



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*

Summertime

*By Sascha Wagner, Alive Alone Summer 2009
Newsletter*

It sounds so easy. A soft, warm word - time to run barefoot, time to leave windows open all night. Summertime. Somehow it seems, doesn't it, that it's especially meant for children. Children on beaches, children on swings, children in large pools, a child in a tiny tub.

We, who do not have all of our children with us, may feel the summertime in two ways. One is to remember shared events and adventures, there were so many, long rides in a hot car or a nap in the back seat. The famous questions, "Are we there yet?" Everything from a heat rash to ice cream cones and sand castles.

For us, another way to feel summertime is the special emptiness brought about by children who are no longer on this earth. They used to trot along on hikes in the hills; they used to gather wood for an evening fire. Now summer brings us again the melancholy awareness of their absence. Have you ever walked on some unfamiliar path, surprised by not having been there with the children? Even when there's nothing to remember, we are reminded of the children's absence.

We have been diminished by death. Some of us may still have living children. Other parents have no children left. They have lost an only child, perhaps, or all of their children died. And here we are, grateful for the warmth of summer mornings, aware of the ripe beauty of nature, trying to deal with our children's absence with all of the grace of which we are capable. Often we do not want to burden others with our grief or we may be convinced that others don't want to share our distress. We have learned,

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS:

REMINDER: We will not have a regular monthly meeting in July because the Butterfly Release Picnic is Sunday, July 10.

Tuesday, August 2 - Monthly Chapter Meeting:

7:00 PM to 8:30 PM - We will be setting up our "Wishing Pond" outside, near the north entrance (by tot lot).

School Supplies: We will be collecting donations of new school supplies for needy children.

Tuesday, September 6 - Monthly Chapter Meeting:

7:00 PM to 8:30 PM - Still time to donate school supplies.

Tuesday, October 4 - Monthly Chapter Meeting:

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

after all, that the world around us is not always able to understand how we feel.

Besides, we were taught to be brave. Many of us will do everything we can to appear "normal" after our loss. But, we were also taught to be honest. And when you feel the hurt, when you seem almost to be lost in the shadows of this golden summertime, don't hide your sorrow. The grief of your spirit can perhaps be kept a secret on the outside. Yet, your deepest feelings, unexpressed, can burn into your existence with harmful force.

You can be both brave and honest. You know that it's brave to share grief, be it old or new grief. And revealing that sorrow is also honest. Of course, nothing can wipe away much of your pain, but sharing grief is helpful. You will know that, after you have expressed the painful sorrow you once kept hidden and find yourself, finally, smiling at the memories and the blessings of past summertimes. ❀

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



Do We Have Your Current Email Address?

It is important that we have current email addresses so that we can send chapter news to everyone. If you have not been receiving our chapter emails, 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 the First Congregational Church of Western Springs, 1106 Chestnut Street in the Education Building, on the second floor in the Seim Room. Please enter the building through the north doors by the playground. 🙏



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:

- ♥ Nella Sansquiri, mother of Keya
- ♥ Henry Ugartechea & Kimberly Baber, & Irma Ugartechea, father, stepmother, & grandmother of Gianna

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, 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 Sally at psyrbrry@hotmail.com.

Thank You!



**In loving memory of
Matthew Corrigan
July 4, 1977 until August 12, 1991**

It's hard to believe you have been gone so long. Our lives have moved forward but we can always stop and smile and just remember that special guy who was in our lives. We love you!

Love,
Mom & Dad &
Christy & Beth & Erin & Meghan & Annie
Donna & Mike Corrigan





LIFE GOES ON

By Keith Swett, Seymour, WI

When asked, "What is the most important thing you have learned about life?" Robert Frost replied, "In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life: it goes on."

As bereaved parents it is sometimes hard to believe this simple truth:

~ When your child dies and life feels like you have been punched with a metal press, life goes on.

~ When you cannot get up in the morning because of exhaustion, life goes on.

~ When you are not sure what day it is, life goes on.

~ When you cry in the cereal aisle, life goes on.

~ When friends hide from you, life goes on.

~ When your partner does not understand you, life goes on.

~ When the boss tells you to pull it together, life goes on.

~ When you do not recognize yourself, life goes on.

~ BUT, when you get up, get dressed and go to work, life goes on.

~ When you realize that love never dies, life goes on.

~ When you can laugh even a little, life goes on.

~ When hope returns, life goes on.

