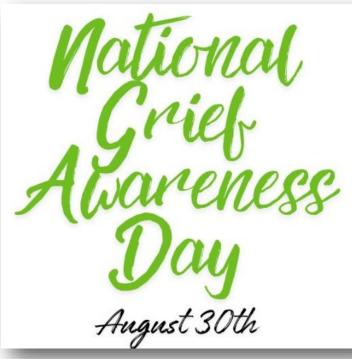
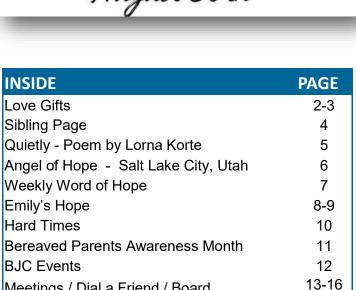
July-August 2025



Chapter Newsletter

VOLUME 48 - NUMBER 4





Meetings / Dial a Friend / Board

Representation



"The bad news is that you never completely get over the loss of your beloved. But this is also the good news. They live forever in your broken heart that doesn't seal back up. And you come through. It's like having a broken leg that never heals perfectly that still hurts when the weather gets cold, but you learn to dance with the limp."

—Anne Lamott

The child who owns the summer is not here.

Not here to know the wealthy

summer wind.

Not here to share the glowing and the song.

The child who owns this summer did not live long enough to touch the richness of this DAY...

This Day a Summer
When you are all ALONE
Cry to the summer wind
Cry
And behold
The CHILD you remember.

Poem provided by Darren's mom, Doris.

Our condolences to Doris & family on the Dec 9, 2024 passing of Darren's dad.

Dearest Darren,

If you can see us from the sky, help us to know the reason why. Help us not to cry and cry.

Thank you for

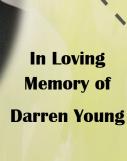
your love gift

We never got to say Goodbye.

Why did you have to die?

Sending love, Mom

Dad is with you now. 12.9.24





In Loving Memory of Rosie Umhoefer

Will she travel the memorized miles, or just meet me in our favorite place?

While I'm there, I feel her in the crispness

of the early morning breeze.

I hear her amazing laugh
as it billows through the trees.

I see her endearing smile in the sun's rays upon the lake. Her sweet voice calls to me. "I'm here Mom, for goodness' sake."

Background: My aunt's property in Farmington, MO. The archway of trees leads to their home. Photo taken July 6, 2024. — Marilyn Kister

Poem by Rosann Umhoefer, Rosie's mom - BPUSAStL



Welcome, bereaved sibling

https://bereavedparentsusa.org/

First things first – you are not alone. Many join you in the community of bereaved siblings, and the more we are able to lean on one another, the more we can continue on. Your presence here is an important part of connecting with others. We are so glad you are here, even as we are heartbroken at the reason why you have come.

Sometimes called the "forgotten mourners," bereaved siblings have a significant — and frequently unmet — need for support. Although some believe the loss of a sibling is somehow less intense than the loss of a child, a parent, or a spouse, this is not at all the case in a general sense. Individuals may have more or less intensity around any loss they experience, depending on their own circumstances, but siblings often feel a devastating loss. In many cases, people have never known a time when their siblings were not a part of their lives, and for this reason cannot conceive of them being gone. This tremendously confusing loss may turn one's sense of reality upside down and lead to deep and challenging questions of trust, faith, and identity.

Here are some particular features of sibling loss that you may relate to:

- The nature of the sibling relationship, which is for many people the longest relationship in life; siblings are "life witnesses" who know us as no one else can
- The feeling that with your sibling gone you have lost past, present, and future
- The challenge of supporting one's parent(s) through the loss, especially when extreme parental grief constitutes an additional loss for the bereaved sibling
- New roles and responsibilities for surviving siblings as the family structure shifts
- For adult siblings, regret over distance or lack of time spent
- The depth of sibling connection, regardless of proximity or emotional closeness, and often despite conflict
- The tendency for others to idealize the deceased sibling

Sense of a part of self missing, physically/emotionally and in terms of memory Circumstances of sibling loss, and the accompanying needs, vary widely. An adult losing a sibling, for example, has different needs than a child who has lost a sibling. Someone whose sibling died by suicide experiences different circumstances than someone who lost a sibling to cancer. We can learn from one another, sometimes when we connect with someone whose circumstances resemble ours, other times when the loss of a sibling is the only thing we have in common.

