

May/June 2021

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

Volume 18, Number 3



## *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 1<sup>st</sup> to Bev Ruane at 540-628-4758 or [ruane.beverly@yahoo.com](mailto: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.

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

## **Caring and Sharing Support Meetings:**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday @ 7:00 p.m.  
ZOOM Meetings until  
further notice**

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](mailto:bpusanova@gmail.com)



DAVID J COBB  
FOUNDATION

## **Life After Loss Support Group for Suicide Survivors**

**"Shining A Light for Those in Darkness"**

**1<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto:kimberly.fleming@djcfoundation.org)  
website: [www.djcfoundation.org](http://www.djcfoundation.org)

## **AMORe**

(All Murdered Offspring Remembered)

**3<sup>rd</sup> 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](mailto:ruane.beverly@yahoo.com)

## **Support Group for Parents with No Surviving Children**

**2<sup>nd</sup> 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

## **Book Club**

There has been a suggestion of starting a book club for  
the Chapter. We would pick helpful books on the  
subject of Grieving.

We would start out in a Zoom Format (like our support  
meetings) and then when it is safe to do so we would  
meet in homes.

So, I need to know if there is any  
interest in this type of group.  
Please, let Jodi know, if you have  
an interest by emailing  
[bpusanova@gmail.com](mailto:bpusanova@gmail.com).



## **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](mailto:bpvirtualsiblingchapter@gmail.com)  
for the zoom link.

## 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 [bpusanova@gmail.com](mailto:bpusanova@gmail.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](mailto:bpusanova@gmail.com)



## Garden News

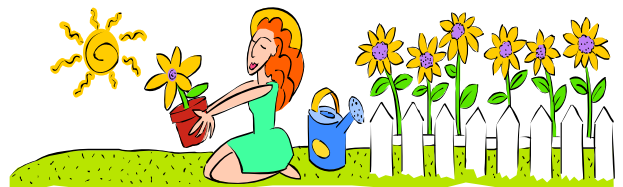
Just want to remind everyone that our Memorial Garden is a beautiful, peaceful place to go to remember our precious children. It is open to everyone and it is a place you can go to practice social distancing and get fresh air.

This 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 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. Perennials are preferred.

If you can help out with the garden please contact Bev or Jodi so we can notify you of any garden work days. At any time, you are available to do so work on the garden, please go out there and do what you can.

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](mailto:ruane.beverly@yahoo.com) or Jodi at 703-656-6999 or [bpusanova@gmail.com](mailto:bpusanova@gmail.com).



## 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 donations:**



**Tom and Linda Harkness  
Neil and Mary Alexander**

## NATIONAL GATHERING 2021



**Bereaved Parents USA**

August 6-8 ♥ St. Louis, Missouri

## Annual Picnic & Lotus Flower Lantern Release



Sunday, May 16, 2021

5:00 p.m.

Locust Shade Park – Marigold Pavilion

Don't forget to RSVP at the following link:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/annual-picnic-lotus-flower-lantern-release-tickets->

## When Nothing Seems To Matter: Surviving The Death Of Your Child

Excerpt from **LOST to FOUND: Surviving the Death of Your Child** by Basia Mosinsk

We cried and cried and cried. We were in shock. We were fearful. We were in disbelief. We asked questions. We became angry. We didn't sleep and we were numb. We were jolted out of our ordinary lives of 'normal' expectation and predictability when our nightmare happened: our child...our loved one was taken from us by illness, or accident. They are gone through their own intention, by their hand or at the hand of someone else. The day our loved one got their wings was our first real day of hell on earth. That was the grim welcome to The Grief Journey.

We were taken down to our knees as all hell broke loose. Lost without a map, a key or a guide. Others in our family or community may have also been affected by the death of our loved one but they were not of much help to us because they didn't have a map either. We were grateful for their presence but felt lost while in the presence of others.

In the chaos of the first few days, we made arrangements, processed papers, collected belongings, and artifacts, if available. We may have looked like we were functioning but we were walking husks of our former selves. Those days may seem like a blur now. We may have spoken to people but not remember that we did. We may have been good at remembering faces and then we weren't. After family and friends returned home or we returned home from where our child lived or died...the initial shock wore off.

