



July/August 2020

caring & sharing news
Helping rebuild lives following the death of a child

Volume 17, Number 4

Annual Picnic & Lotus Flower Lantern Release



Sunday, October 11, 2020
5:00 p.m.

Locust Shade Park – Marigold Pavilion

On Sunday, October 11, 2020, join us at our Annual Picnic and Lotus Flower Lantern Release to remember all the children who died too soon but are still in the hearts of family and friends. As we release lotus flowers on the pond we are reminded of the beauty that our children brought into our lives.

Please bring a dish to share for our Pot-Luck Picnic. Chicken, Hot Dogs and Drinks will be provided by the chapter.

Each person registered will receive one lantern unless you send an email to: bpusanova@gmail.com to request additional lanterns.

Monetary donations appreciated to cover the cost of the lotus flower lanterns and picnic expenses.

RSVP: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/annual-picnic-and-lotus-flower-release-tickets-113849444754>

For more information contact Jodi Norman at 703-656-6999 or email: bpusanova@gmail.com.

The Lotus Flower – Out of the Mud & Muck By Stacy Kesten

Close to where I live in Los Angeles, there is a beautiful, wonderful place called the Huntington Gardens. For many Angelinos, Huntington Gardens is a magical, peaceful, oasis of nature in a town where finding a quiet little green piece of earth is no easy feat. If you ever visit the L.A. area, I would highly recommend that you put it at the top of your must-see list. One of my favorite features of this sprawling garden paradise is the plethora of lotus flower ponds.

I have always loved these flowers, but not just because they are stunningly beautiful to look at, which of course, they are, but if you look a little deeper into the story of the lotus, the loveliest part of the flower is actually found in its journey. You see, lotus flowers *only* grow in muddy, murky, mucky, swampy ponds, yet when their petals do finally open to the sunshine, they emerge as absolutely flawless, almost celestial-looking flowers. For me, the metaphor is powerful and pulls at something deep inside of me. I'm starting to understand that we are all a little bit like the lotus flower. When we choose to embark on a spiritual journey, we initially imagine that someday our life will finally become effortless bliss with no obstacles and no trials. But what I have often found it is that in the darkest and murkiest corners of our lives we find insight and are therefore able to grow into something more beautiful than we could have even imagined.

These days, when I'm having a difficult time, I try to look back on all of the lotus flowers that have grown out my "inner-swamp". When I recall some of the murkiest times in my life, I can also see the beauty that came out of them, and just like the juxtaposition of the pristine lotus against the swamp, I can see the light that came out of my darkness. And the beauty that I've found inside of myself makes the journey worthwhile. There is tremendous value in every piece of our journey, even the muddiest, muckiest, murkiest parts.



Wings of Hope Butterfly Release

Sunday, August 18, 2019, 5:30 p.m.

BPUSA Memorial Garden

St. Benedict Monastery

9535 Linton Hall Road, Bristow, VA

The highlight of the Butterfly Release will be the individual and mass release of the butterflies accompanied by music, inspirational readings and remembering our children.

We are requesting a \$5 donation per butterfly. Orders for the butterflies must be received by August 1st by registering on Eventbrite at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/wings-of-hope-butterfly-release-tickets-111912778132>

Any questions contact Bev Ruane at to Bev Ruane at ruane.beverly@yahoo.com or call her at 540-628-4758.

Refreshments will be provided after the program and release of the butterflies. If you would like to help provide refreshments, finger foods that can withstand the heat, would be appreciated.

Plenty of open space to social-distance. Bring your own chairs as there is no seating at the garden.

We rely upon the generosity of our donors to help us provide support to families who've suffered the death of a child. These gifts help cover expenses and, most importantly, to reach out to newly bereaved families in the community. Thank you to the following for your generous donations:



Janet Baker
Mary Alice Combs
Wanda Nelson
Jeanne Simmons

Rock-It Creations

If you would like to have a rock in the Memorial Garden in memory of your child, sibling or grandchild, we highly recommend that you order through "Rock-It Creations." The rocks are river rocks and will last a life-time! Your rock can be personalized and customized. Please order the large size rocks, either the custom or standard rocks, for our Memorial Garden. There is no shipping charges or taxes on the rocks.

