

The pain of grief is just as much a part of life as the joy of love; it is perhaps the price we pay for love. Colin Murray Parkes



# Bereaved Parents of the USA

## Anne Arundel County Chapter



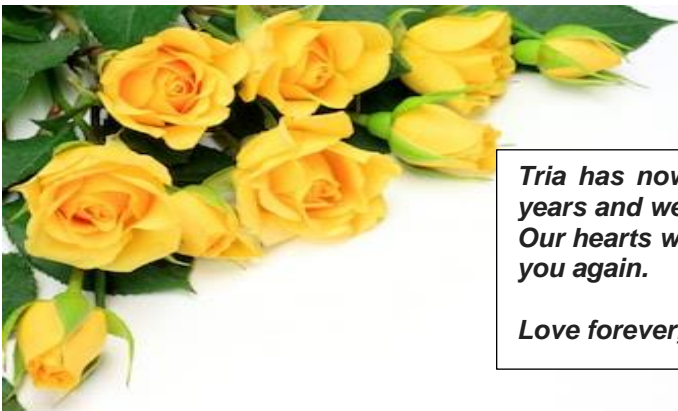
**Tria Marie Castiglia**  
July 6, 1963-October 14, 1984



Happy Birthday in Heaven, Dave.  
We miss you every day.  
Love, Mom, Dad, Beth, Lara,  
Brent and Josh

**David W Tomaszewski – Sep 4, 1974-Feb 6, 2001**

*“Borne of the air and sea – I will always fly”*



*Tria has now been in heaven for 35 years and we still miss her every day. Our hearts will be whole when we see you again.*

*Love forever, Dad and Mom*



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When no more a child, not quite a man  
The angels called him home.  
We bear the bitter grief that's come  
And try to understand.

**Robert Owen Synex – September 2, 1993 – December 20, 2012**



PhotoScan by Google Photos



**Hal Benjamin Stern**

**October 30, 1970 – October 5, 2018**

**You are a part of my soul. I feel you everyday and miss your warm, loving smile. Mom**

**I love you and miss you greatly, Dad.**



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My thoughts: We fortunately found Dave's poetry journals in the trunk of his car...hidden away. This poem pulls at my heartstrings, and we put the first and last lines on his headstone.

Dave was born in Hawaii and loved the beach and outdoors...the air and sea. He had troubled teenage years, when this poem was written, and struggled to find his way in life. Now I feel him around me every season, shining through the stars, and with the gentle breeze or strong wind.

And so he'll always fly, and I know he is always with me.

Carol Tomaszewski, **Dave's** mom  
Anne Arundel County Chapter BPUSA



## I AM

By Dave Tomaszewski, 1974 – 2001

Borne of the air and sea  
tell me what to be  
or I will fly.  
I am the seasons  
for unknown reasons  
and I do fly.  
I am the stars  
Jupiter and Mars  
and still I fly.  
I am the wind  
everywhere I've been  
I'll always fly.

***What the caterpillar calls the end of the world,***

***The master calls a butterfly.***      -Richard Bach-



Benji,

You were always following your own path; from the time you were tiny and had to stop to examine anthills.

We would say, “Two steps forward and one step back to get Benjie.”

Your array of odd pets from skunk “Exodor” to boa, “Nigel”.

In your beautiful 47 years, you filled your life with adventures from skiing, Dungeons and Dragons, Spelunking (caving), to visiting a good friend who was in Nicaragua mid-wifing!!

How we all loved to gather on your Canton roof top deck with all your booze-hound friends.

Your love for the Washington Capitals—how awesome you felt when you got to moonlight for them as one of their score keepers. So glad that you were able to watch them Win the Stanley cup!!

How our hearts filled with happiness when you found Tara who was your true soulmate. Sooo proud and heart wrenching to be part of your fight for life after diagnosis of brain cancer. Six months after your wedding.

You are a part of my soul. I feel you everyday and miss your warm, loving smile.

