



Volume 21, Number 1

January/February 2024

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

Twenty-One Years of Hope & Healing

New Meeting for Support After Addiction Death (SAAD)



Starting in March 2024
3rd Friday of the Month
6 p.m.



First United Presbyterian Church
14391 Minnieville Road
Dale City, VA

For more information contact
Jodi Norman @ 703-656-6999
bpusanova@gmail.com



Be gentle
with yourself.



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

Caring & Sharing Meetings

In-Person Meetings

First United Presbyterian Church
14391 Minnieville Road
Dale City, VA
4th Sunday @ 3:00 p.m.

Manassas Church of the Brethren
10047 Nokesville Road, Room 207
Manassas, VA 20110
1st Thursday @ 7:00 p.m.

Zoom Meetings

2nd Thursday @ 7:00 p.m.
(February Meeting is on Feb. 15th)

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

Sibling Support Group

Virtual Support Meetings for
any bereaved sibling over the age of 18
will be held on the
last Thursday of each month.

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84851846327?pwd=dlJiM3VPdkFkVzFvWWtxbm80RkdWdz09>

Meeting ID: 848 [5184 6327](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84851846327?pwd=dlJiM3VPdkFkVzFvWWtxbm80RkdWdz09)
Passcode: 3EDn58

AMORe

(All Murdered Offspring Remembered)

2nd Sunday @ 3 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”

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

SAAD

(Support After Addiction Death)

3rd Friday of the Month @ 6 p.m.

First United Presbyterian Church
14391 Minnieville Road, Dale City, VA

Valentine's Dinner

Monday, February 12, 2024

6:00 p.m.

United Buffet

2942 Prince William Parkway

Woodbridge, VA

RSVP:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0948ACAE22A4F8CF8-47230228-valentines>

Tell Us Your Story

Interested in sharing your child's story for a book designed to give other Bereaved Parents hope?



We are looking for parents who would be willing to be interviewed and have their story written (with your approval) OR write your own story for submission.

Contact Sue Cerrone for more info at 703-819-8604 or Suebcerrone@gmail.com

March Pot Luck Dinner

Wednesday, March 20, 2024

7:00 p.m.

Valerie & Rich Larson Home

6900 Cole Timothy Court

Manassas, VA

RSVP:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0948ACAE22A4F8CF8-47294966-march>

Book Club

Our Book Club meets on the last Monday of the month at 7 p.m. We will meet both on Zoom and in person at Sue Cerrone's home, 9564 Basilwood Drive, Manassas, VA.

We will choose a new book each month, all books will deal with grief and loss.

The Zoom log-in will be emailed to everyone a couple days before the Book Club meets.

For more information contact Sue at suebcerrone@gmail.com or call 703-819-8604. Please RSVP if you are attending in person or on Zoom.

If you are interested in the Book Club please let Jodi know so you will receive the Book Club announcements via email.



Bereaved Parents of the USA
National Gathering Conference



With Sympathy



Our Sincere

*Sympathy to the family of
Sharon Austin.*

*Sharon, mom of William Austin II,
died of Cancer on December 21, 2023
at the age of 68.*

Is Grief A Natural State?

By Brian Smith

Consider this. If we didn't love, we wouldn't grieve. Your grief is a sign of your love. Your love didn't die when your loved one's body died. Love endures. The evidence of the survival of love is grief. Be grateful for the love that continues even though that love means you are now in pain.

LOVE IS A GAMBLE

I have a pair of sneakers with a graphic saying "Love is a gamble." I bought them years ago. I had no idea of the depth of meaning of that phrase until Shayna passed. My love for her was a tremendous gamble. Grief is the price we pay for love.

The more we love, the more crippling the pain can be. This doesn't mean if you love someone tremendously, you will never be able to get "over" the grief. It doesn't mean the longer you're unable to function after their death, the more you loved them. You can and will learn to cope with the pain. Your love for them, and knowing they still love you and want the best for you, can help pull you out of those darkest days. You continue for them, as well as for yourself.

