

Holiday Grief Support Zooms

Virtual Chapters

- + IL - Chicagoland Chapter
- + MA - Lynn/NE Region Chapter
- + MI - Macomb Michigan Chapter
- + MD - Anne Arundel County Chapter
- + National Bereaved Sibling Chapter
- + NJ - Bereaved Sibling Chapter
- + PA - Butler County Chapter
- + TN - Middle Tennessee Chapter
- + VA - Northern VA Chapter

This season, don't carry your grief alone. Connect with others who understand your pain. Try one or more of the virtual chapter meetings available through BPUSA. Dates & times throughout the year are available here:

bereavedparentsusa.org/find-a-chapter

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CANDLELIGHT SERVICES



Angel of Hope

*Candlelight Memorial Service
held every year on*

December 6th, at 7:00 pm

This memorial is hosted by Share Pregnancy & Infant Loss, and well attended by BPUSAStL for child loss at any age. Please review their website for COVID-Related updates: <http://nationalshare.org>

Local Locations:

- Ben Rau Memorial Garden, Blanchette Park, St. Charles, MO 63301
- Weinand Park, 1305 Boone Street, Troy, MO 63379

BPUSAStL
*Invites you, your
family, and
friends*

A Candlelight Memorial Service

In Memory of our
Children, Grandchildren & Siblings

Date: Sunday, December 7, 2025

Registration: 1:30 - 1:45 pm

Service: 2:00 pm

Location:

Life Gate International Church
7575 Veterans Memorial Pkwy.
St. Peters, MO 63376

**Invitations containing
additional
information will be mailed in
November**

**Please review the website,
especially for any cancellations
due to inclement weather**

www.bpusastl.org



Holiday Remembrance

CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

The Holidays are a difficult time for those who are grieving. Baue invites you to our Holiday Remembrance Candlelight Memorial Service where we will remember those we have lost with a name reading ceremony, music, light refreshments, and a candle lighting.

Please join us in remembering those who have passed.

December 4, 2025

6:00pm

Baue O'Fallon
311 Wood Street
O'Fallon, MO 63366

December 6, 2024

11:00 am & 2:00 pm

Baue Cave Springs
3950 W. Clay Street
St. Charles, MO 63301

December 9, 2024

6:00 pm

Baue St. Charles
620 Jefferson Street
St. Charles, MO 63301

Thank you for your love gift



**In Memory of
Darren Young
12.19.68
10.22.89**

**TOGETHER
AGAIN**

**In Memory of
Dad
3.15.34
12.9.24**



Seasons change, love does not.

Like a cold autumn breeze, the loss sweeps over me.
I couldn't see it coming but I felt the chill in my bones.
Suddenly out of nowhere there it is.
Reminding me once again of the loneliness of child loss.
I shiver at the memories that invade my mind as the cold settles in.

In some ways I welcome it.

I know that I am alive, I know that he is not.

The tears flow like a fall rainshower, cold yet refreshing.

The leaves crunch beneath my feet reminding me of change.

I gaze into the hazy grey sky. I feel as if the clouds are sitting on my shoulders.

Weighing me down in sadness and loss.

He is on my mind, my son, my love.

I shiver, damp and cold on this fall day and know I must move on.

I smell the dampness of the leaves, I watch them fall to the ground in the cool breeze.

Some float through the air as if finally finding freedom.

I envy them, I will never float through life again.

I can't. But I can feel the cold, I can smell the rain and I can remember him.

Seasons change, love does not.



Lorna Korte
Eric's mom



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

Weekly Word of Hope

I remember talking to a precious friend a few years ago who has been with us literally since the very first day GPS Hope was birthed, when we opened our home as a church life group to meet with other parents who had lost a child.

As we were talking, a question she asked with tears was, "Why doesn't my own family remember the dates? Not a single one of them contacted me this year. I am afraid they are forgetting my son!"

I am pretty sure there are several of you out there who feel the same way, so I thought I would share my answer to Donna with you, as well.

