

ST. LOUIS CHAPTER  
BEREAVED PARENTS U.S.A.  
P.O. BOX 410350  
ST. LOUIS, MO 63141

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May • June 2009

## 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 BP/USA to provide a haven where all bereaved families can meet and share our grief journeys. We attend monthly gatherings whenever we can and for as long as we believe necessary. We share our fears, confusions, 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 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 to each other and to every more recently bereaved family. We are the *Bereaved Parents of the USA*. We welcome you.



St. Louis Chapter Newsletter

# USA

May • June 2009

## A Solitary Journey

Helen Steiner Rice

Grief is a solitary journey. No one but you knows the gaping hole left in your life when someone you know has died. And no one but you can mourn the silence that was once filled with laughter and song. It is the nature of love and of death to touch every person in a totally unique way.

Comfort comes from knowing that people have made the same journey. And solace comes from understanding how others have learned to sing again. ■

## May I Grieve?

—Susanne DeMars, Miami, FL

In the daytime I walk,  
work, and all;  
but at home in the evening,  
I stumble and fall.

The office says, "Function, smile,  
get control!" but at home I can grieve to  
cleans my soul.

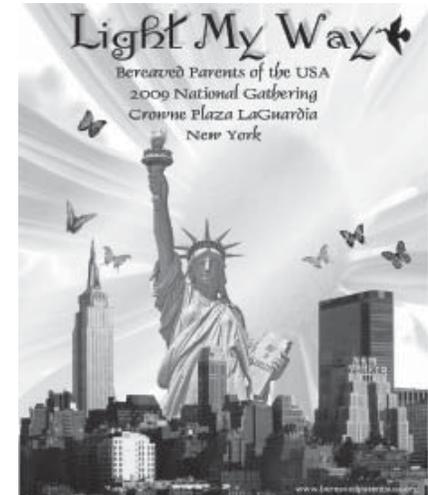
Must I be two people for  
the rest of my life?

Can I make it through pain  
and struggle and strife?

If I could be just one person for more than  
one day, my freedom to grieve would help  
light the way.

But society tells me not to be sad.  
They tell me, "She's at peace now, and you  
should be glad."

When grieving the loss of a child  
is perceived,  
how much easier it is for  
we, the bereaved. ■



## Gathering 2009

July 10 - 12, 2009

[bereavedparentsusa.org/Gathering.html](http://bereavedparentsusa.org/Gathering.html)

## Incredible

things happen  
when **Bereaved Parents** gather!  
Please note the **Gathering '09** date on your  
calendar then visit our website.  
**Start planning!!** *Hope to see you there.*

## Inside:

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## Bereaved Parents USA

Mothers' Day

## JANE L.



-Jane L. Huntsville Chapter, AL

The Mother's Day commercials had begun. Some tug at painful memories; most I just ignore. I don't celebrate Mother's Day though I do remind myself that the founder never had any children. My workplace sent an e-mail of a different sort, acknowledging that for some of us the day can be filled with conflicting emotions. (That's for sure!) The e-mail invited us to a Mother's Day labyrinth walk. The idea of an ancient and spiritual experience appealed to me at this time. (Who knows about next year?) While walking the labyrinth, I tried to concentrate on the connections between the heavens and the earth or between the physical and spiritual. I did find it to be a relaxing even emotionally soothing experience. On Monday morning I heard several of my co-workers being asked how their Mother's Day was. I realized that this year, I had an answer. I would say, "I walked the labyrinth." We were ▶

▶ invited to walk for our Mothers, but I walked it for my child, my son Ben. Ben's Mom - Jane.

**Herb's Hodgepodge and his Ed Note:** The labyrinth is not a maze, but a circular path with only one way into the center and one way out. The illustration below is one of several different labyrinth designs. Many exist today in churches and parks and are used to help achieve a contemplative state. Walking among the turns, one loses track of direction and of the outside world, and thus quiets his mind. Jane and a close friend walked the local labyrinth on Mother's day weekend; I have asked her to write about her experience for our newsletter. ■



## FATHER'S DAY

Warm and sunny day in June  
Father's Day

Children, small and grown  
give gifts to father  
say thanks to father say I  
Love You.

But there are fathers whose  
children are not here  
to give gifts and say thanks  
and say I Love You.

