



## A Prayer for Spring

Like springtime, let me unfold and grow,  
Fresh and anew,  
From the cocoon of grief  
That has been spun around me.

Help me face the harsh reality of  
sunshine and renewed life,  
as my bones still creak from  
the winter of my grief.

Life has dared to go on around me.  
And as I recover from the insult of life's continuance,  
I readjust my focus to include  
Recovery and growth as a possibility in my future.  
Give me strength to break out of the  
Cocoon of my grief.

But may I never forget it  
As the place where I grew my wings,  
Becoming a new person because of my loss.

Janis Keyser  
*UNITE Notes*, spring 1984



# *Professionally Speaking...*

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

## Grief Hangover

When one thinks of a hangover, it usually refers to the unpleasant symptoms that are associated with drinking excessive amounts of alcohol. Some of the common symptoms are fatigue, dizziness, loss of appetite, nausea, and headaches. Pain relievers, water, and bland snacks usually help a person feel better within a matter of hours. While these symptoms can be severe and very incapacitating, they usually don't last longer than one day.

A grief hangover may have some of these symptoms to some degree, but this type of hangover lasts much longer. Grief does affect us physically, often causing symptoms similar to an alcohol hangover. Headaches, stomachaches, irritability, loss of appetite, sleeplessness, and forgetfulness are a few common physical reactions to grief. However, pain relievers and water do nothing to relieve grief symptoms.

While parents mourn the loss of their baby, they not only experience physical symptoms, but the emotional symptoms can be overwhelming. Feelings such as sadness, guilt, anger, loneliness, denial, and jealousy are just a few of the feelings that parents often feel after a miscarriage, stillbirth, or early infant death.

When the physical and mental symptoms are combined, bereaved parents feel like grief is "hanging over them" everywhere they go. Hence, a grief hangover - with no end in sight. Some people ask me how long they will feel this way because they can barely tolerate the pain.

Your life changed on the day that your baby died. You may feel like a dark cloud is hanging over your head, and it follows you everywhere you go! Your instinct may be to run away from the cloud, but I'm urging you not to. The great poet Robert Frost writes, "The best way out is always through." Don't run from the cloud that is hanging over you, rather allow it to envelope you. Go through it. Feel the pain of your loss. Let it be OK that you have a grief hangover. This may sound counterintuitive, but the only way that you will heal is to feel all the emotions and physical changes that come over you.

For the first weeks and months after your loss your grief hangover will likely feel severe. Your symptoms will be very difficult to overcome. In time, you will learn how to manage them. Your loss will feel more familiar to you.

I will warn you that grief comes in waves. You may be able to string together several days or weeks when you are feeling pretty good, only to be shattered by a griefburst. You will feel like that dark cloud is back hanging over you, and you will feel like you have regressed on your grief journey. Griefbursts are normal. They often occur when something reminds you of your baby, or when events such as the due date, the baby's birthday, and holidays are celebrated. Your grief is your closest connection to your baby.

The dark grief clouds will hopefully subside in time. My wish for you is that you look up to the clouds and see beautiful, white, puffy clouds hanging over you. Take the opportunity to feel the grief of your loss and remember your precious baby with more love than pain.



# 2022 Walk to Remember

*Simon Hindle*

## *Time*

It heals all wounds, so the saying goes. For those who have suffered a loss, it is both an enemy and a friend. As more time elapses, it can bring despair that our loved ones and our losses can appear diminished, especially to those outside our circle of friends who have experienced the same level of loss. But, for those of us who have the stamp of membership permanently imprinted on our hearts and in our minds, it's always there.

Some time has passed since the Walk to Remember back in October of last year. Just as acknowledgement of our pain brings some small but welcome solace, the Walk to Remember brings comfort to have our loved ones remembered and be able to share in that by being amongst friends without fear of judgement. To hear the names of our babies and being able to say them out loud and hear others say their names too, is as close to consolation as one can get - but it's needed and welcomed by us all. This day helps to do that in such a huge way.

The 2022 Walk last October was the same weekend as the nationally observed day of remembrance, which was no coincidence. It is that important. The importance of having the walk was also highlighted by the fact that it

had been several years since the previous walk. The era of the Covid-19 virus had left everyone with only their own company to remember remotely and for most of us, remember remotely in private - being alone is hard at the best of times, being alone with the pain of such profound loss brings back memories we often want not to go through again. So this Walk brought a lot of relief, and though happiness is not a word that often springs to mind in these experiences, being able to get back together again did appear to bring some joy.





