



May/June 2022

caring & sharing news

Helping rebuild lives following the death of a child

Volume 19, Number 3



Wings of Hope Butterfly Release

Sunday, July 31, 2021

5:30 p.m.

BPUSA Memorial Garden

St. Benedict Monastery,

9535 Linton Hall Road, Bristow, VA

The highlight of the Butterfly Release will be the individual and mass release of the butterflies accompanied by music, inspirational readings and remembering our children.

We are requesting a \$5 donation per butterfly. RSVP's and orders for the butterflies must be received by July 15th to Bev Ruane at 540-628-4758 or ruane.beverly@yahoo.com.

Refreshments will be provided after the program and release of the butterflies. If you would like to help provide refreshments, finger foods that can withstand the heat, would be appreciated.

Please bring lawn chairs as there is no seating at the garden.

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

Caring & Sharing Meetings In-Person Meetings

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

First United Presbyterian Church
14391 Minnieville Road
Dale City, VA

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



Life After Loss Support Group for Suicide Survivors

“Shining A Light for Those in Darkness”

1st 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
website: www.djcfoundation.org

Zoom Meetings 2nd Thursday @ 7:00 p.m.

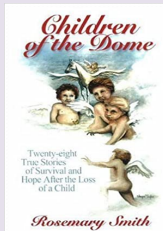
I will send out an email with password and
log in information prior to the meeting date.

Book Club

Our Book Club meets on the last
Monday of the month at 7 p.m., except
for May we will meet on Monday,
May 23rd due to Memorial Day. 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. If you do not have the book it can
be ordered on Amazon. It will take 2-3 months to read
all 28 stories in the book. Read chapters 1-7 for the
May Meeting and 8-15 for June. Please email
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 or call 703-819-8604. Please
RSVP if you are attending in person or on Zoom.



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

NATIONAL GATHERING 2022



Bereaved Parents USA

JULY 22-24 ♥ ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

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.

Check Out Our Website

<http://www.bpusanova.com>

I need everyone's help in updating our website. If you have not already done so, please write a bio of your child and include a photo or a collage of pictures to include in “Our Children Remembered” Section. 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



Garden News

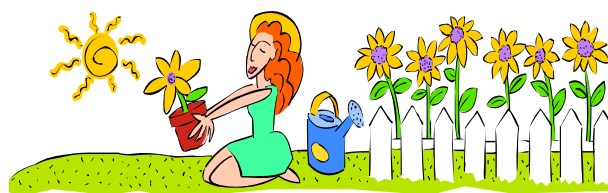
We need your help! Due to the unseasonal weather this spring, the work in the garden has been delayed and we could really use your help to get it cleaned up and ready for it to be a beautiful, peaceful place to go to remember our precious children.

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 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. Perennials are preferred.

If you can help out with the garden please contact Bev or Jodi so we can notify you of any garden work days. At any time, you are available to do work on the garden, please go out there and do what you can.

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



Our sincere sympathy to the family of Rose Brooks. Rose, mom of Kenny Brooks, Jr. died on April 5, 2022 at the age of 64.

Our sincere sympathy to Cynthia Williams and her family on the death of her son and Jason Jackson's brother, Jawann Edward Carter on March 25, 2022 at the age of 35.



Closure is a myth: Getting through Mother's Day without my Child or My Mom

By Carol Smith / Source: TODAY Contributor

Nearly 30 years ago, Carol Smith lost her son. This year, her mother died. As old and new grief collide, this is what she's learned.

When I saw the flash of lilac on my morning walk, my heart lifted for a split second and I reached for the phone in my pocket to call my mom, who loved the scent of them. Instead, the sight of them dropped me to my knees. My mom died in February. This year will be my first Mother's Day without her.

It also will be my 27th without my son, **who died suddenly at age 7 one bright winter morning. Collapsed** there on the pavement, my old grief and my new one collided. I could barely breathe.

Old grief is different than new grief. Each is hard in its own way. With my mom, people have rushed in to comfort me, to share their memories. Her loss is so fresh, it still doesn't really feel like she's gone. I still expect to pick up the phone and hear her cheery, "Hello, it's your mother" before she launches into the details of her day. I still expect to get a card addressed in her looping, elementary school teacher cursive and stuffed with clippings in the mail. I still automatically pick up slices of lemon loaf at the bakery, before remembering there will be no more teas in front of the fire with her cats. None of it has sunk in.