Remember the fathers  
whose children are gone,  
because they will always be



If you are interested in walking a Labyrinth for Mother's or Father's Day there are many in our area. Just google "Labyrinth" and your location. I did and listed below are just a few in St Louis area that are open to the public;

**First Presbyterian Church of St. Louis**  
7200 Delmar Blvd.  
St. Louis, Missouri 63130

**Centenary Church**  
55 Plaza Square  
St. Louis, Missouri 63103

If you're going through  
hell, keep going.  
- Sir Winston Churchill

## Meeting Times &amp; Places

## ARNOLD-IMPERIAL

**No longer meeting!**  
A suggested alternative is  
South Co's Fenton Group.

## BOWLING GREEN

(3rd Thursday, 7-9 PM)  
Prairie Edge Garden Center,  
18011 Business 161 S.  
Bowling Green, MO 63334  
**Fac:** Cindy Morris (636)462-9961

## Bowling Green's SIBLING GROUP

(Meet time same as Bowling Green)  
**Fac:** Wendy Koch (573)822-6123

## TROY, MO Group

(2nd Tuesday, 7 PM)  
Ingersoll Chapel in Troy  
**Fac:** Cindy Morris (636)462-9961

## Troy's SIBLING GROUP

(Meets same time as Troy)

## ST. PETERS

(1st Thursday, 7:00 PM)  
Knights of Columbus Hall  
5701 Hwy N, Cottleville MO  
**Fac:** Marcia Hoekel (636)332-8097

**St. Peters' SIBLING GROUP**  
(Meets same time as St Peters)

## Tri-County Chapter

(2nd Thursday)  
First Baptist Church  
402 North Missouri St  
Potosi, MO 63664  
**Fac:** Brenda Wilson (573)438-4559

## JEFFERSON COUNTY, SOUTH

(1st Thursday, 7 PM)  
St Rose Catholic Church,  
Miller & 3rd St  
Desoto, MO  
**Facs:** Ginny Kamp (636)586-8559  
**Co:** Debbie Larson

## SOUTH COUNTY Fenton

(2nd & 4th Monday, 7 PM)  
Abiding Savior Lutheran Church  
4355 Butler Hill Rd.  
St. Louis, Mo 63128  
**Fac:** Kathy Myers (636)343-5262  
**Co:** Darla McGuire (636)671-0916

## WASHINGTON MO Group

Does not meet please call  
**Fac:** Betty Werner (636)3904422

## NORTH COUNTY Group

(3rd Saturday, 9:30 AM)  
Coldwell Baker  
Gundaker Bldg (rear)  
2402 North Hwy 67  
**Fac:** Pat Ryan (314)605-3949

Volunteer interpreter for  
hearing impaired, call ahead!

## WEST COUNTY Group

(4th Tues, 7 PM)  
Shaare Emeth Congregation,  
11645 Ladue (Ballas & Ladue)  
MO 63141  
**Fac:** Judy Ruby (314)994-1996

## BPUSA St L Chapter's

**Business Meeting: May 9**  
**Facilitators Meet: June 13**  
Saturdays @ 9:00 AM  
Creve Coeur Gov. Center  
room #1  
300 N. New Ballas Road  
All interested in how  
our chapter operates are  
welcome.  
Questions?

Call: Sharon Krejci  
(636) 532-0033



## ADDITIONAL MEETINGS

**Parents of Murdered Children:**  
Meetings: 3<sup>rd</sup> Tues 7:30 p.m.  
St Alexius Hospital  
3933 S Broadway  
Mata Weber (618) 972-0429  
Butch Hartmann  
(314) 487-8989

**LIFE CRISIS CENTER:**  
(Survivors of Suicide)  
2650 Olive St,  
St. Louis, MO 63103  
Meetings: Weds 7:00 p.m.  
(314) 647-3100  
**P.A.L.S.** (Parents affected by  
the loss of a child through  
suicide)  
Meetings: 2<sup>nd</sup> Tues 7:00 p.m.  
4th Sat at 10:30 a.m.  
St Lukes Hospital (141 & 40)  
St. Louis, MO  
(314) 853-7925

Bereaved Parents USA

## Bereaved Parents USA

## IT'S MUSIC THAT BONDS THE SOUL

—Stacie Gilliam, Oklahoma City, OK

The room you once lived in  
doesn't look the same.  
The people, who used to call you,  
never mention your name.  
The car you used to drive,  
they may not make any more, all the  
things you once treasured, are boxed be-  
hind closet doors.

