



*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 (708-738-0396; [psyrbrry@hotmail.com](mailto:psyrbrry@hotmail.com)), Chapter Co-Leaders*

## Thanks for the Little While

~ Darcie D. Sims, *The Grief Toolbox*

Thank you for life. For its good times and bad.  
Thank you for love, even when I can't feel it.  
Thank you for the love I used to share,  
For the arms that held me tight.

Thank you for my family  
In faraway places, in different times.

Thank you for the songs we sang,  
For the dreams we saved,  
For the smiles we shared.

Thank you for the strength that eludes me just now.  
Thank you for the weakness that sends me to my knees.  
Thank you for the searching, the reaching and the hoping.

Thank you for the bonds of memory that hold me in place  
in this universe, even when I don't believe in it anymore,  
or forget what it is all about.

Thank you, most of all, for having been blessed with the  
love I have known, even now when I fear I will forget it.

Thank you for the memory and for filling it full  
measure for me. It wasn't nearly long enough, but it will  
have to do. Thanks for the moments we danced.

Thanks for the little while....



## UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS:

Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month at the First Congregational Church of Western Springs, 1106 Chestnut Street, in the Education Building, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor in the Seim Room. Please enter the building through the north doors by the playground.

### **Tuesday, April 2 - Monthly Chapter Meeting:**

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

### **Tuesday, May 7 – Monthly Chapter Meeting:**

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

### **Tuesday, June 4 - Monthly Chapter Meeting:**

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

### **Sunday, July 14 – Butterfly Release Picnic: Katherine**

**Legge Memorial Park, South Pavilion:** 12:00 noon  
(see RSVP form in this newsletter)

*“I wish you knew how much of  
you there is in everything I do.*

*It can be the smallest  
thing...trivial...mundane...  
But you're there, under the  
surface of it somewhere.*

*I wish you knew  
how I carry you with me  
always...Everywhere I go.”*

~ Ranata Suzuki



*The holiest of all holidays are those  
Kept by ourselves in silence and apart;  
The secret anniversaries of the heart.*

~ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

 Love Gift 

*In loving remembrance of*  
**Michael Walter Schulman**

*April 21, 1978 until November 28, 2006*

Michael,  
Our love for you continues to grow.  
We miss you each passing day, especially on  
your birthday.

Your loving family,  
The Schulmans


 Love Gift 

*In loving memory of*  
**Michael Seaney**

*February 24, 1951 until September 23, 1995*

Mike,  
Thinking about you always.  
Love, Mom

Vernadene Tolman


 Love Gifts 

A Love Gift is a donation to the chapter in memory of your child, grandchild or sibling. A financial contribution in any amount is appreciated. All Love Gifts are gratefully acknowledged in the newsletter accompanied by wording exactly as the donor submits. BP / USA is a national non-profit organization; therefore all donations to the chapter are tax deductible as allowed by law.

When mailing in a love gift, **please include your child's name**, and any other info you would like in your love gift message. Make your check payable to: **BP / USA Chicagoland** and mail it to arrive by **the 10<sup>th</sup>** of the month prior to the upcoming newsletter. **The newsletter is published quarterly.**

Mail your check to:  
**BP/USA Chicagoland Chapter**  
**P.O. Box 320, Western Springs, IL 60558**

It is also recommended that you email your love gift message to the newsletter editor and chapter co-leader, Sally Yarberrry, at [psyrbrry@hotmail.com](mailto:psyrbrry@hotmail.com). 🙏



### *Bereaved Parents of the USA Credo:*

We are the parents whose children have died. We are the siblings whose brothers and sisters no longer walk with us through life. We are the grandparents who have buried grandchildren.

We come together as Bereaved Parents of the USA to provide a safe space where grieving families can connect, share our stories, and learn to rebuild our lives.

We attend meetings whenever we can and for as long as we find them helpful. We share our fears, confusion, anger, guilt, frustrations, emptiness, and feelings of hopelessness, knowing these emotions will be met with compassion and understanding. As we support, comfort and encourage one another, we offer hope and healing. As we confront the deaths of our loved ones, our shared grief brings us to a common ground that transcends differences, building mutual understanding across the boundaries of culture, race, faith, values, abilities, and lifestyle.