BPUSA offers support for siblings:

All <u>chapters</u> welcome bereaved siblings.

A few <u>chapters</u> are exclusively for siblings, and we hope to have more. If you do not live near these chapters, we invite you to <u>start a sibling-specific chapter of your own.</u>

 Our Annual Gathering Conference features workshops focused on siblings as well as sibling-specific activities and a gathering spot.

Quietly

Without notice a quietness surrounds her.

Like a blanket of fog.

You can see her through the mist but not clearly.

She has changed, she has grown silent.

There are no more words to say.

She has said them all.

There are no more pictures to be shared.

There is only the beating of her heart that holds him close.

As if she is protecting him, keeping him safe.

She guards his memories as if they are a sacred treasure.

To her they are more valuable than all the gems in the world.

She picks through them keeping the good and casting out the bad.

At times she is alone in this but she doesn't care.

She is safe in her world that quietly has him in it.

Not physically, but somehow she feels him close.

She loved him in life, she loves him in death.

He was hers, he still holds her heart.

She gave it to him the day he was born.

He took it with him the day he left this world.

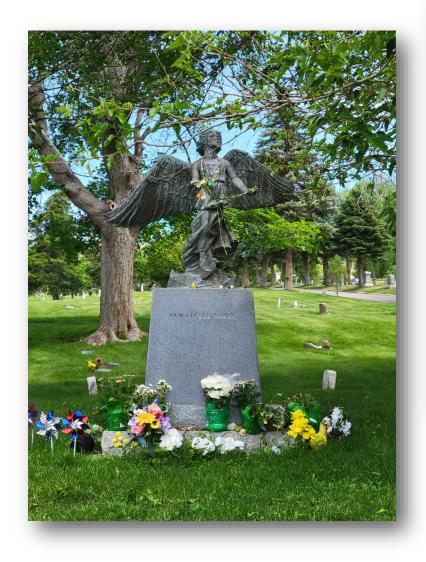
So she stays quiet, in the memories, in the grief, in the mist.

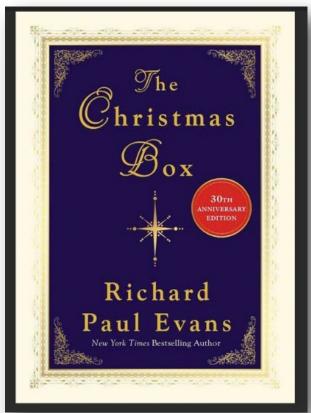
Lorna Korte Eric's mom 2025





In Loving Memory of Eric Korte 5/1985 - 7/2015





On June 3, I visited this original Angel of Hope located at the Salt Lake City Cemetery.
- Pic by Marilyn Kister

The Christmas Box, 30th Edition, was published in 2023.

And it was my 3rd Author's Retreat at Rick's ranch near Zion National Park.

THE STORY

With more than 150 angels across the United States, the Angel of Hope is a memorial with a national community as well as a local one. The first angel was erected in Salt Lake City, Utah, in 1994. It was inspired by the book and hit movie The Christmas Box by Richard Paul Evans. In the story, a woman mourns the loss of her child at the base of an angel monument. Since then, communities have recognized the need for a quiet and healing place where bereaved parents and loved ones can remember their children.



Richard Paul Evans and Marilyn Kister. Rick is one of the kindest individuals one could ever meet.



Weekly Word of Hope

https://www.gpshope.org

As you are aware, our brains don't function well *at all* after the death of our child. But you may not be aware that the grief from the death of our child is considered traumatic grief, and actually causes chemical changes in our brains that produce the confusion and fuzziness. So, it isn't just emotional, it is also literally physical.

Shortly after Becca died, I started parking in the same area all the time at stores that I shop at frequently, to prevent that feeling of panic trying to remember where my car was. I still tend to park in those same areas, over ten years later.

Several years into my grief journey, my fuzzy brain allowed me to wear my fuzzy slippers from my condo room to the swimming pool with my granddaughter. (We both had a good laugh when we saw what was on my feet at the pool!)

Then a few days later, I discovered the same slippers were on my feet as I was starting to wheel the luggage cart out to the car as we checked out of the unit. I laughed at myself again and took a picture of my feet and sent it to my granddaughter.

