



January – February – March 2014

A Journey Together: Chicagoland Chapter - Bereaved Parents of the USA 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*

Climbing Lessons

by Keith Swett, Matt's dad

A visit to Bergland Michigan was always fun for my brother and me especially in January when the snow was deeper than we were tall. Bergland is at the edge of the Porky Pine mountain range so escarpments loomed a hundred yards from the back door. We were rock climbers before it was a sport.

One year we escaped the stifling adult atmosphere of the house and plowed through the drifts to a small rock outcropping about 200 feet from both the house and the mountain. We quickly decided to climb the face which proved challenging wearing snow suits, gloves and boots. Climbing went fine as we pulled each other up to the next hand hold or jumped from one small ledge to the next, but we were not satisfied with reaching the top.

We decided that the snow was deep enough that we could jump off and so we did. I landed in a little trouble. I was so deep in the snow that my boots stuck and when I escaped my boots were still held prisoner.

Panicked we retraced our steps to the house, me in my socks. Poor dad grabbed a shovel and waded through the huge drifts trying to find my boots. A man cannot walk where little kids can. The rescue almost killed him. Dad ended up crawling on top of the snow, digging out the boots and crawling back.

My aunt put my brother and me in a hot tub

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS:

Monday, January 6 - Ladies Night Out: 6:00 PM - TGI Fridays, 601 E Butterfield Rd, Lombard

Tuesday, January 7 - Monthly Chapter Meeting: 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM - "Tear Soup" with Donna Corrigan. You made it through the holidays but now see the new year looming ahead. How did you handle those days and what can you do to help yourself face the ones before you? Although each child, each family, each grief is unique, we can find hope in sharing our stories. We can learn and be encouraged by their examples. We can make choices.

The book Tear Soup so eloquently reminds us, "When one person is missing, the whole world seems empty." Join us as we seek to make our worlds a little less empty, a little less foreboding.

Tuesday, February 4 - Monthly Chapter Meeting: 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM - Topic to be determined

Monday, March 3 - Ladies Night Out: 6:00 PM - TGI Fridays, 601 E Butterfield Rd, Lombard

Tuesday, March 4 - Monthly Chapter Meeting: 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM - Topic to be determined

and made hot chocolate and cookies for us. Dad had a shower and a nap. We all gained a new story for the Christmas table.

The thing is you and I are like those little boys off on an adventure, unaware of the danger, needing help, finding comfort. We have no idea of the risks encountered while climbing our fears and pain. We cannot guess the consequences of jumping into the snow, into life, into hope. Helping us is a formidable challenge. But most of all, love can provide the

Continued on next page

Climbing Lessons continued..

comfort and security we need.

So, if you know where the hand holds are, guide me. If I am buried and trapped pull me out. I know helping is an overwhelming challenge, but in the end hot chocolate, cookies and hugs will set me up to try again.

Life is not nor can it be about staying safe on the couch. Some will tell you playing in the snow is dangerous. Living is always dangerous, but there is no joy in hiding. Fear and pain cannot win. We need to leave that stifling room and return to the living, to life, to joy. With help and courage we can take the steps necessary to celebrate life rather than spend our lives cursing death. 🙏

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



Welcome

Bereaved Parents Chicagoland Chapter extends a warm welcome to the new attendees at our recent meetings. We know it is difficult to come to your first meeting.

New attendees:

- ♥ Laureen Dunne, mother of **Jacob Silver**
- ♥ Anne Evans, mother of **Brent Evans** and **Katie Evans**
- ♥ Nancy Butler, parents of **Phillip Butler**
- ♥ Sandy Tummillo, mother of **Casey Reiter**
- ♥ Mary Woods, mother of **Dan Woods**

We are very sorry for the reason you are here, but we are glad that you found us. 🙏

Send Your Email Address to Sally

We are hoping to have up-to-date email addresses for everyone in our database. Please send your email address to Sally at psyrbrry@hotmail.com.

