



April – May - June 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*

Spring

*by Donna Corrigan, reprinted from Hinsdale
Chapter Newsletter, April – May, 2010*

Hopefully, by the time you read this, spring will have officially arrived, not just by the date; sunny days will affirm the calendar. Spring has always been my favorite time of year, the budding leaves on the trees, the daffodils and tulips popping up through the bare soil. The season speaks of life and hope and reminds me that I will survive the winter seasons of life.

I remember how disappointing the first spring times were for me after my son died. Instead of the hope I was expecting, all I could see was a sad future without Matt. The beautiful flowers actually insulted me and my broken heart did not feel encouraged by any of this new life stuff! I only saw desolation and emptiness and I had begun to feel that maybe this was a winter I would not survive. I really had counted on a healing spring; would anyone but another bereaved parent understand this?

As a grieving parent, I realized my pain had changed the way I looked at the world....I seemed to be protecting my heart and memories and had a difficult time allowing any beauty to touch me. I wanted to deny that the world could be beautiful without my son. Sound selfish? Yes. Again, only a bereaved parent would understand this feeling. Somehow, I did know, deep down in my soul, I wanted to live. I wanted to enjoy what life I had left, even if Matt was gone. I just didn't know how....

Going to my first bereaved parents meeting about ten months after my son died, I left thinking I would never be like them and I would never return. I still wanted to believe I could somehow solve this

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS:

Tuesday, April 5 - Monthly Chapter Meeting:

7:00 PM to 8:30 PM - "Lessons Grief Has Taught Us"

Tuesday, May 3 - Monthly Chapter Meeting:

7:00 PM to 8:30 PM - "The 10 Self-compassionate Principles of Grief"

Tuesday, June 7 - Monthly Chapter Meeting:

7:00 PM to 8:30 PM - Balloon Release

Friday, July 1 - Sunday, July 3 - National Gathering: "Crossroads of Your Heart", Indianapolis, IN

Sunday, July 10 - Butterfly Release Picnic, Katherine Legge Memorial Park South Pavilion - 12:00 noon
(see RSVP form in this newsletter)

grief thing. I just wasn't ready to accept that there was a new normal; I wanted to recapture the past.

Each month, as I attended meetings, I would tell my story and cry and listen and sometimes even laugh; not knowing when I became one of "them". One day I brought Matt's picture and a birthday treat; it had taken me a very long time to share this tender part of my heart. I was beginning to heal. It is taking much longer than I expected.

Once again, spring speaks about new life and resurrection to me. I can enjoy the fresh green beauty, the sun is welcoming and the flowers are beautiful. Matt is still not here but I can see that for now, the winter is past. 🌸



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



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 a new attendee at our recent meeting. We know it is difficult to come to your first meeting.

New attendee:

♥ Gus Lozano, father of Mia

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!



MICHAEL WALTER SCHULMAN

April 21, 1978 – November 28, 2006

Somehow the pain of losing you has become one with the magic of how you came into our lives.

Time has made missing you more permanent than ever.

We love you.

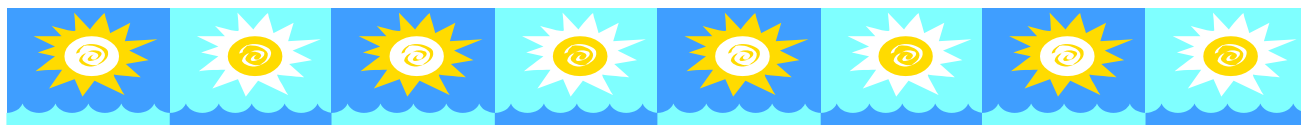
The Schulmans



GRIEF IS....

