



GRIEF SUPPORT AFTER MISCARRIAGE,
STILLBIRTH AND INFANT DEATH

UNITE Notes

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Tiny Hands

Written by Aimee Jones in memory of Esmee Isobelle Morris

I hope you felt the comfort in my words of love so deep
I hope you knew my hopes and dreams and what you meant to me
It's so much more than words can say or what the eyes can see

Tiny hands and tiny feet
The most beautiful baby I ever did meet
As small as you were, the biggest part of my heart you hold
And that's where it will remain until I'm grey and old
For a long time my skies have been so grey,
And it's hard to find words to say,
But I'll try now, I hope that's okay

To me you are the breeze that softly whispers by and gently dries my tears
You're the sun that lights my heart and mind and takes away my fears
You've never truly left my love, you're wrapped within my heart
A lifetime love, forever close, I know we'll never part

I miss you



Professionally Speaking...
by Denise M. Paul MA, CT, CPCC
A Bereaved Parent

A wife who loses a husband is called a widow.

A husband who loses a wife is called a widower.

A child who loses his parents is called an orphan.

There is no word for a parent who loses a child.

That's how awful the loss is.

- Jay Neugenboren – *An Orphan's Tale* - 1976

I have worked with hundreds of people who have lost a spouse, and I have learned that most of them do not like the title of “widow” or “widower.” The word “orphan” suggests the same unfortunate status, since orphans are children who are left without parents, likely because of some tragic circumstance. But what do we call a parent who loses a child?

Jay Neugeboren, in his book *An Orphan's Tale* says that there is no word in the English language for a parent who loses a child because the loss is so awful. In fact, there is no word in any language to describe such a person. No word can express the profound, gut wrenching sorrow that a parent feels when a child dies - no matter the child's age. Bereaved parents may look like any other parent, but in the inside their hearts are broken. The title of “bereaved parent” is especially disenfranchising if the child dies before birth, as in the case of miscarriage and stillbirth. Mothers and fathers sometimes need to be convinced that they are still parents, even if their baby never lived outside the mother's womb.

Grief literature uses the title “bereaved parent” to describe such a person. The word “bereaved” literally means to be deprived of a close relation through their death. A parent is deprived of his or her child through death. Alan Wolfelt, a nationally recognized grief expert, teaches that the word “bereaved” means to be “torn apart.” Parents are certainly metaphorically “torn apart” when a child dies.

It is understood that a widow has lost her one and only husband, a widower has lost his one and only wife, and an orphan has lost both of his/her parents. However, a “bereaved parent” means that at least one child has died. There are many parents who are bereaved because of the death of one child, but who still have other living children. It becomes more challenging for parents who have both living and deceased children. They certainly are mourning the child that has died, while at the same time, they are happy and engaged with the children that are alive and well. The challenge is to honor the title of “bereaved parent” while parenting their living children. The tricky part is that even if someone has a deceased child and has no other living children, they are still a “bereaved parent.”

In a recent miscarriage and stillbirth support group, a mother said, “It’s very hard to parent a child who is in Heaven.” Bereaved parents visit their children at the cemetery. Bereaved parents talk to their children in their dreams. Bereaved parents honor their child’s birthday with unopened gifts and unrelenting tears. They yearn to parent a child who is not physically present, but who lives in their hearts.

The title of “bereaved parent” says it all. You are a parent who is torn apart because you are deprived of your child whom you love with all your heart. There is no word in the dictionary that identifies a parent who has lost a child. That’s how awful the loss is.



Coping With Loss

Grief After Stillbirth

Hali Sklar, a member of Redeemer Health's UNITE group, was recently interviewed on FOX 29 News for a story on the topic of Stillbirth. Denise Paul, the Director of Facilitators for UNITE, and a certified Perinatal Loss Grief Counselor also participated in the interview.

At 34 weeks, Hali no longer felt her baby move. She soon learned that there was no heartbeat and that her baby had died. After enduring 30 hours labor with her first baby, she delivered her precious daughter, Maya Dylan. She and her husband Matthew spent time in the hospital with her, trying to squeeze a lifetime of memories into a few short hours. They said "hello" and "good-bye" to their baby on March 1, 2019.

You can see the live interview on the following link:

www.fox29.com/video/1003894



Infant Loss During The Pandemic

Hali and Matt Sklar were interviewed multiple times for an article on dealing with grief associated with infant loss during the pandemic. The interview also addresses the challenges of handling a subsequent pregnancy after experiencing a loss.

You can see the entire interview at the following link:

www.romper.com/life/grieving-a-baby-virtually-during-the-pandemic

“Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Tells Your Story?”

