



January – February – March 2016

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*

Hope

by Margaret Gerner, Arthur's Mom and Emily's Grandmother, St. Louis Chapter Newsletter

I sat down regularly to read the many newsletters that I receive from the chapters across the county. Most of the time there were articles in them that made me cry a little. I read about children who are dead and parents who are hurting, but never did I come away from those reading sessions depressed. I came away with hope, hope that the searing torment does lessen and eventually give way to warm, loving memories of our children.

When we are in the deepest throes of our grief, when our beloved child has just recently been snatched from life by a tragic accident or succumbed to a fatal illness, or died in some other way, can we believe we can ever be happy again? When to simply get up in the morning is a major accomplishment, can we believe that we will ever be able to function with enthusiasm or purpose? When every thought of our children brings excruciating pain, can we believe that we will someday be able to think of him/her and smile? I know it is hard to believe that this will ever happen, but it will.

The words used in defining HOPE are expect, trust, anticipate, wish, desire and confident. These are the keywords. If we expect, trust and anticipate feeling better, we will in time. If we wish it and are confident, the day will come when we will feel better. Of course, it doesn't just happen. It takes long, hard grief work. It takes many painful hours of allowing ourselves to go through our grief. It takes patience and it takes time. But know you will come to the light at the end of the tunnel.

Know that there is hope. Know that many bereaved parents who have been in the same painful place that you are now have found life meaningful again.

Know that you will too.

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS:

Tuesday, January 5 - Monthly Chapter Meeting:

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

Monday, January 11 - Ladies Night Out: 6:00 PM - Ruby Tuesday, 1570 Butterfield Road (at Finley), Downers Grove.

Tuesday, February 2 - Monthly Chapter Meeting:

7:00 PM to 8:30 PM - Topic to be determined

Tuesday, March 1 - Monthly Chapter Meeting:

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

~ Candle Light Program ~ A Heartfelt Thank You!

Sunday, December 6th was our annual candle light observance, and it was a beautiful evening of remembrance for our children.

A sincere thank you to all who made the evening possible including Donna Corrigan, Sally Yarberry, Jerry Schulman, Bob & Carol Gordon, Rose Martino-Krueger, Marilyn Cocogliato, Maureen Anderson and Nancy Butler. Many thanks to everyone who lent a hand with set-up and/or clean-up!

Donations:

Bill & Marge Adams, In memory of Thomas (Tommy John) Adams and Martin K. Adams
Helen Amelio, In memory of Frank P. Amelio
Trish DeBauche, In memory of Bryce Stack
Frank Vlazny, In memory of Peter Vlazny

Many, many thanks!

FIRST ENCOUNTER

When grief first enters our life,
 it tends to invade us –
 completely and relentlessly.
 We are without comfort, we do not feel pleasure,
 we find no joy.
 We ache in mind and body.
 We feel weak and numb.
 In the deepest core of our being,
 we are ready to accept
 that we will never know happiness again.
 What's more, we feel that this state
 is entirely appropriate, natural and irreversible.
 Nothing can convince us that, given time,
 we can learn to live again.

But we will.

from *For You From Sascha* by Alexandra Sascha Wagner

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 Yarberry (708) 560-0393



♥ ♥ ♥ Love Gift ♥ ♥ ♥

In loving memory of
William "Billy" Collins
 November 15, 1965 until December 24, 1989

"The true measure of one's life is not the present fire of one's character but the flame that continues to burn even after death."

He touched many.

The Collins Family



♥ ♥ ♥ Love Gift ♥ ♥ ♥

In loving memory of
Roseanne Strick
 February 27, 1969 until October 13, 1991

And
Patricia Strick-Hawkins
 October 31, 1959 until March 18, 2015

Patricia was a kind, hard-working and loving daughter.
 I miss her and Roseanne so much.

In loving remembrance,
 Your Mom, and Brother Michael & Families
 Ilse Strick

*Bereaved Parents of the USA
 2016 National Gathering*

Indianapolis, Indiana
 June 29 - July 3, 2016

"Crossroads of Your Heart"

Start planning now, information is on the national website at <http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org/Gathering.html>
 For info contact LeeAnn Hutson at dlhutson@joink.com or 765-866-1903

♥ ♥ ♥ Love Gifts ♥ ♥ ♥

♥ ♥ ♥ 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 320
Western Springs, IL 60558**

It is also recommended that you email your love gift message to the newsletter editor and chapter co-leader, Sally Yarberry, at psyrbrry@hotmail.com.



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

Would have been your 41st birthday on the 5th, but it was just like any other day, loving you and missing you, every day, every hour and with every breath I take.

Love You Always,
Dad
Joseph Robert Craig



*In loving memory of
Amy Elizabeth Gales
July 18, 1975 until March 8, 1995*

Love always and forever,
Mom
Sandra C. Gales



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

Happy 26th Birthday with Lots & Lots of Love!

