

caring & sharing news

Helping rebuild lives following the death of a child

Volume 16, No. 2

Grief in Spring?

Written by John Pete

If Spring makes you feel better and to feel new hope, that is a good, positive and nurturing thing. But it may not be true for everyone, and no one should feel they have to hide their true feelings. It is perfectly normal to experience new heightened grief and/or grief-related anxiety in Spring, just as it is in other seasons of the year. Although warmer, sunnier months can be nurturing and inspire new hopefulness, grief does not suddenly go away just because seasons change.

Spring generally brings a sudden flurry of change and things begin to move faster all around us. There is rebirth and renewal in nature as flowers and trees bloom and everything turns green again, and people quickly begin to flock to their favorite warm-weather activities. Try to take time to sit down make some plans that can nurture you and help you cope with your losses and grief.

A helpful way to respond to one's anxiousness about spring and summer is to remind yourself that YOU are in control and that the warmer months offer unique opportunities for nurturing activities such as travel, planting gardens, nature walks, photography, family gatherings, star-gazing, and many other things.

And if it helps, take comfort in the belief that your precious loved ones are with you wherever you are and whatever you are doing.

*"As flowers bloom and the sun shines,
I will forever remember you!"*

- Amanda Gaba



So it's true,
when all is
said and done,
grief is the price
we pay for love."

- E.A. BUCCHIANERI



Healing Through the Decades After a Child Dies

Written by Stacy Parker on Sunday, February 10, 2019

I am a bereaved parent. For so long, that title has defined me and the person I am now. My first daughter was born in 1995 and had a rare condition called Alagille Syndrome. She was cognitively okay, but had serious issues with her heart, liver and kidneys. She lived for two years and two months; then she suddenly took a turn for the worse and died. She was my only child at the time.

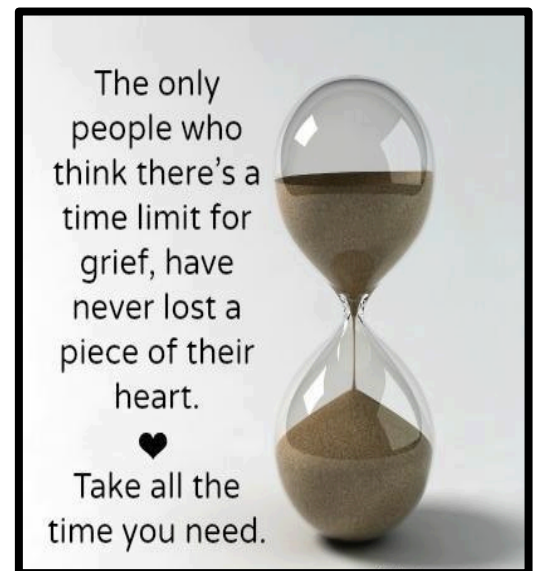
Even after all this time, not a day goes by that I don't think about her. It's been 22 years, and I have to say mostly when I think about her now it is with love and fondness, instead of the searing pain it had been for so many years. How did I make it to 22 years and survive? First of all, time doesn't stop for us even if we think it should. Also, for most people it is a slow and painful process to get through the pain of grief.

I actually didn't think I would make it in the beginning. The pain was so all consuming that I couldn't even imagine it would ever lighten up. When someone dies, it is important to really take it one day at a time, one moment at a time. Just getting through the initial days and weeks is exhausting and can be incredibly painful. It helped me to have the support of family and friends in the beginning, but grieving is a very personal thing. What works for one person might not work for another and it is important to be kind to yourself and give yourself time to get through this process.

My husband and I grieved very differently but we also gave each other space to get through it the way we each needed to. I cried all the time and wanted to talk about my daughter. I also started to scrapbook and I went through pictures and wrote about her and our experience with having a medically fragile child. That helped me a lot. My husband couldn't look at a picture and went right back to work. He was much quieter at home and told me he cried when he was in the car alone.

When you are going through the loss of a child it is hard enough holding yourself up. You cannot hold your partner up too. So, giving each other space and time without judgement helped us get through the most difficult times.

