

ST. LOUIS CHAPTER
 BEREAVED PARENTS U.S.A.
 P.O. Box 1115
 St. Peters, MO 6337

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September • October 2010

St. Louis Chapter Newsletter

Bereaved Parents **USA**
 September • October 2010



Important
 change on
 Candlelight



Candlelight 2010's

slide presentation
 of our children is updating!
 It is **mandatory** to respond to and follow
 the directions of
 Candlelight 2010's invitation
 in order for your child's picture to be
 included. RSVP **by Nov 1st**

Still Time to Participate

Remember... Oct. 9, 2010
BPUSA^{StL}'s Fundraiser:
Golfing for Angels
 happens!



*Silent
 Action*
 Door Prizes

*visit our website for
 details, contacts etc*

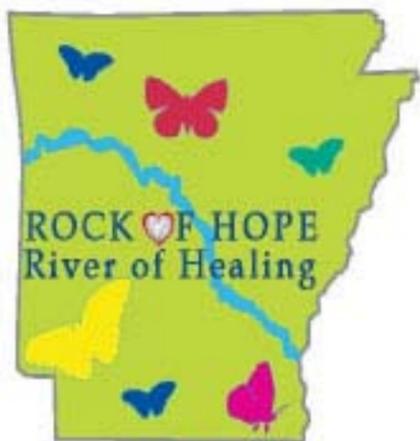
Bereaved Parents of the USA **Credo**

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.



What is our Candlelight? Every year in early December, **BPUSA^{StL}** holds a Candlelight Memorial Service to honor and remember our children who have died. The service itself includes music, poetry, and special words of understanding and hope. The highlight for most of us is that moment in the service when we see our child's picture, hear our child's name read aloud and light a candle in their memory.
Is it difficult? Yes – it can be. But it is a beautiful tribute to our children as well as a healing and peaceful experience for those that attend.
Shall I go if this is my first year? As with so many first steps, it is a personal decision. Early on, it can be painful to experience our own and others' grief. However, the service itself is intended to offer each of us a place to remember our child (or children) and to receive the comfort that comes from sharing this love with other bereaved parents, siblings, families, and friends. ■

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NOTES FROM GATHERING 2010

Dear Parents, Once again **BPUSAStL** prints gathering notes jotted as the writer listened for insights into the presenter's journeys that spoke to them—applied to their journey. This year our "imbedded" reporter is Mike Francisco. He and Jeanne are the parents of Jennifer, who was killed in an auto accident in December 5, 2008. In this issue we include installment 1 of his magical notes. —Jamie

07/0/2010, Saturday, Paul and Claudia Balasic, Anne Arundel County, MD, Hidden Connection with our Children

Their daughter, Bethany Anne, was a Severna Park High School, freshman when she died, a mile away from home.

They ask, "Who are we now?"

- ∞ Our body, mind and soul, our essence, is who we are.
- ∞ We are bereaved parents.
- ∞ Repairing soulfulness is who we are. Our souls give us comfort of who we are. Our souls long for things we're deprived of.

They say, "Grief changes everything."

- ∞ Logical thinking doesn't matter. We revert to emotional feelings.
- ∞ We see things that reconnect us, and we grieve.
- ∞ Our souls are disrupted. Our souls want to get whole.

- ∞ We lose our identity and need to re-invent ourselves.

They say, "We suffer collateral losses."

- ∞ Friends and family leave us. "We are their worst nightmare; we are the most horrible reality to them.
- ∞ We are car wrecks people don't want to see.

They say, "this is what helps."

- ∞ Our periodic balloon releases are symbols of joy and happiness.
- ∞ Claudia's poppies bloom in spring.
- ∞ Claudia wears a pewter "Bethany" heart – she had bought at a truck stop. She asked a clerk re-stocking the display if she had a pewter heart with "Bethany" enscribed. It was in restock clerk's hand at that moment. She didn't forget to say, "Thank you," to the clerk and Bethany.

- ∞ Kids give us enormous opportunities to make positive impact on the world.

They say, "There's no peace in grief. You've gotta find a mean between joy and grief."

- ∞ When Paul and Claudia became grandparents, their grandson's name was "ETHAN." "ETHAN!" Ethan, what an incredible honor and remembrance of their BETHANY.