Go to Rock-It Creations' website to order a rock in memory of your loved one, <https://www.rockitcreations.com/>

If you have any questions, contact Jodi Norman at 703-656-6999 or bpusanova@gmail.com

Garden News

Just want to remind everyone that our Memorial Garden is a beautiful, peaceful place to go to remember our precious children. It is open to everyone and it is a place you can go to practice social distancing and get fresh air.

The Memorial Garden belongs to all of us Bereaved Parents. It's a labor of love! We could really use your help to keep the garden maintained, weeded and watered. When you work in the garden, it's a way to honor your child.

There are now garden vases at the garden that you can use to place fresh cut flowers. Please refrain from putting artificial flowers out in the garden during the flower growing season, May to October. If you would like to plant some flowers, you are more than welcome to do so. Please plant flowers that are deer resistant.

If you have any questions about the garden, please contact Bev Ruane at 540-628-4758 (h) or 703-395-9546 (c) or email: ruane.beverly@yahoo.com.



There is a meeting for everyone! Join us at one of these meetings!

Caring and Sharing Support Meetings:

**4th Sunday of Each Month
3:00 p.m.**

**Zoom Meetings
until further notice**

**For more information contact:
Jodi Norman, Chapter Leader
703-656-6999 (cell)
bpusanova@gmail.com**

zoom meetings

Until further notice our monthly meetings will be Virtual Zoom Meetings. I will send out an email with password and log in information prior to the meeting date.

4th Sunday at 3:00 p.m.

Life After Loss Support Group for Suicide Survivors

**"Shining A Light for Those in Darkness"
Last Wednesday of Each Month
7:00-8:00 p.m.**

Parents of Suicide Loss Support Group

**1st Sunday of the Month
1:00-2:30 p.m.**

**Meetings held at ACTS
9317 Grant Ave, Manassas, VA**

For more information contact:
Kimberly Fleming
Office: 571-377-8134 or Cell: 703-349-9184
email: kimberly.fleming@djcfoundation.org
website: www.djcfoundation.org



AMORe

(All Murdered Offspring Remembered)

**3rd Wednesday @ 6 p.m.
3182 Golansky Blvd, Suite 101
Woodbridge, VA**

**A support group meeting for parents
whose children have been murdered.**

**For more info contact:
Beverly Ruane
540-628-4758 (h) or 703-395-9546 (c)
ruane.beverly@yahoo.com**

Overdose and Substance Abuse Support Group

**First Sunday of Every Month
2:00 p.m.**

Zoom Meetings until further notice

**A support group meeting for parents whose
children have died from Drug Overdose or
Substance Abuse.**

For more information please contact:

**Jodi Norman at bpusanova@gmail.com
or call 703-656-6999
or
Kathie Kelly at tcffred@gmail.com
or 540-220-4325**

Check out our Chapter Website

<http://www.bpusanova.com>

You will find all announcements regarding our chapter on the website. Also, please check your email and Facebook for Chapter Announcements. The easiest way to get the word out about Chapter happenings is via the internet. If we do not have an email address for you, please email bpusanova@gmail.com with your email address.

Our website has a "We Remember Our Children" section and we need your help to update this page. Please write a bio for your child and submit a photo or a collage of photos. We would like to have all the children of our chapter included on this page. Please send submissions to Jodi at bpusanova@gmail.com.

What the Newly Bereaved Should Know

UNDERSTANDING GRIEF: ELEANOR HALEY

Today is April 13, 2020. People throughout our country and many parts of the world are keeping a safe distance from their friends, family, and neighbors. While, at the same time, an unprecedented number of people are sick, dying, and grieving.

Quite often, the best thing you can give to someone new to grief is a hug or a shoulder and your quiet but abiding presence. At a time when closeness is the answer, it's become an impossibility. If you're newly bereaved, I'm sorry you're going through a loss in semi-isolation, and I'm sorry all anyone can offer you is grief support from a distance.

Hello to the newly bereaved. I'm sorry to meet you here in the place where loved ones leave you — a place where no one wants to be.

If this is your first time here, you may find it darker, foggier, and more frightening than you expected. If you've been here before, you'll probably notice that things look different than you remember. That's the nature of this place. It's always changing, depending on who you're saying goodbye to.

You may feel incredibly alone right now, so the first thing I want you to know is that there are people who want to help you find your way out of this place. Most people can only join you for parts of your journey, and those who you do and do not see along the way will probably surprise you. But they are out there.