Furthermore, we were able to be joined by our friends and families from Walk to Remember Philadelphia for us to all share in that spirit of remembrance and getting back together in person.

## *Increasing Awareness*

In the build up to the day, Andrea and Bill Devenney appeared on our local Philadelphia Fox29 new channel a week before, highlighting the cause and our Walk. Well done to both for representing our cause and withstanding the scrutiny of the TV cameras.



## *The Walk*

The day itself was largely left a simple affair. It is about our children and remembering & acknowledging our loss and those of our friends.



Located at picnic area #17 of the Ridley Creek State Park, proceedings kicked off at mid-day on Sunday, October 16th. We had signs and luminaries to mark the path of the walk. We had raffle prizes which, for the size and generosity the term “raffle”, seems inadequate with box seats for the Flyers and 76’ers, spa experience, fan packs, and pampering baskets to name but a few. Congratulations to all the winners! Three hours between mid-day and 3 pm may seem like a long time but the time flew by very quickly. We also had the services of our smooth talking and ever-present Master of Ceremonies, Matt Sklar, on microphone to drive us through the day.



## 2022 Walk to Remember

### *Thank You*

Thanks to all who came and shared the day. Thanks to our organizing committee, Andrea Devenney, Matt Sklar, and Simon Hindle for pulling it together. Thanks to the UNITE groups for support and provision of prize baskets for the fundraising raffle prizes, which were immense and varied. Lastly, but very importantly, a very big thank you must also go to our sponsors who helped to make the day the success it was.



Thank you to our headline presenting sponsor Dynamic Advertising Solutions (DAS) who as well as sponsoring the event with a donation, partnered with us with provision of signs for this year's walk.

Also, a big thank you to our two generous Gold Sponsors, Plymouth Opticians and an anonymous donor. Their support helped to make the day the success it was.

And, to the Springfield Country Club and our sponsoring families with their kind donations, thank you for helping to make it truly a Walk to Remember.

# Why Not You?

Hali Sklar



I see you with your double stroller and baby strapped to your chest as I cross the street. I hear you shuffling your toddler on her wobbly legs outside my living room window. I feel you as you tell your pig-tailed three year old, “I love you” and embrace her tight.

*And all I can think at each of these moments is, “why not you?”*

Now, before you write me off as some sadist from the depths of hell who wishes pain upon others, note that I do not wish any of what I have experienced upon another human being.

*I am simply a grieving mother with questions unanswered.*

When I first lost my only daughter at 35 weeks I thought, “why did this happen to me?” However, as the weeks went by and I began slowly emerging from the comfortable cocoon I made for myself within the four walls of my home, I began running into women and their children and my thoughts shifted from, “why me” to “why not you?” I started feeling like a bad person (because I needed yet another reason to feel bad about myself during this time) and I felt ashamed to even tell anyone I was having these kinds of thoughts, but the truth is I was, and quite honestly, I don’t feel guilty for having them.

*Jealousy is yet another feeling (on a long list of feelings) that a bereaved mother feels when she loses her baby.*

When you lose your baby, suddenly the world is chock full of pregnant women with their large protruding bellies taunting you in their current state of oblivion, or women in their trendy yoga pants walking side by side with their adorable children being pushed in their strollers. If you live in an overpopulated metropolis like myself, you are doomed the minute your shoe hits the pavement.

You want to be happy for all of these women, but the truth is, you are jealous. Jealous of those who will experience all the good that comes with having a healthy, living child. Jealous that these same women will get the future that you dreamt about for eight perfect months. That same future that all but disappeared with the words, “I’m sorry” from your doctor. The future that will never come to be as my daughter can now only be held in my heart and not in my arms.

*So, “why not you?”*

What makes every other mother I see with their beautiful, pink cheeked baby so lucky? These are just some of the many questions that I, as a bereaved mother, will never know the answers to and I will live life wondering not only why other women were luckier than me, but also all of the additional mysteries about my daughter and her future that now lay beside her peacefully in heaven.





# UNITE – A Lifesaver

*Theresa Fisher*

I have been a member of UNITE for almost 25 years and the editor of the newsletter since 2006. I joined the group shortly after my twin boys, Eric and Joshua, died due to complications from their prematurity. They were just 23 days old.

Years ago, when I was 13 years old, my baby sister was born. Her name is Maryanne and she was born still.

It was a Friday. My parents left for the hospital very early in the morning. I remember going to school and waiting all day for the principal to come and tell me that my mom had her baby. The principal never came.

When I returned home from school, my dad met my sisters and me at the door and simply said, “The baby died. There is no baby.” That was it. He said nothing more.

