



# caring & sharing news

*Helping rebuild lives following the death of a child*

We as bereaved parents, help grieving parents and families rebuild their lives after the death of a child.  
The mission of Bereaved Parents of the USA

## Annual Butterfly Release



*Sunday, August 12, 2018  
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 1, 2018 to Bev Ruane at [ruane.beverly@yahoo.com](mailto: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.

## 2018 Programs

New for 2018 is adding guest speakers to some of our monthly Sunday meetings in addition to our yearly events. Below is a schedule for the year (subject to change):

August 3-5 – National Gathering in Memphis, TN

August 12 – Butterfly Release at Memorial Garden – No Support Group Meeting

September 9 – “Introduce Your Child”

September 22 – ComedySportz in Richmond

September 29 – Overdose and Substance Abuse Support Group Meeting

October 4 – New Support Group Meeting in Annandale

October 14 – Program to Be Announced

November 11 – Program to Be Announced

December 2 – Service of Remembrance

December 9 – Program to Be Announced

## Caring and Sharing Support Meetings:

2<sup>nd</sup> 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](mailto:bleachermom2000@aol.com)

AMORe  
(All Murdered Offspring Remembered)  
3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday @ 6 p.m.  
3182 Golansky Blvd, Suite 101  
Woodbridge, VA

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

### New Support Meeting Starting in October

#### First Meeting:

Thursday, October 4 at 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](mailto:emilygps@verizon.net).

Or Jodi Norman at 703-656-6999  
[bleachermom2000@aol.com](mailto:bleachermom2000@aol.com)

At our September 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.

We will also be making photo buttons, so please email a photo of your child to [bleachermom2000@aol.com](mailto:bleachermom2000@aol.com) so the photos can be pre-printed.

### Overdose and Substance Abuse Support Group

**First Meeting: Saturday, September 29, 2018**  
**1:00 p.m.**

**Montclair Library**  
**5049 Waterway Drive**  
**Montclair (Dumfries), VA**

\*A light lunch will be provided.

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](mailto:bleachermom2000@aol.com) or call 703-656-6999.

### Sandra Curtiss Barrett

December 16, 1954 - June 24, 2018



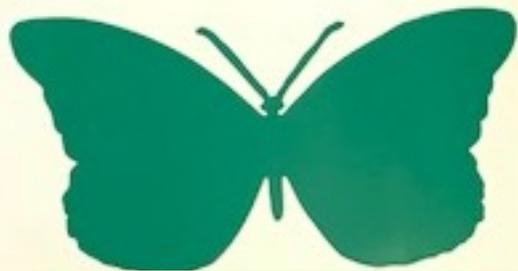
*Our dear friend and fellow bereaved parent, Sandy Barrett lost her battle with many health issues on June 24, 2018. She is survived by her son Chris, daughter-in-law Melissa, sisters Donna and Cathi, and grandchildren Amelia, Elijah, Isaac, and Colter.*

*After the car accident death of her beloved daughter, Kimmi on May 4, 2002, Sandy become an active member of the NOVA Chapter until health issues forced her to move to MD to live with her son and his family.*

*Donations in Sandy's memory can be made to BPUSA NOVA Chapter and sent to P.O. Box 7675, Woodbridge, VA 22195.*

Help Support BPUSA NOVA Chapter by buying a vinyl butterfly for our vinyl banner that will be used at all our events. We will be taking the banner to carry at the "Walk Towards Hope and Healing" at the 2018 National Gathering in Memphis!

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](mailto:bleachermom2000@aol.com)

## 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](mailto: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](mailto:bleachermom2000@aol.com)

**IMPORTANT:** With our new website and publishing our newsletter on the website, your child's name, birthdate and death date may be on the website. If you have any objection to your child's name and information being on the website please let Jodi know as soon as possible at [bleachermom2000@aol.com](mailto: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/Balloon Release, 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](mailto:bleachermom2000@aol.com) or 703-656-6999.

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](mailto:bleachermom2000@aol.com).