Then, we were faced with the real nightmare...our child was never coming back.

Those of us who were strong were rendered helpless. Those who were numb couldn't get out of bed. Those who were vulnerable became suicidal. This was our 'new normal'. Our child was gone and now we were losing ourselves. And as if the loss of our child wasn't bad enough...we all know that it was... for many there were more losses, like after-shocks following an earthquake. Some lost their marriage, some had to move from their home because reminders inside and out were too painful. Some lost work, or took unpaid leave from work. As a result, they lost income, and then made terrible financial decisions in order to survive. The work, the people, the requirements, the meaninglessness, the commute or the tone of someone's voice was something we just couldn't tolerate any longer. Not when one of the most important people in our lives...is gone.



# How Many Children Do I Have Now?

Excerpt from Standing on One Leg by Neal Raisman

How many children do you have?

Do I have? Did I have?

How do I answer that? How do I stop the rising sadness as I think.

I had two. Now. One? No two. He always exists. Even if he doesn't. He is here.  
No. I don't know where he is. Is he anywhere?

I have one. Shana.

But I had two Shana and Issac.

So, what is the answer? How can I respond without denying him or the truth. I have one now.

Why did you ask? To cause pain. Increasing the longing for what I cannot have. Two children. Here. With me. Touchable. Huggable. Breathing. Living. Why did you ask? It's just a common courtesy question. Socially acceptable intercourse. A nicety? But not acceptable or nice when you ask the father of a dead son.

But she doesn't know. Doesn't think about death. About how I grieve so for him. For Aileen and Shana. And myself. For our loss that you just brought up again like blame thrown in my face. As if I should have two now still. And I feel it gorging in my throat. Behind my eyes and in my mouth. It curling down and out as if fighting the pain of hammer on thumb. But this is hammering on my being. Being alive. To answer unintentional questions that burn my spirit.

Why ask me that? Do you know? What to watch a man in pain. See how he suppresses tears. Rage?

Nah, just accidentally right on target space filler question.

I have one but I had two? Can't deny his existence but no longer have him. Have him here. But I still have him. He is here all the time but none of the time.

Tell this person I have/had two? Do I need the pity rush today. Do I want to retell the story? Will she really hear the loss. Or merely rubberneck in the tale of death and want move on quickly. Oh, I'm so sorry. It must be terrible. As if asking how's the weather? Phatic statements. Filling in the silence.

"I have two. A daughter and a son who died at age 26." And the condolences "I am so sorry. That must be terrible?"

I want to say that she has no idea how horrible. How horrific it is to live without him. How it pains me that I can't help Shana understand how much I love her but have trouble showing it now. Surface emotions just a comb over trying to pretend my emotional range did not fall away.

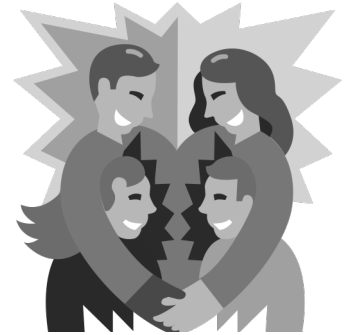
I want to say she could never understand the torment. Screams of agony repressed at the top of my throat. A desire to smash her and everyone around who is happy. Wishing to cause enough hurt so others really understand. A hurt that makes pulling out someone's fingernails, smashing finger, being drawn and quartered pleasurable in comparison.

So, I say he died of meningitis. And tell the abbreviated story. Readers Digest version.

"I'm so sorry."

"Thank you."

Look at one another for a moment. Then move on to another topic or person. The question remaining for me like a wound that does not heal.



# International Bereaved Mother's Day: An Open Letter to my Fellow Sisters in Loss

From [thelifeididntchoose](#) blog by Melanie Desimone

Dear Mama,

*I know that you never-in your wildest imagination-thought that you would need a day set aside for your broken heart and your empty arms.*

***Who thinks when they learn a new life is growing inside that this same life might be cut short? What heart is brave enough to consider the possibility?***

*Yet here you are.*

**I'm so, so sorry.**

But there are a few things I want you to know. There are some important truths to remember on this broken road-truths that can help you hold onto hope and finish strong.