My parents never saw Maryanne. The doctor delivered her and handed her to the nurse who took her away. No pictures were taken. No footprints were taken. No locks of hair were cut. My parents had nothing. That was back in 1975. If it were 1995, all those things would have been done. They just weren’t done back then.

It wasn’t until 23 years later, when I lost my own children, that I realized what my mom and dad actually experienced after Maryanne’s death. They certainly did not have the support systems that we have in place today. After Eric and Joshua died, we received a memory box of their short little lives. We have locks of their hair, their footprints, casts made from their hands, the blankets they slept with, and the little diapers that they wore. Thanks to the wonderful hospital staff, we have everything that was connected to our babies during their short lives here with us. The box also contained information about support groups and reading material to help us deal with our loss.

After our sons died, my husband and I needed to connect with other parents in situations similar to ours. We searched for a support group in our area and were grateful to find the UNITE support group that met at Mercy Fitzgerald Hospital. We would not have survived those early months if it had not been for the friends we met at our meetings.....friends that I am still in touch with today. They are the best friends I wish I never had reason to meet. But we did meet and we found comfort in talking to each other because we knew exactly what it was that each of us were experiencing. Through our meetings, we learned that it was okay to cry; it was okay to talk about our babies who had died; it was okay to take as long as we needed to accept and live with our loss. And, most importantly, it was okay to keep our babies’ memories alive.

A lot has changed since my sister was born and my parents felt they had to silently grieve her loss alone. This change is due to groups like UNITE that provide support to grieving parents. I will be eternally grateful to UNITE and all of its members...the group that saved my life.



# Bearing the Unbearable

*Joanne Cacciatore*  
*December 2017*

When someone asks: "When will you stop grieving the death of your child (or other beloved?)" you may want to consider this answer as an option: "When I stop loving..." - yeah, that'll never happen. I've been saying this for two decades!

Look, just because we are grieving doesn't mean we are laying in bed 18 hours a day, 7 days a week. I agree with the writer Mary Gordon, who lost her father as a child, who calls herself a "perpetual mourner." I don't need to stop mourning to live a full and meaningful life. In fact, it would be imprudent; I would be a fragmented and inauthentic person if I forcibly avoided grief.

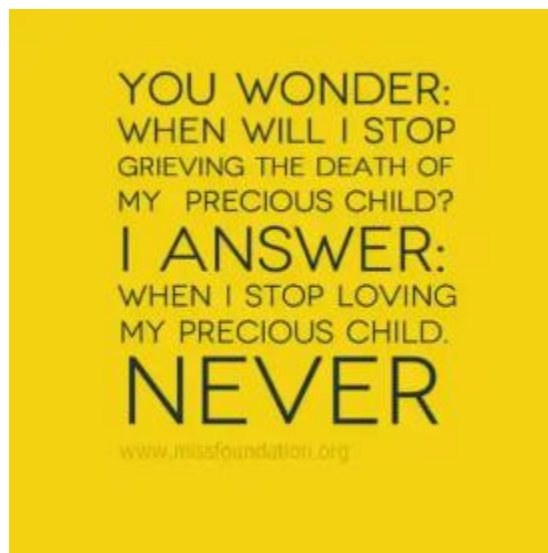
Grief is energy that, when we are ready, can be directed into fierce and unstoppable compassion in the world.

Grieving people can- and do- kick ass.

Just give us some time and space to be and feel and receive love and support. If you can't do that, then move on and let us fill our circle with others who can.

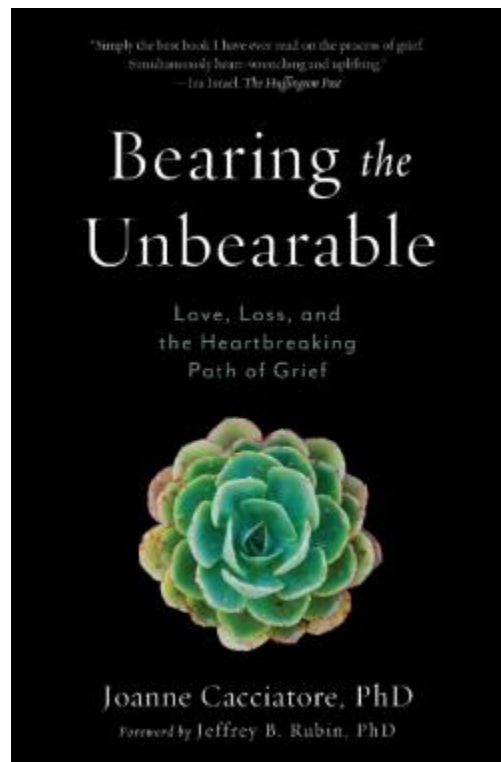
Said with love, but fierce love ♥

[MISS Foundation](http://www.missfoundation.org), thank you!





