



April – May - June 2015

## A Journey Together: Chicagoland Chapter - Bereaved Parents of the USA [www.bpusachicagoland.org](http://www.bpusachicagoland.org)

### Bereaved Parents of the USA Mission:

We, as bereaved parents, help grieving parents and families rebuild their lives following the death of a child.

*Meetings are generally held the first Tuesday of every month, 7:00 – 8:30 PM. Doors open at 6:30 PM for greeting and fellowship.  
First Congregational Church of Western Springs, 1106 Chestnut Street, Western Springs, Illinois  
Eleanor Byrne (708-485-6160) and Sally Yarberry (708-560-0393), Chapter Co-Leaders*

## Spring and Hope

*by Keith Swett, Matt's dad*

Spring promises hope and healing. The death of a child is a terrible blow to the body and the spirit, crumbling belief systems, social networks, dependable patterns. Nothing prepares us for the death blow and what the loss forces us through.

Lost in pain we stumble, striving to survive in this world of constant pain, despair, confusion. Daily life suddenly seems overwhelming. Decisions take forever. Goals no longer matter. Human comfort withdraws, avoiding the fog of pain surrounding us. Then spring comes.

Just as we don't notice the first hints of spring, we don't realize, ever so slowly, we are getting better. The first steps are small. We don't cry at breakfast, maybe later; but we don't start the day crying. We smile at a picture of our child, remembering laughter. We don't flinch at our child's name. We take a walk or visit a gym. We eat a healthy meal. We realize our living children need us.

Spring promises that life and love do not die. We do not have the life we wanted, but our children expect us to not only live but to also laugh and love again. Their love supports us, moves us forward. We take little steps testing our new life, growing, stretching, until we bloom. We return to today. With spring, life, and love we move forward. 🌱

### UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS:

#### Tuesday, April 7 - Monthly Chapter Meeting:

7:00 PM to 8:30 PM - "Words of Comfort". Please think of something to share, such as an article, poem, song or even something someone said, that you found comforting.

#### Tuesday, May 5 - Monthly Chapter Meeting:

7:00 PM to 8:30 PM - Open Discussion

#### Tuesday, June 2 - Monthly Chapter Meeting:

7:00 PM to 8:30 PM - Balloon Release

#### Friday, July 24 - Sunday, July 26 - National Gathering: "Season of Healing", Hartford, CT



## Death's Aftermath

*by Shirley Ottman, BPUSA North Texas*

[To a recently bereaved parent]

Just a little while ago I walked where you are walking now. Your child was special, too, I know, and was quite different from mine. Yet love is love and death is death and pain is pain. Your pain is mine; my pain is yours. Come, friend, let us search for hope together. 🌱

## BP/USA Chicagoland Chapter

**Bereaved Parents of the USA** is a self-help support group which is run entirely by volunteers who are also bereaved parents. The volunteers are a little further down the road in their grief and can give back to the chapter by helping with the many jobs it takes to keep the chapter running.

If you feel that you are ready to give back to the Chapter and would like to volunteer your time and talent, please contact the Chapter Co-Leaders Eleanor or Sally.

Chapter Co-Leaders:

Eleanor Byrne (708) 485-6160

Sally Yarbry (708) 560-0393

[psyrbrry@hotmail.com](mailto:psyrbrry@hotmail.com)



## ♥ ♥ ♥ Love Gifts ♥ ♥ ♥

A Love Gift is a donation to the chapter in memory of your child, grandchild or sibling. A financial contribution in any amount is appreciated. All Love Gifts are gratefully acknowledged in the newsletter accompanied by wording exactly as the donor submits. BP/USA is a national non-profit organization; therefore all donations to the chapter are tax deductible as allowed by law.

When mailing in a love gift, **please include your child's name, your address** and any other info you would like in your love gift message. Make your check payable to: **BP/USA Chicagoland** and mail it to arrive **by the 10<sup>th</sup>** of the month prior to the upcoming newsletter. **The newsletter is published quarterly.**

Mail your check to:

**Bereaved Parents of the USA  
Chicagoland Chapter  
P.O. Box 320  
Western Springs, IL 60558**

It is also recommended that you email your love gift message to the newsletter editor,  
[celeste\\_hardy@hotmail.com](mailto:celeste_hardy@hotmail.com).

