

Summer 2015



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

WE'RE ALIKE, YOU AND I

By Judy Dickey, Greenwood, IN

We're alike, you and I.

We've never met. Our faces would be those of strangers if we met. We would barely perceive the other's presence if we passed on our walk through the mists. We're unknown to each other until the terrible words have been spoken: "MY CHILD DIED".

We're alike, you and I.

We measure time in seconds and eternities. We try to go forward to yesterday. Tomorrows are for whole people, and we are incomplete now.

The tears, after a time, turn inward to become invisible to all save you and me. Our souls are rumped from wrestling with demons and doubts and unanswerable prayers: "GIVE ME BACK MY CHILD."

We're alike, you and I.

The tears that run down your face are my tears, and the wound in your soul is my pain, too. We need time, but time is our enemy, for it carries us farther and farther from our lost child. And we cry out: "HELP ME."

We're alike, you and I.

And we need each other. Don't turn away, but give me your hand . . . and for a time we can cease to be strangers and become what we truly are, a family closer than blood, united by a bond that was forced upon us - but a bond that can make us stronger, still wounded to be sure, but stronger for our sorrows are shared.

"We need not walk alone."

Caring and Sharing Support Meetings

4th Sunday

3 p.m.

Good Shepherd UMC
14999 Birchdale Avenue
Dale City, VA 22193

2nd Thursday

Pot Luck Social Event
7 p.m.

Larson Home
6900 Cole Timothy Court
Manassas, VA 20112
703-791-6537

rlarson900@verizon.com

3rd Wednesday

AMORe

(All Murdered Offspring Remembered)

Murder Victims Support Group
6 p.m.

3182 Golansky Blvd, Suite 101
Woodbridge, VA 22192
703-395-9546

bruane01@verizon.net

For more information contact:

Jodi Norman, Chapter Leader
703-910-6277 (home)
703-656-6999 (cell)

bleachermom2000@aol.com



We Remember Our Children

Who have Birthdays and Angelversary dates
in July, August, September

Jason Duane Alexander	7/02/74 ~ 7/24/13	Anthony “Tony” Mason	2/28/73 ~ 9/22/07
Scott R. Barley	12/07/81 ~ 9/29/11	Ronald McCorn	8/14/75 ~ 12/09/04
James “Jimmy” Barnette	7/11/98 ~ 6/03/06	Kevin McGuinn	2/8/88 ~ 8/26/08
Kimberly Ann Barrett	9/08/86 ~ 5/04/02	Emily “Tabor” McMullen	1/26/84 ~ 8/31/12
Trevor Austin Blake	10/30/01 ~ 8/11/13	John Earl Medley	2/21/59 ~ 9/09/08
Parker Evan Boyd	9/15/98 ~ 6/04/08	Derek Meffert	4/21/95 ~ 8/15/10
Baron “Deuce” Braswell II	9/29/89 ~ 1/20/06	Ella Miller	4/27/02 ~ 7/23/10
Kenny Brooks Jr	8/13/82 ~ 1/13/06	Michael Joseph Moore	7/13/71 ~ 1/09/09
Brandon Bundy	5/19/84 ~ 8/24/08	Christina Morgan	7/30/80 ~ 3/13/02
Lisa Marie Champlin	10/16 ~ 9/2	Johnny Ray Mullins	7/11/61 ~ 1/22/02
Christopher Chapman	8/01/88 ~ 1/13/07	Michael Sean O’Berry	9/13/94 ~ 12/15/97
Eduardo P “Eddy” Chavez	2/07/06 ~ 9/20/10	Zane J Pitzvada	8/22/92 ~ 9/14/11
Jason A. Clover	7/30/84 ~ 9/28/03	Linda Thompson Plewes	7/16/51 ~ 3/21/02
Todd Coder	7/23/84 ~ 9/24/10	Kylene Marie Privett	12/14/83 ~ 8/13/07
Sarah Beth Cole	8/06/80 ~ 4/23/11	Ronald Ralph, Jr	7/27/66 ~ 11/04/02
Corey Martin Dill	7/25/90 ~ 5/03/07	Matthew Allan Ruane	9/07/83 ~ 4/29/02
Tresa Eastes	3/07/67 ~ 7/08/03	Vernon Santmyer, Jr.	8/24/79 ~ 5/17/11
Robert Alan Finch	7/27/70 ~ 1/02/01	Gene Anthony Sergent	8/10/87 ~ 9/14/07
Rhonda Lynn Flannery	7/31/63 ~ 11/10/01	Brandon Simms	10/10/80 ~ 7/14/95
Bruce Lee Foxworthy	8/29/75 ~ 2/11/12	Adelacia Smalley	08/06/94 ~ 10/19/02
Erin Gaston	9/27/80 ~ 10/31/08	Tyler Smith	9/20/92 ~ 8/01/06
John Edward Gregory	9/21/73 ~ 6/03/13	Michael “Ryan” Stevens	7/07/87 ~ 5/30/07
Olivia Jean Howard	12/31/91 ~ 9/03/09	Graham Stevenson	3/30/85 ~ 9/22/07
Rasheem Jenkins	5/04/82 ~ 9/09/09	Jerry Damon Taybron	11/21/75 ~ 8/18/07
Cody Darrin Johnson	9/11/02 ~ 3/06/09	Austin Trenum	3/26/93 ~ 9/27/10
Stephanie Dawn Kirpes	5/06/85 ~ 7/06/08	Mindy Weakley	12/20/83 ~ 9/02/09
Robert Loiseau	8/22/72 ~ 5/27/93	Josh Weaver	6/17/82 ~ 9/09/09
Sara Lott	11/01/95 ~ 7/23/08	Kevin Woods	12/08/93 ~ 8/06/14