~ When new friends offer a hand, life goes on.

~ When a small hand fits into yours, life goes on.

~ When people say your child's name, life goes on.

Our children wait for us to realize life goes on. It was meant to go on. It has to go on and so do we. #



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.

Adam Schar - 33

Nov 23, 1976 - Jul 18, 2010
Accidental Death
Janet Schar

Aidan Samuel Wood - 4

Jul 17, 2003 - Nov 30, 2007
House Fire
Michelle & Ian Wood

Amy Elizabeth Gales - 19

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

Anthony Neri - 21

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

Brendon Anderson - 22

Jul 18, 1976 - Mar 16, 1998
Murdered
Rob Anderson

Bryce Stack - 30

Jan 26, 1979 - Jul 24, 2009
Accidental Overdose
Trish DeBauche

Carl Alan Vuillaume - 16

Mar 14, 1989 - Jul 21, 2005
Accidental Drowning
Rob & Charleen Vuillaume

Elizabeth Nelson - 23

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

James G. Frale - 13

Jul 11, 1967 - Sep 13, 1981
Electrocution
John & JoAnn Frale

Jamie Lee Hoebble - 21

Jul 26, 1983 - Sep 23, 2004
Karen & John Pech

Jennifer Erin Morris - 16

Jul 15, 1982 - Aug 10, 1998
Auto Accident
Wendy & Dan Morris

Katie Evans - 35

Mar 24, 1978 - Jul 16, 2013
Heroin overdose
Anne & Ed Evans

Katie Satkamp - 7

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

Maria Elena Nudell - 14

Apr 17, 1981 - Jul 07, 1995
Horseback Riding Accident
Marilyn Cocogliato

Mariana Tunstall - 8

Dec 29, 1999 - Jul 16, 2008
E-Coli
Keith & Kristena Tunstall

Matthew Corrigan - 14

Jul 04, 1977 - Aug 12, 1991
Auto Accident
Donna & Mike Corrigan

Mia Lozano - 13

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

Nicholas Carl Pica - 21

Dec 12, 1984 - Jul 13, 2006
Sudden Cardiac Death
Jane & Jerry Pica

Nicholas Palumbo - 21

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

Rob Funston - 25

Aug 22, 1955 - Jul 30, 1981
Pneumonia
Bob & Fran Funston

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 Marie Fink - 3 1/2 Mths

Jul 11, 1977 - Nov 02, 1977
SIDS
Sue & Garry Fink

Scott Saville - 42

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

Tamaron "Tami" Racky - 21

Jul 08, 1975 - Sep 12, 1996
Accidental Drug Overdose
John & Debbie Racky

Thomas A Walsh Jr - 32

Oct 16, 1970 - Jul 20, 2003
Unknown
Karen Richards

Trudy Boskey - 47

Jul 06, 1953 - Aug 03, 2000
Cancer
Rose Conway

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Vincenza - 47

Jul 30, 1966 - Mar 08, 2014
Cancer
Margherita Arrowsmith

William Kavanaugh - 3

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

Zachary "Zach" Pfingston - 13

Sep 20, 1996 - Jul 31, 2009
Seizure
Manjula & Jack Pfingston

Branden Martinez - 6 Weeks

Jun 26, 2011 - Aug 08, 2011
Infection
Kyle Martinez & Missy Babyar

Brandon Hardy - 22

Aug 13, 1980 - Dec 28, 2002
Auto Accident
Don & Celeste Hardy

Brian Sirotzke - 26

Aug 03, 1982 - Sep 05, 2008
Anne Sirotzke

Carole "Suzie" Pavett - 56

Jun 03, 1953 - Aug 20, 2009
Heart Attack
Audrey Stolfa

Casey Reiter - 25

Aug 11, 1984 - Dec 15, 2009
Heart Attack
Sandy Tummillio

Corinne Naumann - 23

Aug 14, 1986 - Apr 14, 2010
Cheryl Naumann

Dan Woods - 29

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

Danny Golden - 22

Aug 26, 1975 - Aug 24, 1998
Suicide
Janet Mallo

Frank Gianfortune Jr - 19

Aug 01, 1968 - Dec 06, 1987
