

Volume 17 Number 5

September/October 2021

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

***Please join us in celebration of our children's
lives as we enter this Holiday Season with
Love, Compassion and Hope for all.***

***Annual Service of Remembrance
Sunday, December 12, 2021
6:00 p.m.***

First United Presbyterian Church of Dale City

**Program will consist of readings, music, slideshow of our
children and lighting candles in their memory**



If we do not already have your child's photo to be used in our slideshow, please send a photo to Jodi at bpusanova@gmail.com. We want to include all the children of members of our chapter whether you are attending the service or not.

If you would like to participate in the program by doing a reading, provide music, read the names or anything else you would like to do, please let Jodi know at bpusanova@gmail.com

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

Caring & Sharing Meetings

**In-Person Meetings are Back
Beginning September 26th**

4th Sunday of each month
3:00 p.m.

First United Presbyterian Church
14391 Minnieville Road
Dale City, VA

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

New Date for Zoom Meetings

2nd Thursday @ 7:00 p.m.

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

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.

Life After Loss Support Group for Suicide Survivors

"Shining A Light for Those in Darkness"
Last Wednesday of Each Month
7:00-8:00 p.m.

Parents of Suicide Loss Support Group

1st Sunday of the 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



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

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.

Cancelled

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 and preferably perennials.

The address to the garden, which is on the grounds of the St. Benedict Monastery, is 9535 Linton Hall Road, Bristow, VA. The garden is near the Labyrinth and the Columbarium.

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.

Check out our Chapter Website

<http://www.bpusanova.com>

You will find all announcements regarding our chapter on the website. Also, please check your email and Facebook for Chapter Announcements. The easiest way to get the word out about Chapter happenings is via the internet. If we do not have an email address for you, please email bpusanova@gmail.com with your email address.



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 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

Learning To Live With Unanswered Questions

Written by Melanie Desimone

It's been twenty years since the Towers fell. Hard to believe-no matter how great the tragedy, life goes on.

Like many, I was watching things as they happened that day.

My husband, an architect and engineer, saw the wobble in the first tower and knew, he knew, it was going to collapse. *Horried I began to understand that whoever was still in that building was running out of time.*

And I cried, oh, how I cried. It was awful.

Since then I've lived my own tragedy.

My son was unexpectedly and instantly taken from us in an accident.

So, when I'm reminded of 9/11 my heart takes me right to those left behind.



And while politicians and pundits can debate the reasons for the attack, can argue about what could have been done, should have been done and why and when-they can never answer the real question in the heart of every family who buried a loved one because of the events of that day.

Why MY husband, wife, daughter, son? How do I make sense of this senseless tragedy?

The answer is, ***“You can’t.”***

You cannot know why one person *chose to go this way and lived* and another *went a different direction and died*. It's impossible to understand the series of events that made someone late for work that day but lead another to show up early.

Last minute travel plan changes saved some from being aboard the fateful planes and put others in a seat.

I can't know exactly why my son lost control of his motorcycle that night. ***I will live the rest of my life without an answer to that question.***

It's an ongoing challenge to face the discomfort of things **NOT** making sense. *It goes against human nature to acknowledge that the world is far less predictable than we like to believe.*

It takes courage to greet each new day with knowledge that **ANYTHING** might happen-**not only beautiful and wonderful things, but ugly and awful things as well.**

If I let my heart dwell on the questions of “why?” and “control”, I am paralyzed, unable to take another step.

There's no clear path through a world filled with the rubble of broken lives and broken people.

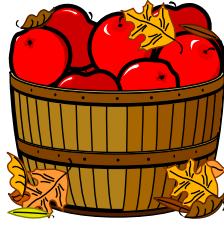
You can do the
IMPOSSIBLE,
because you have
been through the
UNIMAGINABLE.

Christina Rasmussen

Grief is not linear –
it doesn't start strong
and taper off with time.
Rather, it is like a storm,
that grows smaller or larger
in the same day,
and often within hours.