I am not sure when I realized that I would actually be okay...when I would get to the other side and feel like I survived the worst. Like I said before, it is a slow and gradual process. Days became weeks that became years and one day I realized that I went the whole day without crying, or I didn't think about my daughter almost the whole day. Or when a friend mentioned my daughter, I didn't break down. I just smiled and thanked her for bringing her name up. There are still days that can be hard for me and when I talk to someone newly bereaved, it brings back all the feelings from the beginning of my journey. But I am happy to say I think I am as good as I'm going to get in reference to my loss. My daughter will always be a part of my life and I wouldn't want it any other way.



Matthew Ruane

My Dear Sweet Matthew,

I can't believe it's been 17 years since you were taken away from us. You have missed so much over the years: weddings, births, holidays, birthdays, and just plain everyday life that you should have been a part of. We miss you every day, every minute, every second.

Although I know you are around in spirit, I so much want to feel your hugs, hear your voice, and see your beautiful smile. I love all of the little signs you send me; especially, when I'm not looking for them. It's comforting to know you are around even though you can't be seen.

We love you and miss you so much. Until we meet again, please drop by and say hi any way you can. I'll be waiting.

Love mom, dad and sisters.

Happy Birthday Kristin!

Our beautiful daughter Kristin's birthday is this month, March 19th. She should be turning 30 years old on that day, celebrating her BIG 3-0 with family and friends. Instead, we will be sharing her favorite dish, Macaroni and Cheese, and reminiscing about the days "before." As bereaved parents, you know what I'm talking about. There's "before" (Kristin's death) and "after" (Kristin's death). I sometimes refer to it as "BK" and "AK" which as you know refers to two totally different lifetimes for myself and my family.



Unfortunately, "AK" began eleven years ago, February 21, 2008, which was the last time I would ever again hear my beautiful daughter Kristin's voice. We had spoken three times that day, as was typical for us, the last time being at 5:00 pm. She was watching a movie with her "big sis" so didn't have much more than a couple of minutes with me. She told me she would be going out that night with friends so I ended the conversation with my usual, "Be careful. Please don't drink. I Love You." She laughed the way she had about a million times before in her short 18 years and responded, "I know mom, I will. I Love You too." Just nine hours later, my Kristin would be gone, and twelve hours or so after that, my world and that of our family's would be forever changed... Every moment in our lives would now sadly be "AK."

After eleven years, I am well aware that there are those people in my life who might say, "Isn't it just time to move on?" My response is that there has been no other choice. In eleven years, her friends have graduated from college, established careers, fallen in love, some have gotten married, and a few have had children. This year, most will turn 30, yet our Kristin will forever be remembered as 18.

My family and I have been honored to be included in five of Kristin's closest friend's weddings, and I have attended a few of the bridal and baby showers. Her cousin Erin has married and has a little girl. Another cousin, DJ, has married and they just had their second son. I am extremely happy that "Life DOES go on" because our second-born, Eric, married five years ago to the most beautiful bride, Lauren, and have blessed us with the greatest gift of all, our two beyond beautiful and amazing grandchildren, Camden, 3 years, and Reese, 1.5 years. They are a joy in our lives and have helped me tremendously in my grief journey. However, as joyous as all of these occasions have been, there has always been someone missing, and that "empty chair" is never easily ignored. I also don't ignore the fact that I do have another beautiful daughter, Jessica, who continues to challenge me, but shares her love for me the best she knows how. I understand that it's difficult feeling that you have to compete with your deceased sister's memory. "If only..." are two words that are used often by bereaved parents, as well as, "What if..."

I wish (another two of "those" words) there was something more I could have done or said the evening of February 21st that might have changed the tragedy that was to happen that night, in the wee hours of February 22, 2008. A few months after our loss, Eric shared that as sad as we were, we had to feel a sense of peace in knowing that Kristin knew how much she was loved, and that was something not everyone can say. With that being said, I don't think any of us want to take a moment for granted. We have learned the hard way that you never know what tomorrow will bring, so don't let a day go by without telling those who matter in your life how much you love them. I will forever be grateful for my own last conversation with Kristin as we each spoke, "I Love You," to one another. I know that not all of you had the same experience, but your child, or children, feel it every moment of every day, without doubt.