Let me start by asking you a few questions. Do you have high school (or college friends) that you thought would be good friends for the rest of your life, but you haven't seen or heard from them in years? How about people you met on a mission's trip? Was there someone you connected with on a deep level, and you were sure that relationship would continue once you returned home, but it has fallen off? How many coworkers from your last job were you friends with outside of work, whom you barely talk to anymore, after saying you would still hang out together?

We all have good intentions, but most of the time, what is going on right in front of us, is what gets our attention. Does that mean you have forgotten them? Of course not! It just means you haven't made it a priority or made the time to communicate. It isn't intentional, it just happens.

Yes, those around you may forget dates, but I can guarantee they won't forget your child! He or she was part of their lives.

Like it or not, often it is going to be *our* effort that keeps them there. That's just the way the business of life works.



A final thought



Unless someone has lost a child, they really can't know how important these dates are to us. We will always remember them; we can't get away from them.

The most important thing is that there are others who remember your son or daughter's *life*, and still share in those memories.

So, don't be too hard on them, or yourself.

Offering Hope Through Him,
Laura D

<https://www.gpshope.org>

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



NEW SIBLING COORDINATOR - AMANDA HUGHES



After the unexpected passing of her beloved brother, Henry "Hanale", in 2016, Amanda began accompanying her mother to local BPUSA meetings. Despite being the only sibling who attended at the time, she formed a close bond with many of the parents, and they remain important people in her life, even after she eventually stopped attending regularly herself. Years later, when the chapter began discussing the need to support siblings, Amanda became Sibling Coordinator for the Anne Arundel County MD Chapter of BPUSA. As Sibling Coordinator for the chapter, she has hosted in-person and virtual meetings for local siblings when there were periods of interest, made herself available to be a resource for grieving siblings or parents, and presented to her own and other chapters on topics such as sibling loss, and raising children around grief and the memory of a loved one in a healthy, positive way.

Outside of BPUSA, Amanda is a wife and mother of four children, two of whom she adopted from Foster Care. Amanda and her husband are both Montessori teachers, and continue to be a licensed foster/resource home. Amanda also co-trains and mentors foster parents, and organizes training and volunteer opportunities for staff and students at her school. She enjoys uplifting people and building community in every area of her life and looks forward to bringing that to the community of BPUSA siblings.

Amanda can be reached by email at siblings@bereavedparentsusa.org, or by text or phone call at 202-596-7573. You also can follow BPUSA Bereaved Siblings on facebook, with other social media options to come soon.

When A Parent Outlives A Child

There are no words that can ever truly capture what it feels like losing a child.

It's a pain that settles into your bones, a silence that echoes in every corner of your life. The world keeps spinning, but everything feels different, dimmed, quieter, and heavier.

From the moment you first hold a child, you imagine a lifetime of tomorrows. First steps, birthdays, laughter, dreams waiting to unfold. You never let yourself believe that one day you'd be living in the world without them.

Here's the thing...a parent isn't supposed to outlive their child.

It feels unnatural, unbearably cruel, and it shakes the very foundation of who you are.

When you lose a child, you carry two lives within you, the life you go on living, and the one you grieve every single day. You remember their laugh, their voice, the way they looked at you with a kind of trust only a child can give.

And you remember the day that trust turned to goodbye.

That moment steals a part of you that you'll never get back.



Everywhere you go, you see reminders, an empty chair, a photo on the wall, the sound of a song that made you dance together. Some days you can smile at those memories. Other days, the weight of them crushes you.

This grief doesn't disappear...it just teaches you how to carry it.

But your child's love isn't gone, and neither is yours.

You're still bound forever by the heart-strings that nothing, not even death, can cut.

Though you may stumble under the heaviness, you keep their light alive in you.

And maybe...that's the only way forward, one breath, one memory, one heartbeat at a time.

2026 NATIONAL GATHERING



2025 - 2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



BPUSA National Board of Directors (L-R)

- Debra Shirt - *Chapter Support*
- Sherry Reber - *Secretary*
- Debra Moroney - *Treasurer*
- Pamela Ondash - *Vice President*
- Christine Roe - *President*
- Kimberly Havens - *National Community Giving Chair*
- Jill Theriault - *Chapter Operations*

And 2 BPUSA 30th Anniversary cakes!

