



July/August 2022

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

Volume 19, Number 4

## Annual Picnic and Lotus Flower Lantern Release



**Sunday, October 9, 2022**

**5:00 p.m.**

**Locust Shade Park – Marigold Pavilion**

On Sunday, October 9, 2022, join us at our Annual Picnic and Lotus Flower Lantern Release to remember all the children who died too soon but are still in the hearts of family and friends. As we release lotus flowers on the pond we are reminded of the beauty that our children brought into our lives.

Please bring a dish to share for our Pot-Luck Picnic. Chicken, Hot Dogs and Drinks will be provided by the chapter.

Monetary donations are appreciated to cover the cost of the lotus flower lanterns and picnic expenses.

Each person will receive one lantern unless you request additional lanterns.

To RSVP or for more information contact Jodi Norman at 703-656-6999 or email: [bpusanova@gmail.com](mailto:bpusanova@gmail.com).

## 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.

## Attention

Due to the rising costs of printing and postage, this will be the last mailed newsletter. Newsletters will be sent out via email. If you are not already receiving our newsletters, please fill out the information form (in this newsletter) to include an email address so you can continue to receive our newsletter.

If you do not have an email address, please fill out the information form, indicate you do not have email and mail us the form.

## 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)

## 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](mailto:Suebcerrone@gmail.com)

## Save the Dates & Plan to Attend BPUSA National Gathering July 20-23, 2023

At  
Hilton Washington Dulles Hotel  
Herndon, VA

## 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.

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).



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

## Caring & Sharing Meetings

### In-Person Meetings

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday @ 3:00 p.m.

First United Presbyterian Church  
14391 Minnieville Road  
Dale City, VA

### Zoom Meetings

2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday @ 7:00 p.m.

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)

## 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)

## 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.

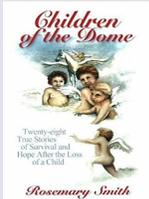


Meetings held at ACTS  
9317 Grant Ave, Manassas, VA

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)

## 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 are currently reading *Children of the Dome* by Rosemary Smith. The author has been joining us via Zoom each month. We are on the last chapters for August. Please email [bpusanova@gmail.com](mailto:bpusanova@gmail.com), if you would like to receive emails about the Book Club.

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](mailto:suebcerrone@gmail.com) or call 703-819-8604. Please RSVP if you are attending in person or on Zoom.

## 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.

# You Are Not Alone

Angela Kennecke

*"We bereaved are not alone. We belong to the largest company in all the world — the company of those who have known suffering." — Helen Keller*

"How Love Showed Up" was the title of my talk to a group of grieving parents in St. Louis last weekend. They actually have conferences for bereaved parents, which I know seems morbid, and I was apprehensive about how I would be able to handle so much grief in one room. It was obvious within moments of arriving that my preconceived ideas about what would happen that weekend were utterly wrong.

We were asked to stand up and form a circle on the first night. Newly grieving parents, who had lost a child within two years, were in the middle of the circle, surrounded by those who had lost children within five years, like me, then ten, then 20 or more. "We are here to support you. We are here to support each other," an organizer said. People broke away from the circle, but they didn't immediately disperse. Those who had attended previous conferences reunited, and others introduced themselves to the newbies. There was something in the air I had never experienced with any group of people before – complete acceptance and an utter lack of judgment.

Egos were checked at the door. There were no pretenses, and no one was aloof. We have all experienced the worst emotional pain possible, and everyone immediately understood that there was a common thread in that pain. My fellow conference-goers were friendly and kind. Every one of them was *doing* something with their grief, even if that something was attending this conference to learn ways to heal from others.

I met Peggy, who had lost one child at nine months. Her little girl had suffocated at daycare. Then years later, she lost her son to suicide. Peggy has now written two books on the subject of child loss. Brenda lost her adult son to mental health and addiction issues, and Fentanyl was involved. She was already a social worker, but following his death, she became a grief counselor to help others.

