



January/February 2018

caring & sharing news

Helping rebuild lives following the death of a child

Volume 15, Number 1

2018 Programs

New for 2018 is adding guest speakers to some of our monthly Sunday meetings in addition to our yearly events. Below is a schedule for the year (subject to change):

February 11 – “Signs From Our Loved Ones” with Claire Ann and Sam Stevenson

March 11 – “Anger and Grief” with Paul Balasic

March 17 – “Tuesdays With Morrey”

April 8 – no speaker

April 14 – A Day with Alan Pedersen Workshop

April 28 – Art Therapy with Sue Ann Hastings

May 13 – Mother’s Day (No Meeting)

May 20 – Annual Picnic and Balloon Release at Locust Shade Park

June 10 – “Heading for the Light: Striving for a Positive, Purposeful Life” with Valerie Larson

July 8 – “True Colors” with Sue Cerrone

August 3-5 – National Gathering in Memphis, TN

August 12 – Program to Be Announced

August 19 – Butterfly Release at Memorial Garden

September 9 – Program to Be Announced

October 14 – Program to Be Announced

November 11 – Program to Be Announced

December 2 – Service of Remembrance

December 9 – Program to Be Announced

If you know of anyone who would be a good speaker for our meetings, please let Jodi know by emailing bleachermom2000@aol.com.

Check out our Chapter Website

<http://www.bpusanova.com>

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, please email bleachermom2000@aol.com with your email address.

A Day with Alan Pedersen
Saturday, April 14, 2018
Wellington Community Center
9700 Wellington Road
Manassas, VA 20110



Workshop Part 1: 3p.m.

Dinner: 5 p.m.

Workshop Part 2: 6 p.m.

Alan Pedersen is an award-winning speaker, songwriter and recording artist. His inspirational message of hope and his music have resonated deeply with those facing a loss or adversity in their lives. Since the death of his 18-year-old daughter Ashley in 2001, Alan has traveled to more than 1,300 cities speaking and playing his original music.

Alan is currently on the road with The Angels Across the USA Tour where he will speak and perform in over 100 U.S. cities in 2018.

Our workshop day will be a mixture of learning, laughing and feeling. Alan will share what he has learned on his own grief journey and from the thousands of other grievers who have shared their stories with him. The workshop will offer real tools and ideas to consider for those who are grieving and for those who work with the bereaved. Powerful music and a down to earth message are the hallmark of A Day with Alan Pedersen.



Session 1- “Everything You Never Wanted to Know About Grief”

Who imagined we would be walking this path, yet here we are. This workshop deals with the basics of grief and the multi-faceted changes we face mentally, emotionally, spiritually and physically as we take on the challenges of processing loss. The focus will be on fully understanding our loss, how to build our own unique support system and the importance of educating ourselves

Session 2 – “Does It Ever Get Any Better?”

Grief can leave behind a lot of unfinished emotional business. Some of us deal with guilt and regret, and other issues such as not having the opportunity to say goodbye. This first half of this workshop will focus on some of the common things that can make us feel stuck in our grief. The second half of the workshop will focus on things we can do and actions we can take which can bring healing and meaning into our lives.

**Caring and Sharing
Support Meetings:**

2nd Sunday @ 3 p.m.
First United Presbyterian Church
14391 Minnieville Road
Dale City, VA

For more information contact:
Jodi Norman, Chapter Leader
703-656-6999 (cell)
bleachermom2000@aol.com

AMORe
(All Murdered Offspring Remembered)
3rd Wednesday @ 6 p.m.
3182 Golansky Blvd, Suite 101
Woodbridge, VA

For more info contact:
Beverly Ruane
540-628-4758 (h) or 703-395-9546 (c)
ruane.beverly@yahoo.com

AMORe

(All Murdered Offspring Remembered)