"The beauty of a servant's heart is found in its willingness to give without expecting anything in return."

Twelve Things to Remember about the Holidays and Grief

By Deb Kosmer

1. That I could not predict how I would feel or react at any given moment.
2. That as much as I miss my loved ones I would miss them even more during the holidays.
3. That my feelings were normal.
4. That I have a right to be sad. Someone I loved very much was no longer here where I could touch them. If I am angry that is okay too. Anger is a natural reaction to pain.
5. That taking care of myself and doing or not doing whatever I decided did not make me a selfish person. It just made me human and was my way of coping.
6. That regardless of who gave it or claimed to be an expert at this grieving stuff; I was the only expert on mine; and I was learning one day at a time.
7. To expect the unexpected.
8. That regardless of how much others may care about you, grief really is a solitary journey. They can walk along side of you but only you can walk through your pain.
9. That though others in my family lost that person too, relationships are not the same. It doesn't matter if we are both sons or daughters or parents or siblings; we connected uniquely in life and we will grieve their deaths uniquely as well.
10. Losses are not solitary but cumulative. When someone we love dies it can resurrect feelings about previous deaths.
11. That it is okay and usually a good idea to acknowledge the person who has died.

Some people do this by:

Hanging their Christmas stocking and tucking personal notes inside.

Buying a gift for someone in need or giving to a charity the money they would've spent on their loved one.

Helping the less fortunate by;

Helping at a soup kitchen or delivering holiday meals to the home bound

Buying a gift for someone in need or giving to a charity the money they would've spent on their loved one.

Keeping a candle lit throughout the holiday or at special times to honor their memory.

Making remembrance books or DVDs for friends and family.

Asking others to share their memories with you.

Doing something or making plans to do something that person always wanted to do but didn't get the chance to.

Beginning a new tradition.

Purchasing books or music and giving them in memory of your loved one to the city or church library.

Decorating a small or extra tree in honor of or memory of your loved one's life, using things of significance to them, e.g. sewing notions, sports memorabilia, etc.

Inviting someone for Thanksgiving dinner that would otherwise be alone.

12. THIS TOO SHALL PASS!

Though I may not believe it or want to hear this and that's okay and in time, I will be okay too.

Surviving the Holidays

By Liene Ciguze, David's Mom

Do you ever wish holidays after child loss would come with a user manual? We used to know how to do holiday, but now we are at a total loss.

Unfortunately, there is no user manual available. Because we are so different and our life situations differ too. Some of us have other children. Some of us lost our only child. For some, it's been a while since the loss; for some, it's fresh. Some of you even lost your child around this time of year. For some, it's essential to pay tribute to your child and continue the celebrations the same way as before. Some want to skip it all and be on an uninhabited island with no Xmas trees, decorations and TV that keeps blasting us with images of perfect happy families having perfect holidays. So how do we survive holidays best?

Let me share my first experience. I lost my son in March, so by December, I was kind of robotically functioning. Since it was just two of us – my husband and me, we decided to travel. We spent Christmas Eve on the plane, which was fine by me. I didn't feel like celebrating or putting up decorations at home. My family was not happy about my decision to go away, but I made this decision for myself because that was the best decision for me then. We celebrated New Year's Eve at a hotel. There was a dinner party, and the beginning was quite civilized. I got dressed and put on make-up, we sat at a table and had some food, but when midnight approached, I broke down. I was overrun by immense sadness. I couldn't believe I have to celebrate New Years without my son. So, I excused myself and went back to my room, where I cried for probably a couple of hours until I fell asleep. So, the civilized me didn't even last until midnight.

