

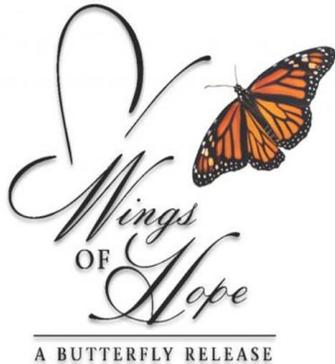


July/August 2019

caring & sharing news

Helping rebuild lives following the death of a child

Volume 16, Number 4



A 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 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.

Change in Meeting Date Starting in January 2020

Starting in January 2020 we will be meeting on the 4th Sunday of each month instead of the 2nd Sunday.

Annual Picnic, Memory Walk, & Lotus Flower Lantern Release



**Sunday, September 22, 2019
Locust Shade Park**



**A Day with
Alan Pedersen
Sat. Nov. 23**

Alan is an award-winning songwriter, recording artist and speaker who will inspire us with his hope-filled words and music.

*That Their Light May
Always Shine . . .*



Annual Service of Remembrance

Sunday, December 8, 2019

6:00 p.m.

2019 Programs

Below is a schedule for 2019 (subject to change):

July 14 – Juli Richardson -"Signs & Symbols from Spirit"

August 2-4 – National Gathering in St. Louis, MO

August 11 – Introducing your Child – see information in box below

August 18 – Butterfly Release at Memorial Garden

September 8 – Kristi DiFilippo, LCSW, Capital Hospice

September 22 – Chapter Picnic, Memory Walk and Lotus Flower Lantern Release at Locust Shade Park

October 13 – Program to Be Announced

November 10 – Anna Whiston-Donaldson

November 23 - A Day with Alan Pedersen Workshop

December 8 – Annual Service of Remembrance

Help Support BPUSA NOVA Chapter by buying a vinyl butterfly for our vinyl banner that will be used at all our events.

For a \$25 donation, you will be able to write your child's name and a short message on the butterfly.



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 bleachermom2000@aol.com

AUGUST MEETING: At our August Meeting we would like to get to know your child. Please bring photos of your child, a picture board or collage, or a video of your child. If you would like, you can bring something that reminds you of your child.

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 bleachermom2000@aol.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 bleachermom2000@aol.com.

I am looking for submissions for a booklet to give to newly bereaved parents. If you would be willing to write about how BPUSA has helped you on your grief journey, it would be greatly appreciated. Please email submissions to bleachermom2000@aol.com.



There are dozens of tasks that go into running our chapter and our special events. If you feel you are now in a place in your grief journey where you can help and give back to the chapter in any little way, we would love your help. Most of us find that when we reach a point of giving back to those who come after us, we gain far more than we give.

I could really use volunteers to plan our special events (Picnic, Butterfly Release and Service of Remembrance). Other areas of need are in Fundraising, Publicity, Outreach, and helping at the Memorial Garden.

If you would like to volunteer to help our chapter, please contact Jodi at bleachermom2000@aol.com or 703-656-6999.

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

Caring and Sharing Support Meetings:

2nd Sunday @ 3 p.m.
First United Presbyterian Church
14391 Minnieville Road
Dale City, VA

For more information contact:
Jodi Norman, Chapter Leader
703-656-6999 (cell)
bleachermom2000@aol.com

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



Parents of Suicide Loss

SUPPORT GROUP

We Understand the Struggle
You are not Alone

- WHEN** ● First Sunday, Every Month:
1pm - 2:30pm
- WHERE** ● ACTS
9317 Grant Ave., Manassas, VA
- DETAILS** ● Support group for parents who have lost a
child to suicide. This is a safe place to share
stories of your loved ones and receive the
support needed to deal with the loss.

Sponsored by:



Life After Loss Support Group for Suicide Survivors

“Shining A Light for Those in Darkness”

Last Wednesday of Each Month

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



Overdose and Substance Abuse Support Group

First Sunday of Every Month
2:00 p.m.
American Legion Post 28
17934 Liming Lane, Triangle, VA 22172

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

For more information please contact:
Jodi Norman at bleachermom2000@aol.com
or call 703-656-6999
or
Kathie Kelly at tcffred@gmail.com
or 540-220-4325

Support Meeting in Annandale VA

1st Thursday of Every Month
7 p.m.

Annandale United Methodist Church
6935 Columbia Pike
Annandale, VA 22003

For more information about this meeting please
contact Emily Slough at emilygps@verizon.net.