I know at the beginning, it can be very unnerving to feel like there is no information in your brain to even draw from, even to do things that should be automatic. (I once heard of a grieving mom who forgot how to peel an orange, and someone else who put an entire watermelon in the freezer and discovered it days later.)

Many of us wonder if early dementia is setting in. I sure wondered that for quite some time, but now I know that it is just "grief brain," and I can laugh at my stupid forgetfulness, well, most of the time.

If you struggle with this as well, give yourself lots of grace, and try to get to the point where it just doesn't bother you anymore, realizing that is just part of who you are now.

Others around you may not understand and get frustrated by it, but we get it, and we love you, fuzzy brain and all!

Permission to use article from: Laura Diehl, author and keynote speaker at the 2023 BPUSA Gathering.



Angela's Blog

Sick and Tired of Grief

As I reach the seven-year mark of Emily's death, I'm tired. Tired of the dates that stack up each spring: her birthday, then Mother's Day, the last day I saw her alive, and then... May 16. I'm exhausted. I'm sick and tired of grief. I want to be done with it.

In some ways, it feels like just yesterday I got the phone call from Emily's dad.

"Emily's OD. I think she's dead."

Those words still haunt me.

And yet, in other ways, it feels like seven years have stretched into seventeen... or twenty-seven. Like a life-time has passed since I last hugged my daughter or saw her smile.

As I reach the <u>seven-year mark of Emily's death</u>, I'm tired. Tired of the dates that stack up each spring: her birthday, then Mother's Day, the last day I saw her alive, and then... May 16. I'm exhausted. I'm sick and tired of grief. I want to be done with it.

If you've never lost someone suddenly, someone you love more than life itself, it might be hard to understand why I haven't just "moved on."

Believe me—I want to. I want to leave the pain behind. But I can't leave her behind.

She was my firstborn. I loved her with everything in me. I was her mother. I was supposed to protect her. And the truth is, I couldn't.

I watched her slip into addiction, trying everything I could to pull her back. I didn't think it would end in death. But maybe I should have.

Every year, from March 23 to May 16, the calendar turns into a slow, painful countdown. Nature wakes up with springtime beauty—blooming trees, golden sunshine—and all I feel is the ache of death. It's a jarring contrast. The world celebrates renewal while I relive my greatest loss.

And this year, I just want it all to stop.

Not the advocacy. Not the work I do in her name.

But the grief? Enough already.

Continued on page 9

Sick and Tired of Grief (continued from page 8)

When Emily first died, I remember looking ahead—thinking of how many more years I might live—and wondering how I could possibly survive all that time carrying this pain. But seven years have passed. I'm still here. I'm still standing.

I find myself wanting to skip over these anniversary dates entirely. Erase them from the calendar. Pretend they don't matter. That instinct to avoid is new for me. But it's real.

Emily being her goofy self at age 7!

They say you know your heart is healing when you think of your loved one and smile before the tears come. That's true for me now. Sometimes I just smile. I picture Emily being goofy or making me laugh, and I keep going.

But May 16 still looms. It always will.

I never know quite what to do on that day. I never will.

And yet, life moves forward.

Grief has linked me to others in ways I never expected. There's something profoundly human about suffering. When I look into the eyes of someone who's been shattered by loss, I recognize it. It connects us.

I've changed. I see it in old photos—my face from before. The innocence in not knowing how deep pain can go. That kind of innocence doesn't come back. But I like who I am now. And suffering, as much as I hate it, helped shape me.

Still, I wish it hadn't taken losing my daughter to get here.

I don't believe everything happens for a reason. But I do believe we can become something meaningful in the aftermath.

As for grief?

It can take a hike—and it can take these dates with it.

Faith, Hope & Courage,

Angela





Angela was a keynote speaker at the 2022 BPUSA Gathering in St. Louis,. MO.

View her website at: https://emilyshope.charity/

Hard Times

How to hold on and how to let go....How to lose and how to keep...these are hard problems for the bereaved parent.

We want to keep the child in our life, we want to remember the child, we want to save those parts of our life which are tied to the child.

Yet, at the same time, we know that the child is deadthings cannot be as they were before. The memories of good times now bring pain; the memories of the bad times raise guilt and feelings of powerlessness.

