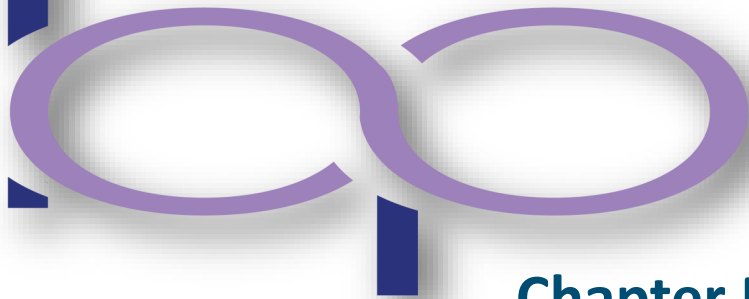


SEP - OCT 2024



**Bereaved
Parents**
OF THE USA

Chapter Newsletter-BPUSA-St. Louis

VOLUME 47 - NUMBER 5



As we approach our 30-Year Anniversary in 2025, we reflect on and celebrate BPUSA's ongoing mission of supporting families who have suffered the loss of a child, sibling, or grandchild. This milestone represents not only our commitment to bereaved families, but also our dedication to growing and evolving as an organization.

We are excited to share two important updates with all of you.

First, we are delighted to announce that *Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is the location for the 2025 National Gathering Conference, July 25-27. The Pittsburgh Airport Marriott Hotel* is the venue for this great celebration of 30 years service and support to communities that only happens with your support.

Second, we are excited to introduce a new logo for BPUSA, developed with the talent, creativity and understanding of our mission by a wonderful graphic designer. While this change modernizes our visual identity, our core "brand" remains the same. Our brand is what families think about when they consider the impact of BPUSA's mission during their grief journey; it is what stays with them and keeps them connected to us. This new logo reflects our growth, view of the future and continued commitment to support bereaved families nationwide.

BPUSA Board of Directors

(Logo: *top of this page*)

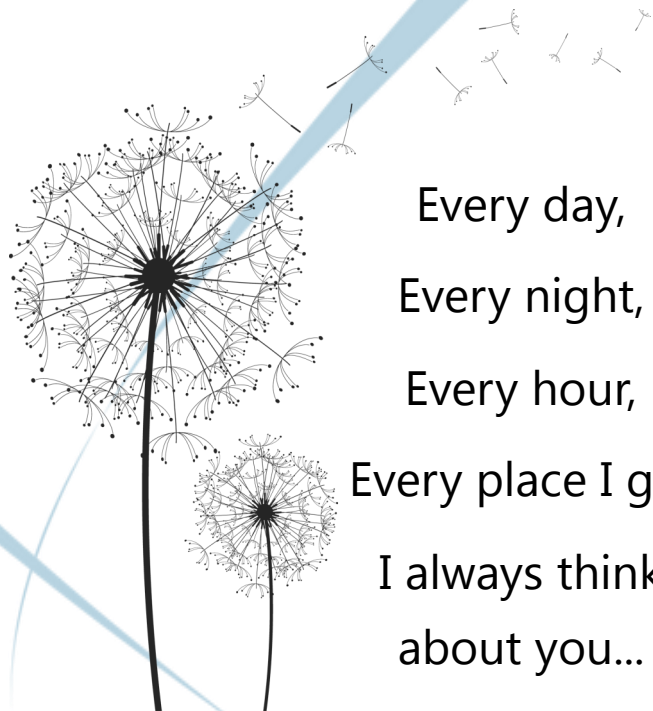
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THANK YOU FOR YOUR LOVE GIFT