Meeting Day and Location Reminder:

Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month from 7:00 to 8:30 PM at First Congregational Church of Western Springs, 1106 Chestnut Street, Western Springs, IL, on the second floor in the youth room. Please enter the building through the north doors by the playground. 🙏

CREDO

We are the parents whose children have died. We are the grandparents who have buried grandchildren. We are the siblings whose brothers and sisters no longer walk with us through life. We come together as Bereaved Parents of the USA to provide a haven where all bereaved families can meet and share our long and arduous grief journeys. We attend monthly gatherings whenever we can and for as long as we believe necessary. We share our fears, confusion, anger, guilt, frustrations, emptiness and feelings of hopelessness so that hope can be found anew. As we accept, support, comfort and encourage each other, we demonstrate to each other that survival is possible. Together we celebrate the lives of our children, share the joys and triumphs as well as the love that will never fade. Together we learn how little it matters where we live, what our color or our affluence is or what faith we uphold as we confront the tragedies of our children's deaths. Together, strengthened by the bonds we forge at our gatherings, we offer what we have learned to each other and to every more recently bereaved family. We are the Bereaved Parents of the USA. We welcome you.

♥ ♥ ♥ 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 10th** 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 718
Lyons, IL 60534**

It is also recommended that you email your love gift message to the newsletter editor, **celeste_hardy@hotmail.com.**

♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥
*In loving memory of
Heather Runge
November 21, 1989 until January 4, 1990*

Happy 24th Birthday Heather!!!!

When I close my eyes I imagine you as a beautiful angel of The Lord doing great deeds all throughout heaven!!!! It's a lovely image of YOU! 23 years later since leaving this earth, your loving spirit continues to bless my life abundantly and for that I am so deeply grateful.

May your loving spirit continue to be with me filling my heart with great LOVE! My heart will always be heavy though; as I miss watching you grow and experience life! Words cannot adequately describe my missing you.

I love you sweetheart and a most Happy Birthday!!!!

Love,
Mom
Sandy Runge-Sand and big sister, Lauryn



♥ ♥ ♥ Love Gifts ♥ ♥ ♥



*In loving memory of
Joseph James Craig
December 5, 1974 until December 15, 2009*

Love You Always,
Dad
Joseph R. Craig



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

Jeff

I can't believe another birthday is here. Still miss you terribly but not a day goes by without thinking about you or talking about you.

This is especially hard for me this year without your dad but I know he's there with you. I know you both will be looking out for me until we are reunited again

Love always and forever,
Mom
Irene Anderson



*BP/USA
2014 National Gathering*

**2014 National Gathering for the
Bereaved Parents of the USA
St. Louis, Missouri
July 25-27, 2014**

Hope in the Heartland

Start planning now, information will be on the National Website soon. Location will be the Sheraton Clayton Plaza.

Contact person is Jodi Norman, VP 703-910-6277
bpusagather@gmail.com

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

Breanne Conterio – 21
Feb 27, 1990 - Jan 09, 2012
P.E.
Teri & Steve Conterio

Bryce Stack – 30
Jan 26, 1979 - Jul 24, 2009
Accidental Overdose
Trish DeBauche

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

Denise Dubois – 38
Feb 12, 1960 - Jan 02, 1999
Cancer/Suicide
Janet & Bernie Finnigan

Gerrick Davies – 18
Jan 21, 1986 - Feb 09, 2004
Murdered
Diane Davies

Heather Runge – 6 Weeks
Nov 21, 1989 - Jan 04, 1990
Neuroblastoma
Sandy Runge-Sand

Jeffrey Anderson – 17
Jan 28, 1981 - May 25, 1998
Asphyxiation
John & Irene Anderson

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

Jennifer Roley – 22
Nov 26, 1989 - Jan 15, 2012
Drug Overdose
Lynn Gantner

Josiah Weiberg – 10 Months
Jan 16, 2009 - Dec 03, 2009
SMA Type 1
Alesha & Jim Weiberg

Martin K. Adams – 42
Dec 11, 1960 - Jan 06, 2003
Marge & Bill Adams

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

Matthew Swett – 25
Jan 07, 1979 - Jan 25, 2003
Accident
Keith & Jean Swett

Patrick Vincent DeMauro – 19
Jan 28, 1982 - Aug 29, 2001
Car Accident
Vincent & Debbie DeMauro

Ryan James Moravcik – 21
Jan 07, 1980 - Dec 31, 2001
Suicide
James & Lucille Moravcik

Ryan Vesely – 17
Oct 03, 1974 - Jan 18, 1992
Auto Accident
Stan & Val Vesely

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

Douglas McCallum – 19
Sep 23, 1980 - Feb 21, 2000
Accident
Reg & Marcia McCallum

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

Denise Dubois – 38
Feb 12, 1960 - Jan 02, 1999
Cancer/Suicide
Janet & Bernie Finnigan