The end of the grief process is a resolution of this tension between holding on and letting go.

We can remember and be sad; we can remember and be happy; we can remember and just be.

But it takes a long time for such a resolution to happen and while we are in the process, we find ourselves pulled to one side and then to the other.

Sometimes we want to leave the room exactly as it was,. Other times we want to put everything away so nothing reminds us of the child.

Some times we want to talk over and over again about the events of the death; other times we want to avoid the topic altogether.

Sometimes, when all we have left of our child is our sadness, we don't want to give up our grief for fear of giving up on our child. All that is a normal process. We go through it at any death. When our parent dies, the problem is how to hold onto our childhood and youth and yet give up our childhood and youth. So, we find ourselves keeping a bit of our parents in ourselves by becoming a little more like them. I was once talking about this in a class when, suddenly, a woman blurted out, "So that's why I wanted to use the good china so much a year after she died."

It is a lot harder to give up the child and keep the child at the same time because, when our parents die, we have to lose and keep our past. When our child dies, we have to lose and keep our future.

In our grandparent's day, losing a child was an expected part of life. But it is not in our time. Few of us ever knew anyone else to whom it happened. So we have few models.

Each of us seems to have to find out our own way for ourselves. It is a hard and lonely journey. But the experience of others who have gone down this valley is that there is a resolution at the end. We can hold on and let go.

If we can, for a moment, share with others on the same journey, we can help others find directions and let them help us.

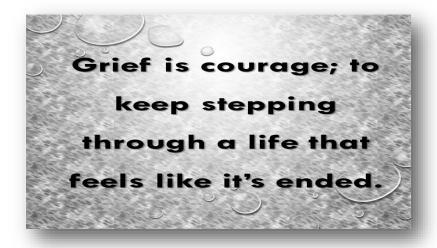
That is what Bereaved Parents is all about.

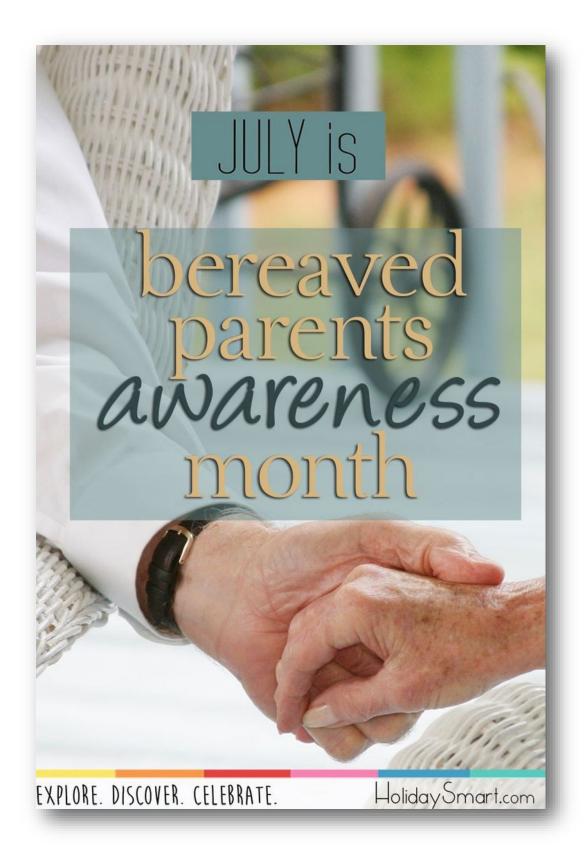
— Dennis Klass, Ph.D.

Former Professional Advisor

BP/USA

Article: Lovingly lifted from BPUSA Tampa Bay, Jul-Aug 2023





I will
always
keep you
tucked
safely
inside my
heart.

