting towards us, sky crimson, scarlet and gold,
the softness of kittens, the pure icy cold
Of mountains in winter, silence, snow deep,
castles and fairytales, a baby in sleep.
All this and more you, who came with the sun.
Aquarius child, dear amethyst one.

— Genesse Bourdeau Gentry
Submitted by the Erickson family
in loving memory of Jenna Erickson

Our Annual Service of Remembrance

I wanted to say a "BIG" THANK YOU to all who worked so hard on our Service of Remembrance for this past year.

Thank you to all whose names were printed in the program for their participation in the program, and to those who worked behind the scenes to give of themselves so we all could enjoy the service.

June Erickson, Tiffany Gordon, Terre Belt, Eryn Belt Lowe and to Fran Palmer, Barbara Blessing, June Erickson, Denise Crouse and Fran's Mom, who along with the others, prepared the food. I apologize for any names I may have missed, but you know who you are and we thank you.

Even though the weather was bad, we managed to have about 125 people attend. We hope next year will be our biggest turn out ever for that will be our 30th year of our Service of Remembrance.

It is a privilege for me to have worked on this Service for all these years. When our Tria died, I wanted to do something that would help us bereaved parents get through the holidays and felt that if we did a memorial service every year, we would honor our children at the holidays. Every year I hope that everyone enjoys the Service. If you would like to see something different, or want to help with the Service, please let me know.

Wishing you all a peaceful New Year.

*With Love in my heart for each one of you who worked on this year's Service of Remembrance,
Ann Castiglia*

Conference News (continued from Page One)

We are currently lining up speakers and presenters for the day. If there are any topics that you would like us to consider, or if you know of someone you feel would be a good addition as a presenter, please let us know. We are looking for suggestions and confirmation that the topics we are considering are indeed ones that you are interested in.

Prior to the Conference, we will need volunteers to help with:

- Registration materials: typing, printing and collating
- Name Tags: layout, print and assemble
- Signs for the workshops & hallways: Design and printing
- Picture Memory Board: Design, set up & oversee display
- Request Donations: for paper goods, breakfast items, water, office supplies
- Gift Sales Donations: Items for resale with proceeds to our Chapter
- Book Sales Donations: Gently Used Books on relevant topics
- Give-Away Memento: suggestions for a small item for each attendee
- Centerpieces: suggestions for the lunch tables, then give away

There are many small jobs to be done, so please consider volunteering and together we will make the Conference a success. We can help ourselves by helping others. To volunteer, please call Carol, 410-519-8448, or email hopeandhealing2014@gmail.com.

Urgent News: We are going green!

In order to save time, money and waste, our Chapter has opted to move to electronic newsletters instead of paper copies beginning in May of 2014. If you would like to continue receiving your paper newsletter in the mail each month, or if you do not currently receive our newsletter in your e-mail each month, we need to hear from you. Please feel free to email us at chapterleader@aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org or at aabereavedparents@gmail.com, or send us a note at PO Box 6280, Annapolis, MD 21401.

Also please remember that you can help honor your child and sponsor the monthly newsletter for \$75, or sponsor the website for \$25 a month. Our Chapter is able to support the bereaved community thanks to you and your generous contributions.

— *Tiffany Gordon, Chapter Leader*

We're On Facebook

Chapter Members can join our group at <https://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/BPUSAAAC/>. Everyone must be a member of Facebook to join this group. We are a CLOSED group for privacy purposes, so nothing posted on our group's wall will go into your regular NEWS FEED to your regular FB friends - only other members of our group will be able to see what you posted there.

When you get to our page, you must request to JOIN the group and approval will be sent when the page is checked each day. Then you will have full access to read all postings, and post your own comments or pictures for other members to read and respond to 24/7. Like our meetings, please do not share postings outside of this group. AGAIN, this is a CLOSED group. If anyone has a question, suggestion, problem or just needs someone to walk them through the Facebook process, please contact June Erickson at 410-451-8637 or email juneErickson@aol.com.



Bereaved Parents of the USA Anne Arundel County Chapter

P.O. Box 6280

Annapolis, MD 21401-0280

www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org

Presorted Standard U.S. Postage PAID Permit No. 922 Capitol Heights, MD

NEXT MEETING: February 6, 2014



Time sensitive

Must be delivered by January 31, 2014

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS:

Taking Care of Yourself While Grieving

**7:15 pm @ Calvary United Methodist Church,
Annapolis, MD**

Thursday, February 6, 2014

Tips about how to deal with the unique challenges associated with grieving will be the topic of discussion.

How to Make Blankets for Project Linus

**7:15 pm @ Calvary United Methodist Church,
Annapolis, MD**

Thursday, March 6, 2014

Vickie Rankin will demonstrate how to make blankets for the Linus Project (<http://www.projectlinus.org>). Attendees wishing to participate should bring 1.5 yards of fleece fabric. Check for more details in the March newsletter, and take a look at the Project Linus website for more information about the mission of this non-profit organization.

The Compassionate Friends National Conference

Chicago, IL

July 11 – 13, 2014

BP/USA 2014 National Gathering

Sheraton Clayton Plaza

St. Louis, MO

July 25 – 27, 2014

RESOURCES:

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

The Compassionate Friends, Reston Satellite Group (for no surviving children)

North County Government Center

Reston District Police Station

12000 Bowman Towne Drive

Reston, VA

Second Saturday of each month; 2pm - 4pm

We appreciate feedback on our Chapter meetings. If you have suggestions for future topics of discussion, please contact our Program coordinator: Mary Redmiles at Mary.Redmiles@gmail.com.