Casey Cox – 27
Dec 17, 1985 - Feb 14, 2013
Asthma
Cynthia Cox

Dan Parmenter – 20
Oct 15, 1987 - Feb 14, 2008
NIU Classroom Shooting
Gary Parmenter

Daniel Meyer – 7
Feb 21, 1977 - Sep 21, 1984
Hit by Car
Kenneth & Olivia Meyer

Deborah Gilligan Main – 35
Mar 18, 1965 - Feb 13, 2001
Melanoma
Margaret Gilligan



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

Donna Hark – 48
Oct 28, 1961 - Feb 08, 2010
Pulmonary Hypertension
Geraldine Ploskonka

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

Melissa Juergensen – 19

Feb 24, 1989 – May 03, 2008
Auto Accident
Ruth Juergensen

Emily Rose Ford –

Feb 23, 2010 - Feb 24, 2010
Prematurity
Jeremy & Jaime Ford

Henry J Ford –

Feb 25, 2010 - Feb 26, 2010
Prematurity
Jeremy & Jaime Ford

Evan Holmes – 20

Feb 09, 1990 - Apr 02, 2010
Unknown
Irene Gangemi

Evan Holmes – 20

Feb 09, 1990 - Apr 02, 2010
Unknown
Mason Holmes

Foly Phillips – 26

Feb 18, 1982 - Feb 26, 2008
Sickness
Yinka & Grace Phillips

Gerrick Davies – 18

Jan 21, 1986 - Feb 09, 2004
Murdered
Diane Davies

Glenn Patrick Beach – 31

Nov 07, 1960 - Feb 16, 1992
Murdered
John & Grace Beach

Mark Susong – 21

Jun 05, 1990 – Feb 10, 2012
Drug Overdose
Jill Susong

Ian McDonald-Shumaker – 17

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

Jamie Mitchell – 31

Feb 28, 1978 - Sep 19, 2009
Suicide
Lance & Kristie Mitchell

Joseph Ross – 23

Jun 09, 1985 - Feb 05, 2009
Asthma
Pat Ross

Kate Pranno – 24

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

Katherine Lacewell – 41

Feb 27, 1969 - Oct 16, 2011
Alcoholism
Allen Lacewell

Kimberly Ann Olson – 15

Feb 14, 1983 - Aug 20, 1998
Histicytic Disorder
Larry & Danita Olson

Michael Patrick Gordon – 30

Feb 20, 1974 - Aug 08, 2004
Killed by Drunk Driver
Robert & Carol Gordon

Mike Seaney – 44

Feb 24, 1951 - Sep 23, 1995
Medical Misdiagnosis
Vernadene Tolman

Nadia Chowdhury – 20

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

Nancy R. Lyell (Sue's Sister) – 35

Feb 14, 1961 - Sep 10, 1996
Cancer
Sue & Garry Fink

Roseanne Strick – 22

Feb 27, 1969 - Oct 14, 1991
Brain Aneurysm/Heart Attack/Car
Accident
Ilse Strick

Sean Howard Anderson – 17

Feb 22, 1983 - Dec 05, 2000
Suicide
Maureen Anderson

Steven Glosky – 23

Feb 16, 1972 - Nov 13, 1995
Suicide
Judy & Danny Glosky

Thomas (Tommy John) Adams – 35

Feb 01, 1966 - Nov 01, 2001
Marge & Bill Adams

Tim Schiefelbein – 18

Dec 07, 1989 - Feb 24, 2007
Car Accident
Diane Grabowski

Timmy Ciametti – 5

Feb 12, 1985 - Mar 18, 1990
Adult Respiratory Distress Syndrome
Vince & Gloria Ciametti

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

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

Amy Elizabeth Gales – 19
Jul 18, 1975 - Mar 08, 1995
Auto Accident
Ron & Sandy Gales

Brendon Anderson – 22
Jul 18, 1976 - Mar 16, 1998
Murdered
Rob Anderson

Carl Alan Vuillaume – 16
Mar 14, 1989 - Jul 21, 2005
Accidental Drowning
Rob & Charleen Vuillaume

Dan Woods – 29
Mar 12, 1978 - Aug 22, 2007
Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy
Mary Woods