Mom (Barbara)

Barbara Stern in loving memory of her beloved son **Hal Benjamin “Benjie” Stern**

Ben, Benj, or Benjie -- he never outgrew his youthful names—

A people magnet – he bonded so easily with people. He had a real depth of feeling for people and retained many life-long close friends. Such a warm soul!

He was always ready to lend a hand or just listen as a friend.

The two-year torturous journey we experienced with him showed me a tough side of my son I had never before seen. He was determined to work as hard as he was able in order to gain control over his damaged body and to continue enjoying life with his life-mate Tara.

He fought, never giving in until the fight was over.

I love you and miss you greatly.

Dad

Robert Stern, in loving memory of his beloved son **Hal Benjamin “Benjie” Stern**

## **NEWS FROM OUR CHAPTER LEADER**

### ***BP/USA National Gathering 2019 - 'Spirit of Love'***

Sandi and I, and Paul Balasic traveled to St. Louis, MO., to attend the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual BP/USA National Gathering - 'Spirit of Love' from 2 to 4 August. The theme for this year's gathering was inclusion (parents, siblings, grandparents) - not exclusion. Inclusion through words and actions. The gathering welcomed nearly 190 bereaved from Washington State to Florida and from Texas to Connecticut to listen to inspiring keynote speakers.

The Gathering offered: 34 workshops, a dedicated track of workshops for parents who had lost their only or all children, and workshops designed for bereaved siblings. Most importantly, we shared our stories. At the end of each emotion-filled day, there were evening sharing sessions, or a chance to join in one of Paul's jam sessions, which drew nice crowds.

We met many first-time attendees, as well as attendees we have come to know over the years. The gathering has a family feel to it, not too large that you feel like a stranger; and yet, you have the chance to meet everyone, especially during the meals. People change tables, meet someone new, share their story, and make new friends. We had a chance to chat with the Baltimore Metropolitan chapter leader, Bill Lyon and his wife Anne and share stories not only about our children, but also about the beginning years of our chapters and all that we have in common.

The Gathering Chair, the Gathering Committee and the Board of Directors worked tirelessly to offer well prepared and sensitive workshops to meet the varied needs of the attendees. In addition to the workshops, there was a creation station, hospitality room, reflection room, evening movies, a painting class, yoga, massages, comfort dogs, and much more. And did I mention Paul held jam session sing along each evening.

The gathering afforded everyone a safe place to share their story with others who had suffered the loss of a child. It is a place where no one judges or tells you what you ought to be doing or where you should be on your grief journey. The gathering is a place to meet other bereaved parents, some further on their journey than you and others more newly bereaved and still raw in their grief.

On Saturday night we had a candle lighting service. After our children's name had been read and we had lit our candle, we were witness to sorrow, tears, laughter and joy. The resilience and strength of each bereaved parent shown brightly because of the love they hold for their children. The gathering is a unique experience for each of us, yet it is a shared experience for all.

I had the privilege to represent our chapter at the gathering and during chapter leader training I was able to present each of the chapter leaders with a painting by Amanda, Cheryl Long's daughter. I was overwhelmed by the thanks and expressions of appreciation for such a lovely thoughtful gift. The leaders were truly moved. Cheryl donated several of her hand-crafted works for the raffle. All her items were bid on and went to happy winners. Our chapter donated two afghans which were highly sought. Thanks - Amanda, Cheryl and Lorraine.

I invite and encourage you to attend the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual BP/USA National Gathering to be held in St Louis, MO, from 7 to 9 August 2020. I will provide more information in the coming months, or you can contact me at [bpaacntychapterleader@gmail.com](mailto:bpaacntychapterleader@gmail.com)

**Bob Burash, Chapter Leader**

All BP/USA Anne Arundel County Chapter meetings, programs, and events are organized and staffed by volunteers!

You and your family are encouraged to volunteer!