## LENDING LIBRARY NEWS – AND A REQUEST

### News Bulletin....Imprisoned Lending Library Liberated!

Due to storage constraints, our chapter has not been able to display our Lending Library ever since we changed locations in 2013. Now, thanks to a generous donation from Nancy Butler, in honor of her son Dr. Phillip Butler, we have purchased a library-style book cart that can be wheeled into our meeting room each month.

As it's been awhile since there was any point in purchasing new books, we have compiled a Wish List of recently-published books. Please consider purchasing and donating a book from our Wish List, or making a donation allowing us to purchase a book to include in our Lending Library.

All donated books will display a sticker with the name of the donor and the name of the child in whose honor the book was donated. Please contact Sally for a list of titles: [psyrbrry@hotmail.com](mailto:psyrbrry@hotmail.com); 708-738-0396.

## Pain

The pain...  
The sadness you must have felt.  
Oh, how your thinking in the moment  
Will last a lifetime for me.  
Now *I* hold the pain and sadness  
For *you*.

(c) Lee Ann Hutson 2006, Crawfordsville, IN

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## Thank You!



*In loving memory of  
Jeffrey Anderson  
January 28, 1981 until May 25, 1998*

You were here for 17 years and now you have been in your heavenly home for 17 years. You're surrounded by loved ones that I know. Sometimes it seems like so long ago and then just like yesterday. One thing is constant though Jeff and that is I love you and miss you to the heavens and back.

Love forever,  
Mom  
Irene Anderson



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

By: R. D. Cawyer  
Bereaved Father  
Denton, TX

We do it all the time, send good wishes and thoughts to those we love who are separated from us. It may be across town, across the state, across the world, or in another time. We cannot help thinking about them and sending our love. It is only natural.

We may do it by card, by telephone, by email, or just by thought. If we are separated by time instead of distance, thought is the only way to send our love.

To those who have never experienced the death of a child, it may seem morbid or like a waste of money to celebrate one's child's birthday. Those same people probably think nothing abnormal about visiting the grave of a favorite relative (mother, father, etc.). These are considered acts of love, and for me, I seek to communicate (at least one way; maybe one of these days, two-ways) with a sorely missed and loved daughter.

So, whatever anyone else may think, I will continue to celebrate my Sarah's birthday. I will do so by releasing balloons, planting a rose bush, making a donation to organizations that either she participated in or that I believe are helpful in some ways to foster understanding, love and tolerance. In doing so, I tell her one more time, *I love you, Sarah. Happy Birthday.*

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## "The Longest Road" Documentary

Subject: "The Longest Road" Documentary  
Date: Thu, 19 Feb 2015 09:04:32 -0800

Dear Eleanor and Sally,

Thank you for the work you do with Bereaved Parents of the USA.

I am a documentary filmmaker who specializes in the field of oncology; I've made over 25 films about the cancer experience. I am now working on a feature length documentary, "The Longest Road," about three families, each of whom has lost a child to cancer. The film focuses on the different routes people take to reclaim their lives after losing a child. "The Longest Road" is finished filming and now in the editing process.

"The Longest Road" explores the different ways people work through their grief. To give you a sense of the film I've put together a couple of short three-minute trailers, one from the parent's point-of-view, the other from the sibling's. Both trailers are on our Facebook page and website.

Facebook: The Longest Road - The Documentary  
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Longest-Road-The-Documentary/712045378849966>

Website: [www.thelongestroaddocumentary.com](http://www.thelongestroaddocumentary.com)

If you could share the links with people I would greatly appreciate it. And please let me know what you think of the trailers. I am especially interested in your feedback.

Best regards,  
Bruce Postman  
Producer-Director, "The Longest Road"

## A Prayer, A Cry

by Joyce Grant, Worcester, MA

I read of an accident the other day.  
Another young person had died and gone away.  
My heart beat faster and I started to cry.  
Why do young people have to die?  
The good die young, so the saying goes.  
But what the family goes through, no one knows.  
So when I read of an accident or hear an ambulance go by,  
I pray for the child, but it's for the family I cry.