There may be times when you feel let down by your support system, but try and remember, they aren't trained for this. Most likely, your friends and family have the same good intentions, but varying levels of tact and execution.

Though providing honest feedback sometimes feels awkward, you'll get more of what you need if you can tell people what is and is not helpful. Also, try and lean on your loved one's strengths and forgive their weaknesses at least once. And when all else fails, look for the grief safe havens in your community – the counselors, support groups, and grief centers.

The next thing you should know is, there's no trail of bread crumbs to lead you back to your old life. After someone you love dies, life changes. Joan Didion put it well when she said, "*Life changes fast. Life changes in the instant. You sit down to dinner and life as you know it ends.*"

That's not to say *everything* familiar is lost. Some things about your old life are already gone, and some will necessarily change, but some parts will stay the same – you don't need to know which is which right now. Uncertainty is scary, but it's normal for things to be hazy. There are a lot of things you can't know right now, but they will become more evident over time.

Also, there's a lot that probably hasn't sunk in just yet. Many people say the days following their loved one's death were a blur. You won't always feel this way. Actually, for many of you, what you're experiencing is probably more akin to a temporary acute stress response than grief.

It's okay to be in shock. It's okay to feel numb. It's okay to feel *all the things* you're feeling. Grief is a lot of overwhelming things, but it isn't dangerous. Grief, in and of itself, won't harm you – though it does mean experiencing some pretty painful things.

As you become more familiar with grief, try and throw away any preconceived notions you have about it following a set of stages or a timeline with a beginning, middle, and an end. It's so tempting to believe in something that makes grief seem manageable. But how could anything unique to you and your relationship with your loved one possibly be so uniform?

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it following a set of stages or a timeline with a beginning, middle, and an end. It's so tempting to believe in something that makes grief seem manageable. But how could anything unique to you and your relationship with your loved one possibly be so uniform?

I'm sorry to say; grief can be unruly and unpredictable. Sometimes you hear the rumble of thunder before the grief storms hit, and sometimes they bubble up out of nowhere, but they do always subside. And it's through weathering these storms time and again that they incrementally become more bearable. Until eventually, you learn it's safe to go outside even though there's always the chance grief could cloud your day.

Yes, "always".

Your grief will forever be a part of you because your loved one is forever a part of you – and this is the last thing I want to tell you (for now). Your loved one is never really gone from this world. No, they aren't physically "here" to look at, talk to, or hold, and that hurts like hell. But in mind, heart, and spirit – as a part of the past, present, and future – they are here.

They are here as long as you are here to remember them. Hold onto this truth as you stand in this place where your loved one has left you and fight for it if you have to. It's the guiding light that will help you out of this place, and chances are it will be part of the foundation on which you build whatever comes next.

this is my *wish* for you:
comfort on difficult days,
rainbows to follow the clouds,
smiles when sadness intrudes,
faith so that you can believe,
sunsets to warm your heart,
laughter to kiss your lips,
courage to know yourself,
hugs when spirits sag,
patience to accept the truth,
beauty for your eyes to see,
confidence for when you doubt,
friendships to brighten your being,
and
love
to complete your life.

Broken

By Neal Klein

"Loss,
like beach glass,
freshly broken,
its edges sharp
With age, over time,
the glass, still a piece of the whole,
still broken,
edges filed by elements,
of water, sun, wind, and sand,
weathered glass not quite as sharp;
its edge dulled and buffered,
cradled in your hand, your heart,
its muted color cherished,
beautiful, smooth, softened texture,
texture felt
as you rub your thumb
along the time-worn, rounded edges
of love
and memories."





Making the Most of Summer While Grieving

Summer is a season for being outdoors and enjoying the warmth. This is especially true for those of us living in northern states. Flowers start blooming and the fields are full. Trees are green and the sounds and smells of summer waft through the air. The sun shines. Birds sing. Kids are out of school. Life is good.

All of these ideas of summer are normally positive for people. However, grief can be very different. Summer is often the most difficult season for people mourning because of good memories of their loved one and because of the expectations of increased happiness during the summer time. This is especially true for children. It is important to remember that mourning and grieving do not have a timeline. It is okay to feel sad and happy at the same time. Remind your children that experiencing more than one emotion at a time is okay. They have permission to be sad and miss their beloved one who passed away and still be happy to be out of school and playing with friends.