We apologize if there are any mistakes in the “We Remember Our Children” section. If we spelled any names incorrectly, have any dates wrong, or your child’s name is not listed and he/she has a birthday or angelversary date during the months of July, August and September, please provide us with your child’s information so they can be included correctly in future newsletters.

**In Loving Memory of
Matthew Alan Ruane
September 7, 1983 – April 29, 2002**

Dearest Matthew,

Another birthday without you here on earth is here. I remember like it was yesterday the day you were born and how happy I was. I miss seeing your quirky smile everyday and your playfulness. I know it would be different now because you would be older but I don't think you would have ever lost your beautiful smile, sense of humor, generosity, and kindness. You are so greatly missed and always will be.

You have missed so much over the years but I know you are seeing and feeling everything in spirit and always will be. Your family and friends wish you a Happy Heavenly Birthday. We wish you were here on earth to celebrate it for you.



We miss you and love you now and forever. You will always be my baby boy.

Love, Mom, Dad, Sisters and all.

**I Will Love You,
My Child**

**As long as I can dream,
as long as I can think,
as long as I have a memory...**
I will love you.

**As long as I have eyes to see
and ears to hear
and lips to speak...**
I will love you.

**And as long as I have a heart to feel,
a soul stirring within me,
an imagination to hold you...**
I will love you.

**And as long as I have a breath
to speak your name...**
I will love you.

Author Unknown

**In Loving Memory of
Jason Duane Alexander
July 2, 1974 – July 24, 2013**

Happy Birthday Jason! There's not a day that goes by without a thought of you...a smile, or a tear as we remember the big void left in our lives. However, you live in our hearts and are never far away with all of our special memories.

Miss you, Mom, Dad, and Brian



And through all the tears,
and the sadness
and the pain,
comes the one thought that can
make me internally smile again:
I have Loved!

**“Grief is not a sign of
weakness – nor loss of
faith, it is simply
the price of love...”**



Shipwrecked

From an Internet Blog by
Bobby Popovic

From the depths of old internet comments comes another incredible gem of a story. One user wrote the following heartfelt plea online: "**My friend just died. I don't know what to do.**" The rest of the post has been deleted, only the title remains. However, the helpful responses live on, and one of them was absolutely incredible. The reply by this self-titled "old guy" might just change the way you approach life and death.

I'm old. What that means is that I've survived (so far) and a lot of people I've known and loved did not. I've lost friends, best friends, acquaintances, co-workers, grandparents, mom, relatives, teachers, mentors, students, neighbors, and a host of other folks. I have no children, and I can't imagine the pain it must be to lose a child. But here's my two cents...**I wish I could say you get used to people dying.** But I never did. I don't want to. It tears a hole through me whenever somebody I love dies, no matter the circumstances. But I don't want it to "not matter". I don't want it to be something that just passes. My scars are a testament to the love and the relationship that I had for and with that person.

And if the scar is deep, so was the love. So be it. **Scars are a testament to life.** Scars are a testament that I can love deeply and live deeply and be cut, or even gouged, and that I can heal and continue to live and continue to love. And the scar tissue is stronger than the original flesh ever was. Scars are a testament to life. Scars are only ugly to people who can't see. As for grief, you'll find it comes in waves. When the ship is first wrecked, you're drowning, with wreckage all around you. Everything floating around you reminds you of the beauty and the magnificence of the ship that was, and is no more. And all you can do is float. You find some piece of the wreckage and you hang on for a while. Maybe it's some physical thing. Maybe it's a happy memory or a photograph. Maybe it's a person who is also floating.