**Saturday, Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup>**  
**Show at 7 p.m.**  
**ComedySportz**  
**8906-H W Broad Street**  
**Richmond, VA**

**Dinner at Casa Grande, 7818 W Broad St,**  
**Richmond, VA before the show at 5 p.m.**

**HMS Production, Inc.**

**Don Hakenson**

Author-Producer-Narrator-Tour Guide

Col. John S. Mosby & Civil War Documentaries  
Civil War Books, Tours & Films  
703-785-5294  
[dhakenson@verizon.net](mailto:dhakenson@verizon.net)  
[www.hmshistory.com](http://www.hmshistory.com)  
[www.stuart-mosby.com](http://www.stuart-mosby.com)



July is Bereaved Parents Month  
Written by Rob Anderson, Brendon's Dad

July is Bereaved Parents month. It saddens me beyond words that a month like this even exists, but kids do die. 😞 A heart wrenching reality.

If you are one, my heart bleeds for you. A lifelong suffering like no other. If you aren't one, I am thrilled for you. A small bit of advice. Love the fingerprints on your windows. Love the muddy footprints on your carpet. Love the spilled milk on your new couch. Love the temper tantrums. Love the disgusting room and bad attitude. Love it all; all the time. All bereaved parents want the same thing - tomorrow and all of that back. We found that our kids were only rented. The day they died, they got returned.

The 2 most important days in the life of a bereaved parent are the birthday and death day of our child(ren). You can never, ever remind us our children have died. That sadness blankets us every single day. We are professionals at masking. Most will never see that sadness which lurks below.

If you acknowledge either, or both, of those days our hearts will leap with gratitude. By doing that you're saying, "I care about you. I care about your child." If we cry, you did not cause those tears. Those are tears from a grateful heart.

One thing of many that my son's death has taught is that we get one shot on earth. If we live it with anger, judgment and criticism, the whole world suffers. If we live it with kindness, caring and compassion, the whole world gets better. Sometimes I succeed at those and sometimes I fail, but I try and I am aware.

Thanks and much love to all of you all the time from Brendon's dad. ❤️



You never know when  
a moment and a few  
sincere words  
can have an  
impact on a life  
Forever.

~ Zig Ziglar

Pictures & Quotes

There is hope. The day  
will come when grief  
will not have the hold  
on you it does now.



You never know how strong you  
are until being strong is the only  
choice you have

## 4 ways to help a grieving parent

**1. Sit with their pain and sadness.** "The people who helped me the most were the ones who had no problem crawling in the ditch with me and lying with me in the middle of my pain without needing to fix it or make it better," [wrote Angela Miller](#). "The ones who could listen without changing the subject. The ones who would remember to say my son's name long after everyone else had stopped saying it. True empathy and love are the two things that saved me. People who can offer a bereaved parent true compassion are absolutely priceless."

**2. Help the family with everyday tasks and take the initiative to organize.** "Don't ask what I need," [wrote Meagan Golec](#). "I don't know what I need. You're asking what I need puts the burden on me to figure out what will make me feel better so you can do that thing and feel good about supporting me. What I need is for you to take the initiative to find out what other people in my situation said they needed after the fact. Then do those things. For years. It has been more than two years since my son died."

[Michele also mentioned](#) the importance of help from the community:

*My community carried our family through. My girlfriends assigned someone to be at our house, helping with my toddler, in 4-hour shifts. They had arranged to pick up and drop off my preschooler each day for school, and take her on playdates. Our neighbors got a group together to provide meals to us daily for 6 weeks. It was remarkable, amazing, and overwhelming. Our community functioned for us when we could not function ourselves. It propelled me to start the same sort of meal service for community members in the following years. If someone was going through a birth, death, traumatic life event, I'd get an email and then organize my 14 volunteers to provide meals to the family in need for a specific amount of time. It felt like a way to give back for all the grace given to our family.*

**3. Be patient and understand that grief has no timeline.** The idea that there are strict and linear elements to grief doesn't fit what people go through, Okun said.

Boudreau said she felt the pressure to fit a timeline, but it was coming from a well-meaning and loving place. "I felt like my friends and my family wanted that for me," she said. "They wanted to see me get back to how I had been before... People wanted to see you moving through it each year."