Or Jodi Norman at 703-656-6999
bleachermom2000@aol.com

Dear Newly Bereaved Parent

By Angela Miller

This will likely be the hardest thing you'll ever do. *Survive* this. And eventually, maybe even thrive again.

At times it will feel virtually impossible. You'll wonder how a human being can survive such pain. You'll learn you know how to defy the impossible. You did it from the moment your child's heart stopped, and yours kept beating. You do it with every breath and step you take. You're doing it now. And now. And now.

Your fingernails will become bloodied from clawing your way from the depths of despair. Your spirit will grow weary from fighting to survive. Your eyes will cry more tears than you ever thought possible. Your arms will ache an ache for which there aren't words. For a *lifetime*.

Your heart will break into a million tiny pieces. You'll wonder how it will ever mend again.

But with every morsel of unspeakable pain, there is love. An abundance of love. A love so strong, so powerful, it will buoy you. You will not drown.

Others will say things that are intended to be helpful, but aren't. Take what is, leave what isn't.

Still, you'll meet others along the journey who will get it without ever saying a word. Kind souls who will breathe you back to life again. Let them.

Years down the road you'll tire of hearing the same advice and clichés, over and over again. Advice you don't want or need. Everyone will try to tell you how to best "fix" your broken heart. The trouble is, you don't need fixing.

There is no fix for this.

Eventually you'll learn how to carry the weight of this pain. At times it will crush you. At other times you'll learn how to shoulder the burden with newfound grit and grace. Either way, you'll learn how to bend with the weight of it.

It will not break you. Not entirely.

And even if you don't believe in hope— not even a little— hope will light the way for you. At times you won't realize your path is lit. The darkness feels all-consuming when you're in it. But know the light is there. Surrounding you now. And now. And now.

Know you're being guided, by all of us who have survived this impossible hell. You may not hear us, or see us, but we are with you. Beside you. Hand in hand, heart to heart. Always. Just like your child still is.

Above all else, know that no one can save you but yourself. You are the heroine/hero of this sad story. You are the one who gets to decide how, and if, you'll survive this. You are the one who will figure out a way to survive the sleepless nights, and the endless days. You are the one who will decide if and when you'll find a purpose again that means something to you. You are the one who will choose how you'll live with the pain. You are the one who will decide what you'll cling to, what will make your life worth living again. You, and only you, get to decide how you'll survive.

No one else can do this for you.

People will speak of "closure," of "moving on," of "getting over it," of grief coming to an end. Smile kindly, and know, anyone who says these things hasn't lived this thing called grief.

To lose a child is to lose the very heart and soul of *you*. It is overwhelmingly disorienting. It takes a long, long time to find yourself again. It takes a long time to grow new life around the chasm of such grave loss. It takes a long time to grow beauty from ashes.

There will always be a hole in your heart, the size and shape of your child. Your child is absolutely irreplaceable. Nothing will fill the void your child left. But your heart will grow bigger— beautifully bigger— around the empty space your child left behind.

Continued on next page

Dear Newly Bereaved Parent Continued:

The love and pain you carry for your precious child will be woven into every thread of your being. It will fuel you to do things you never dreamed you could do.

Eventually, you'll figure out how to live for both of you. It will be beautiful, and it will be hard.

But, the love you two share will carry you through. You will spread this love everywhere you go.

Eventually, you'll be able to see again. Eventually, you'll find your way again. Eventually, you'll realize—you *survived*.

FINDING A LITTLE PEACE ON A SUMMER NIGHT

by Cathy Seehuetter, TCF Leader in St. Paul, MN

July 4, 2019

While most others love summer for its daytime pleasures, such as beach time, golf, picnics and other family outings, personally, I like it at night... on my deck after most others have long gone to bed. I gaze at the silhouettes of the trees against a cloudless sky, with a sliver of moon and glistening stars as a backdrop, and watch the fireflies dance and illuminate the blackness. My senses are heightened as I listen to the tinkle of the wind chimes in the evening breeze, the gentle hum of the overworked air conditioner after a blistering hot day, the hypnotic chorus of crickets, and the mournful wail of a train whistle off in the distance.

There is nothing like fireworks on the 4th of July (or any summer night, for that matter). Despite the noise, something about the "rocket's red glare" makes me smile; brings back memories of more innocent times, not only my own childhood 4ths, but my own children at the yearly fireworks displays; the ooohs and aaahs as their eyes lit up at the beautiful sights...in those years long past, when we were a whole family altogether...long before we were...not.