Falling In Autumn

Written by Tanner's Mom



Prior to Tanner's death, I loved everything about Autumn. The beautiful colors, the apples, the pumpkins, the brisk fall air...everything. We loved raking the leaves, hiking through the woods, and heading to soccer games bundled up with blankets and sweatshirts. Now that he is gone, I sometimes find myself struggling to enjoy a season that took so much away from me. I'd love to be taking his goofy "first day of school" photos with his big "sissy," but instead we find ourselves getting ready for another year without him and his infectious laughter. Tanner passed away in August, and now the fall brings painful memories of what should have been.

As I watch my daughter get ready for a new school season to start, I know that she is thinking some of the same things I am.... what grade would Tanner be in? What would he pick out for new school shoes? Would he still be wearing the same basketball themed wardrobe like the one he left behind? I know this because, in the fall, she speaks of him every day. Not just the occasional mention, but with detail. "Tanner would love my Nike shoes, wouldn't he, Mama? They are like his basketball shoes. He would have needed all basketball clothes, and he would want soccer cleats, too. He would have been great friends with Rylan, and they would have been in the same class! They would be crazy together. I miss him, Mama." To hear her speak of him so openly is music to my ears, as it took her several months to learn how to speak of her loss without emotions taking over and shutting

her down. She now has her own way of coping with his absence, but hearing her say "I miss him" and watching the pain appear across her face opens the wounds as if they were new. She tucks his picture into her folder and walks to the car as her "Tanner" key-chain dangles from the front of her backpack. To us, the beautiful leaves remind us that Tanner isn't coming back.

You see, in the fall, we lost our son, little brother, family athlete & clown, our snuggle bug, protector, green eggs and ham lover, crazy dancer, playmate, and all that his future would hold. We lost the ability to photograph his first day of school, take him camping, enjoy late night movies, watch him play in a championship game, attend his graduation, meet his beautiful bride, to hold his children, to have afternoon coffee together...we lost all of those memories that we were not given the time to create. Losing a child is a horrific experience, but what so many fail to realize is that it's not just the child you lost, but also all that he would become. I too, thought I had all the answers before it happened to me. I remember reading articles about children who had gone too soon and thinking "Oh, that is horrible. I just couldn't go on." The thing is though, you can go on, and you do...and you'll need to find a way to cope. Eventually, the good days

will outweigh the bad, but you'll need to realize that the pain of your child's loss will never "go away," and you'll always have moments in time that are more difficult to get through than the others. For us, Autumn is that moment.

To ease the heartache of Autumn this year, we took a vacation to Maine and walked along the beach by our old house. When we lived there, many hours were spent combing the shoreline for sea glass and small crabs to pick up and befriend. After losing Tanner, my daughter and I liked to pretend that every special treasure we found was one that he had left for us. Somehow, I had forgotten this, until she ran up to me with the most beautiful piece of blue sea glass and said "Mama, Tanner must have known we were here...look what I found!" It amazes me that she continually finds ways to feel connected to him even at her young age. Through her I remember that he'll never really be "gone." For the rest of the trip, we found more treasures than we ever found while we were living there...starfish, sand dollars galore, sea glass, & sea urchins.....and each one convinced us even more that he was watching and enjoying our vacation with us. We chose to visit "our beach" the week of his death, and apparently, he knew that we needed him and knew just where to find us. Even though we'll never really know where he is now, it's memories like this that keep us from falling in Autumn.

5 Tips from a Grieving Mother

By Lisa Boehm



You will survive Angel Mama, I promise

Dear Angel Mama,

I see you there wishing you could die too. I see the tears trickling down your face in silence. I can feel the hole that is in your heart. I know that feeling well because I am a grieving mother too.

There are some things I want you to know. As impossible as it may seem, I promise you that you will survive this tragedy that has destroyed the person you were before your child died. I also want you to know that you are not alone, as lonely as this road feels. I am here with you, and so are countless others. Often, we walk in silence.

