



July/August 2021

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

Volume 18, Number 4



Wings of Hope Butterfly Release

Sunday, August 15, 2021

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 540-628-4758 or ruane.beverly@yahoo.com

RSVP at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/wings-of-hope-butterfly-release-tickets-153236260781>

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.

Please bring lawn chairs as there is no seating at the garden.



Those we love
don't go away,
they walk beside us
every day.
Unseen, unheard,
but always near,
so loved, so missed,
so very dear.

Happy Heavenly Birthday,

Tony

We miss you and love you
so much.

Seize the day and the Angel
Food Cake!!





Alan Pedersen and
Angels Across the USA Tour
Presents:

Heartaches, Highways & Hope Concert

Saturday, October 2, 2021
Time and Place
to be announced at a later date.

The Angels Across the USA Tour 2021, is all about hope, featuring the message and music of Alan Pedersen. Alan will be kicking off his Fall Tour, "Heartaches, Highways and Hope," in Northern Virginia with a concert featuring his newly recorded music.

Save the date and be one of the first to hear Alan's new music in person.

Thank You!

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 donation:

Charlie and Karen Turchiano



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 get fresh air and enjoy the beautiful surroundings.

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 garden vases at the garden that you can use to place fresh cut flowers. Please cut the flowers to fit in the vases. 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.



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

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

Caring and Sharing Support Meetings:

**3rd Thursday @ 7:00 p.m.
ZOOM Meetings**

I will send out an email with password and log in information prior to the meeting date.

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

Support Group for Parents with No Surviving Children

2nd Saturday of each month at 2:00 p.m.
North County Government Bldg.
Reston Police Station
12000 Bowman Towne Drive
Reston, VA

For more info contact: Nancy Vollmer
703-860-8587

Sibling Support Group

Our National BPUSA Sibling Coordinator,
Katie Alger, will be facilitating a
Zoom Support Meeting for
any bereaved sibling over the age of 18.

**Zoom Meetings will be held on the
last Thursday of each month**

If you or your surviving children are interested in participating in the Sibling Support Group, please email Katie at bpvirtualsiblingchapter@gmail.com for the zoom link.

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

Life After Loss Support Group for Suicide Survivors

"Shining A Light for Those in Darkness"



1st Sunday of Each 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

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.

It's Bereaved Parents Month, Here's What We Want You To Know

By Caila Smith

July is Bereaved Parents Awareness Month, a time to **advocate for and raise awareness of one's life after the loss of their child**. But we the bereaved still don't feel nearly seen enough.

The efforts bereaved parents use to create a certain level of transparency in our grief goes unnoticed by the general public. You see, our cause is taboo. One that's better off not to dwell on because it's uncomfortable and heartbreaking. It's the kind of cause that's only mentioned when another parent is forced to join the throes of it's unfortunate hold. Even then, you're only truly remembered for as long as the funeral.

But our grief extends beyond those immediate moments following the mass destruction of our lives. It's our shadow, if you will, and we wish you could understand us without having to become us.

We want you to know...

1. We are still "normal."

"When someone sees [a bereaved parent], they look at us like we are broken. Like we 'can't function right,'" Chelsea Fairchild, mother of two, tells Scary Mommy about the passing of her three-year-old son Riley. "We are humans just like everyone else. Just because we struggle with [the] grief of a child, doesn't mean that we are outsiders."

Though we are different, we are still us... just a bit more rusty around the edges for a time. After the initial grieving stages have passed, we still long for our friendships and other relationships to see us through the toughest days ahead. And if they are nowhere to be found when we are ready, it hurts, it's noticed, and it will always be remembered.

Carrie Stafford, Colorado mother of four, says she feels like others see her differently since the death of her one-year-old son Bryce. "People view [bereaved parents] as fragile and weak and feel uncomfortable around us. We don't have a contagious disease... we have a broken heart!" she says.

2. Our child(ren) died, but we can't stop living.

The most common phrase acting as a "filler" toward bereaved parents in conversation seems to be, "I can't imagine."

It's understandable. And almost always, **these words are meant to serve as a good testament** to the bereaved parent's strength. But when the topic is dwelt on, when someone continues on their banter about a loss they haven't experienced, but just "could not" live through, what is meant to be taken as comfort can quickly turn into something that is unintentionally hurtful.

Chances are, there was a time when the grieving parent didn't have the slightest clue how they would survive their own child's death when it actually *did* happen to them. They didn't *want* to survive it. They felt *wrong* for surviving it. But they didn't have a choice in the matter, and it's important to recognize that when using filler words such as these. (Better yet, just be there. No filler words are needed.)

There comes a time when even the bereaved parent has to learn how to smile again. And I promise, unless you've been there yourself, you don't know what it took for them to do it. That smile has been *earned* without question.

Haley Bennett is a mother of two from Indiana who lost her firstborn daughter, Mayleigh, when she was born still at 38 weeks and 5 days. After some time of isolation and feeling frustrated about entering the "real world," Bennett says that she always wound up hearing responses from others such as, "I don't get how you could go through with something so tragic and be the way you are today."

"I just have to remind them I didn't choose to live like this, and I had to push through it," she says.

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3. We are *constantly* aware our child is gone.

“Sometimes it really hurts deep down that [Bryce] is forgotten and the harsh reality sets in once again that he should be here to share [everyday moments] with us, but he’s not,” Stafford says.

Rest assured, bringing up our deceased child(ren) is not going to suddenly depress us or instantly remind us of their death. We are *so* blatantly aware of their nonexistence in every single moment of our lives.