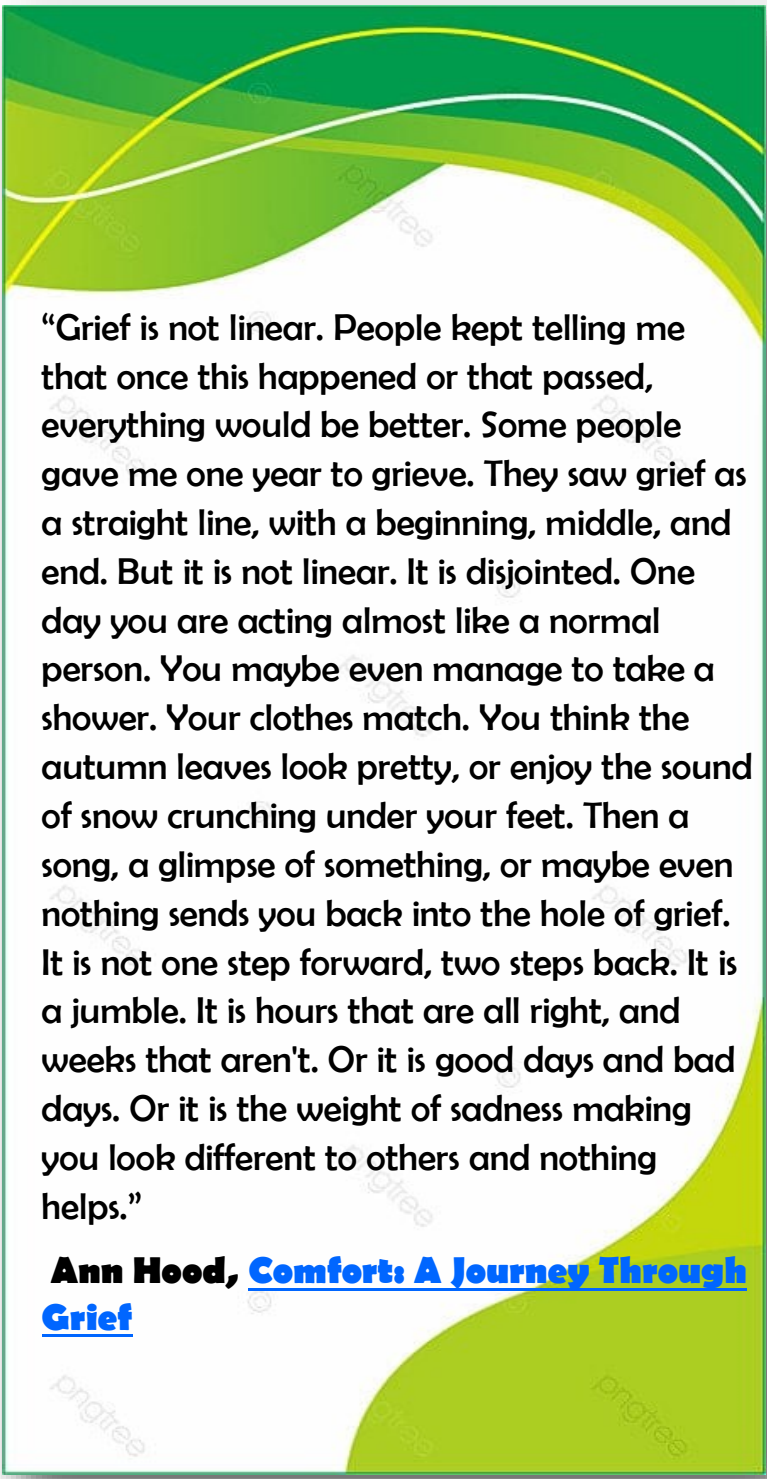


**Darren Young
1968 - 1989**

**35 years
without
you!**



Every day,
Every night,
Every hour,
Every place I go,
I always think
about you...



"Grief is not linear. People kept telling me that once this happened or that passed, everything would be better. Some people gave me one year to grieve. They saw grief as a straight line, with a beginning, middle, and end. But it is not linear. It is disjointed. One day you are acting almost like a normal person. You maybe even manage to take a shower. Your clothes match. You think the autumn leaves look pretty, or enjoy the sound of snow crunching under your feet. Then a song, a glimpse of something, or maybe even nothing sends you back into the hole of grief. It is not one step forward, two steps back. It is a jumble. It is hours that are all right, and weeks that aren't. Or it is good days and bad days. Or it is the weight of sadness making you look different to others and nothing helps."

Ann Hood, Comfort: A Journey Through Grief

...grief doesn't care
how many years it's
been.

—Ohmygrief



THINGS THAT, AS A BEREAVED PARENT, I'M NO LONGER APOLOGIZING FOR:

- My grief, no matter how long it lasts.
- Talking about my child, even if it makes others uncomfortable.
- Needing space from those who don't understand.
- Not "moving on" according to others' timelines.
- Celebrating or honoring my child's memory in my own way.
- Having bad days, even years after the loss.
- Feeling joy or laughter amidst my grief.
- Saying no to social gatherings that feel too overwhelming.
- Choosing the people I want to be around.
- Needing help or support, no matter how long it's been.
- Taking time for myself, even if it means being "selfish."
- Mourning in my own unique way, without conforming to others' expectations.
- Protecting my heart by avoiding hurtful or insensitive comments.
- Prioritizing my healing over pleasing others.