Auto Accident
Ms. Adel Gianfortune

Michael Patrick Gordon - 30

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

Kimberly Ann Olson - 15

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

Mark Thomas Fornek - 6

May 16, 1992 - Aug 04, 1998
Floodwater Drowning
Greg & Wendy Fornek

Patrick Vincent DeMauro - 19

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

Megan Elizabeth Peters - 23

Nov 26, 1980 - Aug 31, 2004
Drug Overdose
Kathleen Peters

Michael Knorps - 51

Aug 17, 1957 - May 30, 2009
Mary Ann Knorps

Ron Buccieri - 42

Mar 22, 1961 - Aug 31, 2003
Unknown
Carol Polich

Patrick Dore - 12

Aug 08, 1990 - Aug 25, 2002
Meningitis
Lois McDonald

Patrick Dore - 12

Aug 08, 1990 - Aug 25, 2002
Meningitis
Phil & Linda Dore

Christopher Kavanagh - 25

Sep 23, 1984 - Nov 15, 2009
Undetermined
Sherri Kavanagh

Daniel Meyer - 7

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

Daryle J. "DJ" Hall - 22

Mar 10, 1984 - Sep 11, 2006
Accidental Drug Overdose
Bob and Sherry Hall

Douglas McCallum - 19

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

Eric Byrne - 44

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

Frank P. Amelio - 27

Apr 25, 1980 - Sep 13, 2007
Drug Overdose
Helen Amelio

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.

Richie Chow – 27

Dec 22, 1983 - Sep 30, 2011
Unknown
Joyce Chow

William E. Barth – 20 1/2

Sep 23, 1965 – Jun 05, 1986
Suicide
Karen Barth

Jamie Mitchell - 31

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

Jennifer Lynn Kirwan - 17

Mar 10, 1981 - Sep 20, 1998
Auto Accident
Linda Kelley

Jill Kathleen Ebert - 6

Jun 24, 1984 - Sep 03, 1990
Brain Tumor
Michael P Ebert

Jimmy Lekas - 18

Sep 10, 1969 - Jun 14, 1988
Cancer
Stephanie Lekas

Johnny Hurley - 28

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

Joshua Burkett - 27

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

Kelly Ann Meicrotto - 23

May 25, 1980 - Sep 01, 2003
Lenore Robinson

Kerri L. Gartner - 22

Sep 09, 1981 - Oct 24, 2003
Auto Accident
Ervin & Kathleen Gartner

Laura Ryeczyk -

Sep 03, 1965 - Sep 03, 1965
Cord Strangulation
Jack & Karen Ryeczyk

Lily Claire Domagala - 16 Months

May 11, 2002 - Sep 12, 2003
Heart & Lung Defects
Lisa Domagala

Marty Sobanski (Brother) - 28

Dec 08, 1961 - Sep 05, 1990
Seizure Disorder
Helen Sobanski-Hennessey

Michael Atella - 60

Oct 11, 1949 - Sep 12, 2008
Heart Attack
Edna Atella

Mike Seaney - 44

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

Nancy R. Lyell (Sue's Sister) - 35

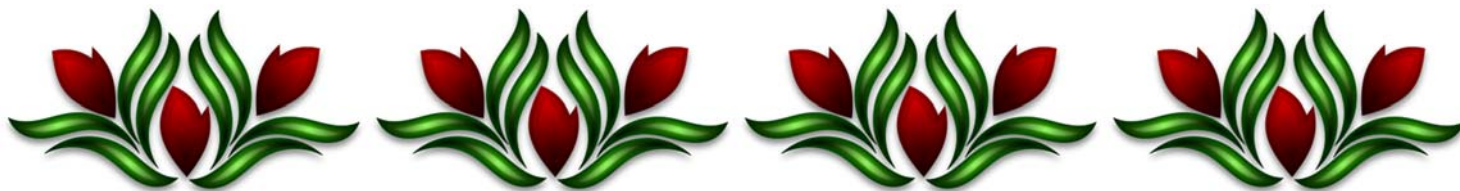
Feb 14, 1961 - Sep 10, 1996
Cancer
Sue & Garry Fink

Phillip G. Dore - 21

Nov 11, 1988 - Sep 02, 2010
Suicide
Phil & Linda Dore

Rachel Krueger - 21

Dec 29, 1986 - Sep 23, 2008
Pulmonary Embolism
Jim Krueger & Rose Martino-Krueger

**GRIEF IS NOT AN ENEMY** by Doug Manning, *The Gift of Significance*

At my brother's funeral, a lady said, "You seem to be doing so well." "No, I am doing quite poorly, thank you," I responded. She did not give up, and said, "Well, you don't seem to be upset." I did not want to get into any discussion but I had acted as if nothing had happened for as long as I could, and I reacted. "If I were doing well with my grief, I would be over in the corner curled up in a fetal position crying, not standing here acting as though no one had died."