I met Diane, who has Ph.D. behind her name. She lost one of her twin babies hours after his birth. Loss propelled her family in an entirely new direction. She and her husband spent two years sailing around the world with their other two young children. She told me if she hadn't sunk to the depths of despair, she never would have had the courage to give up her comfortable life to take such a risk. However, that adventure changed their lives.

Another woman named Beth lost her son in a car crash at age 19. She held a sound bath at the conference, using Tibetan singing bowls and crystal bowls and a host of other sound makers that she drove all the way from Colorado. Beth handed out a poem she wrote to all the parents, rolled like a scroll and tied with a purple ribbon:

We all spent the weekend wearing pins with photos of our lost children. It struck me that the last time I wore a pin with Emily's face was for gymnastics and cheerleading meets. Back then, I could never have imagined that I'd be wearing her face on my chest due to her untimely death. The pins gave us all a chance to ask another attendee about the child they loved so deeply. I learned about the boy who had overcome autism when his life was cut short by a heart attack. I learned about a little girl who had died at age four. I met other mothers who lost their children to fentanyl poisoning too. The room was filled with the best listeners I have ever met. Then our children's names were read out loud during a candle lighting ceremony. The one thing we all had in common – none of us ever want our child to be forgotten.

My talk about "How Love Showed Up" was well-received. I shared my own crisis of faith after Emily's death, along with how so many others had lifted me up in prayer and action. I told them about the people who had come beside me and joined the mission of Emily's Hope. And I revealed how Emily's high school art teacher had presented me with paintings that he had fished out of the trash because she had thrown them away, and he held onto them for several years and gave them to me after she died. That is love showing up in the best way possible.

As if on cue, I had a message from a woman Emily had worked for at a pottery painting business after I got off stage. She had just found a bowl that Emily painted in 2015. She wondered if I'd like to have it. I certainly would, I told her. Love keeps showing up. I told the group that "hope" is a verb, and I see the action in hope every single day. If we can "be the container" for life, even in the face of loss, together we can continue to move forward and know that we are not alone.

Faith, Hope & Courage  
Angela

# Abi's 21st birthday – Heartache and Heaven

By Kelly, LIFE WITH GRIEF

It's been three years since I've shared anything on here, and it's over eight years now since Abi died, and the pain of loss is always there. Perhaps not so obviously now, but it lives in the restless nights, the stomach aches, the sudden pangs of sorrow or angry outburst.

Her 21st birthday is around the corner, so much time lost, so many what ifs...

The past two years have been incredibly triggering; seeing intensive care and death up close every time I turn on the TV or look at social media (from which I've had to switch off many times). No escape was allowed by seeing friends and family. In the midst of constant lockdowns, home schooling and collective public fear, there was no head space to reflect.

The perpetual public anxiety in COVID, no matter what your opinion is of it, is like reliving a nightmare for the already grieving...

We already know that no amount of money or medicine can stop death. We are still processing the shock and stress of suddenly finding ourselves in ICU all those years ago and it feels as if the entire world is living in that fearful place.

Like many others, our home became our fortress against the world. Sometimes I think I'd live life in lockdown forever if it meant Abi could be alive too. I get angry at the complainers. I doubt our leaders. I resent that so many get to live longer lives while our bright sunshine girl died just 12. And I hate having those thoughts because I know absolutely *everyone* needs compassion as they navigate their own troubles. Grief can make life ugly, especially when, if you believe the world, there is no *hope*.

But *hope* is what I have, thank God. I hold fast to my faith that Abi is in her eternal home with Jesus, who has travelled every step of this journey with us. She rests where there is no fear, pain or suffering. She is with love. It's not a place of mourning or sullen faces, it's a place of pure peace and joy! It's almost impossible to imagine given what we've become used to!

While knowing this is yes of course an immense comfort, it doesn't mean I don't still grieve. That I don't get anxious or angry about the whys and what ifs... but I strive to live in *hope* for the days ahead with my family, who every day show me glimpses of what heaven on earth will be like, and I look forward to that time when we will all be home, together.