#bereavedparentsoftheusa
#bpusacelebrating30years



COMMUNITY GRIEF SEMINAR WITH KELLY KARAVOUSANOS, LPC, CT

Kelly Karavousanos is a compassionate and passionate Licensed Professional Counselor, Certified Thanatologist, Licensed Funeral Director, Coach, Educator, and Public Speaker. She has worked for over 25 years in a variety of settings including substance abuse treatment, hospice, community mental health, and private practice helping individual's mind, body, and soul. Her passion and career focus is on grief, loss, and life transitions. She has been a frequent educator and speaker on the topics of grief, loss, stress management, change and resilience in times of crisis, and other aspects of leadership and mental health. She volunteers as the Co-Lead of the Professional Women's Mentorship Program for Athena Leadership Foundation of St. Charles County and is a board member of Turning Point Advocacy Services.

OCT
9

Wednesday 6:30pm - 8:30pm (Central)

Venue:

The Christy Banquet Center

Address:

9000 Veterans Memorial Pkwy, O'Fallon, MO 63366

Phone:

636-946-7811

QUIETLY

I missed you quietly today. So quietly that no one noticed.

I missed you as I climbed out of bed and as I brushed my teeth; when I waited at the lights on the drive into work and as I heard the rain outside my window.

I missed you as I ordered lunch and as I kicked off my shoes when I got home; as I switched off the lights and climbed into bed for the night.

I missed you without tears or noise or fanfare.
But oh how I felt it.

I felt it in the morning, at lunchtime, in the evening and at night. I felt it as I woke, as I waited, as I worked. I felt it at home, on the road, in the light, in the dark, in the rain.

I felt it in every one of those moments, each one sitting heavier and heavier as the weight of me missing you kept growing and growing.

Yes, I missed you so quietly today.

But I felt it so loudly.

'Quietly' is a newer poem but there are similar in my book of grief and loss poetry

<https://amzn.eu/d/ePSd4yb>

Becky Hemsley 2024

Artwork by Lilymoon

*Grief is
when your entire
world falls apart
and no one else's life
changes.*

—Hello to Heaven



I thought of you today.
That was nothing new.
I will think of you tomorrow,
and the next day too.

I looked for you today,
as soon as I awoke.
Then my heart reminded me
why it was now broke.

I cried for you today.
I caught my tears in a cup.
I couldn't bare to empty them
so many are now full up.

I walked with you today,
though I couldn't see you there.
But I have now come to accept,
you go with me everywhere.

I shouted at you today.
I asked why you left me here.
Another cup awaited
to catch another tear.

You smiled at me today.
In a memory that I found.
It caught me unaware,
and I fell to the ground.

I had another cup ready
but the tears never came.
Instead I sat with the memory
and you looked the same.

You walked with me today.
We revisited familiar places.
I said "hello," to people passing
with curiosity on their faces.

