



October – November - December 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*

Nurture Yourself

From "Understanding Your Grief", by Alan Wolfelt, Ph.D.,

I remind you that the word "bereaved," which to our modern-day ears can sound like an old-fashioned term that only a funeral director might use, means "to be torn apart" and "to have special needs." So despite its obsolescence, the word is still accurate and useful. Perhaps your most important "special need" right now is to be compassionate with yourself. In fact, the word "compassion" means "with passion." Caring for and about yourself with passion is self-compassion. This article is a gentle reminder to be kind to yourself as you journey through the wilderness of your grief. If you were embarking on a hike of many days through rugged mountains of Colorado, would you dress scantily, carry little water, and push yourself until you dropped? Of course not. You would prepare carefully and proceed cautiously. You would take care of yourself because if you didn't, you could die. The consequences of not taking care of yourself in grief can be equally devastating.

Over many years of walking with people in grief, I have discovered that most of us are hard on ourselves when we are in mourning. We judge ourselves and we shame ourselves and we take care of ourselves last. But good self-care is essential to your survival. To practice good self-care doesn't mean you are feeling sorry for yourself, or being self-indulgent; rather, it means you are creating conditions that allow you to integrate the death of someone loved into your heart and soul. I believe that in nurturing ourselves, in allowing ourselves the time and loving attention we need to journey safely and deeply through grief, we find meaning in our continued living. We have all heard the scripture, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." To this I might add, "Blessed are those who learn self-compassion during times of grief, for they shall go on to discover continued meaning in life, living and loving."

Remember, self-care fortifies your long and challenging grief journey, a journey that leaves you profoundly affected and deeply changed.

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS:

Tuesday, October 4 - Monthly Chapter Meeting:

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

Tuesday, November 1 - Monthly Chapter Meeting, Potluck Dinner & Labyrinth Walk: 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM

- Chicken & beverages will be provided; please bring a side dish or dessert to share. Please RSVP by Oct. 29 to Sally at 708-738-0396 or psyrbrry@hotmail.com

Tuesday, December 6 - Monthly Chapter Meeting:

7:00 PM to 8:30 PM - Children's Gifts - Bring an unwrapped gift in honor of your child and share each gift's significance. The gifts will be donated to underprivileged children

Sunday, December 11 - Candle Lighting Program:

Doors open 6:30 PM; Program at 7:00 PM. Please RSVP. See additional information and form in this newsletter

To be self-nurturing is to have the courage to pay attention to your needs. Above all, self-nurturing is about self-acceptance. When we recognize that self-care begins with ourselves, we no longer think of those around us as being totally responsible for our well-being. Healthy self-care forces us to mourn in ways that help us heal, and that is nurturing indeed. I also believe that self-nurturing is about celebration, about taking time to enjoy the moment, to find hidden treasures everywhere - in a child's smile, a beautiful sunrise, a flower in bloom, a friend's gentle touch. Grief teaches us the importance of living fully in the present, remembering our past, and embracing our future.

Walt Whitman wrote, "I celebrate myself." In caring for yourself "with passion," you are celebrating life as a human being who has been touched by grief and come to recognize that the preciousness of life is a superb opportunity for celebration. 🌿

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

psyrbrry@hotmail.com



Holiday Cards Still Available!

We still have a limited supply of Bereaved Parents Holiday and All Occasion cards, so we're able to offer them again this year. The holiday cards are an assorted package of previous favorites including a wreath, an ornament, a bell, and an angel (five cards of each design). The butterfly, our symbol of hope, is uniquely featured on each of the cards.

This is a general holiday greeting card with special meaning for bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents, as well as those who support them. Printed on high-quality paper, the actual size of the card is 4"x 6". The card comes in packages of 20 assorted cards with matching envelopes. The order form is available on our chapter website. ❀❀

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:

♥ Diane Angone, mother of Nicky

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,
sallyyarberry@hotmail.com.



*In loving remembrance of
Paula Lynn Yarberry VanHorn
October 3, 1968 until October 27, 2006*

Paula Sunshine,
A decade has passed, and I miss you as desperately as ever. Not a day passes that I don't yearn to hear your voice, or share a laugh.

*"Missing you has settled into my bones.
What once was fierce has softened.
Like a constant memory, your name,
pouring through my mind – on repeat.
Your memory, the undercurrent of my days."
~ Lexi Behrndt*

I carry your heart in my heart.

