



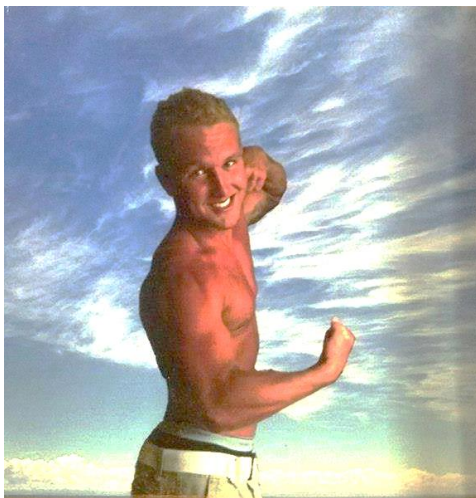
# Bereaved Parents of the USA

## Anne Arundel County Chapter

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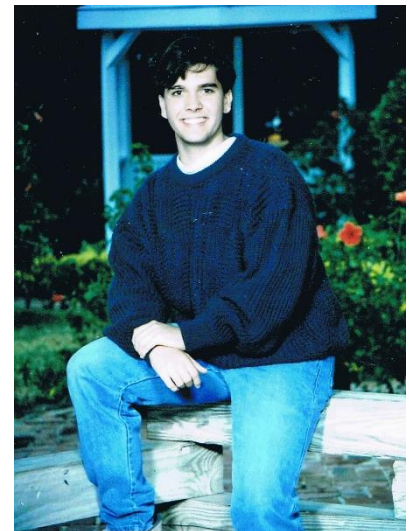
"Think of your child then, not as dead, but as living; not as a flower that has withered, but as one that is transplanted ; and touched by a Divine hand is blooming in richer colors and sweeter shades than those of earth."

*Richard Looker, British Theologian*



"Matthew, Happy 28th Birthday we miss you every second of each day!"  
Love, Mom, Dad, Josh, Cody, Jeremy, Carly and Lily

Matthew Joseph Morrow  
November 13, 1990 – October 13, 2012



Joey Belcher

April 21, 1975 --- December 17, 2012

LIVING YOUR UNLIVED LIFE FOR YOU  
AND WITH YOU.

ALL OUR LOVE FOREVER,.

Papa, Mom, Mimi and Riley

\*\*\*\*\* NEWS NEWS NEWS \*\*\*\*\*

**MEETING:** The **November 1** meeting will be held in the church **PARLOR.** P 16.

**HELP NEEDED: Chapter Leader/Meeting Coordinator,** and other volunteer opportunities. P 15

**SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE:** December 2, **RSVP NOVEMBER 5.** P 16

**SAVE THE DATE: April 27, 2019.** Our Chapter is hosting a regional "Hope and Healing Conference." P 17

### Our Chapter Column

**Our Chapter Column** is where you will find articles....poems...lyrics...thoughts, submitted by our chapter members, in memory of their loved ones. Creative writing and journaling are a therapeutic means for expressing your innermost thoughts and feelings, and providing self-healing. Some of us are prolific writers, some of us may write occasionally, and others may not be able to write a word. If you are doing any type of writing, I hope you will consider sharing your efforts with others in this forum. For as healing as it is for you to put your emotions into words, it is just as healing to others to see that someone has the same thoughts and emotions as them, especially at a time in our lives when we feel most alone and isolated because of our grief. It is often hard to believe that someone else could feel the intense depth of pain that comes with the loss of our child, and extremely comforting to know that we are not alone.

Please consider submitting something to be printed in this column to:  
[belcherirene@gmail.com](mailto:belcherirene@gmail.com), or mail to PO Box 6280, Annapolis, MD 21401.

Newsletter article submission deadline is the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to publication.



Submitted in memory of Matthew Joseph Morrow.

***Your final journey into the arms of God, taught me that ---***

By Irene Belcher, in memory of Joey

--- One day I would crawl out of the dark, and icy fog your departure left me enveloped in.  
--- I would go out into a world which was cruelly unchanged, indifferent to my pain, inexorably marching on.  
--- Once I learned that life is random I would be able to stop blaming God and I could then find refuge in His unfathomable love.  
--- I would never "Heal" in the most basic meaning of that word, but that I would find a way to just go on.  
--- While your life could never be restored, I could live your un-lived life for you and with you every second of the remainder of mine.  
--- People would stop calling or coming and that I'd be able to forgive, as your loss was mine and not theirs.  
--- Asking "why" over and over would never give me the answer I needed to hear.  
--- Instead of asking "unanswerable whys" I could lend some logic to the horror of why you died instead of me.  
--- I could honor your name by doing all the things you would have done for others.  
--- There was a reason for the indescribable pain of losing what I loved most in life.  
--- The reason was that your loss was never meant to be in vain. That I could let it make me a new person; a better person than I was.

A person who daily strives to become who you were.

A person who defers judgment to God and loves nevertheless.

A person who believes that generosity and compassion should not only be boundless, but also inexhaustible.

A person whose humility can harbor the greatest treasures of the Divine.

Thank you forever my dearly beloved son.

Joey Belcher, Jr.

April 21, 1975---December 17, 2012

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**"HIS ENDLESS COMPASSION"**

By Irene Belcher, in memory of Joey

Joey was a pensive, wistful boy, given to acts of colossal generosity and benevolence from an early age --such as asking whether we would buy a pair of Nike sneakers for a boy whose parents could not afford them.