The clothes you set the trends by,  
are surely out of date.  
The people you owed money to,  
have wiped away the slate.

Things have changed and changed,  
again since you went away.  
But some things have remained  
the same each and every day.

Like this aching in my heart...  
a scar that just won't heal, or the way a  
special song can change the way you feel.

Brother, you must know that the music  
bonds us and will always keep us close.  
Because, secretly, I know deep in my  
heart, it's the music you miss most.

So, let the world keep on turning  
and time can take it's toll.

For as long as the music keeps playing,  
you'll be alive and dancing in my soul. ■

## Sibling Page

### To My Sister

—Laurie Dunham

*To my sister who  
saw through it all,  
to my sister who  
wouldn't let me fall.*

*To my sister in heaven  
living a new life,  
to my sister not living  
in a world of strife.*

*To my sister, my earth,  
wind, and sky,*

*to my sister fly hard, fly high.*

*To my sister who's my star  
shinning bright,  
to my sister good-bye  
and good-night.*



## In Remembrance of John

—Susan Herndon, BP Marion County Chapter



One bright day he went off to war  
my precious first born son,  
to battle in an alien land  
in a war that would never be won.  
As he said good-bye on that fateful day,  
my eyes were filled with tears.  
He looked so young to be leaving home,  
younger than his nineteen years.  
The months passed slowly, week by week,  
the news was ever grim.  
Despite my prayer, the fear was there  
at the thought of losing him.  
Then one sad day, it came to pass  
The knock upon the door.  
My dear, brave boy - the one I loved  
would be with me no more.  
He died heroically, I'm told  
a good soldier to the end.  
He never lost his faith in God  
and to all he was a friend.  
Now his name is engraved  
on that famous wall  
for any and all to see.  
But, in my aching heart, I wish  
that he was here with me. ■

## Save the Date Candlelight

December 1, 2009  
Shaare Emeth  
Congregation

11645 Ladue  
(Ballas & Ladue)  
St Louis, MO 63141



*"A candle loses nothing by  
lighting another candle."*

—Erin Majors

Bereaved Parents USA

Bereaved Parents USA

# Golfing for Angels

*In loving memory of our children*

*Saturday Oct 3rd 2009*



## The Golf Club at Wentzville

9 Pro Shop Drive Wentzville Mo 63385

12 P.M. Shot Gun Start

4 Person Scramble

Entry Fee \$ 360.00 per team

or \$ 90.00 per person

(individual will be placed in a foursome)

Limited to the first 36 teams – First Place in 3 Flights

Tournament includes: golf, cart, supper and beverages, closest to pin on three par 3's, long drive men and women and attendance prizes.

### \$ 20,000.00 Hole-in-One

Optional Skins game, mulligans, and a 50/50 drawing

Call (314) 574-3733 or (636) 441-5304 for inquiries

The Bereaved Parents of the USA (BP/USA) is a National Organization designed to support parents and their families who are struggling to survive their grief after the death of a child. Most families feel a need, after they have endured this most devastating life crisis, to have some order restored to their lives. BP/USA provides an atmosphere where personal change, growth and a positive resolution of grief can occur. Your support of this event will allow us to continue to provide:

- 65 chapters throughout the United States
- Over 10,000 parents visit our website each month
- 50,000 newsletters sent annually
- Weekly meetings conducted by volunteer facilitators
- Self-funding / self supporting
- Telephone hotline provided (314-878-0890)
- An all-volunteer organization
- Holiday candlelight in Memory of our Children
- Local website - bpusastl.org
- National Website - bereavedparentsusa.org

## Team Entry Form

Make checks payable to: **BP USA Tax Id #43-1744852**

Mail Checks and Team Entry Forms to: **BP USA**

*Please have entries in by Sept 26th* PO Box 410350

*We will take late sign ups day of the tournament as space allows.* St. Louis Mo 63141

Player Name	Address	Phone	E-mail
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1.	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____

# Infant & Toddler Page

## BIRTHDAY BLUES

—Dana Gensler

**T**oday is May 23, a very significant day, because it is our daughter's birthday. I still remember sitting on the back deck on a bright happy day, holding a big baby in my tummy, and feeling the first pangs of labor. Of course, it's raining outside today. It rained last year too.