Unknown Author



Support That Surrounds 2025 BJC Hospice Community Grief Support Programs

GRIEF SUPPORT GROUPS

 SPOUSE OR PARTNER LOSS GROUP Spring/Summer/Fall/ St. Charles, MO Call Christy Brimm to register: 314-225-0902

CHILD LOSS GROUP

Beginning January 2025 Call Sandy Dillon to register: 314-267-5967 HEALING HeARTS ART THERAPY GROUP

For young adults (ages 18-26) Winter 2025

Call Tali Light to register: 314-713-6739

MANY COLORS OF GRIEF

Art therapy group for parent loss Fall 2025

Call Jen Dykeman to register: 314-575-3985

GRIEF EVENTS

BEREAVED PANEL EVENT

June 4, 2025

ROCK PAINTING AT EVELYN'S HOUSE

Date TBD

HOLIDAY CANDLE LIGHTING

November 16, 2025

LOSS OF A CHILD

Weavings retreat for mothers who have lost a child

October 24-26, 2025



SUPPORT FOR GRIEVING KIDS AND TEENS

Stepping Stones camp for kids ages 6-15 who have lost someone important

August 8-10

Camp Wyman in Eureka, MO



FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER FOR ANY OF THESE EVENTS, PLEASE CONTACT BJC HOSPICE AT GRIEFSUPPORT@BJC.ORG OR 314.953.1676.



MEETING TIMES & PLACES

Call for meeting status



BUSINESS / FACILITATORS MEETINGS

LOCATION

DATE

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 9:00 AM

TIME

CONTACT: Mike & Jeanne Francisco 636.233.8490

events.

GROUP MEETINGS	MEETING LOCATION	FACILITATOR(S)	DAY	TIME
BPUSAStL—St. Peters / St. Charles, MO	Share 1600 Heritage Landing, Suite 109 St. Peters, MO 63303	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	Discontinued meetings. Feel free to call one of us.	Anne Marie Salyer 972.740.9702 Marilyn Kister 636.634.6019		
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	FACILITATOR(S) / CONTACT(S)	DAY	TIME

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
Grief Support Group	Ferguson Library 35 N. Florissant Road St. Louis, MO 63135	Pat Ryan 314.605.3949	3rd Saturday	2:00 pm
BPUSA Virtual Bereaved Sibling Chapter — Ages 18+	TBD	TBD		

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

August 15, 2025

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

Newsletter

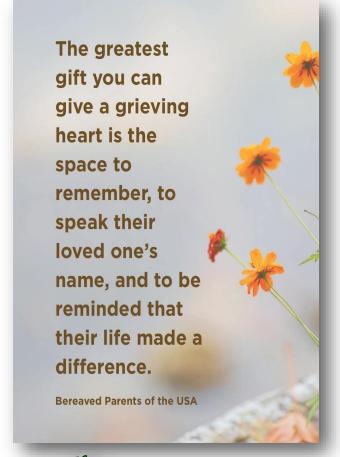
PO Box 1115

St. Peters, MO 63376

or to

snowwhite6591@gmail.com

Your writings may help someone.





OUR COMMITMENT



Part of **BPUSA***StL*'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.

BPUSA*StL* 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 Salver Son of Anne Marie and Steve Salyer & Wriaht City Group **Facilitator**



Rosie Umhoefer Daughter of Rosann Umhoefer



Matthew Wiese Son of Kim Wiese





P. O. BOX 1115, ST. PETERS, MO 63376

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

If you wish to make a love donation - IN ANY AMOUNT - We will include a picture of your child(ren). (See page 2-3 of this newsletter)

NAME PHONE_____ ADDRESS_____ CITY STATE _____ ZIP _____ NAME OF CHILD(REN) I 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,

Children of BPUSAStL's **Special Events**





Danny Brauch

Brother of Samantha Schaefer



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

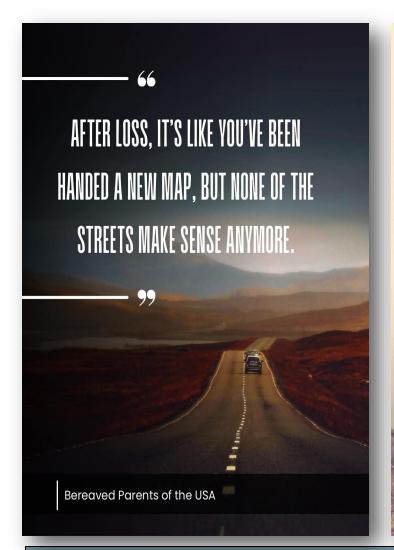
Valene Connell Daughter of Chris Connell Candlelight Coordinator



St. Peters Group Sibling Facilitator

Anger can be grief's
loudest voice — it
hits when you least
expect it, and it
doesn't apologize.







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