



January – February – March 2018

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*

SAY THEIR NAMES

By Olin's Father, BP/USA St. Louis Chapter,
<http://www.bpusastl.org/nArticles.html>

The time of concern is over. No longer are we asked how we're doing. Never are the names of our children mentioned to us. A curtain descends. The moment has passed. Lives slip from frequent recall. There are exceptions - close and compassionate friends, sensitive and loving family.

For most, the drama is over. The spotlight is off. Applause is silent. But for us the play will never end. The effects on us are timeless. Say THEIR NAMES to us.

On the stage of our lives they have been both lead and supporting actors and actresses. Do not tiptoe around one of the greatest events of our lives. Love does not die. Their names are written on our minds. YOU feel they are dead...we feel they are of the dead and still they live. They ghost walk our soul, beckoning in future welcome.

YOU say they WERE our children. We say they ARE. Say their names to us and say their names again. It hurts to bury their memory in silence. What they were in flesh is no longer with us. What they are in spirit stirs within us always. They are of our past, but they are part of our now. They are our hope for the future.

You say not to remind us. How little you understand we CANNOT forget. We would not...if we could. We understand you, but feel pain in being forced to do so. We forgive you, because you cannot know. And we would forgive you anyway.

We accept how you see us, but understand that you see us not at all. We strive not to judge you, for yesterday we were like you. We love you, will make no expectations toward you. But we wish you could understand that we dwell both in flesh and in spirit. The mystery is that you do too, but know it not.

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS:

Tuesday, January 2 - Monthly Chapter Meeting:
7:00 PM to 8:30 PM - General Discussion

Tuesday, February 6 - Monthly Chapter Meeting:
7:00 PM to 8:30 PM - Topic to be determined

Tuesday, March 6 - Monthly Chapter Meeting:
7:00 PM to 8:30 PM - General Discussion

Tuesday, April 3 - Monthly Chapter Meeting:
7:00 PM to 8:30 PM - Topic to be determined

We do not ask you to walk this road. The ascent is steep and the burden heavy. We walk it not by choice. We would rather walk with them in flesh, looking not to spirit roads beyond. We are what we have to be.

Say THEIR NAMES for they are alive in us. They and we will meet again, though in many ways we've never been parted. They and their lives play light songs in our minds, sunrise and sunsets on our dreams. They are real and shadow, were and are.

Say THEIR NAMES to us and say THEIR NAMES again. They are our children and we love them as we always did. Say THEIR NAMES! 🌈

*I miss your love.
I miss your hugs.
I miss being happy.
I am told that, in time,
"the sun will come out tomorrow".
But I know that, without you,
it will never shine as bright again.*

www.wherismystupidrainbow.com

♥ ♥ ♥ Love Gift ♥ ♥ ♥

In loving memory of

Douglas Scott McCallum

September 23, 1980 until February 21, 2000

Missing you every single moment.
We will always love you
and remember you.

Love, your family



♥ ♥ ♥ Love Gift ♥ ♥ ♥

In loving memory of

Joseph James Craig

December 5, 1974 until December 15, 2009

Love you and miss you, every day, every hour,
and with every breath.

"You Loved Everyone and Everyone Loved You"

Love You Always,
Dad
Joseph Robert Craig



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:

- ♥ Debra Garozzo & Lloyd Snyder, parents of Emily
- ♥ Terri and Don Liebenritt, parents of Cory Payne
- ♥ Barbara Piegat, mother of Andre'
- ♥ Katie Trent, mother of Anna

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



♥ ♥ ♥ 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**, 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. 🌸



♥ ♥ ♥ Love Gift ♥ ♥ ♥

In remembrance

Heather Runge

November 21, 1989 until January 4, 1990

Happy 28th Birthday, sweet Heather!

As the one Christian song goes...."I can only imagine....", and yes, I do!!!! I wonder often how you'd look, who your friends would be, what your likes / dislikes would be, what you and your sister would love to do together, if you'd be married and who would be the lucky guy!

However, all those questions really don't matter because I know your eternal home is filled with Love, Joy and Beauty 24-7! Thoughts of you always make me smile and make me feel blessed, though I miss you greatly – you couldn't stay on earth longer! Know you are forever in my heart, loved more, and missed more with each passing year!