My story might not be everyone's story, but the reason I'm sharing it is:

Holidays heighten emotions – sadness, anger, resentment. You can almost count on it. It might come from many different sources – holiday cards, movies, ads, songs, memories – you name it. So, let's assume that it will be hard, whether it's your first holiday after you've lost your child, second or 8th like in my case. There will be tough moments. And if you think about it, something would be wrong if we wouldn't have them because great love comes with great sorrow. So, let's not pretend we are fine because we are not and neither should we be.

So, how can I care for myself when it's hard? What do I need to take care of myself? These are the questions that help to decide how to spend this holiday season. And you shouldn't feel guilty about your decisions – about not doing what other people like you to do, saying yes to something and then changing your mind. Give yourself flexibility. Decide if you wish to decorate your house or not. Whether you wish to have people over or stay home alone. And I genuinely believe that you can trust yourself to know what you want for yourself if you ask yourself – what do I need this holiday season? Listen to what comes up. You will know what you want.

Two more things I've learned during my journey:

First, the fact that you feel more fragile, sad, and broken during the holiday season doesn't mean anything about your progress or how you handle the grief; it also doesn't mean anything about the future holiday. The fact of how you are feeling today doesn't mean you'll be feeling like that for the rest of your life.

Second, it's ok to experience some joy, laughter and moments of happiness during the holidays too. Moments of happiness and joy don't mean you are not grieving the loss. Grief is a lifelong marathon filled with many things, so allow for the moments of joy and happiness when they come and don't be afraid of sadness, anger and disbelief – all part of the journey.

Lots of love,
Liene Ciguze, David's mom

The Longest Night: grief and the winter solstice

By LITSA from "What's Your Grief"

The winter solstice is upon us. Here in the Northern Hemisphere, it's the 24-hour period with the fewest hours of daylight all year. It's sometimes referred to as the 'longest night of the year', which is either the perfect metaphor for grief and/or the perfect title for an early-aught emo album.

Though I am someone deeply impacted by the darkness of the winter [*she wrote, flicking on her S.A.D. lamp*], there is something I have long found comforting about the idea of leaning into the winter solstice. Something is reassuring about celebrating the day when the planet seems most aligned with death, grief, and loss, all the while knowing that longer days and shorter nights lie ahead.

In *Les Misérables*, Victor Hugo famously wrote, "Even the darkest night will end and the sun will rise". What he doesn't mention is that it will get dark again. Even the brightest day will end and the sun will set, after all. Though perhaps that sounds depressing, I actually find an incredible comfort in it. We were never promised a life that would be all light or all darkness. It has always been days and nights, joys and pains, calm and chaos, growth and decay. The only constant is that the states are ever-changing, be it the darkness, the weather, the seasons, our bodies, or our emotions.

Well, that and that big box stores will insist on putting their holiday decorations out earlier each year.

On the longest night of the year, in a season that finds you grieving, in a world that is filled with immense suffering and pain, it is weird to be surrounded by twinkle-lights, isn't it? The dissonance can feel too great. People we love are dead. Humans are suffering. What right do people have to hang twinkle-lights and be merry? What does it mean for *us* to hang twinkle-lights and be merry?

At the same time, we never ask what right the sun has to rise each morning. We know the night and day live side by side, doing their dance across each twenty-four span. They move up and down, across each season, longer and shorter, waxing and waning.

We've rambled more than enough about holidays and grief. We have dozens of articles about it on WYG. I'll spare you more musings and instead just send one hope your way: that you can lean into tonight's long night. Wrap it around your shoulders like a blanket, stay open to the dawn, appreciate the twinkle-lights if you can. And show yourself some kindness and compassion if you can't.

It isn't easy. It's okay if you can't.

Perhaps that is the absolute best and absolute worst thing about grief at the holidays - it may not go the way you hoped or planned, but that's okay . . . the sun will keep rising, the darkness will keep falling, and it will come back around next year for you to try it again.

BPUSA GEAR

BPUSA BONFIRE STORE



GREAT ITEMS - GREAT CAUSE



Support Bereaved Parents of the USA Through Our New Bonfire Shop

We're excited to share a new way to support Bereaved Parents of the USA—our Bonfire Shop! Now you can purchase shirts, sweatshirts, hats, and more, all while helping our organization continue its mission of providing comfort, connection, and hope to bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings.

