

Little Child in Heaven

Written for Lisa Natalizio's son, Al, and All Those with Him

There's a little child in Heaven
Straight from his Mother's womb
His home is now above the clouds
For the Heavens are his room

Yet, he is with you always
Even though it's hard to see
You'll smell him in spring flowers
Though you'd swear he cannot be

Sometimes he will come over you
Like a warm blanket from the sky
You'll suddenly feel overwhelmed
You'll smile and won't know why

On early winter mornings
When you walk out in the mist
You'll find your face is wet because
It was your cheeks he sweetly kissed.



Sometimes later after sunrises
Like the sound of morning doves
The little child in Heaven sings
A song for those he loves

And in the wind he'll whisper
As it's blowing up a breeze
And then you'll hear his laughter
In the rustling of the leaves

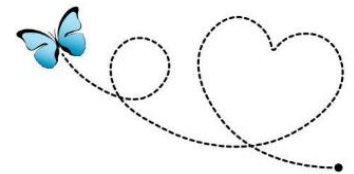
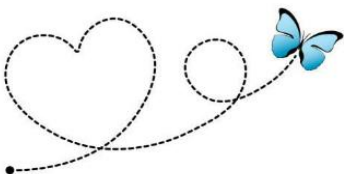
You'll gently comb his silken hair
As your hands brush across the lawn
And see the wonder of his smile
In the sunset and the dawn

You'll see him running in the wind
Which blows through fields of wheat
To you he runs much faster
When, in time, again you meet

You'll sometimes feel his gentle touch
As if its evening rain
And receive the love he's sending
As he tries to ease your pain

Within the stars you'll see his eyes
And within your dreams he'll play
For as you often think of him
He will think of you each day

His blessings come every morning
And again at night by seven
To those of us who share the love
For the little child in Heaven



Professionally Speaking.....

By Denise M. Paul MA, CT, CPLC

Life Has to End - Love Doesn't



J. William Worden, PhD, is one of the world's most accomplished grief theorists. He has identified what he calls "Tasks of Mourning" following the death of a loved one. They are as follows:

Task 1: To accept the reality of the loss.

Task 2: To process the pain of grief.

Task 3: To adjust to a world without the deceased.

Task 4: To find an enduring connection with the deceased.

The enduring connection is *Love*

On June 21, 2024, Nadira Rice gave birth to a beautiful baby girl who was born still at 22 weeks gestation, weighing only one pound. I had the privilege of meeting Nadira and her husband, Richard, in the midst of their profound sorrow, a short time after their daughter was born. They named their precious new baby, "Halo Amor." Halo for their angel, and Amor for love.

They had not even begun to accept the reality of the loss, let alone process the pain of their grief. It would take months, and years, to work on the tasks of mourning. How can a father process holding his baby's tiny, lifeless body in the palm of his hands?

Nadira and Richard are already the proud parents of a two-year old daughter, so they already know the joy and love they are capable of feeling for their child. They already had hopes and dreams for this new baby, but they were dashed in an instant.

As the Perinatal Loss Coordinator for Holy Redeemer Hospital, I am blessed to have the job of caring for the babies who die too soon. I photographed Richard as he held his tiny baby in his hands, and I couldn't help noticing his graphic T-shirt that read, "Life has to end - love doesn't." The ironic thing about his choice of shirts that day is that he didn't even realize what his shirt said! He left the hospital to get changed and grabbed a shirt, then rushed back to be with Nadira and his baby. I knew that this T-shirt had a profound meaning, but I wondered why Richard even owned a T-shirt with those words.

His T-shirt suggested that he understood that life has to end, but I'd venture to bet that in that moment, only a few hours after his daughter's birth, he was struggling to accept the fact that his daughter's life had ended. He did not want his daughter's life to end. It did not have to end that early. But it did. It will take months, even years, for Nadira and Richard to process and accept that their baby's life has ended before it even began. We all know that our life will end. Yes, all life ends. We expect our elderly grandparents to die. But we never expect that our unborn baby will die.