There is no shortage of advice for the newly bereaved — books and courses and podcasts. People with new grief are in survival mode and an industry has grown up around them — search and rescue for the broken-hearted. By the time it's an old grief, though, that help has largely disappeared. So have many of the people who knew the person who died. Those of us with old losses have to figure out how to manage them on our own.

Christopher died on a New Year's Eve morning when he was with his father and his grandparents. I wasn't there that day. For months afterward, I was sure it wasn't real, that any moment, Christopher, who was deaf, would come flying through the door with his Batman lunchbox swinging, signing "school finished" and launch himself into my arms. I would turn a corner in Pasadena, California, where we lived, and catch a glimpse of a little brown-haired boy petting a dog and my heart would plummet when I realized it wasn't him. I kept his library books by the door so we could return them together. But the books became overdue, and the sightings faded away. Eventually, I had to pack his room and move without him into a new life in Seattle.

In the beginning, people kept telling me it would get easier with time, "it" meaning handling my grief. In some sense it is true. Those of us who carry old grief become experts at it. We have been climbing the mountain for a long time and know just how to shift the pack so we can keep going. And it's true that many things have gotten easier, but not all. Here's what gets easier:

You know your own triggers.

In the first years after Christopher died, I would have a panic attack when a yellow school bus drove by. The buses would reappear with the turning of the leaves for the start of each school year and I'd reflexively search for his face through their windows. But he wasn't there.

And there were other triggers. Christopher was born with failing kidneys and spent much of his life in and out of hospitals, until his last year when a kidney transplant gave him a second shot at a healthy childhood. He was thrilled when he learned to hit a T-ball, dragging home a trophy half as tall as he was. He rode horses in a special therapy program to help his strength and balance catch up to other kids his age. He played endless games of "conductor" on the old, parked steam train at Travel Town in Griffith Park in Los Angeles.

Now the sound of ambulances, the smell of crayons or saddle soap, the rumble of a train going by can all collapse my lungs and send my heart racing. Over time, though, I have learned what to do when something triggers me, how to breathe through his death in the same way I had to breathe through his birth. I take walks. I call friends. And I've re-mapped my memories onto happier ones. Now, when I see a yellow school bus, it makes me smile.

The shroud of privacy comes back over your life.

After any kind of death, you are at first an open, walking wound. People can read your pain in the hollows of your face and sag of your body. They step in to help and are witness to your deepest fears. Your helplessness. Over time, though, your strength returns. You no longer feel as though you're walking around stripped naked in front of people. You take back control of your life. You drive yourself to the doctor and make your own meals. You stop fearing you'll snap at unsuspecting strangers or lose it in the grocery store. You start to trust yourself again.

You feel less alone.

Grief is a powerful, magnetic force that both attracts and repels. With the poles aligned one way, it drives people apart. Aligned the other way, it draws people from disparate circumstances with different griefs together. We, the grieving, recognize our own. After Christopher died, I felt completely isolated, as though I were the only one who could possibly know or understand this kind of pain. I couldn't express what I was feeling, even to myself. It cost me my marriage. Friends drifted away. Eventually, though, I found a support group for other moms who had lost children and discovered I was not alone.

I recently rejoined that group after many years away. In each meeting, I have flashbacks to the early days when my grief was new. I see myself. I hear my own voice. It was such a relief, even after 25 years, to feel connected to people who understood what I'd been through.

You learn you can hold pain and joy at the same time.

Over the years, the weight of joy adds up, too — new children born to friends and colleagues, beauty discovered in unexpected places, new friendship. New love.

Initially, permitting myself to feel any kind of pleasure felt like dishonoring my love for Christopher, a betrayal. Over time, though, noting my joys became a kind of memorial to him. He was a joyful, stubborn child who was as excited when he got to pour the seed into our bird feeder as he was to ride the “big” rollercoaster at Magic Mountain. The way to honor him was to live as joyfully as he had. I owed his memory that much.

All of these things made it easier to carry my loss forward over the years. Some would call this closure. I've never liked that word. For a grieving parent, no matter how the child died, closure never comes. And some things don't get easier as time goes on.

There will be new triggers you didn't anticipate.