Joanne's book can be found on Amazon



# Dealing With Grief

## ***Communication***

- Talk about the baby and your feelings with your partner, family, and friends. It may sound trite, but this is an excellent outlet for releasing bottled-up emotions.
- Try to resume old and start new relationships as a couple and as individuals.

## ***Nutrition***

- Eat a balanced diet that includes milk, meat, vegetables, fruit, and whole grains.
- Avoid junk food and fast foods.

## ***Fluid Intake***

- Drink eight glasses of liquids per day. It can be useful to keep a measured jug of water in the refrigerator to assure you drink enough.
- Don't drink caffeine or alcohol because they may cause dehydration, headaches, and/or lower back pain.

## ***Exercise***

- Do something active every day such as, biking, walking, jogging, aerobics, or stretching. Even a walk around the block can be useful.

## ***Tobacco and Alcohol***

- Avoid tobacco because it depletes the body of vitamins, increases acidity of the stomach, decreases circulation, and can cause heart palpitations.
- Don't drink alcoholic beverages because they depress body function and natural emotional expression.

## ***Rest***

- Avoid increased work activity
- Maintain rest patterns even if unable to sleep.



GRIEF IS  
THE PRICE  
WE PAY  
FOR LOVE

# Winter 2023 Donations

*We Are So Grateful for Donations Given Throughout the Year*

## Walk to Remember Sponsors

DAS – Dynamic Advertising Solutions  
F. Gimbel Enterprises – Plymouth Opticians  
Snow Crab Dining LLC – Springfield Country Club  
Jim & Denise Paul  
Paris Margaritis  
Simon & April Hindle  
Matthew & Hali Sklar  
Andrea & William Devenney  
Dennis & Leslie Boyle  
Kevin & Karen Binns  
William & Donata Devenney  
Cathy Plaisted – Ridley Creek Park Picnic Area Sponsorship

## Walk to Remember Donations

Ashley Plasha in memory of Emry John Plasha  
Jessica Powell  
Mark West  
Caitlin DePrinzio in memory of Danielle Theresa  
Linda Nuccitelli  
Beth Sturman  
David Paone  
Norilene Averion  
Allen & Wendy Bond in memory of Reagan Leigh Criado

## In Memory of Anthony Devenney

Andrea & William Devenney  
William & Donata Devenney  
Dennis & Leslie Boyle

## In Memory of Addison, Blaize & Carlee Moury

Deborah Clark  
Ross & Carol Schwalm  
Sam & Alice Sererance  
Charles & May Carsten  
Kathleen Pope  
Ken & Lorri Bond  
Allen & Wendy Bond  
Tim & Tracey Sommers  
Lloyd Sherton Termite & Pest Control  
Carole Clydesdale  
Bruce Clydesdale  
Norie & Tom Byrne  
Martin & Marchia Rattigan  
Edythe Mitchell  
Dr. Elizabeth Bond & Jeremy Eicher

## Walk to Remember In-Kind Donations

Cathy Plaisted – Ridley Creek Park Picnic Area Sponsorship  
Fund Raising Committee - Matt & Hali Sklar, Andrea Devenney, Simon Hindle  
Matt & Hali Sklar  
Andrea Devenney  
Simon Hindle

## Walk to Remember Yard Signs

Catlin DePrinzio – In memory of Danielle Theresa  
Ashley Broxterman – In memory of Emry John Plasha  
Jessica Powell – In memory of Angel Jay Filett  
Mark West - In memory of Mason Jeffrey West  
Robert Silva – In memory of Mila Kelly Robinson  
Yessenia Silva – In memory of Mila Kelly Robinson  
Nancy Sklar – In memory of Maya Dylan Sklar  
Matthew Sklar – In memory of Maya Dylan Sklar  
Kara Christoph – In memory of Thomas & Hazel Maslo  
William Henrich – In memory of Our Angel Babies (2020, 2021, 2022)  
Amanda Sierko – In memory of Waverly Jean Sierko  
Lisa Baker – In memory of Emmie Rose McLaughlin  
Yessenia Silva/Nelly Cruz – In memory of Mila Kelly Robinson  
Renee Camm – In memory of Christian Michael Camm  
Keith & Nathifa Harper – In memory of Princeton Jamar Harper  
F. Gimbel Enterprises – Plymouth Opticians – In memory of Ellie Gimbel  
Lissette and Victor Rodriguez – In memory of Lucas Manuel Rodriguez