Later in life when he accomplished personal and professional feats beyond any average parents' expectations we were bewildered and happy for him. As that was a facet of his persona we didn't know.

What we always knew, however, was that God had bestowed him with boundless generosity, kindness and humanity. As such we were not surprised when many people came to us at the funeral home ---some of them complete strangers -- who shared stories we had never heard about our son. Unsolicited accounts of the lives he had touched and the lives he had improved in the short 4 years he lived in the East Coast.

We heard the account, through an interpreter, of how he employed a deaf-mute young man from Nigeria in one of his restaurants. How he'd paid for his schooling at Gallaudet University. And between tears and hugs he recounted how that had changed his life. This young man (Mukanda) is now living in California holding a job at a restaurant in the L.A. area while starting a photography business.

Story after story came to us and gave us some measure of comfort in the early days. One of the most beautiful and which brings to mind -- "Whatever you did for the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me. Matthew 25:40" -- is the story that follows:

On Easter Day, 2013, just four months after losing our beloved son Joey, our daughter invited one of Joey's closest friends for Easter dinner. He asked if he could bring with him a guest. This guest is one of his most trusted employees and his name is Scott. (Name changed for privacy.) Scott related to us that a few days after he was released from prison he was looking for a job without success. The problem was that he chose to disclose the truth about his past in his interviews, knowing that eventually his record would show up. Besides, he said, "I don't want to start a new life based on deceit."

He was down to 20 dollars and very despondent when he saw one of our son's restaurants, Sticky Rice on "H" Street. He said he saw this kid in cargo shorts, a cap and a black t-shirt intently working on a project with some wood. The kid casually looked

up and said, "Hi". Tom started by asking him if he knew if the restaurant was hiring people at that time. He briefly looked up again and asked: "You're looking for work?" Scott then proceeded to reveal the problem that being truthful presented to him in trying to secure employment. He said the kid never looked up at him and for a moment he thought he was just wasting his time as he just kept on working. Scott says, that when he was finally finished sharing his life story, his problems and his bleak future the kid looked up and writing something on a piece of paper, he said, "My name is Joey." And handing the paper to him he continued, "You said you had 20 bucks left? Take seven out of that, take the train to Baltimore and go to this address, introduce yourself to this person and by the time you get there he'll know you are coming."

The address was the Sticky Rice in Fells Point in Baltimore City, the person was Joey's partner and the message said something to the effect of: "homeless, no references or recommendations, no money, no family – needs all that, needs a chance."

That was in 2010, Scott now has a small apartment; a steady job with Joey's best friend in his business. He recently went to Tennessee to visit his mom whom he hadn't seen in many years.

The words that Scott said at the end of his narration will forever ring in my ears as a testament of a soul incredibly rich, meaningful and eternal.

"The gifts your son gave me are rare; uncommon. He gave me the gift of trust, care and concern, for me, a convicted felon. And the gift of love – love for a total stranger, a total loser -- Joey changed my life, just like that, just like that."

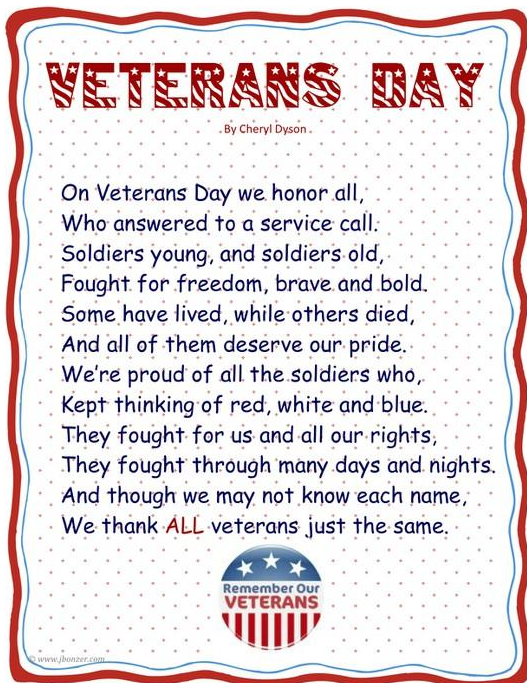
Joey Belcher, Jr.

April 21, 1975 --- December 17, 2012



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Freedom in America  
Isn't really free;  
We often pay a price  
To keep our liberty.

Remember those we loved,  
Who fought for us, and died;  
And those we never knew  
For whom others mourned and cried.



## Grateful and Grieving

By Angela Miller

There are some who believe that positive thinking and gratitude are the answer to most of life's ailments. And perhaps it is the answer for *most* of them. But is it possible to be both grateful and grieving?

Sure a posture of gratitude can help many situations, but gratitude doesn't always feel possible when grieving the loss of a child. Maybe it's the quick fix, game changer for some things in life that aren't as permanent, but all the positive thoughts in the world aren't going to change the fact that my child is dead. It will not change the empty chair at my table on Thanksgiving, the 3T clothes my son never grew into, or the hole exactly the size and shape of him that is permanently frayed into the fabric of every moment of my life now.

Gratitude is great— really, it is— but it can't fix child loss. Nothing can. The only fix for my pain would be to raise my child from the dead.