GRIEF IS NOT TERMINAL

Grief feels like it will never end. Almost four years in, I don't think my grief will ever end. And, I'm OK with that. If grief is defined as missing them and wanting them back with us, for most of us, it will never end. Grief may lessen. It will lessen if you let it. Grief is like a chronic, incurable illness. It's not terminal. It will feel that way at times. You will learn to live with it.

When someone dies, for the survivor, serotonin levels dip to levels that make it difficult to function. The body may go into shock. During the grieving process, the brain uses serotonin faster than the body can make it. We are physically impacted as well as emotionally.

With low serotonin levels, our sleep is off. We may sleep too much. Maybe we can't sleep at all. Concentration and attention are difficult. We misplace things. We lose physical energy. Sexual interest may drop. We may eat too much or not enough. Interest in social interaction may wane causing us to isolate ourselves. Solitude can be a good thing. It gives us time to process. However, too much isolation may lead to loneliness which can exacerbate grief.

This is excerpted from Brian Smith's book, [Grief 2 Growth: Planted, Not Buried. How to Survive and Thrive After Life's Greatest Challenges](#)

Valentine's Day Triggers Mother's Grief

By: Janice Bell Meisenhelder

My firstborn, Melissa, was a hopeless romantic! She loved Valentine's Day ever since she was a little girl. We always celebrated as a family with a special dinner and Valentine cards. My husband would give red roses and candy to all three of "his girls": myself, Melissa, and her younger sister. As a teen, Melissa always had a boyfriend. and Valentine's Day continued to be a major celebration.

Melissa succumbed to cancer in June of 2004, at the age of 19. I anticipated Valentine's Day in 2005 as being difficult, but it hit me much harder than I expected. I could not sleep at all that night.

There is no cheating grief. Valentine's Day continued to be a grief trigger for years and remains so to a much lesser degree even now.

Other people will not understand this trigger on a rather minor holiday, especially if your loss was not your spouse. For us who know deep loss, catastrophic loss, all triggers are valid, and all triggers are personal and individual. Forgive those who cannot support you and move toward others who understand.

Like all triggers, acknowledging the validity of the feelings and honoring those feelings becomes necessary. Honoring our loved ones remains appropriate, no matter the holiday, the trigger, or the length of time since the loss. Ways to honor may mean visiting the gravesite, lighting a candle, or planting a flower. I send Valentine cards to Melissa's friends every year, because I know hearing from me will make them think of Melissa. I have turned Valentine's Day into a Remember Melissa Day in my own way.

Find the way that works for you to transform this day of love into honoring the person you love in whatever way feels right to you. To all those who have suffered the loss of a loved one, my heart goes out to you.

Dr. Janice Bell Meisenhelder is author of *Surviving the Unthinkable: The Loss of a Child*

A Dozen Roses

By Alan Pedersen

If I had a dozen roses, I know just what I'd do

I'd give each one a name that reminded me of you

The first rose I'd call sunshine, because you brighten everyday

The second would be beauty, the kind that never goes away

The third rose would be priceless, like those hugs you gave to me

I'd name the fourth rose silly, oh how funny you could be

Rose five of course is patience, something you have helped me find

The sixth rose would be memories, the gift you left behind

The seventh and the eighth rose would for sure be faith and grace

Nine would be unique because no one can take your place

The tenth rose well that's easy, I'd simply name it love

Eleven would be angel, I know you're watching from above

I'd think about that twelfth rose, and I'd really take my time

After all these roses are for you my Valentine

I'm sending them to heaven in every color that I know

So, twelve I'll name forever, that's how long I'll love you so

On Valentine's Day, Choose to Believe in Love

By Kelly Buckley

Love is a symbol of eternity. It wipes out all sense of time, destroying all memory of a beginning and all fear of an end. ~Author Unknown

I was reading recently about a woman who, married to her husband for 59 years, wondered how she would ever go on and celebrate days like Valentine's in the same way as she did in her youth. Reading her story reminded me of my father after my mother died. It also reminded me of my own thoughts about the needed cancellation of every celebratory day on the calendar following the loss of Stephen.

It got me to thinking, about how the pains of loss are directly related to the depth of the love we feel. If we did not allow ourselves to be in the vulnerable space of love, would we spare ourselves the hurt when that love changes? How many of us have had our hearts broken? Not only by death, but by life? How many of us have looked around us and asked ourselves, "Where is the love?"