Together we celebrate the lives of our children, siblings, and grandchildren, sharing the joys and the heartbreaks as well as the love that will never fade. Together, strengthened by the bonds we create, we offer what we have learned from one another to every bereaved family, no matter how recent or long ago the death.

We are the Bereaved Parents of the USA. We welcome you. 🙏

## 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:

- ♥ Tamara & John Brattoli, parents of Anthony
- ♥ Rachel Kay & Blair Hadnott, parents of Ra'Meer

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

## My Youngest Son's Death

~ by *Dr. Robert Neimeyer, AfterTalk*, <https://ask.aftertalk.com/my-youngest-sons-death-2/>, March 18, 2019

*Robert A. Neimeyer, Ph.D. has published 27 books and serves as Editor of the journal "Death Studies". He served as President of the Association for Death Education and Counseling (ADEC), and Chair of the International Work Group for Death, Dying & Bereavement.*

Dear Dr. Neimeyer,

As I am approaching the second anniversary of my youngest son's death, I feel as if I will never know exactly who I am for the rest of my life. There are good days and bad days, and today is a bad one. It just cannot ever make sense to me—maybe someday, far away.

It's just so tough trying to come to terms with the senselessness of it. I was his mom for over 25 years—and now I'm wondering what happens from here? A definite piece of my life puzzle is gone forever.

Kaitlin

Dear Kaitlin,

Your image of the "puzzle" of your life, missing the prominent piece that was your son, is so evocative: it captures the sense of fragmentation of a once coherent picture of your life, like a jigsaw puzzle that has fallen to the floor, its pieces scattered, and at least one seemingly lost for all time. Surely many bereaved people, and bereaved parents especially, must feel this kind of brokenness and senselessness following an irreplaceable loss, and like you, are left wondering what sense life makes, what sense they make, in its aftermath. And despite the cultural adage that time heals all wounds, this is often simply not true when the death is premature, violent, or unexpected; in fact, research indicates that a worsening of many grief related symptoms is a common phenomenon as the second anniversary of the death approaches.

And yet, there may be ways to respond adaptively to a grievous loss, even when one cannot simply banish it or "get over it." One place to start is by attempting to conserve, rather than relinquish your valued role as a mother, not only in relation to your living children, but also in relation to the son who is with you in spirit. Though it might seem paradoxical, it can be worth asking yourself, "How does my son need me to be a good mother to him now?" Might you play a central role as the loving custodian of his memory, someone who helps keep his stories alive in the world? Would you do so by sharing the proud, loving or funny moments that otherwise might be eclipsed by the dark memory of his death, or fall silent through the awkward avoidance of others? Are there aspects of his legacy you could extend, perhaps in the form of acting on his behalf to support people or causes he cared about? Might caring for yourself, as he might have cared for you as he grew to maturity, become a way of "channeling" his love for you? Might you even consider writing a symbolic letter to him about such questions, and then write back a response from your "inner son" to the letter from a lost and grieving mother?

In any of these ways, you will be turning from the sometimes futile effort to find meaning in his senseless death, and instead give attention to finding renewed meaning in your life now. And a part of this can involve crafting a new puzzle piece to fit in the hole, one that helps you rebuild, rather than relinquish, your identity as a mother to a precious boy who was taken from you far too soon.

