



Bereaved Parents of the USA Anne Arundel County Chapter

OCTOBER 2014

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12th Annual Memory Walk: Saturday, October 4, 2014

Quiet Waters Park. 600 Quiet Waters Road, Annapolis, Maryland

We are sponsoring our 12th Annual Memory Walk on Saturday, October 4th at Quiet Waters Park. Whether you walk a hundred yards or the whole two miles, what matters most is that you join us as we all travel the same difficult journey together. Please go to our website at <http://www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org/HTML/MemoryWalk/MemoryWalk.htm> for information and registration forms. It's a great venue for everyone to gather and remember.

On the morning of the walk, we could always use a few extra hands to help with set up. If you would like to help, or have questions about the walk, please contact Barbara Bessling at aacountymemorywalk@gmail.com. If you would like your child's picture posted on the trail, please contact Barbara at the same email, so we can ensure that we have the picture.

If you would like a picture button of your child made, please bring a copy of the picture. You do not need to cut the picture out. We have a machine that can do that. The only requirement is that the picture just fit within a 2 1/3 inch circle. The buttons are \$2 apiece. Hope to see you there.

Sponsorship of this newsletter has been made by the following families:

Judy and Buzz Bolly
In memory of their daughter
Wendy Jean Bolly
April 6, 1977 - October 11,
2002



The poet Thomas Campbell wrote: "To live in hearts we leave behind, is not to die." -- Wen, you will live in our hearts even beyond the end of our days, when we will all be together again. Love, Mom, Dad and Brian

Noel and Ann Castiglia
In memory of their daughter
Tria Marie Castiglia
July 6, 1963 - October 14,
1984




We love and miss you Tria. You are always in our hearts. Dad, Mom, Carla, Danielle and Tony

Yoosef and Linda Khadam
In memory of their son
William Mirza Khadem
October 24, 1984 - April 6, 2012

Happy birthday precious William,
When on earth you made this, all too often unpleasant world, a more beautiful place. Now your soul graces the glorious realm that is Heaven, and makes it, too, a more beautiful place.
May your spirit fly with wings of Joy.
Much, much love, Mom, Dad, Seyed, Qiao, Grandma, Grandpa, Barb, Dakoda and sweet, little Hayden



October is Pregnancy Loss and Awareness Month



*They never left footprints in this world...
But they left forever footprints in our hearts*

Since this is **Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month**, I thought it would be appropriate to share a short article I wrote for Kay Bevington's Alive Alone Newsletter about our Angel Gown Project (minus the pictures).:

1 - The First Tentative Step Toward Reinvestment

Six months after the death of my daughter Jenna (22), I needed to get out of bed and out of the house. My cousin Sandy suggested I volunteer at our local hospital with her and that's how I began volunteering every Wednesday afternoon in Radiation Oncology at the The Geaton and JoAnn DeCesaris Cancer Institute at Anne Arundel Medical Center in Annapolis, Maryland. Some friends said, "Why would you want to volunteer in such a sad place, isn't that going to make you feel worse?" No, it didn't, just the opposite, I found it hopeful. In fact I was with nurses and radiation tech staff that unbeknownst to them, were actually helping me heal too, just as they did every day with the patients in their care. These extraordinary people heal daily with their hearts as well as their hands instinctively even though I wasn't one of their patients. They are a special breed to me and so is the atmosphere there. If I can get a patient a wheelchair when needed, welcome them as they enter the door with a smile, say goodbye as they leave, laugh or just tease them and make one patient smile for a moment, I feel like I've passed on some of my own Jenna's positive energy. The patients don't even know about my Jenna, but they are receiving her smiles through me. The staff and patients fight the good fight there, just as Jenna did after her accident. In my small way I fight for the patients too, and for Jenna...

I know that other parents who have lost a child (an only child in my case) help each other because we know the whole truth of this horrific experience each of us has had. Like many of you, I never thought I would still be here, nor did I want to be here without Jenna. There is no way I would still be here without a lot of help along the way. Thank you to my bereavement groups filled with the most giving people I've ever met. They can look you in the eye with total honesty and say, "I understand and will help you to survive also." I am forever grateful to each and every one of them. But most of all I am thankful for Jenna giving me the unknown strength I feel each and every day. I can still see her smiling face with her two friends Vickie and Lyndsie at my surprise 50th Birthday Party singing my favorite song Gloria Gaynor's, "I Will Survive!"

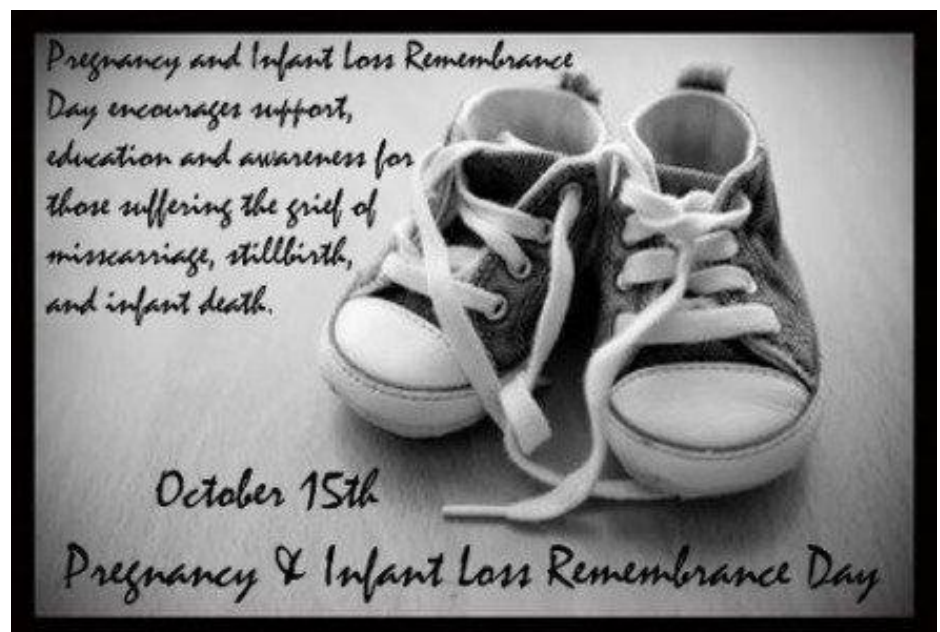
Just as Jenna still impacts me every single day, your child does too. Our children still make an impact on others so continue to share them whenever you can. Do something, anything, no matter how small. Even something as simple as a smile or hug can make such a big difference in someone's life. That's what our children would be doing if they were still here, and that's exactly what they would want us to do for THEM. Love is indeed stronger than death....

