

March/April 2014



caring & sharing news

Helping rebuild lives following the death of a child

Caring and Sharing Support Meetings

4th Sunday

3 p.m.

Good Shepherd UMC
14999 Birchdale Avenue
Dale City, VA 22193
(Note change in date)

Infant Loss Meeting

Same time & location as
Caring & Sharing Meeting

2nd Thursday

Pot Luck Social Event
7 p.m.

Larson Home
6900 Cole Timothy Court
Manassas, VA 20112
703-791-6537
rlarson900@verizon.com

For more information contact:
Jodi Norman, Chapter Leader
703-910-6277 (home)
703-656-6999 (cell)
bpusa.nova@yahoo.com



BP/USA

2014 NATIONAL GATHERING

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI | JULY 24-27

It is time to make plans to attend the 2014 BP/USA National Gathering in St. Louis, MO in July. Registration is now open on line on the BP/USA National Website: www.bereavedparentsusa.org.

Speakers for this year's National Gathering are:
Becky Russell, Ron Greer, Dr. Doug and BJ Jensen,
Jeff and Cindy Morris, Vicki Scalzitti and Jeffri Ann Franks

Butterfly Release

Sunday, June 29th

5 p.m.



BP/USA Memorial Garden
Bristow, VA



We Remember Our Children

*Who have Birthdays and Angelversary dates
in March and April*

Christopher Wesley Blok
3/21/80 ~ 2/25/09

Kristin Marie Harkness
3/19/89 ~ 2/22/08

Shelby Nicholson
4/22/92 ~ 1/07/09

Danielle Mae Burmeister
3/26/11 ~ 3/26/11

Cody Darrin Johnson
9/11/02 ~ 3/06/09

Matthew Miguel Ortiz
4/23/84 ~ 5/13/08

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

Kashif Johnson
3/15/87 ~ 5/01/07

Matthew Allan Ruane
9/07/83 ~ 4/29/02

Jason Michael Colson
3/09/84 ~ 10/01/08

Leslie Ann Kramer
4/20/71 ~ 12/17/06

Jacqueline Simoes
11/05/66 ~ 3/15/06

Christina Lynn Curtis
3/01/74 ~ 12/25/07

Robert Larson
3/14/94 ~ 6/30/10

Karl Dewan Smith
11/20/83 ~ 4/25/04

Tresa Eastes
3/07/67 ~ 7/08/03

Glen Irvin Leonard II
4/13/71 ~ 12/07/09

Kevin Michael Stanphill
3/12/80 ~ 5/09/09

**Antonio "Tony"
Ford-Flores**
2/25/89 ~ 4/15/10

Henry Lewis III
2/16/74 ~ 4/15/02

Graham Stevenson
3/30/85 ~ 9/22/07

Raven Gileau
6/23/90 ~ 4/23/10

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

Neale Thompson
4/07/71 ~ 4/09/93

Ahmad Givon Glenn
3/06/83 ~ 12/04/06

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

Austin Trenum
3/26/93 ~ 9/27/10

Dwayne Eddie Gonsorcik
5/26/74 ~ 4/26/13

Ella Miller
4/27/02 ~ 7/23/10

Kyle Robert Wilson
5/25/82 ~ 4/16/07

Kourtney Michelle Hale
5/29/80 ~ 3/17/10

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

Brian Floyd Weakley
1/20/80 ~ 4/19/07

In Loving Memory of Matthew Ruane

It has been 12 years, April 29, since our Matthew was taken away from us. That night is as vivid in our minds as if it was yesterday. Not a day goes by that we don't think about him and miss him. Life is just not complete. We go on, day after day, doing what we need to do. We enjoy life, family and friends but there is always a blank spot on the canvas that will forever remain unpainted. Matthew, we miss you terribly and will forever. I know you are around because we feel your presence and you give us signs. Please continue in whatever way you can to show us you are here. It's very comforting. We love you.