As the graphic T-shirt suggests – love doesn't end. Richard had only a few hours in the hospital to physically cradle and love his baby, but the love that he felt that day will last a lifetime. Nadira and Richard will continue to love Halo Amor, even in her physical absence. A lifetime of memories had to be made in the hospital on the day she was born, but the love did not start at the moment of birth. They loved their baby from the moment that they learned of her existence in Nadira's womb. Although she died too soon, there was grace to be found in being able to carry her long enough to meet her, albeit too early for her to survive.

Grief theorists talk about having "continuing bonds" with the deceased. Nadira and Richard certainly feel a continuing bond with their baby. They set up a little shrine in their home, containing the linking objects that



touched Halo Amor while she was in the hospital. Her urn is nestled between the legs of the bear that was given to them, along with her footprints, and a photo of her tiny feet.

Richard and Nadira's love will be with Halo Amor on her birthday, on Mother's Day, on Father's Day, on Thanksgiving Day, on Valentine's Day, on Christmas, and Easter, and every holiday throughout the year. In fact, their love will be with her every day for the rest of their lives. Richard will wear his T-shirt proudly as a testament to the love that he will continue to have for his precious little girl.

Conversely, Halo Amor's love will be with her parents. She knew the affection that her mother had for her as she carried her and nurtured her growing body for 22 weeks. She knew the sound of her father's voice as he spoke of her anticipated arrival. She had the capacity to love. That love shines down

from Heaven, watching over her parents and giving them strength to love others. Halo Amor's love will be in their hearts for the rest of their lives. They will carry her love as they move forward, integrating her life and death.....and love into everything they do and everyone they love.

2024 Walk to Remember

Simon Hindle



Heartwarming

The **Walk to Remember** was a great day in countless ways. On that Sunday, the weather couldn't have been better - warm, bright, and sunny. The event was an overwhelming success, with the largest attendance in recent memory and record-breaking fundraising.



It was an event attended by a broad spectrum with parents of loss, their families, grandparents, parents with recent loss still raw, and parents with rainbow babies, included in the day. Notable attendees included our presenting sponsor, Mary Cushing Doherty, and Kathy Donaldson from the Central Jersey Family Health Consortium.

This year, we introduced UNITE branded t-shirts, each bearing the listed names of babies on the back. The shirts were incredibly popular, and we plan to offer them again next year. It was heartwarming to see a sea of mint green shirts, fostering a sense of solidarity and togetherness.



Our friends and families from **A Walk to Remember Philadelphia** joined us again, with the charity making a last-minute sizable donation and Denise Thomas providing her invaluable services on our organizing committee.

On that note, a huge thanks to our organizing committee - Andrea Devenney, Brittny D'Amour, Caitlin DePrinzio, Denise Thomas, Kevin Binns, Lisa Natalizio, Matt Sklar, and Simon Hindle - for pulling it together. It was an incredible team effort.



The Walk – Sunday October 20th 2024

The day itself was largely 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. At 1pm our Chairman and Master of Ceremonies for the day, Matt Sklar, kicked off the introductions. He thanked the organizing committee, Simon Hindle echoed that and led the observation of a moment of silence followed by our customary reading by our Director of Facilitators, Denise Paul.

The Walk started shortly thereafter, with signs and luminaries marking the path. We had generous raffle prizes, including box seats for the 76'ers, a spa experience, baggo boards, and pampering baskets, to name but a few. Congratulations to all the winners!

Three hours flew by very quickly. Acknowledging our pain brings solace and the Walk to Remember provides comfort in having our loved ones remembered and sharing that experience amongst friends without fear of judgement.

We did encounter a small snag with respect to the higher than anticipated attendance resulting in the parking lot reaching overcapacity and the park officials closing off access. While it's a "nice" problem to have, reflecting our success, we do not want to challenge the goodwill and



accommodations of the State Park. As a result, we are liaising with DCNR State Park Representatives to investigate what we can do to avoid any issues future years.

THANK YOU

Thanks to the UNITE support groups and individuals for providing immense and varied prize baskets for the fundraising raffle.

