UNITE, Inc.
GRIEF SUPPORT AFTER MISCARRIAGE, STILLBIRTH AND INFANT DEATH

Summer 2025

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UNITE Notes

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SUMMER'S EMBRACE

Author Unknown

Warm summer sun, upon my face,
A bittersweet embrace.
Joy blooms in gardens, bright and bold,
While dreams of you, forever unfold.

The gentle breeze, a soft caress,
Whispers of love, a silent stress.
I see your face in every flower,
In every sunlit, passing hour.

My heart aches with the summer's light,
For what was lost, in fading night.
But love remains, a vibrant hue,
A summer memory, fresh and new.

Though you're not here, in arms I hold,
Your story, in my heart, is told.
This summer's warmth, a tender sign,
Of love that's truly, truly mine.

MEET YOUR NEW EDITOR

Hello, my name is Caitlin DePrinzio, and I became part of UNITE in 2017 after the heartbreaking loss of our first baby and daughter, Danielle, on April 17, 2017.

My husband, Dan, and I learned we were expecting in July 2016, just after celebrating our first wedding anniversary. We were thrilled to begin the next chapter of our lives as parents. My pregnancy was easy and full of joy, no morning sickness, no complications, just excitement. That November, we found out we were having a little girl. We named her Danielle Theresa. Danielle for her father, and Theresa for my husband's late mother.

Our April 9th due date came and went with no signs of labor. Finally, on April 16th, Easter Sunday, I went to the hospital to be induced. Everything was going smoothly until the morning of April 17th. The doctor told me I still had "hours to go" and recommended a c-section. Almost instantly, the room filled with nurses moving quickly, unhooking monitors, and rushing me into the operating room.

Once I was on the table, the doctor asked for a doppler. That's when I heard the words no parent should ever hear:
"There's no heartbeat."

Before I could process those words, I was placed under general anesthesia. When I woke in recovery, the doctor gently told me I was safe, but Danielle had not made it. As cries filled the room, I saw my husband holding our beautiful 8 lb. 13 oz, 21.5-inch-long daughter. She looked just like him, right down to her red hair.

We spent the next few hours introducing Danielle to our family, giving them the chance to say both hello and goodbye.

In the years since losing Danielle, we have been blessed with three more daughters, Jennifer, Parker Jean, and Peyton, but Danielle will always be our firstborn and a part of us.

I want to take a moment to thank Theresa for her years of dedication to the UNITE newsletter. Since joining, I've read every edition, and her work has meant so much to me. Theresa, thank you for your heart and commitment. I hope to honor you as I step into the role of editor.

PROFESSIONALLY SPEAKING…..

BY DENISE M. PAUL MA, CT, CPLC

FEELINGS ARE IMPORTANT

Feelings are at the core of the human experience. Each day, whether we are aware of it or not, our emotions guide the decisions we make, the relationships we foster, and the way we perceive the world around us. Recognizing your feelings is not only vital for personal well-being, but also for nurturing authentic connections with others, making sound decisions, and living a purposeful life. When a death occurs, we are flooded with emotions that are difficult to deal with. However, the only way to process our grief in a healthy way, is to acknowledge our feelings.

Award-winning author, Dr. Travis Bradberry, writes in his book, "*The New Emotional Intelligence*," that there is an amazing amount of power in simply labeling or consciously identifying your emotions. When we can accurately identify our feelings, we are better equipped to manage them, empathize with others, and navigate the complexities of social interactions. We should name those feelings without judgment.

The first thing that I do when working with new bereaved clients is to give them a list of feelings, and ask them to check off the feelings that they are currently experiencing. It's important to use a broad emotional vocabulary to identify your emotions. Instead of "good" or "bad," I use more specific words. When I first started doing this practice many years ago, I had a list of approximately a dozen common feelings. Over the years, people have identified many more feelings for me. My list is now at 44 emotions! I'm certain that the list will continue to grow! Here is a list of some of the emotions that grieving people may feel. See how many you can identify with: denial, hopeless, jealous, betrayed, guilty, scared, angry, sadness, relief, confused, failure, anxious, strength, appreciative, hollow,

isolated, vulnerable, ashamed, abandoned, preoccupied, proud, grateful, depressed, lonely, disbelief, and overwhelmed. It's important to find healthy outlets for your feelings, whether through talking with a trusted friend, journaling, creative pursuits, or physical activity. Expressing your emotions helps process them and prevents them from being bottled up.