*Our Children, Loved, Missed and Remembered - Anniversaries and birthdays are difficult for bereaved parents and families. In the days ahead, may we lovingly remember these children and send our prayers, love and support to their parents and families*

**Amanda Aadson - 20**  
Apr 08, 1981 - Nov 25, 2001  
Car Accident  
Mary Jo Sullivan

**Caitrin Paige Gadomski - 6**  
Apr 16, 2007 - Nov 17, 2013  
Cancer  
Joe & Becky Gadomski

**Cameron L. Chana - 22**  
Apr 02, 1987 - May 30, 2009  
Bus Accident  
Lori & Rob Chana

**Celeste Tomasello - 17**  
Apr 20, 1982 - Nov 05, 1999  
Accidental Fall  
Linda & Angelo Tomasello

**Challing Eugene Albert LeBlanc - 4**  
Apr 11, 1997 - Jun 02, 2001  
Boating Accident  
Liz & Stephen LeBlanc

**Corinne Naumann - 23**  
Aug 14, 1986 - Apr 14, 2010  
Cheryl Naumann

**Dana Samuel - 32**  
Apr 07, 1970 - Jan 23, 2003  
Asphyxiation  
Lana Samuel

**Daniel M. Schedler - 23**  
Dec 16, 1969 - Apr 06, 1993  
Auto Accident  
Tom & Judeen Schedler

**Dennis Rich - 37**  
Feb 11, 1971 - Apr 01, 2008  
Cancer  
Karen Rich

**Evan Holmes - 20**  
Feb 09, 1990 - Apr 02, 2010  
Unknown  
Mason Holmes

**Evan Holmes - 20**  
Feb 09, 1990 - Apr 02, 2010  
Unknown  
Irene Gangemi

**Frank P. Amelio - 27**  
Apr 25, 1980 - Sep 13, 2007  
Drug Overdose  
Helen Amelio

**Jacob Kowalik - 10**  
Feb 26, 2004 - Apr 15, 2014  
Heart Attack  
Mike & Jennifer Kowalik

**Jacob Silver - 22**  
Oct 05, 1990 - Apr 11, 2013  
Suicide  
Laureen Dunne

**Johnny Hurley - 28**  
Apr 15, 1977 - Sep 11, 2005  
Motorcycle Accident  
John & Pat Hurley

**Kevin Jon Ryczzyk - 8**  
Mar 29, 1972 - Apr 15, 1980  
Lung Ailment  
Jack & Karen Ryczzyk

**Maria Elena Nudell - 14**  
Apr 17, 1981 - Jul 07, 1995  
Horseback Riding Accident  
Marilyn Cocogliato

**Melissa Renee Wolfram - 30**  
May 18, 1971 - Apr 26, 2002  
Pulmonary Embolism  
Earl & E. Renee Bailey

**Michael Walter Schulman - 28**  
Apr 21, 1978 - Nov 28, 2006  
Traffic Accident  
Jerry, Mary, Melissa, Jonathon, & Katie  
Schulman

**Nicholas Martino-Krueger - 10**  
Jun 23, 1995 - Apr 15, 2006  
Hit by Train  
Jim Krueger & Rose Martino-Krueger

**Paul Anthony Schneider - 17**  
Jun 18, 1965 - Apr 11, 1983  
Paul & Dolly Schneider

**Scott Wesolowski - 18**  
Dec 13, 1984 - Apr 08, 2003  
Drug Overdose  
Sue Berger

**Susan G. Gabrielsen - 31**  
Apr 18, 1963 - Oct 14, 1994  
Breast Cancer  
Patricia Jacobi

**Thomas Burton - 22**  
Apr 14, 1954 - Aug 27, 1976  
Suicide  
Patricia & Erwin Burton

**Todd J. Smith - 23**  
May 12, 1983 - Apr 26, 2007  
Cancer  
Marie Smith

**Tony Jurkas Jr. - 23**  
Feb 26, 1983 - Apr 16, 2006  
Suicide  
Laurie Jurkas



*Our Children, Loved, Missed and Remembered (continued) - Anniversaries and birthdays are difficult for bereaved parents and families. In the days ahead, may we lovingly remember these children and send our prayers, love and support to their parents and families*