Bring to the table a cornucopia filled with my blessings and I'll bring you one filled with my infinite pain. Let's put them both on the empty chair next to me where my seven year old should be sitting, joyously stuffing his face with pumpkin pie.

Telling me to only focus on my blessings and not what's missing this holiday season is like telling me to forget if I had lost all my limbs. Yes, I'd still be thankful for what I had left and yes I'd also be deeply sad for what is missing.

Both are true. It's not one *or* the other. Yes I'm *still* grieving because I love and miss my son with every molecule in my body, but that doesn't mean I'm not also deeply thankful for my blessings.

As bereaved parents we are forced to learn the art of holding infinite space for both/and— because this new life we didn't ask for is now a heartbreaking juxtaposition of contradictions. Our hearts hold *both* the blessings and the trials, the joy and the pain, the white meat and the dark meat on the same blessed fork.

We are grateful *and* we are grieving.

The former can't cure the latter, and the latter doesn't negate the former. Nor were they meant to. Yes, grieving parents are incredibly thankful for every single blessing in their life, and that also doesn't negate the truth of the sorrow in their heart. If only the world could learn to hold the space for both too so bereaved parents could catch a break at the table of thanks every once in awhile.

This Thanksgiving, be so very grateful if your table is as full as it should be, for that is truly the greatest blessing there is. And in your thanksgiving please remember those of us who come to the table with a grieving heart. Remember to hold space for us bereaved parents too. Leave room for the truth of how hard the holidays are for those who are missing our very hearts— and be thankful if you're lucky enough to have every single one of your children sitting at the table with you.

Not everyone is quite so lucky.

When you see me this holiday season, pull up a chair beside me, and open wide your heart and ears to the truth of my experience. At first glance it might appear that I seem ungrateful, but I beg you, look again. The depth of my gratitude runs deeper than you know, for I know more than most how quickly my greatest blessings can be taken in an instant; I know the immeasurable pain of being robbed of my greatest joy. I don't take a thing for granted, so

please don't patronizingly remind me to be thankful for my blessings when I share with you the truth of my sadness. I'm not sad because I'm *choosing* a negative frame of mind, I'm sad because I'm grieving the death of my precious child. Those are two very different things.

Trust me, I am thankful, grateful and blessed. And I am also still grieving, hurting and sometimes a mess.

Please don't assume because I'm sad that I'm not grateful, or because I seem grateful I'm not still sad that my child isn't here. And keep in mind once Thursday rolls around I may decide to close my eyes tight and not move from my bed until Thanksgiving passes. I may not feel very grateful for much of anything at all. And that is perfectly ok too. It's more than ok— it's the reality and truth of surviving the holidays after child loss. Grief is not a straight line, and the grief landmines of the holidays only amplify a grieving parents' suffering.

Instead of assuming you know how I feel, simply ask me how I'm *really* doing this holiday season. Ask me what the holidays are like for me as a bereaved parent.

Ask me about the empty chair beside me and I'll gratefully tell you all about the beautiful boy who should be sitting next to me, the one who taught me how to stretch my love far and wide enough to span the gap between heaven and earth. Ask me about the one who taught me how to gracefully keep my balance while juggling impossible juxtapositions of life and death, joy and sorrow, mothering the living and the dead. Ask me about the one who showed me how to love beyond all time and space, how to survive the unimaginable, how to live for both of us.

Ask me about my greatest blessing and my deepest sorrow— *ask me about my child.*

Remember him with me. Invite him to the table this year too. I need to know that you remember he lived. Share his stories, his memory, his life, his love. And if you're open to blessing my aching heart even more, I invite you to *say* his name out loud with me. Often. And without hesitation. To hear his name is to hear the most beautiful sound there is. May it always be on the tip of your tongue like it is on mine. There is no greater gift.

Remember that for some of us the holidays can be very painful and lonely— not the season of Yuletide cheer they once were. Take a minute out of the hustle and bustle of ever-gratefulness to simply be *real* with me. Climb into my skin for awhile. Feel uncomfortable with me as we wade in the waters of holiday grief. Embrace my grieving heart with tenderness, with compassion, with love. My heart will forever be broken. Remember to treat me gently. It

takes everything within me just to show up at the table.

Let me know you're thankful I did.



Source: [www.abedformyheart.com/grateful-and-grieving/](http://www.abedformyheart.com/grateful-and-grieving/)



## SURVIVING THE HOLIDAYS AFTER THE DEATH OF A CHILD

Written by [Alice Wisler](#) on Saturday, November 21, 2009

That holiday-pang hit my stomach the first October after Daniel died. Greeting me at an arts and craft shop were gold and silver stockings, a Christmas tree draped with turquoise balls and a wreath of pinecones and red berries. What was this? And was “Santa Claus Is Coming To Town” playing as well? It was only October.

I had anticipated that Christmas and the holidays would be tough. In fact, I’d wake on those cold mornings after Daniel died in February and be grateful that it was still months until his August birthday and even more months until Christmas. I dreaded living both without him. I would have preferred to have been steeped in cow manure. At least then I could take a hot bath with sweet smelling bubbles and be rid of the stench. But bereavement isn’t that way. As those who had gone on before let me know, you have to live through it.

Christmas came. I did live through it. It continues to happen as do the other significant days of the calendar year. Daniel never arrives at any of them although his memory lives on. By incorporating him into these days of festivity, I can cope.