Dr. Bradberry noted a study in which participants underwent MRI scans of their brains when they labeled negative emotions. Negative emotions are the ones most commonly experienced after the death of a loved one. He found that their pre-frontal cortex (where emotions are generated) calmed down. It was also found that labeling emotions of other people calms them down too! One study even suggested that there was a relationship between how long you live and your ability to express your emotions. It was found that people who lived to be at least 100 were significantly more emotionally expressive than the average person. Labeling your emotions honors them, and it helps your brain process what you're feeling. Dr. Bradberry believes that true self-awareness means identifying and honoring your feelings and allowing yourself to experience the catharsis that comes from embracing them for what they are.

There are many benefits to recognizing your feelings:

- ❖ Improve Mental Health: Denying or ignoring your emotions can lead to increased stress, anxiety, and even depression. By recognizing and validating your emotions, you allow yourself to process them in a healthy manner.
- ❖ Enhanced Relationships: Understanding your emotional state enables you to communicate more authentically with those around you. It fosters empathy, as recognizing your own feelings often makes you more sensitive to the emotions of others.
- ❖ Better Decision-Making: Feelings play a significant role in the choices we make. By recognizing your feelings, you can discern when an emotional

reaction is clouding your judgment or when your intuition is guiding you toward a decision that aligns with your values.

- ❖ Greater Resilience: Life's inevitable challenges can feel overwhelming when emotions go unrecognized. Acknowledging your feelings -particularly in difficult times - builds resilience. It helps you to process setbacks, learn from your experiences, and emerge stronger.

Do not judge yourself harshly for experiencing certain emotions, especially those deemed "unacceptable" or "irrational." All emotions serve a purpose and offer valuable information about our needs, desires, and boundaries. Practice self-compassion and treat yourself kindly, especially in moments of emotional discomfort, such as when you lose a loved one.

Recognizing your feelings is a profound act of self-care and self-respect. It is not always easy, especially in a world that often prizes productivity and stoicism over vulnerability and introspection. Yet, taking the time to tune into your emotions offers invaluable rewards.

HEAVEN'S BABY ANGELS

Hannah Dougherty Campbell

Our baby, Marc John, was stillborn at 6 months on May 4, 1987. Going to the hospital I never realized he would need an outfit to be buried in. Thankfully, my Aunt Kate, went to a department store's preemie dept. and bought a beautiful outfit. The clerk assured her that the outfit "could last up to 6 months", at which point Aunt Kate said, "our baby didn't make it".

I barely remember seeing the outfit through my sedation induced state and tears all over my face. One thing I do remember is that Aunt Kate even bought a diaper for Marc to wear.... He was only 2 lbs.

I remember people saying, "Well, at least you didn't get to know him". And my response was that I would have loved to. This past February, my heart was stabbed again when our 42-year-old son Patrick died of stage 4 peritoneal cancer. He suffered for one year, and I watched his pain and fear. Yes, I have memories of Patrick, and I still won't say it was harder with his loss than Marc's.

If there is a Heaven (and this loss has shattered my faith), I hope Patrick's little brother welcomed him and is comforting him. It might have been Patrick who put a whisper in my ear to do something for deceased babies, and I remembered the organization Heaven's Baby Angels.

With one quick google search, you will find out that they are volunteer based, accept donations of sewing supplies, and of course, monetary donations, gift cards to notions stores. This is not to say UNITE deserves your donations first and foremost.

These wonderful women gather at one's home in Galloway, NJ, to cut gowns and use notions to decorate outfits, including hats and caps, for babies to wear. They send finished outfits to hospitals around the country. If you go on their website, you will see the lovely bereavement outfits going to a little one, or more than one little one. Unfortunately, hospitals DO NOT pay for shipping and handling, a major cost to HBA.

A labor of love for babies we, and they, will never know. How grateful the parents are.

My beautiful son Patrick inspired me to find HBA. It's a worthy cause. Thank you.

SAVE THE DATE

UNITE will be holding its ***14th Annual Walk to Remember*** on Sunday, October 19, 2025, from noon to 3:00pm at the Ridley Creek State Park, **Pavilion #11A and #11B**.

Due to last year's overwhelming turnout, the event has been moved to a different site with larger pavilions and better parking so that we could accommodate everyone who is planning on attending this year.

The Walk to Remember is held in memory of each child who has passed due to miscarriage, stillbirth, or infant death. This free to attend event welcomes all bereaved parents, siblings, grandparents, families, and friends.

Back by popular demand are UNITE's branded T-shirts that are available for purchase, along with yard signs, luminaries and sponsorships. You can purchase any of these items through our website: https://unitegriefsupport.org/walk-to-remember-2025

Proceeds from the WALK will allow UNITE to continue to establish support groups for bereaved parents, train support group facilitators, and provide literature and information on bereavement.

A HEARTFELT THANK YOU

Honoring the Dedication of our Loss Group Facilitators.