As Abi's birthday rolls around again, I'm once more mentally coasting through the month not knowing what to do; feeling that everything I do is more inadequate with each passing year.

I seek only to remember Abi, as she was, as she might have been, in my day to day, and pray that I may never have to know this pain again...



## We Remember Our Children Who have Birthdays and Death Dates in July and August

**Jason Duane Alexander**  
7/02/74 ~ 7/24/13

**Emily Andrews**  
8/02/97 ~ 3/14/16

**Cora Rose Bardwell**  
8/24/98 ~ 7/10/20

**James "Jimmy" Barnette**  
7/11/98 ~ 6/03/06

**Jennifer Lynn Becker**  
12/30/67 ~ 7/26/70

**Trevor Austin Blake**  
10/30/01 ~ 8/11/13

**Kenny Brooks Jr**  
8/13/82 ~ 1/14/06

**Claire Rebecca Buckley**  
7/27/11 ~ 11/17/16

**Brandon Bundy**  
5/19/84 ~ 8/24/08

**Christopher Chapman**  
8/01/88 ~ 1/13/07

**Jason A. Clover**  
7/30/84 ~ 9/28/03

**David Joseph Cobb**  
7/02/98 ~ 10/23/15

**Todd Clifford Coder**  
7/23/84 ~ 9/24/10

**Sarah Beth Cole**  
8/06/80 ~ 4/23/11

**Michael Costanzo**  
7/07/98 ~ 12/22/20

**Ryan Cross**  
7/12/97 ~ 7/26/17

**Gregory Dennis**  
8/26/98 ~ 7/26/17

**Corey Martin Dill**  
7/25/90 ~ 5/03/07

**Forrest Grant Dotson**  
8/25/79 ~ 4/19/17

**David John Drumheller**  
8/30/89 ~ 6/20/16

**Bryan Eastes**  
8/18/80 ~ 4/18/17

**Elizabeth A. Erickson**  
7/23/89 ~ 9/14/89

**Omisha Flagg-McDowell**  
8/28/80 ~ 7/08/21

**Robert Alan Finch**  
7/27/70 ~ 1/02/01

**Rhonda Lynn Flannery**  
7/31/63 ~ 11/10/01

**Bruce Lee Foxworthy**  
8/29/75 ~ 2/11/12

**Clay Matthew Haga**  
12/09/88 ~ 8/26/19

**Charlotte Gaston**  
7/21/98 ~ 6/23/21

**Nathan Hamilton**  
7/19/99 ~ 9/04/18

**Ashley Hoefling**  
8/22/85 ~ 2/08/17

**Desmend Holmes**  
6/16/06 ~ 7/21/15

**Quincy Holmes**  
5/18/05 ~ 7/20/15

**Daniel Franklin Houston**  
8/10/68 ~ 6/13/16

**Ethan Humphrey**  
6/23/16 ~ 7/22/16

**Kyle Irwin**  
07/27/92 ~ 4/21/20

**Claude (Jason) Jackson III**  
8/20/92 ~ 9/12/15

**Ryan Gardiner James**  
2/17/99 ~ 7/06/19

**John William Kennedy**  
1/16/94 ~ 8/11/18

**Ryan George Khazmo**  
7/10/02 ~ 10/16/21

**Kwadwo Amoako Kusi**  
3/20/06 ~ 7/26/08

**Thomas Langston**  
4/05/92 ~ 8/04/18

**April Charlotte Lillicotch**  
7/27/04 ~ 2/24/20

**Robert Loiseau**  
8/22/72 ~ 5/27/93

**Sara Lott**  
11/01/95 ~ 7/23/08

**Kyle Ludeman**  
4/12/93 ~ 8/27/13

**Robert Henry Maples**  
6/07/76 ~ 7/05/18

**Kevin McGuin**  
2/08/88 ~ 8/26/08

**Emily "Tabor" McMullen**  
1/26/84 ~ 8/31/12

**Derek Meffert**  
4/21/95 ~ 8/15/10

**Michael Joseph Moore**  
7/13/71 ~ 1/09/09

**Christina Morgan**  
7/30/80 ~ 3/13/02

**Johnny Ray Mullins**  
7/11/61 ~ 1/22/02

**Elijah James Nealey**  
9/08/10 ~ 8/22/12

**Nicholas James Nelson**  
7/16/90 ~ 4/19/18

**Brian Scott Ogden**  
7/04/87 ~ 12/24/17

**Kim Ouren**  
9/19/57 ~ 7/22/18

**Thomas Parker**  
8/26/92 ~ 4/15/19

**Catzby James Pitzvada**  
8/07/88 ~ 12/17/19

**Zane J Pitzvada**  
8/22/92 ~ 9/14/11

**Linda Thompson Plewes**  
7/16/51 ~ 3/21/02

**Kylene Marie Privett**  
12/14/83 ~ 8/13/07

**Khalif Rashon Privott**  
7/21/94 ~ 7/13/16

