



UNITE, Inc.

GRIEF SUPPORT AFTER MISCARRIAGE,  
STILLBIRTH AND INFANT DEATH

## UNITE Notes

Winter 2018

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P.O. Box 298, Oxford, PA 19363

[www.unitegriefsupport.org](http://www.unitegriefsupport.org), 1-888-48 UNITE

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### *Sitting in solidarity...*

*In solidarity with people who are crying  
People who are not joyous at a time when everyone tells you that you should be  
In solidarity with those who have lost loved ones  
Those who are alone and empty  
Those who cannot give thanks in this moment  
Those who are angry at this moment  
Those who are asking, "Why did this happen to me?"*

*I'm sitting in solidarity with those questioning their faith  
With those questioning their body  
With those questioning the people around them  
With those questioning their very existence in this challenging space.  
In solidarity with people who paint a smile to cover the tears  
People who laugh to conceal a cry  
People who hold onto their loved ones with the force they can no longer use on their little ones*

*I'm sitting...  
In quiet... in mindful... in thoughtful and thoughtless spaces  
In solidarity  
With those who are still avoiding social media, family & friends  
Those who need both quiet when the outside is too loud  
And noise when the inside is too quiet  
I'm sitting in solidarity with you  
With momma's and papa's and mzazi's and nana's, and omi's...  
With me.*

*Written by Jeanae Hopgood-Jones in memory of her twins Aviva Monroe and Jora Nirali.  
She carried them for 16 weeks and 5 days. They were born on June 7, 2017.*

*Jeanae's blog: [www.blackangelmom.com](http://www.blackangelmom.com)*

If you or your organization would like to sponsor *UNITE Notes*,  
please contact us at 1-888-488-6483 or via email at [administrator@unitegriefsupport.org](mailto:administrator@unitegriefsupport.org).  
Thank you for your support.

# Professionally Speaking...

## by Denise M. Paul MA, CT, CPLC

### What Are Your Options?

The death of your baby may have left you feeling like you will never find joy again. The physical and emotional toll that your loss has on your body and mind is tremendous, and it takes a great deal of strength to come back from the depth of grief and despair.

I am currently reading the New York Times best-selling book, *OPTION B*. Sheryl Sandberg writes about facing adversity, building resilience, and finding joy in the face of adversity, following the sudden death of her husband. In an attempt to recover from his loss, she wrote this book in collaboration with psychologist Adam Grant. Ms. Sandberg encourages the reader to know that after the most devastating events, it is possible to grow by finding deeper meaning and gaining greater appreciation in our lives. I realize that the possibility of moving on is very difficult to imagine when your heart is completely shattered, but you have no choice.

Journaling is a therapeutic technique that I often recommend for people who are mourning the loss of their baby. It is helpful to write down your feelings so that they can be read and acknowledged. However, I often find that it's difficult to get started unless you are given a specific topic or a prompt.

Another tool for recovery is a gratitude journal, in which you keep a log of things that you are grateful for. In other words – you count your blessings. By acknowledging what you do have, rather than what you have lost, you naturally look towards the positive things in your life. It may be uplifting to think about the good in your life, but when your baby dies, it's nearly

impossible to think about something to be grateful for.

The authors of the book *OPTION B* quote philosopher, Soren Keirkengaard by saying, "Life can only be understood backward, but it must be lived forward." This means that the death of your baby has shaped who you are. Despite the profound grief that you feel, you must figure out a way to incorporate this loss into your life and move on. This can be done by re-building your self-confidence in order to navigate the present and the future. Mothers in my UNITE Grief Support Group often tell me about the feelings that they are experiencing following the death of their babies. The feelings that I most often hear are: guilty, scared, isolated, ashamed, vulnerable, hopeless, failure, and jealous. Their self-confidence is destroyed because moms believe that they are responsible for nurturing their babies to life. When their babies die, they often blame themselves. One of the things that must be re-built is self-esteem and confidence. Psychologist, Adam Grant, points out in the book that simply counting your blessings doesn't boost your confidence.

Grief permeates your whole life. Even when you go back to work and resume your usual activities, you are carrying all of your feelings associated with grief. At first, it may be difficult to simply get out of bed in the morning and brush your teeth. In the first days, weeks, and even months following the death of your baby, you can barely function. So how do you boost your confidence when you are feeling so sad? *Option B* offers a unique technique that I'd like to share with you.