Mom, Dad, Sisters and
all of your family

The Only Thing Missing

by Ann "Flea" Wilson

Ah! It is one perfect moment sitting here
Watching everyone growing
and laughing with me.

It is

A beautiful day for a walk in my meadow,
And the only thing missing is you.

The sun shining, beaming and bursting
The dew apart as it awakens the flowers
And everything around me comes to life,
and the

Only thing missing is you.

The song of nature is whispering
and telling me the
Secrets of its ruler and maker,
and how

It keeps the thunderstorm
overhead from harming me,
and

The only thing missing is you.

The sun finally peers through the clouds
and

Everything starts reaching up to him,
and he

Embraces me in his warmth.

Then here was darkness...

And the only thing missing was you.

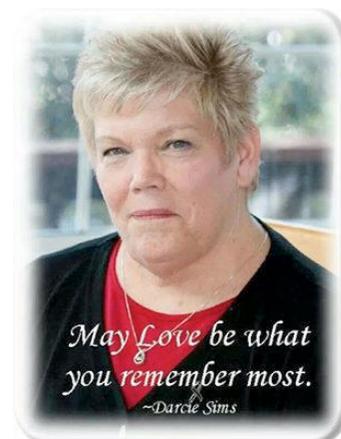


September 7, 1983 ~ April 29, 2002

"Thanks, For The Little While"

On February 27, 2014 the bereavement world lost a true friend and an amazing woman, Darcie Sims. Darcie was the keynote speaker at the National Gathering that our chapter hosted in 2011. An awesome speaker, Darcie taught us how to laugh and cry at the same time. She had an amazing way of helping grieving parents to find hope after the death of their child. Darcie's legacy will live on in the many books she has written and videos she has done on the subject of grief.

Darcie was one of us, she felt our pain, she walked our walk, she was a bereaved parent. She is once again holding her precious son, Austin.



A Golden Heart Stopped Beating ~
Kevin, Gone To Soon ~

Happy 34th Birthday Darling Kevin ~ March 12th, 1980 ~

Always Loved, Never Forgotten ~ We will
always love you, remember you and honor you
sweet Kevin ~ Love Never Dies ~ We miss you
more than any word could ever speak ~

Wir lieben dich, Mama, Michael, Dad and
Family <3



In loving memory of Kevin Stanphill

Share the Wealth

By Valerie Larson

When your child dies I think the temptation is to hang onto every single thing they ever touched... every book they read, every toy they played with, every piece of clothing they wore.

In honor of our son Robert's 20th birthday we are giving away a plethora of Playmobil sets and a boatload of Bionicles. A while back my daughter Christina and I spent many hours sorting out all of these toys and taking an exhausting emotional trip down memory lane. I'm proud of her for powering through it.

I have to remind myself that we are not giving away Robert's essence – his loving, creative, bright spirit – or the fun memories that he and Christina created together. We are only giving away the objects that will enable other children to do the same. Robert's been gone almost four years, and it's high time we shared the fun. Robert's gift to us was laughter, and I know he would want us to spread that in the world. In fact, he would want it to catch like wildfire!

No matter what possessions you give away, no one can ever take away your child's spirit and the memories they created with your family. Those live in your heart forever. By sharing our possessions and wonderful stories of our children, we ensure that they are the gifts that keep on giving.

Happy birthday, Robert!

We love you and miss you endlessly,
and we are

Forevermore the Larson Four...

Rich, Valerie, Robert, and Christina ♥♥♥♥



One Day At A Time

Today marks 6 years, 24 days since the loss of our 18 year old daughter, Kristin. Tomorrow we would have celebrated her 25th birthday. A year ago, her cousin Erin was married. Kristin was missing. Last October, our son Eric married Lauren. Kristin should have been there. In June, one of Kristin's best friends, Courtney, will marry Phillip on the beach in Cancun. All of Courtney's closest friends will be in the wedding...there will be an empty space for Kristin...