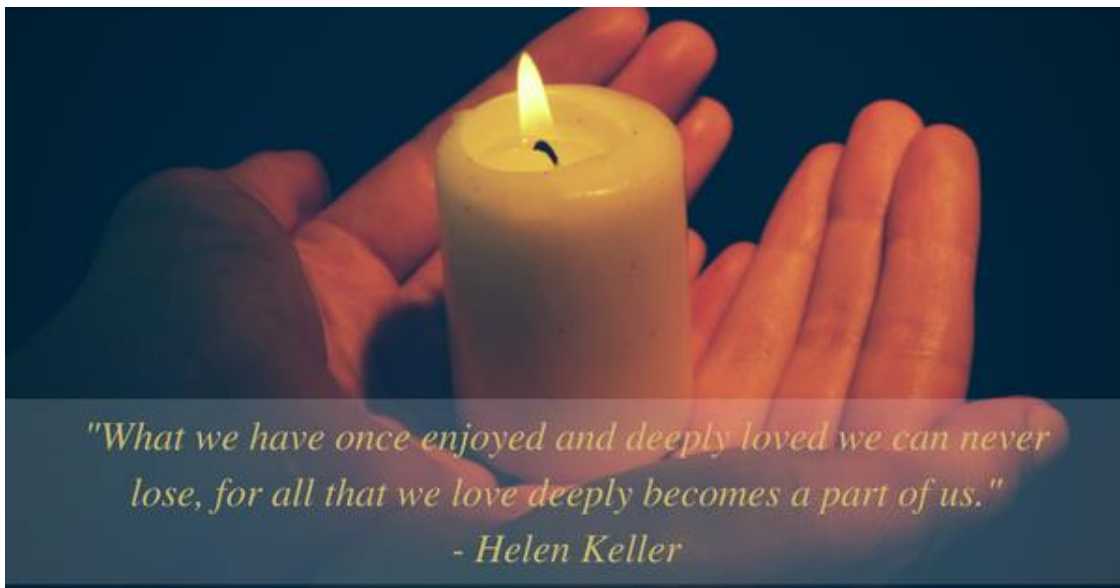
Some of you have your child’s birthday and/or anniversary day within the November through January season. These days, in addition to the holidays everyone else is celebrating, make the season even more complicated and painful, I’m sure.

**I offer eleven tips I’ve used to survive the holidays.** Some are my own suggestions and some are borrowed from the many who walk the path of grief.

1. **Know you will survive.** Others have done it and you will, too. Keep in mind that your first Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s Day will not be easy.
2. **Find at least one person you can talk to or meet with** during the holiday season. Perhaps this person has gone through a few Thanksgivings and Christmases before and can give you some helpful ideas that have worked for her.
3. **Things will be different this holiday season** and perhaps for all the rest to come. Don’t think you have to do the “traditional” activities of years past when your child was alive. Your energy level is low. If no one in your household minds, skip putting up the tree. Forget spending hours making your holiday cookies.
4. **Spend the holidays with those who will let you talk about your child.** You will need to have the freedom to say your child’s name and recall memories, if you choose to do so. Your stories about your child are wonderful legacies. Tell them boldly again and again.

5. If going into the mall or stores brings too much pain, shop for gifts online or through mail-order catalogs. Thinking everyone is happily shopping at the malls with intact lives while your heart is crushed is terribly tough. Go easy on yourself.
6. Getting away from the house is an idea that worked for my family. The first Christmas without Daniel we went to a nearby town and lived in the Embassy Suites. The kids enjoyed the indoor pool and breakfast buffets. Christmases that followed were spent at a rented cottage on the shore and the Christmas we rented the beach house, we were able to invite extended family to join us. We all shared in the cooking.
7. Create something to give to those who have helped you throughout the year. I made some very simple tree ornaments with "In Memory of Daniel" stamped on them and gave them to friends that first Christmas.
8. Decorate the grave. Put up a plastic Christmas tree with lights. Sometimes being busy with decorating the grave gives a feeling of doing something for a child we can no longer hold.
9. Do something in memory of your child. Donate to a charity or fund in his memory. Volunteer. My oldest daughter Rachel and I volunteer at the Hospice Tree of Remembrance each December and share memories of Daniel as we spend this time together.
10. If your bereavement support group has a special candle-lighting service to remember the children in your area who have died, attend it. Doing something in memory of your child with others who understand the pain these holidays hold can be therapeutic.
11. Spend time reflecting on what the season is about. Everyone around you may be frantic with attending parties, services, shopping and visiting relatives. Perhaps you used to be the same way. Now you may want to avoid some of the festivities. Give yourself permission to excuse yourself from them. Light a candle in your favorite scent. Record some thoughts in a journal. This is great therapy, too.

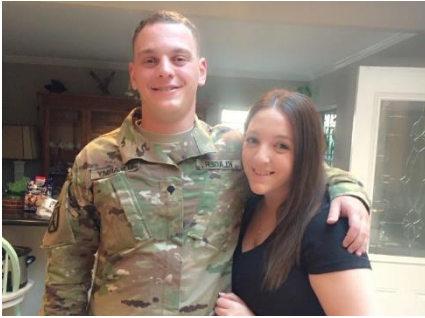
One day you will wake up and it will be January 2. The holidays will have ended. You will have made it. If you are like me, you will find that surviving the tinsel has made you stronger and although you may cry, somewhere within you, you will feel that core of new steel.



