

Eric Tognozzi shared memories and legacy of his and Amy's son, **Justin**, at the BPUSASTl candlelight ceremony.



Justin was loved by all who knew him - his wit, charm and smile would light up a room. Justin enjoyed spending time with his friends, had a passion for golf and hockey and was an entrepreneur at heart. He thrived academically, graduating from Marquette High School in conjunction with obtaining an associate degree from St. Louis Community College. He attended the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa in pursuit of a Bachelor of Science degree in Biochemistry.

NOTE: The Thursday, January 8, 2026 St. Peters Group meeting will be held at:
Life Gate International Church
7575 Veterans Memorial Parkway
St. Peters, MO 63376

When the Day turns into Night

When the day turns into night
And you're way beyond my sight,
I'll think of you, I'll think of you.

When the night turns into day
And you still are far away,
I'll think of you, I'll think of you.

Even when I am not here
We still can be so very near
I want you to know my dear
I'll think of you.

— Fred Rogers

INSIDE	PAGE
Love Gifts	2-3
Thank you to the Bronder Family	4
2026 National Gathering Speakers	5
Word of Hope - Laura Diehl	6
Grief Quotes	7
Recipe for Grief	8
I Would Trade it All	9
Author Becky Hemsley Poem	10
2026 BJC Events	11
The Heavy Coat of Grief	12
Meetings / Dial a Friend / Board Representation	13-16

THANK YOU FOR
YOUR LOVE GIFTS

**"It's your grief.
Do it your way."**

***Gary Sturgis,
Surviving Grief***



In Memory of
**Kenneth Michael
Lederich**



In Memory of
**Buddy
Moore**



In Memory of
**Thomas Ian
Lupardus**



In Memory of
**Robert Andrew
Angelbeck
"Robbie"**

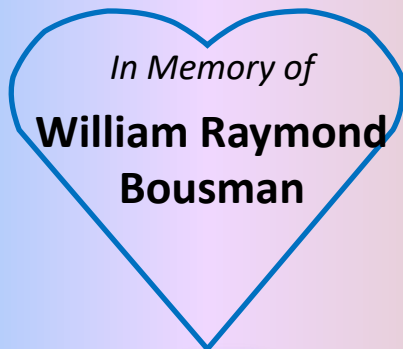
THANK YOU FOR YOUR LOVE GIFTS

**“May there be comfort in
knowing that someone so
special will never be forgotten.”**

Julie Hebert



In Memory of
**James Kevin
Foley**



In Memory of
**William Raymond
Bousman**



In Memory of
**Ericka Jean
Lundell**

THANK YOU to the Bronder Family for the wonderful boxes of cookies.