## Walk to Remember Luminarias

Phuong Ngo – In memory of Boo & Levi Sean Ong  
Jessica Powell – In memory of Angel Jay Filett  
Mark West - In memory of Mason Jeffrey West  
Robert Silva – In memory of Mila Kelly Robinson  
Yesenia Silva – In memory of Mila Kelly Robinson  
Nancy Sklar – In memory of Maya Dylan Sklar  
Gill Hustus - Not all siblings walk hand in hand, for some are in heaven while others walk on land. Baby Hustus, we love you.  
Stephanie Impriano - Until we meet again baby Carr & baby Yeatts  
Matthew Sklar – In memory of Maya Dylan Sklar  
Lisa Baker – In memory of Emmie Rose McLaughlin  
Lisa Baker/Lisa & Mike McLaughlin – In memory of Emmie Rose McLaughlin  
Lisa Baker/Joyce Baker – In memory of Emmie Rose McLaughlin  
Lisa Baker/Joyce Baker – In memory of Emmie Rose McLaughlin  
Lisa Baker/Marge and Hugh McLaughlin– In memory of Emmie Rose McLaughlin  
Amanda Sierko – In memory of Waverly Jean Sierko  
Yesenia Silva/ Robert Marcin – In memory of Mila Kelly Robinson  
Yesenia Silva/Clotilde Cruz – In memory of Mila Kelly Robinson  
Yesenia Silva/Kim Guyton – In memory of Mila Kelly Robinson

Renee Camm – In memory of Christian Michael Camm  
Danielle Echols – In memory of Tyler James Zukowski-Echols  
Keith & Nathifa Harper – In memory of Princeton Jamar Harper  
Paris Margaritis – In memory of Alexander Ilias Margaritis  
Adam Smith – In memory of James Hart Smith  
Colleen Clarke – In memory of Gabriel Patrick Muraresku  
Colleen Clarke – In memory of Dean Michael Muraresku  
Pamela Alegado – In memory of Grayson Wexler (GW)  
Phuong Ngo – Boo & Levi Sean Ong – Love you Forever  
Phuong Ngo – Boo & Levi Sean Ong – Forever in our Hearts  
Phuong Ngo – Boo & Levi Sean Ong – Too Precious to forget

## UNITE Donations

Tracey Diamicis  
Moiriah Burdo  
Cindi Callahan  
Cydnee Baffa  
Lauren Ryley

## Grants

Merck Foundation  
Amazon Smiles

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

## **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**

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](mailto: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.

## **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](mailto: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](mailto: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 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday, 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

##### **Facilitators:**

Denise Paul

Liz Steward

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

Wynnewood, PA

Meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday, 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM

##### **Facilitator:**

Paris Margaritis

#### **UNITE, Paoli**

Paoli Pointe Medical Center, next to hospital

Meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday, 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM

##### **Facilitators:**

Sue McAndrew

Gerri Donaher

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

Philadelphia, PA

Meets 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday, 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM

##### **Facilitators:**

Michelle Ferrant

Kelly Colby

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

Philadelphia, PA

Meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday, 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM

##### **Facilitators:**

Kelly Zapata

Vicki Kroesche

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

Media, PA

Meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday, 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM

##### **Facilitators:**

Regina Fazio

Sheila McCabe

### **New Jersey**

#### **UNITE, Penn Medicine Princeton Health**

Meets 1<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

##### **Facilitator:**

Ann Coyle, RN

### **Subsequent Pregnancy Groups**

#### **UNITE, Virtual Support Group**

Virtually on Zoom by invitation

Meets 1<sup>st</sup> Monday, 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM

##### **Facilitator:**

Denise Paul

### **Father's Group "Grieving Dads"**

Virtually on Zoom by invitation

Meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM

##### **Facilitators:**

Simon Hindle

Matthew Sklar

### **UNITE Parenting After Loss Group**

Virtually on Zoom by invitation

Meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday, 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM

##### **Facilitators:**

Hali Sklar

Cathy Plaisted

*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](mailto:administrator@unitegriefsupport.org)

*UNITE Notes* is published quarterly by UNITE, Inc., a non-profit corporation. All Rights Reserved.

Please correspond with UNITE, Inc. before reprinting any material from *UNITE Notes*. In most cases reprinting permission is extended, but only with proper credit noted, including author, "Used with permission from *UNITE*



UNITE, Inc.

**P.O. Box 298**

**Oxford, PA 19363**

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