## What Are Your Options? (cont.)

Start by writing down three things that you have done well each day. Even though you feel that you are barely functioning, focus on the “small wins.” It can be simple things like putting on make-up, or enjoyed a cup of tea. In an experiment, people wrote down three things that went well and why every day for a week. Over the next six months, they became happier than a group who simply journaled about memories and feelings. In another study, people wrote down things that went “really well” and why. The results were that their stress levels dropped, as did their mental and physical health complaints. The phenomenon of incremental progress will uplift you on your very difficult grief journey.

Following the death of your baby, you have two options: you can curl up in a ball and cry all day, or you can slowly move forward, re-investing in life, while keeping the memory of your baby always in your heart. Your heart is broken, but it still beats.



## How Long Does it Take?

*Ann Coyle RNC*

This is a question asked by both people who are grieving and their family and friends who love them. “How long does it take?” There is no patent answer for this. There is certainly not a time frame that we can put on the grief process that would be the same for any two people. Some of us have learned the stages of grief defined by many different people. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross MD, a well-known psychologist and author of “On Death and Dying”, identified the stages of grief experienced by a dying person themselves. She listed them as anger, depression, denial, bargaining, and acceptance. These have been adapted by many to identify the stages that the grieving person also experiences after the loss of a loved one. Many have found that they don’t go through the stages in any specific order, in fact, there seems to be a great ‘disorder’ to their feelings. They may be angry soon after the death, and then in time seem to accept what has happened, then weeks later, feel angry again at someone or something that’s happening. These feelings can be overwhelming to the grieving person and make them feel like they are either crazy, and/or the only person who has ever felt this way. They can bounce back and forth between feelings/stages for a very long time. Many people have found it very helpful to talk about their feelings to a friend, counselor, or support group. Support groups can be very helpful, it is good to talk to other people who are feeling the same way or living through the same type of loss as them. These people in the group also “get it”, according to the members. They feel like no one understands how they feel, what helps them, and what hurts them. That is why we need to educate one another and try to leave the lines of communication **OPEN** to begin to help one another through these difficult times. We all need to think before we speak, understand when invitations are turned down, and respect the time it takes for our loved one to heal. Just keep letting THEM talk, and you listen, no matter how long it takes!

## Some Days

Written by Jeanae Hopgood-Jones in memory of her twins Aviva Monroe and Jora Nirali

*Some days, the hardest thing I have to do is  
wake up without you.  
I look at my belly and see an empty space where  
you should have been.*

*I look in my eyes and see a glassy surface with  
no sparkle.  
You were the twinkle that lived there.*

*For four months, you lit up my world from the  
inside out.  
You filled my heart with reasons to beat,  
You filled my womb with reason to create.  
You filled my head with an understanding of  
love never realized before.*

*Some days, the hardest thing I have to do is  
breathe without you.  
I take in air that serves the singular purpose of  
keeping me alive.  
I exhale all the hopes and dreams I had of you.  
My breath catches in my throat when I  
remember your beauty...*

*When I see your faces, I am overwhelmed with  
sadness and lost for words.  
The air I breathed was for us... all three of us.  
The air I breathed helped to create you both.  
My chest rises with all the love I want to give to  
you,  
And falls with all the love I send to the universe  
for you.  
Some days, the hardest thing I have to do is take  
a step without you.  
You filled my muscles with reason to push  
forward.  
You fueled my stride in the journey toward  
motherhood.  
You filled my legs with purpose,  
With strength to support us as your genesis  
continued.*

*You guided my steps.  
You guided my thoughts.  
You moved me in the direction I was destined to  
go, just by your very existence.*

*Some days, the hardest thing I have to do is  
keep living when you're no longer here.  
I yearn to feel you inside me,  
Moving and kicking and getting the hiccups.  
I yearn to feel your energy around me,  
Oddly consoling me when I know I should be  
consoling you...  
My babies... my daughters... my loves.*

*Some days the hardest thing I have to do is  
remind myself that you're still with me.  
You're still in the air I breathe, the breaths I  
take, the strides I walk...  
You're still in every beat of my heart, every  
thought I have, every tear I cry...  
You're still in every hope, every dream, every  
bit of inspiration that I have.  
You're part of me where this world ends and the  
next begins.*