Sharing Benji’s Short but Powerful Life

By Maggie Rousis

When my husband and I found out we were pregnant in June 2019, we were all in from the start. In late August, I had an ultrasound that showed several abnormalities. Two days later, genetic testing results would confirm that our son had Trisomy 13. We were evaluated at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia at 20 weeks, where we found out that his abnormalities were too severe for intervention. We decided on palliative care, preferring to deliver at Holy Redeemer Hospital (now Redeemer Health), surrounded by family and friends. We thought we could enjoy our time with him and make memories at least until my due date on February 29, 2020, but on December 20, 2019, I had to be induced due to severe preeclampsia, and Benji was born still.

How do you find meaning in such a short life? How do you keep your son’s memory alive?

It started with a note in my phone, not even a cohesive plot. Just a few lines inspired by a daydream: What if Benji could tell his own story? What if he could talk to the stuffed eagle plush we bought for him (affectionately named Mr. Eagle), and what memories did they share when Mr. Eagle was in Benji’s bassinet overnight in our hospital room? Most importantly, could Benji feel that he was loved?

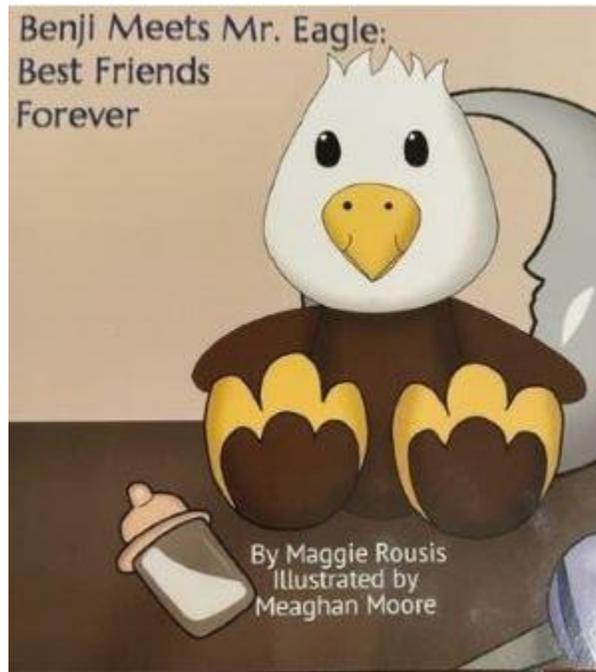
I jotted down the few ideas I had and didn’t touch the note for about a year. I came across it with a new mindset one day and fleshed out the story, adding dialogue, sharing with family and friends to make sure it was clear, and removing medical jargon to make it more understandable to a child. I intended for parents who had experienced loss to read it to their surviving children, or to their angel babies in hospital rooms before they said goodbye.

My cousin’s daughter, Meaghan Moore, had recently graduated with a bachelor’s degree in graphic design. I reached out to her and she was eager to help bring Benji’s story to life. Her sketches brought me to tears; it was as if she had read my mind! They were exactly as I had imagined.

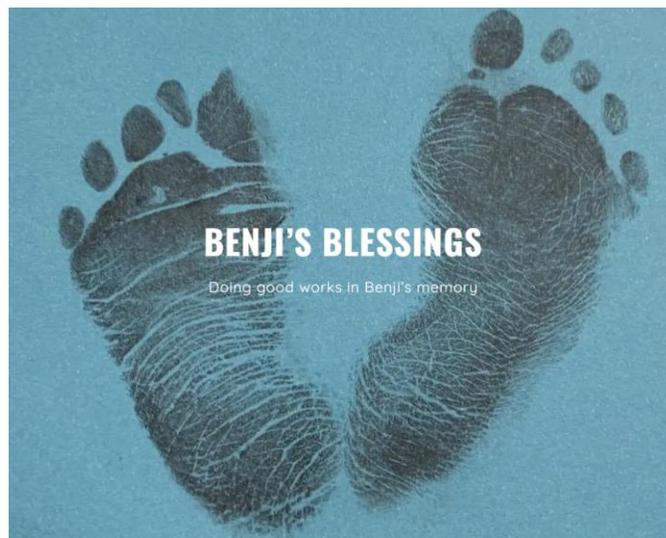
Over the next several months, we talked back and forth, making adjustments and clarifications. The hardest part of the process was actually self-publishing on Amazon because the publishing software was not very user-friendly. The templates provided by Amazon had to continually be adjusted in Microsoft Word, which (if you have experience modifying pictures in Word) was incredibly frustrating! After several uploads and revisions, the book was live!

We’ve sold over 100 copies the last several months and I feel so at peace now. It’s as if a weight has been lifted off my shoulders. Benji’s story is out in the universe, being read by people I haven’t even met. It’s truly humbling. Additionally, all proceeds benefit the nonprofit Benji’s Blessings, established in his memory, which aims to help children with special needs. We can continue to do good work in Benji’s name.