Forever and always,
"MamaSama and Bry"
Sally Yarberry and Bryan Yarberry (brother)



Spending Time in the Basement

Remodeling the kitchen, we had to put the cats in the basement for days at a time. Samson never got used to the basement. His howling echoed through the house from morning to evening, unceasing, relentless, plaintive. He had plenty of food and water, a litter box, chairs, toys, and his sister; but he didn't have us. With all his physical needs met, life was painful, almost unbearable.

I can identify with Samson. I eat, sleep, play, work, recreate; but I'm not with Matt. I, too, want to howl at the universe, disconsolate, unsatisfied. From the outside, people wonder why I don't move on, why I can't enjoy success, admiration, love. But I'm in the basement locked away from my first born. I console myself with memories of yesterday and hopes for tomorrow. Our spirits walk together playing in the snow, tasting the fresh cold air, sharing yesterday and tomorrow. I can hear him. He is just beyond reach, but I can't open the door. It is maddening to be so close and yet always, always finding myself just barely, just almost, just a breath away.

Samson swipes a paw under the basement door trying to snag me as I walk by. We almost touch. From my side I know why he must stay in the basement. The construction would terrify him. He might get outside, at his age, that is a death sentence. He could be injured, crippled by the workers and their equipment. He is better off without me now, and I know we'll be together soon. He'll crawl up in my lap and purr for hours. In my lap, in front of the fire, the pain of the basement disappears. Reunited, Samson and I doze peacefully, happily. Rejoined, contented, together, life is good again.

Every day Samson struggles, trying to avoid the basement. The kitchen is almost done, but time and thought are too abstract for a cat. In my own basement, struggling with pain that I can't understand, I cry, hope, pray. I don't know why Matt is gone or how his being gone makes sense. I just miss him, reach for him, want him with me.

Soon, not soon enough, Matt will reach through and help me cross. I may never understand why or how I ended up in the basement, but love will lead me out. Together again life will be good. 🍁

—Keith Swett, *Matt's Dad*, from *Panache*



Grief

by Gwen Flowers, *Healing Arts Poetry*

I had my own notion of grief.
I thought it was the sad time
That followed the death of someone you love.
And you had to push through it
To get to the other side.

But I'm learning there is no other side.
There is no pushing through.
But rather,
There is absorption.
Adjustment.
Acceptance.

And grief is not something you complete,
But rather, you endure.
Grief is not a task to finish
And move on,
But an element of yourself-
An alteration of your being.
A new way of seeing.
A new definition of self.



The Price

by Sascha Wagner, *For You From Sascha*

It is not a question
of whether I could have wanted
never to have you with me,
if had I known
how deeply your dying
would break my life today.

There is only one certain truth:
Even if I had known
that there would come to me
the cruel grief I suffer today,
I would endure it all again
for the wonder of
having had you in my life.



Potluck Dinner & Labyrinth Walk Tuesday, November 1st

Doors Open at 6:30PM - Dinner at 7:00PM
Program begins at 7:45PM

Please come join us for food & fellowship. We all need a night out, especially before the holiday rush begins. Hope to see you there!

The Chapter provides chicken, beverages and table settings. Bring your child's favorite dish if you wish, or another special item sure to be enjoyed by all!

Please bring a dish (serving for 8) based on your last name:

If your last name begins with **A-N** - please bring a **dessert**

If your last name begins with **O-Z** - please bring a side dish or salad

Stiffler Labyrinth

Last year the 1st Congregational Church of Western Springs installed a labyrinth into the floor of Plymouth Hall. A spiritual tool dating back to ancient times, a labyrinth offers a pathway to prayer, or a walking meditation. We will have a presentation from the church's Labyrinth guide, Bob Kos, who will also answer any questions we might have and help us get the most from our walk.

Siblings (high school age or older) are encouraged to attend.

Please R.S.V.P. by October 29 to Sally Yarberrry at (708) 738-0396 or
psyrbrry@hotmail.com.