—Dr. Neimeyer

***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*

**Aaron Rush - 30**

Jun 14, 1985 - Apr 06, 2016  
Accidental Overdose  
Carrie Rush

**Amanda Aadson - 20**

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

**Anthony Brattoli – 21**

Apr 28, 1997 – Jul 18, 2018  
AVM – Brain Hemorrhage  
Tamara & John Brattoli

**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 LeBlanc - 4**

Apr 11, 1997 - Jun 02, 2001  
Boating Accident  
Liz & Stephen LeBlanc

**Corinne Naumann - 23**

Aug 14, 1986 - Apr 14, 2010  
Cheryl Naumann

**Caitrin Paige Gadomski – 6**

Apr 16, 2007 – Nov 17, 2013  
Cancer  
Joe & Becky Gadomski

**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

**Dana Samuel – 32**

Apr 07, 1970 – Jan 23, 2003  
Unknown  
Asphyxiation  
Lana Samuel

**Evan Holmes – 20**

Feb 09, 1990 – Apr 02, 2010  
Unknown  
Irene Gangemi  
Mason Holmes

**Frank P. Amelio – 27**

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

**Keya Sansquiri - 5**

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

**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

**Michael Walter Schulman - 28**

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

**Melissa Renee Wolfram - 30**

May 18, 1971 - Apr 26, 2002  
Pulmonary Embolism  
Earl & E. Renee Bailey

**Paul Anthony Schneider - 17**

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

**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

**Patrick McNaughton - 2**

Mar 27, 2014 - Apr 28, 2016  
Viral Meningitis  
Sheila & Ryan McNaughton

**Riley McBride - 30**

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

**Susan G. Gabrielsen - 31**

Apr 18, 1963 - Oct 14, 1994  
Breast Cancer  
Patricia Jacobi

*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*

**Scott Wesolowski - 18**

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

**Tony Jurkas Jr. - 23**

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

**Todd J. Smith - 23**

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

**Andre Piegat - 28**

May 30, 1988 - Dec 26, 2016  
Accidental Drug Toxicity  
Barbara Piegat

**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

**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

**Athena Marie Myers - 11 Months**

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

**David A. Schreck - 21**

- May 30, 2014  
Overdose  
Josie & Mark Schreck

**Elizabeth Nelson - 23**

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

**Eric Byrne - 44**

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

**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

**Kelly Ann Meicrotto - 23**

May 25, 1980 - Sep 01, 2003  
Lenore Robinson

**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 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

**Matthew Gavin - 32**

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

*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*

**Melissa Juergensen - 19**

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

**Michael Knorps - 51**

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

**Nadia Chowdhury - 20**

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

**Robbie Funston - 18**

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

**Robert Conway - 15**

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

**Phillip Butler - 30**

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

**Ryan A. Minor - 30**

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

**William Kavanaugh - 3**

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

**Robert J. Gentilini, Jr. - 25**

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

**Anthony Neri - 21**

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

**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

**Anna Trent - 4**

Jun 12, 2012 - Jun 19, 2016  
Drowned  
Katie Trent

**Branden Martinez - 6 weeks**

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

**Brian Schrader - 13**

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

**Emily Rose Snyder - 23**

Jun 16, 1994 - Jul 08, 2017  
Traffic Accident  
Debra Garozzo & Lloyd Snyder

**Carole "Suzie" Pavett - 56**

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

**Dominic Cairo - 8**

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

**Eric Robisch - 22**

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

**Daniel Stoothoff - 34**

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

**Eric Fitzpatrick Bucholz - 19**

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

**Elizabeth Anne Barrett - 15 1/2**

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

**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

**Jimmy Lekas - 18**

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

**Joseph Ross - 23**

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

**Paul Moore - 11**

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

*Our Children Remembered (continued)....*

**Mark Susong - 21**  
 Jun 05, 1990 - Feb 10, 2012  
 Drug Overdose  
 Jill Susong

**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

**Noah James Farley -**  
 Jun 07, 2006 - Jun 08, 2006  
 Prenatal Fetal Anomalies  
 Kelly Farley

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

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

**Matthew Lukaszczyk – 18**  
 Jul 04, 1999 – Jun 11, 2018  
 Accident (Fell from bridge)  
 Anna Lukaszczyk

**Stephanie Bartik – 30**  
 Jun 15, 1987 – Dec 23, 2017  
 Accidental Overdose  
 Mike & Cheryl Bartik

**William E. Barth – 20 ½**  
 Sep 23, 1965 - Jun 05, 1986  
 Suicide  
 Karen Barth



Join us in St. Louis, MO for the  
 2019 Bereaved Parents of the USA National Gathering

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Start planning now, information is on the national website at  
<https://www.bereavedparentsusa.org/annual-conference/annual-gathering-conference/>

## A Mother's Chorus: Grieving a Child on Mother's Day

~ Reprinted from WYG, *What's Your Grief*, March 9, 2018

WYG asked mothers grieving the death of a child to share one thing they want people to know about their grief on Mother's Day. They received comments and messages from close to one hundred different women and decided to take many of the responses and put them together in a letter. This letter is not written by one bereaved mother, but an entire chorus of mothers.