*Mommy will carry you forever.*



## In Memory of Riley Grace

No words I write can ever say  
 Or express the sadness I feel everyday  
 As time goes on and seasons go by  
 I try my very best not to cry  
 I think of you, my beautiful Angel always by my  
 side  
 How I miss you...no one will ever seem to know  
 It's hard for others to understand - I'm the one  
 who carried you in my belly for 9 months or so  
 I think of you even in silence  
 And love to speak your beautiful name  
 But all mommy was left with are a few memories  
 And some of your gorgeous pictures in a frame  
 I had so many hopes and dreams for you precious  
 child of mine  
 But I'll keep them photographed and imaged in  
 my brain  
 We had so little time together to share  
 But my precious baby girl, Riley Grace, I'll hold  
 your heart in mine  
 And I promise you until the last breath I take,  
 that love will ALWAYS be there.

*Written by Andrea Adams  
 in memory of her sweet daughter  
 Riley Grace Adams  
 August 20, 2017-October 15, 2017*



## For David and Gabriel, Baby A & B

*Written by Julia Melone. She lost her twins on  
 April 23, 2017 and April 24, 2017*

It's been months.  
 many mornings,  
 nights with you both on my mind.  
 more days of hope,  
 high sun rising on the day —  
 and yet a heart weighed down, pierced  
 by every stroller and baby i see.  
  
 how chubby would you both be?  
 what would your smiles be like?  
 what would it be like to see your sisters  
 holding you both, instead of their plastic dolls?

unending questions— sometimes met with  
 silence,  
 sometimes met with quiet comfort.  
 standing in a space of waiting  
 for all wrongs to be made right.  
 in this place of waiting, hope seems like a pipe  
 dream.  
 help me remember, it's worth holding on.

moving forward with this wounded, raw heart.  
 carrying memories — so vivid.  
 my heart aches — how did it all change so  
 quickly?

lifting my eyes up,  
 among the wreckage of trauma and loss—  
 big gaping holes, empty arms.  
 nightmares, darkness.

hoping, clinging, waiting — for light,  
 for peace, for quietness, for healing.  
 for all the brokenness to be over — forever.  
 to be in the place with no tears, no trauma, no  
 pain.  
 to hold you both, to see you,  
 and to finally be healed.

## A Message from Danielle Kennedy President of UNITE's Board of Directors

On behalf of the UNITE Board of Directors, I would like to extend our hope for a peaceful New Year to all of you.

Last year brought several changes to the make-up of UNITE's Board of Directors. After many years of service to UNITE, our administrator, president, as well as one of our members-at-large, decided to step down. UNITE is grateful for their dedicated service and wish them our best. The administrator position was filled by our Board Chair and long-time member, Barbara Bond-Moury. In November of 2017, I was elected by the Board to serve as interim president until the annual Board elections in April. I am honored to serve and am forever grateful to UNITE for its support after the loss of my eldest son, Sam.

When I lost Sam 17 years ago, I was not sure how I would survive the loss of my infant son. Help came when I started attending a local UNITE support group. Sharing Sam's story with a community of parents who truly understood began the healing process and helped me to find a place for my grief. Three months after losing Sam, I found out I was pregnant with my daughter, and once again, UNITE's community of parents offered support and friendship through what seemed like the longest nine months of my life.

In 2002, my husband and I began hosting a yearly fundraiser called Sammy Bowl as a way to create a legacy for Sam. The proceeds were gifted to UNITE so it could continue its important work of helping newly bereaved parents. But as Sam's mom, the true gift was watching the hundreds of Sammy Bowl participants smile, play, and laugh in his name.

Forty years ago, when UNITE, was founded, many parents suffered in silence and were told to forget about their children and move on. Because of the courage of a hand-full of parents who simply refused to accept the status quo, parents who dared to question accepted beliefs about grieving a child lost during pregnancy or shortly after birth, we have UNITE...and you and I are free to tell our childrens' stories.

The Board continues to work to make sure that UNITE remains here for you as well as all the newly bereaved parents to come.

To that end, the Board has decided to undertake a comprehensive review of our by-laws. We are actively seeking volunteers to serve on our Board in various capacities as well as offer input on the future of UNITE. We are also starting to plan for our annual Walk to Remember as well as numerous other fundraising efforts. If you are interested in joining our Board or discussing ways in which you might use your time and talents to help UNITE, please call our administrator. We would love to hear from you. Thank you...and as always, remembering the children who hold our hearts instead of our hands.