A very big THANK YOU to our SPONSORS who helped to make the day a success. Thank you to our:

- **Headline Presenting Sponsors:** The Manny and Ruth Cohen Foundation, and Mary and Jim Doherty Family.
- **Gold Sponsors:** Plymouth Opticians, The Eye Store, Steven and Nancy Sklar, and Tristan and Alexis Jones.
- **Silver Sponsors** AGC Chemicals Americas, Kim and Gareth Glaser, and Jacqueline Allen.



Additional thanks to Dynamic Advertising Solutions (DAS) who partnered with us in the provision of t-shirts, signs, and the banner for this year's walk. Their support was invaluable. We also extend our gratitude to the Springfield Country Club, Sound Systems Unlimited, and our sponsoring families with their generous donations.

Thank you to everyone for making it truly a Walk to Remember.



My Forever Butterfly

Written by Lisa Natalizio, Al's Mom

It has been 31 years since I said hello and goodbye to my son, Alessandro, on November 9.

To those of you who know the pain and sadness and disbelief that this could be happening to you, I am so sorry. I had battled infertility for years - surgery after surgery, injection after injection, IVF, GIF - I did it all with no viable pregnancy. Until I got pregnant naturally, a true miracle. I always say it was the best nine months of my life, nine months many women do not get, to carry a child and feel them grow every day.

Sadly, my story didn't end as I had hoped. Being 34 and carrying full term for the first time, everything was new to me. Calling out to my secretary, is this normal, I think I am having contractions, but my water didn't break. To appease me and ensure I gave her a good review, she took me to the hospital. I was expecting to be in labor, but learned a new term, it was Braxton Hicks - I was having pre delivery contractions. All looked good and I was sent home.

However, the next day at a high-risk ultrasound, my story changed for the worse. When the ultrasound tech did not speak or comment on my scan, I knew something was wrong - the doctor will be out to speak to you. The words are being said, but I am falling deep into shock - your son has a very rare condition and will not survive outside of your womb. OK, I'll carry him forever - we need to start inducing you because we are concerned other physical complications will arise and affect your health.

The next few days were hellacious, going back and forth to the hospital, knowing I was the only thing keeping him alive and knowing I would not be bringing him home. All I could do was cry and hold on to my belly as I sat in the glider in our nursery, knowing he would never be in my arms.

The next few months were somewhat of a blur. I was angry, sad, mad at God, and every woman who was pregnant. I thank my faith, family, and the guidance of other women who had walked in these unforgettable steps, who kept me from staying in bed in the fetal position. The nurses gave me things to read, a teddy bear to hold as I was wheeled out of the hospital, his footprints, hair, and booties - but no baby. How would I go on? Was I going to ever smile, laugh or be happy again - did I want to?

I journaled, prayed, cried, and dealt with all the things that would never be. I had a nursery, planned his birthdays, and his future - now what - my husband and I were at a loss of what to do and where to go. Everyone that loved us was there, but they didn't know our pain, so I reached out and called UNITE.

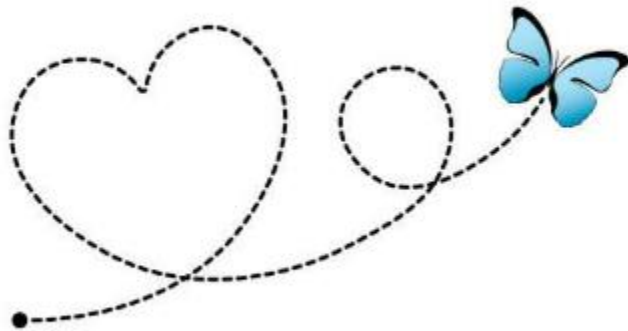
After my call with so many questions, including will I ever be happy again, I decided to attend a meeting. It was a safe place with parents just like me - who were sad, mad, and lost as to why - we shared ways to cope with the comments that were meant to make us feel better but were made by people who had no idea what our pain was. I remember going home and breaking dishes, I was so mad - the only way to release my anger and not hurt someone.