Your loving spirit continues to fill my heart with beauty, joy, and love each and every day! The day you were born, God blessed me with an extraordinary gift....YOU!

Miss you more than words can express, sweetie!

We are currently awaiting the birth of a beautiful baby girl from your sister in December. I know you would have been the BEST and most LOVING aunt on the planet!

With love,
Mom (Sandy Sandy)
& your big sister (Lauryn Runge)



*In loving memory of
Douglas Scott McCallum
September 23, 1980 until February 21, 2000*

We love and miss you terribly. You are always in our thoughts.

Sixteen years have passed, and we continue to remember your kindness, intelligence and unique sense of humor.

Till we meet again.....

Mom, Dad, Heather & Meghan



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 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 Gavin – 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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Joseph Ross – 23

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

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
Mason Holmes

Nancy Inamine – 47

Apr 15, 1967 – Feb 07, 2015
Cancer
Joyce Connolly

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

Steven Glosky – 23

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

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

Amy Elizabeth Gales – 19

Jul 18, 1975 – Mar 08, 1995
Auto Accident
Ron & Sandy Gales

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

Jacob Kowalik – 10

Feb 26, 2004 – Apr 15, 2014
Heart Attack
Mike & Jennifer Kowalik

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

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

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

Vincenza – 47
Jul 30, 1966 – Mar 08, 2014
Cancer
Margherita Arrowsmith (Sister)

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



Our Children Remembered.... (continued):

Kevin O'Malley – 25
 Mar 04, 1990 – May 30, 2015
 Murder
 Brian & Sharon O'Malley



Hudson Colwell – 1
 Mar 28, 2014 – Apr 24, 2015
 Virus
 Megan & Chris Colwell

Thank You! Thank You!

A thank you note from the organization that was the recipient of your gift donations at the December meeting.

December 20, 2015

Dear Fellow Bereaved Parents,

I am overwhelmed by your generosity in purchasing gifts for needy children. I understand the feeling of emptiness when you can't buy for your child, and buying for needy children helps to fill the void. This year, the Christmas gifts were given to impoverished children through the organization entitled "Christmas Cheer". Nicole Gamez, the PE teacher at Lincoln School, volunteers to deliver food and gifts on Christmas morning every year.

About the Christmas Cheer Foundation:

Christmas Cheer Foundation is a not-for-profit, tax-exempt foundation consisting of an all-volunteer group that prepares and delivers meals, new children books, toys and beanie babies to needy families and seniors within the Chicagoland and suburban area on Christmas Day. We provide other support projects throughout the year.

When did it begin?

In 1981, a group of volunteers gathered at Good Shepherd Church in Oak Park to provide meals that would be delivered by a friendly face to about 150 homebound people on Christmas morning. These people received Meals on Wheels on a regular basis, but due to the holiday, no meal would be available to them that day.

When do all the activities begin?

CCF planning is a year around project of love with the core group of volunteers. But our major work (when we need our large group of volunteers) starts in early December and continues during the whole month, culminating on Christmas Day when we need the most volunteers.

Where does all this take place?

Prior to Christmas Day, CCF works with the cooperation of St. Cyprian Parish in River Grove and the Dominican University in River Forest. Around Christmas, all activities are located at the Dominican University Priory campus

How many volunteers are needed and what do they do?

400 volunteers help with wrapping and transporting items to the Priory about a week before Christmas. On Christmas Day, 500 volunteers are involved in the assembling, preparing, routing, delivering and cleaning up to complete our labor of love.

Thank you so much moms and dads!

Sincerely,
 Suzi Scott, Bereaved parent of Katherine Pranno
 May 19, 1977 – February 22, 2002



LESSONS

November 13, marks the 4th year since the death of my beloved son, Joey. In these four years, I have learned many lessons. Lessons that were not my choice to learn.

I have learned what it means to go from a happy, carefree family of five, to a grieving heartbroken family of four.

I have learned that grief hurts like no pain I have ever experienced before.

I have learned the unbelievable pain involved in arranging a funeral and burying a son.

I have learned that death of a son takes its toll on the entire family.

I have learned that the general public, who have never experienced such pain, have many cures and "should-ofs" for a grieving mother.

I have learned what it means to try to go on with life....taking one step frontwards and two steps backwards.

I have learned what it means to be so consumed with pain and grief that it is impossible to go on with trivial things of everyday life.

I have learned that the sun "dared" to come up the very day after my son died and continues to do so daily.

I have learned the pain of getting two Mother's Day cards instead of three.

I have learned that Christmas and other family days are not so much fun anymore.

I have learned that four years is the same as yesterday in my memory.