## *SIBLING CORNER*

### 5 Reasons Peer Support Has Helped Me Through My Grief

Author: Amanda Klager



You can Google the definition of grief and read it over and over again, but until you go through it you'll never fully understand.

When my brother, Army Spc. Adam Klager, died friends and loved ones came to my side. They cried with me. They were there for me. But they didn't understand what I was going through. My family was grieving as well, but their grief was different.

Eight months after my loss, I was paired with a TAPS Peer Mentor, and knowing there was someone who could relate to how I felt was such a comfort. Here are five reasons I'm grateful my peer mentor is by my side through this grief journey:

- 1. My peer mentor understands me.** When my TAPS Peer Mentor, Carly, reached out to me in the beginning, I was hesitant. She definitely couldn't bring back my brother, and I was so sure she couldn't change the way I felt. But, boy, was I wrong. The day I agreed to speak to Carly, another surviving sister, changed my life. She stayed on the phone with me for three hours, listening to me cry, yell and talk through my grief. She understood and gave me advice no one else could offer.
- 2. I'm never alone.** The "firsts" — the first birthday, the first holiday, the first anniversary — after the loss of your loved one are the roughest. Every day, reality sunk in a little more. Every day, I would send Carly a text message, and she would respond back encouraging me, letting me know my feelings were normal and reminding me I wasn't alone. On my brother's birthday, when I thought everyone had forgotten about this special day, my phone rang — it was Carly. She remembered, and together we sang happy birthday to Adam. I had comfort on that day knowing she was there for me.
- 3. She helped me discover my "new normal."** Learning to find a "new normal" in my life was difficult. I didn't know left from right or up from down. When my peer mentor came into my life she showed me how to live with grief. Carly was so patient, kind and understanding with me, and she didn't judge me as I learned to walk this new path of life.
- 4. I gained a sister.** I lost my little brother, and while Carly can never replace Adam, I have now gained a sister. I gained a sister for the rest of my life who is there for me through the hard times and the good times. We live on opposite sides of the country, but we always find time for each other. Carly always says, "Us sisters have to stick together," and I believe that.
- 5. She showed me how to give back to others.** I recently became a TAPS Peer Mentor myself, but I was hesitant and not sure if I was ready for the task. Carly encouraged me to take this next step, and she shared with me that I had helped her in ways I didn't even know. I'm excited to help another surviving sister the way Carly has helped me. There is a saying, "We plan and God laughs." I'm a firm believer in this; I had a full day planned when two soldiers showed up at my parents' doorstep. From that moment on, my plans changed, but I'm thankful Carly has been with me every step of the way.



Source: [www.taps.org](http://www.taps.org)



## 16th ANNUAL MEMORY WALK 2018

The Annual Memory Walk was on Saturday, 10/6. We had a large turnout. The room at the Quiet Waters visitor's center worked out well this year. It was a warm, dry retreat and provided us with a relaxed place for some fellowship time.



We hope the Walk was able to provide some peace during our grieving process to all who participated.



The Walk wouldn't be possible without the families who donate their time and effort to this worthy cause that allows us to celebrate our precious children. Many thanks to all the volunteers, as it is truly a labor of love.

And a heartfelt thank you to all of you who gave monetary donations to support this event.

Robert and Barbara Bessling in memory of Ricky and Jamie.

Sharon Cantrell in memory of Luis B. Cantrell

Noel and Ann Castiglia in memory of Tria

Michael Downey

Kathy Franklin in memory of Tanager Ru Ricci

Brenda Gawthrop in memory of Andrew Gawthrop

Derrick and Torcelia Hawes in memory of Brian T. Davis

Halbach Family in memory of Henry Halbach

Cheryl Long in memory of Sean Long

Dana Abrams in memory of Sean Long and Brent Whittaker

Elvira and Tom McCormick in memory of Tommy McCormick

Jean and Bill Wise in memory of Tommy McCormick

Paul and Patricia Dembeck in memory of Tommy McCormick

Morrow Family in memory of Matthey Morrow

Fran Palmer in memory of Scott

Mary and Joe Redmiles in memory of Tommy Redmiles

Patricia Rogers in memory of Gabriella Berryman

Scott and Jeanette Stangle in memory of Matthew Ryan Stangle

Laura Sisler in memory of Brandon Michael Sisler

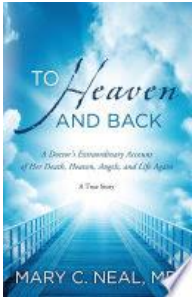
Gary and Desiree Smith and Family in memory of Joseph Claude Smith

We hope you will plan to join us again next October.  
Barbara Bessling & Elvira McCormick, Walk Co-Chairs

BOOK REVIEW

“To Heaven and Back”: A Doctor's Extraordinary Account of Her Death, Heaven, Angels, and Life Again: A True Story,

By: Mary C. Neal, MD



*This book could probably be one more publication by a near death survivor were it not for the fact that the author learned beforehand of the death of her son to take place in the future. Additionally, when her son, Willie, was four or five pursuant to a conversation with his mom and in answer to her statement, “When you are eighteen ...responded, “But I’m not going to be eighteen.” She then asked, “What did you say?” And he said again, “You know, I am never going to be eighteen. That’s the plan. You know that.” At that, she later reflects, “He said it as if I was kidding with him. I must know the plan for his life.”*