I made friends who understood what I was going through, and we supported and helped each other through all the firsts. My world began to change. I didn't run out of a room if there were pregnant women or babies; I took off the dark sunglasses that became my signature look for over a year to hide my tears; I became strong enough to tell my story and honor my son. I began to feel, to heal, and deal with the greatest loss of my life.

I became a UNITE bereavement counselor - I wanted to help other families know that in time they, too, would be ok. Time is an amazing healer - but it takes TIME. Honoring our children and our status as mothers and fathers is so difficult when they are not here physically with us. It has been 31 years and I still hurt and miss him terribly. I am his mom, and nothing can change that. When I see a butterfly - I know he is sending me a sign - I see them often when I need him most. I honor him every year on his heavenly birthday and continue to share his existence with everyone I meet. I pray and hope you, too, will be able to do the same, in time. I will gladly talk to anyone who would like to know more, as my story has 31 years of joy to share - because I am Alessandro's Mom, and nothing can take that away - my son and forever butterfly.

Peace and love,
Lisa, Al's Mom

The poem appearing on the front page of this edition was written by my cousin's husband when Al passed - I hope it helps you remember your child in heaven and heal your broken heart.



The Forgotten Mourners- Sunshine Babies

Laurie Holper, Assistant Editor

Following the loss of a baby by miscarriage, still birth, or infant death, the concern mainly centers around the mother, followed by the father. Even the grandparents are considered mourners. But what about the siblings of these babies? Their grief is often overlooked.

These children may experience a range of emotions, depending on several factors, including the age of the child. They may feel shock, confusion, sadness, anger, bewilderment, and worry.

Very young children may be sensitive to the changes in the atmosphere and the mood around them. They may react by bed wetting and tantrums. They may be clingier than usual. They may seek out security from a favorite toy or comforter. They may use play as a way to deal with their emotions and fears. They may not understand that death is permanent. Some children may not react initially, but then ask questions days or weeks later.

Children five years and older may have a better understanding of what death means. They may cope by focusing on other things and distracting themselves through play. They may act silly and joke about what happened. This is a coping mechanism for them, but it doesn't mean they don't understand or care.

Older children and teens may exhibit complex and conflicting emotions. They may seem to be independent and take on more responsibilities at home. They may try to be strong for their parents.

What can parents do to support their children? First of all, they should listen to them, give them their time, and take an interest in what they are doing. If their child doesn't want to talk, the parent might start a conversation while they are doing an activity together.

Parents should tell the child that there is no right or wrong way to feel. They could explain that they, the parents, feel sad because the baby has died, and that is why it is natural to cry. The parents should assure the child that what happened is not their fault. The children need to know that it is ok to show emotion, and that it's a normal, healthy way of coping with grief.

If parents are worried about their child's behavior or reaction, they may want to consult the pediatrician or a counselor. Another reason to consult a specialist is if the parents seem to be too overprotective of their child for fear of something happening to him or her. They should also make sure that the school is aware of what happened.

It is important for parents to keep a routine to help the child feel more secure. Also, involving a grandparent, aunt, uncle, or close family friend may help reassure the child that things are under control.

Including children while creating memories of the baby is a good idea. They could draw a picture or write a letter for the baby. They may want to get a stuffed animal to go in the memory box, if there is one. Acknowledging their children's feelings and helping them to express what may be confusing to them may prevent them from being "forgotten mourners".

As can be seen in the next article, it is also important to mention that children born after the baby's death ("Rainbow Babies") may experience feelings relating to the loss of a sibling they never knew but heard about from their parents.

The Brothers I'll Never Get to Meet

Written by Jess Fisher

In Honor of her Brothers, Eric and Joshua

7/12/98 to 8/4/98



My Brothers' Grave - Fall 2013

It is weird to miss someone you never have met. I can say with certainty, however, it is possible. I grew up in a household of four. My Mom, Dad, and sister. Well, five if you count my dog. Before my sister and me, however, I had twin brothers on this Earth for just shy of a month. I am named after them; Joshua and Eric Jessica Erin. On occasion, I do get emotional thinking about them, which even I find odd, considering I never met them. While no, I do not mourn the loss of my brothers like my parents do, and can never fully understand what they went through, I feel sadness for them. To think about the amount of hurt they endured is painful to fathom.