2 - Because of Rosebud

"Rosebud" is a beautiful little baby girl named Lahna Gordon whose mother Tiffany was our Chapter Leader for a while at Bereaved Parents of Anne Arundel County, Maryland. I never knew her, but I call her "Rosebud" because that's how I see her - a beautiful little pink rosebud filled with life that never got to completely bloom. Lahna lived for 1 month and 27 days, but she is still impacting others outside of her family seven years later. Because of Rosebud, her mother Tiffany has kept in touch with the NICU nurses that cared for Lahna, and one day she sent me information on 'NICU for Helping Hands' that started in Ft. Worth, Texas. They were taking donated wedding dresses, pastel colored bridesmaid and prom dresses, and turning them into beautiful little Angel Gowns for NICU babies that die in hospitals around the country. I knew immediately this was something I would love to do with my own wedding dress, and told another mother in our Bereaved Parents AAC group named Tawny who also lost her only child Tori (27). She too immediately said she wanted to help with her own wedding dress. That got everything going as one by one Chapter members volunteered their sewing skills and time for this project. Since I was already a volunteer at my hospital every Wednesday afternoon, I then spoke to our Auxillary Volunteer President June Caudill who contacted the NICU and gave us the go-ahead to do this for our local hospital here in Annapolis, Maryland. Our bereavement group ran with it and so far, only through word-of-mouth, many people locally have contacted us. In addition to donating gowns, they are also using their own time making beautiful angel gowns. Still more are donating fabrics, embellishments, etc. If they can't sew, then they pin or cut patterns, do beading, sew on lace, or just iron. Everybody is welcome and our Bereaved Parents of Anne Arundel County are leading the way with other friends and family wanting to help with this worthwhile project. I got a call just the other day from the mother of a bride-to-be getting married in October 2014, who has already decided to donate her own dress after her Fall wedding for these babies. Local seamstresses and costumers have donated dresses, and their skills when our sewing group meets. So far we have over 20 angel gowns heading to our local NICU with many more to follow. We are all doing this for the babies in our own NICU because they matter, and we want the parents to know we care and understand. What better way to give, from one bereaved parent to other newly bereaved parents who have lost their babies. If anyone wants to contact me, I can be reached at JuneErickson@aol.com.

We do this in memory of our own children gone too soon no matter their age. It's our gesture of our love for them too. And those tiny NICU babies are impacting us now....just like Rosebud.

~ by June Erickson, Jenna's Mom



Next Meeting: Thursday, October 2nd at 7:30 p.m.

Margaret Jackson, bereaved Mom of Richard, will come to speak about her son and her foundation RJ Smiles, Inc.

Calvary United Methodist Church • 301 Rowe Boulevard • Annapolis, MD 21401
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. **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 November newsletter are due to the Newsletter Team by October 10.
Send an email to: newsletter@aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org.



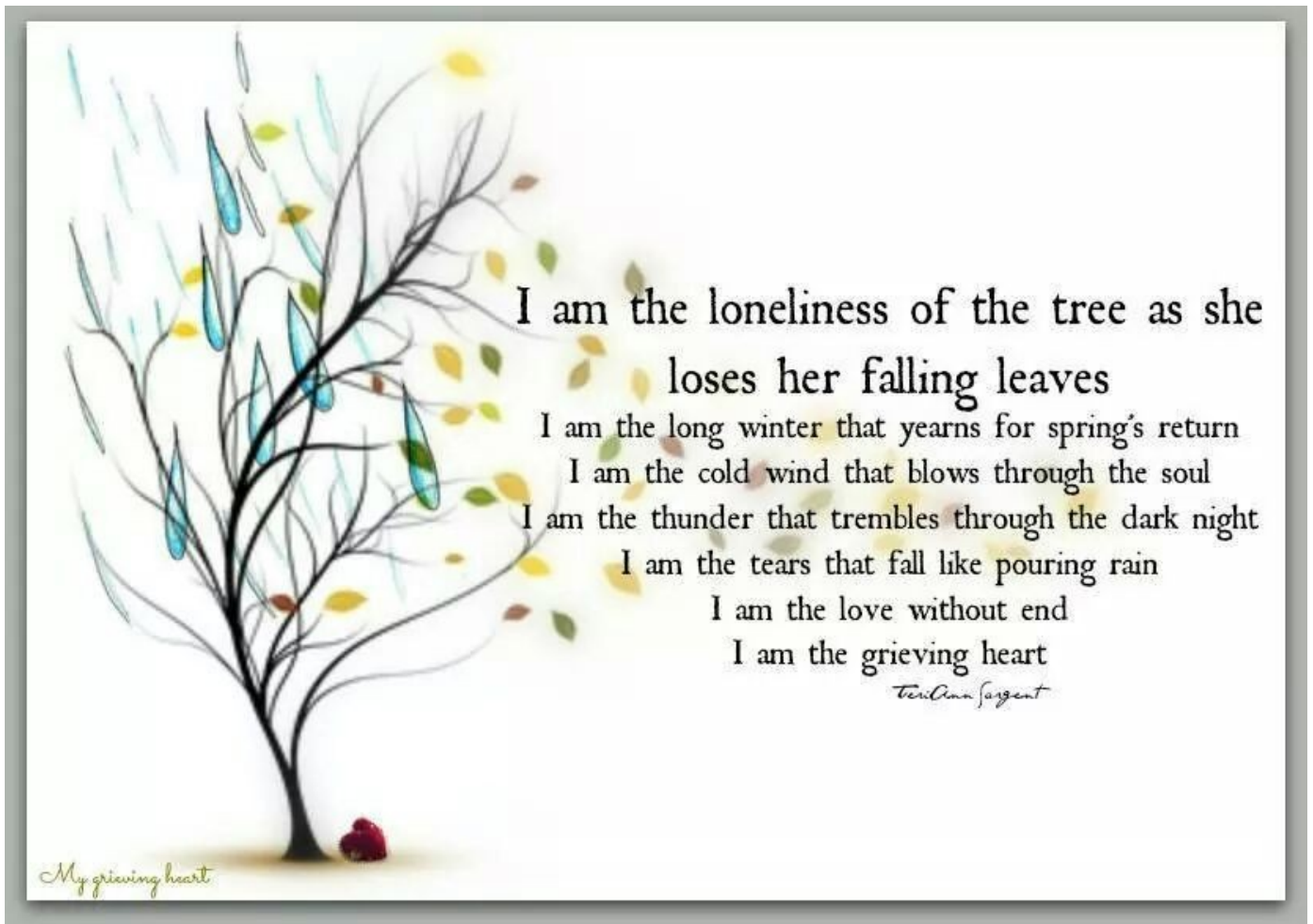
Chapter Leader: Vacant
Newsletter Team:
June Erickson, Linda Khadem,
Katie Redmiles
Treasurer: Fran Palmer
Correspondence &
Hospitality: Tawny Stitely
Librarian: Bob and Sandi Burash
Programs: Mary Redmiles
mary.redmiles@gmail.com