The final song of the musical *Hamilton* is called “Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Tells Your Story?” I am honored to be able to share Benji’s story with the world.



Benji Meets Mr. Eagle: Best Friends Forever by Maggie Rousis, illustrated by Meaghan Moore, is available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



The website for the non-profit *Benji's Blessings* can be found at www.benjiblessings.com

Little Butterfly

I lived my life inside you
Cocooned in all your love
So mama, papa, please don't cry
I'm still with you, just up above

I felt your every heartbeat
It's my sweetest melody
And for every heavenly bedtime
The Angels play it back to me

I know how much that I am wanted
I feel so very blessed
Of all the mommy's in all the world
I got the very best!

You think of me in all your waking hours
And all those sleepless nights
Just look out the window and you'll find me
The brightest star, the most dazzling light

I'm that little breeze in the summer
And I'm that unexpected white feather
I plucked it from my downy wings
So that you remember we are always together

I know how much it hurt your soul
When we had to say goodbye
But I'm not gone, I'm always here
I'm your sweet little butterfly

Amy Farquhar
In memory of Alfie James Farquhar



*You are my first thought
In the early morning,
My last thought
Before I fall asleep,
And almost every thought
I have in between*



*When tomorrow starts
without me
Don't think we're
far apart
For every time you
think of me
I'm right here inside
your heart*

Thinking Of You With Love

by My Forever Child

We thought of you with love today,

but that is nothing new.

We thought about you yesterday,

and days before that too.

We think of you in silence,

we often speak your name.

All we have are memories,

and your picture in a frame.

Your memory is our keepsake,

with which we will never part.

God has you in His keeping,

we have you in our hearts.

A million times we've wanted you.

A million times we cried.

If love could only have saved you,

you never would have died.

It broke our hearts to lose you.

But you didn't go alone.

For a part of us went with you...

the day God called you Home.

~Author Unknown



Mother To An Angel

A tiny little angel
bid a silent sweet goodbye
to a sad and weeping mother,
then flew off to heaven's sky.

When a spirit child is perfect
there's no need for them to stay.
They come and choose a family
then go quickly on their way.

The trials and pain of earth life
are not theirs to endure.
God knows these precious little ones
are much too good and pure.

But while here, a bond is made.
Closer than any other.
One of everlasting love
between the child and mother.

I'm the mother of an angel.
who is watching over me.
How I wish you could have stayed,
but it's not meant to be.

For a time, my little angel,
you and I will be apart,
but until I hold you in my arms,
I'll hold you in my heart.

Ron Tranmer©



An Angelic Dream



I dreamed about my angel baby
One time
And one time only.
It was in March,
Around the time I conceived.
There was nothing there
Except her.

I saw her as a toddler.
Maybe two or three years old.
She had two full afro puffs
Of kinky curly hair.
She had beautiful, glowing brown skin,
And she was smiling brightly.
As cute as a button.
I can't fully remember what she had on,
But it was soft pink,
Like a rose.

I knew I was pregnant when I woke up.
The pregnancy test I took afterwards
Was only confirmation
Of what my soul already knew.
I knew she was a girl,
Even though
I was only days pregnant at the time.
I miscarried in my first trimester.
Never got any confirmation,
But I believe my soul already knew that, too.

To my angel baby,
Tamar Rose,
Who came in the middle of the night
To meet me in my heart,
Knowing I would never get to hold her in my arms.
Thank you.
I love you.

Sarita Smith





You are invited to UNITE's 11th Annual Walk to Remember

When:
Saturday, October 16, 2022
12:00 PM to 3:00 PM
(Rain or Shine)

Where:
Ridley Creek State Park, Picnic Site #17
<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/findapark/ridleycreek/index.htm>

What:
The "Walk to Remember" is an opportunity for the UNITE community to join together to remember our children and raise funds for UNITE. **Please bring your own picnic lunch.** Drinks and soft pretzels will be provided. **Lunch will begin at 12:00 PM and the walk will begin promptly at 1:30 PM.** The walk will be no farther than 1 mile (you can turn around at any time) or you are welcome to remain at the pavilion during the walk.

Fundraising:
There is no registration fee for this walk and fundraising is not required. However, if you would like, you can ask your friends and family to sponsor you (or even sponsor yourself!). Your fundraising efforts will allow UNITE to continue supporting bereaved parents in our community. A sponsor form is available from your group facilitator or by contacting fundraising@unitegriefsupport.org. Additional sponsor forms will be available the day of the event.

Please RSVP:
RSVP to 1-484-758-0002 or fundraising@unitegriefsupport.org by October 1, 2022. Family and friends are welcome to attend! For more information, please call or email.