Dear Friend,

I miss my child every day. This grief of mine will never leave me, and honestly, why should it? I love my child more than I ever could have imagined, and yes, I do mean present tense "love". It is excruciating knowing that my child will never return to my arms. However, a mother's love for her child doesn't require physical presence; this can be proven by the fact that most mothers love their children well before they are even born. I will love my child forever, and therefore, I will grieve my child forever. This is just how it goes.

I know it's difficult for some people to understand my ongoing grief, I guess because they want me to "get better" or return to "normal." However, I actually *am* normal. I'm just different now. I believe those who say they want to support me on difficult days like Mother's Day, but part of this is accepting me as a grieving mother who will always love her deceased child. Again, this is just how it goes.

My grief is like the weather. Somedays it's calm, quiet, maybe even a little sunny. Other days it's a devastating storm that makes me feel angry, exhausted, raw, and empty. I wake up in the morning and wonder – "Am I even alive at all? And if so, how am I supposed to make it through this day?" This is why when you ask me how I feel about Mother's Day, all I can say is that it depends. Of course, I'm going to try my best to cope with the day, but while you're hoping that your Mother's Day picnic doesn't get spoiled by actual rain, I'll be praying that the grief storms stay at bay.

Like many things in a grieving mother's life, Mother's Day is bittersweet to the nth degree. On the one hand, I feel immense joy because I was blessed with my child and I feel gratitude for every moment I was given with her. On the other hand, the pain of missing my child – my greatest happiness, my life's purpose, and my best friend – is intense.

Bereaved mothers live with so many of these confusing contrasts. They are like undercurrents that tug at and toss about our hearts and minds. I am a mother to a child who is not alive. Perhaps a child who you've never met. You can't ask me about their school year, or how they're liking piano lessons, or whether they've chosen a major in college. In my mind, I've imagined my child doing all these things. People don't realize that I grieve each of my child's milestones, knowing they didn't get the opportunity to experience these special days.

Most people don't know how to validate my child's place in the world or my ongoing role as my child's mother. This is a difficult concept for others to grasp. Heck, sometimes even I grapple with the answers to questions like "Do you have children?" and "How many?" I know many bereaved mothers, like me, long for these questions to have straightforward answers.

Sadly, mothers who have experienced the death of their *only* child may even wonder whether they get to call themselves a mother at all in broader society. So, in addition to the pain of grief, these mothers have to cope with a sense of being left out, forgotten, and ignored. Can you imagine how that might feel? I think it must be like being stabbed through the heart and when you turn to others for help they say "What blood?" "What knife?"

Then, for mothers who have surviving children, there is this gem of a comment – "Don't forget, you're lucky to have other children." Please let me assure you, a mother does not forget *any* of her children. This mother loves each and every one of her unique and special children in unique and special ways, but one of her children has died and so her love for this child looks a little untraditional. Mothers do not have a finite amount of love to be shifted, divided, and spread around depending on the number of children they have on this Earth. So please be careful with your comments, because it's difficult enough for grieving mothers who often feel torn between feeling joy and happiness for their living children and grief for the child who has died.

All that said, you asked me what it's like to grieve a child on Mother's Day, so here's what I have to say:

*Continued on next page....*



This day will forever be hard for me. I live with an emptiness that no one can fill; so I may be sad, I may be unsociable, and I may need to take a break to be by myself in a quiet place. Whatever shape my grief takes on this day, please allow me to feel the way I feel and please follow my lead.