Do You Use Amazon.com?

If you enter Amazon through our Chapter's website (www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org), the Chapter will earn a commission of 5% on your purchases. Using the link does not increase your cost (and information about your purchase is not shared with the Chapter). It's an easy way to support our Chapter's activities. Go to the Chapter's home page, click on the butterflies on the welcome page, and 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 through the Chapter's website credits the Chapter with the 5% commission on any purchases that follow. Thanks in advance for your help!

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 Mary Redmiles (mary.redmiles@gmail.com) or call her at 410-721-6671, or sign up at a monthly meeting. Say Their Names!!! And help the Chapter, too!

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Connect With Us on Facebook

We are now on Facebook. It is a closed group where we can continue our discussions in private. Your other Facebook friends will not be able to see what you post there, and you will not be able to share postings by others. You have to join Facebook first before you can become a member. Please go to <https://www.facebook.com/groups/BPUSAAAC/> and ask to join. You will be approved within 24 hours. If you have any questions or problems, please contact June Erickson at JuneErickson@aol.com.



The Man in Black and the Girl in Pink and Blue

September 22, 2014 by [Kelly Gerken](#)
Still Standing Magazine

Johnny Cash was known as *The Man in Black*. He chose to wear black to stand with those struggling with pain and oppression in this world.

The broken ones.

When my mother died, I watched *Walk the Line* again and again. Because, that's what I do, beyond going to the Bible and sitting at the feet of Jesus in prayer...when things are too much...when I need to escape...I bury myself in a book or a movie. During the fall of 2006, it was *Walk the Line*.

When we were getting ready for her funeral, I looked in the mirror, shrugged, and said, "You look like you're going to a funeral."

Quoting Johnny's line, I mumbled to myself: "Maybe I am. Maybe I am."

When life gets a little too much, some movie quoting is good therapy. It helps you keep standing, when your knees want to buckle under the weight of the grief. Some hurts are too much to fully feel.

I have spent the last decade, standing with the broken, myself. For eight years after losing our twin daughters Faith and Grace (born still at 26 1/2 weeks due to twin to twin transfusion syndrome) and our son, Thomas (died six hours after birth due to Potter's Syndrome), I didn't speak their names except to a select few. I didn't put up pictures. I didn't want to make anyone uncomfortable. For the last decade, I have spoken of them more openly. We are now living in a time, ripe for change. A time when mothers and fathers are breaking the silence and taboo surrounding the subject of baby loss. For the last decade, I've been finding my own voice. Speaking the truth. Standing with you...Because every life matters.

Because all life and all grief is worth acknowledging. And, most of all, so that others know that their babies are worth mentioning. That they are not alone. And, that there is hope for healing to happen amidst the broken.

There's been a most interesting part of the reaction of others to being bolder and speaking aloud what no one wants to know...that sometimes babies die. In my desire to speak, to stand with those who are grieving, to offer hope and comfort from one who has received great healing herself after walking in the wilderness...some...not many...but some have chosen to misunderstand the speaking.

Speaking about loss, remembering a loved one...even one with a brief life...is not wallowing in



grief and hopelessness. I promise you, I am a woman full of hope, who thoroughly adores life in the land of the living, and sees beauty in everything around me. Not a wallower...an overcomer. Remembering is part of loving. Part of healing. Part of being set free...free to feel all that passes through your heart. It takes courage to feel like that.

The missing remains. Even with healing. A memory crosses through your mind, and it may be bitter...or it may be sweet...the remembering. I choose to view it as a gift. The tears are cleansing. The memory and longing...while full of ache from time to time...remind me of the preciousness of love and life and the ones I'm missing. We humans were created to long for heaven. Longing is part of this existence.

A lady recently messaged me that a few people have told her they think I've "lost my mind" because I choose to spend my life serving grieving families, honoring babies with brief lives, because I speak of loss. She likely missed the part where I talk about the hope and the gifts we glean, even in sorrow. Perhaps she and the handful of people she describes are right. In the spirit of the great grace rebel, Johnny Cash, I could imagine the conversation going this way.

Lady with the voice of condemnation: "Some people think you've lost your mind."

Me, with my best Johnny Cash swagger: "Maybe I have. Maybe I have."

Although, I must say....I've never felt more "who I'm supposed to be" than in recent years. And, the voice I've been given to speak has never felt more real and true and right.