I know I have. I have had many a conversation with The Big Guy about the location of said love. Why do bad things happen? Why do those we love die, or leave, or hurt us?

And there is no easy answer, and no Super Glue that can put a broken heart back together.

But there is love. Sometimes we don't see it, or it is overpowered by negative emotions, but nonetheless, it is always there. It endures. Love is eternal, and has no beginning and no end. The love I feel for Stephen still continues to grow, even if he is no longer with me in a physical sense.

When our hearts break, when the world is bad, we often refuse to see the love, to believe that it can still be there as we hurt. This hurt/love intersection is a fork in the road of life. At the moment of great pain, we have a choice. We can choose to work through loss and pain believing in the existence of love. Or we can believe that when our hearts are breaking, love is nowhere to be found.

The choice is important. Because one produces healing and more love, and one produces bitterness.

So, I have a suggestion that has helped me, and will remind you that love starts within, and is still all around you.

This Valentine's, take some time to craft a love letter, to you and your broken heart. Real love begins with a love of self, deep within, that enables us to then give love to others.

Celebrate how strong you are, sing the praises of your unbreakable spirit. Take the time to recognize the importance of your tears, the tenacity it took to wake up and live each day, even when the pain was excruciating. Recognize the fact that you still allow love in your heart, even when it is not easy to do so.

Remind yourself that even though you are not in a Cupid/Red Heart kind of mood, that does not mean that you are not surrounded by love. Acknowledge the hurt, for what it is teaching you, and the fact that it means you took the risk and loved in life. Some people don't let themselves love, for fear of what you are feeling right now.

Look in the mirror and see that you are perfect, made in God's image, and worthy of love, and deserving of future happiness. Give yourself a round of applause for the fact that you are still standing. This Valentine's day, take some time to show your appreciation....for you and that broken heart of yours.



We Remember Our Children Who have Birthdays and Death Dates in January and February



Kirsten Lynn Adler 2/21/94 ~ 10/24/10
Joseph Michael Atalla 3/19/85 ~ 1/24/22
Zaria Jasmyn Nevaen Agee 1/28/04 ~ 6/09/19
Ethan Arterburn 2/16/07 ~ 2/28/07
Suzanne Baughan 9/18/73 ~ 2/18/20
Demitrios Bedoya 10/27/76 ~ 2/10/03
Bryan Christopher Bingel 1/08/80 ~ 3/04/08
Christopher Wesley Blok 3/21/80 ~ 2/25/09
Lesly Glyn Bolton 1/19/80 ~ 10/27/16
Baron "Deuce" Braswell II 9/29/89 ~ 1/20/06
Alex Charles Bridwell 1/27/89 ~ 10/31/22
Kenny Brooks Jr 8/13/82 ~ 1/14/06
Joseph Brendan Birkebile 6/26/89 ~ 1/11/11
Pamela Sue Chaiken 1/17/64 ~ 9/29/95
Christopher Chapman 8/01/88 ~ 1/13/07
Eduardo P "Eddy" Chavez 2/07/06 ~ 9/20/10
Barbara Dawn (Dotson) Cleary 12/3/66 ~ 1/21/18
Alaina Michelle Combo 2/01/17 ~ 2/01/17
Ryan Michael Conde 12/02/04 ~ 2/02/17
Christopher Da-Sean Currin 1/04/94 ~ 1/04/22
Stephen Brian Donnelly 1/08/72 ~ 2/15/18
Val Keith Ensor, Jr. 8/2/94 ~ 1/21/16
David Joseph Erickson 1/07/91 ~ 1/07/91
Robert Alan Finch 7/27/70 ~ 1/02/01
Baja Flagg 1/07/91 ~ 3/15/20
Antonio (Tony) Ford-Flores 2/25/89 ~ 4/15/10
Victoria Anne Forster 1/04/89 ~ 1/04/09
Bruce Lee Foxworthy 8/29/75 ~ 2/11/12
Payton Rose Freeze 10/13/98 ~ 2/10/16
Jacob Thomas Fulton 4/15/03 ~ 1/11/15
Ezekiel Josiah Gales 1/30/98 ~ 6/08/20
Andrew Geracoulis 10/20/99 ~ 1/07/23
Jacob Charles Glushefski 5/23/77 ~ 2/21/11
Adon Gerald Grey 11/05/81 ~ 1/20/18
Kristin Marie Harkness 3/19/89 ~ 2/22/08
Ashley Hoefling 8/22/85 ~ 2/08/17
Philip Reid Hottle 2/16/85 ~ 12/03/08
Ryan Gardiner James 2/17/99 ~ 7/06/19
John William Kennedy 1/16/94 ~ 8/11/18
Nicole Michelle Lee 6/22/89 ~ 1/26/08