07/10/2010, Saturday, Sandy Brosam, Spokane, WA, Moving Forward With Grief (Way Forward)

Sandy lost 2 children. "I am a mother – daughter – wife – sister – granddaughter. I love my family deeply, so when I lose a member of my family, a close friend, how do I move forward in my grief?"

People would be terrified to be in her shoes. That's the basis of her book - what to do. Her two-year old son was killed in a car crash. She sued the State of Washington over the faulty guardrail she hit (\$1,800 damage—and the state counter-sued her for guardrail repair). She had anger with the state of Washington and weathered a 4 year legal battle. The state placed the accident cause with her actions. She was forced to obtain depositions from her childhood to cite her honesty. cont. pg 3 ▶

Meeting Times & Places

BOWLING GREEN Group

(3rd Thursday, 7-9 PM)
Prairie Edge Garden Center,
18011 Business 161 S.
Bowling Green, MO 63334
Fac: Bill & Vicki Lagemann
(573)242-3632

Bowling Green's Sibling GROUP

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

ST. PETERS /St Charles Group

(1st Thursday, 7:00 PM)
Knights of Columbus Hall
5701 Hwy N, Cottleville MO
Fac: Cindy Morris (636)462-9961
Greg Klocke(636)-441-5304

St. Peters' SIBLING GROUP

Fac: Nikki Boswell
nichole.boswell@gmail.com
(Meets same time as St Peters)

TROY, MO Group

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

A WARM, UNDERSTANDING

Welcome To Newcomers

We understand how difficult it is to attend your first meeting. Feelings can be overwhelming; we have all experienced them and know how important it is to take that first step. Our stories may be different, but we are alike in that we all hurt deeply. We cannot take your pain away, but we can offer friendship and support. Bring a friend or relative to lean on if you wish.

Tri-County Chapter

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

JEFFERSON COUNTY Group

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

SO. COUNTY Fenton Group

(2nd & 4th Monday, 7 PM)
Abiding Savior Lutheran Church
4355 Butler Hill Rd.
St. Louis, Mo 63128
Fac: Kathy Myers (636)343-5262
Kathymyers3@charter.net
Co: Darla McGuire (636)671-0916

So County Sibling Group

Fac: Stephanie Dunn
(Meets same time as So County)

NORTH COUNTY Group

(3rd Saturday, 9:30 AM)
Coldwell Banker
Gundaker Bldg (rear)
2402 North Hwy 67
Fac: Pat Ryan (314)605-3949
 Volunteer interpreter for hearing impaired, call ahead!

WEST COUNTY Group

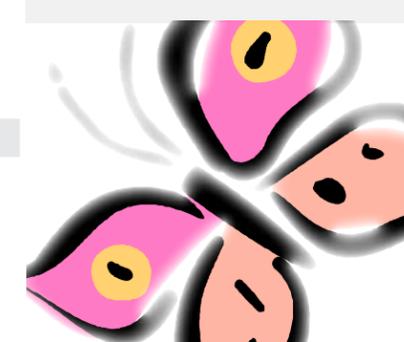
(4th Tues, 7 PM)
Shaare Emeth Congregation,
11645 Ladue (Ballas & Ladue)
MO 63141
Fac: Judy Ruby
(314)994-1996



BPUSAStL Chapter's

Business • Facilitators
Meetings: Nov 13th
Saturday @ 9:00 AM
BJC Hospital - St. Peters
10 Hospital Drive
St. Peters, MO 63376
All interested in how our chapter operates are welcomed! **Questions?**

Call: Cindy Morris
(636) 462-9961



ADDITIONAL MEETINGS

Parents of Murdered Children:

Meetings: 3rd 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 by suicide)

Meetings:
4th Sat at 10:30 a.m.
St Lukes Hospital (141 & 40)
St. Louis, MO
(314) 853-7925

A NEW YEAR'S PRAYER

—Denise Falzone, Memphis TCF

At the beginning of the Jewish New Year there is a special service held in remembrance of loved ones. This is a prayer that is said:

Yom Kippur on the sunset of Friday, the 17th of September, starts the Jewish New Year.