Since that is true, "Happy 30th Birthday Kristin! Your birthday gift is the same I have given you for the past 12 birthdays. I continue to survive. I continue to try and live my days with empathy and kindness. And each time I laugh it is a reminder of the way you somehow found everything hilarious so you are probably laughing at, or with, me. Most important, I love you as BIG as the SKY and even BIGGER, my Poops... Birthday Hugs, Mom"

2019 Programs

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

March 10 – Journaling with Bev Ruane

April 14 – GPS Hope with Laura and Dave Diehl

April 27 - Hope & Healing Conference in Annapolis

May 4 – A Day with Alan Pedersen in Fredericksburg

May 12 – Mother's Day (No Meeting)

June 9 – Therapeutic Drumming with Dr. Caratozzolo

July 14 – Program to be Announced

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 – Program to Be Announced



Laura and Dave Diehl

Sunday, April 14

3:00 p.m.

First United Presbyterian Church

A Day with Alan Pedersen

Saturday, May 4, 2019

10 a.m. ~ 3 p.m.

Redeemer Lutheran Church

5120 Harrison Road

Fredericksburg, VA



Hope & Healing Conference

We are not alone. We walk together with hope in our hearts.

April 27, 2019, 8 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.

Calvary United Methodist Church

301 Rowe Blvd, Annapolis, MD 21401

Registration fee: \$35 per person.

Continental breakfast and lunch included.

For more information contact:

Carol Tomaszewski, 410-519-8448 or

AnnapolisConference@gmail.com

Help Needed to Update Website

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.

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 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

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

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@yahoo.com or 540-220-4325



DAVID J COBB
FOUNDATION

Life After Loss Support Group for Suicide Survivors

"Shining A Light for Those in Darkness"

Last Wednesday of Each Month
Central Public Library
Community Room
8601 Mathis Avenue
Manassas, VA 20110

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



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:



NATIONAL GATHERING 2019



Bereaved Parents USA

August 2-4 ♥ St. Louis, Missouri



**Join MOD Pizza in supporting
Bereaved Parents of the USA
NOVA Chapter**

**Sunday March 31, 2019
10:30am-10:00pm**

**13800 Smoketown Rd.
Woodbridge, VA**

Donating Back: 20%



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.

Please Check E-mails

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 e-mail. If we do not have an email address for you and you have e-mail, please send me an e-mail to bleachermom2000@aol.com. Thank you!

Garden News:

Hello! It's that time of the year again! Soon there will be leaves on the trees, flowers blooming, grass to mow, and those dreaded weeds! The Memorial Garden will start budding shortly so we need to prepare for its rebirth after the winter. There are bushes to trim, grasses to dig up, remaining weeds to pull, flowers to deadhead, and mulch to spread. Anything we can do to be ready for Spring will be a big help for the garden.

After the garden begins growing, we will need continued help to keep the weeds under control and the flowers watered to combat the dry heat of summer. Without water the blooming flowers will wither and die.

Anyone that lives close to the garden would be a great help to drop by and pull a few weeds or water. I will be glad to show you where the water is located. If you just stop by to visit, reach down and pull a weed or two. They are easy to see in the pathway. Every little bit helps! It's amazing how much water the ground soaks up and how fast the weeds grow! Jodi and I are about an hour away so we aren't able to get up there as much as we would like.

This Memorial Garden belongs to all of us Bereaved Parents. It's a labor of love. When you work in it it's a way to honor our children. I believe they know what we are doing for them. Who knows, maybe you will receive a sign from your child. I know I have many times while there! Also, if you don't have a stone in the garden and would like one, you can purchase one from Rock-It Creations, <https://www.rockitcreations.com>. Please order the large size.

We are planning a garden work day on **Saturday March 16** at 10:00 a.m. Please come and help. The more we have the more we can complete and the quicker we can get done. Bring shovels, rakes, pruners, gloves, and anything else you think you might need. Strong arms would, also, be appreciated to dig up grasses! Water and snacks will be provided.