**Alyssa Dabrowski - 22**  
May 20, 1979 - Feb 03, 2002  
Car Accident - Hit & Run  
Allen & Rosemary Dabrowski

**Amanda Coughlin - 10**  
May 11, 1991 - Mar 15, 2002  
Cathy Coughlin

**Athena Marie Myers - 11 Months**  
Jun 03, 2001 - May 27, 2002  
Car Accident  
Polly Myers

**Matthew - 32**  
Jan 22, 1981 - May 17, 2013  
Cancer  
Mary Ellen & Glenn Gavin

**Cole Exner - 22**  
Jun 09, 1983 - May 21, 2006  
Automobile Accident  
Scott & Janie Exner

**Colt Grabowski - 20**  
Feb 21, 1993 - May 16, 2013  
Car Accident  
Meg Iorfida

**David A. Schreck -**  
- May 30, 2014  
Overdose  
Josie & Mark Schreck

**Elizabeth Nelson - 23**  
Jul 27, 1980 - May 31, 2004  
Car Accident  
Tom & Kathy Nelson

**Eric Byrne - 44**  
Sep 04, 1960 - May 09, 2005  
Pulmonary Embolism  
Eleanor & Joe Byrne

**Eric J. Munzenmay - 12**  
May 07, 1969 - Jun 28, 1981  
Pneumonia  
Lillian Munzenmay

**Gino Grandenitti - 20**  
Aug 14, 1990 - May 30, 2011  
Cancer  
Vic Grandenitti

**Ian McDonald-Shumaker - 17**  
Feb 06, 1989 - May 11, 2006  
Suicide  
Stacia McDonald-Shumaker

**Jeffrey Anderson - 17**  
Jan 28, 1981 - May 25, 1998  
Asphyxiation  
Irene Anderson

**Jeffrey Scott Caccavari - 34**  
Jan 16, 1967 - May 10, 2001  
Unknown  
Dominic & Karen Caccavari

**Joshua Burkett - 27**  
Sep 14, 1982 - May 04, 2010  
Car Accident  
Dan Burkett

**Kate Pranno - 24**  
May 19, 1977 - Feb 22, 2002  
Liver Failure from Drugs & Alcohol  
Suzi Scott

**Katie Satkamp - 7**  
Jul 12, 1974 - May 12, 1982  
School Bus Accident  
Ronda & Steve Satkamp

**Kelly Ann Meicrotto - 23**  
May 25, 1980 - Sep 01, 2003  
Lenore Robinson

**Ken Putnam - 28**  
May 11, 1967 - May 23, 1995  
Auto Accident  
Karen Putnam

**Lily Claire Domagala - 16 Months**  
May 11, 2002 - Sep 12, 2003  
Heart & Lung Defects  
Lisa Domagala

**Lt Adam Philip Kass - 25**  
May 29, 1977 - Jun 25, 2002  
Motorcycle Accident on Military Duty  
Cindy & Dave Kass

**Mark Thomas Fornek - 6**  
May 16, 1992 - Aug 04, 1998  
Floodwater Drowning  
Greg & Wendy Fornek

**Michael Knorps - 51**  
Aug 17, 1957 - May 30, 2009  
Mary Ann Knorps

**Melissa Juergensen - 19**  
Feb 24, 1989 - May 03, 2008  
Auto Accident  
Ruth Juergensen

**Anthony Neri - 21**  
Jul 03, 1973 - Jun 24, 1995  
Accidental Drug Overdose  
Diane Neri

**Carole "Suzie" Pavett - 56**  
Jun 03, 1953 - Aug 20, 2009  
Heart Attack  
Audrey Stolfa

**Branden Martinez - 6 Weeks**  
Jun 26, 2011 - Aug 08, 2011  
Infection  
Kyle Martinez & Missy Babyar

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**Daniel Stoothoff - 34**  
Jun 03, 1970 - Dec 07, 2004  
Car Crash  
Sally Stoothoff