You see, as long as there are mothers and fathers and siblings and grandparents aching and grieving for the loss of sweet babies and children, I will wear pink and blue. And, I will say every life matters. Whether some want to hear it or not. I will walk alongside mothers saying goodbye to their babies, help to dress the little ones in outfits worthy of their beauty, take the pictures that capture a lifetime of love in mere moments. I will hold them in my arms....the babies with fleeting breath, the ones born still, the mothers with heaving sorrow pouring from their souls, and the fathers desperate to fix the broken. I will see them and not look away from the pain. And, I will speak of grace and hope when the time comes, and the raw grief passes.

Until things are brighter, I will be the woman in pink and blue, standing with you.

.....
 LIFE is a journey
 up and down and round and round
 LIFE is an adventure
 something new at each turn
 LIFE is a challenge
 sometimes harder than we'd like
 LIFE is good
 taken in perspective
 LIFE is a mystery
 we wonder how and why

.....
 LIFE is a gift
 more precious than we know
 LIFE is love
 a lasting bond with special people
 LIFE goes on
 one moment at a time
 LIFE is eternal
 our angels are always with us

~ a poem by Carol Tomaszewski (2010)

Our Children Remembered

James "Jamie" William Henry Alexander Son of Dave and Sue Alexander October 12, 1970 - October 26, 1998	Christine Kelly Enders Daughter of Holly and Alli Enders September 26, 1986 - October 15, 2008 Brandon Robert French Son of Rhonda and Norman French October 8, 1983 - July 29, 2006	Matthew Joseph Morrow 11/13/90 - 10/13/12 Son of Carla and Ed Mor- row Krystal Brooke Pearce Daughter of Douglas Pearce June 1, 1995 - October 3, 2013
Christopher Thomas Ammon 10/28/71 - 7/17/07 Son of Madaline and Phil Ammon	Katie Fritz Daughter of Carol Fritz October 29, 1977 - February 27, 1993 Romana Alice Hale Sister of Bobbi Remines October 8, 1948 - November 5, 1976	John Christopher Poe Son of Sharon and Ben Poe October 12, 1967 - Sep- tember 24, 2001 Robert William Rey II Friend of Peggy Smeltzer September 14, 1965 - Oc- tober 2, 2003
Gregory Gerard Anderson, Jr. Son of Greg Anderson October 19, 1987 - August 23, 2012 Wendy Jean Bolly Daughter of Judith and Louie Bolly April 6, 1977 - October 11, 2002	Traci Jeanne Heincelman Niece of Terre and John Belt Cousin of Eryn Belt Lowe October 6, 1980 - March 10, 2002	Tanager Rú Ricci Son of Kathy Franklin October 19, 1977 - Febru- ary 16, 2004
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	Charles "Chip" Marshall Hodges Son of Betty and John Hodges October 24, 1954 - March 14, 2005 Richard Arland Jackson Son of Margaret Jackson February 9, 1990 - October 22, 2010	Zachary Daniel Robertson Son of Mary Ellen and Jim Young March 3, 1978 - October 26, 2006
Hannah Lindley Campbell Daughter of John and Cathi Campbell October 10, 1992 - October 10, 1992 Tria Marie Castiglia Daughter of Noel and Ann Castiglia Sister of Carla Castiglia July 6, 1963 - October 14, 1984	William Mirza Khadem Son of Yoosef and Linda Khadem October 24, 1984 - April 6, 2012 Timothy Jarrett Mabe Son of Marilyn Mabe October 29, 1977 - February 18, 2001	Nathaneal Paul Rohan Son of Andi Zolt October 2, 1983 - Septem- ber 14, 2013 Thomas "Tommy" Richard Short Son of Karen Short September 25, 1997 - Oc- tober 16, 1997
Jacquelyn D. Connolley Daughter of Pat Donoho October 3, 1969 - September 13, 1986 John Mario DeMichiei Jr. Son of John and Linda DeMichiei February 24, 1979 - October 23, 2008	Kevin Michael Morris Son of Gayle and David Morris October 7, 1982 - March 30, 2007	Kelcey R Silva Daughter of Francisco Martins Silva Daughter of Kristen Silva October 28, 1991 - June 16, 2011

Deonte Joseph Simms
Grandson of Deborah Simms
October 1, 1981 - September 9,
2001

Brandon Michael Sisler
Son of Laura Sisler
May 7, 1993 - October 15, 2011

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

Brittany Nicole Tyler
Daughter of Janet and Dan Tyler
Granddaughter of Dot Carter
October 12, 1986 - August 23, 1992

Charles E Valentine, III
Son of Cathy Valentine
November 29, 1974 - October 21,
2011

Richard C. Watts
Son of Tom and Fran Cease
December 28, 1966 - October 28,
1998

Grant Alan Williams
Son of Mark and Randye Williams
October 25, 2000 - October 25,
2000

Samuel Mark Williams
Son of Mark and Randye Williams
October 25, 2000 - October 25,
2000

Tracy Woodfork, Jr.
Son of Jennifer
Woodfork
Grandchild of Julie
Bergmeier
November 28, 1989 -
October 8, 2012