We are doing well with our grief when we are grieving. Somehow we think we have it backwards. We think people are doing well when they aren't crying. Grief is a process of walking through painful periods toward learning to cope again. We do not work this path without pain and tears. When we are in the most pain, we are making the most progress. When the pain is less, we are coasting and resting for the next steps. People need to grieve. Grief is not an enemy to be avoided; it is a healing path to be walked. #

LIKE A THREE-LEGGED DOG: ADAPT AND SURVIVE

Rob Anderson, www.opentohope.com, December 19, 2011

My niece's husband's brother (got that?) has a dog named Samson; he's an enthusiastic, loving dog. Samson has only three legs. I don't know the story behind the loss of his right front leg, but I do know he was born with four legs and lost one to an injury. Quite the fork in the road for Samson.

Since we can't understand how dogs rationalize, problem-solve on an intellectual level, or speak to their owners as to how to help them, Samson had to adapt to his new world on his own. His out of balance world provided quite a challenge for him.

For Samson, it was a matter of his physical survival. He had to teach himself how to balance on three legs so he could get to his food and water dishes, so he could go to the bathroom, so he could exist. And Samson did it. Samson now runs, jumps, plays and does pretty much anything a four legged dog can do. He took his problem head on, made the changes he had to make and now is a happy, fun loving dog that doesn't seem to notice, or care, that he's missing a leg. Samson adapted.

On the news, I saw a story about a bird that had an arrow running right through its body, but was still surviving just fine. I can't imagine the hunter's surprise when he shot the bird with his arrow, saw it go down and when he got to it, watched it fly away. The arrow didn't seem to have affected the bird as it swam on a pond, its demeanor alert and attentive. The bird had learned to adapt to its altered life.

One night, when I was driving home, I looked up to the sky and saw the familiar "V" of a group (probably not what they're officially called) of geese as they flew to who knows where. Suddenly the lead bird dove, sending the other birds into a frenzy. It dove because it was going to land on a pond. The "V" became disrupted as the other geese put on their brakes and quickly positioned themselves for a landing. It was like the fall of a house of cards. Their normal path had been changed and they were adapting. They all landed on the pond safely.

In our past lives, we were the four-legged dog, the bird without the arrow through its body, and the orderly and comfortable "V" formation. Then we got the call, the knock on the door or were there when our kids died and our lives dramatically changed direction. We lost a leg, had an arrow shot through our body and the formation of our lives fell completely apart.

As we struggled to figure out how to regain our balance and adapt to our new lives, we were no different than those animals whose lives were also disrupted. I'm sure Samson would have loved to have had his fourth leg back, the bird would have preferred a life without an arrow through its chest, and the geese in the "V" would have liked to have gone on flying in their comfortable formation. But as we know, there is no rewind in life.

If Samson sat day after day thinking, "I can't go on without my leg," he would have died. If the bird with the arrow said, "I can't go on with this arrow stuck in me," it would have died. If the geese in the "V" formation lamented the loss of their comfortable pattern, they would not have taken flight again.

As bereaved parents, we're now in the process of adapting to our new lives. We've been thrown off, way off, and struggle to find our path. Each day we make decisions to find ways to move forward or we decide not to move forward and let the pain of wanting what we can't have direct our lives. A horrible, horrible thing has happened to us and our kids. It's up to us to take that horrible event and either blend it into our lives and find a new normal, or let it control our lives and keep us from healing.

In the beginning, our grief controls us as we move through life on a subconscious level, making decisions we sometimes don't even remember making. That's fine, that's how we do it. But as we move down the road, our decisions to battle our grief and pain are made on a conscious level as to how we want to, or don't want to, heal. Healing is a decision. Therefore, not to heal is a decision also.

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LIKE A THREE-LEGGED DOG: ADAPT AND SURVIVE *(continued....)*

When I was a combat soldier in Viet Nam, those who fought against us were my enemy and we spent each day implementing strategies to defeat them, just as they used their strategies to defeat us. Grief is no different. We must treat it as the enemy to our healing and battle it every day, or it will overrun our lives and defeat us.

If grief defeats us, it defeats our children as well. We can't let that happen. Each day, we battle our pain and fight our fears, we bulldoze ahead a little further down the road of our new lives. The enthusiasm for our work is like the gasoline to the bulldozer of our healing. The more we pour in, the more road we open ahead of us. That enthusiasm can be found in the love for our kids.