Over the past six years, I have learned to "handle" my grief. I can reach out to others who unwillingly find themselves in this dark *club*, assuring them that they will survive, just as so many of us have done before them. I try to say the *right* things to give others hope, but then I feel like a hypocrite when I am bawling my eyes out at any given moment, like during the occasions above.

Thankfully, the tears are so much more infrequent than 5 or 6 years ago. I passed the "I want to die" stage, then spent some time in the "I want to disappear" stage... disappear in the bottle... disappear into the world of the homeless... disappear to a mountain cabin and live as a hermit... However, time passes and I believe there's a chance that maybe I can do this, try to live my life as "normal" as possible.

So my life has moved forward, but I'd never call it *normal*. I do my best to say and do the *right* things. I'm as *okay* as I can be under the circumstances... until October... Halloween and the adorable children running around excitedly in their costumes... no laughter from Kristin. November, and Thanksgiving with families gathering to give thanks... but there's an empty chair in our home. Christmas brings memories of our happiest times spent as a family... We've made new memories, but they will never be the same without Kristin... January brings with it the beginning of a new year... another year that Kristin will never see... February brings another "angel date" and another year without our family complete... March is the birthday month in our home. All three of our children were born in March so we celebrate Eric's on the 2nd and Jessica's on the 24th, but in between we attend Mass *in memory of* Kristin on the 19th. So unfair.

It doesn't end there. Easter in April, Mother's Day in May, Father's Day in June, great memories of our annual 4th of July celebration spent with my husband Tom's extended family in Florida. Tom's birthday in August, mine in September. And so it goes year after year after year...

Thankfully, all of the above mentioned occasions are a day here, a day there. They amount to 12 days out of the year so there are another 353 days we can count as *ordinary* days. Our children remain in our hearts on even the most ordinary of days, but it's *different* than the other 12.

It's easy for me to sit here and talk the talk, but it isn't always easy to walk the walk. Today I find myself *walking the walk*, but tomorrow is another day. It will be Kristin's 25th birthday, but she will be Forever 18 in our hearts. I'll somehow manage to get through yet another day without my "Poopsie," another birthday she must celebrate with her *angel friends*. The following day, I'll wake up to another ordinary day where Kristin will enter my thoughts but it won't be nearly as painful. I still have a few of those *other* days ahead of me this year, but I've learned to take it "one day at a time."

I wish you well as you take your own personal journeys. May you find many more days filled with peace rather than pain. We **can** do this...

Linda Harkness
Kristin's Mom



Garden News:

It's that time of the year again! Hopefully, spring-like temperatures will accompany the actual spring season. It's definitely been a long, cold, snowy winter. I'm so anxious to feel the warmer temperatures and see the new growth begin.

The garden looks like it has survived the winter with the trees and bushes intact. The Butterfly Bushes have been trimmed and hopefully by the time you read this the grasses will be, too, provided the weather cooperates! When things begin to grow we will be better able to see what perennials have survived the winter. Hopefully, most of them. Soon we will be able to plant some colorful annuals and replant perennials as needed. Then comes mulching. It definitely needs refreshing. I'm going to try to pick up bags here and there when it is on sale.

One thing in the garden that will have to be replaced, unfortunately at some point, perhaps in the fall, are the posts of the arbor. The top is in fine condition. Two of the posts are bowing and splitting. David said we would be able to just replace the two without disturbing anything else. I think it will be fine for the spring/summer season this year (but will consult with David on that) but would definitely need to be replaced by next year.

When the time comes to schedule a workday, you will be notified. Looking at dates at the moment but have no tentative ones.

I'm looking forward to seeing and working with everyone again this year. Until then, think warm thoughts!

God Bless, Beverly

UPcoming EVENTS

Thursdays, Mar 13 & Apr 10
7 p.m.

Pot Luck Social Event
Larson Home
6900 Cole Timothy Ct
Manassas, VA

Sundays, Mar 23 & Apr 27
3 p.m.