**PLEASE REMEMBER THAT VOLUNTEERS ARE THE BACKBONE OF EVERY BP/USA Anne Arundel County Chapter MEETINGS, PROGRAMS, AND EVENTS.**

## **CURRENT VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:**

**Annual Memory Walk** - October 12 at Quiet Waters Park. Registration starts at 8:30. If you would like to help put up signs, make mementos, register walkers, do a reading, etc., please contact Barbara Bessling, [bebessling@aol.com](mailto:bebessling@aol.com) 410-761-9017.

**Service of Remembrance** - December 8 at St. Martin in the Field, Severna Park. There is a great need for help. We need several people to fill key positions to coordinate the service, to select and arrange the music, or to design the program and work with the printer. There are several minor tasks that need to be filled. If interested, please contact Bob Burash, at [bpaacntychapterleader@gmail.com](mailto:bpaacntychapterleader@gmail.com)

Thank you for your consideration.



## **CHAPTER NEWS**

### **CHAPTER CONTACTS:**

Chapter leader: Bob Burash, 410-551-5774, [bpaacntychapterleader@gmail.com](mailto:bpaacntychapterleader@gmail.com)

Treasurer: Fran Palmer

Refreshments: Sandi Burash, 410-551-5774

Librarian: Bob and Sandi Burash

**Programs/Sponsorships:** 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)

**NEWSLETTER ARTICLES:** Please consider submitting an article, letter or poem for inclusion in the newsletter, provide this information no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to publication to [belcherirene@gmail.com](mailto:belcherirene@gmail.com).

**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 contact Mary Redmiles, Sponsorship Coordinator, at 301-704-8086 or [mary.redmiles@gmail.com](mailto:mary.redmiles@gmail.com).

- 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 at [belcherirene@gmail.com](mailto:belcherirene@gmail.com).
- For the website, a sponsor's 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.

### **MONTHLY GATHERINGS:**

**September 5<sup>th</sup>.** Second phase of Facilitator Training for those interested in facilitating sharing groups.

**October 3<sup>rd</sup>.** (Healing with your hands.) At this meeting we will be making, no-sew blankets, T-Shirts, shell angels, etc. If you want to make a t-shirt for the walk, Bring your own t-shirt, email a picture to Carol at [ctomaszewski74@gmail.com](mailto:ctomaszewski74@gmail.com) and she will transfer your picture to an applique and have it at the October gathering.

**November 7<sup>th</sup>.** (Preparing for the holidays.) An email will be sent out asking for volunteers who'd be interested in sharing their experiences.

**December 5<sup>th</sup>.** (Remembering our children and bringing a gift for a child in need.) At this meeting members are asked to buy a gift. One that reminds them of their Child, or a toy they'd have bought for their child for subsequent donation to a needy child.

**CHAPTER MEETING SUMMARY:** 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. (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, 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 are 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 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.

#### **CORE GROUP MEETINGS:**

**Tuesday, November 12, 2019**

**WHAT TO EXPECT AT OUR CORE GROUP MEETINGS:** Everyone is invited and encouraged to attend our core group meetings. We are always looking for new ideas and programs.

A core group meeting typically meets from 7 pm until 9 pm. once a quarter. We discuss finances, upcoming activities, plan the annual walk, plan the service of remembrance, suggest programs for the monthly gatherings, and address any number of issues that may come before the group.

#### **OTHER IMPORTANT DATES:**

##### **October 12<sup>th</sup> - Annual Memory Walk**

Please join us along with your family and friends on Saturday, October 12, 2019 when the Anne Arundel County Chapter of the Bereaved Parents of the USA is hosting its 17th Annual Memory Walk to remember all of our children who died too soon, but still walk in the hearts of our families and friends. Whether you walk two miles or a hundred feet, it is not important. What matters is that you have taken the time to join with family and friends – new and old – who are walking the same journey as you. We hope to see you there.