Grief is laughing with your children and wishing for the absent one to make the circle complete.
Grief is crying in your car at stoplights.
Grief some days makes you brutally honest, other days, grief muzzles you.
Grief reconstructs your heart.
Grief is sadness, hope, smiles and tears rolled tightly like a snowball.
Grief makes you search past the stars and the moon for Heaven.
Grief strips you of everything you were pretending to be.
Grief gives you new priorities.
Grief opens hidden treasures from deep within your soul.
Grief allows you to empathize more deeply with others who ache.
Grief is a daily companion, best dealt with by admitting you do walk with it, even after all these years.
Grief is the price of love.

From the blog of Sandy Fox
<http://survivinggrief.blogspot.com/>

**TO HONOR YOU**

To honor you,
I get up every day and take a breath
and start another day without you in it.

To honor you,
I laugh and love with those who knew your smile
and the way your eyes twinkled
with mischief and secret knowledge.

To honor you,
I listen to music you would have liked,
and sing at the top of my lungs, with the windows rolled down.

To honor you,
I take chances, say what I feel, hold nothing back,
risk making a fool of myself, dance every dance.

You were my light, my heart,
my gift of love from the very highest source.
So every day, I vow to make a difference,
share a smile, live, laugh and love.

Now I live for us both, so all I do,
I do to honor you.

Connie F. Kiefer Byrd
In loving memory of Jordan Kiefer, TCT Atlanta, GA

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

Amanda Aadson - 20

Apr 08, 1981 - Nov 25, 2001

Car Accident
Mary Jo Sullivan**Caitrin Paige Gadomski - 6**

Apr 16, 2007 - Nov 17, 2013

Cancer
Joe & Becky Gadomski**Cameron L. Chana - 22**

Apr 02, 1987 - May 30, 2009

Bus Accident
Lori & Rob Chana**Celeste Tomasello - 17**

Apr 20, 1982 - Nov 05, 1999

Accidental Fall
Linda & Angelo Tomasello**Challing Eugene Albert LeBlanc - 4**

Apr 11, 1997 - Jun 02, 2001

Boating Accident
Liz & Stephen LeBlanc**Corinne Naumann - 23**

Aug 14, 1986 - Apr 14, 2010

Cheryl Naumann

Dana Samuel - 32

Apr 07, 1970 - Jan 23, 2003

Asphyxiation
Lana Samuel**Daniel M. Schedler - 23**

Dec 16, 1969 - Apr 06, 1993

Auto Accident
Tom & Judeen Schedler**Dennis Rich - 37**

Feb 11, 1971 - Apr 01, 2008

Cancer
Karen Rich**Evan Holmes - 20**

Feb 09, 1990 - Apr 02, 2010

Unknown
Irene Gangemi**Evan Holmes - 20**

Feb 09, 1990 - Apr 02, 2010

Unknown
Mason Holmes**Frank P. Amelio - 27**

Apr 25, 1980 - Sep 13, 2007

Drug Overdose
Helen Amelio**Hudson Colwell - 1**

Mar 28, 2014 - Apr 24, 2015

Virus
Megan & Chris Colwell**Jacob Kowalik - 10**

Feb 26, 2004 - Apr 15, 2014

Heart Attack
Mike & Jennifer Kowalik**Jacob Silver - 22**

Oct 05, 1990 - Apr 11, 2013

Suicide
Laureen Dunne**Johnny Hurley - 28**

Apr 15, 1977 - Sep 11, 2005

Motorcycle Accident
John & Pat Hurley**Kevin Jon Ryeczyk - 8**

Mar 29, 1972 - Apr 15, 1980

Lung Ailment
Jack & Karen Ryeczyk**Maria Elena Nudell - 14**

Apr 17, 1981 - Jul 07, 1995

Horseback Riding Accident
Marilyn Cocogliato**Melissa Renee Wolfram - 30**

May 18, 1971 - Apr 26, 2002

Pulmonary Embolism
Earl & E. Renee Bailey**Michael Walter Schulman - 28**

Apr 21, 1978 - Nov 28, 2006

Traffic Accident
Jerry, Mary, Melissa, Jonathon, & Katie
Schulman**Nancy Inamine - 47**