I remember in this solemn hour, beloved child, the many joys you afforded me during your lifetime. I recall the days when I delighted in your physical and mental growth and planned for your future. Though death has taken you from me, you are not forgotten. Your spirit is enshrined in my heart. Oh, Heavenly Father, I thank thee for the precious gift which Thou did entrust to my keeping and which in Thine infinite wisdom Thou has called back unto Thyself. Though few were the years wherein I rejoiced with my child, many are the blessings that he brought into my household. Teach me to live more noble and to extend my love and devotion to other children in thankfulness for the privilege of having had and loved this child, though but for a few brief years. Thus may his soul be bound up in the bond of life and his memory remain an inspiration to me. Amen. ■

FOR THE NEWLY BEREAVED

—Carol Babush, TCF, Atlanta, GA



Even those of us with steadfast faith find our belief system shaken after the death of a child. We seek, in various ways, to make sense of an often senseless tragedy. Whether our loss was a result of illness, accident, suicide, or murder, the questions are the same: “Why? Was it God’s will? Is my family being punished for some (probably imaginary) sin? Could it be that there is no God (for the loving God of our religious training would not allow such a terrible thing to happen)?”

I agonized over these, and many other, unanswerable questions in my grief following the death of our daughter, Susan, last year. My faith in God was not sufficient - I could not accept her death as part of some “Master Plan”. A long held belief in reincarnation, karma, and reunion in the afterlife became much less certain and reassuring, for it became much more important. And I was afraid to believe.

Some of us will, over a period of time, find either a new belief system or a return to the old that allows us to be ‘at peace with our loss. Others will acknowledge there are no acceptable answers for now, and let the issues rest. It does not matter which path we follow, but it is vital that, no matter how long it takes, we find a way to cease investing all our emotional energy in a quest that has no end. We must, in my opinion, learn to concentrate upon ourselves - some of us for the first time in our lives.

We, the survivors, have a duty to ourselves, our families, and to the memory of our children not to dwell in the world of what was or what might have been. We should re-enter, as soon as we are able, the world of reality and do the very best we can with the rest of our lives. The question we must really ask is not “Why?”, but “What now?” ■



Her husband divorced her for “killing his son.” She counter-sued the state for wrongful death of her son. The state was eventually proven wrong—they didn’t bury the guardrail according to safety requirements. She found she had no self-esteem. At the time, she even thought her new daughter might die. It took a long time to heal. Her 8-year romance blew-up. She progressed to 25 years with new husband and they had a son with same exact same due date. He even looked like her first-born. Brandon was thought to be a healthy baby. She soon learned he was born with embryonic cancer cells on the back of his head. A chiropractor diagnosed cancer. After a MRI, a neurologist suggested the possibility of

Sandy suggests that grieving classes need to be taught in high school—“You may find your friends are gone because they don’t know what to do

a brain tumor, but wouldn’t say what. It was a cancer the size of a lemon. The doctor said he will die without an operation in the next eight hours. Her nightmares were back. He lived the rest of his life in the hospital. He underwent two heart and two brain surgeries and only had a 50 percent chance, but lost. Then, her first son came to her in a vision. She saw a movie in her head of the accident. He son said, “You have to let me go,” “so you can go on.” She did, and her visions stopped. She visualized pulling love in, and pushing pain out into the ground, and gave herself a hug. This was the emotional closure of their physical relationship. You need to “Get rid of woulda, coulda, shoulda.” Say, “I really loved you” and “I let you go.” Put a good memory in front of the ugly memory and it works. (Brandon was in the hospital 55 days.) She wrote

a book on her grieving process. She took emotion and some detail from her first book. “We’re all on Planet Grief.” She acknowledged what she was doing. She never had adult memories of marriage, graduation, etc. She uses Facebook and tries to put on a positive spin. She has a “Facebook Mom Memory Box.” She suggests, “Write good memory on slip of paper and read it when you’re weepy.” You have everyone else’s memories to pick you up while you’re in grief. Focus on things positive. She existed, not lived life. She was angry at God and everybody else. Her kids are ok, she is not. She’s not looking at what is good and fun, like looking at ants (with her son), carrying a cookie crumb into crack in sidewalk, and didn’t get the ant spray. “Let the pain go and don’t carry it. See love of child thru your grandchild’s eyes. You need to release the bad. We cannot control a lot of things. You may choose to let it destroy you, or decide to live on.” She has practical things to do to get through life in her book. You may find strength, courage and encouragement in her book. She left some of her raw emotions in the book. She finds she gave away more of her books than she sold—some people needed the book more than she needed the profit. “People were there for the funeral, and they left us. We feel all alone.” In the love for her family, she found courage to go on. She says her husband and brother couldn’t get past first couple pages. Sandy suggests that grieving classes need to be taught in high school—“You may find your friends are gone because they don’t know what to do. Try to find some good tomorrow. Smile thru the pain, its ok. You don’t have to walk this journey alone.” ■

2011 BP USA Gathering:

29-31 July 2011 in Reston, Virginia

(Billed as “Washington, DC”)

\$99xnight, free shuttle

\$145xmeal plan, \$75xchildren’s meals

28 July

KickoffPool party!