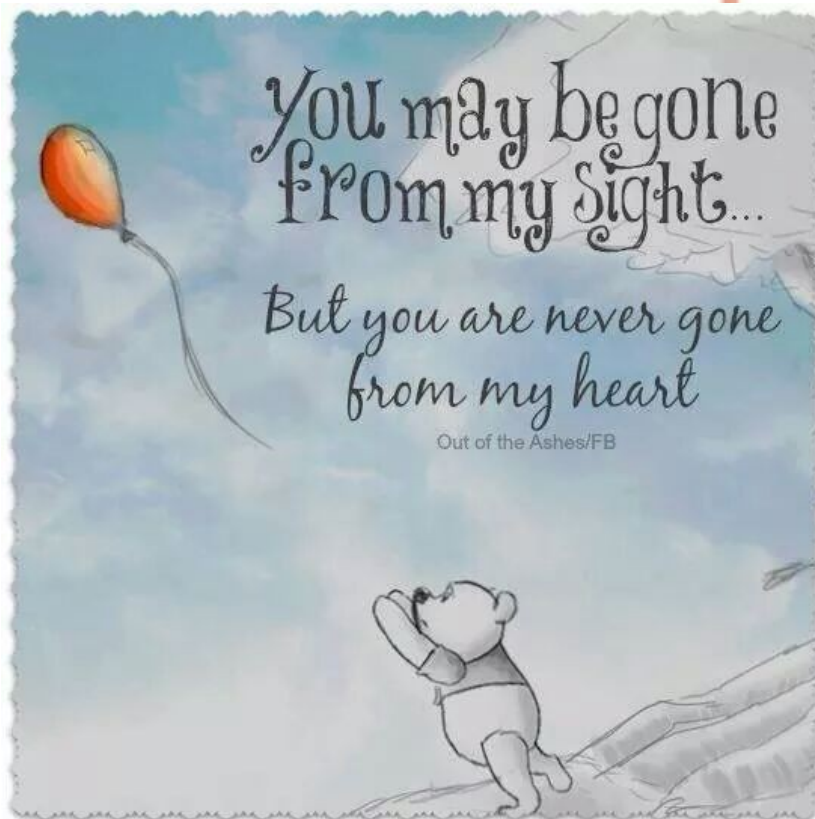
Alex Paul Yokanovich
11/22/79 - 10/30/13
Son of Delight
Yokanovich

Ashley Jayné Younger
Daughter of Stephanie
Younger
October 12, 1990 - Sep-
tember 28, 2008

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:

Kenneth Smith in memory of his niece Tracy Fotino



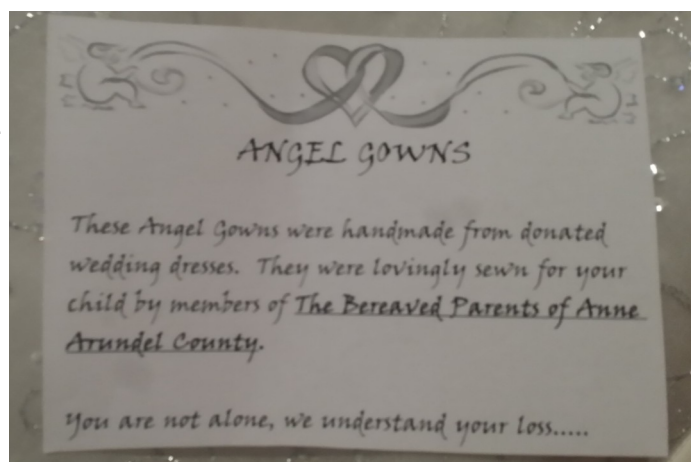
Chapter Notes

Chapter Leader Position

We are looking for a Chapter Leader. If anyone with good organizational skills is interested in helping out with the Chapter Leader position, please contact the Core Group.

Angel Gown Project

The Angel Gown Project is doing very well with many new donations and other friends and family volunteering to help our Chapter members create them - THANK YOU! We made our first delivery of 30+ beautifully handmade Angel Gowns to the NICU at Anne Arundel Medical Center. Four butterfly boxes in different sizes were donated by Tawny Stitley. The boxes were labeled Premie, Small, Medium and Large and lined in colored tissue paper. The hospital says they need large gowns, and I think we need to focus on more boy gowns. Inside the box lids was this card identifying our Chapter. Come join us!



October Chapter Meeting - Thursday October 2, 2014

7:15 p.m. at Calvary United Methodist Church, 301 Rowe Blvd., Annapolis, MD

Margaret Jackson, bereaved Mom of Richard, will come to speak about her son and her foundation, RJ Smiles, Inc. She and her family created the foundation to honor Richard and to give back to the community. You can learn more at rjsmiles.org.

12th Annual Memory Walk - Saturday, October 4, 2014

8:30 a.m. - Rain or Shine - Quiet Waters Park, Dogwood Pavilion, 600 Quiet Waters Road, Annapolis, MD

Whether you walk two miles or a hundred feet, or even make a pledge, is not important, What matters is that you have taken the time with family and friends, who are walking the same journey as you. We hope to see you there. Visit our website for further information and registration. ---> <http://www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org/HTML/MemoryWalk/MemoryWalk.htm>

12th Annual Wellness Seminar - Saturday, October 25, 2014

From 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. - Individuals \$15.00, Families \$25.00

"How to Nurture Yourself While Grieving" presented by Gilchrist Hospice Care at The Conference Center at Sheppard Pratt, Towson, MD. Call 443-849-8451 or email GHC_bereavement@gilchristhospice.org

November Chapter Meeting - Thursday, November 6, 2014

7:15 p.m. at Calvary United Methodist Church, 301 Rowe Blvd., Annapolis, MD

There will be a panel discussion on 'Coping with the Holidays'. Panel members will be Noel Castiglia, Janet Tyler, and Holly Enders.

Chapter Notes: Upcoming Meetings & Announcements

November Core Meeting - Tuesday, November 11, 2014

7:00 p.m. at Calvary United Methodist Church, 301 Rowe Blvd., Annapolis, MD
We will be discussing the Service of Remembrance. Please join us.

December Chapter Meeting - Thursday, December 4, 2014

7:15 p.m. at Calvary United Methodist Church, 301 Rowe Blvd., Annapolis, MD
Speaker to be announced.

Annual Service of Remembrance - Sunday, December 7, 2014

3 p.m. at St. Martin-in-the-Field Episcopal Church, 375 Benfield Road, Severna Park, MD
Since its beginning in 1985, the Anne Arundel County Chapter's Annual Service has provided an opportunity for parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts and uncles, and friends to remember our precious children. Please join us in this celebration of our children's lives as we face the Holiday Season with Love, Compassion, and Hope for all. The Service is normally held on the first Sunday in December. A reception is immediately following the Service. RSVP by November 15, 2014

Worldwide Candle Lighting - Sunday, December 7, 2014

At 7:00 p.m. every year, on the second Sunday in December, group candle lightings are held around the globe. Intense darkness of grief gives way to light as hundreds of thousands of candles spread their flickering flames to light the night in unison as all of the children who died are remembered and honored. The first candles are lit in New Zealand, and for the next 24 hours a virtual wave of light spreads around the world.