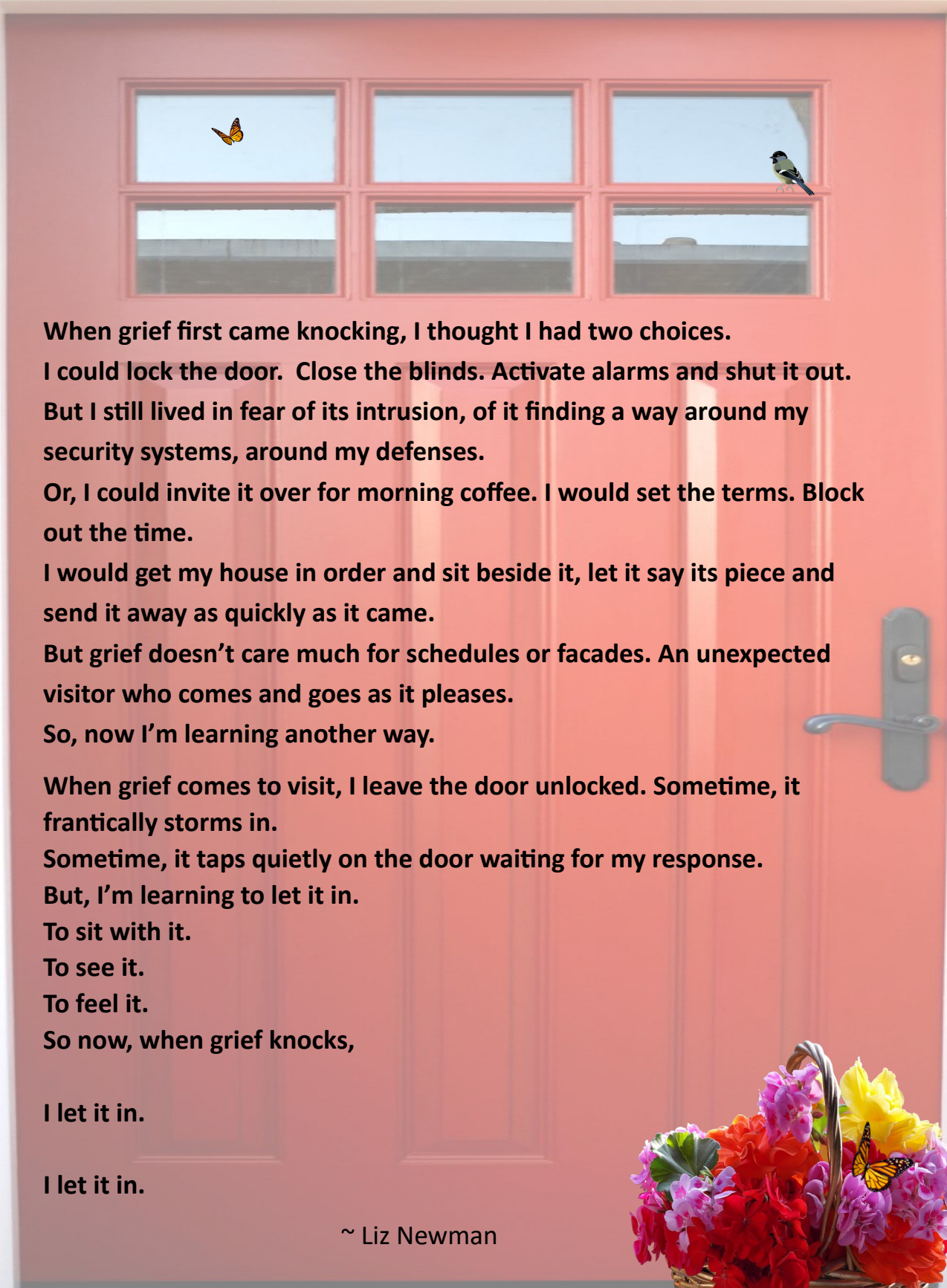
I said sorry to you today.
You never left me here at all.
You were still by my side.
Just waiting for my call.

Author Joanne Boyle

*Joanne is from Hartlepoole, UK. She works
as a healthcare assistant and writes poetry
in her free time.*

SOME DAYS I JUST SIT AND REMEMBER

AUTHOR UNKNOWN



When grief first came knocking, I thought I had two choices.
I could lock the door. Close the blinds. Activate alarms and shut it out.
But I still lived in fear of its intrusion, of it finding a way around my
security systems, around my defenses.
Or, I could invite it over for morning coffee. I would set the terms. Block
out the time.
I would get my house in order and sit beside it, let it say its piece and
send it away as quickly as it came.
But grief doesn't care much for schedules or facades. An unexpected
visitor who comes and goes as it pleases.
So, now I'm learning another way.

When grief comes to visit, I leave the door unlocked. Sometime, it
frantically storms in.
Sometime, it taps quietly on the door waiting for my response.
But, I'm learning to let it in.
To sit with it.
To see it.
To feel it.
So now, when grief knocks,

I let it in.

I let it in.

~ Liz Newman



*It takes
as long as
it takes.*

*Be kind to
yourself.*

*In my heart is
where
Our
Story lives*

*"The reality is, you will grieve
forever. You will not 'get over' the
loss of a loved one; you will*

learn to live with it.

*You will heal and you will rebuild
yourself around the loss you have
suffered. You will be whole, but you*

will never be the same again.

*Nor should you be the same, nor
should you want to."*

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross

Youth Dynamics

*I can no longer see you
with my eyes or touch you
with hands, but I will feel you
in my heart
forever.*



The shadow side of survivorship

You may have heard of the phenomenon known as "survivor guilt" (described [at this link](#) by What's Your Grief). It's fairly well documented that many survivors of traumatic events – wartime violence, natural disasters, mass shootings – feel guilty that others died when they did not. The guilt can be especially crippling when something a survivor chose to do, or not do, somehow contributed to the death of one or more people in the situation. Survivor guilt also occurs in people who have come through a health crisis while others have succumbed to the same illness or injury they faced.

