

Sep-Oct 2025



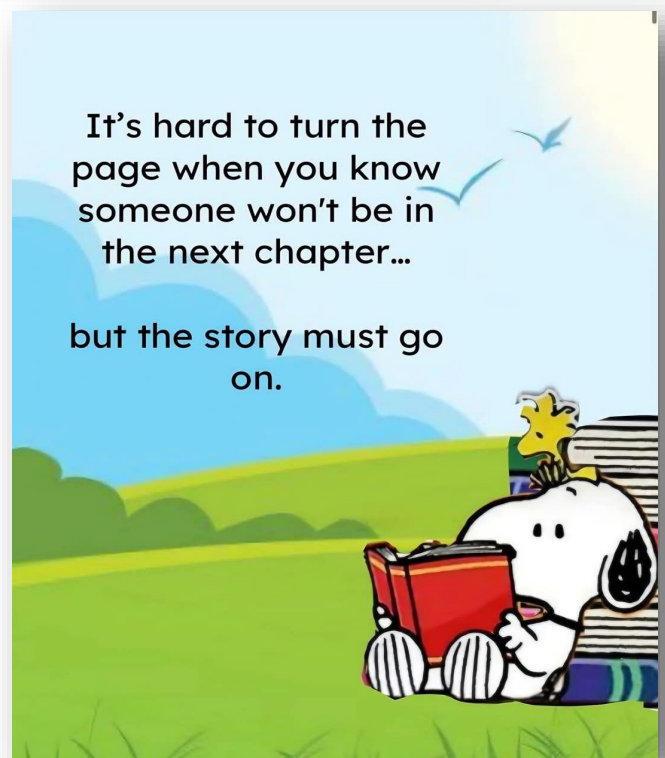
**Bereaved
Parents**
OF THE USA
ST. LOUIS, MO

Chapter Newsletter

VOLUME 48 - NUMBER 5



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Thank you for your love gift

The worst has happened.
I've lost my child
and I have three days to grieve,
then return to work uninspired.

My department friends try to
hide the tears in their eyes,
I have no control or strength,
so I hide in the restroom for all my cries.

I know we have work to do
but I'm not the same.
Why is the world still moving,
but no one can say her name.

The girl I ate lunch with
has stopped joining me.
She averts my eyes and turns away.
It's easier to just let me be.

Then one day I am surprised
by two co-workers I rarely see.
One offers me hope with her kind words and
the other reaches out and embraces me.

So the two women
I just knew by name
lifted me up
and their memories remain.

I know it's hard for people
to grasp others personal grief.
They don't know the words or
the actions to provide relief,

A grasp of one's hand,
a warm embrace,
mention the child's name.
It feels like a heavenly grace.




In Loving Memory of Rosie Umhoefer

Poem by Rosann Umhoefer,
Rosie's mom - BPUSAtL



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

 90-days hassle-free returns. [View returns policy](#)

 BONFIRE



OFFICIAL MERCHANDISE

<https://www.bonfire.com/store/bereaved-parents-of-the-usa/>

Hats, t-shirts, hoodies, mugs, duffle bags.

Where grief meets hope and healing.

Every purchase supports Bereaved Parents of the USA's mission of hope and healing. Proceeds help fund programs, events, and resources that provide connection and support for bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings. Thank you for helping us create a community where no one has to walk this path alone.

It feels like I spend most of my waking moments trying to get my life organized. I'd love to make it happen so I can think about other things.

It seems that most of my time is spent taking care of all the things that I have, car, property, knick-knacks, clothes, and the accompanying cleaning and maintenance that goes along with it all.

After my loss, I had to figure out what I wanted to do with all my loved one's belongings.

What a daunting task!

I remember through my initial fog, someone telling me, "It's just stuff."

Here's the thing...we spend the first half of our life trying to accumulate things, and the second half trying to get rid of them.

Sometimes I think the only reason we even have houses is because we need a place to keep all our "stuff."

But it's complicated, because some of this "stuff" is actually meaningful to me, and as for all the other less meaningful "stuff," the problems get even more difficult. My "stuff" is like having a cast of characters surrounding me in life, and I have a relationship with all this "stuff."

