



*Helping grieving parents and families rebuild their lives after the death of a child*

[www.bereavedparentsusa.org](http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org) October – November – December 2018

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

I need to talk about my loss.  
I may often need to tell you what happened  
or to ask you why it happened.  
Each time I discuss my loss, I am helping myself  
face the reality of the death of my loved one.

I need to know that you care about me.  
I need to feel your touch, your hugs.  
I need you just to be "with" me.  
And I need to be with you.  
I need to know you believe in me and in my  
ability to get through my grief in my own way.  
And in my own time.

Please don't judge me now  
or think that I'm behaving strangely.  
Remember I'm grieving.  
I may even be in shock.  
I may feel afraid. I may feel deep rage.  
I may even feel guilty. But above all, I hurt.  
I'm experiencing a pain unlike any I've ever felt before.

Don't worry if you think I'm getting better  
and then suddenly I seem to slip backward.  
Grief makes me behave this way at times.  
And please don't tell me you "know how I feel,"  
or that it's time for me to get on with my life.  
I am probably already saying this to myself.  
What I need now is time to grieve and to recover.

Most of all, thank you for being my friend.  
Thank you for your patience.  
Thank you for caring.  
Thank you for helping, for understanding.  
Thank you for praying for me.

And remember, in the days or years ahead,  
when you may have a loss – when you need me  
as I have needed you – I will understand.  
And then I will come and be with you.

~ **Barbara Hills LesStrang,**  
<https://www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub/posts>,  
August 24, 2015



## UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS:

**Tuesday, October 2 - Monthly Chapter Meeting:**  
7:00 PM to 8:30 PM - Open discussion

**Tuesday, November 6 - Monthly Chapter Meeting,**  
**Potluck Dinner & Speaker:** 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM - Chicken  
& beverages will be provided; please bring a side dish or  
dessert to share. Please RSVP by Nov. 4 to Sally at 708-  
738-0396 or [psyrbrry@hotmail.com](mailto:psyrbrry@hotmail.com)

**Tuesday, December 4 - 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 9 - Candle Lighting Program:**  
Doors open 6:30 PM; Program at 7:00 PM. Please RSVP.  
See additional information and form in this newsletter

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

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

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

*We come together as Bereaved Parents of the USA to provide a haven where  
all bereaved families can meet and share our long and arduous grief journey.*

*We attend monthly gatherings whenever we can and for as long as we believe  
necessary. We share our fears, confusion, anger, guilt, frustrations, emptiness  
and feelings of hopelessness, so that hope can be found anew. As we accept,  
support, comfort and encourage each other, we demonstrate to each other  
that survival is possible.*

*Together we celebrate the lives of our children, share the joys and the  
triumphs as well as the love that will never fade. Together we learn how little it  
matters where we live, what our color or our affluence is or what faith we  
uphold as we confront the tragedies of our children's deaths.*

*Together, strengthened by the bonds we forge at our gatherings, we offer  
what we have learned from each other to every more recently bereaved  
family.*

*We are the Bereaved Parents of the USA. We welcome you. 🕯*

## 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:

- ♥ Anna Lukaszczyk, mother of Matthew
- ♥ Peggy Yracheta, mother of Brian

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, birth and death dates, and the actual wording of 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 (January, April, July, October).**

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 Yarberry at [psyrbrry@hotmail.com](mailto:psyrbrry@hotmail.com).



*In loving memory of*  
**Bobby Vargas**  
*October 10, 1972 until October 26, 1988*

You are loved, missed and remembered every day.  
Love Mom and David



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

Dearest Daughter,  
I think of you a hundred times a day, and miss you more than words can convey. Your loving nature meant you were always willing to listen, and you had a talent for getting to the heart of what troubled me. No matter how bleak things were, you could always find some humor. The love and the laughter are what I remember and miss the most.

*"Your smile and your laughter lit my whole world".*  
~ Ranata Suzuki

I carry your heart in my heart.

Always and forever,  
"MamaSama and Bry"  
Sally Yarberry and Bryan Yarberry (brother)



*In loving remembrance of*  
**Michael Walter Schulman**  
*April 21, 1978 until November 28, 2006*

Michael....  
We are still discovering the many ways we miss you, and loving you even more than ever.

All the Schulmans



## On Grieving During the Holidays: The First Thanksgiving After the Death of My Son

by Tony A Rose, <http://medium.com>

My 28-year-old son died in July.

