

Volume 17 Number 5

September/October 2020

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

## Annual Picnic & Lotus Flower Lantern Release

Sunday, October 11, 2020  
5:00 p.m.

Locust Shade Park – Marigold Pavilion

On Sunday, October 11, 2020, 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.

Each person registered will receive one lantern unless you send an email to: [bpusanova@gmail.com](mailto:bpusanova@gmail.com) to request additional lanterns.

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

RSVP: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/annual-picnic-and-lotus-flower-release-tickets-113849444754>

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

\*Social Distancing will be enforced and masks are recommended. Bring your own chairs if you would like to spread out more during the picnic.

# Save the Date

## Annual Service of Remembrance

Sunday, December 13, 2020

6:00 p.m.

*This years' service will be virtual*



### Photos Needed for Service of Remembrance Slideshow

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](mailto:bpusanova@gmail.com). We want to include all the children of members of our chapter whether you are attending the service or not.

### Service of Remembrance

I would like help with this year's Virtual Service of Remembrance. 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 me know as soon as possible at [bpusanova@gmail.com](mailto:bpusanova@gmail.com).

### Caring and Sharing Support Meetings:

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday @ 3 p.m.  
**ZOOM Meetings until further notice**

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

### Overdose and Substance Abuse Support Group

**No Meetings until further notice**

A support group meeting for parents whose children have died from Drug Overdose or Substance Abuse.

For more information please contact:

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

or

Kathie Kelly at [tcfred@gmail.com](mailto:tcfred@gmail.com)  
or 540-220-4325

### 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”  
Last Wednesday of Each Month  
7:00-8:00 p.m.

## Parents of Suicide Loss Support Group

1<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto:kimberly.fleming@djcfoundation.org)  
website: [www.djcfoundation.org](http://www.djcfoundation.org)



## Thank You

We rely upon the generosity of our donors to help us provide support to families who've suffered the death of a child. These gifts help cover expenses and, most importantly, to reach out to newly bereaved families in the community.

Thank you to the following for your generous donations:

Fran Barr



*Our sincere sympathy to  
The Ruane Family on  
the death of Beverly's  
father and Matthew's*

*Grandfather, Walter Lane Cockram on  
August 22, 2020 at the age of 88.*

## Garden News

Our annual Butterfly Release was a success! We had a good turnout and good weather. Thankfully, it didn't rain. Thank you to Vernon and Karol Santmyer for singing; Claire Ann Stevenson, Karen Turchiano, Cynthia Carter-Williams, and Jodi Norman for reading; and Jodi Norman for reading the names of our children. As our children's names were read, we released butterflies in their memory. It's always a beautiful but emotional time. I am very happy to see how many people were able to come during this troubling time. Thank you for coming and making this special day even more special.

Now that summer is almost over, it's time to start thinking about preparing the garden this Fall in preparation for the Winter. Although it's best to prune the Butterfly Bushes, among others in the garden, in the early Spring; there are other things that can be done in the Fall to tidy for the Winter. Annuals that you know have finished their season may be pulled up. There is always the over-abundance of weeds. Once they stop growing, removing those weeds can provide a clean fresh garden for the next Spring. It's, also, a good time to remove any invasive plants that have sprung up in unwanted areas. Spring blooming bulbs; such as, Tulips and Daffodils can be planted in September or October to provide early color in the Spring. Unfortunately, Tulips are not good to plant unless you want to feed them to the deer, but they avoid Daffodils. I would like to set a date for us to gather together to work at the garden. Be sure and check your email for the date.

If you are interested in helping with the garden this Fall or early Spring, please contact me or Jodi. We would love to have you join us!

Hugs, Beverly



## 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](mailto: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](mailto:bpusanova@gmail.com).**

## Grief in Autumn – Alone and Missing You

By Julie Siri, A Journey Through Loss

Rambling thoughts.....

Brown grass, dried remnants of vegetable vines, and a lonely shriveled tomato hanging on a broken stem remind us the summer has gone.