2015

The Compassionate Friends National Conference -

July 10 - 12, 2015

The 38th TCF National Conference, "Hope Shines Bright ... Deep in the Heart", is the theme of next year's event. The 2015 Conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency Downtown Dallas. Visit their website at ---> [http://](http://www.compassionatefriends.org/News/Events/Conferences/National_Conferences.aspx)

www.compassionatefriends.org/News/Events/Conferences/National_Conferences.aspx

Bereaved Parents of the USA National Gathering -

July 24 - 26, 2015

Hartford, Connecticut

Visit their website at ---> <http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org/Gathering.html>

TFC Regional Conference - October 9 - 11, 2015

"From a Broken Heart....Emerges Hope and Healing"

Radisson Hotel Valley Forge, King of Prussia, PA

Please contact Bobbi Milne at mcfly423@aol.com or Ann Walsh at tcfeastrc@yahoo.com if you would like to volunteer, be a sponsor or send a donation. More details to come later.



Bereaved Parents of the USA
2015 NATIONAL GATHERING
HARTFORD, CT • JULY 24 - 26

We Would Have Died For You

(The Journey of Bereaved Parents) by Maria Kubitz | Aug 6, 2014 | from griefHaven.org

From the moment we found out you were coming into our lives, ...we felt electric: a mix of excitement, adrenalin, and a dose of fear for good measure. We dutifully began plotting the course of our lives together – starting with milestones like Kindergarten, puberty, graduation, career, wedding, grandchildren, etc. Then we began making our maps more detailed with our hopes and dreams for you. We prepared as well as we could for your arrival.

On the day we welcomed you into our lives, we held out our loving arms and said softly, “Welcome. We’ve been waiting for you.” We stared into the vast universe reflected deep within your eyes with awe and wonder. You were a part of us; an extension of our very being. As you stared back into our eyes, a feeling of intense love for you took hold in every cell of our body. This was true, unconditional love with no boundaries and no end.

Our lives were more meaningful with you in it. You gave us a greater sense of purpose and a profound sense of responsibility. Your life was ours to protect; ours to mold and guide. We needed to teach you all that we knew, and try to help you avoid the mistakes we made. We wanted to afford you every opportunity to make your unique mark on this world. We wanted to make sure your life would become better than our own. In return, all we asked from you was your continued unconditional love, because it felt wonderful. Better than anything else in this life of ours.

We did the best we could as parents. We weren’t perfect. We made plenty of mistakes intermixed with our successes. We got off course of our map here and there and had to identify some new routes. But the destination was always the same: we would take care of you until one day you would take care of us. At that point we would say goodbye and leave you to be on your own. By then you would have a family and be following your own map. We’d leave happy in the knowledge that we made the world a better place by bringing you into it.

But then the impossible happened: you died before we did.

On the day you died, our hearts shattered into a million pieces, as did the world around us. We were left in a dark, unfamiliar place where pain filled every cell of our body where love once lived. The air around us was now hard to breathe. Gravity was stronger than before, and the simple act of sitting or standing used up all of our strength and energy. Our map had disintegrated and we were hopelessly, utterly lost in the darkness of horror and misery.

Amid the darkness, familiar hands grabbed ours. Voices of family and friends guided us as we fumbled about in this strange new world, not knowing what to do. These family and friends all gathered around us to ceremoniously say goodbye to you. And yet we couldn’t. The words never made it to our mouths. We were sure this was all a mistake – a nightmare that we would wake up from and find you standing over us smiling and laughing. We cried out for you, but got no answer in return.

As our family and friends left us to be on our own without you, the familiar world we once knew began to reappear around us. And yet it was very different than before. We could interact with it, but we couldn’t touch this world because we were trapped in a bubble of despair. And yet most people couldn’t see our bubble. To them, it looked as if we were the same person we were before you died – maybe sadder, but basically the same. They expected us to quickly go back to our old routines and

be our “old selves”. But they couldn’t see our bubble, and that we had fundamentally changed.

Inside that bubble, everything felt overwhelming. Our reactions to common sights and sounds were different than before. Laughter and joy made us angry and sick to our stomach. We were filled with resentment that the world itself hadn’t ceased to exist when you died. Happiness was now out of reach, and we felt as though we’d never get it back. Some of us didn’t want it back if you weren’t there to share it with us. Even when we were surrounded by people outside our bubble, we felt hopelessly alone and misunderstood.

We became excellent actors worthy of an Oscar. We learned to pretend we were better and back to normal for the benefit of those around us. “Fine” is how we mostly answered the question of, “How are you?” We looked desperately around us for people who actually wanted to hear the truth. We were not fine. When you left us, you took a part of us, and the void it left still ached with a pain so unbearable, we couldn’t find adequate words to describe it.

A few people could see our bubbles; most of them lived in bubbles themselves. Unlike the majority of people in the world around us, these people had the ability to reach inside our bubble and embrace us with understanding. We didn’t have to pretend to be ok around them. We could break down and cry as loud and long as we needed to without worrying about making them uncomfortable. We found a sense of community that we had lost when you died. But none of this made the pain go away.

Over time, small cracks began to develop in our bubbles. These cracks let more light into our dim world. The air that came inside was easier to breathe. The gravity lightened a bit. It still hurt to be alive in a world without you, but we began to learn how to adjust to it so that it wasn’t as debilitating as before.

Many of us learned to pry open the cracks in our bubbles a bit more to let in even more light and air. This changed the chemistry of the atmosphere inside our bubble from that of despair to a mix of memories and longing for you. We learned how to feel happiness and joy once again, even though it never made the pain deep within us subside. We began to learn how to better function in the world around us while still in the confines of our bubbles.