“It takes a lot of courage for a man to open up in front of a room full of other men. However, that’s exactly what I witnessed from these dads at the workshop. A lot of sharing and a lot of courage.”

— Kelly Farley (presenter at Gathering)

Golfing for Angels

In loving memory of our children
Saturday Oct 9th 2010



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 Oct 2nd PO Box 410350

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

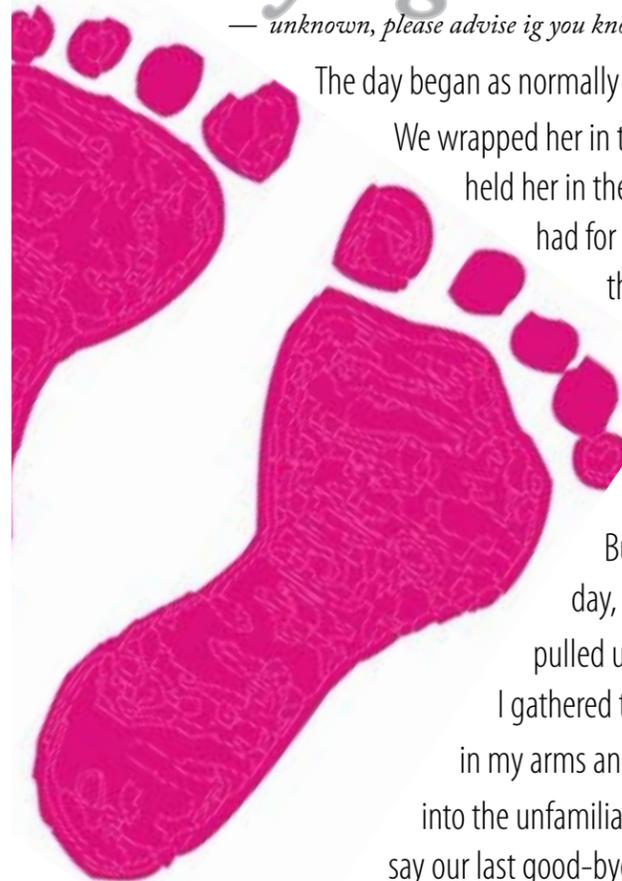
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| 1. | _____ | _____ | _____ |
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| 3. | _____ | _____ | _____ |
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Infant & Toddler Page

Saying Good-Bye

— unknown, please advise if you know this dad's name



The day began as normally as any other day.

We wrapped her in the same blanket, held her in the same way, and hugged her the same way we had for the past eight months. We drove the same car over the same streets, in the same town, with the same people all around us.

We could have been going to any of the familiar places we frequented on a normal day.

But we weren't. There was nothing normal about that day, and as we

pulled up to the funeral home, I gathered the still bundle

in my arms and she and I took our final walk together into the unfamiliar atmosphere of the funeral home where we would say our last good-bye.

It had been difficult to accept the news that our baby would have less than a year to live. It was a strain living from day to day, never knowing what each hour would bring. It was heartbreaking when her death occurred.

But nothing, absolutely nothing, could have been more gut-wrenchingly painful than laying down our beautiful baby and turning away, knowing we would never hold her again.

When we went home, we walked through the same door, into the same house, and hung up our coats in the same closet. But as I looked around, I knew everything had changed. Nothing would be the same again. We were no longer normal, for we had lost a part of ourselves that we could never regain. The day ended. Our new normalcy had begun. ■

It's Okay

It's okay,
 To cry,
 To not cry,
 To feel guilty,
 To not feel guilty,
 To be angry,
 To stop being angry,
 To seek answers
 To stop seeking answers,
 To feel responsible,
 To feel sorry for yourself,
 To be mad at your child,
 To feel misunderstood,
 To reach out for help,
 To let out your pain,
 To care what others think,
 To not care what others think,
 To let go of your child's death,
 To embrace your child's life,
 To lose your expectations,
 To grieve anyway you want,
 To give yourself a break,
 To believe in signs,
 To stop hating,
 To forgive,
 To smile without guilt,
 To find joy,
 To heal,
 To begin to live again,
 To laugh,
 To love yourself,
 It's okay; It's all okay.