But is it more important than my relationship with other people? No!

How much do I truly need? Truly need to keep me safe, warm, and, how about happy? Because I'm pretty clear at this particular moment that having too much "stuff" isn't making me happy.



I think less is more.

One of the lessons I learned while my loved one was sick, and fighting terminal cancer, was how incredibly valuable it is to stop and smell the roses. That I should take the time to appreciate what I have, the loved ones in my life, and the very air that I breathe.

In the end, I decided to only keep what serves me, and brings me comfort. The rest was just "stuff."

So if you're worried about what to do with all your loved one's belongings, try to remember that you never see a moving truck following a hearse.

Because when this life is over...all you take with you is love.

Gary Sturgis - Surviving Grief Author

Ever felt tired in your soul, not just your body?

Grief fatigue is real — and it doesn't care what day of the week it is.

While the world stretches, sleeps in, and makes weekend plans, some of us wake up to the same ache we carried yesterday. The same exhaustion no nap can fix.

It isn't just feeling "tired." It's:



Forgetting what you walked into a room for



Snapping at people you love over nothing



Staring at your phone but having no energy to reply



Feeling physically heavy, like your bones remember the grief even when your mind tries to forget



Not caring about the to-do list because survival is enough

And you are not alone in this.

People will ask what you're doing today. Maybe the answer is surviving. Or sitting quietly with memories. Or getting through one breath at a time.

That is enough.

To those carrying this invisible, bone-deep weariness — I see you. You belong to a quiet, brave community that understands the kind of tired grief brings.

What's one small thing that's helped you rest your heart, even for a moment?



[#grieffatigue](#) [#bereavedparents](#)
[#itsokaytoest](#) [#saturdaygrief](#)
[#bpusatogetherweremember](#)
[#bereavedparentsoftheusa](#)





BPUSA 2025 Gathering Conference

August 7 at 3:50 PM · 🌐

The Bereaved Parents of the USA Gathering feels like a reunion—of hearts that understand, tears that don't need explanation, and smiles that rise even in our grief.

We come carrying loss, but we also carry love. And somehow, in the warmth of shared stories and hugs that say "me too," we find ourselves smiling again.

Not because the pain is gone, but because we're not alone in it.

[#bereavedparentsoftheusa](#) [#bpusatogetherweremember](#)



BPUSA 2025 Gathering Conference is 🥰 feeling loved with LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs. ...

August 4 at 6:25 AM · 🌐

One of the most meaningful parts of this year's Gathering was the presence of Kezia from LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs. With her calm spirit and quiet understanding, Kezia offered what so many of us needed—comfort without words, presence without pressure.

Grief can feel isolating, but somehow, when Kezia gently leaned in or laid her head on someone's knee, that loneliness eased just a bit. She didn't need to speak—her eyes said, "I'm here. You're not alone."



Weekly Word of Hope

2025 is more than half over. Does this make you feel relieved, or does it sting? I know for me personally, when I first lost Becca, a thought like that went beyond a sting. It took my breath away.

So why would I bring it up and risk the possibility of doing that to you? Because I want to encourage you that it does get better! It won't always be like this. Yes, it takes time. And I am not saying the untruth that "time heals all wounds". I firmly believe it is what we do in that time that starts to bring us out of the suffocating darkness and back into light and being able to live again.

Do I miss Becca? Absolutely, with every fiber of my being! But I am now in a different place than the first two or three years of being without her. Now, knowing we are beyond the half-way point of the year doesn't take my breath away. It doesn't sting or make me feel relieved. It is just a fact that gives me a pause of reflection and then I carry on.

This is a journey, a process, we are all in. We are all at different places and we will all hit various milestones at different times. But we are all in this together!

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



Sometimes I feel like this whole grief experience would be easier if it weren't for the people around me.

At least...that's the way it feels.

Right after my loss it felt like people were everywhere. There were tears, hugs, and the hundreds of times I heard, "I'm so sorry."

Everyone was telling me they were here for me, and to let them know if there was anything they could do for me.

Here's the thing...where did they all go?

It was like they suddenly all disappeared. They evaporated into thin air.

Poof! They were gone.