Apr 15, 1967 - Feb 07, 2015

Cancer
Joyce Connolly**Nicholas Martino-Krueger - 10**

Jun 23, 1995 - Apr 15, 2006

Hit by Train
Jim Krueger & Rose Martino-Krueger**Paul Anthony Schneider - 17**

Jun 18, 1965 - Apr 11, 1983

Paul & Dolly Schneider

Riley McBride - 30

Nov 06, 1984 - Apr 22, 2014

Overdose
Mary & Jim McBride**Scott Wesolowski - 18**

Dec 13, 1984 - Apr 08, 2003

Drug Overdose
Sue Berger**Susan G. Gabrielsen - 31**

Apr 18, 1963 - Oct 14, 1994

Breast Cancer
Patricia Jacobi**Thomas Burton - 22**

Apr 14, 1954 - Aug 27

Suicide
Patricia & Erwin Burton

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.

Todd J. Smith - 23

May 12, 1983 - Apr 26, 2007
Cancer
Marie Smith

Tony Jurkas Jr. - 23

Feb 26, 1983 - Apr 16, 2006
Suicide
Laurie Jurkas

Athena Marie Myers - 11 Months

Jun 03, 2001 - May 27, 2002
Car Accident
Polly Myers

Alyssa Dabrowski - 22

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

Amanda Coughlin - 10

May 11, 1991 - Mar 15, 2002
Cathy Coughlin

Eric Byrne - 44

Sep 04, 1960 - May 09, 2003
Pulmonary Embolism
Eleanor & Joe Byrne

Melissa Juergensen

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

Cole Exner - 22

Jun 09, 1983 - May 21, 2006
Automobile Accident
Scott & Janie Exner

Colt Grabowski - 20

Feb 21, 1993 - May 16, 2013
Car Accident
Meg Iorfida

David A. Schreck -

- May 30, 2014
Overdose
Josie & Mark Schreck

Elizabeth Nelson - 23

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

Kelly Ann Meicrotto - 23

May 25, 1980 - Sep 01, 2003
Lenore Robinson

Eric J. Munzenmay - 12

May 07, 1969 - Jun 28, 1981
Pneumonia
Lillian Munzenmay

Gino Grandenitti - 20

Aug 14, 1990 - May 30, 2011
Cancer
Vic Grandenitti

Ian McDonald-Shumaker - 17

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

Jeffrey Anderson - 17

Jan 28, 1981 - May 25, 1998
Asphyxiation
Irene Anderson

Jeffrey Scott Caccavari - 34

Jan 16, 1967 - May 10, 2001
Unknown
Dominic & Karen Caccavari

Joshua Burkett - 27

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

Kate Pranno - 24

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

Katie Satkamp - 7

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

Matthew Gavin - 32

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

Ken Putnam - 28

May 11, 1967 - May 23, 1995
Auto Accident
Karen Putnam

Kevin O'Malley - 25

Mar 04, 1990 - May 30, 2015
Murder
Brian & Sharon O'Malley

Lily Claire Domagala - 16 Months

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

Lt Adam Philip Kass - 25

May 29, 1977 - Jun 25, 2002
Motorcycle Accident on Military Duty
Cindy & Dave Kass

Mark Thomas Fornek - 6

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

Nadia Chowdhury - 20

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

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.