Directions:
The main entrance to Ridley Creek State Park is Sandy Flash Drive South at Gradyville Road. From main entrance, pass by the Park Office and follow directional signs to picnic area #17.

For GPS, use the following address:
351 Gradyville Road
Newtown Square, PA 19073.

Or find detailed directions at:
<http://www.friendsofrcsp.org/Directions2Ridley.pdf>



Amazon Smiles

Everyone,

UNITE could really use your help this year.

When ordering online from Amazon, please choose UNITE, Inc. as the organization you would like to support.

UNITE will get a percentage back from what each person spends on Amazon Smiles. You have to use the link below.

Go to smile.amazon.com/ch/23-2362403 and AmazonSmile donates to Unite Inc.

Copy this URL into your browser ---www.smile.amazon.com/ch/23-2362403
Then Shop....it's that easy!

Please also share with family and friends!

Thank you,
Barbara Bond-Moury
UNITE Board Chair



Spring 2022 Donations

We Are So Grateful for Donations Given Throughout the Year

Donations

James & Thanh Dickey – “I Run for Kaia” – In memory of our daughter Kaia

Michael & Hannah Campbell

Samantha Wilson

Karen Binns

Linda Nuccitelli

Dejah Everett



Grants

Merck

United Staff Association NJEA

UNITE offers a number of services to grieving parents and their caregivers including the following:

Peer to Peer Grief Support Groups

- * Literature
- * Educational Programs
- * Training Workshops
- * Group Development Assistance

Without Your Most Generous Donations, UNITE Would Not Be Able To Continue These Services

News

Mailing Address and Phone Number

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

Phone Number

Please note our new phone number:
484-758-0002

New Group

A new group entitled Parenting After Loss will begin in September. The meetings will be online. More info to follow.

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.

Home Page Info

www.unitegriefsupport.org

Virtual Butterflies: 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. Note that the newsletter is now being uploaded to the UNITE website which allows all who are searching for comfort and support due to the loss of their child(ren) to see your written story.

Acknowledgments

If anyone has not received an acknowledgment for their donation, please contact the administrator@unitegriefsupport.org, or call the UNITE line at 484-758-0002. 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 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.

Fundraisers Wanted

We are looking for some fresh ideas in fund raising! Do you have an idea to share? We'd love to hear about it. Please contact UNITE at administrator@unitegriefsupport.org.

Support Groups

UNITE in-person support group meetings are suspended until further notice
Please call 484-758-0002 if you would like to attend a UNITE Virtual Support Group

For information about the group nearest you, please contact UNITE, Inc. at 484-758-0002 (leave a message), write to UNITE Inc. at P.O. Box 298, Oxford, PA 19363, or email administrator@unitegriefsupport.org. **All UNITE Virtual Support Groups are by Invitation only.** 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, Holy Redeemer Hospital
Huntingdon Valley, PA
Meets 3rd Thursday, 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Facilitators:

Denise Paul
Liz Steward

UNITE, Lankenau Hospital
Wynnewood, PA
Meets 3rd Tuesday, 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM

Facilitator:

Paris Margaritis

UNITE, Paoli
Paoli Pointe Medical Center, next to hospital
Meets 2nd Monday, 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM

Facilitators:

Sue McAndrew
Gerri Donaher

UNITE, Pennsylvania Hospital
Meets 1st Tuesday, 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

Facilitators:

Karen Donnelly
Kelly Colby

UNITE, Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania
Meets 3rd Tuesday, 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM

Facilitator:

Michelle Ferrant

UNITE, Riddle Memorial Hospital
Media, PA
Meets 1st Thursday, 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM

Facilitators:

Regina Fazio
Sheila McCabe

New Jersey

UNITE, Penn Medicine Princeton Health
Meets 1st Wednesday, 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM
Contact: Debbie Miller, RN

Facilitator:

Bernadette Flynn-Kelton BSN, RN

UNITE, Virtua at Voorhees
Barry D. Brown Health Education Center
Meets 1st and 3rd Monday 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Facilitator:

Ann Coyle, RN

Subsequent Pregnancy Groups

UNITE, Virtua at Voorhees
Barry D. Brown Health Education Center
Meets 2nd Tuesday, 7:00 - 8:30 PM

Facilitator:

Ann Coyle, RN

UNITE, Virtual Support Group

Virtually on Zoom by invitation
Meets 1st Monday, 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM

Facilitator:

Denise Paul

Father's Group "Grieving Dads"

Virtually on Zoom by invitation
Meets 2nd Tuesday, 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM

Facilitators:

Simon Hindle
Matthew Sklar

Parenting After Loss

Virtually on Zoom by invitation
Beginning in September
Day/Time To Be Determined

UNITE Notes Staff

Editor: Theresa Fisher

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

484-758-0002

or email administrator@unitegriefsupport.org

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