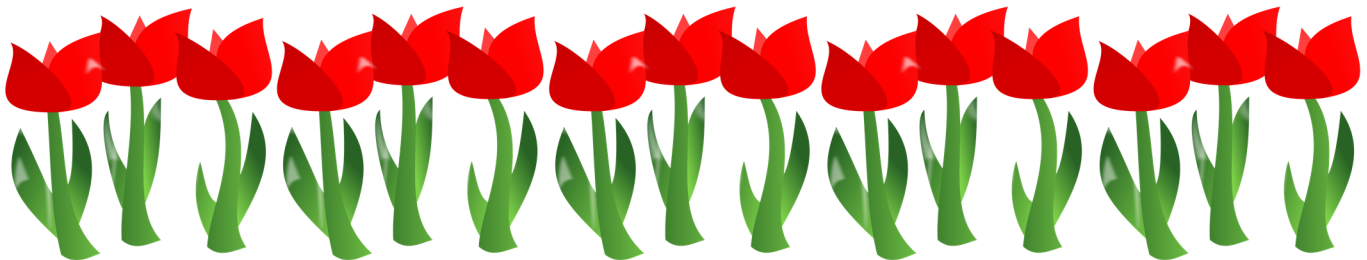
Beyond that, acknowledge me as a mother. It makes me feel forgotten and as though my child has been forgotten when people act as though my child never existed. Also, I can sense that people feel uncomfortable talking about my child and I constantly feel like the elephant in the room, but it doesn't have to be this way. Honestly, I find it really comforting when someone talks about my child. I love hearing their name spoken out loud! I love hearing stories about them. Maybe you know a story I've never heard, or maybe I've heard it a hundred times before, but it really doesn't matter to me. Your acknowledgment alone is one of the greatest Mother's Day gifts you could give me.

I guess while I'm offering my two cents, I also have something to say to my fellow bereaved mothers. No one has it all figured out, but I've learned a few lessons along the way. If you're worried about Mother's Day, you're not alone. Try not to get overwhelmed or wrapped up in anxiety. You may actually find that the anticipation of the day is worse than the day itself. You may want to plan a whole day of activities just to stay busy, or you may feel like doing nothing at all. There is no "right" way to handle Mother's Day – but do try to plan ahead a little. You may want to reach out to others who are struggling with the day and, if you can, it always helps to face the day with people who love and support you.

Whatever you do, believe you will make it through the day. With time, the grief storms will grow smaller and less frequent and you will find a little more balance and room to breathe. Believe you will be okay and have hope that in the future you will find yourself in a place where you can grieve and celebrate on Mother's Day all at the same time.

Let's take care of each other,

M. 🌸



**~ From "Healing After Loss", Martha Whitmore Hickman, reprinted from BP/USA Baltimore Chapter Newsletter, March-April 2019**

One effect of losing a loved one, particularly if the death is sudden and unexpected, is that we become newly aware of the fragility of life. If this tragedy can befall us, what next? We can become fearful, almost paranoid. A mother whose child was killed in an auto accident tells me she cannot bear to have her other child come home later than she expected. "Call me if you're going to be late. Even ten minutes. Please," she tells him.

Our security in the world is threatened. Our inner lives are in turmoil. To follow methodically the patterns of the day may give us some sense of order so we will not break apart.

Beyond that, we may feel that by sticking to our established ways, perhaps we will keep the fates from noticing us and be spared further unexpected terror. These are primal, irrational fears – but the loss we have gone through is not rational, either.

Later – not now – we'll have the energy and courage to cope with change. 🌸

*"We know that the acute grief we feel after such a loss will come to an end, but we shall remain inconsolable, and never find a substitute. Everything that comes to take its place, even if it were to fill it completely, nevertheless remains something different. And this is really as it should be. It is the only way of perpetuating the love which we do not want to renounce."*

*~ Sigmund Freud, bereaved parent, written to a friend whose son had died*

## Dealing With Father's Day After Losing a Child

~ by Marti Wormuth, MA

How does a father who has lost a child cope with Father's Day? What should be done in order to get through this painful, yet important day in your life? Here are some things that can help you work through the pain in a healthy, compassionate, and helpful manner.

### ***Remember, it is still your day.***

Even if you don't have any other children, *you are still a father*. Don't forget that. Don't think that you're any less of a dad because you lost your child - even though you may have just been a father for a few brief moments, you are still a father and it is still your day. Father's Day is your day and you deserve to be recognized for it. You are a wonderful man who has taken time out of your life to love someone more fully than you have ever loved anyone, except perhaps your spouse. That alone is worth being recognized, and if you can bring yourself to do it, celebrate if you can. You are still wonderful and you are still loved, and that's important to remember.