*On January 14, 1999 during a kayaking trip to Chile, Dr. Neal drowned being pinned down by her kayak. Oxygen-starved and severely injured, Dr. Neal died.*

*What follows is Dr. Neal’s story of all the events that took place as she moved from life to death and back again. With enormous simplicity she guides the reader through every emotion she experiences and her awe and wonder at discovering a magnificent world, a beautiful world where she encounters relatives, friends, Angels and a sudden understanding of life as it should be lived and the Master plan which dictates for each of us a path.*

When she is in her human form she realizes she is dying and asks God for His Divine Intervention. She then abandons herself into the loving embrace of God immediately being overcome by a total peace and calm. Throughout her ordeal she comes to understand God has a plan for our lives and once we thoroughly accept that, then everything makes sense.

She describes the spirit beings as people she knew and loved and understood she had known them for all eternity. They were luminous, brilliant beings who did not speak as we do, but communicated in a very pure form with thoughts and emotions. They joyously celebrated seeing her again as if they’d waited for a long time to guide her home, her eternal home.

Following her near-death experience, she begins to live a life replete with meaning and preparation for the next, perpetual life we will all experience one day.

It’s a book full of promise and hope. The possibility of something wondrous and permanent that minimizes all this earthly stuff we struggle with, seem so small and temporal --- Excellent reading for any bereaved parents.

In loving memory of our son, Joey Belcher, Jr.  
Joe and Irene Belcher



**#GivingTuesday**  
 A Global Giving Movement  
**November 27, 2018**

## Our Children Remembered – November

Jon Russell Aikin  
Grandson of Elizabeth and Barry Aikin  
September 4, 1983 - November 19, 2001

Mariah Nicole Albee  
Daughter of Valerie and Richard Albee  
November 27, 1982 - September 7, 2012

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

Douglas Lee Baer III  
Grandson of Shirley Baer  
August 21, 1983 - November 14, 2006

Makayla Gabrielle Carpenter  
Daughter of Tarica Carpenter  
November 10, 2008 - July 30, 2010

Aris T. Carpenter  
Son of Kim Carpenter  
November 20, 1985 - December 4, 2013

Michelle Marie Dyke  
Daughter of Marie Dyke  
May 19, 1975 - November 10, 1992

Alice Engleman  
daughter of Elizabeth Engleman  
November 20, 1997 - June 21, 2011

Genevieve Marie French  
Daughter of Tina French  
September 25, 1995 - November 7, 2017

Thomas James Geoghegan  
Son of Maureen Geoghegan  
November 13, 1969 - June 30, 2013

Jeffrey Andrew Grimm  
Son of John and Linda Grimm  
November 25, 1973 - September 28, 1989

Romana Alice Hale  
Sister of Bobbi Remines  
October 8, 1948 - November 5, 1976

Galen Andrew Harig-Blaine  
Son of Clare and Stephen Blaine  
November 14, 1989 - April 22, 2007

Suzanne Boyer Hyatt  
Daughter of Jenni Lucke  
February 23, 1982 - November 6, 2017

Daniel Ryan Mayes  
Son of Dale Mayes  
December 5, 1984 - November 27, 2015

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

Matthew Joseph Morrow  
Son of Carla and Ed Morrow  
November 13, 1990 - October 13, 2012

Michael Dwayne Nokes  
Son of Ellen Foxwell  
November 9, 1963 - March 15, 1988

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

Jessica Price Parsons  
Daughter of Patricia and James Price  
Daughter-in-law of Mary Parsons  
November 24, 1984 - April 8, 2016

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

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

Samantha Ann Rankin  
Daughter of Vickie and Bart Rankin  
November 19, 1988 - May 31, 2010

André Marc Sanders  
Son of Karen Sanders  
April 8, 1968 - November 27, 2002

Erin Michelle Shannon  
Daughter of Karen Shannon  
November 21, 1979 - March 18, 2009

Michael Elliott Simms  
Son of Molly Simms  
November 12, 1996 - March 29, 2016

Gary "Jake" David Spirt  
Son of Dee Spirt-Rayment  
November 19, 1962 - November 21, 2002

Karen Leese Stevens  
Daughter of Judith and John Leese  
July 19, 1962 - November 17, 2009

Tori Danielle Stitely  
Daughter of Tawny Stitely  
May 21, 1985 - November 26, 2012

Nicole L Tresize  
Daughter of Cathy Valentine  
November 2, 1975 - November 12, 1975

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

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

Alex Paul Yokanovich  
Son of Delight (Nick) Yokanovich  
November 22, 1979 - October 30, 2013

## **Our Children Remembered – December**

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

Dora Baldwin  
Daughter of Aurelia Ferraro  
December 11, 1964 - May 2, 2012

Stephanie Noell Banchemo  
Daughter of Bill Banchemo  
December 16, 1985 - April 9, 2012

Joey E Belcher  
Son of Joseph and Irene Belcher  
April 21, 1975 - December 17, 2012

Aris T. Carpenter  
Son of Kim Carpenter  
November 20, 1985 - December 4, 2013

David Brian Clutter, Sr  
Son of Barbara Orndorf  
July 23, 1968 - December 25, 2000