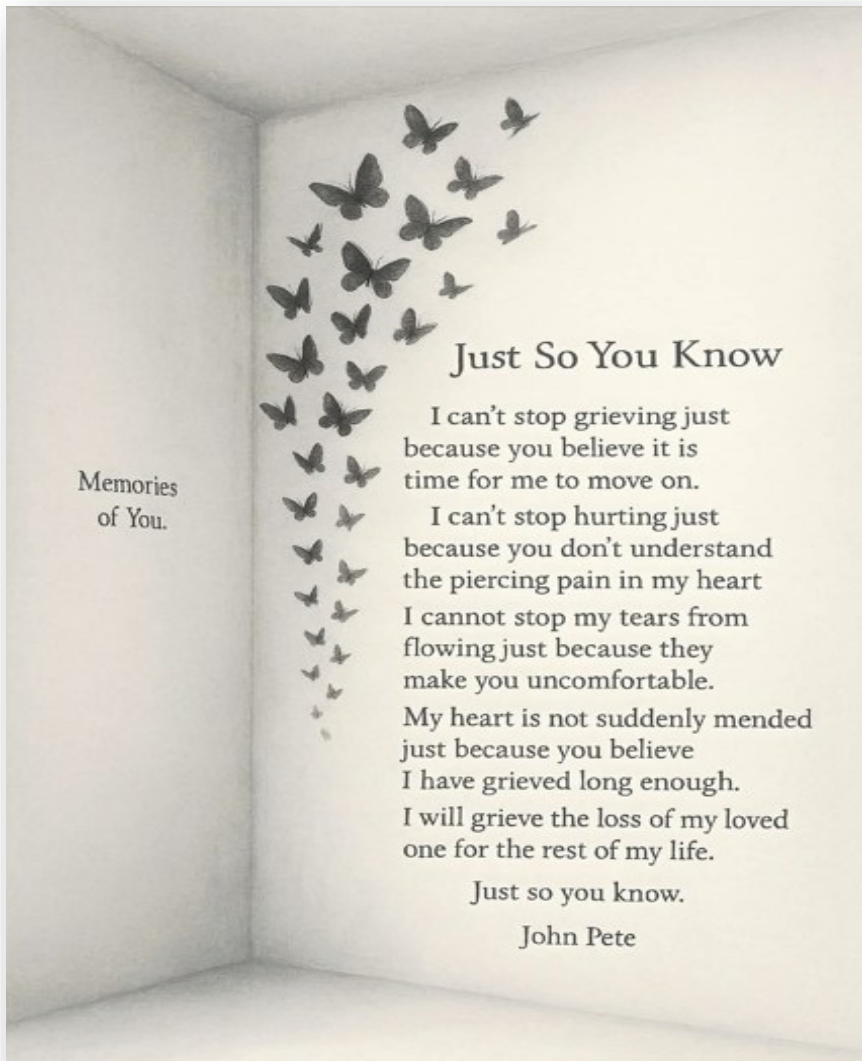
From The Bronder Family: "Knowing You Ministries began in honor of our daughter Kylene who inspired us to open our eyes to those hurting hearts around us."

The Bronders also accept help in cookie donations, either bought or baked, packaging and delivering.

If you wish to receive cookies during the month of December 2026 in memory of your child, please let someone on the BPUSASTL Board know in October 2026; or contact Deb Bronder with your address knowingyou@sbcglobal.net



In Loving Memory of Kylene Bronder





We're honored to announce our 2026 BPUSA National Gathering Keynote Speakers!

Each of these incredible individuals brings courage, compassion, and hope through their stories of loss and healing:

✦ John DeDakis – Journalist, novelist, and writing coach whose award-winning books explore grief and resilience. A former CNN editor, John now teaches and writes about loss with honesty and heart.

✦ Lenny Hunt – Grief coach, speaker, and author known for creative, heartfelt ways of making grief approachable. With a following of over 250,000, Lenny inspires others to live fully again after loss.

✦ Erin Blechman – Author, speaker, and Certified Grief Educator whose book *My Unexpected Journey* shares her path after losing her son, Max, to suicide. Erin's work brings awareness to grief, mental health, and healing.

✦ Janet Geller-Lesko – Retired Naval Officer and speaker who transformed the loss of her daughter and granddaughter into purpose, helping others find hope through The GRIEVE Method™ and The HELP Method™.

We look forward to coming together in 2026 to listen, learn, and heal through their powerful stories. 💜

[#BPUSA](#) [#BPUSANationalGathering](#) [#GriefSupport](#) [#HopeAndHealing](#) [#BereavedParentsUSA](#)

BEREAVED PARENTS OF THE USA NATIONAL GATHERING

July 24-26

Pittsburgh Airport Marriott



John DeDakis



Lenny Hunt



Erin Blechman



Janet Geller-Lesko

Weekly Word of Hope

<https://www.gpshope.org>



THE DASH

I read of a man who stood to speak at the funeral of a friend. He referred to the dates on the tombstone from the beginning... to the end.

He noted that first came the date of birth and spoke of the following date with tears, but he said what mattered most of all was the dash between those years.

For that dash represents all the time they spent alive on earth and now only those who loved them know what that little line is worth.

For it matters not, how much we own, the cars... the house... the cash. What matters is how we live and love and how we spend our dash.

So think about this long and hard; are there things you'd like to change? For you never know how much time is left that still can be rearranged.

To be less quick to anger and show appreciation more and love the people in our lives like we've never loved before.

If we treat each other with respect and more often wear a smile... remembering that this special dash might only last a little while.

So when your eulogy is being read, with your life's actions to rehash, would you be proud of the things they say about how you lived your dash?