Our bubbles never fully go away. They change over time and may shrink considerably, but the pain will never leave us. This is because the pain was created by – and coexists with – the love that invaded every cell of our body when we stared into your eyes that very first time. And sometimes, we can momentarily release the feeling of pain by focusing our attention on the love that lives with it. The secret is to focus on you and the love you gave us that still lives in our bodies. You remain with us and a part of us.

The fact is we would have died for you. We would have gladly given up our own lives in a heartbeat if it meant you could have continued living. But no one has ever learned how to go back in time to make that sacrifice. So we are left to live and breathe in a world without you. We have to create a new map that takes us into uncharted territory. We do this in your honor. We do this in honor of our family and friends that remain by our side.

We will continue down this new path until we take our own last breaths. And when we leave this world and head into the unknown, we hope to see you there with open, loving arms and hear you say softly, “Welcome. I’ve been waiting for you.”

For Siblings: Grieving the Loss of a Sibling

If you and your sibling were not close at the time of his or her death, or if the two of you were in an estranged relationship, do not let this keep you from grieving. Many times relationships among family members are strained. In death, forgiveness can occur, as well as healing. Poems pertaining to your situation may help you during this time as well. Regardless of your relationship with your sibling, taking time to deal with his or her death is important. Hopefully other family members will want to recall memories from your sibling's life and you will have time to share what your sibling meant to each of you. As holidays and other special occasions approach, they will be difficult to handle, so make sure that you are aware of the various components of grieving at these special times. Emotions that seem to be pronounced and feel like an out-of-control roller coaster ride are natural. Often when a loved one dies, we are thrown off guard as to when certain emotions will trigger tears. Take care of yourself as you mourn the death of your sibling. Grieving is hard work, but necessary in order to rebuild your life without your sibling there. If you are fortunate, friends will be there to help you deal with your grief. Allow others to befriend you at this time of anguish.

~ From www.griefHaven.org

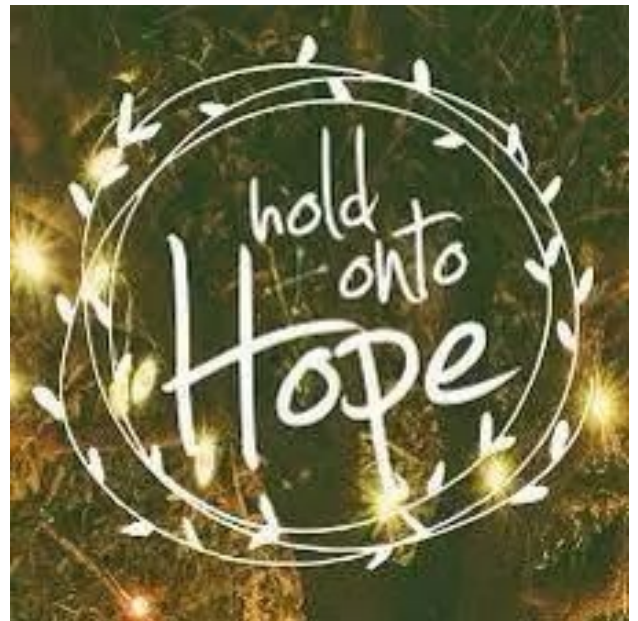
Halloween

by Sascha Wagner

It is here, this day of merriment
and children's pleasure.
Gremlins and goblins
and ghosties at the door
of your house.

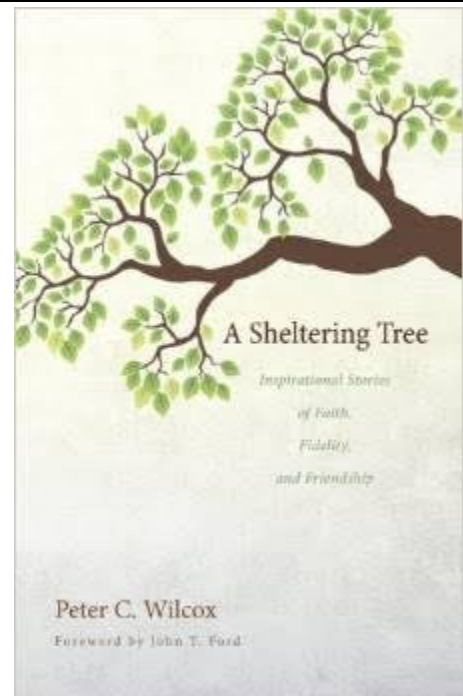
And the other children
come to the door of your mind.
Faces out of the past,
small ghosts with sweet, painted faces.
They do not shout.

Those children
who no longer march laughing
on cold Halloween night,
they stand at the door of your mind -
and you will let them in,
so that you can give them
the small gifts of your Halloween
-- a smile and a tear.



Book Review

Peter C. Wilcox is a bereaved parent and was our speaker the September Chapter meeting. He has been a psychotherapist and spiritual director for over thirty years. He holds a doctorate in theology from the Catholic University of America and has taught at the Washington Theological Union, Loyola University in Maryland, and St. Bonaventure University. He has directed retreats and conducted seminars on personality development and spiritual growth for many years and is the author of John Henry Newman, Spiritual Director 1845-1890. His latest book, *A Sheltering Tree, Inspirational Stories of Faith, Fidelity, and Friendship* has just been released in July, 2014. Dr. Wilcox lives in Millersville, Maryland, with his wife and daughter. View on Amazon ---> http://www.amazon.com/Sheltering-Tree-Inspirational-Fidelity-Friendship/dp/1625646658/ref=sr_1_4?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1411424554&sr=1-4&keywords=peter+wilcox



*When nights are cold
and stars are few,*

*I close my eyes
and think of you.*

*A silent hope,
a silent tear,*

*A silent wish that
you were here.*

Resources

Hospice of the Chesapeake Life Center

90 Richie Highway
Pasadena, MD 21122
410-987-2129

Toll Free: 888-501-7077

Website: <http://chesapeakelifecenter.org/programs-and-services/groups>

1) Child Loss Group

Monthly support group for parents experiencing the loss of a son or daughter of any age. Saturday: September 6, October 4, and November 1 from 10 a.m. to Noon. Saturday, December 6 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

2) Suicide Grievors

Monthly Support Group with a professional facilitator for those 18 years and over who are grieving the death of a loved one by suicide - Tuesday: September 9, October 14, November 11, and December 9 – Evening. Please call 410-987-2129 for further information.