It is a difficult time for people prone to depression, or those grieving the death of a loved one.

Colder days and the early evening darkness bring lonely quiet times causing us painful awareness of the absence of those we have loved and lost.

The shorten days announce winter will come and the dreaded days of holiday cheer. This realization brings a feeling of pain and panic.

*What will I do? How will it be? How will I be? Can I survive?*

Change and holidays are catalysts that propel the roller coaster of grief, turning calm days into sleepless nights and reopening wounds that have just begun to heal.

Emotional triggers include Halloween with its festive and fun spirit evoking memories of early childhood, wide-eyed and innocent, exploring and participating in a world of make believe. I can be a pirate, or a princess or Dorothy of Kansas. Now I know the world includes grief and all that comes with it. I know about suicide, and disease, and being scared.

Painful memories abound, reflections not of our loved one but on how we coped, what we did instead, how we held it together. Questions everywhere.

*Should I have done more? Did I care enough?*

*I am alone.....and I am missing you.*

At times it seems new memories will never happen, at least authentic peaceful ones.

I watch the happiness of others quietly resenting the healthy intact families finding joy at their holiday table. A tinge of jealousy sneaks its way to the surface. The holidays present another level of grief.

***Fortunately, nature is compassionate, the season of dying is also the season of preparation.***

Age and a traveled path help me to appreciate the paradox of autumn. Nature is both cruel in its presentation of emotional triggers and yet loving and supportive in its message to prepare and to have gratitude.

I feel forewarned and I know what to expect. Awareness reduces the number of surprises and adds predictability. Like a squirrel I gather good books and movies to occupy and nurture the wanderings of my mind. My journal lies ready at the bedside. Maybe I will change holiday rituals and side step the pain of the old ones.

Brisk walks and crisp air help to awaken the lethargy. The cold which chills me to the bone encourages comfort food and rich soup, lovely soft flannels and colorful plaids. I can fill my empty home with the smells of freshly baked bread, cinnamon and raisins.

The lonely early night, although dark, reveals diamonds in the sky and the silence for reflecting on what once was. Warm memories unfold and I am at peace. I know where to find you. You live within the stars. Grief has quieted its roar.

Nature sends the brown bear to hibernate, the geese migrate and I am reminded to seek solace. The quiet safe place inside where I can care for myself, where my heart can be still. Where I can experience connection to those I miss, and where I can remember who I am.

Autumn has forewarned me and I have a suspicion of what to expect. I will nurture myself. I will say “yes” to the friends who understand and “no” to those who don’t.

***I will get up I will keep going and I will cry when I cry.***

*I am alone....and I am missing you.*



# Autumn and the Season of Grief

Autumn is one of my favorite times of the year. The air is getting cooler, the leaves are changing colors, and there are so many activities that bring my family together. There have been many writings about Spring and starting new, rebirth, and a fresh start. But if Spring is all about newness, then where does that leave Fall? It seems that Autumn is about coming to a close. We are leaving the summer behind and preparing for the cold Winter months. Animals prepare for hibernation, the days get shorter, and the leaves, which are so pretty early on, eventually turn brown and fall to the ground. In Chinese Medicine, Autumn is considered the season of Grief and I think that is very fitting.

## What is Grief?

Grief is a strong and, at times, overwhelming emotion that comes about due to a loss of something important. It is typically associated with bereavement (the loss of a loved one through death) but it doesn't have to be. Grief can be felt due to the loss of a relationship, the loss of a job, the loss of identity, or a multitude of other important things in our lives. It is important to remember that grief is both natural and universal. It is not a sign of weakness and not something to ignore or try to push away. It is also highly unique, so one shouldn't try to fit grief into how it "should be" or how others have experienced it. Some people experience grief as extreme sadness and go through crying spells, while others experience it as numbness and feel as if they are in a cloud or outside of their own body just observing.