No one was calling, texting, or emailing. No one was checking in on me. No one was mentioning my loved one's name.

And what about all those casseroles I've heard about? I never got one?

When I was with people, they just pretended like nothing happened.

But something did happen!

The person I love was gone, and my heart was broken. In a million pieces.

No one noticed, they just stepped over the rubble and went on with their lives.

I'm not saying that there weren't some people who were helpful. The ironic thing is most of them were people I never knew before my loss. They were usually strangers who also had a loss. They were kind and caring.

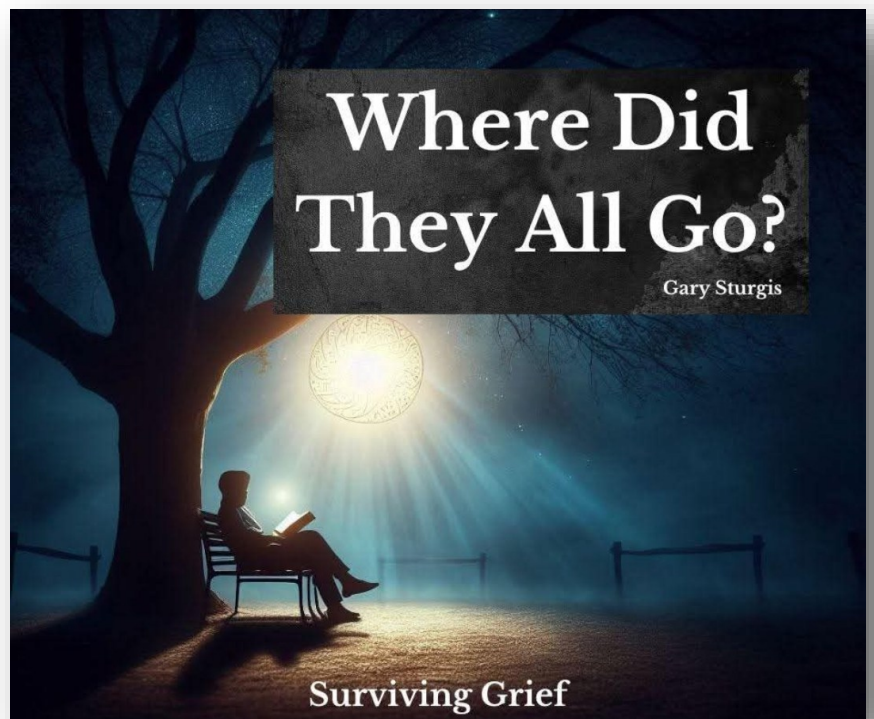
Most of the people that were in my life for a long time seemed to just want to wish it away. That just made me feel invisible and abandoned.

Losing the person I love was more than enough, and I guess I just never expected the betrayal of the people I thought I could count on.

Yeah...I was angry, but I've learned that the people in my life now are my tribe. They can handle the mess.

As for those other people...I bet they'll be back when it's their turn at grief.

Gary Sturgis - Surviving Grief



Used by permission from Gary Sturgis, Author of *Surviving Grief*

Nurture Yourself

From "Understanding Your Grief", by Alan Wolfelt, Ph.D.,

I remind you that the word "bereaved," which to our modern-day ears can sound like an old-fashioned term that only a funeral director might use, means "to be torn apart" and "to have special needs." So despite its obsolescence, the word is still accurate and useful. Perhaps your most important "special need" right now is to be compassionate with yourself. In fact, the word "compassion" means "with passion." Caring for and about yourself with passion is self-compassion. This article is a gentle reminder to be kind to yourself as you journey through the wilderness of your grief. If you were embarking on a hike of many days through rugged mountains of Colorado, would you dress scantily, carry little water, and push yourself until you dropped? Of course not. You would prepare carefully and proceed cautiously. You would take care of yourself because if you didn't, you could die. The consequences of not taking care of yourself in grief can be equally devastating.