**4. Don't stop talking about the child that died.**

Source: [www.mprnews.org/story/2014/08/12/daily-circuit-death-of-a-child](http://www.mprnews.org/story/2014/08/12/daily-circuit-death-of-a-child)

### She is Gone

By David Harkins

You can shed tears that she is gone  
Or you can smile because she has lived  
You can close your eyes and pray that she will come back  
Or you can open your eyes and see all that she has left  
Your heart can be empty because you can't see her  
Or you can be full of the love that you shared  
You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday  
Or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday  
You can remember her and only that she is gone  
Or you can cherish her memory and let it live on  
You can cry and close your mind, be empty and turn your back  
Or you can do what she would want: smile, open your eyes, love and go on.

The day your heart  
Stopped  
Is the day my heart  
Broke



"Tears are the  
silent language  
of grief."

Voltaire

## I Am a Grieving Parent

By Alan Pedersen

I am a grieving parent. My child died nearly 17 years ago. Most people would assume that all the unfinished business and emotion surrounding her death would have long since resolved itself and been settled. They would be wrong.

I have learned through experience the expectations of others regarding the life span of my grief who haven't walked in my shoes are polar opposites of my reality.

One of the biggest misconceptions made by others about me and those who walk this same path is that we "should" be working toward being healed. They tend to think of our grief as an outcome-based process with benchmarks we "should" have reached as we complete steps and stages which would result in us somehow emerging unscathed by the horror of our loss.

Nothing anyone says about my grief who hasn't experienced the incredible high of witnessing their child's first breath and the unimaginable low of knowing their child has taken their last breath holds any significance to me. Frankly, I am happy those who speak in ignorance don't have to live this experience and I am also jealous of them as well.

Many years ago, I decided to make peace with the world of fortunate others who will never "get it." In my early years of grief, I would confront insensitive comments or try to educate every pompous intellect who had an opinion about my grief journey. Today, I do not waste my breath, it is no longer a good use of my energy.

Instead of trying to inform those misinformed folks who really weren't open to my lecturing, I shifted my energy toward being compassionate and kind to all in honor of Ashley. I can't tell you how much better I felt once I removed myself from this verbal combat zone where I was always hyper sensitive and on guard for the next "stupid" thing someone might say.

It was in this process where I realized something which has served me quite well over the years. People tend to understand grief and loss to the level they have experienced it. We can't expect people to know what they have not experienced. I soon began to chuckle inside at some of the ridiculous things people would say in their ignorance. One thing I advise woman in my workshops on this topic to do is the next time someone tries to tell them how they should grieve, imagine me standing in front of them trying to explain what it feels like to give birth to a child ... this always brings a laugh.

I live with the loss of Ashley every day, and I wouldn't have it any other way. My love for her is forever woven into the fabric of this new life I live since her death. Ashley's birth sent my life on a trajectory in which I expected to spend my lifetime physically with her in it. Her death changed that trajectory, but that does not change the fact that I will still live the rest of my life with her in it. I am her hands, her voice, her feet. My compassion and kindness reflect the love that lives on in my heart. I am doing exactly what I am supposed to be doing, and that keeps me deeply connected to her.

I am a bereaved parent, but I am alive and well. I do not need for you to understand how or why I grieve so loudly after 17 years. It is my journey; my choice and I am blessed to dedicate my life to advocating for all who walk this difficult path.

No, I am not healed and no, I am not over it. And because I am not healed or over it, my life is both manageable and beautiful. Ashley's life and death have shaped and colored my world in ways I could have never imagined. It is all bittersweet. I accept that, I embrace that, I am a bereaved parent, this is what we do.

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## BEREAVED FATHERS DAY

Last Sunday in August every year

I am a father  
I hold my child in my heart



National  
Grief Awareness  
Day  
August 30<sup>th</sup>

Coming out of the darkness and into the light





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

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

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](mailto:Bleachermom2000@aol.com)



Bereaved Parents of the USA

[www.bereavedparentsusa.org](http://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](mailto:bleachermom2000@aol.com) or calling Jodi at 703-656-6999.

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