Less well known or understood is survivor guilt experienced by people like me – people who have no connection with whatever caused the death of a loved one. I was nearly 2000 miles away at the moment my brother died, and nothing that I did (or didn't do) or said (or didn't say) was connected to the circumstances surrounding his death. But I feel survivor guilt anyway.

Apparently, all it takes for me to feel survivor guilt is the fact that I'm alive and he's not.

Perhaps it doesn't seem reasonable for me to feel guilty, because the word *guilt* presupposes freedom of choice, and implies a choice was made. I made no choice, and had no choice available. For me, though, the concept of *deserving* plays a part. My brother deserves to be alive as much as I do, so it makes no sense that one of our lives has been cut short. Basically, I feel guilty that I'm here simply because he isn't. It doesn't mean I don't want to be here – I'm glad I'm here. But he should be here too.

Often I experience a trigger that doesn't seem like it should be a trigger at all – a beautiful day, a great cup of coffee, a special time with my family. Even as I feel joy in such things, survivor guilt alters that joy, mixing it with pain that Frank is not here to enjoy them. Somehow I feel unduly advantaged, undeservedly prioritized. Guilty. And disheartened at how the glow of wonderful moments can dim in the shadow of my brother's absence. No, it doesn't happen with every wonderful moment. But it happens, often enough.

Maybe my notion of survivorship comes from years of reading obituaries. Almost every obituary notes that the deceased was "survived by" one or more family members, naming those who live on. My brother was survived by his family, including me. I survive my brother. With my survivorship comes the confusing combination of gratitude for, and guilt about, being alive.

The shadow side of survivorship

Continued from page 9

Many people who experience survivor guilt find solace in working to improve something related to the loss. Patients in remission from cancer work may raise funds for research; those who escaped mass shootings may advocate for gun control and greater security. What can I do? I can fight against drunk driving. I can help my family thrive. I can appreciate the fleeting beauty of a random day.

I am working to cope with the shadow side of survivorship. Although the shadow doesn't lessen my joys, it has made them more challenging to access, more unwieldy, more complicated – and, all the while, more precious.



Bereaved Sibling, Sarah Kravits

"Just So You Know

I can't stop grieving just
because you believe it is
time for me to move on.

I can't stop hurting just
because you don't understand
the piercing pain in my heart

I cannot stop my tears from
flowing just because they
make you uncomfortable.

My heart is not suddenly mended
just because you believe
I have grieved long enough.

I will grieve the loss of my loved
one for the rest of my life.
Just so you know.

-John Pete "





Gary Sturgis - "Surviving Grief"

The problem most people have with the phrase "moving on" is that it feels like you're being told to forget about the relationship that you had with the one you love.

That's why I always say, "moving forward".

It just sounds less final.

So let's focus on what moving forward means. Moving forward isn't about forgetting, it's not about being happy or sad, or black or white.

It's shades of gray.

It's about learning to live a full and happy life even as you miss and long for the person you love. It's about remembering and honoring the one you love while also embracing the fullness of the life you still have to live.

It's about your love, and the shadow of your loss, coexisting.

Moving forward also doesn't mean the end of your grief. There is no end. It doesn't mean suddenly you're done grieving and

Moving forward also doesn't mean the end of your grief. There is no end. It doesn't mean suddenly you're done grieving and will never hurt again.

Grief is complex, and your loss becomes integrated into your life. It's not something you get rid of, it just changes over time. You get stronger as you carry it. The edges dull. It starts to take up less time in your life, but it will always be there to remind you of your loss, in different ways and at different times.

Here's the thing...only you get to define how you'll move forward.

People will have all kinds of advice and well-meaning intentions about how you should do it, when you should do it, and what it should look like. They, however, can't determine that for you.

There are no timelines or rules to the grieving process. You'll move through it at your own pace and not one minute faster. The process of grieving is unique. No amount of pressure from others can make you move through your process any quicker, at least not in any kind of healthy way.