She was two days old when she died. Because her birth and her death are so close together, both days seem to be equally difficult. Even the day in between is just as bad.

Events of her life leisurely parade through my mind: the delivery, the urgent flight to Kosair's Neonatal Intensive Care, that devastating telephone call, her sighs. Everything!

I especially remember those words the doctor said: "There is nothing we can do." It was only a few hours later when the same voice whispered:

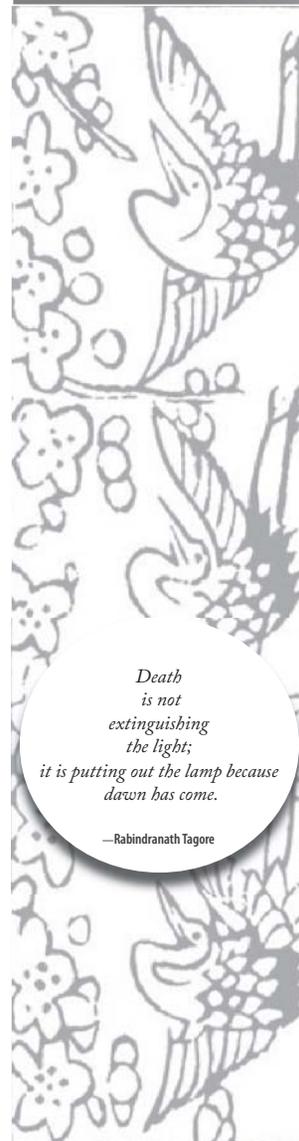
"I'm so sorry. Her heart has stopped beating." Of course, by that time we already knew. We had been holding her in our arms as she gradually, gently, slipped away.

Nobody ever told me grief could be so persistent. She's always in my mind, but there have been weeks, months even, when I hardly cried for her at all. But today I feel that same intense desire to see her again. If only I could hold her in my arms, just one more time, I'm sure the tears would stop. (I believe the experts refer to this as "Shadow Grief")

And yet, it can really make me angry when other people assume my tears only indicate that I am a weakling, wallowing in my own grief. Or, even worse, accuse me of "angling for sympathy". "After all," they say, "it has been two whole years. It's time to forget it and go on."

We are going to have to deal with these days in May for the rest of our lives. Time helps ease the pain of grief, but nothing will ever ease the pain of how much we miss her. Not the passage of time, not other children, not a new house, or a new job, not even a new baby.

I can't help it, I still love her. I can't pretend it didn't happen. I can't deny it. I can't forget it. It's still far beyond my comprehension! It wasn't just for a week, or a month, or even two whole years. It's going to go on, and on, and on. Forever! ■



*Death is not extinguishing the light; it is putting out the lamp because dawn has come.*

—Rabindranath Tagore

Bereaved Parents USA

## Bereaved Parents USA

## Newsletter Submissions

(Cut off date for the *July August* issue is August 20th)

To include your child's photo send your donation/love gift/ brief sentiment & photo to:

Jamie Ryan  
6309 Washington Ave  
St. Louis, MO 63130

(Include a self addressed stamped envelope, and make checks payable to BPUSA)



## BP/USA 2009 Gathering Reminders:

© Gathering attendees may register online this year if they wish.

© Hard-copy registrations are also accepted.

© Early-registration discount!  
Registration is \$25 per person or \$75 per family of three or more only if registration made before June 1, 2009.

© It would be a good idea to make hotel reservations early as well. Be sure to mention that you are attending the BP/USA 2009 Gathering so that the hotel will give you our special rate.

Reminders courtesy of, Shirley C. Ottman,  
President BP/USA Board of Directors



## Telephone Friends

### Accident, Automobile:

Katie VerHagen .....(314) 576-5018  
Steve Welch .....(636) 561-2438

### Accident, Non Vehicular:

Maureen & Chuck McDermott .....(636) 227-6931

### Adult Sibling:

Mark VerHagen .....(314) 726-5300  
Traci Morlock .....(636) 332-1311

### Drugs or Alcohol:

Patrick Dodd .....(314) 575-4178

### Grandparent:

Margaret Gerner .....(636) 978-2368

### Child with Disability:

Lois Brockmeyer .....(314) 843-8391

### Illness, Short Term:

Jean & Art Taylor .....(314) 725-2412

### Illinois Contact:

Linda Moffatt .....(618) 243-6558

### Jefferson County Contact:

Sandy Brungardt .....(314) 954-2410

### Murder:

Mata Weber .....(618) 972-0429  
Butch Hartmann .....(314) 487-8989

### Only Child:

Mary Murphy .....(314) 822-7448

### Suicide:

Sandy Curran .....(314) 647-2863

### Single Parent:

Mary Murphy .....(314) 822-7448

When you're down and troubled  
and you need a helping hand ...  
Close your eyes and think of  
me