## Fall/Winter 2017 Donations

*We are so grateful for donations given throughout the year. Below are donations provided specifically for the Walk to Remember, Fall Fundraiser, and general donations.*

### **Walk to Remember 2017**

Lawrence & Paula Healy  
Jackson  
Katherine Schmid  
Kevin & Allison Healy  
Paul & Dolores Kolakowski  
Kathy Macagnone  
Anthony & Linda Nuccitelli  
Daniel & Danielle Kennedy  
Brain & Michelle Manning  
Tracy Kolakowski

### **Fall Fund Raiser**

**Harold & Judith Woolf** in memory of Scott Nolan Woolf  
**Mary Hobbins** in memory of James E. Hobbins, III  
**Maria Griffith**  
**The Colby Family** in memory of Mason Colby  
**Michael & Hannah Campbell** in memory of Marc Campbell  
**Philip Gitomer & Teresa Maone** in memory of Emily Maone Gitomer  
**Dennis & Regina Tosto** in memory of Christopher Tosto  
**Rajesh Nair & Rumi Agarwal** in memory of Riya Nair  
**Nathan & Molly Wingerd** in memory of Grace Anna Wingerd  
**Robert & Jane Stutz**  
**Beth Brobst** in memory of Sean Andrew Brobst  
**Nanci Goldman**  
**James & Rachael Boice**  
**David & Eleanor Nagele** in memory of our son Jonathan  
**Lynn C. Healy** in memory of my 1<sup>st</sup> granddaughter, Haley Joyce Powers  
**Antonio & Jennifer Tedesco** in memory of our son Antonio Tedesco, Jr.  
**Gerri Wismer** in memory of Freida Wismer and her dad, William Wismer

**Morrie & Sherry Gold** in memory of Karen Amy Gold  
**James & Becky LaFreeda** in memory of our daughter, Marcie Jo  
**James & Denise Paul**  
**Shannon Belisari** in memory of Danielle Allison Denize  
**Zachary & Debora Topka** in memory of Katherine Jane Topka  
**Chastity Bruno** in memory of Owen Bruno  
**David & Maureen Rich** in memory of Maxine Rich  
**Mark & Stacy Bricker**  
**John & Nora Parell** in memory of the babies we lost  
**Emma Mellon** in memory of Zachary D. Mellon  
**Glenn & Arlene McMinn** in memory of Glenn, Jr. and lifelong friendship made through UNITE, Inc.  
**Sandy & Barry McClure** in memory of Kali Burgess and Angel McWhirter  
**Carmela Roberts** in memory of Lillian Roberts  
**Joseph & Paulette Ramsey**  
**Sally & Bill Jones** in memory of "Our 2 Little Loves"  
**Sigita Banevicius and Ed Krakauskas** in memory of Serena Visconti

### **Donations**

**Mr. & Mrs. Michael Fink** in memory of Michael L. McDevitt, Jr.  
**Harold & Judith Woolf** in honor of their granddaughter Lauren Rachel Woolf  
**Dennis and Jean Tosto** in memory of Spencer Parks and Callan Joseph Kreider  
**Kirk & Nice Community Outreach** in honor of Mary Cushing Doherty  
**William Copestick**  
**Andrew Tosto** in memory of Callan Joseph Kreider

### Fall/Winter Donations (cont.)

**Jessica Molek** in memory of Alice and Beatrice Hauck

**Mr. & Mrs. John Fleming** in memory of Jason John Fleming

**Charles & Kathleen Bennett** in memory of Jacob W. Bennett

**Gail Bober & Jeff Bakely** in memory of Eve Bober Bakely

**Elaine Shields** in memory of Mikey (Michael Francis Shields)

**Dorothy Hanshaw** in memory of Brendan E. Morris

**Kathy Pope** in memory of “three angels in heaven”

**Mr. & Mrs. Paul Kolakowski** in memory of Annabelle Kolakowski

**Tami Leather**

**Eric Woolf**



*Save the Date*

*2018 UNITE  
Walk to Remember  
Saturday, October 6<sup>th</sup>  
Ridley Creek State Park  
Picnic Area #17  
(See Sponsor Form On Page 11)*



The UNITE website is undergoing changes which will include the ability to view your newsletter on the website...we'll keep you posted!