**You are not a failure.** I don't care about those silly social media memes that are tossed around like candy from a Mardi Gras float. *You kept your baby or your child as safe as you knew how.* **You are not omnipotent nor omniscient.** You did the best you could. That's all **ANYONE** can do.

**You are a mother even if you don't have a single child to hold on earth.** You have a child-just not one that others can see. When people ask how many children you have, answer boldly and count the one (or more!) that wait for you in eternity.

**Your love is valid and worthy of expression.** Love for your missing child may look different than love for a child still walking the earth with you. That's OK. Grief is love with no place to go. Tears are fine. Laughter is fine. Speaking his name is your privilege. Carrying her legacy is your honor. No one gets to tell you how or when to express your heart.

**You are brave.** Bereaved mothers are not the only brave ones on this planet but they are some of the bravest ones I know. You have received the heaviest blow a mama's heart can know and you are still standing. You get up every day and carry on. You continue to love the people in your life and serve your family. You have not given up although giving up would be the easiest thing to do. Don't discount your own courage.

**You are strong-not** because you want to be but because you have to be. Other people depend on you and you are trying your best not to let them down. It's no compliment when someone says, *"I just wouldn't be able to survive."* Because, really-what choice do we have? We bear up under the burden because the alternative is to further burden our families.

**You are beautiful.** Every time you look in the mirror and notice the circles under your eyes or the lines around your mouth, don't think that makes you ugly. They are scars-scars of love and sacrifice. They bear witness to the fact that you choose to carry on and carry your child's legacy even though it costs every ounce of energy and will you can muster. You may not like the way you look in pictures, but trust me, you are beautiful.

**You are a living legacy for your missing child.** You carry his light. You honor her memory. You keep it fresh and alive and present and refuse to let others forget or ignore it.

**You have a story to tell so tell it.** Your story may be the key to unlock another mom's prison. We cannot do this alone. We need one another. Don't let fear of being dismissed or misunderstood silence you. Speak up. Stand out. Shout your truth for others to hear.