**Elizabeth Anne Barrett - 15 1/2 \*\*\***  
Dec 29, 1976 - Jun 29, 1992  
Hit by Van  
Kay & Phil Barrett

**Eric - 22**  
Jun 28, 1970 - Feb 08, 1993  
Sue and Lou Robisch

**Eric Fitzpatrick Bucholz - 19**  
Jun 26, 1974 - Dec 24, 1993  
Electrocution  
Sue Bucholz



**Jason Matthew Bill - 13**  
Aug 17, 1981 - Jun 14, 1995  
Water Sport Accident  
Nancy Stein

**Jill Kathleen Ebert - 6**  
Jun 24, 1984 - Sep 03, 1990  
BrainTumor  
Michael P Ebert

**Jimmy Lekas - 18**  
Sep 10, 1969 - Jun 14, 1988  
Cancer  
Stephanie Lekas

**Joseph Ross - 23**  
Jun 09, 1985 - Feb 05, 2009  
Asthma  
Pat Ross

**Shawn Lighty - 37**  
May 05, 1972 - May 23, 2007  
Accidental Drug Overdose  
Jan Lightly

**Mark Susong - 21**  
Jun 05, 1990 - Feb 10, 2012  
Drug Overdose  
Jill Susong

**Matthew Davis - 33**  
Dec 28, 1976 - Jun 10, 2010  
Unknown  
Gloria Smolek

**Michael Kosinski - 26**  
Dec 17, 1986 - Jun 12, 2013  
Sudden Cardiac Arrest  
Marge & Bill Kosinski



**Noah James Farley - 10**  
Jun 07, 2006 - Jun 08, 2006  
Prenatal Decision Due to Severe Fetal  
Anomalies  
Kelly Farley

**Noah Michael Cichorski - 2 1/2**  
Jun 24, 2001 - Dec 16, 2003  
Head Injury (Cause Unknown)  
Jeannine Cichorski

**Russel Witek - 14**  
Jun 16, 1994 - Mar 29, 2009  
Leukemia / Brain Tumor  
Dan & Helen Dennett

**Paul Moore - 10**  
Nov 04, 1982 - Jun 08, 1994  
Drunk Driver  
Don & Julie Moore

**Robbie Funston - 18**  
May 30, 1990 - Jun 22, 2008  
Accidental Drowning  
Ric Funston

**William E. Barth - 20 1/2**  
Sep 23, 1965 - Jun 05, 1986  
Suicide  
Karen Barth

**Ryan A. Minor - 30**  
May 04, 1980 - Jun 19, 2010  
Overdose  
Betsy Minor

**Nadia Chowdhury - 20**  
May 14, 1983 - Feb 21, 2004  
Hit & Killed by Drunk Driver  
Nasrin & Shamsul Chowdhury

**Phillip Butler - 30**  
Dec 29, 1982 - May 13, 2013  
Atherosclerotic Heart Disease  
Nancy Butler

**William Kavanaugh - 3**  
May 24, 1992 - Jul 04, 1995  
Hit by a Van  
Maribeth Kavanaugh

*Our Children, Loved, Missed and Remembered (continued) - Anniversaries and birthdays are difficult for bereaved parents and families. In the days ahead, may we lovingly remember these children and send our prayers, love and support to their parents and families*

**Robert Conway - 15**  
 May 12, 1975 - Oct 22, 1990  
 Hit by Van while Bike Riding  
 Rose Conway

**Robert Joseph Gentilini, Jr. - 25**  
 Mar 20, 1964 - May 18, 1989  
 Brain Infection  
 Bob & Mary Gentilini

**Stevie Brow - 8**  
 Dec 13, 1964 - May 18, 1973  
 Gunshot  
 Roberta Brow

*If I had a single flower for every time I think of you, I could walk  
 forever in my garden.*

*~Claudia Adrienne Grandi  
 from <http://quotegarden.com/miss-you.html>*



## Mother's Day and Father's Day

*By Kay Bevington*

This time of year is a bittersweet time for bereaved parents. Many are grateful for their surviving children and, at the same time, mourn for and wonder what it would be like if their deceased child had lived. It is difficult to be joyful when part of us is saddened due to the death of a child. This is especially difficult for bereaved parents whose only child or all children have died. Am I really a mother or father now? It is especially appreciated by those parents to be remembered at this time of year by friends and family members.