Over many years of walking with people in grief, I have discovered that most of us are hard on ourselves when we are in mourning. We judge ourselves and we shame ourselves and we take care of ourselves last. But good self-care is essential to your survival. To practice good self-care doesn't mean you are feeling sorry for yourself, or being self-indulgent; rather, it means you are creating conditions that allow you to integrate the death of someone loved into your heart and soul. I believe that in nurturing ourselves, in allowing ourselves the time and loving attention we need to journey safely and deeply through grief, we find meaning in our continued living. We have all heard the scripture, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." To this I might add, "Blessed are those who learn self-compassion during times of grief, for they shall go on to discover continued meaning in life, living and loving."

Remember, self-care fortifies your long and challenging grief journey, a journey that leaves you profoundly affected and deeply changed.

To be self-nurturing is to have the courage to pay attention to your needs. Above all, self-nurturing is about self-acceptance. When we recognize that self-care begins with ourselves, we no longer think of those around us as being totally responsible for our well-being. Healthy self-care forces us to mourn in ways that help us heal, and that is nurturing indeed. I also believe that self-nurturing is about celebration, about taking time to enjoy the moment, to find hidden treasures everywhere - in a child's smile, a beautiful sunrise, a flower in bloom, a friend's gentle touch. Grief teaches us the importance of living fully in the present, remembering our past, and embracing our future.

Walt Whitman wrote, "I celebrate myself." In caring for yourself "with passion," you are celebrating life as a human being who has been touched by grief and come to recognize that the preciousness of life is a superb opportunity for celebration. 🌱

"Mourning in our culture isn't always easy. Normal thoughts and feelings connected to loss are typically seen as unnecessary and even shameful. Instead of encouraging mourners to express themselves, our culture's unstated rules would have them avoid their hurt and 'be strong.' But grief is not a disease. Instead, it's the normal, healthy process of embracing the mystery of the death of someone loved. If mourners see themselves as active participants in their healing, they will experience a renewed sense of meaning and purpose in life."



**Companion
PRESS**

Companion Press is the publishing arm of The Center for Loss & Life Transition

Support That Surrounds

2025 BJC Hospice Community Grief Support Programs

LOSS OF A CHILD

Weavings retreat for mothers who have lost a child

October 24-26, 2025

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

Weavings 

BJC 
Hospice
Every Moment

Grief is never something you
get over. You don't wake up
one morning and say,
"I've conquered that;
now I'm moving on."
It's something that walks
beside you every day.

TERRI ERWIN



*Grief doesn't get smaller... life
just stretches around it.*

~ Izzy Roe



Support Groups

<https://www.baue.com/events/details/virtual-grief-support-group-54>

Local Virtual Grief Support Groups

Virtual-Person Grief Events occur every Wednesday at 6:00 PM. Registration is not required to attend multiple sessions. Potential attendees must register at least once to receive the virtual conference space login information. The login information will not change week to week.

Local In-Person Grief Support

Our In-Person Grief Support Groups occur every Friday at 10:00 AM. Registration is not required to attend multiple sessions but is encourage so counselors may properly prepare for the number of attendees. You can find our latest posts on this page. Click on the calendar to review postings from prior periods and remember to check back here often!

Grief and the Myth of Closure

By Ashley Davis Bush

When faced with grief we often ask, "When will I begin to feel better? When will I return to normal? When will I be able to breathe again? When will I achieve some closure?" The idea of closure in our culture is one of tidy endings, a sense of completion. The reason we long for closure, of course, is because we would like to be rid of this pain. We would like to shut out the sad, confused, desperate, angry feelings from our lives, putting all of this pain behind us so that we can feel joy again.



For some of us, we expect "closure" to happen after the funeral or memorial service or after a loved one's room has been cleared out. For others, we look for closure after a personal ritual, or after the first anniversary comes and goes. "Surely then, we will have closure," we think. We pray.

But what an odd concept really, closure....as if we could turn the lock and throw away the key, as if we could truly close the door on our emotions and our love for someone lost. The truth, of course, is far more complex. The 'closure' that we all strive for loses its relevancy in the realms of loss and love.

Closure may work well in the world of practical matters – with business deals and real estate transactions. But closure does not apply to the human heart, not in a pure sense. It isn't possible to permanently close the door on the past as if it didn't exist. And why would we want to anyway . . . really? If we so thoroughly detached from our loss, we would not only close the door on the pain but we would also sever the connection to our loved one.