Not all of who our kids are died when their bodies died. Think about your child. Are you thinking about a dead child? No, because you can't have memories of someone who was never created. You're thinking about a living child. Now, feel your love. Is that love for a child who has died or a child who has lived? A child who still lives. The answer is a living child.

Our lives can regain balance, we can adapt to that arrow and our "V" formation can find wings again. We will never live the life we once had. That's an unchangeable and undeniable reality. To continue to long for our fourth leg or to try and pull out the arrow or make the "V" exactly as it was, will keep us from healing. If we fight for ways to transition to a new life even though we have those challenges, we honor our children and we gain strength, balance and direction.

We can be like Samson, adapt and survive. We can be like the bird and wrap healing around the arrow and we can once again take flight in search of our children's lives, our smile and our meaning. The opportunities are there if we reach out for them. 🌿

ANNUAL SCHOOL SUPPLIES DRIVE

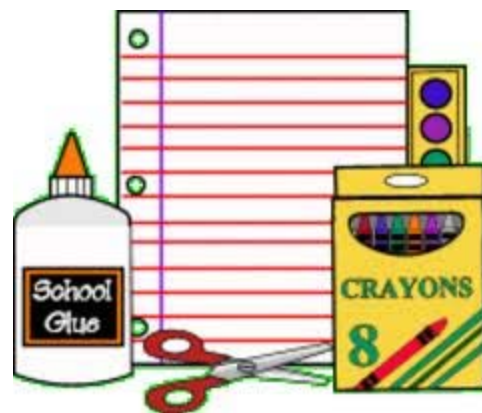
Seeing store shelves stocked with fresh school supplies can bring up bittersweet memories. For the last several years the Chicagoland Chapter has collected new school supplies on behalf of needy children.

A fellow Bereaved Parent, Suzi Scott (mother of Katherine Pranno), is an art teacher at a school in Cicero, IL, and many of her students' parents work tending the horses at the area race tracks. These families live in minimal conditions, frequently whole families in one room. This year the school board wanted to change the school uniform shirt colors and wisely made the decision to change from white to grey because many of the kids just have one school shirt, and a white shirt becomes grey over time when it's washed every few days.

The homeroom teachers tell Suzi which children do not have supplies, and then they sneak a bag of supplies into the children's lockers. Suzi says the reaction of the students when they discover these supplies is priceless.

Here is a list of needed art supplies:

- Crayola Classic Markers
- Pencils #2 (not mechanical)
- Pink erasers
- Fiskars scissors 5"
- Zipper pencil pouches
- Hand sanitizer
- Glue sticks
- Jumbo book covers
- Dry erase markers, thin
- Baby wipes for hands and desk tops (no Chlorox wipes)
- Plastic folders, 3-hole punched
- Crayola crayons



If you would like to participate in this optional charitable project, please bring your donations to the August or September chapter meeting. 🌿

What I Wish More People Understood About Losing A Child

by Paula Stephens, *mindbodygreen.com*, March 23, 2015

Four and half years after the death of my oldest son, I finally went to a grief support group for parents who have lost children. I went to support a friend who recently lost her son. I'm not sure I would've gone except that when I was in her shoes, four years ago, I wish I would've had a friend to go with me. Losing a child is the loneliest, most desolate journey a person can take and the only people who can come close to appreciating it are those who share the experience. The meeting was a local support group chapter, an organization solely dedicated to providing support for those who have lost children, grandchildren or siblings. The facilitator was a tall gentleman who had lost his 17 year old son eight years ago. He opened the meeting by saying that dues to belong to the club are more than anyone would ever want to pay. Well, he couldn't be more correct: no one *wants* to belong to this group.

The group of incredible survivors included parents whose children had been killed by drunk drivers, murdered, accidental overdose, alcoholism, suicide and freak accidents. The children's ages ranged from 6-38 years old. When hearing the stories, I had a visceral reaction to being part of this "club," but was also humbled by the greatness of these mothers and fathers.

Most of what I share in this article came from this meeting, but also from my own experience of having lost a child and being four years into that lifelong journey of healing from deep grief. The following five tips can be your compass to help you navigate how to give support to grieving parents on a sacred journey they never wanted to take.