Here are a few ways to help you and your family move through summer while grieving:

Spend time outdoors

However you decide to do it, spend some time outside. Being in the sunshine increases the Vitamin D within you as you soak in the rays. Vitamin D has been shown to help stimulate endorphins which help us feel better. Just sitting on the deck for 15 – 30 minutes a day during the morning sunshine can make a big difference in the weight of your grief.

Plan a vacation weekend

This may feel counterintuitive to you, however, getting out of your normal space may help lift your spirits. Go to a place you loved going with your deceased loved one and remember the good times. Spend time revisiting your old favorite spots. Or on the other hand, go to a new place. Find a new favorite spot with a friend. See new sites and taste new tastes. It may require extra effort but getting outside of your routine and trying new things can help alleviate grief. You are allowed and encouraged to find enjoyment in life again.

Try your favorite summer activities in a new way

Try out the activities you have enjoyed during past summers. See if they still fit with who you are as you grieve. Did you enjoy swimming? Perhaps go to a new lake or pool to swim. How about bird watching? Find a new place to find birds you haven't seen yet. Hiking and biking are ways many spend their summer downtime. Explore new trails and new paths. Take a picnic with you. You can do all of these alone or with other people. Sometimes alone is good! Sometimes being with others helps and makes life better. Try both!

Create a new tradition honoring your loved one

Traditions bring great comfort to us all. Develop a new summer tradition around honoring your loved one. My favorite idea is to plant a tree each year in honor of my loved ones. Another idea is to add a special garden area to your garden each year as a memorial to my loved one. Kids especially need tradition and finding a summer family tradition of remembering may help them the most.

Be Kind

Finally, allow yourself to be kind to yourself and others. If you are feeling sad, accept the sadness. If you are happy, accept the happiness. Be kind to yourself as you experience the ever-changing emotions during mourning. Do what is best for yourself and for your family.