Writing these words stops me. I sit in my seat, staring at them.

How can they be true?

It is hard to move past these words today, in particular. It is one day before Thanksgiving, and I am wondering how I will make it through tomorrow—the first big holiday without my son.

Jonny would have turned 29 in August. My wife, my daughter, and I survived his birthday with tears and memories and laughter, and then with more tears. Yet, there were fewer expectations on his birthday, fewer customs, and fewer traditions to uphold.

Whereas his birthdays have morphed throughout the years, and we have spent many without him, Thanksgiving is supposed to be a certain way. There is supposed to be turkey and wine and football. We are supposed to be loud and boisterous. We are supposed to be surrounded by family.

We are supposed to be thankful—thankful for the blessing of our children.

And Jonny is supposed to be there.

My wife, my daughter, and I will have Thanksgiving at my house, along with a handful of friends and family.

I wonder: Who will sit in Jonny's chair? Will anyone sit in his chair, or will it sit empty—a loud vacancy reminding us that things are not as they are supposed to be?

We are certainly not the first family to face the fear of that first Thanksgiving. So many others have survived the holidays after a divorce, the first Thanksgiving after the collapse of a business, or the first Thanksgiving after the death of a spouse.

Today, it feels impossible to simultaneously grieve and celebrate—and yet, that is what so many of us are being called to do.

A couple of weeks ago, I had lunch with a friend. We spoke of Jonny, and I told her that I was worried about the holidays.

She said something that has stayed with me.

"Remember that Jonny doesn't die again on Thanksgiving," she said.

Jonny died on July 27, 2015. On that day, we began to grieve. We began processing the fact that we would never again hug him or laugh with him or share a joke with him. He died on a hot day in July.

It happened once. It will never happen again.

It already happened, and it will not happen tomorrow.

I remind myself of this over and over because I want to give myself permission to move forward. And I want this for all of Jonny's friends and family members: my wife, my daughter, Jonny's girlfriend, and his many, many friends.

I do not want us to feel compelled to relive all of our grief, afraid to create new moments because we are so tragically lost in the past. I want us to make new memories, discarding this notion of what is supposed to be, and mindful that although we are grieving, we are also recovering.

Jonny does not die again tomorrow, and we are recovering. 🍂

## My Mind Versus My Heart

<https://www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub/>

My mind tried to distract me from grieving for you  
But then my heart interrupts by saying I miss you  
My mind believes you're in a place of peace without  
pain

But my heart interrupts by saying I want you back  
again

My mind tries to make sense of something that is  
senseless

But my heart's connection of love with you is  
essentially endless

My mind tries to pacify my heart that it will feel  
better in time

But my heart will win the battle of logic versus love  
every time 🍂



## Holiday and All Occasion Cards

We're pleased to announce that we still have a limited supply of Bereaved Parents Holiday and All Occasion cards, so we're able to offer them for sale at least once more. The holiday cards are an assorted package of previous favorites including a wreath, an ornament, a bell and an angel. The butterfly, the BP-USA 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.

The All Occasion card is blank inside and the cover features an embossed white-on-white floral design with a periwinkle blue butterfly.

Printed on high-quality paper, the actual size of the card is 4"x 6". Envelopes are included. The cards come in packages of twenty (five of each design). The order form is available on our chapter website.

🍂





# Potluck Dinner & Guest Speaker Tuesday, November 6<sup>th</sup>



**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 10) 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**

Guest speaker to be announced.

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

**Please R.S.V.P. by November 4 to Sally Yarberry at (708) 738-0396 or**  
[psyrbrry@hotmail.com](mailto: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

**Cory Payne - 39**

Mar 27, 1978 - Oct 17, 2017  
Accidental  
Don & Terri Liebentritt

**Dan Parmenter - 20**

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

**Daniel (Dan) Schmid - 50**

Jan 27, 1966 - Oct 11, 2016  
Heart Failure  
Bill & Jeanne Schmid

**Dominic Cairo - 8**

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

**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

**Gabriella (Gabby) Dunn - 9**

Oct 8, 2007 - Oct 7, 2016  
Car Accident  
Brian Dunn

**Gregory Michael Humbert - 30**

Aug 31, 1961 - Oct 31, 1991  
Struck by Van  
Mary (Marge) Humbert

**Jacob Silver - 22**

Oct 05, 1990 - Apr 11, 2013  
Suicide  
Laureen 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