Daryle J. "DJ" Hall – 22
Mar 10, 1984 - Sep 11, 2006
Accidental Drug Overdose
Bob and Sherry Hall

Timothy Kuzmicki – 16
Mar 07, 1986 - Nov 13, 2002
Motorcycle/Auto Collision
Kathy Kuzmicki

Eric-Alan Gottung – 24
Oct 10, 1986 - Mar 04, 2011
Suicide
Nancy & Eric Gottung

Frank Knapczyk, Jr. – 25
Mar 28, 1967 - Oct 24, 1992
Electrocution
Barbara & Frank Knapczyk

Garrett Joel Zaagman – 7
Mar 04, 1976 - Dec 09, 1983
Spinal Meningitis
Dirk & Florence Zaagman

Gina –
Mar 07, 1968 -
Fred & Carol Renzetti

Jennifer Lynn Kirwan – 17
Mar 10, 1981 - Sep 20, 1998
Auto Accident
Linda Kelley

Jessica Louise Lang – 23
Mar 03, 1980 - Dec 12, 2003
Heroin Overdose
Kristine Lang

Katie Evans – 35
Mar 24, 1978 - Jul 16, 2013
Heroin Overdose
Anne & Ed Evans

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

Matthew Lane – 27
Mar 08, 1978 - Oct 10, 2005
Car Accident
Joylin Lane

Michael Werth – 24
Mar 18, 1978 - Mar 22, 2002
Janey Reed

Natalie Anne Ragusa – 27
Oct 24, 1975 - Mar 04, 2003
Car Accident
George Ragusa

Nicholas Palumbo – 21
Jul 10, 1981 - Mar 05, 2003
Snowmobile Accident
Debbie Palumbo

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

Ron Buccieri – 42
Mar 22, 1961 - Aug 31, 2003
Unknown
Carol Polich

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

Ryan Paul – 15 1/2
Jul 06, 1988 - Mar 09, 2004
Hit by Car
Roy & Melody Paul

Sara Jane Melton – 27
Mar 19, 1969 - Jul 09, 1996
Anaplastic Thyroid Carcinoma
Jack & Jane Larson

Sarah Lynn Moore – 5
Dec 18, 1998 - Mar 31, 2004
Surgical Complications
Susan Moore

Scott Saville – 42
Mar 29, 1969 - Jul 30, 2011
Brain Aneurysm
Mary Saville



Thank You! Thank You!

Please read these sincere notes of appreciation from the school that was the recipient of your gift donations at the December meeting.

An email to Sue Scott:

Sue,

I'm writing this e-mail to say thank YOU so, so much for thinking of the children in our district as eligible kids to receive these wonderful bags of donated toys from your friends & organization. We are the VOICE of the needy and we put our heads together upon hearing the story about Christmas Cheer deliveries on Christmas morning delivering meals and gifts to those in need. I will place a copy of the CHRISTMAS CHEER flyer that I volunteer for every Christmas Day if you wish to share it with anyone. Once again, thank you for thinking of others to help during this season of giving who are less fortunate than us. The recipients of these toys will be children in Cicero during my meal delivery routes. Have a very merry Christmas and happy 2014 Sue!

Your friend and co-worker,

Nicole
Lincoln School P.E. Teacher
Cicero School District #99

An email from Sue Scott:

Dear Bereaved Parents Chicagoland Chapter,

I want to thank the Bereaved Parents for their generous toy donations for the needy kids of Cicero. I asked the PE teacher, Nicole, about the process. She participates in the toy delivery on Christmas morning. She delivers to 30 homes. She is one of the many volunteers for the Christmas Cheer Foundation who deliver food and toys. The teachers in our schools furnish names to the Christmas Cheer Foundation. Nicole receives a list stating how many are in the family, along with the sex and ages of the kids. She selects the families who are recipients of the toys. Nicole said that, last year, the looks on the kid's faces were priceless. You have helped make Dec 25 a better Christmas morning for the kids. She added that where they live is an eye-opener.

Your fellow bereaved parent,

Sue Scott
Kate's mom

Dealing with Grief and Loss

By Karen Rose Schultz L.C.S.W

How does a parent begin to cope with the death of a daughter or a son? My own father lost my brother in a hit and run accident in California three years ago. My brother Mike was 40 years old, mentally ill, and living in a half-way house. He was walking to an early morning flea market when a full size van hit him, and he went flying in the air. He bounced his head and continued to fly. It was 5:15 AM. There were no witnesses. My father was told that my brother was dead over the phone. He lives in New York, and was devastated. What a shock this was to him!