Grandparents hurt for themselves and also for their bereaved children. Many wonder what role to play when this time of year rolls around once again. Bereaved parents wonder how to handle the celebrations. Do I attend these functions to honor my parents while I'm mourning my child? Do I make a spectacle of myself if I become unraveled during these ceremonies? Should I attend the gatherings or simply avoid them to save my sanity? I do not wish to hurt my parents' feelings and how long will they be alive to honor them?

There are no easy answers to these problems. Each individual must decide what he/she can handle and that decision will have to be made on a yearly basis. What is helpful for one might be detrimental for another. Time may help to ease the pain and alter the decisions that are made. An honest discussion about the situation with those involved will help to ease hurt feelings. Try to plan other times with grandparents and let them know you love them even though you may not be able to celebrate these special days. Wherever you are in your grief, may you know that many of us are journeying with you along this difficult path. 🌸

## Exercise for the Soul

by Rob Anderson

Brendon's dad

<http://fromheartbreaktohealing.weebly.com/exercise-for-the-soul.html>

At my first support group meeting the facilitator suggested I try at least three meetings before deciding if a support group was for me. They work for some and not for others and that I might actually feel worse after the first meeting, but give it three meetings before I decide. The part about feeling worse sounded odd, but I allowed the three meeting advice into me because I assumed he knew more about this process than I did. He could actually put a few sentences together that made sense. I was still having trouble with that.

At the first meeting not too much was making sense and I didn't know what was going to work. All I knew was that I needed something to help my pain. "Okay," I thought, "let's get through the next minute and then the next one after that and this meeting will end and if somehow I make it to the day before the second meeting I'll decide what to do at that point."

The day before the second meeting came and I remembered that yes, I had felt worse at the end of that first meeting. I'd felt beaten up and beaten down, but I trusted the facilitator and I went to the second meeting. That meeting was a little better and the third was even better and by that time I was hooked. I was a support group junkie. I found it worked for me in many large and small ways. I felt comfortable in the group setting knowing I could express myself in any way I wanted, knowing I would not be judged or "shoulded" on. Express myself I did. Those first few meetings are a bit hazy, but I remember anger, tears, yelling and pounding the table. I was a scary guy, but every time I let out my pain, I let healing in. Now many years down the road I'm grateful for the "three meeting" advice.

Through the years I've tried to think of an analogy that would help describe how important it is to keep coming back to those meetings. When you're at your first meeting and someone's asking you to come to the third meeting, it really doesn't make sense. It feels too far away. Here's the analogy I've come up with. Joining a support group is like starting an

exercise program after many years on the couch. Make sense? Stay with me. Just like going to that first meeting is hard, it's also hard to start exercising again. The first workout consists of figuring out what to do and where to start. The weights are dusty, the treadmill is covered with clothes and who the heck knows where the exercise mat is located.

That first meeting may also be hard to start. You'll awkwardly introduce yourself and hear strange things like, "I'm glad you're here," which kind of upsets you because you don't really know what that means. Your clothes will feel heavy, your body will feel awkward, not to mention you've got to figure out a place to sit, who to sit next to and what to say. "Lost" is where you are, but as you look around the room and see parents smiling, laughing and hugging, a little teeny tiny bit of "found" might creep into you. You won't recognize it and it will take a few more meetings before you realize what that means, but it can find its way into you and gently wait for you to find its meaning.

Now back to the exercise analogy. You start your exercise program by doing as little as possible because you don't really want to be doing anything, but deep down you know it's important to your health, so you push on. You may do two sets of five push-ups, ten crunches, hit the treadmill for five minutes and call it quits. That first session will be over and you won't feel very good. Your body will be yelling at you and the couch will be calling you. Just like your first workout, at your first support group meeting you might not want to do much either. You may do as little as possible and then find your soul is yelling at you and your pain is calling you. Pain you didn't know you had may have come to the surface and it scared you which made you think, "Why should I come back if I feel worse than when I came in?"

The morning after your first workout you throw your legs over the side of the bed and every single muscle in your body is screaming at you. "Oh my gosh," you think, "what did I do to myself? Why should I do that again?" You may feel the same way the day after your first support group meeting. When you wake up the next morning, tears may run down your cheeks when you think about what happened and you



*Exercise for the Soul... continued from previous page*

may think, "Oh my gosh, what did I do to myself? Why should I do that again?"