William Kavanaugh – 3

May 24, 1992 – Jul 4, 1995
Hit by a Van
Maribeth Kavanaugh

Phillip Butler - 30

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

Michael Knorps - 51

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

Robert Conway - 15

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

Robert Joseph Gentilini, Jr. - 25

Mar 20, 1964 - May 18, 1989
Brain Infection
Bob & Mary Gentilini

Robbie Funston - 18

May 30, 1990 - Jun 22, 2008
Accidental Drowning
Ric Funston

Ryan A. Minor - 30

May 04, 1980 - Jun 19, 2010
Overdose
Betsy Minor

Shawn Lighty - 37

May 05, 1972 - May 23, 2007
Accidental Drug Overdose
Jan Lighty

Stevie Brow - 8

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

Paul Anthony Schneider – 17

Jun 18, 1965 – Apr 11, 1983
Paul & Dolly Schneider

Carole "Suzie" Pavett - 56

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

William E. Barth

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

Anthony Neri - 21

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

Jimmy Lekas – 18

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

Branden Martinez - 6 Weeks

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

Daniel Stoothoff - 34

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

Dominic Cairo - 8

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

Elizabeth Anne Barrett - 15 1/2

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

Eric - 22

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

Eric Fitzpatrick Bucholz - 19

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

Michael Kosinski – 26

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

Jason Matthew Bill - 13

Aug 17, 1981 - Jun 14, 1995
Water Sport Accident
Nancy Stein

Jill Kathleen Ebert - 6

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

Matthew Davis - 33

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

Joseph Ross - 23

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

Paul Moore - 10

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

Mark Susong - 21

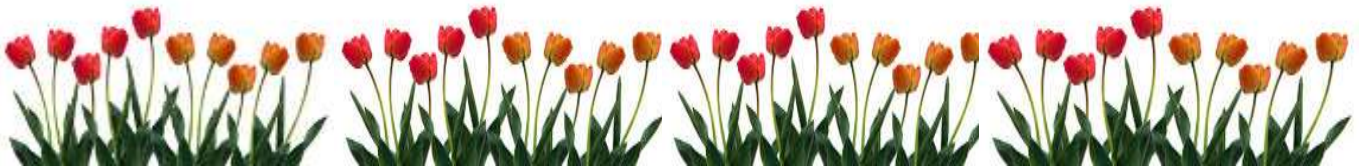
Jun 05, 1990 - Feb 10, 2012
Drug Overdose
Jill Susong

***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.*

Noah Michael Cichorski – 2 ½
 Jun 24, 2001 – Dec 16, 2003
 Head Injury (Cause Unknown)
 Jeannine Cichorski

Noah James Farley -
 Jun 07, 2006 – Jun 08, 2006
 Prenatal Decision Due to Severe Fetal
 Anomalies
 Kelly Farley

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



Father's Day – A Grandfather's View

by Bill "Pa Paw" Fausett, in memory of Jessica Lynn Webb 12/4/98 – 1/17/00

Now well into my fifties, and knowing Father's Day is approaching once again, I find myself recalling my very first. It was a beautiful Sunday morning, June 16, 1969, when I became a father for the first time. A Father's Day I will never forget. Already prepared with the traditional cigars, I had to be a turkey strutting his stuff. Many of the Father's Days after that were spent away from home working and never stopping to think just how special this day really is.

After my retirement a few years back, I became a grandfather, and my whole life changed. I never dreamed I would be changing diapers, giving bottles in the middle of the floor, playing dolls, or outside watching bugs, birds, butterflies, bees, squirrels and rabbits and loving every minute of it, with the most beautiful granddaughter anyone has ever seen (my opinion, of course). That was a special year for me. I found myself asking the wife, "did our kids do that?" many times, and she telling me "yes, but you were working or just didn't notice". My granddaughter taught me more about the beauty of life and how much I had missed, in the short time she was here, than I could ever have imagined. We lost her at 13 months, 2 days and 22 hours due to a very rare genetic disorder and again my life changed.

This Father's Day will be spent with my family and a new grandson, now 2 ½ years old, and a great little guy. I see much of the same inquisitive nature in him. Making sure each visit he has a good time. I think I do it out of obligation, and not with the joy I once had, but when you see that smile on his face that you made his day a little better, and that makes it all worthwhile.

Memories are a part of our past, and some become a part of our heart.

At the end of Father's Day, when everyone has gone to bed, I will sit at my desk, drink one more cup of coffee, say a prayer, and once again, tell my granddaughter just how much I love and miss her, and somehow know she knows, and in my mind I will hear her say "Pa Paw I love you too". Take time to smell the roses. 🌹

Being the Mother of a Child Who Died – On Mother's Day

by Claire McCarthy, M.D.
 Pediatrician, Boston Children's Hospital, Harvard Medical School
 viewed on www.huffingtonpost.com

I am the mother of a child who died. And that makes Mother's Day very hard.