Of course my dad wants answers to questions that we will never have answered. My dad went through the crime scene pictures because he had to find out what happened on the street. He feels guilty that he couldn't be there to help him, or to give him comfort. He feels powerless, and doesn't know how to make sense of his death. He did consult a psychic for answers, but it left him sadder because the psychic told him that the person who hit my brother did not feel any remorse. He had left the state and moved out east. He will never pay for what he did to my brother.

As a social worker I help families deal with the reality of death. Every family deals differently with death and burial issues. Think back to your own family of origin. Was it alright to talk about the deceased? How did your family handle feelings in this regard? These are some of the questions that we ask when people come for therapy. Many families do not communicate with one another, and each person deals with the loss alone. Therapy can bring the family together to talk about the death. Usually teenagers want no part of the process. However, some siblings are very honest and want help. Therapy can mobilize the family to work together and heal.

Grief is a process that comes in stages, and there is no right or wrong way to grieve. Each person has their own way of grieving. The stages of grief are:

1. Shock, denial
2. Anger
3. Bargaining
4. Depression
5. Acceptance

Some people can go through the pain to get to the

healing. Are we ever "at peace" about our loss? Some families I have worked with have been supportive of one another during this time. Others never really feel the pain and the sadness. They often wall themselves off from any help, while others take on too much of the grief. The goal of any therapy is to explore feelings, reduce depression, and to calm anxiety and guilt over the loss of a son or daughter.

Do you think that you need therapy? What exactly is therapy? What do we do in therapy?

The reason people come to therapy is because they are not functioning, not expressing feelings, and/or say that they are "fine" and don't need to grieve anymore. People start self-abusing themselves, distracting their grief by being busy from day and night. Some compulsively exercise, drink, eat, sleep, or talk about suicide. Some say that they are dead, and they lose hope about tomorrow. Some feel guilt to the point of obsession, constantly trying to rework the scenario to a different outcome. It all depends on how they are coping. I do not know exactly how parents really feel. I have heard people talk about the disbelief, the exhaustion, the wake, the funeral, etc. Some have police tapes that they still listen to. Sometimes the image of the deceased is with them for days on end. Others still can't believe it years later.

My brother was very spiritual, and knew that he was leaving the planet. He was tortured by his mental illness, and wanted to die and be with my mother. She died in December 1999 and we buried her New Year's Eve. My brother was lost after that, and kept saying to me "If anything happens to me, I go with mother." I would say to him that nothing was going to happen to him, but he knew. A month before he died, he sent me all of his kitchen utensils, food, and canned goods. I thought he was crazy, but now I know he was preparing us.

The night before he died he called my Dad in New York and told him he would not be coming back to visit anymore and that he would not be seeing either of us. He called me too. He never called at night, but on this night, he called. He told me that we must forgive those who hurt people. He told me to get some cheap angels from the dollar store and to forgive my father. I told him that I loved him and to call me tomorrow. The next morning, my father got the phone call that he was dead. After the funeral I knew that the angels were for various people who helped my brother during his life. He was buried with my mother.

Continued on the next page...

Dealing with grief and loss....continued from page 8

The thing to remember is that when people live and die, we are involved in a spiritual process. I learned how to grieve, and how to live. In therapy, I talked about my brother's illness, and how tortured his life was. I believe that he was taken from us when his time was up.

It does no good to blame myself for the accident. He died on St. Patrick's Day. Why wasn't I out in California seeing that he was alright? Did I feel that I had let him down as a child? I felt guilty for living, and for being embarrassed by his illness. Was I a good sister to him?

The one thing that got me through this was my belief that I could not have prevented the accident. I learned that I had done enough, and that he loved me. It was hard to feel peace. I decided that I was the best sister I could have been. All this takes time, and admitting my defeat over death. I could not control the outcome, I could not save him. He died not knowing what had hit him. I know in my heart that he didn't suffer. My dad told me that from the pictures he had a look on his face like he didn't understand what had happened to him. I believe my mother was there to meet his soul before the collision.