3) Support Group for those Grieving a Loss Due to Substance Abuse

This monthly drop-in/open support group is designed for those who have lost a loved one due to substance abuse and will address issues common to this particular type of loss. Monday: October 6, November 3, and December 1 from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

4) Perinatal Scrap-N-Share Group

This group is designed for individuals or couples coping with a difficult pregnancy diagnosis or infant loss. Participants can make a scrapbook, collage, or shadow box or just come for support with others who have experienced a similar loss. Group meets bi-monthly in the evening.

5) Career-Aged Widow and Widowers Support Group

Groups for career-aged adults who are grieving the death of a spouse or a life partner.

Wednesday: September 17, October 15, November 19, and December 17 from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Tuesdays: November 11 to December 16 from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Grief Counseling

Website: <http://www.chesapeakelifecenter.org/programs-and-services/ind-counseling>

Complementary Therapies

Website: <http://www.chesapeakelifecenter.org/programs-and-services/complementary-therapies>

Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center

Website: www.mdcrimevictims.org or call 410-234-9885

Suicide Support Group

Meets the first Tuesday of each month in Severna Park, MD, Call 410-647-2550

MIS Support Group (miscarriage, infant death or stillbirth)

Meets the first Monday of each month in Edgewater, MD. Call 443-481-6114

Grief Recovery After a Substance Passing (GRASP)

Website: www.grasphelp.com or call 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

Resources

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

North County Government Center, Reston District Police Station, 12000 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston, VA. Meetings on the second Saturday of each month from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Gilchrist Grief Services

Registration is required for all services - Online at gilchristhospice.org/grief_registration

For Hunt Valley, Gilchrist Center, Forest Hill and Dundalk events call 443-849-8251 or

email GHC_bereavement@gilchristhospice.org

For Howard County events call 443-539-4086 or email GHC_bereavement@gilchristhospice.org

Anne Arundel County Suicide Hotline - Call 911 (emergency) or 410-768-5522

Prince Georges County Suicide Hotline - Call 911 (emergency) or 301-864-7130 / 301-429-2185

Hunt Valley:

11311 McCormick Road, Suite 350
Hunt Valley, MD 21031

Support Groups:

Widowed Persons/Life Partner Support Group (all Ages) evening

Tuesdays, Sept. 9 - Oct. 14 from 6:30-8pm

Widowed Persons/Life Partner Support Group (all Ages) daytime

Wednesdays, Oct. 15 - Nov. 19 from 1:30-3pm

Adults with Parental Loss

Tuesdays, Oct. 21 - Nov. 25 from 6:30-8pm

Widowed Persons/Life Partner Support Group (ages 50 & under)

Tuesdays, Nov. 11 - Dec. 16 from 6:30-8pm

Learn to Meditate

Saturday, Oct. 18 & December 20 from 10am-Noon

Workshops:

Craft Night: 6:30-8pm, Monthly

A social time of friendship, fun and creativity

Thursday, Sept. 4, Oct. 2, Nov. 6, Dec. 4

When a Father Grieves

A gathering for me who have lost adult children

Thursday, Oct. 16 from 6:30-8pm

Finding Hope as the Journey Continues

Thursday, Oct. 30 from 6:30-8pm

Understanding Grief

Wednesday, Nov. 5 from 6:30-8pm

Coping with the Holidays

Monday, Dec. 15 from 6:30-8pm

Forest Hill:

Hooper House
2007 Klein Plaza Drive
Forest Hill, MD 21050

Workshops:

Understanding Grief

Wednesday, Oct. 1 from 6:30-8pm

Finding Hope as the Journey Continues

Thursday, Nov. 13 from 4-5:30pm

Coping with the Holidays

Wednesday, Nov. 19 from 6:30am-8pm

Towson:

Gilchrist Center - 555 W. Towsontown Blvd.
Towson, MD 21204

Support Groups:

Mother's Grief: 3-4:30pm, Monthly

For mother's who have lost adult children

Wednesday: Sept. 17, Oct. 15, Nov. 19, Dec. 17

Coping Creatively: The Expressive Arts Workshop Series

For those who would like to explore ways to cope beyond talking.

You may register for all or some of the workshops:

Saturdays from 10am to Noon:

Oct. 11, Movement for the Mind

Oct. 25, Collage for the Soul

Nov. 8, Music for the Journey

Nov. 15, Learning to Meditate

Nov. 22. Caring for Ourselves

Resources:

Columbia:

5537 Twin Knolls Road, Suite 434
Columbia, MD 21045

Support Groups:

Men's support Group: 10am-Noon, Monthly

For men who have lost a spouse/significant other

Saturday: Oct. 11, Nov. 1

Widowed Persons/Life Partner Support Group (all ages) morning

Thursdays, Sept. 4 - Oct. 9 from 10-11:30am

Adults with Parental Loss

Tuesdays, Oct. 7-Nov. 11 from 6:30-8pm

Widowed Persons/Life Partner Support Group (all ages) evening

Mondays, Oct. 20-Nov. 24 from 6:30-8pm

Workshops:

Understanding Grief

Tuesday, Sept. 16 from 6:30-8pm

Finding Hope as the Journey Continues

Thursday, Oct. 2 from 6:30-8pm

Coping with the Holidays

Tuesday, Dec. 9 from 6:30-8pm

Dundalk:

Mosaic Community Services in the Dundalk Professional Building, near the intersection of Dundalk Avenue and Center Place.

40 S. Dundalk Ave, Dundalk, MD 21222

Workshops:

Coping with the Holidays

Wednesday, Oct. 22 from 1-2:30 pm



www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org

BPUSA/AA County Chapter

P.O. Box 6280

Annapolis, MD 21401-0280