**Patricia Strick-Hawkins - 54**

Oct 31, 1959 - Mar 18, 2015  
Ovarian Cancer  
Ilse Strick

**Paula L. 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



***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*

**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

**Adam Schar – 33**

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

**Brian Eck – 39**

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

**Brent Evans – 35**

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

**Celeste Tomasello - 17**

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

**Caitrin Paige Gadomski – 6**

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

**Christopher Kavanagh – 25**

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

**Glenn Patrick Beach – 31**

Nov 07, 1960 – Feb 16, 1992  
Murdered  
John & Grace Beach

**Heather Runge – 6 weeks**

Nov 21, 1989 – Jan 04, 1990  
Neuroblastoma  
Sandra (Sandy) Sand

**Jennifer Roley – 22**

Nov 26, 1989 – Jan 15, 2012  
Drug Overdose  
Lynn Gantner

**Megan Elizabeth 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

**Nicky Angone – 57**

Nov 13, 1958 - Mar 26, 2016  
Cancer  
Diane Angone

**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 ½ Months**

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

**Timothy Kuzmicki - 16**

Mar 07, 1986 - Nov 13, 2002  
Motorcycle/Auto Collision  
Kathy Kuzmicki

**Andre Piegat – 28**

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

**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 Tumillo

**Chris Marie Longo – 18**

Dec 21, 1951 - Sep 26, 1970  
Brain Aneurysm  
Anthony & Margery Longo

**Daniel M. Schedler - 23**

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

*Our Children....continued on next page*

*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 Stoothoff - 34**

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

**Elizabeth Anne Barrett – 15 ½**

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

**Tim Schiefelbein - 18**

Dec 07, 1989 – Feb 24, 2007  
Car Accident  
Diane Grabowski

**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

**Mia Bella Meiszner – 9**

Sep 15, 2008 – Dec 04, 2017  
Organ Failure  
John Meiszner

**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 ½**

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

**Stephanie Bartik – 22**

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

**Stevie Brow – 8**

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

**William (Bill) Collins – 24**

Nov 15, 1965 – Dec 24, 1989  
Auto Accident, Hit & Run  
Suzanne Collins



## GRIEF & THE HOLIDAYS, by David Kessler, <https://grief.com/grief-the-holidays/>

"Holidays are time spent with loved ones" was imprinted on our psyche from a young age. Holidays mark the passage of time in our lives. They are part of the milestones we share with each other and they generally represent time spent with family. They bring meaning to certain days and we bring much meaning back to them. But since holidays are for being with those we love the most, how on earth can anyone be expected to cope with them when a loved one has died? For many people, this is the hardest part of grieving, when we miss our loved ones even more than usual. How can you celebrate togetherness when there is none? When you have lost someone special, your world loses its celebratory qualities. Holidays only magnify the loss. The sadness feels sadder and the loneliness goes deeper. The need for support may be the greatest during the holidays. Pretending you don't hurt and or it is not a harder time of the year is just not the truth for you. If it wasn't harder you probably wouldn't be here. You can and will get through the holidays. Rather than avoiding the feelings of grief, lean into them. It is not the grief you want to avoid, it is the pain. Grief is the way out of the pain. There are a number of ways to incorporate your loved one and your loss into the holidays.

### Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, New Years

These are the biggest and usually most challenging of all. You can and will get through the holidays. Rather than avoiding the feelings of grief, lean into them. It is not the grief you want to avoid, it is the pain. Grief is the way out of the pain. Grief is our internal feelings and mourning is our external expressions.

### Ways to externalize the loss – give it a time and a place

- A prayer before the holiday dinner, about your loved one.
- Light a candle for your loved one.
- Create an online tribute for them.
- Share a favorite story about your loved one.
- Have everyone tell a funny story about your loved one.
- At your place of worship remember them in a prayer.
- Chat online about them.

### Ways to Cope

Have a Plan A / Plan B – Plan A is you go to the Thanksgiving, Christmas Day or Christmas Eve dinner with family and friends. If it doesn't feel right, have your plan B ready. Plan B may be a movie you both liked or a photo album to look through or a special place you went to together. Many people find that when they have Plan B in place, just knowing it is there is enough.

Cancel the holiday all together. Yes, you can cancel the holiday. If you are going through the motions and feeling nothing, cancel them. Take a year off. They will come around again. For others, staying involved with the holidays is a symbol of life continuing. Let the holiday routine give you a framework during these tough times.