You manage to gently but gingerly get back into your workout clothes and head to the basement for another try. After stretching out and again convincing yourself it's a good thing, you get started. Much to your surprise you're able to add one push-up, one crunch, but decide to stay the same distance on the treadmill because, "Hey, let's not get nuts here." What you find is that you saw progress, you moved forward, got a little stronger and you feel a little better about yourself. "Hey, maybe I should keep coming back," you say.

When the day before the second support group meeting comes you have to decide what to do. Go, not go; go, not go; go, not go? In the back of your mind you keep hearing the facilitator asking you to try three meetings, but you're scared. Just like you know that exercising is good for you, you kind of think going to another meeting will be good for you, so you decide to give the support group another try. When you walk in, the surroundings feel a little more familiar, you get hugs from the same people (and maybe new ones) that you got them from last month and the statement, "I'm glad you're here," makes a little more sense. You may open up just a little bit more, share a little more of your pain and feel just a little bit better at the end of the meeting. Your second workout comes to mind and you realize that here too you saw progress, you moved forward, got a little stronger and you feel a little better about yourself. But, it still wasn't all that great. It still hurt. You're still sore.

Now onto your third workout and even though you're no tri-athlete, you feel a little less sore, a little stronger and a little more motivated. You may add nothing to your push-ups, crunches and treadmill, but you showed up and got involved; a victory. Things are moving along in little steps, but they're moving along. Your body is less angry and motivation becomes a word that's starting to make sense. The day before the third support group meeting arrives and even though you're still hesitant because your soul still hurts, the facilitator's advice is now stronger and making more sense. In you go.

This time you initiate the greetings and hugs, which kind of surprises you. You find yourself gravitating to certain people and feel comfortable talking with them. You never had that feeling before and are very grateful for their presence. They're probably thinking the same thing about you. The circle of mutual support is beginning to surround you. On the way home from your third meeting you know what the facilitator meant by asking for three meetings and you silently thank him.

Over the next several months of exercising you get very strong and very healthy. Your attitude is better; your body feels wonderful; no part of it is yelling at you anymore. Instead it's thanking you. You're now highly motivated and look forward to working out. It can be the same for your healing. By this time you've attended eight or nine meetings and can't wait to get to the next one. Even though you don't feel wonderful by any means, you feel better, you continue to move forward and get stronger. Deep down in your soul you think you heard a laugh. It's a distant echo, but you're sure it's what you heard. Just like you've been exercising your body, you've been exercising your soul by attending a support group.

The point of this story is that if you exercise your soul by continuously sharing your story and reaching out for help, you can get stronger, you can get happier and your life can get better. However you exercise your soul is up to you. There are many ways to do it. The important thing is to do it consistently and with as much enthusiasm as you can muster. By working at your grieving and healing, good things can happen. You can one day smile and find meaning in your life again and those are very good things.

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## Working It Out

*from Rachel's Cry A Journey Through Grief by Richard A. Dew, M.D.*

In grief it seems my tasks are three:  
To rethink my faith so it will last,  
To live in today and not the past,  
But hardest of these jobs to me:  
To make sense out of absurdity.

## “DaySavers”

*From Handling the Holidays- Help for the Journey through Special Days, Bruce H. Conley & Karen L. Howard, Conley Outreach Publications, Elburn, IL, 2000*

*Take one day at a time ... whether it be **Mother's Day** or **Father's Day** try to get through just today.*

Be kind to yourself. Schedule only what you feel capable of handling and then give yourself permission to change your mind, even at the last minute.

Remember your loved one with a special gift or flowers that you can take to the cemetery. For a child: a hot wheels car or other favorite toy, a bouquet of flowers, balloons or a special card wrapped in a zip lock bag.

Start a journal of your child's life. There are many new picture albums that allow you to create special pages to go with the pictures.

Keep things simple.

Ignore the holiday altogether. If staying at home is too painful pack a bag lunch and take a walk away from the crowds, go to a movie or a concert.

Gather the family around and take this time to look at pictures, videos or old movies. Share the old stories, the love and even the laughter.