Mark Joseph Curtis  
Son of Sylvia Curtis  
August 20, 1986 - December 20, 2006

Nicholas Delaney  
Son of Tina and Tom Delaney  
December 29, 1981 - January 19, 2016

Jackie Cheyenne Foy  
Daughter of Mike and Cat Foy  
January 21, 1999 - December 24, 2008

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

Henry Ku'ualoha Giugni Halbach  
Son of Gina Giugni and Dan Halbach  
December 9, 1991 - September 25, 2016



Kole William Hoffman  
Son of Erin and Jim McKinney McDonald  
December 23, 2007 - March 7, 2010

Kurt Willard Johnson  
Son of Willard and Marian Johnson  
December 9, 1963 - August 11, 2003

Carlester Wilmore Kane  
Son of Grace Marie Watkins  
February 22, 1964 - December 18, 1998

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

Stuart Livingstone, Jr  
Son of Stuart Livingstone  
Son of Lori Livingstone  
December 20, 1992 - January 25, 2018

Daniel Ryan Mayes  
Son of Dale Mayes  
December 5, 1984 - November 27, 2015

David M Murnane  
son of Jennifer Murnane  
March 7, 1987 - December 9, 2008

Kevin Alan O'Brien  
Son of Lorrie and Keith O'Brien  
December 24, 1986 - June 29, 2012

Michael Henry O'Malley  
Son of Margie and John O'Malley  
August 25, 1971 - December 7, 1991

Christopher Gordon Pessano  
Son of Claire and Roger Cole  
December 18, 1971 - May 26, 2017

Joshua Aaron Prosper  
Son of Terre Prosper  
August 30, 1986 - December 16, 2011

Lynda Jo Quigley  
Daughter of Betty Quigley  
April 2, 1967 - December 13, 2011

Megan Frances Richardson  
Daughter of Karen Richardson  
July 24, 1983 - December 4, 2004

Gregory Robert Sears  
Son of Rob and Marilyn Sears  
December 11, 1975 - January 6, 2012

Owen Robert Sinex  
Son of Phyllis and Bob Sinex  
September 2, 1993 - December 20, 2012

Jason Edward Skarzynski  
Son of Benjamin and Sharon Skarzynski  
December 19, 1977 - December 14, 1995

Mark Edward Smeltzer  
Son of Peggy Smeltzer  
December 11, 1969 - March 15, 1997

Joseph (Joey) Scott Sudo  
Son of Joe and Suzanne Sudo  
December 3, 1999 - April 23, 2012

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

Nariyah Gabrielle Wheeler  
Daughter of Tarica Carpenter  
December 26, 2006 - January 2, 2007

Miriam Luby Wolfe  
Daughter of Larry and Rosemary Mild  
September 26, 1968 - December 21, 1988

Lauren Nicole Zalouder  
Daughter of Mike and Becky Zalouder  
August 15, 1993 - December 25, 2017

## **CREDO**

OF THE ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY CHAPTER  
OF THE BEREAVED PARENTS OF THE USA

**We are not alone.**

**We are the parents whose children have died.**

**We are the grandparents who have buried grandchildren.**

**We are the siblings whose brothers and sisters no longer walk with us through life.**

**We are the aunts and uncles whose cherished nieces and nephews are gone.**

**We are here to support and care for each other.**

**We are united by the love we share for our children.**

**We have learned that children die at any age and from many causes.**

**Just as our children died at all ages, we too are all ages.**

**We share our pain, our lost dreams and our hopes for the future.**

**We are a diverse family.**

**We realize death does not discriminate against race, creed, color, income or social standing**

**We are at many stages of recovery, and sometimes fluctuate among them.**

**Some of us have a deep religious faith, some of us have lost our faith, while some of us are still adrift.**

**The emotions we share are anger, guilt and a deep abiding sadness.**

**But regardless of the emotions we bring to our meetings,**

**it is the sharing of grief and love for our children that**

**helps us to**

**be better today than we were yesterday.**

**We reach for that inner peace as we touch each other's**

**lives and place our hand print on each other's hearts.**

**Our hope for today is to survive the day;**

**Our dream for tomorrow is gentle memories and perhaps to smile.**

***We are not alone***

***We walk together with hope in our hearts***

## CHAPTER NEWS

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

HELP NEEDED: Chapter Leader/Meeting Coordinator -- There is an immediate need for a Chapter Leader/Chapter Meeting Coordinator. For four years I have had the honor and blessing of meeting newly bereaved parents, and working with other volunteers, by serving as your Chapter Leader. All of you are some of the most courageous, resilient, compassionate people I have ever met. But I will be resigning in January because of a serious chronic health issue. Please give thoughtful consideration to the possibility of making the transition from being helped by others, to reaching out and providing support to those who are following in our footsteps along this journey. Although being Chapter Leader may sound daunting, it may be possible to share the responsibility, and there are devoted members of our Core Group of volunteers who provide much of the Chapter Meeting logistics and support.

General Volunteering with our Chapter -- Giving of yourself is always healing, and being instrumental in providing resources to other Bereaved Parents can only be a positive step in your journey as you extend a helping hand to so many others. If you feel you would like to do something, but don't know what you can possibly do, please talk to me. We can work together to find an opportunity that fits for you.