“We WANT to talk about our children. That’s how we keep them alive,” bereaved mother Adrienne Brown says when referring to her late son, David.

Bereaved parents have a parental instinct to protect and love their deceased child. To lose a child is to be given a duty of carrying on their legacy, and it’s hurtful when the rest of the world fails at merely acknowledging the bereaved parent’s child’s existence.

“I wish people would just relax and open up with me and my loss. After all, I’m the one living daily with it, not them,” Hartley Geyer, bereaved mother of twin boys Maverick and Milo, tells Scary Mommy.

4. We might feel trapped in one moment in time.

While everyone else’s life moves on after the funeral, for the bereaved parents, their new life is just beginning. For a time, their very being will be consumed by this forever-defining day. Grief brain, depression, anxiety, suicidal ideations and **PTSD** following the loss of a child are all very real, valid and consuming aftershocks of grief.

Bereaved parents aren’t looking for a free pass on all-the-things in life, but be gracious. Going back to work, parenting, or even just day-to-day activities can feel overwhelming in the acute stages of grief, and even for extended spurts in the many years to follow. Stafford, an elementary school teacher in Colorado, says she was “unsure how to function in a world that kept moving forward” after the passing of her son. She felt like her “entire world stopped.”

“Just being around children was a challenge when I wanted to be curled in a ball in my bed forgetting the rest of the world around me existed,” she tells Scary Mommy.

5. Grieving a child lasts forever.

My great-grandmother lost a child to pneumonia at three years old, and my grandma has always said that her mother grieved that baby until the day she died at 96 years old. When I told one of my friends this to hopefully help her understand my grief after my daughter’s death, her reply in the form of pure shock was, “Really?! That long?!”

From that moment on, at a mere three weeks following my daughter’s death, I’ve felt this world’s harsh and expected timeline of my grief. But the truth of the matter is, the bereaved parent **will grieve for as long as we live**.

“I’m never going to be done grieving because my love for my son Bryce is SO BIG and my connection SO DEEP.” — Stafford.

“I live every single day with the pain of my son’s death. Every day I wake up with a broken heart that doesn’t seem to heal.” — Fairchild.

“I will grieve my children for the rest of my life. I will always wonder who they would have been. What they would look like. Who they would grow up to be. I will ALWAYS grieve my babies.” — Geyer.

“Grief NEVER goes away. There are good days and bad days and on the bad days they are like waves drowning you in an ocean.” — Brown.

So, yes, bereaved parents *really* do and will grieve for “that long.”

What is normal after your child dies?

(Written by A Grieving Mother)

Normal is having tears waiting behind every smile because your child is missing from all the important events in your life.

Normal is feeling like you can't sit another minute without getting up and screaming, because you just don't like to sit through anything anymore.

Normal is not sleeping very well because a thousand what ifs & why didn't I's go through your head constantly.

Normal is reliving the day your child died, continuously through your eyes and mind, holding your head to make it go away.

Normal is having the TV on the minute you walk into the house to have noise, because the silence is deafening.

Normal is telling the story of your child's death as if it were an everyday, commonplace activity, and then seeing the horror in someone's eyes at how awful it sounds. And yet realizing it has become a part of your "normal."

Normal is each year coming up with the difficult task of how to honor your child's memory and their birthdays and survive these days.

Normal is a heart-warming and yet sinking feeling at the sight of something special your child loved.

Normal is having some people afraid to mention your child.

Normal is making sure that others remember your child.

Normal is everyone else eventually going on with their lives.

Normal is weeks, months, and years after the initial shock, the grieving gets worse, not better.

Normal is not listening to people compare anything in their life to your loss, unless they too have lost a child. Nothing compares.

Normal is realizing you do cry every day.

Normal is being impatient with everything and everyone except someone stricken with grief over the loss of their child.

Normal is sitting at the computer crying, sharing how you feel with other grieving parents.

Normal is being too tired to care if you paid the bills, cleaned the house, did the laundry or if there is any food.

Normal is asking God why he took your child's life instead of yours.

Normal is learning to lie to everyone you meet and telling them you are fine. You lie because it makes others uncomfortable if you cry. You've learned it's easier to lie to them than to tell them the truth that you still feel empty and lost.

And last of all...

Normal is hiding all the things that have become "normal" for you to feel, so that everyone around you will think that you are "normal."



Epitaph

By Merrit Malloy



When I die
Give what's left of me away
To children
And old men that wait to die.

And if you need to cry,
Cry for your brother
Walking the street beside you.
And when you need me,
Put your arms
Around anyone
And give them
What you need to give to me.

I want to leave you something,
Something better
Than words
Or sounds.

Look for me
In the people I've known
Or loved,
And if you cannot give me away,
At least let me live on in your
eyes
And not your mind.

You can love me most
By letting
Hands touch hands,
By letting bodies touch bodies,
And by letting go
Of children
That need to be free.

Love doesn't die,
People do.
So, when all that's left of me
Is love,
Give me away.



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

Cora Rose Bardwell
8/24/98 ~ 7/10/20

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

Michael Costanzo
7/07/98 ~ 12/22/20

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

Nathan Hamilton
7/19/99 ~ 9/04/18

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

Kyle Irwin
07/27/92 ~ 4/21/20

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

April Charlotte Lillicotch
7/27/04 ~ 2/24/20

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

Clarke "Dani" Reese
8/31/93 ~ 2/25/07

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

Gene "Tony" Sergent
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

Daniel "Cody" Starr
4/13/88 ~ 7/30/20

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.

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Northern Virginia Chapter
P.O. Box 7675
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