# News

## **New Mailing Address**

Please note our new mailing address:  
P.O. Box 298, Oxford, PA 19363

## **Safe Arrivals**

We would love to hear about your safe arrival so we all can celebrate in your joy. So we can put it in the newsletter, please send information on your new bundle of joy to [administrator@unitegriefsupport.org](mailto:administrator@unitegriefsupport.org)

## **Home Page Info**

### **[www.unitegriefsupport.org](http://www.unitegriefsupport.org)**

Virtual Snowflakes: The donation cost for placing one of these virtual items on the page is \$25 and will be in memory of your baby. You may donate through PayPal by clicking on the Buy Now icon.

Note: On the PayPal page, where it states, "Instructions to the Merchant," type in your baby's name, etc.

## **Newsletter Submissions**

Please send your original poetry, short stories, articles, and letters to *UNITE Notes*. The beautiful writings that we receive from UNITE's bereaved parents are what make our newsletter so special. If you have written poems, articles, etc. that you would like to share with other parents, please send them soon.

## **Acknowledgments**

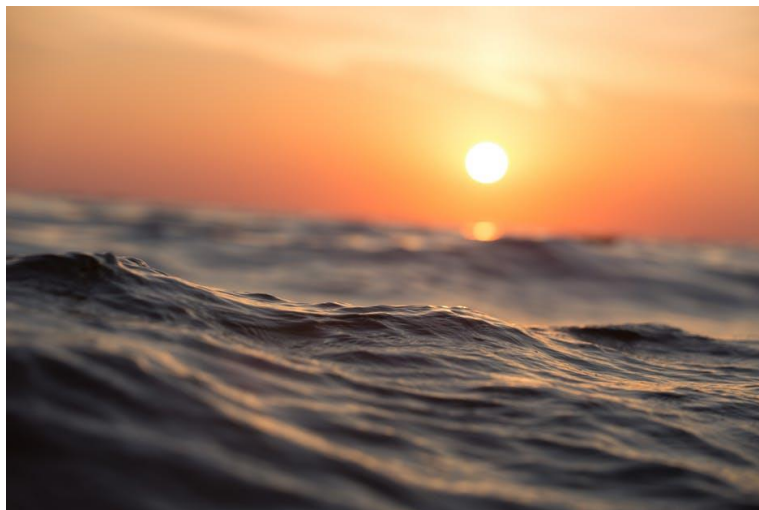
If anyone has not received an acknowledgment for their donation, please contact the administrator@unitegriefsupport.org, or call the UNITE tape at 1-888-488-6483. Please leave your name, phone number, and the best time to return your call.

## **AmazonSmile Foundation**

The Foundation runs a program in which Amazon donates 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to charitable organizations. To shop go to smile.amazon.com from your web browser on your computer or mobile device and choose UNITE, Inc. Products will be marked "Eligible for AmazonSmile donation" on their product detail pages. You may also go to our web page: [www.unitegriefsupport.org](http://www.unitegriefsupport.org) and click on the icon/banner, which will bring you to smile.amazon.com. You should bookmark this page so that you go directly to your Amazon Account and start shopping. Purchase of digital content, such as Kindle e-books or MP3's, is not included.

## **Toll-Free Phone Bill**

Our monthly costs are continuously rising. If you or your organization would be interested in sponsoring UNITE's phone bill, please contact us. It would be greatly appreciated.



## Support Groups

For information about the group nearest you, please contact UNITE, Inc. at 1-888-48 UNITE or 1-888-488-6483 (leave a message on the tape). Or write to UNITE Inc. at P.O. Box 298, Oxford, PA 19363. Or email [administrator@unitegriefsupport.org](mailto:administrator@unitegriefsupport.org). New members must contact the group coordinator before attending their first meeting. UNITE, Inc. does not discriminate on the basis of gender, age, marital status, religious belief, race, sexual orientation or economic status

### Pennsylvania:

#### **UNITE, Bucks County**

Meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday at St. Mary's Hospital, 7-9:00 PM [*currently not meeting, as there is no facilitator*]

#### **UNITE, Delaware County Memorial Hospital (DCMH)**

Meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday, 7:00-8:30 PM at Delaware County Memorial Hospital, in Drexel Hill, PA  
*Contact: Debi Rafferty, 610-394-4798 or UNITE Tape*