The walk will be held at Quiet Waters Park, Annapolis, in the Dogwood Pavilion. The day starts with a fellowship gathering time followed by a short dedication ceremony. Before the walk, we will have refreshments, fruit and breakfast items. The two-mile walk proceeds from there and ends back at the Pavilion, but you do not need to walk to participate. Pets are welcome but, must stay on a leash. We are anticipating about 75 - 100 parents, grandparents, siblings and friends to participate in the Memory Walk this year. Parking is free at Quiet Waters Park for those participating in the Walk. Indicate to the attendant at the entrance booth that you will be participating in the Walk.

**NOTE:** this year we will again be posting pictures of our children along the course of the walk. If you are going to join us at the walk and would like your child’s picture posted, please send an email to [bebessling@aol.com](mailto:bebessling@aol.com). Attach a digital picture to the email or send a photo to the address below. If your child’s photo was in the 2018 Service of Remembrance slide show, you don’t need to submit an additional photo, just let us know.

For More Information or to help in the Walk, contact Barbara Bessling at [bebessling@aol.com](mailto:bebessling@aol.com), 410-761-9017, [aacountymemorywalk@gmail.com](mailto:aacountymemorywalk@gmail.com), Or go to our website at: <http://www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org>



[December 8<sup>th</sup> – Service of Remembrance.](#) 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.

This year the Annual Service of Remembrance will be held at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 8, 2019, at St. Martin's-in-the-Field Episcopal Church, 375 Benfield Road, Severna Park, Maryland 21146.

**VOLUNTEERS REQUESTED:** 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 works for you. Contact me if you have questions or will volunteer in any capacity. Thank you. **Bob Burash, 410-551-5774, [bpaacntychapterleader@gmail.com](mailto:bpaacntychapterleader@gmail.com)**

**OUR WEBSITE:** <http://www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org/HTML/Home.htm>

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. **Bob Burash, 410-551-5774, [bpaacntychapterleader@gmail.com](mailto:bpaacntychapterleader@gmail.com)**, use subject: Privacy

**ANGEL GOWN PROJECT:** We can continue our Angel Gown Project thanks to the volunteers who are sewing the gowns and distributing them to the hospitals. We also continue to have wedding gowns donated. If you know of anyone who would like to contribute to this very healing, worthwhile project, either through sewing or donating gowns or trims or ribbon, please let us know.

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

Barbara Bessling (410) 761-9017    Mary Redmiles (301) 704-8086



*“What we leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but what is woven  
into the lives of others.”*

*Pericles*

*C 494*

### **Ruminations of a grateful, grieving mom.**

As the end of the year approaches inexorably marching me towards an anniversary, I never thought I would have; I contemplate the subtle altering of the flora around me. Implacably forcing me to acknowledge life goes on. Fall is stark in its colorful manifestations. It is sad in the way it loses all that it was. It portends ending, change and inscrutable tomorrows I've learned to not expect.

The above-quoted statement from Pericles jolts me back to where I want to be; where I need to be. A place of gratitude for the privilege of having been chosen by God to give life – a body outside my body; a soul outside my soul and yet all mine as I will forever lament the absence of that other part of me.

My Joey was a “mommy’s boy” who’d follow me from room to room as soon as he could walk. He was tender, pensive and judicious from an early age. He was compassionate always and in every situation. He found beauty in the most unlikely of situations. Reminiscing on this beautiful trait of his character, one salient incident brings a smile to my face and the familiar glistening of tearful longing to my eyes.

At the time Joey was probably eight or nine years old and his sister probably ten or eleven. On a cool, spring weekday morning we all went to ride our bikes to a beautiful bike path cupping Lake Pontchartrain in New Orleans. As we came to the end of the path and on the way back to our car, we discovered the carcass of a rodent. I rapidly walked my bike behind them and told both my children not to touch and not to look. I then proceeded to describe the eerie and nauseous feeling it caused me to see that creature. Joey was quiet for a couple of minutes and then he said, “But, mom, did you see how shiny his coat was?” Even then his compassionate, little heart found something beautiful to garner from that unsightly scene.