For a while, all you can do is float. Stay alive. In the beginning, the waves are 100 feet tall and crash over you without mercy. They come 10 seconds apart and don't even give you time to catch your breath. All you can do is hang on and float. After a while, maybe weeks, maybe months, you'll find the waves are still 100 feet tall, but they come further apart. When they come, they still crash all over you and wipe you out. But in between, you can breathe, you can function. You never know what's going to trigger the grief. It might be a song, a picture, a street intersection, the smell of a cup of coffee. It can be just about anything...and the wave comes crashing. But in between waves, there is life. Somewhere down the line, and it's different for everybody, you find that the waves are only 80 feet tall. Or 50 feet tall. And while they still come, they come further apart. You can see them coming. An anniversary, a birthday, or Christmas, or landing at O'Hare. You can see it coming, for the most part, and prepare yourself. And when it washes over you, you know that somehow you will, again, come out the other side. Soaking wet, sputtering, still hanging on to some tiny piece of the wreckage, but you'll come out. Take it from an old guy. The waves never stop coming, and somehow you don't really want them to. But you learn that you'll survive them. And other waves will come. And you'll survive them too. If you're lucky, you'll have lots of scars from lots of loves. And lots of shipwrecks.

THE GOOD OLD SUMMERTIME???

The good old summertime has arrived. The time when we usually plan vacations, family reunions, picnics, etc. There are many activities going on, such as ball games, golf, swimming, though for some of us a float on an Ozark stream is more enticing. Vacation bible schools and ice cream socials are held at churches. We usually adopt a more casual lifestyle, cook outdoors, and free ourselves of rigid schedules. Whatever our interests may be, this is the time for family togetherness. When our family is still intact, it can be a wonderful time...if not, it can be a very painful time.

If this is the first summer following the death of your child, you may not have much inclination or energy for the usual activities, although many parents find that doing something physically demanding helps release the tension and anger associated with grief. Some have found a measure of healing and peace in their yard or garden, or planting a flower garden in memory of their child. Others may feel obligated to attend family activities, and then they find that it does help to get involved.

If you don't feel able to get out and get involved in your usual activities, don't be concerned, just do what you feel like you can do now.

Many of us think going away on a vacation or short trip somewhere will help us get away from the painful re- minders of our child's death, and though it may be less painful than it was at home, we soon learn that we take our memories and emotions with us wherever we go. However, a vacation can be an incentive for doing something relaxing and enjoyable, though most of us feel guilty if we enjoy ourselves very soon after our child has died.

When we made vacation plans for the summer following our son's death in February, I was a little apprehensive. We were going to visit our daughter, who had recently moved to Michigan, and invited our daughter-in-law (our son's widow) and her daughters, ages three and five, to accompany us on the vacation. From there, all of our group traveled upstate to stay a few days at a lake resort. Our little granddaughters kept the trip upbeat and lively, and we were able to enjoy ourselves for the first time that summer. It was helpful for all of us, even though there were several intense emotional moments. Now we realize that everyone in our family was still grieving, each in their own way, and it would have been helpful to have allowed each one some private time to rest every day.

As newly bereaved parents, we are the pioneers, charting our way through an unknown area to our new destination. We've been told that it is peaceful there, but we can't feel that peace until we arrive. Those who have already made the trip report that life is different, yet good, in that new place. But we find it difficult to believe, because we are still traveling that long, rugged trail, and the end is not yet in sight. "Don't be afraid," we are told, "we made it and you will make it, too." Those who have made the journey encourage us to believe that we'll make it through the wilderness of grief and find peace.

As one who has found peace at the end of the journey, I'm thankful to those who encouraged me during those dark days when I could not see the way. Their loving support, and my faith, gave me hope that life could be good and meaningful again, and now it truly is.

If you are still struggling along, unable to see a future without pain and confusions, please reach out to those of us who have been there.



Webmaster Needed

Our Chapter website is in desperate need of being updated. If you have the skills needed to be a Webmaster, we really could use your help and computer skills. We already have a site on Fat Cow but it has not been updated since 2011. We would like to include photos and bios of our children and use the site to keep our members up-to-date on what is going on in the chapter. This is a great way to do something in memory of your child, grandchild or sibling.

If you are able to help us with this very important project, please call Jodi at 703-656-6999 or email bleachermom2000@aol.com.

AMORe

(All Murdered Offspring Remembered) Meeting for Parents of Children who were Murdered

3rd Wednesday of every month
6:00 p.m.

Woodbridge Christian Church Office
3182 Golansky Blvd., Suite 101
Woodbridge, VA 22192

For more info contact Bev Ruane at 703-395-9546
Or email: bruane01@verizon.net



Congratulations to the following Raffle Winners:

I-Pad Mini: Kylee Norman

Xbox One: Andrew & Wyatt Woodward

Thank you to everyone who sold raffle tickets.