In losing someone dear to us, it's important to remember that the relationship itself is not over. Death cannot take away the love that weaves its way through every fiber of our being. Love will always triumph over death in this regard. We want to hold our cherished memories close to our heart, recognizing that our love is an essential part of us. In fact, we want to open the door, not close it, onto the reality of living with loss.

Perhaps it is better to drop the idea of closure and think instead in terms of healing and growth. We can process our pain and move to deeper and deeper levels of healing; we can find ways to move on while holding our relationship with our loved one forever in our hearts; we can channel our pain into meaningful activities to honor our loved ones; we can even learn to smile again, breathe again and love again.

Our loss becomes love transformed, transformed from that which relies on physical presence to something more pure. So let us not strive for closure. When we do that, we unwittingly close the door on all the love that we shared. And, truly, that would be a loss too terrible to bear.

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	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 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

October 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.

♥
We are not meant to
grieve the same way,
because no two loves
are ever the same.



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.

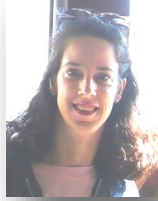
Children of BPUSAStL's Board Representation



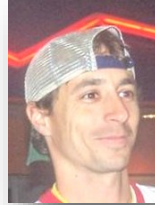
Julie Bardle
*Daughter of
Marilyn Kister
Newsletter
Editor & Wright
City Group
Facilitator*



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*



Valene Connell
*Daughter of Chris
Connell
Candlelight
Coordinator*

**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: _____

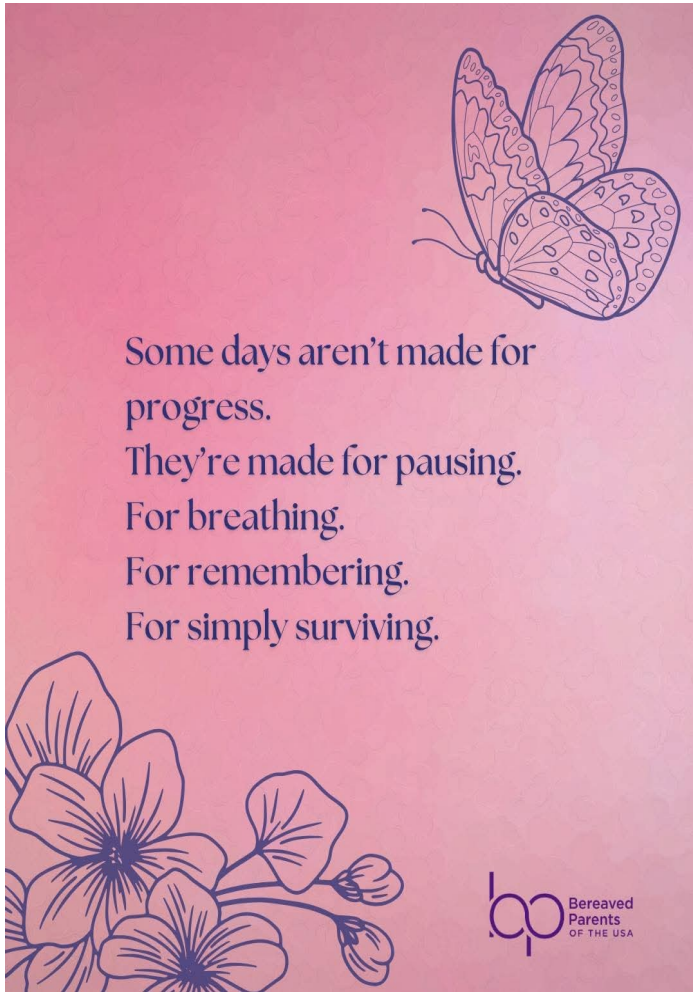
I WOULD LIKE TO DONATE IN LOVING MEMORY OF

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



I still walk beside
you in the spaces
between the seen
and the known.

Bereaved Parents of the USA



Some days aren't made for
progress.
They're made for pausing.
For breathing.
For remembering.
For simply surviving.



***They weren't just
my sibling. They
were my first
friend, my secret
keeper, my
person. And now,
my missing piece.***

BPUSA Bereaved Siblings

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