#### **UNITE, Holy Redeemer Hospital**

Meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday at Holy Redeemer Hospital, 7:00-9 PM  
*Contact: Denise Paul, 1-888-488-6483 (UNITE Tape)*

#### **UNITE, Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania Medical Center**

Meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday, 7-8:30 PM  
*Contact: Kelly Zapata, 215-662-2616 (Voice Mail)*

#### **UNITE, Jennersville Regional Hospital**

Meets 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday, 7:30-9:00 PM in Jennersville, Chester Co., PA  
*Contact: Karen or Glen Powers, 1-888-488-6483*

#### **UNITE, Lankenau Hospital**

Meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday, 7:30-9:00 PM  
*Contact: Don Porreca, 1-888-488-6483 (UNITE Tape)*

#### **UNITE, Mayfair (NE Philadelphia)**

St. John's Lutheran Church  
 Meets 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of the month 3:30pm to 5:00pm  
*Contact Dora Eaton 1-888-488-6483*

#### **UNITE, Pennsylvania Hospital**

Meets 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday, 6:30-8:30 PM

*Contact: Michelle Ferrant, 215-829-5040 or 1-888-488-6483 (UNITE Tape)*

#### **UNITE, Riddle Hospital**

Meets 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday, 7:00-8:30 PM  
 Riddle Memorial Hospital, Media, Delaware Co.  
*Contact: Carol Kealey, 1-888-488-6483 (UNITE Tape).*

#### **UNITE, Thomas Jefferson University Hospital/Jefferson Physicians**

Meets 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday, 6-7:30 PM [on as needed basis]  
*Contact: Andrea M. Braverman, Ph.D., 215-955-9216*

### New Jersey:

#### **UNITE, Princeton Health Care System**

Meets 1<sup>st</sup> Monday, 7-9:00 PM  
*Contact: Debbie Millar, RN, Community Education 1-609-897-8980*  
*Facilitator: Bernadette Flynn-Kelton*

#### **UNITE, Virtua at Voorhees**

Meets 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday, 7-9:00 PM at Barry D. Brown Health Education Center  
*Contact: Ann Coyle, RN, 1-609-502-7552*

### Subsequent Pregnancy

#### **UNITE, Lankenau Subsequent Pregnancy Support**

Meets 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday, 7:30-9:00 PM [on as needed basis]  
*Contact: Don Porreca, 1-888-488-6483 (UNITE Tape)*

#### **UNITE, Virtua at Voorhees (called Rainbow Babies)**

Meets 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday, 7:00-8:30 PM at Barry D. Brown Health Education Center. Call 1-888-VIRTUA 3 to register

### **UNITE's services include:**

- Support Group meetings in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.
- Hospital In-service Programs and community education.
- Conferences for bereaved parents, professionals and the community.
- Literature and newsletter.
- UNITE group development assistance and training programs for group facilitators and support counselors.
- Referral assistance.

Support me as I participate in the 2018  
UNITE, Inc. 8th Annual Walk to Remember



**Participant's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Yes! I will make a contribution to help UNITE, Inc.

- \$250 Donation** (\$250+) \$250 Donation
  - \$100 Donation** (\$100+) \$100 Donation
  - \$50 Donation** (\$50+) \$50 Donation
  - \$25 Donation** (\$25+) \$25 Donation
- \$\_\_\_\_\_ Other

**Please Make Your Checks Payable to: UNITE, Inc.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province \_\_\_\_\_

Zip/Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Country \_\_\_\_\_

Donor Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Thank You So Much For Your Contribution!

Mail this form and your check to:

**UNITE, Inc.**

P.O.Box 298

Oxford, PA 19363

or Deliver the form to the person you are sponsoring with your check.

*UNITE Notes* staff

Editors: Theresa Fisher and Kathy Macagnone

Administrator: Barbara Bond-Moury

**Submissions:** We welcome your original poetry and articles. Your contributions are important to UNITE's work of reaching out to bereaved parents. We reserve the right to edit and select from submissions. Please send all submissions to:

UNITE Inc.

P.O. Box 298

Oxford, PA 19363

1-888-48 UNITE or 1-888-488-6483

or email [administrator@unitegriefsupport.org](mailto:administrator@unitegriefsupport.org)

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