With all my love,
Mom (Sandy Runge-Sand)
& Sister (Lauryn Runge-Sholts)





Join us in Memphis, TN for the
2018 Bereaved Parents of the USA National Gathering

Whispering Woods Hotel & Conference Center
7300 Hacks Cross Road, Olive Branch, MS
(866) 851-0393 / <http://www.wwconferencecenter.com>

Start planning now, information is on the national website at
<http://bereavedparentsusa.org/gathering/>

Bereaved Parents of the USA 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 journey.

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 the 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 from each other to every more recently bereaved family.

We are the Bereaved Parents of the USA.

We welcome you.

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 Steven Weiberg – 10 Mon

Jan 16, 2009 – Dec 03, 2009
Spinal Muscular Atrophy
Alesha & Jim Weiberg

Journee Marie Weiberg – 5

Jan 13, 2011 – Mar 05, 2016
Spinal Muscular Atrophy
Alesha & Jim Weiberg

Daniel F. (Dan) Schmid – 50

Jan 27, 1966 – Oct 11, 2016
Heart Failure
Wm. (Bill) & Jeanne Schmid

Ryan Vesely – 17

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

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

Brian Schrader – 13

Feb 18, 2003 – Jun 03, 2016
Traffic Accident
Melissa Schrader

Eric Robisch – 22

Jun 28, 1970 – Feb 08, 1993
Auto Accident
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

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

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

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

Keya Sansquiri - 5

Apr 07, 2010 – Feb 13, 2016
Cardiac Arrest
Nella Sansquiri

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

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

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

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

Gianna (Gia) Ugartechea - 18

Mar 21, 1998 – Mar 09, 2016
Unknown
Kimberly Baber & Henry Ugartechea

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

Mia Lozano – 13

Jul 04, 2002 – Mar 11, 2016
Diabetes / Cardiac Arrest
Augustine Lozano

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

Cory Payne – 39

Mar 27, 1978 – Oct 17, 2017
Accidental
Don & Terri Liebenritt

Our Children Remembered (continued)....

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

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

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

Nicky Angone – 57
Nov 13, 1958 – Mar 26, 2016
Cancer
Diane Angone

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

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

Patricia Strick-Hawkins – 54
Oct 31, 1959 – Mar 18, 2015
Ovarian Cancer
Ilse Strick

Patrick McNaughton – 2
Mar 27, 2014 – Apr 28, 2016
Viral Meningitis
Sheila & Ryan McNaughton

*Heartfelt Thank You from Thumbuddy Special for Donation of Toys from December Meeting*

To: Friends of Thumbuddy Special

Thumbuddy Special is a non-profit organization that was started over 16 years ago by a group of special education teachers and therapists who had a vision to fill a void in our field. Thumbuddy Special supplies equipment such as wheelchairs, walkers, bath chairs, adapted bikes, and ramps and computers. Often our children were either denied the equipment they needed by the insurance company or public aid. Most of these families lack resources to purchase the equipment that their child needs. In addition, we offer scholarships to children to attend local special recreation camps in the summer.

Our only source for revenue has been fundraising throughout the year, where family and friends continue to be our biggest supporters. We have ten active members on our volunteer board and over 95% of the money we raise goes directly to the children and families.

Every Christmas Season Thumbuddy Special also sponsors needy families in low income communities. On behalf of Thumbuddy Special, I would like to thank your generous organization for all of the wonderful toys! With the help of your amazing donations we were able to assure that over 200 children had presents under the tree on Christmas morning.

We at Thumbuddy Special are forever grateful that you choose our organization year after year to bring your donated toys to. We hope that you can feel the love from afar for the joy that you helped spread this holiday season!

Warm Regards,
Cheryl McCulloch
Board Member

www.thumbuddyspecial.org



ON GUILT AND SHAME

By Lexi Behrndt, www.scribblesandcrumbs.com, March 31, 2016

"When am I going to stop blaming myself?"

She was desperate for relief from the weight of guilt. Her son died the year before and the "whys" and "what ifs" played like a constant movie reel in her mind.

The question wasn't a new one to me, and yet, I still felt incapable of providing an adequate answer.