Our group, The Bereaved Parents of the USA is a wonderful support group for parents who have had a child or children who have died regardless of the cause or age. Sometimes, though, there are those that might need additional support depending on the circumstances of the death. One of those is if your child or children died from murder. In addition to the normal grieving emotions that are dealt with there is the additional stress of dealing with the legal system. AMORe (All Murdered Offspring Remembered) is a support group strictly for that purpose. Within the group you can express all of the emotions you are feeling as a bereaved parent but can also express your frustrations, questions, opinions, satisfaction or most anything. Even though the group is strictly for those dealing with murder and is confidential, the only thing that's not allowed to be discussed are the circumstances of an open active case. No chances want to be taken in jeopardizing a case. Please come join us if you are dealing with the death of a child or children through murder. We meet the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 6:00 at 3182 Golansky Blvd Suite 101. Woodbridge, Va. If you are interested in attending please contact me by phone or email. Beverly Ruane. My home phone is 540-628-4757 or cell 703-395-9546. Email ruane.beverly@yahoo.com

***Our sincere sympathy to the
following families:***

***The Harkness family on the
death of Tom's mom and
Kristin's grandma, Dorothy Harknes:
December 3, 2017 at the age of 90.***



***Ginny East on the death of her dad and Bryan's
Grandpa, Arthur Kaye on January 15, 2018 at
the age of 95.***



There are dozens of tasks that go into running our chapter and our special events. 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, we would love your help. 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.

I could really use volunteers to plan our special events (Picnic/Balloon Release, Butterfly Release and Service of Remembrance). Other areas of need are in Fundraising, Publicity, Outreach, and helping at the Memorial Garden.

If you would like to volunteer to help our chapter, please contact Jodi at bleachermom2000@aol.com or 703-656-6999.

IMPORTANT: With our website and publishing our newsletter on the website, your child's name, birthdate and death date may be on the website. If you have any objection to your child's name and information being on the website please let Jodi know as soon as possible at bleachermom2000@aol.com.

***Memorial Garden at the Linton Hall
Monastery, Bristow, VA***

*It's almost Spring! It won't be long and we
will be out in the Memorial Garden pulling
weeds, cleaning it up and planting for the
2018 Garden Season! If you are interested in
helping this year, please email Bev at
ruane.beverly@yahoo.com or give her a call
at 540-628-4757.*



whispers of
hope

Bereaved Parents of the USA

NATIONAL GATHERING CONFERENCE
AUGUST 3-5, 2018 MEMPHIS, TN



Mitch Carmody



Pam Vredevelt



Stephanie Gerson



Ann Ir Dagle

Possible Additional Chapter Meeting

A newer member of our community is just starting to explore the creation of a new BPUSA NOVA group for the Annandale/Alexandria/South Arlington area. Meetings (monthly, probably pot-luck format) would start later this spring. If you are interested in more information, please send an email to Emily Slough at emilygps@verizon.net.



Social Event

Join us for Dinner and a Play
Saturday, March 17th
Dinner at 5:30 p.m.
Play at 8:00 p.m.

“Tuesdays with Morrie” at the
Hylton Performing Arts Center in Manassas

Dinner at a restaurant to be determined.

Please let Jodi know as soon as possible if you would like to attend so tickets can be purchased.

Ticket price is \$20 or less.

Annual Chapter Picnic, Balloon Release, And Memory Walk

Sunday, May 20, 2018

2:00 p.m.

**Locust Shade Park
Marigold Shelter**



walk towards
hope and
healing

**Fundraiser for
Memory Walk at
BPUSA National
Gathering**

Go to the following link to set up your fundraising page:
<https://www.classy.org/campaign/walk-towards-hope-and-healing/c162565>

Click on “Become a Fundraiser” and then “Join a Team”: Northern Virginia Chapter.

Set your goal and personalize your page with your story and your child’s picture.

Picture needs to be in jpg format to add to the page.

You do not have to attend the Gathering to participate in the fundraising for National BPUSA.

Our chapter’s goal is to raise \$1,000.

Any questions in setting up your personal website, contact Jodi at bleachermom2000@aol.com or call 703-656-6999.

I am looking for submissions for a booklet to give to newly bereaved parents. If you would be willing to write about how BPUSA has helped you on your grief journey, it would be greatly appreciated. Please email submissions to Jodi at bleachermom2000@aol.com.