I share my story with you to give you hope and peace. I wish that those who are silently suffering would try going to a support group and talking about their feelings. Feel the pain, don't repress it. Use your support group for healing as a family. Those who have died have been honored in a way that shows the love and light that they possessed prior to their deaths. This does not replace them or heal the wounds. Bereaved families help others learn how to face death and rise above it.

We are all human, and we will die one day. It is how we live that can honor the deceased. We can help others as well as ourselves. You can get your life back after a loved one has died, although it will never be the same. Those on the other side want us to go on with our lives. I can almost hear my brother telling me to eat, live, and know that he is OK. I talk to my children about him, and he lives on in my heart and soul.

Therapy is a way to heal the wounds, hearts

and minds of the bereaved. People who are hurting silently could profit from some counseling. You don't have to go for years. Try a session or two. Are you stuck in one of the stages of grief? Is the quality of your life being threatened by not knowing how to cope? Are you frustrated because you have a hard time making sense out of your experience?

I would urge all of you to know that counselors are people too. We have had life experiences like the rest of the world. There is nothing like leaving all of your pain, suffering, and guilt at the therapist's office, and finding a way to heal. Just having a safe place to express feelings is one way to heal. We don't take the grief away, but we guide the person past the pain, into another path that doesn't hurt so badly.

Therapy works to restore lives, and works on telling your story in a healing way. If you are in need of help, please ask for it. Don't sit alone with your feelings. You don't have to go through all this alone. Learn new ways to cope after losing a son or daughter and work to clear up the chaos or confusion. Healing means telling your story. By sharing your story, you connect all of us in unity. We are stronger when we share our strength, hope, and experience with one another. Remember, it takes both rain and sun to make rainbows. I wish you light, love, and many rainbows. ☀️

This article is reprinted from the January 2006 edition of our chapter newsletter.

Karen Rose Schultz was the speaker at our November Potluck meeting. Her warmth and caring is evident in the way she relates to grieving people.

Karen is a licensed clinical social worker, professional speaker, author, publisher and a bereaved sibling. Karen maintains a private practice in Hinsdale and has over 30 years of clinical and professional experience. The focus of her practice centers on grief support services. Karen leads support groups for Adolph Funeral Homes and has taught Intuition and Counseling at the College of DuPage.



The Room Just Down The Hall

by Jeremiah Sundown, Nashville, TN

There's a room just down the hall,
where there's never a sound at all,
but once these walls knew laughter,
and music from the radio.

There's posters on the wall,
in the room just down the hall,
and love is all that lives here,
in the place that you called home.

On the bed where you dreamed your dreams,
you were what you wanted to be -
a fireman and a cowboy,
shooting straight and riding tall.
And I remember what you wanted to be,
when you grew up - just like me!
And the world was just like heaven
in the room just down the hall.

Now sometimes late at night,
by the flickering candlelight,
I find simple comfort,
just lying on your bed.
I finally fall to sleep,
with your picture next to me,
and again tears find freedom,
on the pillow where you laid your head.

Lying there in the night,
I know it'll be all right;
I always feel you close,
I often hear you call,
from the place you now call "home,"
in the room you call your own.
Heaven again lies waiting,
in the room just down the hall. 🌿



9 Years Back Steps

by Janice Lopes, Sacramento Valley BP/USA

I was busy today rushing around the office working on a project, when a new staff member saw your photo on my desk. She picked up the frame and gazed at your face. She raised her head and asked, "Is this your son?" I said "Yes" and I paused... I knew it was coming - I held my breath. She looked at me with the frame still in her hands and asked casually, "where does he go to school?" Her face was innocent. Her eyes searched my face. Time stood still as my heart sank... Because I knew I had to tell "the" story, and I wondered if I could say the truth without breaking down. Nine years and I still cry at the question. I knew I had to sum up in a brief moment the pain, the horror, the loneliness of living without you.

I guess sometimes I think I'm normal. I have pictures on my desk like everyone else... I trick myself into thinking my life is moving on, when actually a large part of my life has stopped - the day you were killed. Nine years... and still counting... 🌿

I will be

by Rob Anderson, Brendon's dad

If you think of me as gone forever,
I will be.

If you think of me as sadness and tears,
I will be.

If you think of me as your broken heart,
I will be.

That's not who I want to be, but I will be.

If you think of me as memories to cherish,
I will be.

If you think of me as laughter and joy,
I will be.