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) 918-5896

Single Parent:

Mary Murphy (314) 822-7448

If we all discovered that we had only five minutes left to say all that we wanted to say, every telephone booth would be occupied by people calling other people to tell them that they loved them.

- Christopher Morley

St. Louis Bulletin Board

Did you know . . .

BPUSASTL is our volunteers?

We are so proud of that fact; and for it we deserve a big group hug! Last issue we announced Cindy & Greg as our incoming chair & co-chair. They stepped up which allows Sharon Krejki to sit back and watch BPUSASTL's support power continue to grow.

Along those lines big thanks are due an unsung hero, Michelle Horrell, who maintained BPUSASTL's finances for years! Luckily, Donna Arnold steps up to assume the role of treasurer.

Wait! We have more welcomes and thanks. The BPUSASTL database has also changed hands. Carol Welch turned over the data base (& its philosophy) to Mike Francisco. Our new secretary, who has no predecessor is Victoria Kellison.

You are what keeps BPUSASTL strong!

BP/USASTL

Candlelight 2010

Sunday Dec 5th



Service begins at 3:00
 (registration 2:15- 2:45)

Shaare Emeth
 Congregation

Newsletter Submissions

Cut off date for November • December
 October 14th

Send your submission to:

Jamie Ryan
 6309 Washington Ave
 St. Louis, MO 63130

Include a self addressed stamped envelope
 and make checks payable to BPUSASTL Thankyou!

WWW Honor your Child

Be a...Web Sponsor. Make a \$20 donation to BPUSASTL and your child's picture will be displayed on our home page for 1 month. You can also write the scrolling message above your child's picture (25 words or fewer). Sponsorship is on a first come first serve basis.

Create a...Web Memorial at the "Meet Our Children" section. The cost is a one-time \$25 donation. Your child's name will appear below your group. Their name will be the link to their web page containing their picture and an optional one page story.

Interested? Contact: Barb Blanton through our website or email barb_blanton@yahoo.com. When sending in your donation, please specify whether you want to be a *web sponsor* or to add your child to the *web memorial*.

Margaret's CORNER By Margaret Gerner, MSW

THE HARVEST OF GRIEF WORK

It isn't right! I go a month sometimes and don't cry. I actually get involved in something and don't think about my daughter for hours. I had fun at the company picnic last week. I feel so guilty. Am I forgetting my daughter?

This mother was two years into her grief. She was doing good grief work—leaning into the pain, talking out feelings, expressing emotions, and attending bereaved parent's meetings regularly. But she was hurting less.

When parents begin to reap the harvest of their grief work well done, they fear they are losing their children. The truth is they are just reaping the harvest of their grief work done well.

In the first couple of years, pain ties us to our children. During that time we equate pain with love. By the time we are beginning to resolve our grief (and that is what is happening), pain has been our companion for so long we feel lost without it.

This is one of the few places in grief where our mind needs to take over for awhile. We need to look at the illogic of prolonged grieving. We need to see that we are beginning to reach the goal we hoped some day to reach.

Self talk can help us rid ourselves of this illogical emotion. Ask yourself:

- ① If you believe that to keep a child in your heart for the rest of your life, you must hang onto the pain.
- ① Will your prolonged misery make your child less dead?
- ① Does the fact that your child is dead mean that you must die also?
- ① Does your prolonged misery accomplish anything? What purpose does it serve?
- ① Will hanging onto your pain make you grow and change, or will it make you unhappy and bitter?
- ① What effect will your prolonged grief have on your marriage and your surviving children,
- ① Do you really want to stay in the pit indefinitely?
- ① Will your continuing grief honor your child?

These questions can help you see that beginning grief resolution is as healthy and normal after a couple of years, as is allowing yourself to enter fully into your grief in the early months after your child has died.

Rethink your reactions. Let yourself get to the other side of your grief.

Let yourself appreciate the peace and comfort that is beginning to be yours.