On May 22nd we hosted a thank you dinner for all our Facilitators, and though not everyone was able to make it, the underlying message applies to all the facilitators of all our Unite Loss Groups.

To all the incredible facilitators of loss groups,

With profound gratitude and deep respect, we wish to acknowledge the extraordinary work you have done over the years in providing unwavering support to parents who have faced the unimaginable pain of losing their babies. Your tireless dedication to creating safe spaces for healing and connection has been a beacon of hope for countless families navigating their grief.

Your compassionate presence, empathetic listening, and genuine care have offered not only comfort but also strength to those in need. You have made a difference in their lives, helping them find solace in shared experiences and guiding them toward a path of healing. Through your efforts, you have shown that even in the face of profound loss, there is a community ready to embrace and uplift one another.

The time, energy, and emotional investment you have poured into this work do not go unnoticed. You have turned moments of sorrow into opportunities for understanding and companionship. You have transformed pain into purpose and planted seeds of hope where darkness once prevailed.

Thank you for your courage, your compassion, and your dedication. Thank you for standing alongside families during their most vulnerable moments and offering them the gift of support and understanding. The impact you have made is immeasurable, and your efforts will forever be cherished.

With deepest gratitude and admiration,

A grateful community

Thank you!

FINDING YOUR TRIBE

Caitlin DePrinzio

Finding Your Tribe After Pregnancy and Infant Loss

When you experience the loss of a pregnancy or the death of an infant, the world can suddenly feel unfamiliar, isolating, and unbearably quiet. The plans you made, the future you imagined, and the joy you once felt are replaced with grief that is deep, complicated, and often invisible to others. While friends and family may offer love and sympathy, there is something uniquely healing about connecting with people who truly *understand*, those who have walked a similar path. This is where "finding your tribe" becomes so important.

Why Your Tribe Matters

Grief after pregnancy or infant loss is unlike any other. It's not just the absence of a child; it's the loss of dreams, moments, and milestones that will never happen. Even the most well-meaning loved ones can struggle to find the right words or actions to comfort you. In contrast, those who have lived through a similar loss speak a language you don't have to explain.

Finding a group of people who share your experience can provide:

- **Validation**: They understand the depth of your grief without minimizing it.
- **Safe Space for Emotions**: You can cry, share memories, or sit in silence without feeling judged.
- **Shared Wisdom**: They can offer practical advice on navigating anniversaries, holidays, and everyday triggers.
- **Hope and Encouragement**: Seeing others who have found moments of peace or joy again can help you believe in your own healing.

Where to Find Your Tribe

Your tribe may not always be found in your immediate circle. Sometimes, you have to seek them out:

- **Support Groups**: Many hospitals, counseling centers, and nonprofits offer in-person or virtual meetings for parents who have experienced loss.
- **Online Communities**: Social media groups and forums can connect you to others across the world who understand your journey.
- **Local Events & Memorials**: Walks, candlelight vigils, and remembrance ceremonies can create opportunities to meet others.
- **Faith-Based or Therapeutic Groups**: Churches, temples, or therapists often host specialized grief gatherings.

The Power of Shared Healing

Being surrounded by those who have faced similar heartbreak doesn't erase your loss, but it changes how you carry it. You gain companions who understand that healing is not linear, and that grief can resurface in waves. Together, you can speak openly about your babies, say their names, and keep their memories alive without feeling you need to protect others from your pain.

Your tribe can become a lifeline. People who text on hard days, remember anniversaries, and celebrate moments of progress, no matter how small. In time, you may even find yourself supporting others who are just beginning their journey, offering the same compassion you once received.

You Are Not Alone

In the quiet after loss, it's easy to feel as though no one else could possibly understand. But there are others out there; parents whose hearts have been shattered and rebuilt, who will walk beside you in your grief without trying to rush you through it. Finding your tribe doesn't take away the pain, but it surrounds you with people who will help you carry it. Your story matters. Your baby matters. And there is a place where both will be honored.

SUMMER 2025 DONATIONS

We Are So Grateful for Donations Given Throughout the Year

Samantha Alston
Hannah Campbell
Dennis & Leslie Boyle – In loving memory of Anthony Manus Devenney
Bill & Andrea Devenney - In loving memory of Anthony Manus Devenney
Mary Cushing Doherty – In loving memory of Thomas Reed Doherty & his Father Jim
Alan Fefer
Ilene Seidel
Tristan Jones
Hilary Dingfelder

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 .
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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- IN-PERSON
(Formerly Holy Redeemer Hospital)
Huntingdon Valley, PA
Meets 3rd Thursday, 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM
Facilitators:
Denise Zukowski Thomas
Shannon Szrankowski Mumper

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
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 Olivere

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: Caitlin DePrinzio

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:

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or email boardchair@unitegriefsupport.org

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