Recently I was talking to a mother whose child had just died. "What about Mother's Day?" she asked, through tears. It was hard to know what to say, because it's a terrible day for those of us who have lost a child. Other days of the year you can maybe make it a few hours without thinking about your loss; other days of the year you can pretend that you are an ordinary person and that life is normal. But not on Mother's Day.

On Mother's Day it's in your face that your child is gone forever. On Mother's Day you can't pretend you are ordinary or that life is normal. All the hoopla, all the Hallmark hype, the handmade cards and flowers and family gatherings, make it almost excruciating.

Our town has a Mother's Day road race for which I am eternally grateful – especially because, in a demonstration of grace's existence, the start and finish are next to the cemetery where my son is buried. On my way I can visit his grave and say what I need to say and look yet again at the name we chose for him carved into stone. At the end of the race, they give all the mothers a flower; on my way home, I go back to the grave and lay my flower there. And then I move forward with the day.

See, that's the real challenge after losing a child - moving forward. It's almost impossible to envision in that moment of loss; how can life continue after something so horrible? But life does continue, whether we like it or not. There are chores to do and bills to pay; morning comes, again and again. So you pick yourself up and you live, but you are never the same.

At first, we are different because of our raw sadness. But over time, the sadness moves from our skin into our bones. It becomes less visible, but no less who we are. It changes into a wisdom, one we'd give up in a heartbeat to

have our child back. We who have lost children understand life's fragility and beauty. We who have lost children understand that so many things just aren't important. All that is important is those we love. All that is important is each other. Nothing else.

It can feel very lonely, being the parent of a child who died. Especially on Mother's Day or Father's Day. We feel so different from those around us, all those happy people with children the same age our child was, or would have been. But over the years, I've come to understand that I'm not alone at all.

There is a wonderful Buddhist story about a woman whose son gets sick and dies. She goes to the Buddha to ask him to bring her son back to life; I will, he says, if you bring me some mustard seed from the home of a family that has not known loss. She goes from house to house but can find no family that has not lost someone dear to them. She buries her son and goes to the Buddha and says: I understand now.

That is what I understand now. It doesn't make me miss my son any less, or Mother's Day any easier. But it helps me make sense of it; loss is part of life. There are no guarantees, ever. Our children, and all those we love, are gifts to us for however long we have them.

I understand now too that we are together in this, all of us, in joy and in loss. It's the connections we make with each other that matter – it's the connections we make that give life value and help us face each morning. As G.K. Chesterton wrote, "We are all in the same boat in a stormy sea, and we owe each other a terrible loyalty."

Years ago, I chose words to say each time I go to my son's grave. It makes it easier to have a ritual. And over the years, the words have come to mean more to me. They aren't just about grief anymore. They are about who I am, what I have learned, and what I can give.

"I will always love you", I say. "And I will always be your mother." ❧



He said, she said; the grieving paths of moms and dads

by Rob Anderson, <http://fromheartbreaktohealing.weebly.com/>

"Give me what I need, help me," she begged.
"No, you give me what I need, you help me," he pleaded.
"You don't grieve at all," she said.
"All you ever do is cry," he said.

Such is the journey with some moms and dads as we struggle to find our paths after the death of our child. "He" and "She" can be interchanged in all those statements because there's no gender exclusivity to how we grieve. A father may go inward and the mother may cry. Or, a father may share his grief with the world and a mother may keep her pain hidden. Whichever way we endure our pain is how it's working best for us. But it can be hurtful when grieving becomes a competition as to who misses, or loves, our child the most and who's grieving correctly. Add guilt or blame and emotions are taken to a new and sometimes damaging level. The dramatic differences in grieving styles of moms and dads are not unusual. We're not alone in how we feel.