There was a period of time in my life that I felt no pleasure in anything...and never thought I would ever find anything to give me peace ever again. However, the stillness of the evenings now, more often than not, bring a sense of calm and peace to the end of an often-hectic day. As a bereaved mom in the earlier years of my grief journey, I felt more serene in the dark of the night where the realities of life then felt less harsh and glaring. Though sometimes through my tears, depending on the moment, I'd lie on my back and peer into the heavens and attempt to fathom the enormity of the universe – wondering what lies beyond the celestial bodies. And I'd think about Nina... if, in her new life, she now had an up close and personal view of Saturn's rings. Or was she here beside me one minute with the ability in the next to be perched in the "W" of Cassiopeia, her favorite constellation? Had my precious teenage daughter been to the top of the Eiffel Tower, looking down on Paris as she had dreamed to do one day? Or was my police officer son, Chris, still guarding over the city he patrolled and still watching over it now from a whole different dimension.

I like to believe that they both have and still do. and the tranquility of a summer night gives my body rest, and my mind the opportunity to ponder the wonder of it all and let hopeful thoughts enter in and push aside some of the darker ones.

I hope you give yourself the gift of a peaceful summer night – and that you are able to eventually search for and then – in your own time – find comforting and love-filled memories in the experience.

7 Facts about Grief We Can't Afford to Forget

By Gary Roe

Grief is deeply personal and individual. Every relationship and loss are unique. We can feel unhinged, adrift, or like we're in a free fall. We think we're better and then we get surprised, again.

From the Grieving Heart

I thought I was a little better, but I guess not.

I was doing fine, having a good day, until I heard that song. It took me right back. Thoughts of you came flooding in. I was a basket case in a nanosecond.

I never know what's going to happen next. The grief is always there, slowly building up inside me. It grows until my system is full, and then along comes a person, place, aroma, word, or song that reminds me of you. A switch gets flipped. A hatch pops open, and all the pressurized emotion comes bursting out. I have no control over when, where, or how.

This is frustrating and embarrassing. I take one step forward, and then two steps back. The grief seems to be getting deeper. The more I grieve, the more the grief inside me seems to grow.

It all seems so backward. How do I know if I'm making progress? Is progress what I should even be thinking about? What does "good" grieving look like?

I find one answer, then generate two more questions. Is grief some never-ending cycle? Is there a way out of this?

I don't want to leave you behind. I can't go on without you – at least, I don't want to. There must be another way.

Grief may not be what we anticipated. Grief is not a checklist or a once-and-done activity. It's a process. Here are 7 facts about the grief journey we can't afford to forget:

1. The grief journey is a dynamic process. It's always moving. It's highly individual, defies prediction, and refuses to be boxed in. It's all a bit mysterious. It's a matter of the heart.

2. The grief journey is challenging. Each day is a journey through a virtual minefield. You never know where the next grief burst is hiding. Anything can trigger it. The heart is looking for ways to express itself and to declare its love. You bump into unseen memories suddenly and without warning. Reminders of your loved one are everywhere.

3. The grief journey is one of the heart. The heart is trying to find a way to live with the absence of this special person you've lost. You're thinking of and looking for them, even when you're not aware of it. Loss has invaded your life and is demanding your attention.

4. The grief journey is unpredictable. One day we feel you're doing well. The next day might not be so smooth. One moment might be great, and the next you might be showering the sidewalk with tears.

5. The grief journey is demanding and exhausting. The grief roller coaster is full of ups, downs, and sudden twists. It yanks and jerks you here and there, leaving you gasping for breath. It's never smooth for long. And it's not over in 90 seconds either. It goes on, and on, and on.

This is not a roller coaster you chose to get on. You simply woke up one day and discovered you were a passenger. What's important now is making sure your seat belt is fastened, keeping your arms and legs in the car, and riding this whirling, curling monster as well as possible.

6. It's hard to measure progress on the grief journey. There will be ups and downs, and some will be breathtaking. Some turns you will see coming, while others will take you completely by surprise. You simply grieve as best you can from moment to moment. You take life as it comes, one step at a time. And above all, resist the temptation to compare your grief with someone else's.

