

May/June 2019



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

Volume 16, Number 3



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.

2019 Programs

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

May 12 – Mother's Day (No Meeting)

June 9 – Therapeutic Drumming with Dr. Caratozzolo at ACT Wellness Center

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

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

August 11 – Program to Be Announced

August 18 – Butterfly Release at Memorial Garden

September 8 – Kristi DiFilippo, LCSW, Capital Hospice

September 22 – Chapter Picnic

October 13 – Program to Be Announced

November 10 – Anna Whiston-Donaldson

December 8 – Annual Service of Remembrance



Sunday, June 9, 2019
3:00 p.m.

PROGRAM PRESENTED BY:
Dr. Carmelo F. Caratozzolo, DC

ACT Wellness Center
1411 Minnieville Road
Woodbridge, VA 22193
(Note change in location)

Messages from the Spirit World

Juli Richardson -Light Works

*Will be our special guest speaker on
"Signs & Symbols from Spirit"*

Sunday, July 14, 2019 at 3:00 p.m.

*First United Presbyterian Church
14391 Minnieville Road
Dale City, VA*

NATIONAL GATHERING 2019



Bereaved Parents USA

August 2-4 ♥ St. Louis, Missouri

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 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

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 tccfred@gmail.com
or 540-220-4325



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



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

Please Check E-mails & Facebook

Almost all of our Chapter Communication is done via email. Please check your emails at least once a week. Everything from the newsletter to Chapter Announcements are sent through email. It would also be helpful to respond to all emails sent regarding the Chapter. That lets me know that you did see the email and that I have a correct email address – a simple “got it” would be better than no response at all!

It would also be helpful if you would join our private Facebook page. Please check this page on a regular basis. A Facebook page has been set up for our chapter. Members can join our group at Bereaved Parents of the USA/Northern VA Chapter. This is a closed group for privacy purposes, so nothing posted here will go into your regular News Feed for your regular FB friends to see. Request to join the group and approval will be sent to you.

Check Out Our Website

<http://www.bpusanova.com>

I need everyone's help in updating our website. If you have not already done so, please write a bio of your child and include a photo or a collage of pictures to include in “Our Children Remembered” Section. We would like to have all the children of our chapter included on this page. Please send submissions to Jodi at bleachermom2000@aol.com.

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.rockitcreation.com>

If you have any questions, contact Jodi Norman at 703-656-6999 or bleachermom2000@aol.com



Free Grief Counseling

Capital Caring Hospice of Fredericksburg is offering short term grief counseling free of charge to bereaved parents. The Fredericksburg office provides services to Dumfries, Triangle, Stafford, Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania, Locust Grove, Caroline County and King George County. Please contact Kristi DiFilippo, LCSW at 540-735-0972 if you are in need of grief counseling. Check out their website: capitalcaring.org



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 or 703-656-6999.

Help Support BPUSA NOVA Chapter by buying a vinyl butterfly for our 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. Butterflies will be available at our meetings.