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

Alan Schroeder - 22
Oct 11, 1985 - Dec 04, 2007
Joan & John Schroeder

Bobby Vargas - 16
Oct 08, 1972 - Oct 26, 1988
Auto Accident
Susan Vargas

Cindy Cebrzynski - 21
Oct 18, 1983 - Nov 07, 2004
Victim of a Drunk Driver
Pam & Bob Cebrzynski

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

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

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

Gregory Michael Humbert - 30
Aug 31, 1961 - Oct 31, 1991
Auto Accident
Marge Humbert

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

Katherine Lacewell - 41
Feb 27, 1969 - Oct 16, 2011
Alcoholism
Allen Lacewell

Kerri L. Gartner - 22
Sep 09, 1981 - Oct 24, 2003
Auto Accident
Ervin & Kathleen Gartner

Lisa M Zimmerman - 32
Nov 24, 1971 - Oct 13, 2004
Medication Overdose
Carol & Bill Zimmerman

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

Michael Atella - 60
Oct 11, 1949 - Sep 12, 2008
Heart Attack
Edna Atella

Michelle Louise Jensen - 30
Nov 08, 1980 - Oct 13, 2011
Drug Overdose
Kelly Jensen

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

Paula Yarberry VanHorn - 38
Oct 03, 1968 - Oct 27, 2006
Sepsis
Sally Yarberry

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

Roseanne Strick - 22
Feb 27, 1969 - Oct 14, 1991
Brain Aneurysm/Heart Attack
/Car Accident
Ilse Strick

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

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

Thomas A Walsh Jr - 32
Oct 16, 1970 - Jul 20, 2003
Unknown
Karen Richards

Dominic Cairo
Oct 14, 2002 - June 26, 2011
ALL / CNS Cancer
Anna Cairo

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

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

Brent Evans - 35
Dec 27, 1976 - Nov 07, 2012
Alcoholism
Anne & Ed Evans

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Brian Eck - 39
Sep 08, 1971 - Nov 08, 2010
Enlarged Heart
Kathy Eck

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

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

Christopher Kavanagh - 25
Sep 23, 1984 - Nov 15, 2009
Undetermined
Sherri Kavanagh

David Horn - 7
Aug 05, 1973 - Nov 20, 1980
Leukemia
Russ & Linda Horn

Glenn Patrick Beach - 31
Nov 07, 1960 - Feb 16, 1992
Murdered
John & Grace Beach

Heather Runge - 6 Wks.
Nov 21, 1989 - Jan 04, 1990
Neuroblastoma
Sandy Sand

Katie Elizabeth Farley -
Nov 12, 2004 - Nov 12, 2004
Prenatal Decision Due to Chromosomal
Issues
Kelly Farley

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

Megan Elisabeth Peters - 23
Nov 26, 1980 - Aug 31, 2004
Drug Overdose
Kathleen Peters

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

Timothy Kuzmicki - 16
Mar 07, 1986 - Nov 13, 2002
Motorcycle Accident
Kathy Kuzmicki

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

Phillip G. Dore - 21
Nov 11, 1988 - Sep 02, 2010
Suicide
Phil & Linda Dore

Riley McBride - 30
Nov 06, 1984 - Apr 22, 2014
Overdose
Mary & Jim McBride

Sarah Marie Fink - 3 1/2 Mths
Jul 11, 1977 - Nov 02, 1977
SIDS
Sue & Garry Fink

Steven Glosky - 23
Feb 16, 1972 - Nov 13, 1995
Suicide
Judy & Danny Glosky

Thomas (Tommy John) Adams - 35
Feb 01, 1966 - Nov 01, 2001
Marge & Bill Adams

Tim Schiefelbein - 18
Dec 07, 1989 - Feb 24, 2007
Car Accident
Diane Grabowski

William "Bill" Collins - 24
Nov 15, 1965 - Dec 24, 1989
Auto Accident, Hit & Run
Sue Collins