Contact me if you have questions or will volunteer in any capacity. Thank you.

Carol Tomaszewski, 410-519-8448, [chapterleaderaacountymd@gmail.com](mailto:chapterleaderaacountymd@gmail.com)

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### CHAPTER MEETING SUMMARY:

Meetings are held at 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. (Doors open at 7:00) 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.

We are a self-help support organization dedicated to assisting parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, and uncles 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 2-3 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, a key part of each chapter meeting, will be held as desired for first-time attendees, and the newly and nonnewly bereaved. The 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.

### PHONE NUMBERS TO CALL IF YOU NEED TO TALK IN BETWEEN MEETINGS.

Barbara Bessling (410) 761-9017    Mary Redmiles (301) 704-8086    Janet Tyler (410)960-8759

**MEETING: NOVEMBER MEETING is Thursday, Nov 1.**

The November meeting will be held upstairs in the church **PARLOR**. Park in the upper lot, enter the main church doors, turn right down the hallway. The PARLOR is on the left. Our program is "Coping with the holidays". We will have a panel of parents sharing what they have done to prepare and get through the holiday season.

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**DECEMBER MEETING: December 6.** Join us and introduce your child with photos and stories, and if you would like, also bring a meaningful UNWRAPPED gift. Since we no longer have our loved one to give gifts to, many of us bring a gift(s) in their memory. These gifts will be donated to a local charity for children in need.

**SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE** – The annual Service of Remembrance will be held on December 2, at 3 PM, at St. Martin's-in-the-Field Episcopal Church, Benfield Road, Severna Park. **RSVP NOV 5.** Invitations have been mailed for our annual Service of Remembrance. Please RSVP by November 5 so your child's name is included in the printed program and slide show.

Questions -- contact Carol Tomaszewski, [chapterleaderaacountymd@gmail.com](mailto:chapterleaderaacountymd@gmail.com), 410-519-8448.

**DONATIONS** are welcome to help offset the cost.

And as always, **DESSERTS** for the reception are appreciated.

**OUR WEBSITE:** [www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org](http://www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org) Visit our website for information about our Chapter, Our Children, the Newsletter, upcoming events, and many other resources.

**FACEBOOK:** Join our private, members only, Chapter forum. In Facebook, search for "Anne Arundel County Chapter of the Bereaved Parents of the USA". Our moderator will respond to requests to be included as a friend.

**PRIVACY POLICY:** Our Chapter is cognizant of privacy concerns related to our children. We ask that each family provide written consent to include your child's name, photo, birth date and death date in our newsletter, on our website and other published listings of Our Children, such as for the Service of Remembrance. If you don't see your child's name included in our publications, and would like them to be included, please contact me.

Carol Tomaszewski, 410-519-8448, email [chapterleaderaacountymd@gmail.com](mailto:chapterleaderaacountymd@gmail.com), use subject: Privacy

**SPONSORSHIP of newsletter and website:** You can honor your child's memory by sponsoring our newsletter and/or website. The donation for sponsoring the newsletter is \$75.00 and the website is \$25.00. Either sign up at a meeting or call Mary Redmiles, Sponsorship Coordinator.

For the **newsletter**, submit a photograph and a 2 or 3 line memorial no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to publication. Forward this to Irene Belcher.

For the **website**, a sponsors link will be put on the home page that will open your child's photo from the Our Children section of the website, if you have given permission to include a photo on our website. If no photo is available, your child's name will still be included on the website home page.

**NEWSLETTER ARTICLES:** If you are submitting an article, letter or poem for inclusion in the newsletter, please provide this information no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to publication.



**SAVE THE DATE: April 27, 2019**, our Chapter is hosting a regional “**Hope and Healing Conference**”. We are planning a day of inspirational speakers and activities that will be informative and provide insight into incorporating our grief and memories into our lives. Help with funding through grants and/or donations, planning for registration, meals, activities, etc are needed.

Think about volunteering, and most of all **PLAN TO ATTEND.**

**CHAPTER VOLUNTEER CONTACTS:**

**Chapter leader: Carol Tomaszewski , 410-519-8448 [chapterleadraacounty.md@gmail.com](mailto:chapterleadraacounty.md@gmail.com)**

**Treasurer: Fran Palmer**

**Refreshments: Sandi Burash, 410-551-5774**

**Librarian: Bob and Sandi Burash**

**Programs/Sponsors: Mary Redmiles 301-704-8086 [mary.redmiles@gmail.com](mailto:mary.redmiles@gmail.com)**

**Newsletter: Joe and Irene Belcher [belcherirene@gmail.com](mailto:belcherirene@gmail.com)**

A **National Gathering/Conference** is a weekend spent surrounded by other bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. It is a place where hope grows and friendships are made with others who truly understand. There are inspirational keynote speakers, and abundant workshops for everyone. Bereaved Parents USA Gathering will be in St Louis, and The Compassionate Friends (TCF) Conference will be in Philadelphia. More information can be found on their websites.

**NATIONAL GATHERING 2019**



**Bereaved Parents USA**

August 2-4 ♥ St. Louis, Missouri

**42ND TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE**



**RINGS IN  
PHILADELPHIA**

**JULY 19-21, 2019**



Anne Arundel County Chapter BPUSA  
P.O . Box 6280  
Annapolis, MD 21401