Who was I to say anything when I didn't even have the answer myself? Who was I to say, "Don't feel this way," when I'm convinced that in varying degrees, guilt simply comes with the territory of being a human and experiencing suffering? Who was I to answer when I still have moments of questioning what I should have done, could have done, in all my life circumstances to prevent negative outcomes—loss, heartbreak, devastation? Who am I to tell anyone not to blame themselves and not to spend expend their weary heart carrying that weight, when I myself don't have the solution?

But maybe that's the key.

In the face of pain and complexity, when we look into your own hearts, the answers become simple.

So, I came to her, not as anyone who had superior knowledge or wisdom, and not as anyone who thought that my answer could absolve the guilt she was feeling. I came maybe as I always should, a friend, another heart, broken for her with love and compassion, knowing that there is nothing anyone can do or say to take away this kind of pain, saying the words I know my own heart has needed.

Friend,

The burden of guilt is far too weighty to carry, especially when you're already weary and worn down. I'd be lying if I told you that you carried it alone. Guilt and shame have a funny way of digging in their claws when we least expect it.

It shouldn't be this way. You shouldn't have to hurt this badly. This isn't a burden for you to hold. Guilt loves to latch on, taking captive our broken hearts.

But realize this, and say it to yourself over and over if you have to... This is not punishment. This is not something you did. This is not consequence for bad actions. Do not blame yourself. Do not carry that. Do not hang your head in shame or guilt. Try not to think of all the things you could have, would have, should have done to prevent this— all the things you could have done to stop the pain. All the things you wish were different, and then maybe life would be just right.

It wasn't your fault. Don't blame yourself. Don't hold on to that. It will only serve to tear you down, and they would not want that at all for you. You know that.

You know they would want you to live freely and love fully. They, of all people to walk this earth, know the power and depth of your love, and they wouldn't want you to hide it away.

I know your heart is broken. I'm so sorry it is. There truly are no words for this kind of pain, and it's not a kind that heals with only a scar. It's a lifelong wound, one that we'll brush against every day for the rest of our lives. I think we're learning, over time, it's not as harsh. It's just something that just is and always will be. But I think, given a choice, we would both choose, hands down, to feel them, whether with pain or joy, for the rest of our lives than to ever wake up one day and realize that we've forgotten them entirely.

I know the guilt, because I've been there. I know it, because sometimes I still am there.

So when the voice of guilt and shame become all you can hear, let the voice of love be louder.

You are good. You are worthy. You are brave. Your broken heart still has so much to give. You can rise with love.

I look at you, and I see strength and love. That's who you are, not guilt and shame. You are a heart who has known pain, but also a heart who has known the richest love.

Let that love echo in your heart and drown out all the rest.

I'm here learning right beside you.

No matter how you have suffered or what you have faced, you don't have to carry guilt or shame. You don't have to listen to it. Let the voice of love be louder. 🕊

Choosing Growth after Grief

By Kenneth J. Doka Ph.D., *Psychology Today*, Nov 06, 2017

We can do more than cope with grief -- we can choose to grow.

When someone close to you dies, you feel like all you can do is put one foot in front of the other. Yet research has indicated that some bereaved individuals – even as they struggle with pain and loss – were able to recognize, over time, that they developed new insights, learned new skills, and gained new knowledge. These grieving individuals can teach how to grow even as you struggle with loss. You can find comfort in knowing that you can do more than just cope with the loss; you can choose growth. Here are some ways to do that:

Build on Your Strengths

While the pain of your loss may feel new and unfamiliar, this is likely not the first crisis you have faced. What strategies helped you then? Those strategies can be helpful now; although you may have to reframe them. Shonda's husband Fred helped her greatly through the loss of her parents by listening to her stories as she went through their belongings. After Fred died, Shonda realized that having that special person to talk with about her loss had been so helpful. Although Fred was no longer there, she knew that her best friend would be more than willing to share stories and help her clean out Fred's office. Think also of what strategies did not help during earlier crises and avoid them.

Your spirituality or philosophy also can be a great strength. Most spirituality and philosophies address loss and suffering; ask yourself, "how do my beliefs help me as I face this loss?" Talk to those who share your beliefs.