Caring and Sharing Meeting
Good Shepherd UMC
14999 Birchdale Avenue
Dale City, VA
Meetings are held in the lower level – please use the entrance to the left of the main doors (Counseling Center)

April 26
Hope and Healing Conference
Annapolis, MD

May 23-25
TAPS Conference
Arlington, VA

June 29
5 p.m.
Butterfly Release

July 25-27
National Gathering
St. Louis, MO

Webmaster Needed

Our Chapter website is in desperate need of being updated. If you have the skills needed to be a Webmaster, we really could use your help and computer skills. We already have a site on Fat Cow but it has not been updated since 2011. We would like to include photos and bios of our children and use the site to keep our members up-to-date on what is going on in the chapter. This is a great way to do something in memory of your child.

If you are able to help us with this very important project, please call Jodi at 703-656-6999 or email bleachermom2000@aol.com

Congratulations to proud new grandparents, Carol and Don Hakenson on the birth of Evan Joshua Raguindin, born on December 17th, 2013 to daughter, Katie & husband, Stefan.



Infant Loss Support Group

For the parents who have had an infant death, we will once again have support meetings. They will be held at the same time as our regular Caring & Sharing Meetings on the 4th Sunday of each month. The meetings will be at 3 p.m. at Good Shepherd United Methodist Church, 14999 Birchdale Avenue, Dale City, VA

The Hope and Healing Conference

April 26, 2014
Annapolis, MD

This is going to be a wonderful day filled with speakers and workshops, time to meet other bereaved parents, a Memory Board for photos, and gift, book and button sales.

Speakers for this conference will Kay Bevington, founder of "Alive Alone," and Beth Hewitt, a bereaved sibling and professionally trained in Death and Grief.

Deadline to register for this event is April 15, 2014, registration form can be found on their website: <http://www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org>

AMAZON.COM

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This means that if you visit BP/USA before making an Amazon.com purchase, and click on the Amazon link on the page, that BP/USA will receive a percentage of all sales. The use of this link does not increase the cost of your purchase. Four to 13% of the sales price comes back to BP/USA.

Go to www.bereavedparentsusa.com.



Refreshments

If you would like to remember your child's birthday or the anniversary of his or her death please bring your child's favorite cake or cookies to the meeting during that month.

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) May 24-26, 2014

Every year during Memorial Day Weekend, the TAPS Conference is held at the Crystal Gateway Marriott in Arlington, VA.

BP/USA has a table to promote BP/USA to surviving parents that attend the conference. I need help to cover the whole weekend. We will need help at the hotel on Friday 9-6, Saturday 8-6, and Sunday 8-4. If you can help out on any of the days please contact me (Jodi) at 703-656-6999. I will, especially, need people to help me out on Friday, as I cannot take the day off from work like I have done in the past. We talk to bereaved parents and tell them about BP/USA, hand out tissue packets and Hershey Kisses. Please consider volunteering a few hours of your time for this awesome conference.

In Sympathy

Our sincere sympathy to the following families on the death of a loved on:

The Howard Family on the death of Mary's dad on March 7, 2014.

The O'Berry Family on the death of Valerie's dad on March 10, 2014.

Heide Stanphill and family on the death of her brother-in-law, Jim Matthews Jr. on March 14, 2014.

Bereaved Parents of the USA Credo

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 come together as Bereaved Parents of the USA to provide a haven where all bereaved families can meet and share our long and arduous grief journey. We attend month gatherings whenever we can and for as long as we believe necessary. We share our fears, confusion, anger, guilt, frustrations, emptiness and feelings of hopelessness, so that hope can be found anew. As we accept, support, comfort and encourage each other, we demonstrate to each other that survival is possible. Together we celebrate the lives of our children, share the joys and the triumphs as well as the love that will never fade. Together we learn how little it matters where we live, what our color or our affluence is or what faith we uphold as we confront the tragedies of our children's deaths. Together, strengthened by the bonds we forge at our gatherings, we offer what we have learned from each other to every more recently bereaved family.

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

Chapter Contact Information

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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 bpusa.nova@yahoo.com or calling Jodi at 703-910-6277.

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