7. The grief journey is full of sudden emotional surges, bursts, and spikes. Grief will surprise you. When the grief surges up and spews out, so be it. Every grief burst honors those you've lost and declares your love for them.

Like every other journey, grieving is done one step at a time. You might meander back and forth. That's okay. Other travelers are on this road. Together, we will make it.

Affirmation:

I'll ride this grief roller-coaster as best I can, one moment at a time.



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

Jason Duane Alexander	7/02/74 ~ 7/24/13	Robert Loiseau	8/22/72 ~ 5/27/93
Emily Andrews	8/02/97 ~ 3/14/16	Sara Lott	11/01/95 ~ 7/23/08
James “Jimmy” Barnette	7/11/98 ~ 6/03/06	Kyle Ludeman	4/12/93 ~ 8/27/13
Jennifer Lynn Becker	12/30/67 ~ 7/26/70	Robert Henry Maples	6/07/76 ~ 7/05/18
Trevor Austin Blake	10/30/01 ~ 8/11/13	Kevin McGuin	2/08/88 ~ 8/26/08
Kenny Brooks Jr	8/13/82 ~ 1/14/06	Emily “Tabor” McMullen	1/26/84 ~ 8/31/12
Claire Rebecca Buckley	7/27/11 ~ 11/17/16	Derek Meffert	4/21/95 ~ 8/15/10
Brandon Bundy	5/19/84 ~ 8/24/08	Michael Joseph Moore	7/13/71 ~ 1/09/09
Christopher Chapman	8/01/88 ~ 1/13/07	Christina Morgan	7/30/80 ~ 3/13/02
Jason A. Clover	7/30/84 ~ 9/28/03	Johnny Ray Mullins	7/11/61 ~ 1/22/02
David Joseph Cobb	7/02/98 ~ 10/23/15	Nicholas James Nelson	7/16/90 ~ 4/19/18
Todd Clifford Coder	7/23/84 ~ 9/24/10	Kim Ouren	9/19/57 ~ 7/22/18
Sarah Beth Cole	8/06/80 ~ 4/23/11	Zane J Pitzvada	8/22/92 ~ 9/14/11
Gregory Dennis	8/26/98 ~ 7/26/17	Linda Thompson Plewes	7/16/51 ~ 3/21/02
Corey Martin Dill	7/25/90 ~ 5/03/07	Kylene Marie Privett	12/14/83 ~ 8/13/07
Forrest Grant Dotson	8/25/79 ~ 4/19/17	Khalif Rashon Privott	7/21/94 ~ 7/13/16
David John Drumheller	8/30/89 ~ 6/20/16	Ronald Douglas Ralph, Jr	7/27/66 ~ 11/04/02
Bryan Eastes	8/18/80 ~ 4/18/17	Vernon Santmyer, Jr.	8/24/79 ~ 5/17/11
Robert Alan Finch	7/27/70 ~ 1/02/01	Gene “Tony” Sergent	8/10/87 ~ 9/14/07
Rhonda Lynn Flannery	7/31/63 ~ 11/10/01	Klee Simmons	3/27/89 ~ 8/09/15
Bruce Lee Foxworthy	8/29/75 ~ 2/11/12	Brandon Simms	10/10/80 ~ 7/14/95
Ashley Hoefling	8/22/85 ~ 2/08/17	Adelacia Smalley	8/06/94 ~ 10/19/02
Desmend Holmes	6/16/06 ~ 7/21/15	Tyler Smith	9/20/92 ~ 8/01/06
Quincy Holmes	5/18/05 ~ 7/20/15	Robert Andrew Starling	8/02/93 ~ 2/04/18
Daniel Franklin Houston	8/10/68 ~ 6/13/16	Michael “Ryan” Stevens	7/07/87 ~ 5/30/07
Ethan Humphrey	6/23/16 ~ 7/22/16	Jerry Damon Taybron	11/21/75 ~ 8/18/07
John William Kennedy	1/16/94 ~ 8/11/18	Dana Thrall	8/02/75 ~ 1/02/01
Kwadwo Amoako Kusi	3/20/06 ~ 7/26/08	Anthony Joseph Turchiano	8/04/79 ~ 4/29/17
Thomas Langston	4/05/92 ~ 8/04/18	Kisha Grace Woods	8/06/17 ~ 8/06/17
		Kevin Woods	12/08/93 ~ 8/06/14

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

Bleachermom2000@aol.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 bleachermom2000@aol.com or calling Jodi at 703-656-6999.

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