I have learned the pain in seeing my son's friends marry and have babies.

I have learned that life is not fair and that bad things do happen to good people.

Yes, I have learned so many painful lessons of life, just as each of you has.

But in these four years, I have also learned....that I can and must go on with my life. That going on with life and laughter does not mean I have forgotten my

son or love him any less. Going on with life is just what my son would have wanted for me.

I have learned that I have the best, most loving husband in the world. Who else would have loved and supported me so during these four long years.

I have learned that I still have two precious daughters, who I love dearly, that need and are entitled to a mother.

I have learned how very lucky I am to have a grandson who means the world to me. I have learned that I want him to remember me as a happy, fun granny, not one who cries all the time.

I have learned that God did not take my son, and that God is there now to take care of him. I have learned that even though this is not the way I choose my life to be, this is the way life is.

I have learned to take one day at a time and try to make the best of it. We have no guarantees of what tomorrow brings.

I have learned that I did not lose my son....he is with me in my heart all the time.

I have learned to be a more compassionate person.

I have learned that by reaching out to help others who are hurting, you are in turn helping yourself also.

I have learned that although Christmas will never be the same again, there can be some happiness, joy and even a little excitement in it again.

I have learned how very much each of you, my BP/USA family, means to me. I wish so very much that I could magically and very quickly bring all you newly bereaved parents down along the hard road that I have travelled in the last four years, and that you too must travel on. I cannot do that but I hope that I can offer you some hope that life will be good again.

My love to each of you.

*Pat Moser
BP/USA Tampa Bay Chapter 2003
Newsletter*



This I Can Share With You

I have not experienced the death of my only child, but some of us have.
 I have not experienced a child dying by suicide, but some of us have.
 I have not watched my child fight a terminal illness, but some of us have.
 None of us would say, "I know just how you feel."
 Even if our experiences are similar, no two situations are exactly alike.

But I can say
 I remember the pain when my child died.
 I remember the feelings of insanity.
 I remember the feelings of aloneness.
 I remember wishing I could die.
 I remember wanting to share something with my child,
 But he wasn't there.

So my friends, our experiences have parts in common and parts that are different!
 So, why should we listen to each other?
 Do we have anything to share?
 Do you know what heartbreak feels like?
 All of us do.
 Do you know what it's like to have empty arms?
 All of us do.
 So, let's learn what we can of our commonalities.
 We loved a child, but our child left too soon.

THIS WE CAN SHARE WITH YOU.

By Marilyn W. Heavlin, TCF Tuscaloosa Newsletter, March/April 2004



The Forecast of Grief

Some say grief is like ocean waves constantly lapping at your feet, sometimes swelling and knocking you over. Others describe it as a sequence of predictable stages. I've found that grief is also like summer weather on the Texas Gulf Coast. One minute the sky is blue and you're coping fairly well, then offshore clouds roll in suddenly with a downpour of tears that could flood Oyster Creek.

Grief is the constantly changing radar screen of green, yellow and red. There's an illusion of predictability, but the slightest shift in pressure or temperature—a song, a memory, a smell—can change the forecast without warning. It would be unrealistic to believe that we could live in this area without getting wet, or even without experiencing some sunshine. In the same way, the climate of grief will bring sorrow as well as joy, sometimes all in one day, for the rest of our lives on this shore.

And so we learn to live with it, to find shelter on exceptionally stormy days, to share space under an umbrella when we need support, and to allow moments on clear days to look up at the sky and know that, regardless of the weather, love will always shine bright.

Robin Goddard, Brandon's Mom, TCF Brazoria County, Texas, May-June, 2009

The Grief of Older Parents

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

It is difficult for society to understand the complexity of the loss of a child, no matter the age. Probably the two least understood losses are those at either end of the spectrum: the unsuccessful pregnancy, stillbirth or death shortly after birth, and the loss of an adult child.

In the first case, they wonder why you grieve for someone they feel you didn't know, and in the second case they think that because the son or daughter no longer lives at home and was no longer a part of your everyday life, with a family of his or her own, perhaps, that the pain of the death shouldn't be so bad. They seem not to understand that your children are a part of your life, for all of your life, no matter how far away they may be.

Someone has reminded us that we do not love our children more because they have lived long enough for the parents to watch them grow and develop. It is also important to realize that the older children aren't loved any less. You continue to love them and to develop new relationships with them. It is frustrating for older parents to have poured all that time, effort and love into rearing and shaping a child, to have done a good job and had the time to see the end result; to have been able to love and enjoy the decent, worthwhile adult who has emerged, and who is now a part of two relationships, that of parent/child and friend/friend. They have then lost both of those relationships.