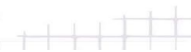
2025 NATIONAL GATHERING *Conference*



Pittsburgh Airport Marriott

JULY | 25-27 | 2025

777 Aten Rd, Coraopolis, PA



2024 National Gathering



”

Here's to all of us who never asked for this unimaginable pain, yet carry the weight of it every day. We didn't choose this path, but we're walking it with courage, grace, and a strength we never knew we had. We're not just surviving, we're finding ways to live with the heartache, honoring our children by continuing on. Here's to us—the ones who bear the scars of love and loss, and still choose to show up for life, one step at a time.

Bereaved Parents of the USA

MEETING TIMES & PLACES

Call for meeting status



<u>BUSINESS / FACILITATORS MEETINGS</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>
ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME!	BJC Hospital St. Peters Medical Center Bldg. 1 St. Peters, MO 63376	Contact Mike & Jeanne. Meeting dates vary depending upon unforeseen events.	9:00 AM
CONTACT: Mike & Jeanne Francisco 636.233.8490			

GROUP MEETINGS	MEETING LOCATION	FACILITATOR(S)	DAY	TIME
BPUSASTl—St. Peters / St. Charles, MO	Knights of Columbus Hall 5701 Hwy N Cottleville, MO 63304	Mike & Jeanne Francisco 636.233.8490	1st Thursday - Please contact facilitators for meeting status	7:00 pm
St. Peters / St. Charles, MO—Siblings Facilitator	Same as above	Samantha Schaefer 636.293.1099	Same as above	7:00 pm
Wright City Group	Scenic Regional Library 60 Wildcat Drive Wright City, MO 63390	Anne Marie Salyer 972.740.9702 Marilyn Kister 636.634.6019	3rd Saturday	1:00-3:00 pm
Troy Group	Dept. of Health Conference Rm #5 Health Dept. Drive Troy, MO 63379	Cindy Morris 314.954.1810	1st Wednesday	7:00-9:00 pm

SPECIALIZED MEETINGS	MEETING LOCATIONS Please contact facilitators to verify meeting dates/times.	FACILITATOR(S) / CONTACT(S)	DAY	TIME
SOUL: (Surviving Overdose and Understanding Loss)	Concordia Lutheran Church 505 S. Kirkwood Rd. Kirkwood, MO 63122 Or via Zoom (holiday weekends and church conflicts) *Be sure to contact MaryAnn before attending	MaryAnn Lemonds 314.282.7453 (landline) 314.330.7586 (cell) SurvivingOUL@gmail.com	Sundays *To confirm dates, contact MaryAnn before attending	5:00 pm
Life Crisis Center Survivors of Suicide	9355 Olive Blvd. St. Louis, MO 63132	314.647.3100	Wednesdays	7:00 pm
Healing After Suicide Loss	Baue Funeral Home 608 Jefferson St. Charles, MO 63301	Kristen Ernst: Call to confirm meeting location and time at 636.328.0878	1st & 3rd Monday	6:00 pm
Trees of Righteousness Grief Support Group—Any loss	Christian Hospital in the main lobby conference room—Please call Johnnie for correct location, dates and times	Johnnie Coleman 314.740.3602	3rd Tuesday	6:00 pm to approx. 7:30 pm
BPUSA Virtual Bereaved Sibling Chapter — Ages 18+	Please use this link to register: https://virtual-bereaved-sibling-chapter-meeting.mailchimpsites.com/	Katie Alger 845.443.0614	Last Thursday of the month	7:00 pm CST

TELEPHONE FRIENDS

BPUSA ST. LOUIS CHAPTER CO-CHAIRS:

Mike & Jeanne Francisco

636.233.8490

Accident, Auto	Theresa DeMarco	636.544.3478
Adult Sibling	Samantha Schaefer	636.293.1099
Drugs/ Alcohol	MaryAnn Lemonds	314.330.7586
Child with Disability	Linda Frohning	314.721.5517
Illness	Marilyn Kister	636.634.6019
Jefferson City	Sandy Brungardt	314.954.2410
Only Child /Single Parent	Donna Arnold	314.608.3655

As always, for up-to-date
information
on BPUSASTL events, visit
www.bpusastl.org

Representation in Lieu of Meetings

Tri-County, MO	Brenda Wilson 573.438.4559
OPEN ARMS (Parents Left Behind)	Kathy Dunn - 314.807.5798 kathydunn333@yahoo.com
West County Group (formerly held in Ladue, MO)	Jacque Glaeser 636.236.5103 jlynn63021@yahoo.com

Newsletter Submissions

Cut-off date for our next issue is

October 15, 2024

Send your submissions (poems, articles, love gifts) to:

Newsletter

PO Box 1115

St. Peters, MO 63376

or to :

snowwhite6591@gmail.com

Your writings may help someone.