Since our husband or wife has been our closest supporter and best friend over the years, we expect that support to continue after our kids die. We shared everything when they were alive and we expect that to happen now that they died. We laughed with each other and now want to cry with each other too. But what we often find is that the person we expect to be able to lean on the most isn't there and we fall. That confuses, hurts and angers us. We think, "You've known what I needed in the past, why can't you see what I need now?" Either parent could say that. The mom and dad of a child who's died have much in common, but also much we can't give each other. What we know is common suffering, our pain is equally intense and we both feel the loss deeply. But since we're both in such turmoil and barely able to take care of ourselves, it can be impossible to give each other a safe place to grieve, a harbor for our broken heart where our way of grieving will be understood and respected.

Our expectations of each other are high, often times too high. If you have those feelings of abandonment, they're not unusual and with work they can be resolved. As in all cases of needs and wants, communication is the key. But, the communication needs to be from a calm, rational perspective, which is not who we are in the beginning. It can be difficult, but not impossible.

When our child was alive, we lived in an "our" world. Both happy and sad times were "our" times. Decisions were made jointly; they were "our" decisions as to what was best for our child. For the most part we were able to share our points of view and find a compromise that worked in the "our" world. We gave respect to each other's way of parenting, and then our kids died and we fell apart. When they were alive we had access to hundreds of books on parenting, plus we had ingrained in us the methods that were used to parent us. We drew information and strength from them. But no one taught us how to cope with the death of our children, there's no book available, so we turned to each other for that knowledge and support. What we found was that the "our" world had suddenly turned to an "I" world, because it had to for our survival. The realization our closest partner couldn't help us, and we couldn't help them, was confusing and often times hurtful. We asked, "So if you can't help me, what am I supposed to do with my suffering?"

The key to coming back to each other is talking and sharing.....communicating. It's paramount to share our pain with our partner and not judge or criticize their way of grieving; and vice versa. Some of us read books on grief and attend support groups. Those things work for some even if our partner may not agree with them. They may find writing, or painting, or gardening as their way of letting out pain. Those methods should also be given respect. Plus, there are non-verbal ways to share our suffering. A hug, a back rub, flowers given with sympathy and empathy can go a long way to healing wounds that have been opened. Don't make grieving a competition, make it a collaboration. We both hurt, we both love our child, and we need each other now more than we ever have.

Work on making compromises to give respect and space for each of our grieving paths. If I'm having a good day, it doesn't mean my partner has to have a good day. And conversely, their bad day doesn't need to be my bad day also. But we do need to let each other have those days. Our patience will be tested as we see our partner progress at a different rate than us. We may not understand why they cry day after day when we no longer need to do that, or never have. Their anger may dissipate slower than ours, but it doesn't mean it's wrong for that to happen. We're different people, it's understandable that we'll grieve differently also. There's much to be learned by involving ourselves in our partner's grief. We can help them and they can help us.

He said, she said; the grieving paths of moms and dads (continued)....

Learn the power of, "I'm sorry" and, "I forgive you." Give up control and what might be best for you so you can help the relationship heal and grow. Work on making your common pain more about "we" and less about "I." Understand that we're not perfect people. We don't live in a perfect world and we all make mistakes. There's no harm, or dishonor, in saying, "I made a mistake. I didn't do that very well and would like another shot at it." And don't forget the healing power in a heartfelt "thank you". Those simple words of appreciation can go a long way to coming back together.

We may need to ask for what we need from our partner, because they might not know. We've heard, or maybe said ourselves, "What do you want from me? What should I do?" If what you need is silence, ask for it. If what you need is a hug, ask for it. If what you need is someone you can feel safe with while you cry, or scream out your pain, ask for it. Try not to ask for understanding of your pain; that may be impossible. What you probably need is an understanding of how much you hurt and you need their support. Also listen to what your partner's needs are and give what you can. When you're able to help each other, also thank each other.