Use Your Support Systems

Grief can be lonely, but you don't need to face grief alone. Use your support systems--family, friends, co-workers, and others. Within this group, recognize that they will have unique gifts. Some may be good listeners while others are good at helping in more tangible ways, like picking the kids up from school or mowing the lawn. Dave's afternoons were challenging after his wife, Carol, died, trying to balance work and his son's after-school activities. He was grateful to accept carpooling offers from other parents—and they were pleased with an opportunity to assist. Some individuals may be uncomfortable even talking about your loss, but will be glad to take you out to a funny movie. These friends offer respite from the hard work of grief. You may also find support in a grief group. Here are others who "get it"—because they have had similar experiences. Grief groups offer validation of your reactions, strategies for coping, and hope. And as you help others, you become more aware of your own strengths.

Remember You Never Lose that Continuing Bond

The people we love never fully leave us. You retain a continuing bond with them through your memories and the ways they affected you as a parent, a partner, or a friend. Think of the legacies they left you. And again, explore your philosophy or spirituality to see what it says about enduring connections with those we love.

Focus, too, on positive memories. Creating a photograph album, a journal, or other tangible reminder can keep those memories alive. Ethan's dad died when he was 4-years-old. He has few memories of his father but he does love to look at the video his mom created of his early experiences with his Dad. It helps him keep the memory of his father alive.

Focus on Empowering Language

If you focus on the tragedy of loss, you may reinforce the tragic. Try whenever you can to use positive language, such as the courage you will need to meet the challenges of loss. Learn from the decisions you make. What went well? What did not? How can you learn from these decisions? What will you do differently next time? Even small choices reinforce your ability to cope.

Remember the Positive Steps You've Made

Periodically review how you have changed as you journey with grief. What new insights have you developed? What have you learned? What skills have you gained?

Be patient with yourself. Acknowledge that grief is hard work, as you both cope with your loss and learn to live a different life without a person you loved. As you grieve, expect both good and bad days. Some days you may be more productive than others. Growth does not have to mean giant steps every day.

Keep Hope in The Future

Life after loss will be different. But as hard as it may to believe now, it can still have joy and happiness. Keep sight of the future. Focus on where you wish to be next week, next month, or next year. Think of the small daily changes you can make to bring you closer to your goal. Remember that while we have no choice about loss or the grief that follows, we do have choices about how we grieve. Choose growth 🌱



Why I'll Never Get Over Losing Him

By Heather Blair,
stillstandingmag.com/2017/12/why-ill-never-get-over-losing-him/

In 2008, my world as I knew it changed forever, with the sudden loss of our 14 year old son, Austin. Shortly after our loss, my husband and I attended a support group. It was the first and last time we would go together.

What shocked us, and turned my husband away from finding hope there, was hearing story after story of loss, but realizing they were years into their grief. *Decades.*

We couldn't imagine suffering from this loss for another day, let alone year after year. It was too painful to face that reality.

On the way home, in our stunned silence, I thought back to Austin's funeral. Most of it is a blur, having survived that time on the sheer power of prayer and peace that only comes from God. But I recall my husband asking another child loss couple, as they came through to hug us, if it ever got any easier. They just looked at us with tear-filled eyes and hugged us harder.

I could think back to others I knew who had lost a child, and how that pain was always just below the surface. How the mention of their child's name instantly misted their eyes, forced a crackle in their voice, or a shift in their emotions. It was clear very early in our grief that you never fully recover from a loss this great.

You don't move on in child loss, you just learn how to move forward without them.

2018 Will Be the Start of a Decade Since the Loss of Our 14-Year-Old Son.

With nearly ten years of experience as a child loss mom, I can see our growth, progress, and healing.

For us, the most difficult year was our second. In the first, we spent most of it numb.

But I also know in watching the three of us learn to grieve, that none of us followed the same path or timeline. And just when you begin to feel grounded, something pulls you off your feet again. It's a continual process, but I believe you do get stronger each day.

Sometimes, especially around his birthday or the anniversary of his death, it seems like some expect us not to pause and remember him. Nobody has ever outright said anything but I read through their comments or lack of them. As if they are thinking "*When are they going to get over this?*"

The truth is, I will never get over the loss, this piece of me that is absent. Losing Austin changed me, shifted our hopes and plans. Altered our happily ever after.

My child is gone. Yet, **our love doesn't die.** Perhaps, losing them intensifies that love even more.