We Remember Our Children

Who have Birthdays and Death Dates
in May and June

Charles (CJ) Angelos, Jr	5/28/85 ~ 11/18/06	Adrienne Leigh Ingram	6/25/79 ~ 12/2/07
Zachary William Arnold	9/23/84 ~ 5/11/14	Derrick V. James	6/01/74 ~ 5/28/05
Mielen Garlit Arquines	12/01/68 ~ 6/04/08	Rasheem Kuwan Jenkins	5/04/82 ~ 9/09/09
William Bruce Austin II	5/11/84 ~ 4/10/18	Kashif Johnson	3/15/87 ~ 5/01/07
Brandon Scott Bailey	6/21/79 ~ 5/31/99	Robert Andrew Larson	3/14/94 ~ 6/30/10
James “Jimmy” Barnette	7/11/98 ~ 6/03/06	Nicole Michelle Lee	6/22/89 ~ 1/26/08
Donald “Donnie” Barrett	5/14/76 ~ 5/03/02	Robert Loiseau	8/22/72 ~ 5/27/93
Kimberly Ann Barrett	9/08/86 ~ 5/04/02	Robert Henry Maples	6/07/76 ~ 7/05/18
Parker Evan Boyd	9/15/98 ~ 6/04/08	Ian Patrick McDonald	5/05/89 ~ 1/12/15
Brian Brumbaugh	11/09/83 ~ 5/02/07	Christian Paul Norman	2/04/85 ~ 6/03/01
Brandon Bundy	5/19/84 ~ 8/24/08	Josephine Pennefather	6/21/03 ~ 6/21/03
Cole James Clark	5/11/13 ~ 5/15/17	Timothy Michael John Peyton	6/13/68 ~ 2/09/17
Brandon DeWulf	6/20/85 ~ 6/29/09	Vernon Santmyer, Jr.	8/24/79 ~ 5/17/11
Corey Martin Dill	7/25/90 ~ 5/03/07	Courtney Sharee Shelby	11/23/93 ~ 5/14/01
David John Drumheller	8/30/89 ~ 6/20/16	Mark Alexander Slough	6/26/96 ~ 10/08/15
Raven Gileau	6/23/90 ~ 4/23/10	Colby Thomas Smith	5/25/04 ~ 10/11/15
Jacob Charles Glushefski	5/23/77 ~ 2/21/11	Adam Charles Sorge	5/12/94 ~ 1/04/14
Dwayne Eddie Gonsorcik	5/26/74 ~ 4/26/13	Kevin Michael Stanphill	3/12/80 ~ 5/09/09
Christina Gordon	5/08/13 ~ 5/08/13	Michael “Ryan” Stevens	7/07/87 ~ 5/30/07
John Gregory	9/21/73 ~ 6/03/13	Beckett Josef TePaske	4/04/12 ~ 5/12/15
Kourtney Michelle Hale	5/29/80 ~ 3/14/10	Josh Weaver	6/17/82 ~ 9/09/09
Gabrielle Nicole Henderson	5/28/86 ~ 6/17/99	Christopher Andre’ Waters Jr	5/31/97 ~ 12/23/07
Olivia Rose Cecilia Henry	5/27/02 ~ 5/26/12	Joe Brown Williams	8/06/92 ~ 6/21/18
Desmend Holmes	6/16/06 ~ 7/21/15	Kyle Robert Wilson	5/25/82 ~ 4/16/07
Quincy Holmes	5/18/05 ~ 7/20/15	Tommie J. Wonnum III	6/14/84 ~ 6/30/03
Daniel Franklin Houston	8/10/68 ~ 6/13/16	Franklin Conner Woodward	5/15/08 ~ 5/17/08
Ethan Humphrey	6/23/16 ~ 7/22/16	Stephen Wesley Wright	6/06/89 ~ 11/21/13

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 May and June, please provide us with your child’s information so they can be included correctly in future newsletters

A Mother's Chorus: Grieving a Child on Mother's Day

What's Your Grief – May 2017

A few days ago, we reached out to our readers and asked for their help writing a post in anticipation of Mother's Day. Specifically, we asked mothers grieving the death of a child to share one thing they want people to know about their grief on Mother's Day. Our intent was to create a list of responses.

We received comments and messages from close to one hundred different women. Although their collective wisdom is the result of a diverse range of experiences, there is a synchronicity to their words that made us feel they belonged together in one cohesive whole.

So, instead of presenting you with a choppy and disjointed list, we've taken many of the responses we received and put them together in a letter. This letter is not written by one bereaved mother, but an entire chorus of mothers. Their words are not at all the same, but their message blends together to create a mournful, harmonious, and beautiful song.