1. Remember our children.

The loss of children is a pain all bereaved parents share, and it is a degree of suffering that is impossible to grasp without experiencing it firsthand. Often, when we know someone else is experiencing grief, our discomfort keeps us from approaching it head on. But we want the world to remember our child or children, no matter how young or old our child was.

If you see something that reminds you of my child, tell me. If you are reminded at the holidays or on his birthday that I am missing my son, please tell me you remember him. And when I speak his name or relive memories relive them with me, don't shrink away. If you never met my son, don't be afraid to ask about him. One of my greatest joys is talking about Brandon.

2. Accept that you can't "fix" us.

An out-of-order death such as child loss breaks a person (especially a parent) in a way that is not fixable or solvable — ever! We will learn to pick up the pieces and move forward, but our lives will never be the same.

Every grieving parent must find a way to continue to live with loss, and it's a solitary journey. We appreciate your support and hope you can be patient with us as we find our way.

Please: don't tell us it's time to get back to life, that's it's been long enough, or that time heals all wounds. We welcome your support and love, and we know sometimes it hard to watch, but our sense of brokenness isn't going to go away. It is something to observe, recognize, accept.

3. Know that there are at least two days a year we need a time out.

We still count birthdays and fantasize what our child would be like if he/she were still living. Birthdays are especially hard for us. Our hearts ache to celebrate our child's arrival into this world, but we are left becoming intensely aware of the hole in our hearts instead. Some parents create rituals or have parties while others prefer solitude. Either way, we are likely going to need time to process the marking of another year without our child.

Then there's the anniversary of the date our child became an angel. This is a remarkable process similar to a parent of a newborn, first counting the days, then months, then the one year anniversary, marking the time on the other side of that crevasse in our lives.

No matter how many years go by, the anniversary date of when our child died brings back deeply emotional memories and painful feelings (particularly if there is trauma associated with the child's death). The days leading up to that day can feel like impending doom or like it's hard to breathe. We may or may not share with you what's happening.

This is where the process of remembrance will help. If you have heard me speak of my child or supported me in remembering him/her, you will be able to put the pieces together and know when these tough days are approaching.

Continued on next page....

What I Wish More People Understood About Losing A Child (continued....)

4. Realize that we struggle every day with happiness.

It's an ongoing battle to balance the pain and guilt of outliving your child with the desire to live in a way that honors them and their time on this earth.

I remember going on a family cruise eighteen months after Brandon died. On the first day, I stood at the back of the ship and bawled that I wasn't sharing this experience with him. Then I had to steady myself, and recognize that I was also creating memories with my surviving sons, and enjoying the time with them in the present moment.

As bereaved parents, we are constantly balancing holding grief in one hand and a happy life after loss in the other. You might observe this when you are with us at a wedding, graduation or other milestone celebration. Don't walk away — witness it with us and be part of our process.

5. Accept the fact that our loss might make you uncomfortable.

Our loss is unnatural, out-of-order; it challenges your sense of safety. You may not know what to say or do, and you're afraid you might make us lose it. We've learned all of this as part of what we're learning about grief.

We will never forget our child. And in fact, our loss is always right under the surface of other emotions, even happiness. We would rather lose it because you spoke his/her name and remembered our child, than try and shield ourselves from the pain and live in denial.

Grief is the pendulum swing of love. The stronger and deeper the love the more grief will be created on the other side. Consider it a sacred opportunity to stand shoulder to shoulder with someone who have endured one of life's most frightening events. Rise up with us. ❧❧



The Cowardly Brain

By Mary Cleckley, Jack's Mom, reprinted from Sharing the Journey, BP of Springfield & Jacksonville, IL, July 2013

Your child dies and because of the trauma of that you need for all of your systems, without any prompting from you, to go on automatic pilot and function more perfectly than before. You find, instead, that your brain, the coward, chooses this time to say, "Excuse me, I've been traumatized here and am no longer capable of concentrating, comprehending, remembering, maintaining any kind of organized pattern or making good decisions. I really am not functioning well, so if you'll excuse me, I think I'll go on leave for a while, and when I'm better, I'll be back. And, oh, by the way, I'm leaving your emotions in charge while I'm gone."

Your emotions, not having had much experience in being totally in control, prove not to be good leadership material. You find yourself reacting in strange ways to old situations, and the people around you, who have not had your experience and who already may be doubting your sanity, now become thoroughly convinced that you are in desperate need of long term mental treatment. You may find yourself agreeing with their assessment of the situation, for those first months of emotion-controlled patterns are easily confused with mental illness. How many times have you said, "I think I'm losing my mind"?