Speaking from the Heart

By Alan Pedersen

One of my New Year's resolutions was that I was not going to take the easy road and write any of my January articles for publications about New Year's resolutions. Writing about the turning of one year into another takes very little creativity and certainly I can do better than that. As I sat and stared at my computer for nearly an hour without a single good idea for a topic, I decided to go back to basics.

I took a trip back in time to my creative writing class in college. My professor, Mrs. English (seriously, this was her name) would often advise us that when you feel stuck and lack creative ideas, pick a subject that you know something about. So, I am heeding her advice for this article and writing about something that I know a lot about ... football.

Football is a game that I love. Professional or college, it doesn't matter; I simply enjoy watching this sport. As I write this column, the NFL playoffs are getting ready to begin with a doubleheader today and tomorrow. On Monday night, Alabama and Clemson will battle it out for the NCAA championship to decide the top team in college football. When I am watching football, I can truly escape from the rest of the world for a little while.

Perhaps you are wondering what on earth football has to do with grief. In my world ... everything. Over the years, football was able to give me a much-needed reprieve from the constant focus of my loss. I came to look at things I enjoy such as football, playing golf and following current events as a beautiful distraction. These things became my coping mechanism, the soft place I could rest and relax to take a break from the hard work of processing my grief.

Grief is an exhausting journey that requires navigation down our own unique path through a valley which we have never been without a compass to guide us. We each make progress at our own pace and arrive where we are supposed to be in our own way. While the work is difficult, we must also recognize that we need times of rest to reenergize and refresh ourselves for what lies ahead.

My hope for each of you is that you consider if there is an activity or hobby that you can participate in that takes you away from the daily struggle of grieving. My wife has taken up running, I have a friend who finds solace in gardening and another who took art classes and began painting. Each of them has found these endeavors to be very rewarding and beneficial in allowing them to have a place where they can shift gears and refocus their energy.

Our grief is part of who we are and will always be there, right below the surface waiting for us. As we grow in our grief we learn that it can be a great catalyst for change; it can also direct our lives into areas we never imagined we would go. The good news is we don't have to live in the valley of our grief every moment of every day ... grief can coexist with laughter, enjoyment, entertainment and stimulating activities. Well, I have to run; kick off is just moments away and I haven't made the popcorn yet.

“Grief is
the price
we pay for
love.”

Queen Elizabeth II

WHERE THERE
WAS GREAT LOVE
THERE IS
GREAT GRIEF.

You'll always be
with me, like a
handprint on my
heart...



Going Into the New Year Without My Child

January 1, 2018 written by Clara Hinton

The New Year has arrived, but it didn't arrive fresh and new with a clean slate like promised. For me the lingering pain of child loss resides in my heart and has taken permanent residence. I guess I wasn't expecting the pain to go away; but I was hoping it would somehow feel lighter this year. **It doesn't.**

My son died unexpectedly almost three years ago of a massive heart attack. I still feel the shock waves of that news almost every day. Trauma does that to us. I don't know if the trauma part will ever completely go away. I still jump any time my phone rings around 8:00 in the evening. I freeze. I refuse to answer. I never want to hear those words ever again. "They tried. They tried for almost an hour, but he didn't make it. I'm so sorry." My body is trembling as I'm typing the words that forever changed my life and the lives of so many that I love.

I'm trying to figure out how to move forward in this New Year with some kind of hope and joy. After all, isn't that what the New Year is all about? I've spent weeks thinking about this knowing that January 1 would be here and I want so badly for this year to be better, to be brighter, to be a more peaceful year.

I sat on Mike's memorial bench for a long time with snow blowing against my cheeks as my tears froze on my face. "Mike, how am I going to do this? I know you don't want me to feel so sad all of the time. I can feel you pushing me out of this dark hole of grief. But, I need some help from you. I need you to show me how to live within this grief with some kind of hope and joy. Help me."