We Remember Our Children Who have Birthdays and Death Dates in July and August

Jason Duane Alexander
7/02/74 ~ 7/24/13

Emily Andrews
8/02/97 ~ 3/14/16

James "Jimmy" Barnette
7/11/98 ~ 6/03/06

Jennifer Lynn Becker
12/30/67 ~ 7/26/70

Trevor Austin Blake
10/30/01 ~ 8/11/13

Kenny Brooks Jr
8/13/82 ~ 1/14/06

Claire Rebecca Buckley
7/27/11 ~ 11/17/16

Brandon Bundy
5/19/84 ~ 8/24/08

Christopher Chapman
8/01/88 ~ 1/13/07

Jason A. Clover
7/30/84 ~ 9/28/03

David Joseph Cobb
7/02/98 ~ 10/23/15

Todd Clifford Coder
7/23/84 ~ 9/24/10

Sarah Beth Cole
8/06/80 ~ 4/23/11

Gregory Dennis
8/26/98 ~ 7/26/17

Corey Martin Dill
7/25/90 ~ 5/03/07

Forrest Grant Dotson
8/25/79 ~ 4/19/17

David John Drumheller
8/30/89 ~ 6/20/16

Bryan Eastes
8/18/80 ~ 4/18/17

Elizabeth A. Erickson
7/23/89 ~ 9/14/89

Robert Alan Finch
7/27/70 ~ 1/02/01

Rhonda Lynn Flannery
7/31/63 ~ 11/10/01

Bruce Lee Foxworthy
8/29/75 ~ 2/11/12

Clay Matthew Haga
12/09/88 ~ 8/26/19

Ashley Hoefling
8/22/85 ~ 2/08/17

Desmend Holmes
6/16/06 ~ 7/21/15

Quincy Holmes
5/18/05 ~ 7/20/15

Daniel Franklin Houston
8/10/68 ~ 6/13/16

Ethan Humphrey
6/23/16 ~ 7/22/16

Claude (Jason) Jackson III
8/20/92 ~ 9/12/15

Ryan Gardiner James
2/17/99 ~ 7/06/19

John William Kennedy
1/16/94 ~ 8/11/18

Kwadwo Amoako Kusi
3/20/06 ~ 7/26/08

Thomas Langston
4/05/92 ~ 8/04/18

Robert Loiseau
8/22/72 ~ 5/27/93

Sara Lott
11/01/95 ~ 7/23/08

Kyle Ludeman
4/12/93 ~ 8/27/13

Robert Henry Maples
6/07/76 ~ 7/05/18

Kevin McGuin
2/08/88 ~ 8/26/08

Emily "Tabor" McMullen
1/26/84 ~ 8/31/12

Derek Meffert
4/21/95 ~ 8/15/10

Michael Joseph Moore
7/13/71 ~ 1/09/09

Christina Morgan
7/30/80 ~ 3/13/02

Johnny Ray Mullins
7/11/61 ~ 1/22/02

Elijah James Nealey
9/08/10 ~ 8/22/12

Nicholas James Nelson
7/16/90 ~ 4/19/18

Brian Scott Ogden
7/04/87 ~ 12/24/17

Kim Ouren
9/19/57 ~ 7/22/18

Thomas Parker
8/26/92 ~ 4/15/19

Catzby James Pitzvada
8/07/88 ~ 12/17/19

Zane J Pitzvada
8/22/92 ~ 9/14/11

Linda Thompson Plewes
7/16/51 ~ 3/21/02

Kylene Marie Privett
12/14/83 ~ 8/13/07

Khalif Rashon Privott
7/21/94 ~ 7/13/16

Ronald Douglas Ralph, Jr
7/27/66 ~ 11/04/02

Vernon Santmyer, Jr.
8/24/79 ~ 5/17/11

Gene "Tony" Sargent
8/10/87 ~ 9/14/07

Klee Simmons
3/27/89 ~ 8/09/15

Brandon Simms
10/10/80 ~ 7/14/95

Adelacia Smalley
8/06/94 ~ 10/19/02

Tyler Smith
9/20/92 ~ 8/01/06

Robert Andrew Starling
8/02/93 ~ 2/04/18

Michael "Ryan" Stevens
7/07/87 ~ 5/30/07

Jerry Damon Taybron
11/21/75 ~ 8/18/07

Dana Thrall
8/02/75 ~ 1/02/01

Anthony Joseph Turchiano
8/04/79 ~ 4/29/17

Jessica Dove Williams
9/18/89 ~ 12/05/19

Kisha Grace Woods
8/06/17 ~ 8/06/17

Kevin Woods
12/08/93 ~ 8/06/14

Jakari D. Wright
3/31/97 ~ 8/18/18

We apologize if there are any mistakes in the "We Remember Our Children" section. If we spelled any names incorrectly, have any dates incorrect or your child's name is not listed and has a birthday or death date during the months of July and August, please provide us with your child's information so they can be included correctly in future newsletters.

Bereaved Parents of the USA Credo

We are the parents whose children have died. We are the siblings whose brothers and sisters no longer walk with us through life. We are the grandparents who have buried grandchildren.

We come together as Bereaved Parents of the USA to provide a safe space where grieving families can connect, share our stories, and learn to rebuild our lives.

We attend meetings whenever we can and for as long as we find helpful. We share our fears, confusion, anger, guilt, frustrations, emptiness, and feelings of hopelessness, knowing these emotions will be met with compassion and understanding. As we support, comfort and encourage one another, we offer hope and healing. As we confront the deaths of our loved ones, our shared grief brings us to a common ground that transcends differences, building mutual understanding across the boundaries of culture, race, faith, values, abilities, and lifestyle.

Together we celebrate the lives of our children, siblings, and grandchildren, sharing the joys and the heartbreaks as well as the love that will never fade. Together, strengthened by the bonds we create, we offer what we have learned from one another to every bereaved family, no matter how recent or long ago the death.

We are the Bereaved Parents of the USA. We welcome you.

Chapter Contact Information

Jodi Norman, Leader
P.O. Box 7675
Woodbridge, VA 22195
Phone: 703-656-6999
bpusanova@gmail.com



Bereaved Parents of the USA
www.bereavedparentsusa.org

Someone Cares About You

If you are receiving this newsletter and have never attended one of our meetings, it is because someone who cares about you feels that our newsletter may help you on your journey through grief. We're sorry for the reason you are receiving this newsletter but invite you to attend our monthly meetings. We cannot take away your pain but we can offer friendship and support.



Attention: If you do not wish to continue to receive this newsletter or be on our mailing list, please let us know by mailing back the address label from this newsletter, by emailing bpusanova@gmail.com or calling Jodi at 703-656-6999.

Bereaved Parents of the USA
Northern Virginia Chapter
P.O. Box 7675
Woodbridge, VA 22195