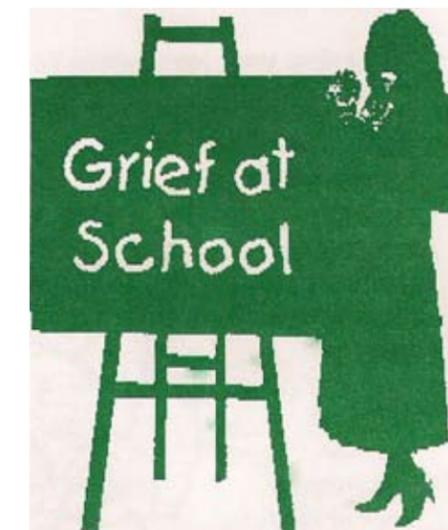
Most importantly, let yourself feel the joy of remembering your child without the deep searing pain you have felt for so long. ■

September means an end to the days of summer and the start of school. For some kids this will be the first time in the classroom after the death in their family, and for others, it may be the second or third or more years. For everyone, school can be a place where others might not know about or understand the difficulties of grieving a death. It can be awkward trying to answer questions about your family... and you may not want to even tell about the death at all. Sometimes you may wish you could just be alone, but it is hard to find a private spot at school. For many kids, it is much harder to concentrate because of all that is on their mind. Maybe the worst part is that unthinking kids can say really mean things. Here are some suggestions from kids for coping with school.

- 1.** Talk with your teacher or write her a note asking for her help.
- 2.** Arrange for permission to leave the room if you become upset or just need to get away. Maybe you could go to the nurse's office or the counselor or the principal or just to the library. If you have a super terrible day, maybe you could go home (but don't do this more than once or twice.)
- 3.** Find out how you could call someone at home or at work if you need to hear their voice.
- 4.** Practice with someone so you know what words to use when you are asked about your family. For example, you could say "I had three brothers but one died. I don't feel like talking about it now, but maybe later." Or, "My dad died last year in a car accident, that's all I want to say right now." Or, "I only talk about that with a few special people, please try to understand." Remember, you don't have to answer every question anyone asks. If you don't feel comfortable, say so. On the other hand, if you have the courage to talk with someone you

School can have its share of hassles but there are good things. Like you get to see your friends every day. It keeps you busy. Some of the teachers are great. You can learn great stuff. So, hang in there. Try these suggestions, and let us know how things go for you. —from the "Inside Fernside" newsletter, September/October, 1993 PO Box 8944 Cincinnati, OH, 45208 Barb Coe, Editor. ■

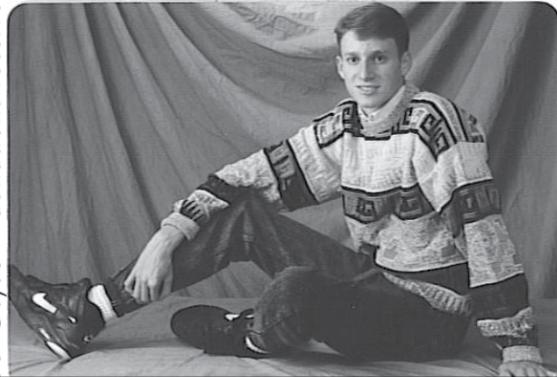
Sibling Page



trust, it may help them learn some thing and it may help you feel a little better.

5. If you have trouble concentrating, this is very normal. You may have to spend more time on your work. Figure out a time for homework when your mind seems to work the best. One kid we know woke up an hour early, ate breakfast, and then did his math. Sometimes it can help if you study with a friend as long as you both agree to be serious about doing the work. Be sure to discuss this problem with your teacher before you flunk ten tests or before your paper is days overdue. Several kids have been helped by tutors.

6. To deal with teasing or nasty comments, the best reaction is to not react at all (at least don't let them see that it bothers you). Usually this will discourage their dumb words and they will stop. You could also ask your friends to help you ignore them. If you try this and it doesn't work, talk to the teacher in charge. Words can hurt, and you are already hurting enough.