Work in the yard or the garden. Put your pain and your anger to work. Be careful about sun exposure and be sure to drink plenty of water.

Hug each other. Though men and women, children and adults all grieve in different ways and times the knowledge that someone loves you is crucial to the process of healing. When you don't feel like talking, a hug or just someone to hold your hand can be the reassurance that you need.

Let your tears fall, they are cleansing. Call a friend who is a good listener, not a “fixer-upper”

A parent remains a parent for all of their lives. A child carries the imprint of their parent's love through all of their days. ❀

## A Moment's Peace

*by Mary S. Cleckley, from I Walked A Mile With Sorrow, p. 54*

Mankind has always been attracted to bodies of water, great and small, but never more so than during times of great stress. I know when our son died, as we satisfied our need to be alone, my husband and I found ourselves in Stone Mountain Park many times. We sat by the edge of the lake and watched the waves as they lapped against the shore, and just listening and watching those waves satisfied some primeval urge.

Later when the crowds of interested and caring people had thinned, I found myself still having the need to be near water. The lake we live by had a magnetic attraction for me. I would walk around to the beach again and again to watch and listen to the waves as they lapped. My husband would come over after awhile to get me, only to find me back again at the beach in a short time. It was like a spiritual place, and I felt more at peace there than at any other place I could find.

If there is a body of water available to you and if you haven't already discovered the way the presence of water speaks to the heart, I recommend you try it. The soothing balm can bring a moment's peace. When a family is grieving for a child, a moment's peace is worth trying for. ❀

## Memorial Day

*WINTERSUN by sascha  
(L.A.R.G.O. Inc. 1996)*

For each grave  
where a soldier lies  
at his rest

For each prayer  
that is said today  
out of love

For each sigh  
of remembering  
someone who died

let us also give thought to  
the mothers and fathers  
the brothers and sisters  
the friends and the lovers  
whom death left behind.



Bereaved Parents of the USA  
**2015 NATIONAL GATHERING**  
HARTFORD, CT • JULY 24 - 26

Sheraton Hartford Hotel at Bradley Airport  
1 Bradley Intl Airport  
Windsor Locks, CT 06096

For more information contact:  
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National BP/USA Website:  
<http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org>

Our committee has been working on plans for this year's National Gathering and we are anxious to share this annual event with you. Although not one of us ever imagined we would be associated with a bereaved parent/sibling group, many of us have found that our grief journey is somewhat more bearable when taking this journey with others who truly understand. Some of you have been making this journey for many years while others have barely begun theirs. Hand-in-hand, step-by-step, we walk this road together, offering one another hope. We guarantee that you will be touched by someone during your weekend in Hartford, CT with us, whether it is by a speaker, workshop presenter, a song you hear, or a "fellow traveler" seated next to you at a meal who can see that you need a hug. We would be pleased and honored to share this experience, and many others, with you. Please join us the weekend of July 24-26 for an event you'll be glad you didn't miss, as we explore the "Seasons of Healing."

Bereaved Parents of the USA  
 Chicagoland Chapter  
 P.O. Box 320  
 Western Springs, IL 60558



April - May - June 2015

CALENDAR OF EVENTS	
April	
April 7	<u>Monthly Meeting</u> : 7:00 PM - "Words of Comfort"
May	
May 5	<u>Monthly Chapter Meeting</u> : 7:00 PM - Open Discussion
June	
June 2	<u>Monthly Chapter Meeting</u> : 7:00 PM - Balloon Release



## Mother's Day

*WINTERSUN* by sascha  
 (L.A.R.G.O. Inc. 1996)

How is the weather now,  
 on mother's day?  
 Shining with spring,  
 promising early roses?

But hides there, in secret,  
 a moment of grief?  
 Frost in the sunlight,  
 pale heartache of sorrow?

- The children are gone. -  
 Are you reminded twice over;  
 the children are gone?

And will you be ready perhaps  
 to remember without tears  
 the sunlight, the laughter, the roses,  
 you shared with the children  
 on next mother's day?

*This Newsletter is compiled in  
 loving memory of all our precious  
 children.*

**BP/USA Chicagoland on the Web:**  
<http://www.bpusachicagoland.org/index.html>