Dear Friend,

I miss my child every day. This grief of mine will never leave me, and honestly, why should it? I love my child more than I ever could have imagined, and yes, I do mean present tense *"love"*. It is excruciating knowing that my child will never return to my arms. However, a mother's love for her child doesn't require physical presence; this can be proven by the fact that most mothers love their children well before they are even born. I will love my child forever, and therefore, I will grieve my child forever. This is just how it goes.

I know it's difficult for some people to understand my ongoing grief, I guess because they want me to *"get better"* or return to *"normal."* However, I actually *am* normal. I'm just different now. I believe those who say they want to support me on difficult days like Mother's Day, but part of this is accepting me as a grieving mother who will always love her deceased child. Again, this is just how it goes.

My grief is like the weather. Somedays it's calm, quiet, maybe even a little sunny. Other days it's a devastating storm that makes me feel angry, exhausted, raw, and empty. I wake up in the morning and wonder – *"Am I even alive at all? And if so, how am I supposed to make it through this day?"* This is why when you ask me how I feel about Mother's Day, all I can say that it depends. Of course, I'm going to try my best to cope with the day, but while you're hoping that your Mother's Day picnic doesn't get spoiled by actual rain, I'll be praying that the grief storms stay at bay.

Like many things in a grieving mother's life, Mother's Day is bittersweet to the nth degree. On the one hand, I feel immense joy because I was blessed with my child and I feel gratitude for every moment I was given with them. On the other hand, the pain of missing my child – my greatest happiness, my life's purpose, and my best friend – is intense.

Bereaved mothers live with so many of these confusing contrasts. They are like undercurrents that tug at and toss about our hearts and minds. I am a mother to a child who is not alive. Perhaps a child who you've never met. You can't ask me about their school year, or how they're liking piano lessons, or whether they've chosen a major in college. In my mind, I've imagined my child doing all these things. People don't realize that I grieve each of my child's milestones, knowing they didn't get the opportunity to experience these special days.

Most people don't know how to validate my child's place in the world or my ongoing role as my child's mother. This is a difficult concept for others to grasp. Heck, sometimes even I grapple with the answers to questions like *"Do you have children?"* and *"How many?"* I know many bereaved mothers, like me, long for these questions to have straightforward answers.

Sadly, mothers who have experienced the death of their *only* child may even wonder whether they get to call themselves a mother at all in broader society. So, in addition to the pain of grief, these mothers have to cope with a sense of being left out, forgotten, and ignored. Can you imagine how that might feel? I think it must be like being stabbed through the heart and when you turn to others for help they say *"What blood?"* *"What knife?"*

Then, for mothers who have surviving children, there is this gem of a comment – *"Don't forget, you're lucky to have other children."* Please let me assure you, a mother does not forget *any* of her children. This

Continued

A Mother's Chorus: Grieving a Child on Mother's Day (Continued)

mother loves each and every one of her unique and special children in unique and special ways, but one of her children has died and so her love for this child looks a little untraditional. Mothers do not have a finite amount of love to be shifted, divided, and spread around depending on the number of children they have on this Earth. So please be careful with your comments, because it's difficult enough for grieving mothers who often feel torn between feeling joy and happiness for their living children and grief for the child who has died.

All that said, you asked me what it's like to grieve a child on Mother's Day, so here's what I have to say:

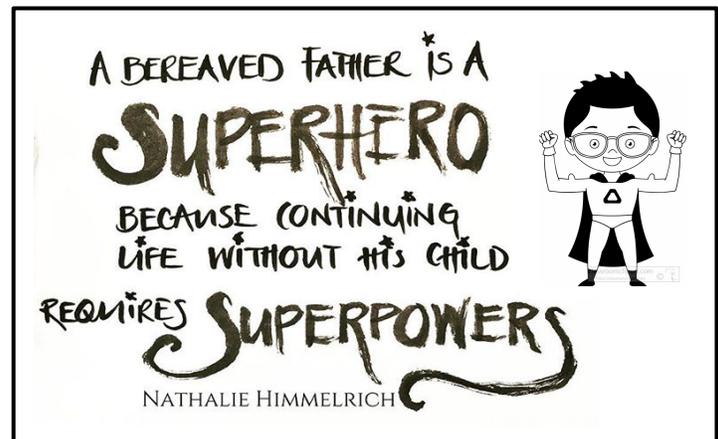
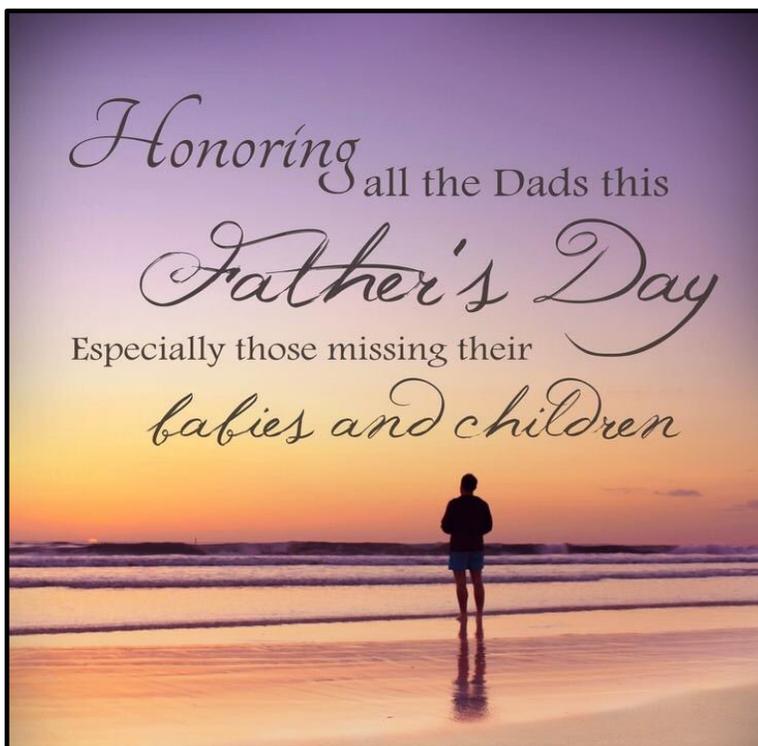
This day will forever be hard for me. I live with an emptiness that no one can fill; so, I may be sad, I may be unsociable, and I may need to take a break to be by myself in a quiet place. Whatever shape my grief takes on this day, please allow me to feel the way I feel and please follow my lead.

Beyond that, acknowledge me as a mother. It makes me feel forgotten and as though my child has been forgotten when people act as though my child never existed. Also, I can sense that people feel uncomfortable talking about my child and I constantly feel like the elephant in the room, but it doesn't have to be this way. Honestly, I find it really comforting when someone talks about my child. I love hearing their name spoken out loud! I love hearing stories about them. Maybe you know a story I've never heard, or maybe I've heard it a hundred times before, but it really doesn't matter to me. Your acknowledgment alone is one of the greatest Mother's Day gifts you could give me.

I guess while I'm offering my two cents, I also have something to say to my fellow bereaved mothers. No one has it all figured out, but I've learned a few lessons along the way. If you're worried about Mother's Day, you're not alone. Try not to get overwhelmed or wrapped up in anxiety. You may actually find that the anticipation of the day is worse than the day itself. You may want to plan a whole day of activities just to stay busy, or you may feel like doing nothing at all. There is no "right" way to handle Mother's Day - but do try to plan ahead a little. You may want to reach out to others who are struggling with the day and, if you can, it always helps to face the day with people who love and support you.

Whatever you do, believe you will make it through the day. With time, the grief storms will grow smaller and less frequent and you will find a little more balance and room to breathe. Believe you will be okay and have hope that in the future you will find yourself in a place where you can grieve and celebrate on Mother's Day all at the same time.

Let's take care of each other.



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