From a very young age, I was told about my brothers. Unlike my parents, there are days that go by that I don't think about them. Some can argue they haven't had a huge impact on my life, if any. Frankly, however, I find this false and feel the complete opposite. Throughout my childhood, I visited their grave countless holidays and birthdays. I've hosted a March of Dimes team, donating all the money to the Premies, and have walked in many walks in memory of them. On many occasions, I snuck into my mom's memory box and rummaged through pictures and articles of theirs, from the short time they were on this Earth. I often wonder what my life would be like if they were here. How these life events, such as the cemetery, would be traded in for possible baseball games and family vacations. I wonder what kind of older brothers they would be? What paths in life would they have taken? Would my sister and I even be here?



March of Dimes Walk 2017

I am a firm believer in everything happens for a reason. No, there is no reason why my brothers had to be taken so soon. There is no reason why some babies get to survive and some, sadly, do not. However, that being said, I truly believe God had a plan for my family. In a letter my father wrote me when I was just a year old, he mentions how big of a role I played in getting him through the loss he experienced, just a year before I came into the world. “You brought your mom and me happiness for the first time in a really long time.” I remember my mom telling me she thought she would never be okay again and then I came along. So many emotions fill me when I think about how I aided my parents in their healing process. I like to think my sister and I are the good that came out of all their pain. No, my parents will not ever fully heal from the loss of my brothers, but we have a family unit that makes everything worth living.

I want people to know it is very possible to have feelings towards someone who you have never met. Some people may feel this more than others. For example, in a way, I feel like I have a stronger connection to my brothers than my younger sister, for no particular reason. Don't let anyone ever discredit these feelings; they are valid. I can honestly say I have the best guardian angels. I know I am never dealing with anything alone. Even though I never physically met them, they will always be my brothers. When people ask how many siblings I have, I say three, not just one. One on Earth, and two forever in my heart.



2004 Big Walk for Little Feet

I Am a Sunshine Baby

Theresa Fisher

Big Sister to Maryanne, 9/12/75

Mom to Eric and Joshua, 7/12/98 to 8/4/98

My baby sister, Maryanne, died during birth on September 12, 1975. That is the day I became a Sunshine Baby. I was 13 years old and I remember the day very clearly. It was a Friday morning when my mom and dad left for the hospital. I was getting ready for school and I watched them holding hands as they walked towards the car. It was an exciting day. I kept waiting for the principal to come to my classroom to tell me I was a big sister. Sadly, she never came. At the end of the day, as I excitedly ran up to the house, my dad met me at the front door. I'll never forget what he said to me. 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. They had nothing. Sadly, that was the norm back then. I don't remember seeing my dad cry but I'm sure it hit him hard. My mom was still in the hospital and would not come home until Sunday. On Saturday, my dad cleared the house of all baby items. When my mom came home, there was no sign that Maryanne ever existed.

My dad was the man, so he had to be strong for my mom, me, and my sisters. He was juggling it all along with his own grief. He most definitely would have benefitted from a group like Matt and Simon's Dads' Loss Group. Unfortunately, one did not exist back then so my dad was on his own. He was my mom's rock and they walked the journey together alone.

Why am I telling you all this? I wanted to piggy-back on Laurie's piece about the Sunshine Babies, the Forgotten Mourners. As we all know, there is nothing worse than losing your child, no matter what age. Everyone handles their grief differently. Right or wrong, my parents handled their grief by not sharing it with me or my older sisters. I'm not sure if they wanted to shield us from their grief or they just couldn't bring themselves to talk about Maryanne. Whatever the reason, they did what they had to do to get through this horrific part of their lives.

Looking back to 13 year old me, I can't say that I was sad when Maryanne died. I was more disappointed than anything. I did not grieve her loss because I had no connection with Maryanne and never discussed her loss with my parents. In retrospect, I think I could have benefitted talking to my parents about Maryanne, as Laurie recommends in her piece.