As the years go by (Six years now.) I have trained myself to reminisce only on the moments which brought great happiness to me. All stored in my heart throughout his life. From babyhood to adulthood. The other thoughts, the terror-filled ones, the excruciatingly painful ones, come unannounced and unsought. Always – unsolicited and sudden.

My mind therefore has learned to escape and find refuge in those other memories where life was innocent and pure. Untouched by the unspeakable horror of his life ending before mine.

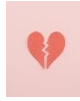
More often than not, as I go on with my daily life remembering the things he said, or liked, as I smile, I taste my tears as well. The sadness will always be part of my gratitude. As if those two feelings had somehow become one. They co-exist and they are as unique to me as the tragedy life conferred to me.

Gratitude always being the abiding feeling as being Joey’s mom allowed me to experience feelings, I’d have never known any other way. And so, every morning and evening, on my knees, I thank God for Joey’s life, for the memories he left, for the lessons he’s taught me before and after his journey back to Him; for the magic of his love and all that he added to my life. I ask God to purify him so that he may dwell in the Mystery of His Perfect Love for all eternity. And finally, I ask if I may have a dream where Joey will come to me.

In memory of my dearly beloved son, **Joey Belcher, Jr.**

Irene Belcher

*I would give back all my tomorrows for a yesterday with you.*



” Today I wrote a note to a bereaved mother. I wanted to say don’t believe all those sympathy cards. The ones that say “time heals” and “God only takes the best” and “may your sorrows be lessened.” You’ll only be disappointed. I wanted to say this is the most heart-wrenching, chest crushing, breath stealing tragedy on earth. I wanted to tell her there will be days she wants to die, and friends who will not understand some of the things she does or says.

I wanted to tell her she will still feel her child’s presence at times, sometimes so strongly that it is as if they are dancing just at the edge of whatever activity is going on. And other times she might not feel their presence at all.

I wanted to tell her that her life will not go back, that she will never be the same, because a piece of her left with her child. And that even though the pain does not go away, somehow her soul will eventually make enough room so she can hold it all– the grief, the pain, the joy and the love.

I wanted to tell her... but I didn’t. Instead, I wrote this: I’m sending love, for words are pointless right now. And that is the truth.”

Wonderfully written by Susi Costello

Shared by Angel Parents



### ***Surviving the Holidays after the death of a child.***

**By: Alice Wisler**

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.



*Our loved ones are always with us ... even after death.*

### **Symbol of hope among the ruins: The Painted Heart.**

Clearing out our deceased daughter's house took more than a year. My husband and I could only work for a half-hour before we were overcome with grief. Our daughter died from the injuries she received in a car crash. Nine months later, her former husband was killed in another car crash, and we were raising her twins.

Packing up an entire house is a monumental task. After talking with our grandchildren, the family decided to give the contents of the house to Rushford, Minn., flood relief. We packed the kitchen first, then moved on to the family room, living room, and bedrooms. The garage was the last area to be cleared. "This is my favorite house," Helen had said. "I just love it."

We listed the house with a top realtor. Our daughter had started to finish the lower level and we carried out her plans, transforming the cave-like area into a bedroom, office, media room, and bathroom. Even with a drastic price reduction (the buyer gets the lower level for free), nobody has been interested in the house, and it has been on the market for a year and a half.

The home that brought our daughter so much happiness has become a constant worry. Three weeks ago, we had torrential rain and the lower level flooded. The laminate floor buckled, the baseboards were ruined, and water was wicking up the walls. According to the insurance agent, many basements had flooded and repair services were scarce. He recommended a restoration company and the crew came within an hour.