Whether you're looking for something cozy to wear, a meaningful gift for someone who understands this journey, or a way to represent BPUSA at an event, there's something for everyone. And limited-edition items for our 30th Anniversary Gathering in Pittsburgh are on the way—stay tuned!

Every purchase makes a difference. Visit our shop today:

[BPUSA Bonfire Shop](#)

Thank you for supporting our community in such a meaningful way!



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

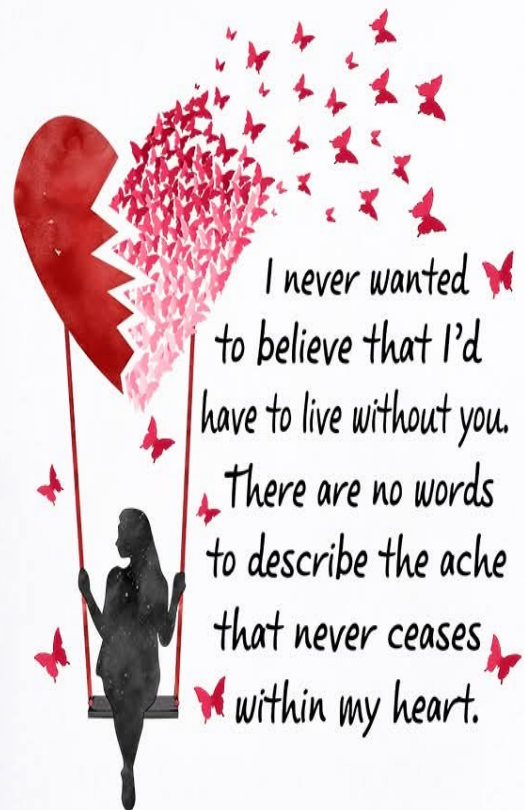
January 15, 2026

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 **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.

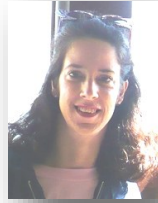
Children of BPUSAS^tL's Board Representation



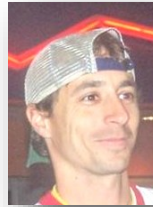
Julie Bardle
*Daughter of
Marilyn Kister
Newsletter
Editor*



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*



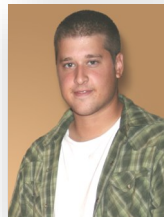
J. P. Rosciglione
*Son of Terre
Rosciglione
Trivia
Coordinator*



Patrick Salyer
*Son of Anne Marie
and Steve Salyer*



Rosie Umhoefer
*Daughter of
Rosann Umhoefer*



Matthew Wiese
Son of Kim Wiese



Arthur Gerner / Emily Gerner
*Son & Granddaughter of
Deceased Margaret Gerner
Founder of BPUSAS^tL*

Children of BPUSAS^tL's Special Events



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



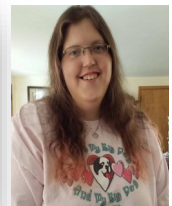
Aaron Cole
*"Aaron's Ms.
Courtney"
Trivia Coordinator*