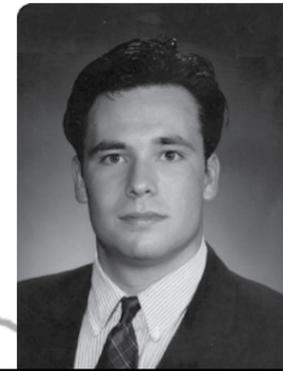
In Memory of
Donnie Lagemann
September 16, 1974—July 5, 2004
*Forever in our hearts
Love, Dad & Mom*
—Bill & Vicki Lagemann



In Memory of
Ryan Arnold
October 2, 1978 – November 3, 2004
In my heart forever.
Love mom
—Donna Arnold



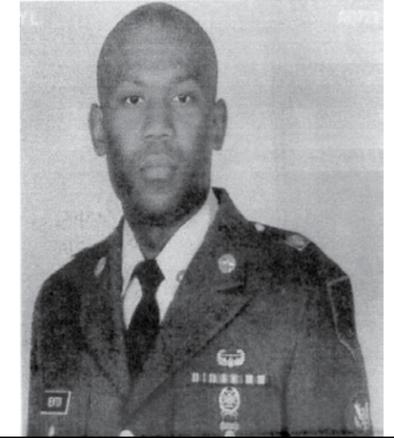
In Memory of
Daniel Mark Kohler
May 14, 1971—May 23, 2005
—Arlene & Buddy Thomason



In Memory of
Andrew Bryan Krejci
Love Mom & Dad
—Sharon & Wayne Krejci



In Memory of
Erin Marie Ewing
October 31, 1980—November 1, 2000
*Forever in our hearts. We love and miss
you. Mom & Chuck*
—Jean Ewing



In Memory of
Specialist Bobby Newton
August 15, 1974 — March 27, 2002
*We love and miss you
Mom, Jasper & family*
— Silver & Greg Crawford

8

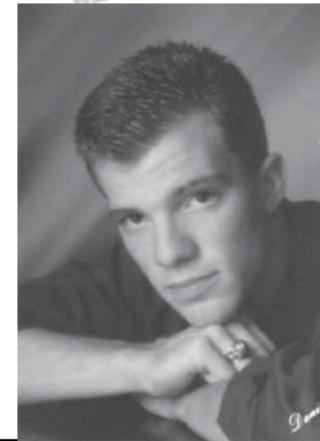
9



In Memory of
Michael Yackly
10/23/76 - 3/8/08
Memories of you are wealth to my soul.
Love, mom
—Victoria Kellison



In Memory of
Amy Jenness Oberreither
January 22, 1983— October 15, 2001
*All the love in our hearts for our beautiful
daughter. We miss you Amy*
Love, Mom & Dad
—Jeff & Persis Oberreither



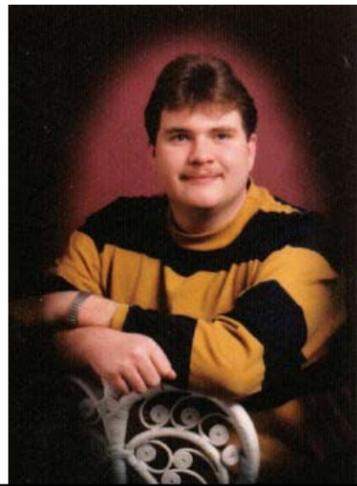
In Memory of
Jeff Ryan
October 3, 1973
much love from your family
—Pat Ryan



In Memory of
Jeffrey Morris
September 14, 1978– September 2, 2004
Love Mom & Dad
—Cindy & Jeff Morris



In Memory of
Dylan Murphy
Oct 8, 1984—August 2, 1991
—Mary Murphy



In Memory of
Brett Alan Blanton
July 15, 1973 ~ August 31, 2000
Love, Mom & Dad
—Barb & Ron Blanton



In Memory of
Jennifer Francisco
November 17, 1972 - December 5, 2008
Love Mom & Dad
— Jeanne & Mike Francisco



In Memory of
Brian Klocke
April 19, 1980– October 30, 2004
— Jan & Greg Klocke

What Is A Love Gift?
It is a donation made in your child's memory to **BPUSAStL** We are self-supporting organization. Our St Louis Chapter runs entirely with volunteer staffers. For that reason fund raising efforts and donations like "Love Gifts" and "Golfing for Angels" pay all our expenses.
If you'd like to have your child's photo printed and **BPUSAStL** 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
Make checks payable to **BPUSAStL**.
—Thank you!