It wasn't until 23 years later, when Eric and Joshua died, that I realized the grief my parents actually experienced, which makes me sad. I did not have any Sunshine Babies at the time, but I did go on to have two Rainbow Babies, Jessica and Abigail. From day one, I talked to them on a regular basis about their older brothers and included them in everything, including memorial services, cemetery visits, and birthday celebrations. Jessica, especially, would want to go through their memory book and box of mementos, which we do quite often, even now, on special occasions. Even though they came after Eric and Joshua, I wanted Jessica and Abigail to feel a connection to their brothers. For the first 23 years of her existence, I had no connection to my baby sister. I did not want that for my girls and their brothers.

I strongly urge parents to include both their Sunshine and Rainbow Babies when creating memories of the deceased baby. Don't hesitate to talk to your children about their sibling and, even if it is uncomfortable for you, talk to them to determine where they are in the grieving process. As always, though, follow their lead and don't force the discussion.

The previous piece, "The Brothers I'll Never Get To Meet", was written by my daughter, Jessica, when she was 19 years old. When she wrote it and showed it to me, I felt so good knowing that Eric and Joshua's short lives will live on through my daughters. They will keep their memories alive. I am convinced that Jessica and Abigail's children will know all about their uncles, Eric and Joshua. That makes me very happy.



The Holiday Dilemma

Written By Denise M. Paul, MA, CT, CPLC



'Tis the season to be jolly...but for parents grieving the loss of their precious baby, they certainly feel anything but jolly! Department stores are adorned with festive holiday décor, and cheerful music rings in the season with songs that sometimes bring tears to the eyes of those who are mourning. Babies are seen sitting on Santa's lap in the mall, while your dreams of visits with Santa are shattered. The dilemma is that the rest of the world wants to experience joy and celebrations while you are grieving. Family and friends want everything back to normal, yet holidays "as usual" deny the loss and trivialize the life of your baby.

I'd like to offer some coping strategies as you approach the holidays:

- Be patient with yourself. Do what you can this season and let it be enough.
- Decide on a new way or a new place to spend the holidays.
- Be realistic and realize that hurting moments will come. Be ready for them and honor them, then let them go.
- Plan ahead. Prioritize what needs to be done, and decide what is really important.
- Be prepared for holiday well-wishers. Brace yourself and know that others do wish you well and that their greetings are not intended to be hurtful reminders.
- Redefine your expectations. Make a holiday checklist of things you would usually do regarding cards, decorations, shopping, and

traditions. Be honest with what you expect to be able to do and don't feel guilty if you are not able to accomplish all that you had in previous years.

- Be flexible. Know that you are working through a challenging time and might have to make some changes.
- Take care of yourself physically. Eat right. Exercise. Rest.
- Screen all holiday activities and gatherings. Only attend the ones that you really want to. Have an escape plan ready. Give yourself permission to leave if you feel uncomfortable.
- Give yourself the gift of emotion. It's OK to cry, but it's also OK to laugh.
- Make shopping easier. Do what you feel you can handle. Shop on-line to avoid busy malls.
- Live through the hurt. Feel the pain – that's how you will heal. Don't allow the pain or sadness to ruin the entire season. Joy can return to your heart.

Grieving is full-time work and holidays interrupt the grieving process. If you can incorporate some of these suggestions into your holiday planning, you may feel better prepared to cope with this difficult time of year.



Spotlight on the Dads Loss Group

October is Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month. It is the mission of UNITE to provide peer-to-peer counseling for families that have experienced such a loss. It has also become important that UNITE provides education and builds awareness about baby loss, which will remove the stigma and shame that comes along with these types of loss.

On Monday, October 21st, Matt Sklar and Simon Hindle had the privilege of being invited by the wonderful people at Fox29's Good Day Philadelphia, to discuss the UNITE Dads Loss group and champion the cause.

UNITE extends their heartfelt thanks to everyone at Fox29 for their warm welcome and the opportunity to highlight the group. Special thanks to Producer Tracy Schmid and our segment hosts, Alex Holley and Thomas Drayton, for their support.

You can watch the segment at fox29.com/video/1535082.