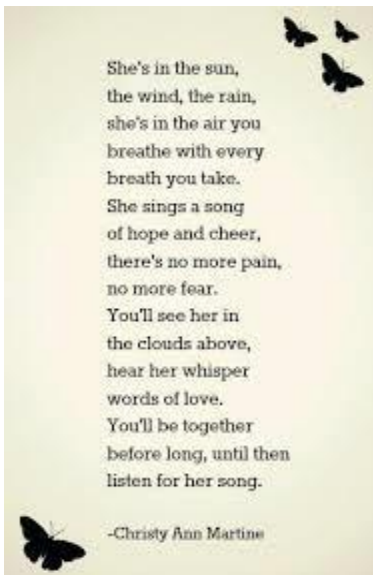
They pumped out the water and set up huge fans and a dehumidifier. An insurance adjuster looked at the damage and, within minutes, handed my husband a check for the maximum amount the policy allowed. "Don't even try to save the floor," he advised. "Replace it." Unfortunately, he thought the repair costs would exceed the amount of the check.

A plumber identified the source of the leak as a stuck valve in the sump pump and repaired it. The restoration crew removed the damaged flooring, baseboards, and plasterboard. We were pleased with the quality of their work and progress. When I walked into the media room, I saw a red heart on the floor.

"Helen probably painted that," I said, and cried. We asked the twins about the heart and they said the man our daughter had planned to marry had painted it when he was helping her seal the basement walls with rubberized paint. The painted heart was a symbol of their love and the future they would share. It was all so sad.

Carpet can be picked up and cleaned, so we are installing it on the lower level. Though the carpet will cover the heart, it will always be visible in my mind. It is a grief marker, a reminder of sorrow and, more important, of love and happiness. The painted heart is painted on my heart and it will be there as long as I live.

Harriet Hodgson



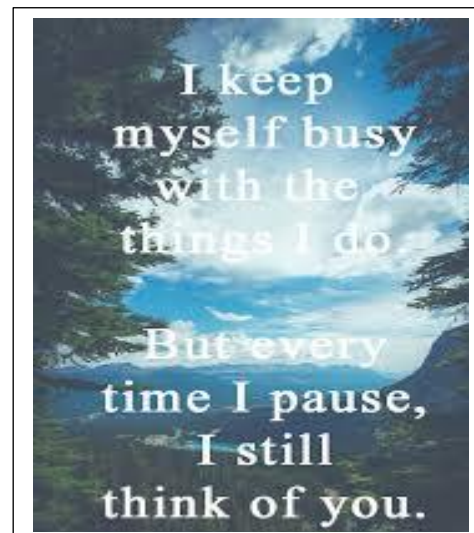
## **READER'S CORNER**

### **Once More We Saw Stars by Jayson Greene**

As the book opens: two-year-old Greta Greene is sitting with her grandmother on a park bench on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. A brick crumbles from a windowsill overhead, striking her unconscious, and she is immediately rushed to the hospital. But although it begins with this event and with the anguish Jayson and his wife, Stacy, confront in the wake of their daughter's trauma and the hours leading up to her death, *Once More We Saw Stars* quickly becomes a narrative that is as much about hope and healing as it is about grief and loss. Jayson recognizes, even in the midst of his ordeal, that there will be a life for him beyond it--that if only he can continue moving forward, from one moment to the next, he will survive what seems unsurvivable. With raw honesty, deep emotion, and exquisite tenderness, he captures both the fragility of life and absoluteness of death, and most important of all, the unconquerable power of love. This is an unforgettable memoir of courage and transformation--and a book that will change the way you look at the world.

This bereaved parents' tragic journey is told from the viewpoint of Greta's father. The aftermath of this freak occurrence in the lives of Greta's Mother and Grandmother as her father experiences it, is shared openly. There is a vulnerability and honesty Jayson is unable to hold back as he endures his horrific loss day by day. The three of them grieve differently and sometimes, separately from each other, but are able to provide the love and support they each need to survive.

By, Mary Redmiles in memory of her beloved son, **Tommy Redmiles**



## **Many Masters, Many lives by Brian L. Weiss**

In his prologue, the author recounts his illustrious career as a physician and psychiatrist. He explains that as a true science man, all through his professional career, he relies on the certainty of the proven via physical manifestations. This is the one tenet upon which he bases the whole of life. Convinced there is nothing beyond what can be proven by science.

“I distrusted anything that could not be proved by scientific methods.”