I talk to Mike often. It helps me to feel his presence. I need so much to feel him nearby. As I sat on the snow-covered bench, off to the left of me three deer inched their way out of the woods. They stood within feet of me and stared not showing any fear. Mike loved the snow and he loved the deer. He loved everything that was part of country living. I locked eyes with those deer and I saw a gentleness that I needed to see. They stayed for a good ten minutes then wandered back into the woods as the sun began setting.

For the first time in a long time my shoulders eased, the tension grew less, and my tears stopped. I felt somehow warmed as I sat on that bench by Mike's memorial garden. Those deer seemed to deliver a message of peace to me. It was as if Mike had sent them to let me know that all was well with him. I was sitting in his happy place among the things that made him so happy as a young child growing up. He moved to Tennessee with his wife and three children but he always made a trip home each year to spend time in the snow, in the woods and among the wildlife. **I was doing what he loved, and I felt him right there with me.**

Is this the peace I was searching for? Is the inner calm I was feeling the joy that would somehow reside in my heart this year in order to calm my grief?

Today, January 1, 2018, was a blustery, snowy day in Pennsylvania. I got up early and walked outside to take in the early morning air. I felt the snow falling against my face. I looked to the heavens and prayed a prayer of thanks for giving me this day. I felt the ache of missing my son. I know that ache will always be there. But, as I looked to the heavens I imagined him watching his mom from above feeling the gentle peace of this day and I know he was smiling.

And, I began this first day of the New Year wrapped in peace and a quiet inner joy understanding the message of hope sent to me from my son.

I think as parents of child loss we all want this terrible emptiness to somehow leave. I don't think we'll ever feel whole again — not in the sense we were whole before our child died. How could we? There will always be that aching, emptiness of missing our child. But, I'm convinced that we can have a meaningful peace-filled life even within the brokenness of loss.

If you have lost a child and you're struggling with finding your way into this New Year, I hope that something I've shared will help you in some small way. This is a difficult journey we're on. There's nothing easy about child loss. But, as we love and support one another we can be encouraged along the way.

May I suggest you get a copy of the book *Hope 365*? I keep my copy with me at all times. I read from it throughout the day for an added boost of encouragement. The short, hopeful messages really do help!

If you're still in the early raw pain of child loss, I'd encourage you to get a copy of the book *Child Loss – the Heartbreak and the Hope*. I wrote this book about a year and a half after my son died. I think you will find a lot in there that will help you.

My love to you. May you find your way to inner peace, hope and inner joy during this New Year.

Love,

Clara

PICKING UP THE PIECES

Franchesca Cox



I used to think picking up the pieces meant having a faith that never asked “Why?”

I used to think picking up the pieces meant getting over it (that didn’t last long - there is no “getting over it”).

I used to think that picking up the pieces meant that they would never fall again.

But Instead of beating myself up that none of the above have resonated with me at all, or for very long, I have decided to redefine what picking up the pieces means.

After your world gets smashed to smithereens there are certainly pieces everywhere for a very, very long time and you find yourself in this endless quest to make sense of the mess and left to pick up the pieces that used to be whole.

Picking up the pieces is crying so much your face hurts.

Picking up the pieces is not kicking yourself for not crying “enough”.

Picking up the pieces is visiting the cemetery as often or as infrequent as you need to.

Picking up the pieces is realizing you cannot measure your love for your child by what you do or don’t do.

Picking up the pieces is believing you did everything you could.

Picking up the pieces is blasting Van Morrison or the Beach Boys when you just don’t want to cry.

Picking up the pieces is never forgetting the big and little things that made the world a friendlier place after grief stole so much.

Picking up the pieces is taking time for yourself. Picking up the pieces is challenging yourself to find something to be thankful for.

Picking up the pieces is embracing grief however that might look at any given moment. The good, the bad and the ugly.

Picking up the pieces is understanding that this is only the beginning.

Picking up the pieces is understanding that you have a story with the power to make someone else feel less alone.

Picking up the pieces is ditching your mask. Picking up the pieces is considering someone else’s broken world. Someone always has it worse. Always.

Picking up the pieces is taking risks.