The following is a transcript of the segment.



Fox 29 – How fathers cope with grief of losing pregnancy, infant death

Alex Holley: October is pregnancy and infant loss awareness month and while we know how painful this experience can be for women, we often don't hear about the toll that it can take on men.

Thomas Drayton: Fathers like Matt Sklar and Simon Hindle both grieved along with their wives after their daughters were delivered stillborn. While there was support readily available for their wives, there wasn't anything in place to prepare them for their deep sense of loss, Matt and Simon say. And while they managed to cope, they actually felt more like the forgotten grievers. That's until they joined UNITE Inc. a grief support group for men after miscarriage, still birth, and infant death.

Alex: Matt is Co-facilitator of UNITE, while Simon is the vice president of fundraising for UNITE and they are both here with us this morning.

Matt: Thank you for having us.

Alex: Thank you for sharing your story. You guys didn't know each other before this and is this what brought you both together?

Matt: Yes, I had my loss of my first daughter in March 2019, and Simon's daughter shortly after in June of 2019. We joined UNITE and at that time, there were groups for families, whatever your family dynamic looked like. The parents were welcome to join, but what we found throughout our grieving process is that fathers grieve a little differently and have different questions that they want to ask and get feedback. UNITE is a peer-to-peer support group, with people within our community of loss. It is facilitated by those that have experienced a loss. We have trained therapists and the facilitators doing this work are all parents of loss throughout that grief journey. Once we were in a better place, about two years into our grief journey, the Director of Facilitators asked if we would start the DADS LOSS GROUP. This would give dads a really safe place to talk about those things that weren't being discussed in the general groups.



Thomas: Because you're also expected to be there for your partner, but not necessarily for yourself, how did you cope with that grief, with that loss?

Simon: It's one of those things where there's almost a stereotypical image in terms of women and men in the way we grieve. The men are the rock and the support of their grieving spouses, and for men it's trying to maintain that steadfastness to support their wives. But there was not an outlet at the time for men to be able to grieve and be able to voice that without appearing to have a weakness in front of their spouse.



Alex: ... and how much of a toll can that take? Because I think we're learning more nowadays that you have to be OK before you can be OK for others. But when it comes to men feeling like you have to be strong, feel like you have to hold it together for everybody, it seems like it would be a heavy thing to carry on top of the grief that you're already dealing with.

Matt: It is heavy because you want to be supportive for your spouse. If you have other living children you have to be a parent. We find a lot of the time, for those that have living children, it's the double edged sword because they have to wake up every day and do what a parent needs to do while not finding that time to grieve. So, in the sense of a male, a father trying to be there for my wife and help her, trying to continue to go to work, but needing to find time to work on my grief. If you don't do that work, it will really come back to haunt you.



Thomas: What were some of the questions you had and what was the first meeting like?

Simon: The fathers tended to initially be quiet as they tried to figure out where the group dynamic lies. We try and keep it fairly open and relaxed for people to be able to talk. Some people immediately show their grief and they want to just let it all out there, but others just listen. The questions typically are, how do you support your wife; how do you manage when in scenarios where you're in social settings; how do you react when people invite you to go to events where you know there's going to be babies or children, which causes a trigger; and questions about how do they react to that?

Matt: And then how to take care of themselves because, like you said, the focus has been on making sure your partner is getting what they need. So finding outlets and ways for us, as fathers, to grieve. The father's group has provided a really safe space for dads to ask those questions, to get that advice.

Thomas: And now it's ok to reach out if you have emotions and to process those emotions.

Matt: Yes, and we had our annual walk yesterday, our 13th Annual Walk to Remember. Just getting to see the families in person helps a lot because many of our loss groups are virtual since COVID. They used to be held in hospital meeting rooms, but post COVID we can't get back in to those venues in person, as much as we would like. So just having the ability to get together as a community is important. We are a community and we look at it that way. We are in the worst group ever but we're glad that we have a group where the people can come.



Thomas: Where can people go?