## Seasons of life

I believe that the seasons are a very good analogy for life and death. They are out of our control and through the seasons one sees a pattern of birth, growth, closure, and death, only to repeat the cycle over again. "A thing isn't beautiful because it lasts." I found this to be a surprisingly profound and touching quote to come from a Marvel movie of all places (Avengers: Age of Ultron). This quote touches on the beauty of the cycle of life. Without Autumn we wouldn't have the newness of Spring or the continual growth of generations.

## Waves of Grief

Many people talk about the stages of grief, as if it is a set number of items to check off and once completed you have graduated from the grief stage, never to return. This is not only inaccurate, but hurtful to those whose experience may be different. Many clients who I've worked with as a grief counselor express it more as waves. In the beginning the waves are strong and constant, beating down on you, making you feel like you will drown at any moment. As time goes on the waves get less powerful and are spread farther apart. But the grief never fully goes away and small waves of sadness may always be lapping at the shore. We get to a point where it is no longer preventing us from living our lives. But the memory is still there, as is the occasional sadness of what was lost. What people find as they progress through grief, is that the emotions become more diverse. Where early on the memory might bring only sadness, later the memory can bring smiles and laughter. But just as seasons come and go, there are times that we can slip back into the sadness of grief, and that isn't a bad thing. It is a reminder of how important this person or thing was in our lives, and the impact it made in our lives.

## Autumn as a reminder

Take this opportunity to appreciate the wonder of Fall and to remember the seasons that have come and gone in your life. Appreciate the newness that came from loss, while remembering fully the things that made the life you have now possible.

James McMillian, MA, LCPC, NCC  
Resolve - Counseling and Wellness Center  
Prairie Village, KS 66206



## Grief's Likeness to Fall - What is Lost, What is Left, What is Possible

By Becca Van Tassel, LCSW

As we prepare for a transition into cool mornings and early sunsets, I have been taking the time to reflect on how nature beautifully represents our mission at Austin Grief. As the trees let go of their leaves in preparation for a season of rest and recovery, it allows me to reflect on what is lost, what is left, and what is possible.

### What is lost?

I always look forward to the first signs of fall; the leaves begin to slowly change, brisk mornings, and the sun begins to change from a penetrating light to a hazy glow. As the season progresses, the leaves begin to change into vibrant colors and slowly release from the trees. Within weeks we are left with empty branches, cool days, and a sense of stillness. I am reminded of how we can associate this transition with the initial phase of grief. Grief can leave us empty without our loved one. The way in which our lives have completely changed from vibrant life to numbness and pain. When grief informs our whole world, it can leave us lonely and desperate for connection to our roots and core. In nature the experience of fall is very purposeful. Trees need to let go of their leaves in order to prepare for the harshness of winter. In grief, we sometimes need to preserve our core for a period of time in order to one day grow again.