No longer by my side,
but forever in my heart



OUR COMMITMENT



Part of **BPUSASTL's** commitment to you is that we are the space where our parents and families communicate. Printed in your newsletter are articles to educate and ones that are private expressions of writers. We offer our writings only for your reflection, sometime serving nature or establishing routines signal solace to the writer. Often they turn to religion or spirituality for comfort and guidance.

BPUSASTL share these insights not only for your contemplation but also to acknowledge our community's many and rich sources for strength and hope.

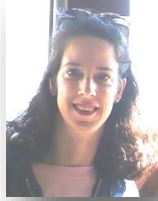
Children of BPUSAStL's Board Representation



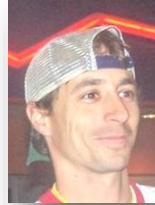
Julie Bardle
*Daughter of
Marilyn Kister
Newsletter
Editor & Wright
City Group
Facilitator*



Joseph DeMarco
*Son of
Theresa DeMarco
Treasurer*



Jennifer Francisco
*Daughter of Jeanne
& Mike
Francisco
St. Peters Group
Facilitators
& Co-Chairs*



Mickey Hale
*Son of
Jacque Glaeser
Secretary*



Jeffrey Morris
*Son of
Cindy Morris
Troy Group
Facilitator*



J. P. Rosciglione
*Son of Terre
Rosciglione
Trivia
Coordinator*



Patrick Salyer
*Son of Anne Marie
and Steve Salyer &
Wright City Group
Facilitator*



Rosie Umhoefer
*Daughter of
Rosann Umhoefer*



Matthew Wiese
Son of Kim Wiese



Arthur Gerner / Emily Gerner
*Son & Granddaughter of
Deceased Margaret Gerner
Founder of BPUSAStL*

Children of BPUSAStL's Special Events

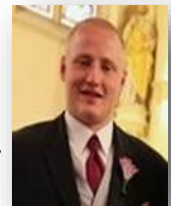


J. P. Rosciglione
*Son of Terre
Rosciglione
Trivia
Coordinator*



Aaron Cole
*"Aaron's Ms.
Courtney"
Trivia Coordinator*

Danny Brauch
*Brother of
Samantha
Schaefer
St. Peters Group
Sibling Facilitator*



**If you wish to make a love donation - IN ANY AMOUNT - We
will include a picture of your child(ren).
(See page 2 of this newsletter)**

NAME _____

PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____ NAME OF CHILD(REN) _____