My best friend's oldest daughter was born a week after Christopher. We'd compared notes at every stage of our pregnancies and our two children spent much of their first few years together before I moved to Los Angeles. This year, my friend welcomed her first grandchild. I was so excited when I got the news, but when I hung up the phone, a wave of sadness nearly knocked me under. Deaths, too, could send me spiraling: A friend losing a parent, or a brother, or a child of their own. My heart would break for them, and myself, all over again.

Same with the milestones that arrived without Christopher — the year he would have gotten a driver's license. Or graduated from high school. The year he would have turned the age I was when I had him. The anniversaries maintained their relentless forward march — five years, then 10, then 25 since his death, as though my grief were growing up alongside my shadow child.

Over time, fewer people know what you have lost.

As the years went on, I reached a point where few people I knew or worked with even knew I'd ever had a child. I'd moved several times since his death, each time building a new circle of friends and acquaintances. It felt easier not to talk about him. But I also regretted it. I missed being able to join in conversations about family or talk about the funny things our kids did. Not talking about Christopher created a deep rift in my own identity, the person I was before and after.

Things still sneak up on you in unexpected ways.

A while ago, I gave a reading in the East Village in New York City. The piece I read was about how I had been unable to face telling Christopher's classmates he wouldn't be coming back to school. I stood under the spotlight behind a mic and started to read. A few sentences in, my throat closed up and I could feel hot tears rising. I took a deep breath, apologized and started again. A few more sentences in, I started to cry, not the kind of tears you wipe away, but a full-on ugly kind of cry in front of the small, packed bar. My mascara trailed swampy black lines down my cheeks. My nose ran. I cried in a way I hadn't been able to the day my friend, a nurse, went to tell the class in my place, or at Christopher's memorial, when I was still in a state of stunned disbelief. I cried as though it was the instant I'd picked up the phone on New Year's Eve to hear those surreal, unbelievable words: “Christopher died.”

The host jumped on stage with a bottle of ice water as I stood there shaking. I gulped and tried to flee the stage, but people urged me to stay. I could not see their faces, only the shapes of their bodies in the dark, but I could sense them holding me up so I could finish. And when I did, they stood and clapped for me.

I stumbled back to my seat and on the way, a woman stopped me to put her arms around me.

“Thank you,” she said. “Christopher is in all of our hearts now.”

It had been many years since I'd cried the way I did that night, but it was a relief, in some ways, to know the magnitude of that sadness still lived somewhere inside me, because that, too, is a way of honoring his life, my body remembering the love I lost.

When I think of closure now, I don't think of it as cutting off my grief. Instead, I think of closure in terms of a circle, with no beginning and no end. New grief becomes old. Old grief becomes new again. But in that circle is strength. Living with grief makes you stronger over time. It is its own kind of tempering. Like steel, we get tougher and more resilient with repeated hammering. And like lilacs, we keep blooming.