In Memory of
Brian Ruby
Love Mom & Dad
—Scott & Judy Ruby

Grieving Grandparents

—Mickey Crawford, TCF Lawrenceville, GA

Reading the stories about grieving grandparents, I can't help but be reminded of something my mother told me about a year ago. I had just received several cards on Christopher's birthday and was telling her about every acknowledgement I received. She started to cry and told me how grateful she was to know others' reached out to me in my sorrow and grief.

For every tear
I shed,
she sheds
two...
one for him
and
one for me.

Then she said, "I wish someone would remember me in that way sometimes. Nobody thinks I hurt, but I do. I hurt so much for you and I miss Christopher so much, but my friends never acknowledge my grandson's birthday to me, or the anniversary of his death."

Then I realized that I, too, just like them, was one of those people who didn't understand her needs. She has always been so supportive and always, always talks about Christopher, yet even I had failed to ever send

a card or a note to her that just said, I know you hurt too - for me and for Chris - and I know your life is different now, too. She so desperately needed to know that others understood her pain and she felt so alone in grief. She felt so out of place with her grief, therefore not entitled to be remembered in any special way. I think grandparents often really are the forgotten grievers. I can tell you without a doubt that my mother's pain is every bit as intense and devastating to her as my pain is to me. For every tear I shed, she sheds two... one for him and one for me.

Please remember your parents along this journey, too. Because all of those little acts of kindness that mean so much to us, mean equally as much to them as well. We can never assume they know that we understand their pain. We have to tell them. They need to be remembered, too. ■

October Snow

It's so early to come
with much left to do-
fun and work and harvest
too. Leaves on trees with col-
ors bright, All covered now
with a snowy white.
"Why now?" we question
too soon from all we know,
yet still in God's system
we have October snow.

I know a young man
with much left to do,
of fun and work
and his harvest too.

His dreams so varied
with prospects bright.
Dimmed now as it were
with a snowy white.

"Why now?" we ponder, too
soon from all we know,
Yet allowed in God's wisdom
like an October snow.

Still it only stays
"But a small moment" or
two, and we appreciate more
skies ahead
filled with blue.

Perhaps God's timetable
is not really off course; It
may be our vision,
oft a limited source.

God knows from the start
the ending at last,
our challenge to learn
in his hands place our trust.

—Newell K. Walker, Idaho Falls,
Idaho. Inspired by the faith & courage of
Greg Olsen

BEREAVEMENT BALANCE BEAM

—Meg Avery, in loving memory of James R. Avery III, TCF



Notice the athlete as she carefully and gracefully strolls across the balance beam. She makes it look so easy. She artistically swivels at the end, We watch and hold our breath hoping she won't fall. She artistically swivels at the end, goes back to the middle, and without missing a beat, lands perfectly on the mat below.

I am not an athlete, nor an acrobat, yet I walk a balance beam every day. I tread gingerly across the beam. I know you have not noticed. I hold my breath, not as a spectator, but as a participant. I wear an outfit, not of spandex or sweats, but of steel-plated armor guarding my emotions. I give a presentation of poise and control, which I've learned with each step I've taken. I know how to survive, take each day one step at a time; sometimes pausing for laughter, sometimes trembling with tears.

Then—there are the times—I've-fallen-off which in the beginning took only a mere reminder of whom I've lost. What caused the fall? Perhaps a mention of his name, hearing his favorite song, seeing a boy on a bicycle and knowing it wasn't James, seeing a mom at the store shopping for back-to-school items, watching someone else's child at the soccer field, driving in the car with no one in the passenger seat.

But I learned to stay on the balance beam, handle those moments. of pain and loss, keep my composure, let the tears fall, but not let my steps falter, turn the corner without tripping, keep life in balance and in perspective with a huge void on the other side. Now; almost five years later, I've nearly perfected this trick. I can't compete with the professional athlete; they have the physical, visible aspect of this performance down pat. I'm still working on the emotional, mental portion, but doing quite well.

Until I hear my niece gets to be a mom, my sister-in-law moans that her son is away for a week and the house is so quiet, or yet another friend has become a grandmother, someone else we know is graduating or marrying, or my nephew turns 16 and gets a license. All are reminders of whom I'm missing, what James never will accomplish, the opportunities that James missed out on, the life I wish I could see James experience. It's all a matter of balance, keeping the stride, maintaining a sense of normalcy—balancing, in spite of a broken heart and an emotional handicap. And I know that when I fall, there are friends to help me back up, memories that make me smile, determination to live the life James would have wanted—for both of us. ■