I'm at a place where I can find joy without guilt. Where I am not afraid of the future. Or dwell on what I could have done differently in the past. But I will *never* stop missing my son. I will *never* not wonder what he might be doing at this stage, what his life might have been. My heart continues to beat, but there will forever be a hole. 🌳



Yesterday....Today....Tomorrow

Source: bereavedparents.com

There are two days in every week about which we should not worry, two days which should be kept free from fear and apprehension.

One of these days is Yesterday, with its mistakes and cares, its faults and blunders, its aches and pains. Yesterday has passed beyond our control. All the money in the world cannot bring back Yesterday. We cannot undo a single act we performed, we cannot erase a single word we said – Yesterday is gone.

The other day we should not worry about is Tomorrow, with its possible adversaries, its burdens, its large promise and poor performance. Tomorrow is also beyond immediate control. Tomorrow's sun will rise, either in splendor or behind a mask of clouds, but it will rise. Until it does, we have no stake in Tomorrow for it is as yet unborn.

This leaves only one day – Today.

Anyone can fight the battle of just one day. It is only when we add the burdens of those two awful eternities – Yesterday and Tomorrow – that we break down. It is not the experience of Today that drives us mad – it is the remorse or bitterness for something that happened Yesterday and the dread of what Tomorrow will bring.

Let us therefore live but one day at a time! 🕯️



"If there ever comes a day when we can't be together, keep me in your heart. I'll stay there forever."

~ A.A. Milne

The promise of spring....

By Keith Swett, Panache, Advertiser Community News

Buried in this ice and snow is the promise of spring. You would never believe it looking out the window today. In reality hope is often buried below the surface and it takes special people to believe in what they do not see. Everyone sees the ice and snow but those special few see spring coming. They see wrestlers maturing and students expanding their world. They see the small steps of progress and the water flowing beneath the ice. They know the lake looks dead but they remember July and believe it will come again.

Brutal winter is the time to remember parks, lakes, flowers, trees. We have made it through winter before and will again. Guys with artificial hips like me have to walk carefully. I do not bounce the way I used to. But the key is little steps moving forward. I know spring is coming, not as fast as it once did but still it comes. Rather than curse the winter I choose to sled the hills, skate the ponds, laugh over hot chocolate. The kids and I will play at the park until blue-lipped; we return to Jean who will rub us warm and offer fresh cookies. Even now love warms the body and the soul. Even now love offers all we need. 🕯️



*A Sincere Thank You to Everyone Who
Helped Make Our Annual Candle
Lighting Program A Success!*

Sunday, December 10 was our annual Candle Lighting Program. It was a beautiful evening of remembrance for our children.

We wholeheartedly thank everyone who pitched in including Donna Corrigan, Sally Yarberry, Eleanor Bryne, Bob Gordon, Bryan Yarberry, Rose Martino-Krueger, Marilyn Cocogliatto and Barbara Poetter. Many thanks to everyone who helped with set-up and/or clean-up!

Donations:

Trish DeBauche, in memory of Bryce Stack
Richard & Ellen Ford, in memory of Richard Ford Jr.
Don & Terri Liebentritt, in memory of Cory Payne
Barbara Piegat, in memory of Andre` Piegat
Frank Vlazny, in memory of Peter Vlazny

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



January – February – March 2018

| CALENDAR OF EVENTS | |
|--------------------|---|
| January | |
| January 2 | Monthly Chapter Meeting: 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM - General Discussion |
| February | |
| February 6 | Monthly Chapter Meeting: 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM - Topic to be determined. |
| March | |
| March 6 | Monthly Chapter Meeting: 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM - General Discussion. |
| April | |
| April 3 | Monthly Chapter Meeting: 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM - Topic to be determined. |

BP/USA Chicagoland on the Web:

<http://www.bpusachicagoland.org/index.html>

Like us on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/Bereaved-Parents-of-the-USA-Chicagoland-Chapter-706510502840344/>

*It is not easy returning to the world of normalcy when your world is upside down.
It is not easy to stop being a mother or father to your child who has died.
The thought for the day is a word – patience – patience with yourself who suddenly and powerlessly has been thrown into this horrid nightmare; patience with your spouse who always seems to be having an up day when you're having a down day;
Patience with relatives and friends who wish to help but seem to hurt with hollow advice and logical words; and patience with time, for it takes time to adjust, and time can move so slowly. PATIENCE!*

By Rose Moen, TCF, Indianapolis, IN