Even if the older child had turned out to be not all the parents had hoped for, who has caused unhappiness with, for example, his alcoholism, the parents are still very much involved in this child's problems and escapades. Worrying about him and being a part of his support system becomes a way of life, and if this child dies, suddenly they are at a loss for a center in their life. They love him, no matter what his shortcomings are, and they grieve for his loss as well.

As parents age, role reversals often develop between them and their children. After years of being responsible, in-charge people, as they go from "What will happen to my children if something happens to me?" to "What will happen to me if something happens to my children?" The child becomes a large part of the older parents; security blanket, and they rely on them for comfort. The parents are reassured, thinking that when either of them dies, a child will be there to care for the one who is left.

Imagine a situation where the mother, who is widowed and in her 60's or 70's, and who now relies on her son, in his 40's or 50's, to help with her financial decisions, the upkeep of her home, any problems she may have with her car, among other things. If she has health problems, he will see that she gets the proper medical care and financial assistance if he is able. He may have assured her of a place in his home should the need arise. Suddenly this child dies. Fear and insecurity become a real part of the mother's life, as though she were a helpless, young child, who parents have died.

Some adult children never leave home. Older, retired parents now find their daily life revolves around the routine comings and goings of this adult child. When he dies, the parents are cast adrift with no anchor, just as surely as parents of younger terminally ill children, after the death. What do you do with all of your time now that the hub of your universe is no longer there? All reasons for functioning seem to disappear.

If there are grandchildren left from this adult child who dies, the grandparents now have to try to maintain a good relationship with the surviving in-law, with the hope that efforts on the part of the son-in-law or daughter-in-law to begin a new life won't include cutting off all relationship with the old life. Keeping in touch, but not intruding, can be tricky, particularly if there was not an especially good relationship between the grandparents and the in-law before the death. If the grandparents are denied access to their grandchildren, that is another great loss for them.



Continued on next page...

The Grief of Older Parents (continued)...

Most parents, no matter what age, will tell you they would have gladly taken their child's place in death, but older parents have inordinate amounts of "survivor guilt" to deal with. "What right do they, who have lived a long, full life, have to be alive when their child is dead?" "It should be me," they will tell you with great sadness.

A large part of survival after the death of a child is being able to motivate yourself to reinvest in life. If you aren't able to accomplish this after an appropriate length of time, you don't fare as well as those who can. If most of your life is behind you, as is the case of older parents, they have other losses of family and friends staring them in the face, as well as having to deal with their own mortality. Some of these parents, with age, aren't as mobile as they once were, so it is difficult for them to take advantage of any new interests that are available to them in their effort to survive. Motivation, then, though not impossible, certainly becomes more difficult. Older parents, like younger parents, are told that time will heal. The older parents answer, "But I don't have that much time." Therein lies the larger part of the problem of adjustment and reinvestment.

As you begin to understand the enormity of the loss of older parents, it is once again brought home that there is no good way or ago to lose a child—just different ways and different ages and all of them are hard.



I would have traded places
Jumped through hoops
Fought the fights
Sent in the troops

I would have done anything
For you to have stayed
Made any bargain
Made any trade

I can spent a lifetime
Filled with guilt and blame
Not being able to save you
Seems like my shame

I will forgive myself
For what I could not do
Instead fill my heart
With all my love for you

Tanya Lord

www.thegrieftoolbox.com

I seem to be falling apart.
My attention span can be measured in
seconds -
my patience in minutes.
I cry at the drop of a hat.
I forget things constantly.
The morning toast burns daily.
I forget to sign the checks.
Half of everything in the house is
misplaced.
Feelings of anxiety and restlessness
are my constant companions.
Rainy days seem extra dreary.
Sunny days seem an outrage.
Other people's pain and frustration
seem insignificant.
Laughing, happy people seem out of
place in my world.
It has become routine to feel half
crazy.

I am normal, I am told.
I am a newly grieving person.

This Thing Called Grief, by Thomas M. Ellis

Bereaved Parents of the USA
 Chicagoland Chapter
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January - February - March 2016

CALENDAR OF EVENTS	
January	
January 5	Monthly Chapter Meeting: 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM - General Discussion
January 11	Ladies Night Out: 6:00 PM - Ruby Tuesday, 1570 Butterfield Road, Downers Grove
February	
February 2	Monthly Chapter Meeting: 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM - Topic to be determined.
March	
March 1	Monthly Chapter Meeting: 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM - General Discussion.



MARCH, THE MONTH OF IN BETWEEN

In between Winter,
 and in between Spring

Your death has left me feeling in between.

In between this world,
 and in between the next.

Since you died, nothing's the same.
 I no longer feel like I belong.

Yet I haven't wings for Heaven,
 though I have no heart for Earth.

So I'm somewhere with March,
 I'm somewhere in between.

*Naomi Holzman,
 Together We Journey, Western NY Chapter BP/USA,
 Winter 2012*

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