Henry Lewis III 2/16/74 ~ 4/15/02
Tiffany Michelle Lewis 1/26/80 ~ 10/11/9
April Charlotte Lillicotch 7/27/04 ~ 2/24/20
Ian Patrick McDonald 5/05/89 ~ 1/12/15
Kevin McGuinn 2/08/88 ~ 8/26/08
Emily "Tabor" McMullen 1/26/84 ~ 8/31/12
Christine McNabb 1/13/88 ~ 2/23/08
Roseann M. Meale 10/04/69 ~ 1/19/87
John Earl Medley 2/21/59 ~ 9/09/08
Michael Joseph Moore 7/13/71 ~ 1/09/09
Johnny Ray Mullins 7/11/61 ~ 1/22/02
Christian Paul Norman 2/04/85 ~ 6/03/01
Jeremy Kyle Nottingham 1/25/91 ~ 11/22/21
Angela Oliver 11/07/67 ~ 1/06/11
Joseph Christopher Page 1/26/88 ~ 2/07/08
Christina Lianne Panzo-Bowers 1/08/94 ~ 11/01/14
Michael Joseph Pennefather 12/09/95 ~ 2/04/08
Timothy Michael John Peyton 6/13/68 ~ 2/09/17
Alice Amelia Porges 2/10/15 ~ 2/10/15
Clarke "Dani" Reese 8/31/93 ~ 2/25/07
Brandon Roat 2/02/92 ~ 2/13/17
Chelsea Rae Rosengarth 2/02/86 ~ 1/27/02
Joshua Daniel Shirt 1/17/91 ~ 10/13/19
Ronald Mark "Bud" Shirt 4/05/57 ~ 1/06/99
Kevin Simpson 2/10/87 ~ 1/24/09
Ben Smith 12/22/70 ~ 1/26/03
Mary Ann Smoot 3/31/84 ~ 1/17/22
Adam Charles Sorge 5/12/84 ~ 1/04/14
Robert Andrew Starling 8/02/93 ~ 2/04/18
Rose Ann "Rose" M. Taylor 6/02/44 ~ 1/02/23
Shawn Terrill 2/23/82 ~ 12/03/06
Dana Thrall 8/02/75 ~ 1/02/01
Derek M. Tierney 1/20/76 ~ 10/09/04
Caleb Milton Torres 2/11/12 ~ 2/11/12
Brian Floyd Weakley 1/20/80 ~ 4/19/07
Christopher (Deuce) Wheeler, II 5/08/18 ~ 1/08/23
Brenden Michael Wilson 1/10/98 ~ 11/10/14

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 January and February, 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



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 emailing bpusanova@gmail.com or calling Jodi at 703-656-6999.

2024 Events

January 13th – Luncheon & Birthday Cake Kits for Area Food Pantries

February 12th – Valentine's Dinner at United Buffet

March 20th – Pot Luck Dinner at Larson Home

April 13th - Brunch at Ashton Ave Family Restaurant

May 13th – Mother's Day Dinner at United Buffet

June TBD – Fly and Remember Kite Festival

July TBD– Pot Luck Dinner at Larson Home

July 26-28 – National Gathering, Herndon, VA

August 18th - Butterfly Release

September TBD– Luncheon & Birthday Cake Kits for Area Food Pantries

October 6th – Picnic and Lotus Flower Release at Locust Shade Park

November TBD– Pot Luck Dinner at Larson Home

December 8th – Service of Remembrance Candle Lighting Service