If you think of me as your healing heart,
I will be.

That's who I want to be, please let me be. 🌿

Reflections on March

by Dayton Robinson, Tuscaloosa, AL

March is a month of renewal. The dormant trees begin to stir, the birds optimistically sing of spring; the winds, sometimes violent, wake us up; perhaps we need a “shake” out of our winter lethargy; an awakening.

There is that urge to plant, to nourish, to grow a tree or a flower. There is the primordial urge to feel your hand digging in the warming earth. Perhaps we plant because we know that someone will see the results, as we have enjoyed the results of others’ work. It could be called a debt of renewal, a repayment for that which we have enjoyed. As we nourish small seedlings, we visualize the end results. That tree may die, as our children did. That tree may flourish beautifully, or it may meet ultimate disaster, but if that tree does well, it could be a source of great pleasure and of beauty for many coming years. We can believe that a seedling will be a glorious tree enjoyed by many. It’s a nice dream.

“To all things there is a season” and as life goes by, we simply cannot afford to miss the season, the renewals, the chances for new growth. Regardless of our grief and regrets, life goes on, and we must try not to miss a season. Life simply will be, whether we participate or not. Someone will benefit from constructive growth, if we can find the energy to make the effort.

Severe grief, for a time, reduces our interest and our ability to participate fully in life. With a low energy level and little initiative and with our hopes for the future severely damaged, it requires great effort for the bereaved to learn to again enjoy the small things that make up most of our lives. Our hopes for the future are so damaged that there is little incentive to work today for the future. The things that exist today comprise the basics of our future. We run a risk and a

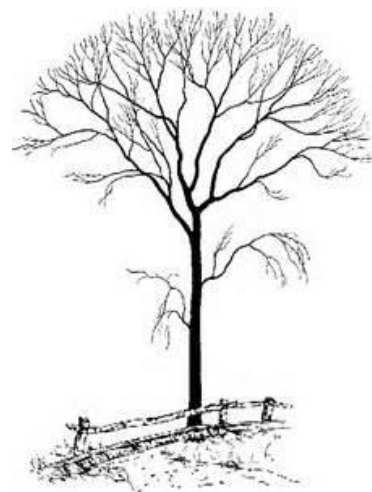
danger of missing the good things that are to be, because we do not have the wish to participate in the things that are today.

Although we need a time of some withdrawal, some time to ponder the unanswered questions, some time to heal, we also need to be aware of the lives that are passing. Regardless of our grief, life simply goes on, and there is much good that we risk losing if we stay too long in a state of suspense of the present and a sad review of the past.

A part of learning to “accept the unacceptable” is to learn to make the effort to sort out the good memories and take them with us into a future that will be happy again.

There comes a time when the harsh winter of our damaging grief will give way to some awakening, a time when we, like nature, can shake off some of the lethargy and see and feel the renewals life offers. Our choice is to remember that we could not control the advent of disaster. We can only control our response. Our choice is now only in the way in which we respond to the necessity to pick up the threads of our life and go on.

We owe it to ourselves to make a positive effort. We can hope that those buffeting winds of March can help us awaken to the renewals of spring and put the “winter of our disaster” in its place, now a part of our ongoing lives. ❧❧



CALENDAR OF EVENTS	
January	
January 6	Ladies Night Out: 6:00 PM - TGI Fridays, 601 E Butterfield Rd, Lombard
January 7	Monthly Meeting: 7:00 PM - Tear Soup
February	
February 4	Monthly Meeting: 7:00 PM - Topic to be determined
March	
March 3	Ladies Night Out: 6:00 PM - TGI Fridays, 601 E Butterfield Rd, Lombard
March 4	Monthly Meeting: 7:00 PM - Topic to be determined

BP/USA Chicagoland on the Web:
<http://bpusachicagoland.org//>



Getting Better

from Rachel's Cry A Journey Through Grief by Richard A. Dew, M.D. Tennessee Valley Publishing, 1996

"You're like your old self,"
 They all say to me
 "You're almost back
 Like you used to be."
 Tears don't come as quick
 As they used to do.
 They all say I'm better,
 It must be true.
 Still, there are some things
 Of which nobody knows,
 Like the box in the closet
 That's full of his clothes.

Bereaved Parents of the USA
 Chicagoland Chapter
 P.O. Box 718
 Lyons, IL 60534



January - February - March 2014