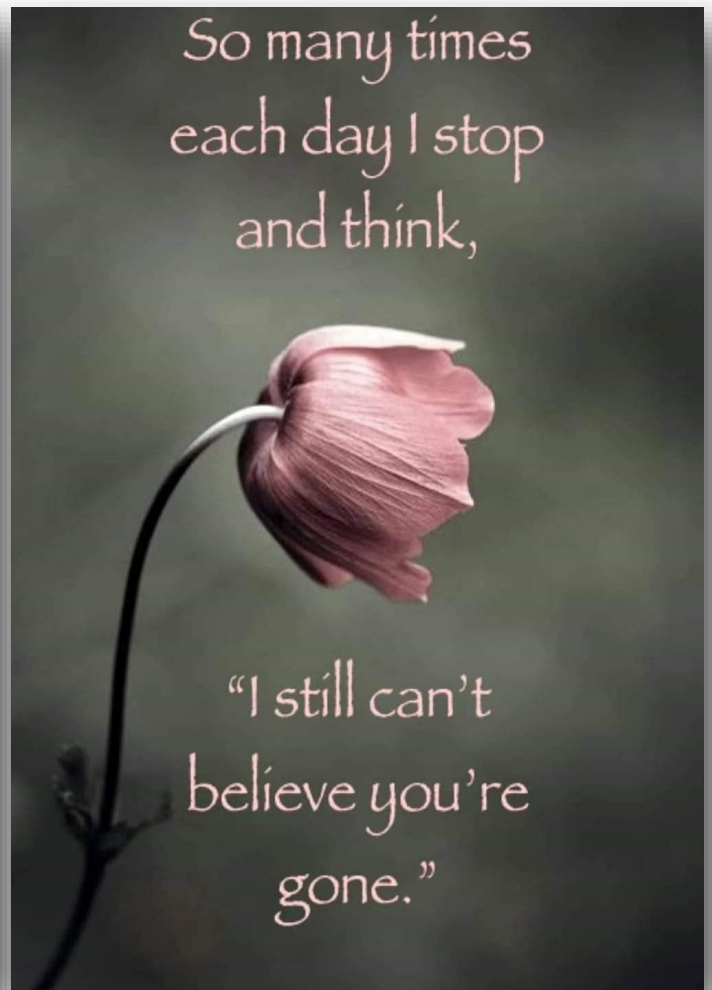
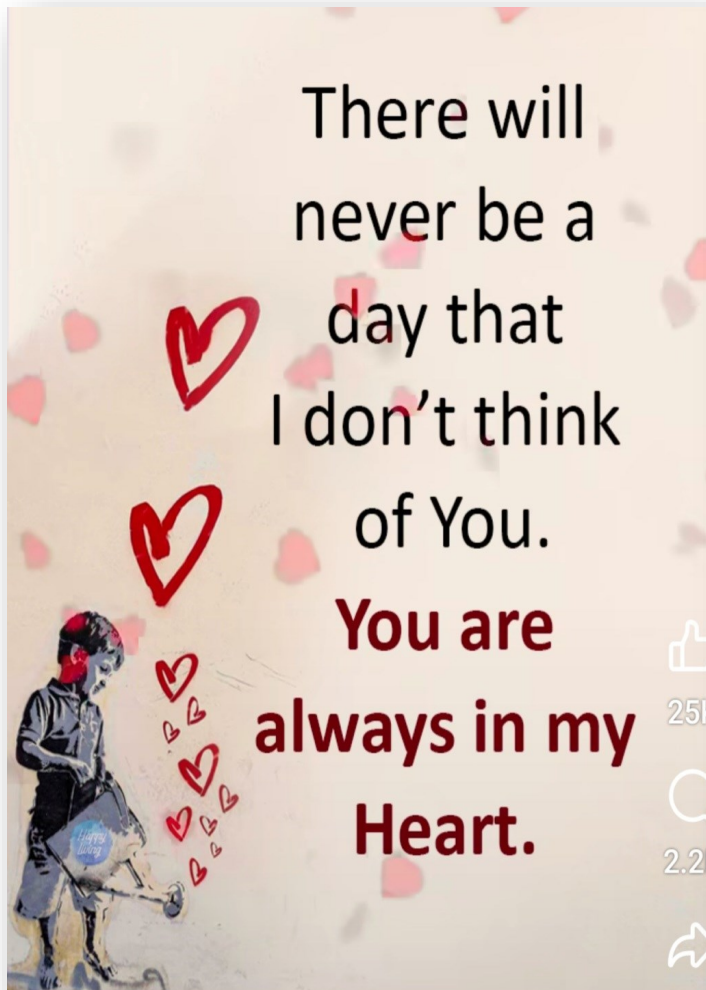
I WOULD LIKE A LOVE GIFT DEDICATED TO MY CHILD(REN) IN
THE MONTH OF: _____

I WOULD LIKE TO DONATE IN LOVING MEMORY OF _____

**MAIL TO: Bereaved Parents of the USA-St. Louis,
P. O. BOX 1115, ST. PETERS, MO 63376**

Behind my smile is a lot of sadness that no
one can understand 💔





WELCOME

We are the parents whose children have died. We are the siblings whose brothers and sisters no longer walk with us through life. We are the grandparents who have buried grandchildren. We come together as Bereaved Parents of the USA to provide a safe space where grieving families can connect, share our stories, and learn to rebuild our lives. We attend meetings whenever we can and for as long as we find helpful. We share our fears, confusion, anger, guilt, frustrations, emptiness, and feelings of hopelessness, knowing these emotions will be met with compassion and understanding. As we support, comfort and encourage one another, we offer hope and healing. As we confront the deaths of our loved ones, our shared grief brings us to a common ground that transcends differences, building mutual understanding across the boundaries of culture, race, faith, values, abilities, and lifestyle. Together we celebrate the lives of our children, siblings, and grandchildren, sharing the joys and the heartbreaks as well as the love that will never fade. Together, strengthened by the bonds we create, we offer what we have learned from one another to every bereaved family, no matter how recent or long ago the death.

We are the Bereaved Parents of the USA.

We welcome you