If you can come, please contact me at H 540-528-4758 or C 703-395-9546 or email ruane.beverly@yahoo.com. Or you may contact Jodi at 703-656-6999 or email bleachermom2000@aol.com. That way we will know how many people to plan on. Thank you all in advance. We look forward to seeing you at the garden! Hugs, Beverly





We Remember Our Loved Ones

Who have Birthdays and Death Dates
in March and April

Simi Abrol	9/12/84 ~ 4/01/18	Robert Andrew Larson	3/14/94 ~ 6/30/10
Emily Andrews	8/02/97 ~ 3/14/16	Glen Irvin Leonard II	4/13/71 ~ 12/07/09
William Bruce Austin II	5/11/84 ~ 4/10/18	Henry Lewis III	2/16/74 ~ 4/15/02
Pounch Bahri	10/25/88 ~ 3/04/14	Erika (Brummett) Lott	4/6/77 ~ 11/05/13
Bryan Christopher Bingel	1/08/80 ~ 3/04/08	Kyle Ludeman	4/12/93 ~ 8/27/13
Matthew Bingel	4/23/87 ~ 4/23/87	Derek Meffert	4/21/95 ~ 8/15/10
Christopher Wesley Blok	3/21/80 ~ 2/25/09	Ella Miller	4/27/02 ~ 7/23/10
Abigail Jane Buckley	4/25/15 ~ 11/17/16	Christina Morgan	7/30/80 ~ 3/13/02
Amy R. Buckley	3/13/86 ~ 11/17/16	Nicholas James Nelson	7/16/90 ~ 4/19/18
Danielle Mae Burmeister	3/26/11 ~ 3/26/11	Kira Marie Nicklas Rippy	10/23/82 ~ 3/22/18
Autumn Marie Coffie	4/16/88 ~ 12/29/14	Matthew Allan Ruane	9/07/83 ~ 4/29/02
Sarah Beth Cole	8/06/80 ~ 4/23/11	Lionel Andres Salvador	3/30/13 ~ 3/30/13
Jason Michael Colson	3/09/84 ~ 10/01/08	Klee Simmons	3/27/89 ~ 8/09/15
Christina Lynn Curtis	3/01/74 ~ 12/25/07	Jacqueline Simoes	11/05/66 ~ 3/15/06
Forrest Grant Dotson	8/25/79 ~ 4/19/17	Karl Dewan Smith	11/20/83 ~ 4/25/04
Michael A. Doyle	9/17/81 ~ 3/12/18	Ananth Vignesh Sridhar	11/12/94 ~ 3/20/18
Bryan Eastes	8/18/80 ~ 4/18/17	Kevin Michael Stanphill	3/12/80 ~ 5/09/09
Antonio Ford-Flores	2/25/89 ~ 4/15/10	Graham Stevenson	3/30/85 ~ 9/22/07
Jacob Thomas Fulton	4/15/03 ~ 1/11/15	Beckett Josef TePaske	4/04/12 ~ 5/12/15
Raven Gileau	6/23/90 ~ 4/23/10	Bill Thompson	9/14/51 ~ 4/19/17
Ahmad Givon Glenn	3/06/83 ~ 12/04/06	Linda Thompson Plewes	7/16/51 ~ 3/21/02
Dwayne Eddie Gonsorcik	5/26/74 ~ 4/26/13	Neale Thompson	4/07/71 ~ 4/09/93
Justin Green	3/28/94 ~ 3/28/94	Austin Trenum	3/26/93 ~ 9/27/10
Kourtney Michelle Hale	5/29/80 ~ 3/14/10	Anthony Joseph Turchiano	8/04/79 ~ 4/29/17
Kristin Marie Harkness	3/19/89 ~ 2/22/08	Ruben Chavira Urbina	4/22/02 ~ 9/15/17
Cody Darrin Johnson	9/11/02 ~ 3/06/09	Brian Floyd Weakley	1/20/80 ~ 4/19/07
Kashif Johnson	3/15/87 ~ 5/01/07	Kyle Robert Wilson	5/25/82 ~ 4/16/07
Leslie Ann Kramer	4/20/71 ~ 12/17/06	Baby Woods	3/15/16 ~ 3/15/16
Kwadwo Amoako Kusi	3/20/06 ~ 7/26/08	Noah Woods	4/19/16 ~ 4/19/16
Thomas Langston	4/05/92 ~ 8/04/18	Neil York	4/29/93 ~ 4/25/15

We apologize if there are any mistakes in the "We Remember Our Loved One" section. If we spelled any names incorrectly, have any dates incorrect or your loved one's name is not listed and has a birthday or death date during the months of March and April, please provide us with your loved one's information so they can be included correctly in future newsletters.

Bereaved Parents of the USA Welcome

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.

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