Brandon Hardy - 22
Aug 13, 1980 - Dec 28, 2002
Auto Accident
Don & Celeste Hardy

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

Casey Reiter - 25
Aug 11, 1984 - Dec 15, 2009
Heart Attack
Sandy Tummillo

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

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

Daniel M. Schedler - 23

Jun 16, 1969 - Apr 06, 1993
Auto Accident
Tom & Judeen Schedler

Daniel Stoothoff - 34

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

Elizabeth Anne Barrett - 15 1/2

Dec 29, 1976 - Jun 29, 1992
Hit by Van
Kay & Phil Barrett

Eric Fitzpatrick Bucholz - 19

Jun 26, 1974 - Dec 24, 1993
Electrocution
Sue Bucholz

Frank Gianfortune Jr - 19

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

Garrett Joel Zaagman - 7

Mar 04, 1976 - Dec 09, 1983
Spinal Meningitis
Dirk & Florence Zaagman

Jessica Louise Lang - 23

Mar 03, 1980 - Dec 12, 2003
Heroin Overdose
Kristine Lang

John C. Crider - 44

- Dec 24, 2009
Helen Bapes Crider

Joseph James Craig - 35

Dec 05, 1974 - Dec 15, 2009
Drowning
Joseph R. Craig

Josiah Weiberg - 10 Months

Jan 16, 2009 - Dec 03, 2009
SMA Type 1
Alesha & Jim Weiberg

Mariana Tunstall - 8

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

Martin K. Adams - 42

Dec 11, 1960 - Jan 06, 2003
Marge & Bill Adams

Marty Sobanski (Brother) - 28

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

Matthew Davis - 33

Dec 28, 1976 - Jun 10, 2010
Unknown
Gloria Smolek

Michael Kosinski - 26

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

Nicholas Carl Pica - 21

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

Noah Michael Cichorski - 2 1/2

Jun 24, 2001 - Dec 16, 2003
Head Injury (Cause Unknown)
Jeannine Cichorski

Phillip Butler - 30

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

Rachel Krueger - 21

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

Richie Chow - 27

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

Ryan James Moravcik - 21

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

Sarah Lynn Moore - 5

Dec 18, 1998 - Mar 31, 2004
Surgical Complications
Susan Moore

Scott Wesolowski - 18

Dec 13, 1984 - Apr 08, 2003
Drug Overdose
Sue Berger

Sean Howard Anderson - 17

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



Organizing Your Griefcase

Time can often be an immeasurable concept in grief. Case in point, our profound loss always seems like it happened yesterday, irrespective of taking place months, years, or even decades before. When my dear son's precious heart failed after a relatively simple medical procedure, he was taken from this world in what seemed like the snap of a finger. In reality, however, an army sized cadre of skilled doctors, nurses and technicians spent exhaustive amounts of time and effort in trying to revive my Jonathan that fateful morning.

When thinking back, as I often do at the uncontrollable whim of my memory, it seems as if one moment I was planning the eventual trip home from the hospital with my child, and the next I was handed my very own Griefcase. It was given to me by the doctor who tried in vain to revive my child. She was certainly compassionate, if not emotional herself, but I wonder if fully aware of what she gave me? After all, only one who has experienced the loss of a loved one knows that there is no "getting over it." There is no normal any longer, and what was once an unquestioned certainty is no longer even a possibility. Was that doctor, a stranger just a short time before, aware of exactly what was within the Griefcase she issued to me?

What is this Griefcase I am referring to? Please allow me to point towards the keyword, "grief." It is a word that we bereaved souls hear almost ad nauseam once we become a member in this unwanted club. Yet, the word grief is not an emotion, is it? It is not really what we are feeling after our loss. If asked how we feel, we truthfully respond that we feel sad, or angry at the loss. We might feel confused or lonely at the moment, or any combination of feelings that repeatedly pound at us in unending waves. However, rarely, if ever, would we respond to the question by saying we feel "grieved." No. Grief is not an emotion.

Those emotions, at first so overwhelming, if not somewhat debilitating, are handed to us totally against our will. We certainly did not ask for them, and in many losses, such as mine, are given to us by a total stranger. We will carry those emotions with us on some level until we join our loved one again. We carry them within the word grief. Grief is the case that holds our emotions from the loss, and therefore, a Griefcase. Now, if you will allow me a stretch of the imagination, I ask that you think of the old spy movies, where a briefcase was physically handcuffed to the secret agent. Somewhat like that spy's attaché, our Griefcase becomes a permanent part of who we are. However, unlike that spy, ours can never be removed. There simply is no lock and key to be found here on Earth.

Early in our journey, those individual emotions inside our Griefcase are like separate manila folders found in any ordinary briefcase, each tab labeled with the contents inside. Yet, the folders are at first jumbled, overstuffed, and so very confusing. Nothing seems to make sense, and the whole thing is overwhelmingly burdensome, and so very heavy early in loss. Because of that, we sometimes refrain from any actions, as the thought of the emotional weight serves to anchor us in place. If we do carry on with it regardless of painful effort, it will get in the way at first, as we find ourselves stumbling over it as we try to move forward. Occasionally, we might even forget for a moment it is even there. We laugh, or begin to enjoy an outing, when suddenly we are stopped in our tracks, as the chain which secures the Griefcase to our wrist has gone taut. It simply cannot be left behind and forgotten.