—by Linda Ellis

We might think about this for our child; how did he or she live their “dash?”

But I want us to apply it to ourselves. Pause and ask yourself: *How am I living MY dash? Am I fighting my way out of the darkness, back to a place of light, and hope and purpose again, in a way that honors my child, and honors the One who created my child and me?*

There is definitely a “before” and “after” in our lives.

Let's do our best to make sure that our dash matters, not just before the death of our child, but after their death as well. I want the FULL dash to count, for Becca, for me and for the rest of my family.

How about you?

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

HOW GRIEF MIGHT SHOW UP IN YOUR BODY

Aches and pains that can feel like the flu, back pain, joint pain, and stiffness

Tightness in the chest, shortness of breath, and shallow breathing

Nausea or stomach pain

Lowered immune system

Increased inflammation

Increased blood pressure

Headaches

Noise sensitivity

Extreme fatigue, feelings of heaviness

Dizziness and dry mouth

Change in eating patterns, eating more, or eating less

Can't sleep, afraid to sleep or mixed up sleep cycles



@movethroughgrief

When you miss someone so much, they will often give you a sign...

Watch for a butterfly, a feather, a dime, a song.

They are always with you, pay attention.



Grief has its
own
heartbeat
inside of me.

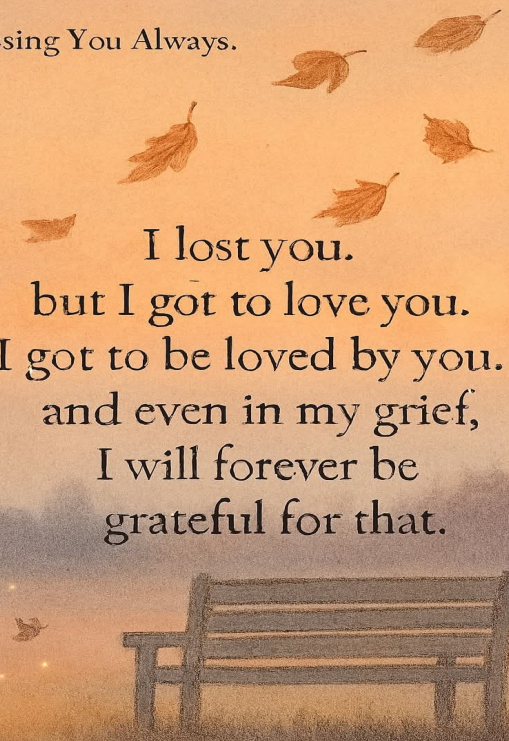
Izzy Roe



WWW.BEREAVEDPARENTSUSA.ORG

Missing You Always.

I lost you.
but I got to love you.
I got to be loved by you.
and even in my grief,
I will forever be
grateful for that.



Recipe for Grief

Ingredients:

- * 1 heavy heart
- * 2 cups of memories
- * A handful of tears
- * A pinch of laughter
- * Patience, courage, and gratitude



Instructions:

◆ Mix memories with tears.

Fold in laughter.

Season with patience and courage.

Wrap in community or solitude. Serve with gratitude — not for the loss, but for the love that made it matter.



I would trade it all

I would trade it all,
I'd give up everything I own,
if I could turn the clock back to a time
before the angels called you home.

The grief it never leaves me,
forever I will mourn,
some days it's just a shower of rain
other days it's like a storm.
And on the days it's heavier,
when it hits me like a train,
I know it's all my love for you
and that my life will never be the same.

And when I feel the anger,
as it sits heavy on my chest,
I know its griefs way of whispering
that I was truly blessed.

@Worduponthewall

People mean well.
They offer advice.
They tell you how strong you are.
They say things like “they’d want you to be happy,” or “at least they’re not suffering.”
They talk about closure. About moving on. About staying positive.

But here’s the thing—
Until you’ve sat in the front row at a funeral...
Until you’ve looked at a casket and felt like the world cracked open...
Until you’ve had to stand there and say goodbye when you weren’t ready—
You don’t really know.

You don’t know how grief rearranges every part of you.
You don’t know how long the silence lasts after everyone else goes back to normal.
You don’t know what it’s like to carry someone in your heart because you can no longer
carry them in your life.