I hope it is a comfort for you to know that your brain isn't gone forever. You will find that before it returns to stay, it will check in from time to time for brief visits. When you find yourself acting rationally for a change, maybe even remembering your own name, for example, just say to yourself, "It must have been my brain on a test run." If, on the other hand, you have a day when you ride around all day with your emergency brake on, or pass the exit by that you've used for the past fifteen years, just know that your gray matter isn't in touch at all that day. Your emotions don't know anything about brakes or exits, you see. Rest assured, however, that one day, when you and it have had the necessary time to recover some of your lost functions, you and your brain will again become one and go about the business of continuing on with your life. ❧❧



BORROWED HOPE

Lend me your hope for a while. I seem to have
mislaidd mine.
Lost and hopeless feelings accompany me daily.
Pain and confusion are my companions.
I know not where to turn.
Looking ahead to the future times does not bring
forth images of renewed hope.
I see mirthless times, pain-filled days, and more
tragedy.

Lend me your hope for a while, I seem to have
mislaidd mine.
Hold my hand and hug me; listen to all my
ramblings.
I need to unleash the pain and let it tumble out.
Recovery seems so far distant; the road to healing
a long and lonely one.
Stand by me; offer me your presence.
Your ears and your love acknowledge my pain.
It is so real and ever present.
I am overwhelmed with sad and conflicting
thoughts.

Lend me your hope for a while,
A time will come when I will heal and I will lend my
renewed hope to others.

~ Eloise Cole, www.hospiceofamador.org,
Phoenix, AZ

FIRST HOLIDAY

We lit a candle today,
To fill the empty place
where you should be but aren't....

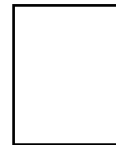
I stood with my hands cupping the flame and felt
the heat....
The energy....
Empty space between the fire and flesh
Nothing visible,
Nothing to see....
And yet I knew it was there –
The energy touched my skin.

And so it was with you today.
Nothing visible – nothing to see.
And yet I knew you were here.
Your energy touched my heart.

*By Sandy Goodman, Love Never Dies,
reprinted from TCF 2009*

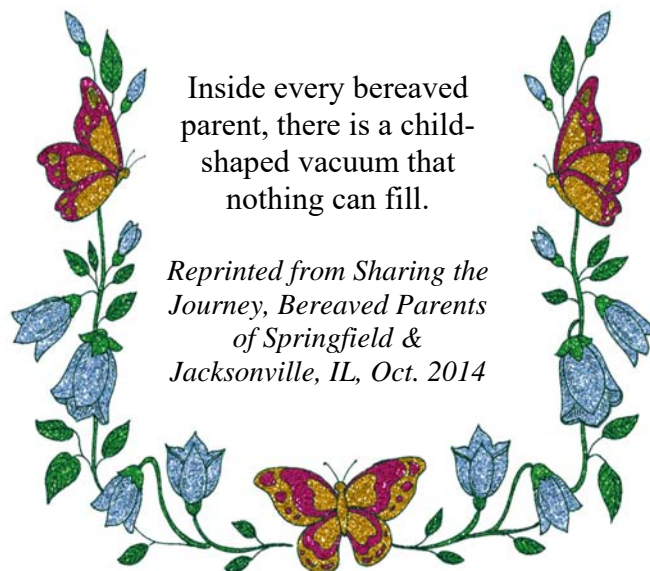


Bereaved Parents of the USA
 Chicagoland Chapter
 P.O. Box 320
 Western Springs, IL 60558



July - August - September 2016

CALENDAR OF EVENTS	
July	
July 10	Butterfly Release Picnic: Katherine Legge Memorial Park - 12:00 noon.
August	
August 2	Monthly Chapter Meeting: 7:00 PM - "Wishing Pond" and Annual School Supplies Drive.
September	
Sept. 6	Monthly Chapter Meeting: 7:00 PM - Still time to donate school supplies.
October / November	
Oct. 4	Monthly Chapter Meeting: 7:00 PM - Open Discussion.
Nov. 1	Monthly Chapter Meeting & Pot Luck Dinner: 7:00 PM - Guest Speaker



Inside every bereaved parent, there is a child-shaped vacuum that nothing can fill.

Reprinted from Sharing the Journey, Bereaved Parents of Springfield & Jacksonville, IL, Oct. 2014

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