Our broken hearts connect us.

When I look back on the five plus years I have spent on this road, there are a lot of things I wish I had known in the beginning. Now I want to share these tips with you.

Choose to focus on your child's life, not their death. I wish I had known this simple thing, because once I started focusing on the 17 years I had with my daughter, the more grateful I was for what I had. When you focus on your child's life, you see the blessings and the happiness and joy and all the experiences that you and your child shared. My daughter was more than the moment she died. I want the world to know that Katie had a big laugh that could be heard 3 aisles over in the grocery store and that she had a serious make-up addiction and loved whipped topping on her Starbucks coffee. I want people to remember her life, not her death.

Find your tribe and soon. One of the greatest gifts you can give yourself is the connection to other mothers who have lost a child. You might meet in person in a formal group setting, you might meet for coffee, or you might connect online in a Facebook group. No one else will know your pain or your journey like another grieving mother. You will find that another grieving mom just "gets it" - no matter what you say or don't say.

Let go of the guilt. You didn't cause your child's death and there's nothing you could have done to prevent it either. You did the very best you could at the time with the information you had. If you could have protected them you would have. If any of us could have saved our children we would have. You did not fail your child. Instead of asking 'what if?', we need to focus on 'what now?'. When we change the question, we change the focus from being powerless (what if) to a position of having some control (what now). The only thing we can control is how we react. Maybe we can take our pain and pour it into creating positive change or maybe we reach out and help others.

It's ok to be ok. The first time you laugh or smile you will feel strange and maybe a little guilty, but I want you to know that your child lives on through you. When you smile, they smile. When you experience joy, they experience joy through you. As you walk this path you will learn that you will always carry grief in one hand, but you can carry joy in the other hand at the same time. The grief never goes away, but it changes. Grief can co-exist with happiness. As a psychic once said to me "Give your daughter something wonderful to watch. Live an amazing life as a way to honor her."

Stay strong. I know you hate this sentiment, Mama, but it needs to be said. You are going through the hardest thing any human being can ever go through. You are a warrior and you must keep your strength up. That means eating good food, replacing all those tears with plenty of water, moving your body in a way that feels good, and getting quality sleep. As moms we are the WORST at taking care of ourselves, but we absolutely need to. It's not negotiable.

Grief is really, really hard and self-care is the first step in coping after the loss of your child.

Walking beside you,

Lisa K. Boehm



We Remember Our Children Who have Birthdays and Death Dates in September and October