Happy Father's Day? My child Has Died

By Kelly Farley

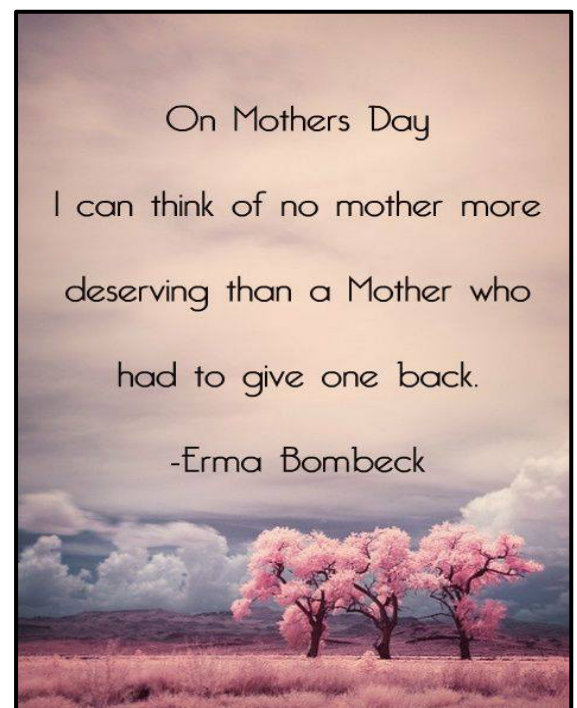
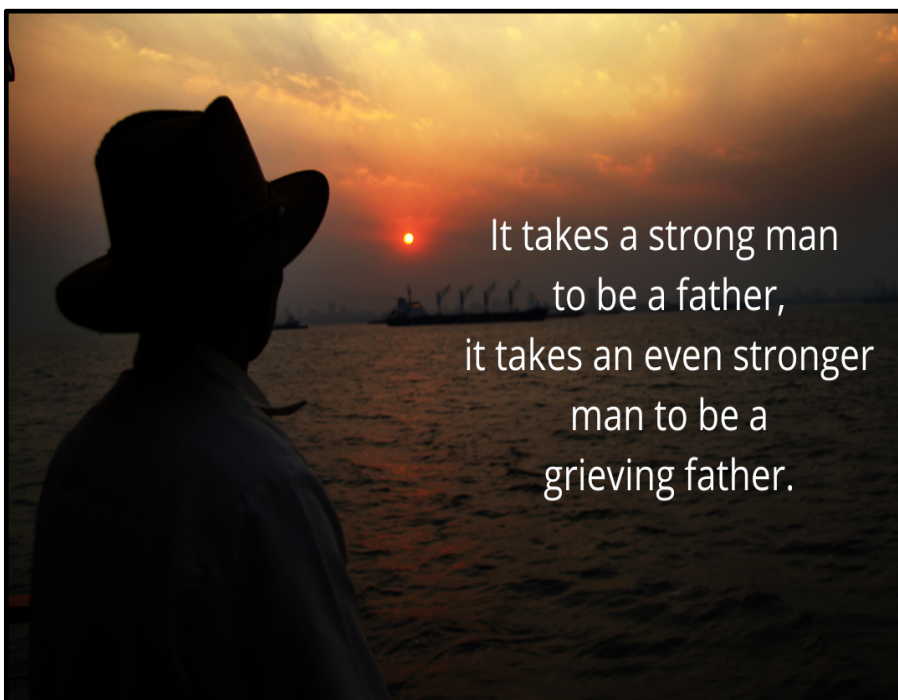
It's that time of year again, Father's Day. It's hard to get excited about this day if you have had a child die. For this father, this day is more about remembering the children that are no longer with me in the physical sense.

I'll be spending this Father's Day out on the road interviewing other grieving dads for this project. I am trying to bring some sort of awareness to the many dads that have lost children and struggle every day to get out of bed and do something positive to honor their child that has died.

Many of the fathers I meet that have lost children feel like they let them down as a father. They should have protected them. That's what a father does right? Protect. We are also "fixers" and we like to fix things, but we couldn't fix the problems that were wrong with our children or the situation our children found themselves in. Many of these dads struggle with seeing the words "Happy Father's Day". Seeing that statement gnaws at the already festering wound that has yet to heal, it's a wound that never completely heals. Over time you can get through the loss of a child, but you never get beyond it. Can you eventually get back on your feet and learn to enjoy life again? Yes. Will your life ever go back to the way it was? No.

Is it possible to have a "Happy" Father's Day after a loss of a child? Yes, but for very different reasons than most people think. The happiness comes into play when you reflect on the time you spent with your child, although you wished you had more time. You're happy because it was an honor to be their dad. The love you feel inside for that child makes you smile and hurt at the same time. The happiness for these fathers does not come from a gift that was wrapped up real nice and given to them on this day. The happiness comes from the gift of being their dad.

If you know a dad that has experienced the death of a child, don't be afraid to reach out to him on this day or any day for that matter. As difficult of a day it is, he would love to hear from you. Someone acknowledging that he is a dad, a dad that has experienced the death of a child.