The Griefcase certainly does not have to remain a heavy burden on our journey to a life of peace and purpose. Although it starts out disorganized, confusing and oftentimes frightening, we can face each emotion and begin to organize what is inside. We open the case, and then each folder, working through the confusion and removing such things as false anger and false guilt. We discover aspects within one emotion that actually belong in the file of another, or are possibly redundant. We can simply ball those up and toss them out. Then, by addressing each folder, and not allowing any to remain unattended, we slowly begin to lighten the load. While it certainly will not be easy, and it will be a lifelong task, your Griefcase will slowly become less of a burden in your journey.

Take heart, fellow grievers. Although we never wanted the Griefcase, it will actually be a wonderful part of who we are to become. To realize this, we must be aware that we could never completely empty any of the emotional folders found inside, even if we tried. Yet, we must always strive to discard all that which are false, harmful or unnecessary. What remains will be the experiences that touched our soul, regardless of how agonizing. These are the foundational building blocks of becoming an amazingly compassionate supporter, with honest empathy, and a true desire to be there for others on the same journey.

Continued on next page

However, if you should find yourself having difficulties working through the folders within your Griefcase, I want to bring one folder in particular to your attention. Every one of us will have this folder, and it can always be found in that pocket inside the lid. It is boldly labeled, "Unconditional Love." It is already well organized and contains all it should, and actually has room to add more over time. If ever you find yourself feeling the overbearing weight of the Griefcase, and despondency seems to be the norm, reach up and pull out that file. Allow the unconditional love you feel for the one you lost to lift you up, so you may face the other dark files in the case, and continue your journey forward.

On a final note, as you remove all the confusing emotions from your Griefcase, not only will it be lighter and far less a burden in your daily life, but it will also have some available space inside. That space belongs to you. Why not give yourself a break and toss in some sunscreen and flip flops? You deserve some peace.

*R. Glenn Kelly, Jonathan's Father,
Author, Public Speaker and Grief Support Advocate
www.grievingmen.com*

Reprinted from BP/USA Sept. 2016 Newsletter



A Lifetime Membership

Some organizations grant lifetime memberships to people who have gone above and beyond, donating much of their time, talent and gifts to the organization. It is a privilege and a way of saying thanks for their efforts and dedication. We as bereaved parents have been granted lifetime memberships to the club in which no one wants to belong. It is the inverse of a privilege for us.

The thesaurus gives "insult" as the antonym of privilege. We are insulted to be lifetime members of 'bereaved parents'. We gave the best we could of ourselves as parents and what did we get for it? We are insulted and hurt that our parental efforts ended in the untimely death of our children.

As we start to come to grips with this insult we are humbled and raw. The humility, infused with hope, helps us to find ways to redirect our efforts to rebuild our lives one step at a time. We help ourselves, we help each other, we reach out to do good things in our children's memory and we just give testament to other bereaved parents and the rest of the world that survival is possible.

Members of our unpopular club are everywhere, in all walks of life and parts of the world. We hear of tragedy every day. When I hear the parents mentioned in these tragic stories I always say "more members of our bereaved parents club". From Jesus's Mother to Mary Todd Lincoln to my great-grandmother who died in childbirth to the moms of the young people shot down in the streets of Chicago, I feel bonded to all of them by this membership. They make me want to survive and be strong.

I wish we had the power to say that membership in our club is now closed and no new members will join. Unfortunately this tragedy is part of the human condition. But we CAN pray for joy and peace and hope and love....

May you find strength in this unified struggle we have as bereaved parents.

*Brandon's Mom
Celeste Hardy
Reprinted from March/April 2013
BP/USA Chicagoland Chapter Newsletter*

I Talk About Him

by Lexi Behrnt, Scribbles and Crumbs, December 2, 2015

I know you don't understand. I'm so thankful you don't. I know time has passed. Somehow, the world kept turning, even when mine stopped. I'm back on the ride now, reluctantly, sometimes half-heartedly, but I'm showing up. I know I am changed. I forever will be. Maybe that's what happens when you kiss a piece of your heart goodbye.

I know it's hard to hear, see, comprehend. When you tossed around words like "stuck" or "move on", I wanted to explain it all to you, not with anger or spite. No, friend. I wanted to explain the tenderness, the sweetness, the deep love that doesn't fit into the neat lines and acceptable boundaries of this world. I wanted to tell you about the richness of it all, yet the words seemed to fail. Some sentiments and explanations are bigger than me, bigger than answers, bigger than I can succinctly share.