Simi Abrol	9/12/84 ~ 4/01/18	William Clayton Holt	9/10/84 ~ 12/23/17
Kirsten Lynn Adler	2/21/94 ~ 10/24/10	Olivia Jean Howard	12/31/91 ~ 9/03/09
Zachary William Arnold	9/23/84 ~ 5/11/14	Devonte Lee Ivy	6/16/00 ~ 9/16/19
Pounch Bahri	10/25/88 ~ 3/04/14	Claude Lee (Jason) Jackson III	8/20/92 ~ 9/12/15
Chad Michael Bailey	9/14/77 ~ 3/25/20	Rasheem Kuwan Jenkins	5/04/82 ~ 9/09/09
Liam Kody Bailey-Edmundson	9/22/15 ~ 9/22/15	Cody Darrin Johnson	9/11/02 ~ 3/06/09
Scott R. Barley	12/07/81 ~ 9/29/11	Adriana Therese Ladino	10/31/02 ~ 3/23/19
Kimberly Ann Barrett	9/08/86 ~ 5/04/02	Jayden William Lee	10/23/10 ~ 10/23/10
Stephanie Webber Bartley	9/29/87 ~ 12/20/16	Tiffany Michelle Lewis	1/26/80 ~ 10/11/96
Suzanne Baughan	9/18/73 ~ 2/18/20	Roseann M. Meale	10/04/69 ~ 1/19/87
Jayden Lee Beale	9/29/08 ~ 9/29/08	John Earl Medley	2/21/59 ~ 9/09/08
Demitrios Bedoya	10/27/76 ~ 2/10/03	Elijah James Nealey	9/08/10 ~ 8/22/12
Trevor Austin Blake	10/30/01 ~ 8/11/13	Michael Sean O'Berry	9/13/94 ~ 12/15/97
Ashley Nicole Blue	11/23/05 ~ 10/11/19	Steven William O'Neill	9/04/75 ~ 9/06/75
Lesly Glyn Bolton	1/19/80 ~ 10/27/16	Kim Ouren	9/19/57 ~ 7/22/18
Mateo Louis Bowman	10/15/13 ~ 10/15/13	Zane J Pitzvada	8/22/92 ~ 9/14/11
Parker Evan Boyd	9/15/98 ~ 6/04/08	Kira Marie Nicklas Rippy	10/23/82 ~ 3/22/18
Baron "Deuce" Braswell II	9/29/89 ~ 1/20/06	Marcus Daniel Robinson	12/29/07 ~ 10/04/17
Clayton Kendall Breeding	10/23/77 ~ 12/12/01	Matthew Allan Ruane	9/07/83 ~ 4/29/02
David John Butts	10/18/80 ~ 12/16/05	Gene "Tony" Sergent	8/10/87 ~ 9/14/07
Lisa Marie Champlin	10/16 ~ 9/2	Joshua Daniel Shirt	1/17/91 ~ 10/13/19
Pamela Sue Chaiken	1/17/64 ~ 9/29/95	Brandon Simms	10/10/80 ~ 7/14/95
Eduardo P "Eddy" Chavez	2/07/06 ~ 9/20/10	Mark Alexander Slough	06/26/96 ~ 10/08/15
Jason A. Clover	7/30/84 ~ 9/28/03	Adelacia Smalley	8/06/94 ~ 10/19/02
David Joseph Cobb	7/02/98 ~ 10/23/15	Colby Thomas Smith	5/25/04 ~ 10/11/15
Todd Coder	7/23/84 ~ 9/24/10	Tyler Smith	9/20/92 ~ 8/01/06
Jason Michael Colson	3/09/84 ~ 10/01/08	Graham Thomson Stevenson	3/30/85 ~ 9/22/07
Ryan Dennis Conty	10/15/20 ~ 10/15/20	Margaret Jane Suliga	4/23/87 ~ 9/02/19
Terry Lee Cunningham, Jr	9/02/94 ~ 9/30/17	Bill Thompson	9/14/51 ~ 4/19/17
Michael A. Doyle	9/17/81 ~ 3/12/18	Derek M. Tierney	1/20/76 ~ 10/09/04
K.J. Edwards	12/03/85 ~ 10/31/03	Austin Trenum	3/26/93 ~ 9/27/10
Elizabeth A. Erickson	7/23/89 ~ 9/14/89	Brian Trotter	11/24/94 ~ 10/17/20
Brian Patrick Elero	12/30/80 ~ 10/29/01	Ruben Chavira Urbina	4/22/02 ~ 9/15/17
Payton Rose Freeze	10/13/98 ~ 2/10/16	Melinda "Mindy" Weakley	12/20/83 ~ 9/02/09
Erin Gaston	9/27/80 ~ 10/31/08	Josh Weaver	6/17/82 ~ 9/09/09
Eric Gonzalez	10/03/02 ~ 10/05/02	Keith Alan West	9/22/66 ~ 11/25/10
John Gregory	9/21/73 ~ 6/3/13	Jessica Dove Williams	9/18/89 ~ 12/05/19
Nathan Hamilton	7/19/99 ~ 9/04/18		

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 September and October, please provide us with your child'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
bpusanova@gmail.com
Website: bpusanova.com



National Website: 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 feel 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
Woodbridge, VA 22195