Matt: www.UniteGriefSupport.org is the website. There are ways to contact us listed on that site, as well as, e-mail addresses and lists of our different groups that meet monthly, with all groups being held monthly on the same day of the month. For example, the dads loss group is the second Tuesday of every month from 7:00pm to 8:30pm and we send out links to the attendees. The website is the best source.

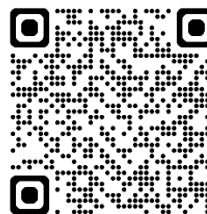
Alex: Thank you for doing the work you do to make sure that there is that safe space for dads out there.

The Dads Loss group focuses on fathers, providing a safe environment for them to share their experiences and navigate their grief. Matt and Simon co-facilitate this group.

The Dads Loss Group is just one of the many free peer-to-peer support groups offered by UNITE, Inc., an organization dedicated to helping parents and grandparents cope with the loss of a baby.

For more information, please visit www.UniteGriefSupport.org.

fox29.com/video/1535082



Fall 2024 Donations

We Are So Grateful for Donations Given Throughout the Year

UNITE Donations – Walk To Remember

Rebecca Brazel
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Sandy Merenda
Joanne Porreca

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 21715, Philadelphia, PA 19346

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 newsletter@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* at newsletter@unitegriefsupport.org. 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 boardchair@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 boardchair@unitegriefsupport.org.

Support Groups

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 21715, Philadelphia, PA 19346, or email boardchair@unitegriefsupport.org. New members must contact the group coordinator before attending their first meeting. **All UNITE Meetings, except for Riddle Memorial Hospital, are virtual and are by invitation only. Please call 484-758-0002 if you would like to attend a UNITE Support Group.** UNITE, Inc. does not discriminate on the basis of gender, age, marital status, religious belief, race, sexual orientation or economic status.

Pennsylvania

UNITE Redeemer Health (Formerly Holy Redeemer Hospital)

Huntingdon Valley, PA

Meets 3rd Thursday, 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM

Facilitators:

Denise Paul

UNITE, Lankenau Hospital

Wynnewood, PA

Meets 3rd Tuesday, 8:00 PM - 9:30 PM

Facilitators:

Paris Margaritis

Michele Rafferty

UNITE, Riddle Memorial Hospital - IN PERSON

Media, PA

Meets 2nd Thursday, 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM

Facilitators:

Regina Fazio

Sheila McCabe

UNITE, Paoli

Meets 2nd Monday, 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM

Facilitators:

Sue McAndrew

Lisa Natalizio

UNITE, Pennsylvania Hospital

Philadelphia, PA

Meets 1st Tuesday, 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Facilitators:

Karen Donnelly

Kelly Colby

UNITE, Chester County Hospital

West Chester, PA

Meets 2nd Monday, 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM

Facilitator:

Ryan Oliver

New Jersey

UNITE, Penn Medicine Princeton Health

Meets 1st Wednesday, 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Facilitator:

Bernadette Flynn-Kelton BSN, RN

UNITE, Virtua at Voorhees

Barry D. Brown Health Education Center

Meets 1st & 3rd Monday 8:30 PM -10:00 PM

Facilitator:

Ann Coyle, RN

Specialty Groups

Subsequent Pregnancy Group

Meets 1st Monday 7:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Facilitators:

Denise Paul

Sandy Smith

Father's Group, Dads Only

Meets 2nd Tuesday, 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM

Facilitators:

Matthew Sklar

Simon Hindle

Grieving Grandparents Group

Meets 2nd Tuesday of Each Month, 7:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Facilitators:

Nancy and Steven Sklar

UNITE Parenting After Loss Group

Meets 2nd Wednesday, 7:30 PM – 9:00 PM

Facilitators:

Cathy Plaisted

Hali Sklar

UNITE, Loving Choices (Termination for Medical Reasons)

Meets 4th Monday, 8:00 PM – 9:30 PM

Facilitator:

Ann Coyle

UNITE Notes Staff

Editor: Theresa Fisher
Co-Editor: Laurie Holper

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 21715

Philadelphia, PA 19346

484-758-0002

or email boardchair@unitegriefsupport.org

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UNITE, Inc.

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