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 _____

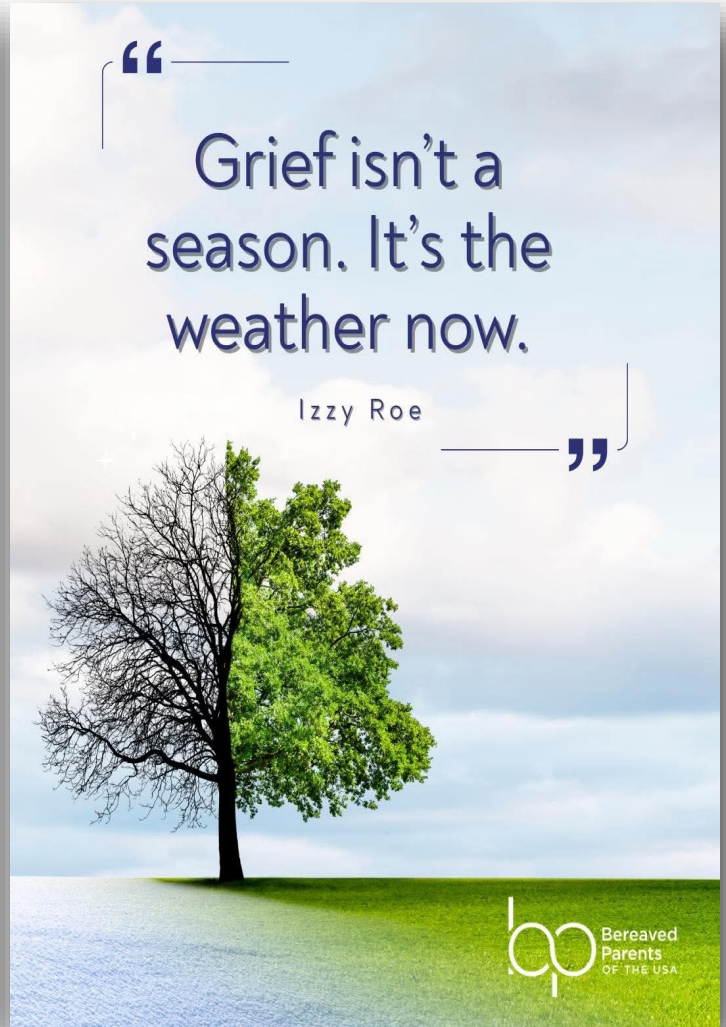
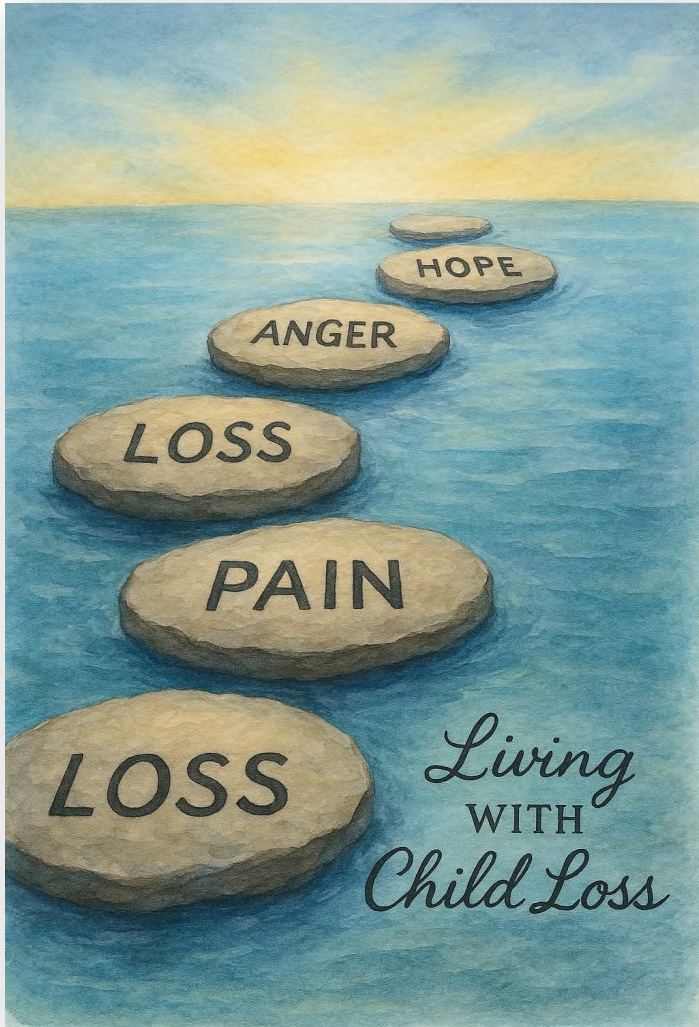
STATE _____ ZIP _____ NAME OF CHILD(REN)

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**





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