Picking up the pieces is dancing with reckless abandon.

Picking up the pieces is taking a canvas and throwing paint at it ‘til your hands hurt.

Picking up the pieces is breaking dishes, slamming the door or screaming as loud as you can.

Picking up the pieces is being okay with disappointing some people.

Picking up the pieces is taking responsibility for my own healing and happiness.

Picking up the pieces is accepting that the old me gone and never coming back.

Picking up the pieces is daring to live and breathe and smile without feeling guilty.

Picking up the pieces is embracing this wild and unpredictable emotion that has turned my world inside out, upside down and so many other ways as a lifelong companion.

Picking up the pieces is accepting grief as the product of love — because we cannot grieve over something we did not love.

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



Kirsten Lynn Adler	2/21/94 ~ 10/24/10	Kevin McGuinn	2/08/88 ~ 8/26/08
Ethan Arterburn	2/16/07 ~ 2/28/07	Emily “Tabor” McMullen	1/26/84 ~ 8/31/12
Demitrios Bedoya	10/27/76 ~ 2/10/03	Christine McNabb	1/13/88 ~ 2/23/08
Bryan Christopher Bingel	1/08/80 ~ 3/04/08	John Earl Medley	2/21/59 ~ 9/09/08
Christopher Wesley Blok	3/21/80 ~ 2/25/09	Michael Joseph Moore	7/13/71 ~ 1/09/09
Lesly Glyn Bolton	1/19/80 ~ 10/27/16	Johnny Ray Mullins	7/11/61 ~ 1/22/02
Baron “Deuce” Braswell II	9/29/89 ~ 1/20/06	Shelby Nicholson	4/22/92 ~ 1/07/09
Kenny Brooks Jr	8/13/82 ~ 1/14/06	Christian Paul Norman	2/04/85 ~ 6/03/01
Christopher Chapman	8/01/88 ~ 1/13/07	Angela Oliver	11/07/67 ~ 1/06/11
Eduardo P “Eddy” Chavez	2/07/06 ~ 9/20/10	Joseph Christopher Page	1/26/88 ~ 2/07/08
Ryan Michael Conde	12/02/04 ~ 2/02/17	Timothy Michael John Peyton	6/13/68 ~ 2/09/17
Robert Alan Finch	7/27/70 ~ 1/02/01	Christina Lianne Panzo-Bowers	1/08/94 ~ 11/01/14
Antonio (Tony) Ford-Flores	2/25/89 ~ 4/15/10	Michael Joseph Pennefather	12/09/95 ~ 2/04/08
Victoria Anne Forster	1/04/89 ~ 1/04/09	Alice Amelia Porges	2/10/15
Bruce Lee Foxworthy	8/29/75 ~ 2/11/12	Chelsea Rae Rosengarth	2/02/86 ~ 1/27/02
Payton Rose Freeze	10/13/98 ~ 2/10/16	Kevin Simpson	2/10/87 ~ 1/24/09
Jacob Thomas Fulton	4/15/03 ~ 1/11/15	Ben Smith	12/22/70 ~ 1/26/03
Jacob Charles Glushefski	5/23/77 ~ 2/21/11	Adam Charles Sorge	5/12/84 ~ 1/04/14
Kristin Marie Harkness	3/19/89 ~ 2/22/08	Shawn Terrill	2/23/82 ~ 12/03/06
Ashley Hoefling	8/22/85 ~ 2/08/17	Dana Thrall	8/02/75 ~ 1/02/01
Philip Reid Hottle	2/16/85 ~ 12/03/08	Derek M. Tierney	1/20/76 ~ 10/09/04
Nicole Michelle Lee	6/22/89 ~ 1/26/08	Caleb Milton Torres	2/11/12
Henry Lewis III	2/16/74 ~ 4/15/02	Brian Floyd Weakley	1/20/80 ~ 4/19/07
Tiffany Michelle Lewis	1/26/80 ~ 10/11/96	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 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

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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 by mailing back the address label from this newsletter, by emailing bleachermom2000@aol.com or calling Jodi at 703-656-6999.

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