and soon I will be there ...  
— Carol e King

# St. Louis Bulletin Board

2nd Annual  
BPUSA *StL's*

## Golfing for Angels

Oct. 3, 2009

For more information see the  
Form on page 4  
and visit our web page



WWW Honor your Child

**Be a...Web Sponsor** for a \$20 donation to BPUSA/STL your child will be featured on our home page for 1 month. Includes a scrolling message and your child's picture (25 words or fewer).

**Create a...Web Memorial** at the "Meet Our Children" section. The cost is a \$25 donation. Your child's name will appear below your group as a link to their page.

**Interested,** contact: Barb Blanton at our website or [barb\\_blanton@yahoo.com](mailto:barb_blanton@yahoo.com). With your donation, specify whether you want to sponsor or to add to the web memorial.

*BPUSA StL's commitment is to provide space in our newsletter for our parents and families to communicate. Printed in your newsletter are private expressions of writers. We offer the writings for your reflection. Sometimes observing nature or establishing routines signal solace to the writer. Often writers turn to religion or spirituality for comfort and guidance.*

*BPUSA StL shares these insights not only for your contemplation but also to acknowledge our community's many, rich sources for strength and hope.* ■

It's so curious...

one can resist tears and 'behave' very well in the hardest hours of grief.  
But then someone makes you a friendly sign behind a window, or one notices that a  
flower that was in bud only yesterday has suddenly blossomed,  
or a letter slips from a drawer and  
everything collapses.

—Sidonie Gabrielle Colette

Bereaved Parents USA

## Bereaved Parents USA

## NIGHT

—Margaret Harmer, Melbourne, Australia

My bedside clock shows the time.

It is 3:16 a.m.— in another desperate night.

I stare into the darkness  
tears roll off the sides of my eyes  
into my ears— out onto my pillow silently.  
My husband moves, I know he isn't asleep.  
His breathing isn't regular.  
He stirs and I know he is remembering.

He moves out of bed into the kitchen, the lights  
out there snap on, I hear crockery noises as he  
makes himself tea... and then there is silence.

Should I go out to see how he is or stay quietly in  
my bed— leaving him time alone?  
His days are so full at work, he has no place to be  
himself but alone at 3:30 in the morning.

Oh, God, **WHEN** are we going to be released  
from this desperate longing and grief for our little  
boy— our only son?  
How long does it last? How long does it take?

So many months have gone by, and we are not  
feeling any better— but **WORSE!**

Help me, God— I just can't handle it alone!

He stumbles back into bed, cold and spent.  
We lie apart— both wide awake desperate for  
rest— relief.

He moves and I turn toward him.  
Suddenly reaching for his hand.  
He turns to me and holds me closely.  
No words are needed ... we are together.

We feel so much for each other. We **KNOW!**

No one else in the world can share  
my grief with him.

Thank you, God, that we still have each other.  
But I am still alone.



## A Message To My Wife

—Don Hackett, Hingham, MA

The years of our marriage are few when  
measured against a lifetime.

We have encountered joy and shared  
confidence in our future.

We have known hope's ending and have  
borne the death of dreams.

We have, together, been diminished.

Even minor aspirations have eluded our  
grasp in the cruel shadow of the loss of our  
child.

Yet, we still share our lives, and though

the brightness we once knew has fled,  
we have grown enough to sense a return  
of laughter— an uplifting to shatter the

dimness, to remind us that tomorrow will  
come and dreams may again be born. ■



## APRIL • MAY

—Terre Bell, Anne Arundel Co. MD Chapter BPUSA

**R**egardless of the calendar or the meteorologists, April  
marks the beginning of spring for many of us. The  
world outside begins to awaken from its winter slumber,  
and the sights and sounds and smells of spring abound, from  
the flowers peeking out of the ground to the birds chirping  
merrily outside our windows to the smell of the blooming trees  
as we venture out for our first walk of the season.