**This day is for YOU.**

*It is set aside for all the mothers who love a child they can no longer hold.*

**Observe it however is meaningful and healing for YOU.**

*There's no right way or wrong way to grieve.*





# ***We Remember Our Children***

## ***Who have Birthdays and Death Dates in May and June***

<b>Zaria Jasmyn Nevaen Agee</b>	<b>1/28/04 ~ 6/09/19</b>	<b>Quincy Holmes</b>	<b>5/18/05 ~ 7/20/15</b>
<b>Charles (CJ) Angelos, Jr</b>	<b>5/28/85 ~ 11/18/06</b>	<b>Daniel Franklin Houston</b>	<b>8/10/68 ~ 6/13/16</b>
<b>Zachary William Arnold</b>	<b>9/23/84 ~ 5/11/14</b>	<b>Ethan Humphrey</b>	<b>6/23/16 ~ 7/22/16</b>
<b>Mielen Garlit Arquines</b>	<b>12/01/68 ~ 6/04/08</b>	<b>Adrienne Leigh Ingram</b>	<b>6/25/79 ~ 12/2/07</b>
<b>William Bruce Austin II</b>	<b>5/11/84 ~ 4/10/18</b>	<b>Devonte Lee Ivy</b>	<b>6/16/00 ~ 9/16/19</b>
<b>Brandon Scott Bailey</b>	<b>6/21/79 ~ 5/31/99</b>	<b>Derrick V. James</b>	<b>6/01/74 ~ 5/28/05</b>
<b>James "Jimmy" Barnette</b>	<b>7/11/98 ~ 6/03/06</b>	<b>Rasheem Kuwan Jenkins</b>	<b>5/04/82 ~ 9/09/09</b>
<b>Donald "Donnie" Barrett</b>	<b>5/14/76 ~ 5/03/02</b>	<b>Kashif Johnson</b>	<b>3/15/87 ~ 5/01/07</b>
<b>Kimberly Ann Barrett</b>	<b>9/08/86 ~ 5/04/02</b>	<b>Robert Andrew Larson</b>	<b>3/14/94 ~ 6/30/10</b>
<b>Jamie William Billek</b>	<b>6/25/06 ~ 6/25/06</b>	<b>Nicole Michelle Lee</b>	<b>6/22/89 ~ 1/26/08</b>
<b>Joseph Brendan Birkebile</b>	<b>6/26/89 ~ 1/11/11</b>	<b>Robert Loiseau</b>	<b>8/22/72 ~ 5/27/93</b>
<b>Parker Evan Boyd</b>	<b>9/15/98 ~ 6/04/08</b>	<b>Robert Henry Maples</b>	<b>6/07/76 ~ 7/05/18</b>
<b>Brian Brumbaugh</b>	<b>11/09/83 ~ 5/02/07</b>	<b>Ian Patrick McDonald</b>	<b>5/05/89 ~ 1/12/15</b>
<b>Brandon Bundy</b>	<b>5/19/84 ~ 8/24/08</b>	<b>Christian Paul Norman</b>	<b>2/04/85 ~ 6/03/01</b>
<b>Cole James Clark</b>	<b>5/11/13 ~ 5/15/17</b>	<b>Josephine Pennefather</b>	<b>6/21/03 ~ 6/21/03</b>
<b>Baby Combo</b>	<b>5/08/16~5/08/16</b>	<b>Timothy Michael John Peyton</b>	<b>6/13/68 ~ 2/09/17</b>
<b>Emmanuel Camden Conty</b>	<b>5/29/19 ~ 5/29/19</b>	<b>Vernon Santmyer, Jr.</b>	<b>8/24/79 ~ 5/17/11</b>
<b>Brandon DeWulf</b>	<b>6/20/85 ~ 6/29/09</b>	<b>Courtney Sharee Shelby</b>	<b>11/23/93 ~ 5/14/01</b>
<b>Corey Martin Dill</b>	<b>7/25/90 ~ 5/03/07</b>	<b>Mark Alexander Slough</b>	<b>6/26/96 ~ 10/08/15</b>
<b>David John Drumheller</b>	<b>8/30/89 ~ 6/20/16</b>	<b>Colby Thomas Smith</b>	<b>5/25/04 ~ 10/11/15</b>
<b>Ezekiel Josiah Gales</b>	<b>1/30/98 ~ 6/08/20</b>	<b>Adam Charles Sorge</b>	<b>5/12/94 ~ 1/04/14</b>
<b>Raven Gileau</b>	<b>6/23/90 ~ 4/23/10</b>	<b>Kevin Michael Stanphill</b>	<b>3/12/80 ~ 5/09/09</b>
<b>Jacob Charles Glushefski</b>	<b>5/23/77 ~ 2/21/11</b>	<b>Michael "Ryan" Stevens</b>	<b>7/07/87 ~ 5/30/07</b>
<b>Dwayne Eddie Gonsorcik</b>	<b>5/26/74 ~ 4/26/13</b>	<b>Beckett Josef TePaske</b>	<b>5/04/12 ~ 5/12/15</b>
<b>Christina Gordon</b>	<b>5/08/13 ~ 5/08/13</b>	<b>Christopher Andre' Waters Jr</b>	<b>5/31/97 ~ 12/23/07</b>
<b>John Gregory</b>	<b>9/21/73 ~ 6/03/13</b>	<b>Josh Weaver</b>	<b>6/17/82 ~ 9/09/09</b>
<b>Kourtney Michelle Hale</b>	<b>5/29/80 ~ 3/14/10</b>	<b>Kyle Robert Wilson</b>	<b>5/25/82 ~ 4/16/07</b>
<b>Gabrielle Nicole Henderson</b>	<b>5/28/86 ~ 6/17/99</b>	<b>Tommie J. Wonnum III</b>	<b>6/14/84 ~ 6/30/03</b>
<b>Olivia Rose Cecilia Henry</b>	<b>5/27/02 ~ 5/26/12</b>	<b>Franklin Conner Woodward</b>	<b>5/15/08 ~ 5/17/08</b>
<b>Desmend Holmes</b>	<b>6/16/06 ~ 7/21/15</b>	<b>Stephen Wesley Wright</b>	<b>6/06/89 ~ 11/21/13</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 May and June, 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](mailto:bpusanova@gmail.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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