There are so many things I wanted to tell you, and in an effort to package it all nicely into a brief statement, thoughts and feelings have spent months running rampant through my mind, demanding to be felt, experienced, shared. It's something bigger than me, bigger than any person or situation. It's about death and a love that is greater.

So, I talk about him...

I talk about him, because grief doesn't need to be experienced silently, especially when the silence is fueled by stigma and shame.

I talk about him, because frankly, acknowledging him is more important than the discomfort of acquaintances. As much as I never want to alienate people, he's as familiar to me now as the air that I am breathing.

I talk about him, because it's my prerogative. In a culture of bravely making your own choices, no matter which direction others are going in, this is mine.

I talk about him, because it's one way I process and feel. Feelings demand to be felt, I'm learning, and the stuffing and pushing aside doesn't leave room for the wounds to heal.

I talk about him, not because I'm stuck or because I haven't moved on, but I talk about him because I am his, and he is mine, and no passage of time will ever change that.

I talk about him, not because I'm constantly living in pain. I'm not anymore, but in my world, this is my normal, and I'd rather live honestly and out loud. Joy, love, happiness, and gratefulness are my everyday, but so are death, loss, heartache, and grief.

Even more so...

I talk about him because I'm proud.

I talk about him, because he deserves to be remembered.

I talk about him, because even though he's not physically with me, he's never far from my mind.

I talk about him, because he's part of me, a part that I could never ignore or disown.

I talk about him because I love him still, and I always will. Forever. Nothing will ever change that.

This is my normal. I know it's hard to understand, and maybe that's okay. When it comes to loving him, I will not be silent or hide away, and the bottom line is that is okay, too.





**Bereaved Parents of the USA
Chicagoland Chapter**

Cordially invites you to attend our

Annual Candle Lighting Observance



Sunday, December 11, 2016
1st Congregational Church of Western Springs
1106 Chestnut Street, Western Springs, IL

Program 7:00 p.m. ♥ Doors open 6:30 p.m.

During this observance, the name of each child will be read out loud. If you wish to submit a photo (5x7 or smaller), your child's picture will be shown as his or her name is read aloud. **If you have submitted a photo in the past, you must give us your permission to have the photo shown again this year.** If you are unable to attend, but wish to have your child's name read aloud, please indicate on the return form.

Refreshments and fellowship will follow the Candle Lighting Observance. You are welcome to bring your child's favorite treat to share. Memorial tables will be available to display your child's picture or remembrance.

Send photos to: Bob & Carol Gordon, 7717 Williams St., Darien, IL 60561-4429, (630) 971-9472
or e-mail photos to: FLASH22504@comcast.net

Deadline for photos, 5x7 or smaller: Monday, December 5, 2016

Return Form for Annual Candle Light Observance

Please respond by Monday, December 5, 2016

Return to: Bereaved Parents USA c/o Bob & Carol Gordon, 7717 Williams St., Darien, IL 60561-4429, or
FLASH22504@comcast.net

First Name of Child(ren) _____

Last Name of Child(ren) _____

First & Last Names of Parent(s) _____

How many people will attend _____ Of those, how many bereaved siblings _____

I have enclosed a picture _____ I will send a picture _____ I will e-mail a picture _____

I give permission to use a photo I previously submitted _____

Donations to help defray costs are gratefully appreciated.

If you would like to help with planning the Candle Lighting Observance, or participate in the program, please contact Donna Corrigan: silks6@aol.com

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



October - November - December 2016

CALENDAR OF EVENTS	
October	
October 4	Monthly Chapter Meeting: 7:00 PM - Open discussion
November	
November 1	Monthly Chapter Meeting, Potluck Dinner & Labyrinth Walk: 7:00 PM - Chicken & beverages will be provided; please bring a side dish or dessert to share. Please RSVP by Oct. 29.
December	
December 6	Monthly Chapter Meeting: 7:00 PM - Children's Gifts - Bring an unwrapped gift in honor of your child and share each gift's significance. The gifts will be donated to underprivileged children
December 11	Candle Lighting Program: Doors open at 6:30; program at 7 PM

*Not until you've lost a child
 do you know how it feels to be sad
 every single day....
 Even when you experience joy.*

www.missfoundation.org



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