We reached our goal of raising \$1,000!

AMAZON.COM

Did you know that BP/USA is an affiliated member of Amazon.com?

This means that if you visit BP/USA before making an Amazon.com purchase, and click on the Amazon link on the page, that BP/USA will receive a percentage of all sales. The use of this link does not increase the cost of your purchase. Four to 13% of the sales price comes back to BP/USA.

Go to bereavedparentsusa.com.

We Need Your Help!

There are dozens of tasks that go into running our chapter and our special events, helping set up the meeting room, helping with the Memorial Garden, planning special events and fundraising, working on outreach and public relations, being our webmaster, if you have the time and talent to share – **we need your help!**

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, please contact Jodi Norman, at 703-910-6277 or by email: bleachermom2000@aol.com

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.

Yankee Candle Fundraiser

BP/USA NOVA Chapter is partnering with Yankee Candle Fundraising. They are the world's #1 candle brand and they offer a wide range of premium candles, fragrances, and décor items at a very wide range of prices. The most important thing to know is that **40% of every sale goes to BP/USA NOVA Chapter!** The prices on the candles and other items are the same prices that you would pay at any retail store. There are a lot of beautiful fall and Christmas items available in the Fall and Winter Collection.



Online Shopping: Visit www.yankeecandlefundraising.com and enter **Group Number: 990078671** in the "Start Shopping" box. Then shop for catalog items and online exclusives to help raise money for the chapter. To invite friends and family to participate, fill out the "Signup to be a seller" form and use the group number to register. Simple instructions allow you to send informational e-mails to friends and family. Items they order will ship directly to them. The online shopping is currently available and will run through January 13, 2016.

Yankee Candle's new mobile app makes contacting family and friends to support your fundraiser easy, automated and very fast. The App lets you load all your contacts from your organization and send out one common message to all of them to shop your fundraiser online. Contact friends, relatives, co-workers, Facebook friends, Twitter followers, Pinterest Partners . . .with one quick message! Download Yankee Fundraiser at Apple App Store or Google Play.

Please support Bereaved Parents of the USA NOVA Chapter in providing needed funds to operate the Chapter, provide outreach, print newsletters, host special events and projects such as the Candle Lighting, Butterfly Release, Memorial Garden, Picnic and Balloon Release.

Thank you for your support!

Infant Loss Support Group

Anyone who has experienced the death of an infant due to stillbirth, miscarriage or neonatal death, and needs support or someone to talk to, who understands what you are going through, please contact

Mary Mozingo

mhmozingo@gmail.com

571-408-1907

Mary would like to start a support group for Parents of Infant Loss. If you are interested in attending a monthly meeting that will offer support and understanding after an Infant Loss, please let Mary know.

Memorial Garden

Our Memorial Garden, located at the St. Benedict Monastery; 9541 Linton Hall Rd, Bristow, VA is a beautiful and peaceful place that is in memory of all the children of the Northern Virginia Chapter of the Bereaved Parents of the USA.

It takes a lot of hard work to keep the garden beautiful. I would like to thank those that have generously given of their time to make the garden a beautiful place to honor and remember our children.

Everyone is welcome to come and enjoy the garden and the beauty of all the nature that is out there. Sit and listen to the birds sing, watch for beautiful butterflies, listen to the wind chimes or just enjoy the peacefulness of a quiet evening remembering our beautiful children!

There is still room for more memorial rocks. They can be ordered from the website "Rockit Creations." The large size is the best size to order allowing for enough room to have your child's name engraved on the rock. These rocks are river rocks and will last a lifetime!



Bereaved Parents of the USA Credo

We are the parents whose children have died. We are the grandparents who have buried grandchildren. We are the siblings whose brothers and sisters no longer walk with us through life. We come together as Bereaved Parents of the USA to provide a haven where all bereaved families can meet and share our long and arduous grief journey. We attend month gatherings whenever we can and for as long as we believe necessary. We share our fears, confusion, anger guilt, frustrations, emptiness and feelings of hopelessness, so that hope can be found anew. As we accept, support, comfort and encourage each other, we demonstrate to each other that survival is possible. Together we celebrate the lives of our children, share the joys and the triumphs as well as the love that will never fade. Together we learn how little it matters where we live, what our color or our affluence is or what faith we uphold as we confront the tragedies of our children's deaths. Together, strengthened by the bonds we forge at our gatherings, we offer what we have learned from each other to every more recently bereaved family.

*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: 703-910-6277
bpusa.nova@yahoo.com



Bereaved Parents of the USA
P.O. Box 622, St Peters, MO 63376
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 bpusa.nova@yahoo.com or calling Jodi at 703-910-6277.

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