We Remember Our Children

Who have Birthdays and Death Dates in May and June

Zaria Jasmyn Nevaen Agee	1/28/04 ~ 6/09/19	Quincy Holmes	5/18/05 ~ 7/20/15
Fabio Mauricio Amarillo	5/26/88 ~ 6/02/19	Daniel Franklin Houston	8/10/68 ~ 6/13/16
Charles (CJ) Angelos, Jr	5/28/85 ~ 11/18/06	Ethan Humphrey	6/23/16 ~ 7/22/16
Zachary William Arnold	9/23/84 ~ 5/11/14	Adrienne Leigh Ingram	6/25/79 ~ 12/2/07
Mielen Garlit Arquines	1 2/01/68 ~ 6/04/08	Devonte Lee Ivy	6/16/00 ~ 9/16/19
William Bruce Austin II	5/11/84 ~ 4/10/18	Derrick V. James	6/01/74 ~ 5/28/05
Brandon Scott Bailey	6/21/79 ~ 5/31/99	Rasheem Kuwan Jenkins	5/04/82 ~ 9/09/09
James "Jimmy" Barnette	7/11/98 ~ 6/03/06	Kashif Johnson	3/15/87 ~ 5/01/07
Donald "Donnie" Barrett	5/14/76 ~ 5/03/02	Robert Andrew Larson	3/14/94 ~ 6/30/10
Kimberly Ann Barrett	9/08/86 ~ 5/04/02	Nicole Michelle Lee	6/22/89 ~ 1/26/08
Jamie William Billek	6/25/06 ~ 6/25/06	Robert Loiseau	8/22/72 ~ 5/27/93
Joseph Brendan Birkebille	6/26/89 ~ 1/11/11	Robert Henry Maples	6/07/76 ~ 7/05/18
Parker Evan Boyd	9/15/98 ~ 6/04/08	Ian Patrick McDonald	5/05/89 ~ 1/12/15
Brian Brumbaugh	11/09/83 ~ 5/02/07	Christian Paul Norman	2/04/85 ~ 6/03/01
Brandon Bundy	5/19/84 ~ 8/24/08	Josephine Pennefather	6/21/03 ~ 6/21/03
Justine Noel Carlton	3/30/98 ~ 5/11/21	Timothy Michael John Peyton	6/13/68 ~ 2/09/17
Cole James Clark	5/11/13 ~ 5/15/17	Eric Noah Rivers	5/15/95 ~ 3/19/20
Baby Combo	5/08/16~5/08/16	Carl Andrew Runion	7/27/94 ~ 5/14/21
Emmanuel Camden Conty	5/29/19 ~ 5/29/19	Vernon Santmyer, Jr.	8/24/79 ~ 5/17/11
Brandon DeWulf	6/20/85 ~ 6/29/09	Courtney Sharee Shelby	11/23/93 ~ 5/14/01
Corey Martin Dill	7/25/90 ~ 5/03/07	Mark Alexander Slough	6/26/96 ~ 10/08/15
David John Drumheller	8/30/89 ~ 6/20/16	Colby Thomas Smith	5/25/04 ~ 10/11/15
Scott Michael Fulton	5/25/93 ~ 10/08/21	Adam Charles Sorge	5/12/94 ~ 1/04/14
Ezekiel Josiah Gales	1/30/98 ~ 6/08/20	Kevin Michael Stanphill	3/12/80 ~ 5/09/09
Raven Gileau	6/23/90 ~ 4/23/10	Michael "Ryan" Stevens	7/07/87 ~ 5/30/07
Jacob Charles Glushefski	5/23/77 ~ 2/21/11	Beckett Josef TePaske	5/04/12 ~ 5/12/15
Dwayne Eddie Gonsorcik	5/26/74 ~ 4/26/13	Christopher Andre' Waters Jr	5/31/97 ~ 12/23/07
Christina Gordon	5/08/13 ~ 5/08/13	Josh Weaver	6/17/82 ~ 9/09/09
John Gregory	9/21/73 ~ 6/03/13	Kyle Robert Wilson	5/25/82 ~ 4/16/07
Kourtney Michelle Hale	5/29/80 ~ 3/14/10	Tommie J. Wonnum III	6/14/84 ~ 6/30/03
Gabrielle Nicole Henderson	5/28/86 ~ 6/17/99	Franklin Conner Woodward	5/15/08 ~ 5/17/08
Olivia Rose Cecilia Henry	5/27/02 ~ 5/26/12	Stephen Wesley Wright	6/06/89 ~ 11/21/13
Desmend Holmes	6/16/06 ~ 7/21/15		

We apologize if there are any mistakes in the "We Remember Our Loved One" section. If we spelled any names incorrectly, have any dates incorrect or your loved one's name is not listed and has a birthday or death date during the months of May and June, please provide us with your loved one'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 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 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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