**Ronald Douglas Ralph, Jr**  
7/27/66 ~ 11/04/02

**Clarke "Dani" Reese**  
8/31/93 ~ 2/25/07

**Carl Andrew Runion**  
7/27/94 ~ 5/14/21

**Vernon Santmyer, Jr.**  
8/24/79 ~ 5/17/11

**Matthew Donald Scott**  
8/07/78 ~ 7/19/20

**Gene "Tony" Sergent**  
8/10/87 ~ 9/14/07

**Klee Simmons**  
3/27/89 ~ 8/09/15

**Brandon Simms**  
10/10/80 ~ 7/14/95

**Adelacia Smalley**  
8/06/94 ~ 10/19/02

**Tyler Smith**  
9/20/92 ~ 8/01/06

**Daniel "Cody" Starr**  
4/13/88 ~ 7/30/20

**Robert Andrew Starling**  
8/02/93 ~ 2/04/18

**Michael "Ryan" Stevens**  
7/07/87 ~ 5/30/07

**Grace Stone**  
8/20/99 ~ 11/01/18

**Jerry Damon Taybron**  
11/21/75 ~ 8/18/07

**Dana Thrall**  
8/02/75 ~ 1/02/01

**Anthony Joseph Turchiano**  
8/04/79 ~ 4/29/17

**Jessica Dove Williams**  
9/18/89 ~ 12/05/19

**Kisha Grace Woods**  
8/06/17 ~ 8/06/17

**Kevin Woods**  
12/08/93 ~ 8/06/14

**Jakari D. Wright**  
3/31/97 ~ 8/18/18

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 July and August, please provide us with your child's information so they can be included correctly in future newsletters.

Bereaved Parents of the USA  
Northern Virginia Chapter Information Form

Please complete and return this form so that your loved one can be remembered in our newsletters and on our website. Please include an e-mail address to receive our chapter news, information and reminders. The best way for us to communicate with our bereaved parents is via the internet. Thank you!

**Please print, filling in all applicable blanks. This is for internal use only.**

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Child's Death Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Cause of Child's Death: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's relationship to you (e.g. son, daughter, brother, sister, grandchild) \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Child's Death Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Cause of Child's Death: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's relationship to you (e.g. son, daughter, brother, sister, grandchild) \_\_\_\_\_

**Note: The information you have given above will be confidential (*used for internal purposes only*) unless you answer "yes" to the following question and then only for the stated purpose.**

1. Do you have any objection to your child's name appearing in the newsletter and website "**We Remember You**" section with birth and death dates? The newsletter is also published on the website.  
No \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_

2. May we include the above information in the BP/USA Northern Virginia Chapter directory that is for chapter use only? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

**Please return to:** The Bereaved Parents of the USA, Northern Virginia Chapter, P.O. Box 7675, Woodbridge, VA 22195

## 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](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 [bpusanova@gmail.com](mailto:bpusanova@gmail.com) or calling Jodi at 703-656-6999.

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