### What is left?

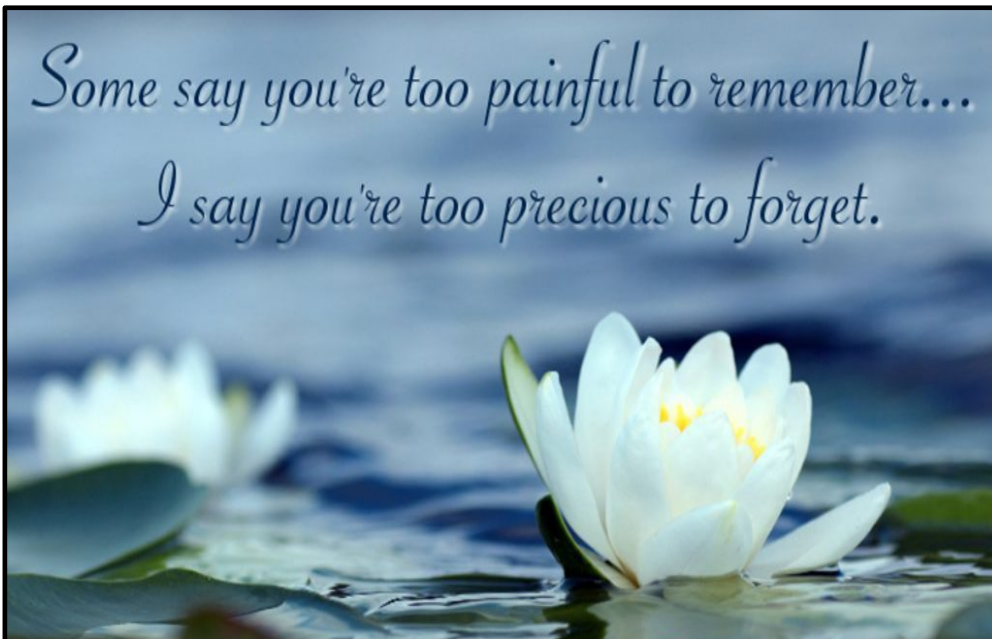
As nature begins to prepare for winter, preservation becomes critical. Every last bit of sunshine and water is stored in order to survive a cruel winter. What we see in the outside world may be empty branches, brown grass, and flower blooms falling away. However, the internal experience is a very different process. Everything is still very much alive and fully functioning. As we move into the "what is left" phase of grief, this can be a similar experience. While our life will never be the same again, grief work can help us slowly identify what is left in our lives. Our core group of friends, family, and support help us nourish and preserve, but they can help us grow. They can help us remember that through loss, we can rediscover life and remember there is still love and connection in our lives.

### What is possible?

As fall transitions into winter, we are left with a period of bleakness. It feels as if nothing is ever going to grow again. Survival is a battle for months. However, this period has purpose. The leaves fall down to the forest floor to provide enough nourishment for the earth's soil to grow more leaves for when spring arrives. Each year when the laurels grow and the bluebonnets begin to emerge again, I am reminded of what is possible. In the final phase of grief, we are reminded that we can find meaning and joy in life again. We can transform our experience of the harshness into nourishment for our souls. Far too often, we fear the dark and adore only the light. The same can be said for grief. What I try to remember is we need balance and perspective as this is what allows for our experiences to be whole.

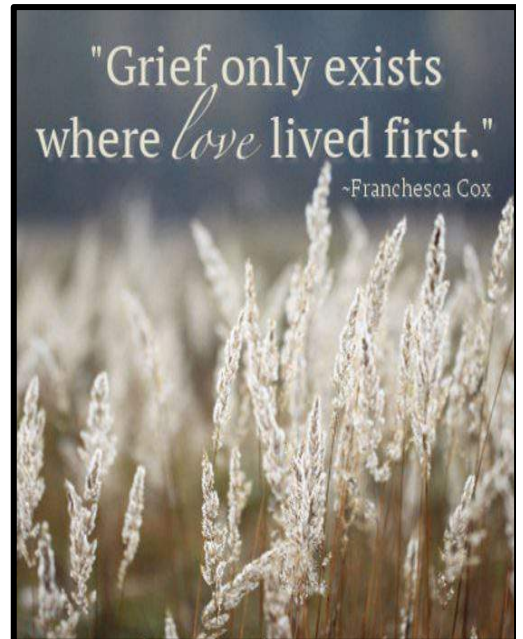
These symbolic associations are powerful reminders that Mother Nature has an incredible influence on our lives. Death forces us to examine the purpose of life. At Austin Grief we strive to connect and empower those mourning to invest in life again. We believe that our connections to our loved ones are not gone, but our relationship may be different. With balance and purpose, we can allow ourselves to love and trust again.

*Some say you're too painful to remember...  
I say you're too precious to forget.*



"Grief only exists  
where *love* lived first."

~Franchesca Cox





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

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

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](mailto:bpusanova@gmail.com)

Website: [bpusanova.com](http://bpusanova.com)



National Website: [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.

Bereaved Parents of the USA  
Northern Virginia Chapter  
P.O. Box 7675  
Woodbridge, VA 22195