### ***Make time for your partner or spouse as well.***

Even if they are not male, Father's Day can bring heartbreaking feelings to your spouse as well, like Mother's Day may have done for you. Spend some alone time with them, work through some of your feelings, just hold each other or do something quiet together. It's good for you to walk together through these difficult days, and it's important for you to remember each other when the going gets tough. Both of you are hurting, but you will both need the strength of the other to continue to move forward and work through your feelings. Love can help many things and help to strengthen you through many types of pain - don't take it for granted.

### ***Be patient and gentle with yourself - it's okay to hurt.***

If you cry on Father's Day, it's okay. Actually, it's healthy. Let yourself cry. Allow yourself to feel, allow yourself to remember. It's not a bad thing, and it's a part of the whole healing process. Grief is not something that we go through once and then forget about it; grieving is something that we may have to go through again and again and again in different ways. That's not to say that we're stuck in a cycle of grief forever, but that moments of grief may come up at times, even years after your child has passed away. So be patient with yourself. Don't do any of this "I have to be a man" business. Allow yourself to cry and feel the pain that you feel - it's normal, it's healthy, and it can help you to become stronger in the end.

### ***If you have other children, focus on them too.***

Father's Day and Mother's Day is as much for the kids as it is for the parent that is being celebrated. If you have other children, then give them some extra love today. They may be thinking about the loss as well, because Father's Day and Mother's Day have a way of bringing out that grief for everyone that is involved. Do something fun with them, like going to the movies or playing mini-golf. Let them love on you today too, because children are incredibly perceptive, even if they are older children. They will know that something is going on with you today, and they will do everything that they can to help you, even if it's something as simple as making a cute little card or taking you out to dinner. They can really help you to get through your day, too, because your children are precious and, even though they may remind you of the child you have lost, their support will help you remember why you're so special as a dad. Pass the love around!

### ***Recognize those in your life that you see as fathers.***

Is your father (or your father in law) still living? Chances are, they are struggling with today too - obviously, it doesn't have the same impact that it has on your immediate family, but they still feel the pain that you are going through. Obviously, you want to make sure that you put some focus on them today, but let them walk with you too. They may have some words of wisdom that can help you out, or they can just be fun to be around for the day. On top of that, if you have father figures (from your place of worship, work, or other associations), make sure you give them a shout out today as well - they're just as much dads as you are, even if there's no biological connection. The reason I say this is because it really helps you to work through your pain if you're loving on other people.

### ***Talk about it.***

Last but not least, don't avoid it. Please, don't avoid the topic all together. Don't forget about Father's Day and act like it doesn't exist at all. If you can and want to, go and put flowers on your child's grave, or just take a visit there. It may hurt, but the more that you talk about it and talk through it, the better it will be for everyone involved and it will help make the next time this comes around that much easier to work through in a healthy way. 🌱



**Annual Butterfly Release & Family Picnic**

Sunday, July 14, 2019; 12:00 noon  
Katherine Legge Memorial Park – South Pavilion  
60<sup>th</sup> 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 10, 2019:**

Sally Yarberry  
Cell: 708-738-0396  
[psyrbrry@hotmail.com](mailto:psyrbrry@hotmail.com)  
BP/USA Chicagoland Chapter  
P.O. Box 320  
Western Springs, IL 60558

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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 2019

CALENDAR OF EVENTS	
<b>April</b>	
April 2	<b>Monthly Chapter Meeting:</b> 7:00 PM – General Discussion
<b>May</b>	
May 7	<b>Monthly Chapter Meeting:</b> 7:00 PM – Topic to be Determined
<b>June</b>	
June 4	<b>Monthly Chapter Meeting:</b> 7:00 PM – General Discussion
<b>July</b>	
July 14	<b>Butterfly Release Picnic:</b> 12:00 noon - Katherine Legge Memorial Park, South Pavilion



*I know now that we never get over great losses;  
 We absorb them, and they carve us into different,  
 often kinder, creatures.*

~ Gail Caldwell

A Journey Together, National Newsletter of the  
 Bereaved Parents of the USA, Winter 2018

**BP/USA Chicagoland on the Web:**

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

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