Try the holidays in a new way. Grief has a unique way of giving us the permission to really evaluate what parts of the holidays you enjoy and what parts you don't. Remember, there is no right or wrong way to handle the holidays in grief. You have to decide what is right for you and do it. You have every right to change your mind, even a few times.

Friends and family members may not have a clue how to help you through the Holidays and you may not either. It is very natural to feel you may never enjoy the holidays again. They will certainly never be the same as they were. However, in time, most people are able to find meaning again in the traditions as a new form of the holiday spirit grows inside of them. Even without grief, our friends and relatives often think they know how our holidays should look, what "the family" should and shouldn't do.

### Do's and Don'ts

- Do be gentle with yourself and protect yourself.
- Don't do more than you want, and don't do anything that does not serve your soul and your loss.
- Do allow time for the feelings.
- Don't keep feelings bottled up. If you have 500 tears to cry don't stop at 250.
- Do allow others to help. We all need help at certain times in our lives.
- Do, in grief, pay extra attention to the children. Children are too often the forgotten grievers.

### Just Remember

Holidays are clearly some of the roughest terrain we navigate after a loss. The ways we handle them are as individual as we are. What is vitally important is that we be present for the loss in whatever form the holidays do or don't take. These holidays are part of the journey to be felt fully. They are usually very sad, but sometimes we may catch ourselves doing okay, and we may even have a brief moment of laughter. You don't have to be a victim of the pain or the past. When the past calls, let it go to voicemail...it has nothing to say. You don't have to be haunted by the pain or the past. You can remember and honor the love. Whatever you experience, just remember that sadness is allowed because death, as they say, doesn't take a holiday.

Even without grief, our friends and relatives often think they know how our holidays should look, what the family should and shouldn't do. Now more than ever, be gentle with yourself. Don't do more than you want, and don't do anything that does not serve your soul and your loss. 🌿





## Bereaved Parents of the USA Chicagoland Chapter

Cordially invites you to attend our

### Annual Candle Lighting Observance



Sunday, December 9, 2018  
1st Congregational Church of Western Springs  
1106 Chestnut Street, Western Springs, IL  
Chapel & Parlor, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor

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](mailto:FLASH22504@comcast.net)

**Deadline for photos, 5x7 or smaller: Monday, December 3, 2018**

### Return Form for Annual Candle Light Observance

Please respond by Monday, December 3, 2018

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

Phone number (in case we have to postpone due to inclement weather) \_\_\_\_\_

**Donations to help defray costs are gratefully appreciated.**

**If you are willing to volunteer to help with planning the Candle Lighting Observance, or participate in the program, please contact Donna Corrigan: [silks6@aol.com](mailto:silks6@aol.com)**

**By Jessi Snapp, <https://www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub/posts/i-just-miss-you-there-really-is-no-other-explanation-for-the-heaviness-felt-in-m/865801120283897/>**

I just miss you. There really is no other explanation for the heaviness felt in my heart. It is as simple and yet as complicated as that – I just miss you. What I wouldn't give for one more moment. One more moment to hold you. To look into your eyes and tell you how much you are loved.

What I wouldn't give to go back in time to the moment where I last held you. Where I was able to kiss you and where I was forced to say goodbye. Because I would relive all the pain of what came after – for just one more moment with you. I would hold you close, with my arms wrapped tightly around you and I would breathe you in. I would soak in that moment all over again, even knowing it would be our last.

What I wouldn't give to have a second chance. A chance to do things differently even though I know those things couldn't change the outcome. But I'd do them anyway because I would do anything to try. There are a thousand different versions of how our story could have played out – and this version is the one I didn't expect. I cannot undo what has already been done – but what I wouldn't give to try just one more time.

I never knew missing someone could hurt so badly. I never knew that missing someone would change me so irrevocably. I never knew how deep and wide love could flood into my life. I never knew how precious this life was until you. I never knew just how much love could hurt until you left. And I never had a clue that the cause of insuperable pain could be narrowed down into four little words – I just miss you.

Your absence has flooded through every part of me. And like a flood, it has left cracks in my foundation. The flood of your absence has obliterated the core pieces of who I once was. It has cracked my heart wide open and my heart has bled with nothing but undying love. And it left me fighting to survive it all. But I would do it all over again.