He also touches, briefly, in the unlikely impasse he experiences as he opens the door into the implausible world of the mysterious. When an incredible experience with one of his patients brings him face to face with the possibility that maybe he does not know everything and yes, things can and do exist albeit positive, physical proof is absent.

He then plunges full force into the one encounter with one of his patients for whom traditional therapy fails in helping her overcome phobias which have plagued her all her life; prompting him to try hypnosis.

What he discovers is a world of possibilities that we, as humans, are just beginning to be aware of:

“The mysteries of the mind, the soul, the continuation of life after death, and the influence of our past-life experiences on our present behavior.”

Over the next following years his patient brings him into her vivid recollections of lives she led at different points of the history of humanity. But a singular and profound experience convinces him that what his patient discloses is irrefutably real. She describes to him how his father, as well as his deceased son, are present at one of their sessions. How they wish for her to convey some information to him. She then proceeds to tell him, among various other things, his father’s name in Hebrew and tells him he knows he named his daughter after him.

She tells him his son, is describing for her the heart defect that took his life in incontrovertible and minute detail. All in an effort to prove it’s really them.

This information would have been impossible to obtain even by expert sleuthing into his life story and only through proficient medical knowledge.

After four years of incertitude in presenting his findings to a reluctant community of psychiatrists and psychologists who dismiss the mounting evidence of a life after life or past-life experiences -- much in the same way astronomers dismissed Galileo’s discovery of Jupiter’s moons – with their eyes tightly shut – he decides to risk it all and make his findings public.

Once he decides to make his findings public, he writes; “I knew that no possible consequence I might face could prove to be as devastating as not sharing the knowledge I had gained about immortality and the true meaning of life.”

The reading of this book, with an open mind, can be cathartic and enlightening for those of us who’ve lost a child. I, for one, choose to believe that my precious son’s essence, spirit, generosity, love and compassion will go on forever. I choose to believe that we don’t die and simply disappear. I choose to believe as the ancient philosophers did, that “Energy never dies, it just morphs into something else.” (Parmenides 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC)

By, Irene Belcher in memory of my beloved son **Joey Belcher, Jr.**





## SEPTEMBER 2019 Meeting and Newsletter OCR

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

Traci Lynn Boone  
Daughter of Bonita Boone-Adamecz  
September 17, 1964 - August 17, 1986

Allison (Alli) Leigh Cantrell  
Daughter of Kristy Cantrell  
January 19, 1982 - September 5, 2014

Jacquelyn D. Connolley  
Daughter of Pat Donoho  
October 3, 1969 - September 13, 1986

O. Steven Cooper  
Cousin of Frances Palmer  
July 5, 1954 - September 26, 1998

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

Christine Kelly Enders  
Daughter of Holly and Alli Enders  
September 26, 1986 - October 15, 2008

Cynthia Lynn Ferguson  
Daughter of Doris and Charles Clair  
September 4, 1952 - March 28, 2010

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

Edward Allen Funkhouser  
Son of Sam and Maureen Funkhouser  
September 3, 1971 - January 23, 2018

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

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

Kerry Elizabeth Hambleton  
Daughter of Bob and Ellen Hambleton  
September 14, 1983 - July 26, 2011

Nicholas Paul Liberatore  
Son of Larry and Pat Liberatore  
September 27, 1980 - June 9, 1997

Brandon James Lima  
Son of Lisa Lima  
July 30, 1998 - September 19, 2018

Cody Thomas Moczulski  
Son of Robin Moczulski  
September 19, 1993 - June 13, 2010

Chad William Muehlhauser  
Son of Paula and Bill Muehlhauser  
October 3, 1983 - September 16, 1992

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

Scott Thomas Palmer  
Son of Frances Palmer  
Grandson of Ethel Cleary  
August 3, 1983 - September 1, 1996

Sarah Elizabeth Patterson  
Daughter of Cindy Patterson  
June 28, 1987 - September 19, 2006