This is what spring is all about unless, of  
course, you are a "newly" bereaved parent,  
and then you might just be oblivious to it all.  
In fact, you may even resent the reappearance  
of spring and its symbolic rebirth.

The message to you from an "old timer" on  
this grief journey is to be easy on yourself... it won't always be  
this hard, and just feel whatever you feel. Don't let anyone tell  
you how you "should" feel this spring (or next).

Like all seasons, spring will have its share of emotional triggers  
for the newly bereaved — graduations, Mother's Day, planning  
for summer vacations, favorite flowers, and just waking up. But  
just as April showers bring May flowers... the tears of grief will  
ultimately sow the seeds of hope, and someday you, too, will see  
the beauty of spring again.

For those of us who have been on our grief journey for awhile,  
not only do we recognize (and welcome) the beauty of spring  
again, but we also see our children in everything that is beautiful  
in spring. It's our way of carrying them with us through spring  
and through all of the seasons. So, as spring unfolds, here's  
wishing each of you peace and whatever joy you are able to find.

## About Feeling Guilty

—Sascha

Do you blame yourself?

Are you strangled by the burden of things you did not  
do and things you should have done, as if these were  
the things that killed him?

What can you do with this relentless torment? ■

## BOOK REVIEWS

## WHEN MOURNING DAWNS

by James E. Miller

Published by Willowgreen  
Publishing this a book  
to help people progress  
through grief. There is also a  
video available of the ma-  
terials which can be viewed  
and discussed in sections.

## MY GRIEVING JOURNEY BOOK

by Eve and Donna Shavatt

"a Great book for siblings."

Published by the Paulist  
Press, on one page, the au-  
thors tell about a concern of  
siblings and on the opposite  
page, they supply a work  
page to write or draw one's  
own feelings.  
www.paulistpress.com.

## THE EMPTY CHAIR

by Susan J. Zonnebelt-  
Smeenge & Robert C. De Vries.

It is published by Baker Book  
House and is a book to help  
with the handling of grief  
on holidays and special oc-  
casions. It contains helpful  
readings and thoughts for  
all occasions which grieving  
parents face. www.baker-  
books.com. ■



## Bereaved Parents USA



**In Memory of  
Kati Fisher**

August 17, 1993 — September 14, 2006  
*When someone you love becomes a memory,  
 the memory becomes a treasure.*  
*We miss you so. Love,*  
*Grandma & Grandpa DuBois & Baboo*  
 —The DuBois'



**In Memory of  
Kevin J. Austin**

June 15, 1960—September 7, 2004  
*This picture reminds me,  
 another vacation  
 coming up and you won't be there.*  
*We'll wish your noise and nonsense.*  
*Forever missed forever loved,*  
*Mom & Bob*  
 —Barb & Bob Callanan



**In Memory of  
Angela Ehrhart**

May 6, 1974 — September 15, 1993  
*Your mom is my rock. Love, Cat Reis*  
 —Catherine Reis



**In Memory of  
Trisha Blue**

*We miss you*  
*Love, Cat*  
 —Catherine Reis



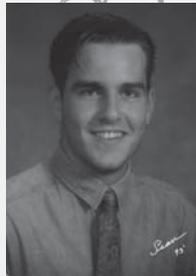
**In Memory of  
Nicole Samuels**

December 2, 1987 — May 12, 2007  
 —Pam Samuels



**In Memory of  
Jason Matthew Snyder**

March 27, 1986— June 1, 2006  
*Forever young, Forever loved,  
 Forever missed.*  
*Love, Mom, Dad, Lonny & Laura*  
 —Joan Synder



**In Memory of  
Sean Anderson**

November 11, 1974— January 24, 1994  
 —Arlene Thomas



**In Memory of  
Leah Eisenberg**

*"You're that kindah daughter"*  
*Kisses sweetie,*  
*Jahmomah*  
 — Jamie Ryan



**In Memory of  
Daniel M. Kohler**

May 14, 1971—May 23, 2005  
 —Arlene & Buddy Thomason



**In Memory of  
Raymond Reis "Ray-Ray"**

January 8, 1991— November 21, 2007  
*My heart aches everyday for you.*  
*Love, Mom*  
 —Catherine Reis

A **LOVE GIFT** is a donation made in your child's memory to **BP/USA**. We are self-supporting, our chapter runs entirely with volunteer staffers, so our fund raising efforts & your donations pay all our expenses. If you'd like to have your child's photo printed and **BP/USA STL** doesn't have a picture on file please send a photo along with a self addressed stamped envelope to: Jamie Ryan, 6309 Washington Ave., St Louis, MO 63130 —**Thank you!**

Love Gifts

## Bereaved Parents USA

## Water Proof Mascara

—Edie Kaplan, Broward County, FL

Recovery comes trickling through the days and years after your child's death...