Because our love is so much more than a flood of your absence. Our love is like a lighting that rushes through me. It has illuminated the darkest parts of me. It ignites my soul and has thundered through my life – pushing me to live a life full of you. For you. Because of you. You – the one who has changed me. The one who has taught me so much about this life and my ability to love with every cell in my body.

For you – I keep breathing, I keep fighting, I keep living. For you – I love more deeply and laugh more freely. For you – I cherish this one life I've been given. No matter the amount of pain and heartbreak. For you – because you exist in every corner of my soul. And your name has transcended from the title you were given while you were still here and into a feeling that describes your absence. Because on the days where I just miss you all I can do is utter your name. And when someone asks me what weighs heavy on my heart yours is the name that flows out. Nothing more is needed to describe what it is I am feeling because you are that feeling. The feeling of missing you, loving you, longing for you, and all the feelings in between. You are the reason they are there and you are the reason I feel them so profoundly.

I never wanted any of this. No one ever wants this. But I wanted you. And sometimes no matter how much we want – it isn't enough to stop the waters from rising and the flood from sweeping into our lives.

So much time has passed and still some days there is a heaviness that weighs me down. I keep searching for the words to explain where it comes from or why it's there. It feels so complicated yet the only words I can muster are – "I just miss you." I miss you more than words can say and emotion can express. Everything I do has been washed by the waters of your absence. Even my heart beats to a steady rhythm of you and its echo rings through the space where you used to be. I have never known so much love, so much joy, and so much heartbreak, until you. And some days the only explanation for the suffocating pain that still lingers on is...

I just miss you. 🌿

When a child dies, a parent is still tied to that child. Souls, tied together across universes. It doesn't matter the age when they passed. It doesn't matter how long ago it happened. It doesn't matter – none of it. Their souls are forever tied.

That's the love of a parent. That's the love that is more powerful than death. That's the heart that breaks and keeps breaking until their arms are filled again. It knows no discrimination based off of age, health or time, it just is, and always will be.

Their souls are forever tied, and there's nothing that can break them. That's the beauty of unconditional love. 🌿

*By Lexi Behrendt, Scribbles and Crumbs*

# An Open Letter To Parents Who Have Lost A Child

*Healing is not on a timetable*

By Sandy Peckinpah, Contributor, LIFE! HuffPost

09/27/2016 | Updated October 5, 2016

I heard someone say, grief isn't a life sentence, it's a life passage. It's the one common human experience we all have at one time or another. But, we didn't expect it to be the death of a child, did we? If you're reading this, it's likely you've lost a child or been affected by the loss of a child. You're now discovering grieving this loss is the hardest thing you've ever done.

I know, because suddenly, without warning, my life changed. My beautiful 16-year old son came home from school complaining of a headache and a fever. The doctor diagnosed him with the flu. But it wasn't. Sometime during the night, my boy was taken from me forever. I found him the next morning in his bed, lifeless. The misdiagnosis was actually a swift and deadly form of bacterial meningitis.

Have you ever felt such incredible emotion as losing your child? It's feared by all parents and an unimaginable loss. Unimaginable, until it happens to you. People refer to it as "the worst that can happen," and that's exactly what it feels like.

In the years following my son's death, I discovered, no matter how great my loss, or how deep my grief, the world does not stop. In fact, it intensifies. I remember thinking... how can I ever be happy again? I felt as though my pain was visible to others, and I would forever be wearing grief as a mask and a tagline..."I'm Sandy and I've lost a child."

Then a friend gave me a journal and said, "Write. Just write." The first blank page was so difficult. I could only put down one sentence, "My son died and my life will never be the same." The next day, I wrote a paragraph, and each day after that I found words came more easily. My journal became my safe haven to empty the well of my sorrow, pouring tears of ink onto paper. And for a little while, I could let my emotions rest.

I *had* to survive this. I had three living children who needed a whole mother. I was not willing to sacrifice my role in their lives by succumbing to paralyzing grief. I kept writing. Words pulled me and pushed me. As weeks went on, I'd read back over the journal entries. I began to see something remarkable... I'd survived another day, another week, another month; and I was growing stronger. I'd see words of hope illuminating my way.

There's no magic secret to the journal. Just pick up a pen and begin with one word or sentence. Keep writing. Healing is not on a timetable. In fact, time doesn't fix this kind of loss. Healing comes from actively pursuing life again.