John Christopher Poe  
Son of Sharon and Ben Poe  
October 12, 1967 - September 24, 2001

Steven Craig Rasmussen  
Son of Robert and Linda Rasmussen  
July 15, 1961 - September 24, 1997

Robert William Rey II  
Friend of Peggy Smeltzer  
September 14, 1965 - October 2, 2003

Nathaneal Paul Rohan  
Son of Andi Zolt  
October 2, 1983 - September 14, 2013

James Ryan Rohrbaugh  
Son of Doug and Donna Rohrbaugh  
August 30, 1983 - September 5, 1983

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

Michael Edward Shannon  
Son of Karen Shannon  
September 10, 1965 - August 13, 2013

Thomas "Tommy" Richard Short  
Son of Karen Short  
September 25, 1997 - October 16, 1997

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

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

Gregory Panagiotis Skaltsis  
Son of Cynthia L Skaltsis  
September 9, 1991 - July 28, 2017

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

Christopher Thomas Trachy  
Son of Tom and Chrys Trachy  
September 3, 1986 - March 3, 2016

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

Jeffrey Kevin Withers  
Son of Jan Withers  
July 30, 1975 - September 28, 1975

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

Sienna Blue Water Zertuche  
Daughter of Karen Samaras  
September 5, 1976 - July 31, 2008



# October 2019 Newsletter and Meeting OCR

James "Jamie" William Henry Alexander  
Son of Dave and Sue Alexander  
October 12, 1970 - October 26, 1998

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

Wes Paul Boone  
Son of Eve Boone  
October 9, 2008 - January 19, 2015

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

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

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

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

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

Traci Jeanne Heincelman  
Niece of Terre and John Belt  
October 6, 1980 - March 10, 2002

Charles "Chip" Marshall Hodges  
Son of Betty and John Hodges  
October 24, 1954 - March 14, 2005

Andrew Scott Hoffman  
Son of Donna and Bryan Hoffman  
March 6, 1986 - October 27, 2013

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

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

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

Chad William Muehlhauser  
Son of Paula and Bill  
October 3, 1983 - September 16, 1992

Krystal Brooke Pearce  
Daughter of Douglas Pearce  
June 1, 1995 - October 3, 2013

John Christopher Poe  
Son of Sharon and Ben Poe  
October 12, 1967 - September 24, 2001

Robert William Rey II  
Friend of Peggy Smeltzer  
September 14, 1965 - October 2, 2003

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

Zachary Daniel Robertson  
Son of Mary Ellen and Jim Young  
March 3, 1978 - October 26, 2006

Nathaneal Paul Rohan  
Son of Andi Zolt  
October 2, 1983 - September 14, 2013

Thomas "Tommy" Richard Short  
Son of Karen Short  
September 25, 1997 - October 16, 1997

Kelsey R Silva  
Daughter of Kristen Silva  
Daughter of Francisco Martins Silva  
October 28, 1991 - June 16, 2011

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



Vejay Singh  
Son of Jessica and Hardeep Singh  
October 12, 1992 – March 21, 2014

Brandon Michael Sisler  
Son of Laura Sisler  
May 7, 1993 - October 15, 2011  
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 Randy Williams  
October 25, 2000 - October 25, 2000

Samuel Mark Williams  
Son of Mark and Randy 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  
Son of Delight (Nick) Yokanovich  
November 22, 1979 – October 30, 2013

**The puzzle piece missing in our hearts, shaped just like our child!**

## **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***

## **DONATIONS**

**Donations may be made in memory of your child to offset the costs of our local chapter's events and communications.**

**We gratefully acknowledge the following donations made recently:**

### **Sponsorships – Newsletter and Web**

**Noel and Ann Castiglia in loving memory of their daughter Tria Marie Castiglia**

**Carol and Rick Tomaszewski in loving memory of their son David W. Tomaszewski**

**Phyllis Sinex in loving memory of her son Robert Owen Synex**

**Robert and Barbara Stern in loving memory of their son Hal Benjamin Stern .**





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