This is a tough journey and there's no need to go through it alone. As parents we hurt equally, we both miss our kids terribly, but some of us find it difficult to express ourselves and may do it in a way that pushes our partner away. We aren't born with the coping skills necessary to understand what's happened to us, but through communication, constant and open communication, we can survive, and even grow closer. It only takes that first word, or hug, to get started. 🙏

Bereaved Parents of the USA *2016 National Gathering*

Indianapolis, Indiana
June 30 - July 3, 2016

"Crossroads of Your Heart"

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

FATHER'S DAY

Every father believes in his role as protector of his family. He had been assigned the job of fixer and problem solver. He has been told since his youngest days that he must be strong - must not cry.

But each father among us has had to face that point where no amount of fixing, problem solving and protecting has been able to stop our child's death. And inside, we must ask ourselves about our failure, and we must face our lack of omnipotence.

Father's Day is often a forgotten holiday, overshadowed by the longer-standing tribute to mothers. But for the bereaved father, it is a poignant reminder of bitter sweetness; sweet in the memory of a loved, now lost, child; bitter for the death and pain and recognition of inability to stop what happened.

Fathers do not often have a chance to share their hurts and concerns. Oftentimes, they are unable to do so, a remnant of childhood learning about the strength and stoicism of "being a big boy". A father may even be uncomfortable opening up to his wife, and the wife who pushes him to talk may be pushing too hard.

Father's Day does not have to be a time when everyone pours out of the woodwork to say, "I'm sorry we haven't talked. Let's do it now." But it can be a time when the family gives Dad a hug, does something special, helps with the chores, and mostly, lets him know how important and needed and loved he is. It is some of these things that he has lost with the death of a child. And, like Mother's Day, the day set aside for fathers does not have to be limited to a Sunday in June. It can be any day and every day.

Fathers often show their hurts differently, often internally. But They Do Hurt.

By Gerry Hunt, TCF, White River Junction, VT, June 2010



Annual Butterfly Release & Family Picnic

Sunday, July 10, 2016; 12:00 noon
Katherine Legge Memorial Park – South Pavilion
60th and County Line Road, Hinsdale

Donations \$12.00 per adult, or \$20.00 per couple, plus \$5.00 per child

1 butterfly included with adult donations

Extra butterflies: \$12.00 each

To safeguard the butterflies, they have to be released at 12:15 p.m.....don't be late!

Chicken, beverages and utensils will be provided by BP/USA

Please bring a dish to share:

A-H Bring a dessert to share (serving 12)

I-Z Bring a side dish to share (serving 12)

Please RSVP with donation by Wednesday, July 6, 2016:

Sally Yarberry

Cell: 708-738-0396

Hm: 708-560-0393

psyrbrry@hotmail.com

BP/USA Chicagoland Chapter

P.O. Box 320

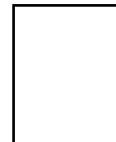
Western Springs, IL 60558

Name: _____

No. of People (total): _____ No. of Children Included: _____

No. of Butterflies: _____ Amount Enclosed: _____

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



April - May - June 2016

CALENDAR OF EVENTS	
April	
April 5	Monthly Meeting: 7:00 PM - "Lessons Grief Has Taught Us"
May	
May 3	Monthly Chapter Meeting: 7:00 PM - "The 10 Self-compassionate Principles of Grief"
June	
June 7	Monthly Chapter Meeting: 7:00 PM - Balloon Release
July	
July 1 - 3	National Gathering: "Crossroads of the Heart", Indianapolis, IN
July 10	Butterfly Release Picnic: 12:00 noon - Katherine Legge Memorial Park South Pavilion

Uneasy Word

by Sascha Wagner, "For You From Sascha"

Hope is not an easy word for griever but we, more than most others, need to understand what hope can mean for us.

Hope means finding the strength to live with grief.
Hope means nurturing with grace the joy of remembrance.

Hope means embracing with tenderness and pride our own life and the gifts left to us by those we have lost.



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