After a while, you'll look back on your words and not recognize the person you once were. You'll see how strong you really are. I used to believe the cliché "everything happens for a reason," but with this kind of tragedy, it seems to be reversed. When a tragedy like this happens, it can be the starting place to give it reason and relevance. When you recognize this, it's the moment your grieving will shift.

Imagine that. What would it feel like? I used to fantasize and picture my life without the pain by writing out that very question, *What would it be like to feel peace around Garrett's death?* I would visualize myself without the veil of sorrow and allow the comfort of happiness to flow in. And for a brief moment, I *could* feel it. As time went on, I was able to reach that peaceful feeling more frequently. I had the power within the pages of my journal to compartmentalize my sorrow. Once you're aware of what it feels like, you'll be able to access it more easily.

It's been decades since my beautiful son left this earth and sometimes tears still surprise me. But the work of healing has brought me a harmonious blend of resolution and comfort as my heart joyfully connects with the sweet ballad of his memories. Healing doesn't mean you'll never feel the sadness. It means you'll be able to have memories without attaching intense despair.

Use your journal as your safe place, and you'll begin to form a new relationship with your child, telling stories, and feeling the joy you once had when they were alive. I now look at the life of my son and marvel at his 16 years, 3 months, and 10 days. He was the first to call me *mom*. His death was the birth of my new life... learning how to live with his loss, and recognizing who I am because of it. I chose resilience and my journal was a big part of helping me rise up.

My child's loss taught me to love harder and appreciate every single day. It taught me to reach out to others and begin sharing my story in hopes it could reassure other wounded parents there *is* life after loss.

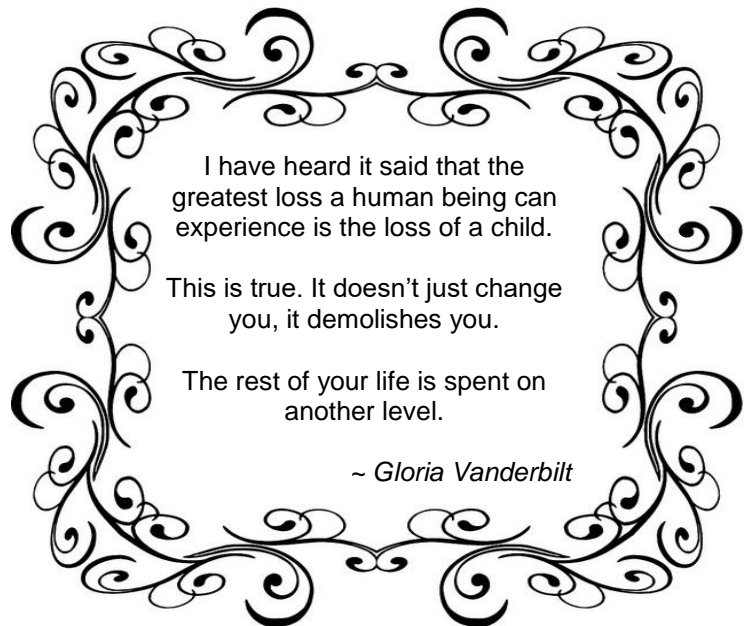
As the years go by, I've learned a mother's love never diminishes; in fact, my love for my son has grown, just as it would have if he was still alive. I am still his mother. No child dies without a legacy and a purpose for those that are left behind. It's up to you, his mother, his father. Honor your child by healing. They wouldn't want it any other way. 🌱

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



October – November – December 2018

CALENDAR OF EVENTS	
October	
October 2	<b>Monthly Chapter Meeting:</b> 7:00 PM – Open discussion
November	
November 6	<b>Monthly Chapter Meeting, Potluck Dinner &amp; Speaker:</b> 7:00 PM – Please RSVP by Nov. 4 (see form in this issue)
December	
December 4	<b>Monthly Chapter Meeting:</b> 7:00 PM – Children's Gifts - Bring an unwrapped gift in honor of your child. The gifts will be donated to underprivileged children
December 9	<b>Candle Lighting Program:</b> Doors open at 6:30 PM; program at 7:00 PM
January	
January 8	<b>Monthly Chapter Meeting:</b> 7:00 PM – Topic to be Determined



BP/USA Chicagoland on the Web: <http://www.bpusachicagoland.org/index.html>  
Like us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Bereaved-Parents-of-the-USA-Chicagoland-Chapter>