A professional woman - up at seven am, the business suit, proper accessories, the hair just right, and of course, the daytime makeup. After that, sharing the duties of parents, we dressed, breakfasted and spent as much time as we could with our only child before I'd take him to school each morning, then off to the job by nine am. Then our lives were changed. The most

devastating thing in our lives occurred and our precious child died. Now, who could get up in the morning when the nights were spent in tears? Where was the desire to choose the proper business attire, fix the hair, or put makeup on a face swollen with tears from the night? The first weeks running on remote from the shock and disbelief that there was no one to take care of, dress, breakfast and take to school, left gaps of time - time to cry. The time on the job, where the preoccupation of thoughts of my child brought tears continually, and with them

came tracks of black mascara running down my cheeks. With the pain in my heart and the signs of grief on my face, I stopped wearing makeup altogether. Everyone asked if I was sick. Sick of heart - sick to death - sick of the days and endless nights of sobbing, pain, loneliness and tears. I couldn't believe I had the discipline to get up and complete a day.

Professionalism on the job was required, so I brought waterproof mascara. I remember that so clearly as a conscious decision. Then, when I cried, there wasn't any black tracks on my cheeks. I could shut my office door, let the tears flow, eventually dry my eyes, and still look okay. Many months of tears and four purchases of waterproof mascara later, my tears became less frequent. The pain in my heart subsided, and my interest in life returned. I realized my child died and I did not, even though I thought I would. Maybe, that realization started its roots at the first purchase of waterproof mascara.

Sometimes between then, and now, I went back to using the regular mascara, a more meaningful life, with only infrequent tears. My precious, remembered child is alive in my heart, not in the grief of death on my face. Recovery

comes trickling through the days and years after your child's death. Only hindsight allows us the identification of those things that we can recognize



the reorganization of our lives. One of

those trickles for me was something so silly as a change of mascara. ■

## UNCOMFORTABLE EXPRESSING EMOTIONS?

—anonymous



Men tend to grieve alone and to express very little about what they are feeling. But keeping emotions bottled up inside slows the healing process.

Dr. Norman Peart says, "Men are taught that they should not express their emotions because that is a sign of weakness. In reality, expressing emotions is a sign of health because it means you are working through those emotions. You have to be honest with yourself; you do hurt."

God, I know that You want me to release my emotions to You and to others. Give me the opportunity and the courage to do that. Uncork my bottled emotions so my healing can continue. Amen ■

## Some Ways to Help Your Grieving Spouse &amp; Strengthen Your Marriage



—Howard Cupp, Norman, OK, 1985

- ◎ Assign top priority to your marriage relationship.
- ◎ Cultivate transparency (openness and honesty).
- ◎ Accept the pain that you feel; be willing to share it, and to listen to your spouse's expression of the pain she/he is feeling.

- ◎ Be patient with your spouse and with yourself. Recognize that your spouse probably is not in the same place in the grief process as you, and that is okay.
- ◎ Don't expect your spouse to be your only source of healing.
- ◎ Keep working at communicating. Especially give attention to your affection for each other. Learn and practice the gestures of love. Remember to stay in touch physically. The importance of human touching and hugging is hard to overestimate.
- ◎ Allow/create space in your relationship. Everyone is entitled to a degree of privacy, especially with their feelings, including their grief.
- ◎ Allow yourselves to enjoy life and each other. Be willing to laugh together, as well as to cry together. Work at finding some fun things to do together.
- ◎ Help each other to remember that life is more than this child who has died. As important as this child is to you, and as much as you feel pain over her/his death, your marriage relationship involves far more than this child.

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People are like stained glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets in, their true beauty is revealed only if there is a light from within.

—Elizabeth Kubler-Ross

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Bereaved Parents USA