So, if you haven’t been there yet, I’m truly glad.
I hope that day doesn’t come for you for a very, very long time.
But please—
Don’t tell me how I should be grieving.
Don’t tell me what joy should look like right now.
Just sit with me. Walk beside me.
Or let me be.

Because unless you’ve sat in the front row...
You don’t get to hold the mic.

Becky Hemsley Poetry

Support That Surrounds

2026 Community Grief Support Programs

GRIEF SUPPORT GROUPS

- **SPOUSE/PARTNER LOSS GROUP @ Progress West Hospital**
Groups will start in January and August. Call Christy Brimm to register: 314-225-0902
- **SPOUSE/PARTNER LOSS GROUP @ Christian Northwest Medical Building**
Group will start in late spring. Call Kristin McGilligan to register: 314-304-6038

- **HEALING HeARTS ART THERAPY GROUP**
Virtual group for young adults (ages 18-30) beginning in February. Call Tali Light to register: 314-713-6739
- **PARENT LOSS GROUP**
Group will be held in North County beginning in the fall. Call Kristin McGilligan to register: 314-304-6038
- **CHILD LOSS GROUP**
Group will be held at Barnes West County beginning in January. Call Sandy Dillon to register: 314-267-5967

GRIEF EVENTS

Walking Together Through Grief
October 2026 (specific date & location TBD)

HOLIDAY CANDLE LIGHTING at The Heights Community Center
November 2026 (specific date TBD)



LOSS OF A CHILD

Weavings retreat for mothers who have lost a child
February 6-8, 2026
October 23-25, 2026
April 2-4, 2027
October 22-24, 2027

Weavings 

SUPPORT FOR GRIEVING KIDS & TEENS

Stepping Stones camp for kids ages 6-15 who have lost someone important
August 7-9, 2026
Camp Wyman in Eureka, MO

Stepping 
Stones

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER FOR ANY OF THESE EVENTS, PLEASE CONTACT BJC HOSPICE AT GRIEFSUPPORT@BJC.ORG OR 314-953-1676.

BJC 
Hospice
Every Moment

The Heavy Coat Of Grief (And Why It Never Matches Your Shoes)

Grief is like a big heavy coat you didn't ask for, but suddenly you're wearing it everywhere. And not a cool, stylish coat, more like a burlap sack that smells faintly of sadness and old library books.

One of the weirdest things about grief, for me anyway, is how it makes you feel utterly, completely invisible.

I mean, people see you, sure. They might even offer the occasional, "How are you holding up?" which is always a loaded question. Like, do you really want the laundry list of ways my soul currently resembles a dumpster fire, or should I just stick with the socially acceptable "fine?"

But invisible in the way that no one really sees you. The you that existed before the grief monster stomped into your life and rearranged all the furniture of your heart.

Here's the thing...it's like you're walking around in a fog, and everyone else is just clearer and sharper.

They're laughing, they're planning vacations, they're arguing about the merits of pineapple on pizza. And you're just there. Watching. A ghost in your own life.

You feel like you're shouting into the void, trying to explain that the world has shifted on its axis, that the sky is a slightly different shade of blue. But no one seems to notice. They're still caught up in their own orbits, and you're just a faint, blurry satellite, orbiting a different sun.

And the humor? Oh, humor is essential. Because if you don't laugh at the absurdity of it all, you'll just cry. And honestly, who has the energy for more crying?

So, you find the funny. The dark, twisted, slightly inappropriate funny. Like the time I accidentally wore two different shoes to the bank and didn't realize it until the lady behind me in line kindly pointed it out.

Grief brain. It's a real thing!

The invisibility coat of grief is a heavy burden, but it doesn't have to define you. Find your little glimmers of light, your moments of laughter, your connections to the world, even if they're fleeting.

And remember...even ghosts can make a little noise if they try hard enough.



Gary Sturgis - Surviving Grief

Used with permission from Gary Sturgis, Author of many grief books.

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	Meetings locations are currently TBD as we search for a new place. Please check the website or call before attending meetings.	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 BPUSAtL 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

February 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.

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



OUR COMMITMENT



Part of **BPUSAtL'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.

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

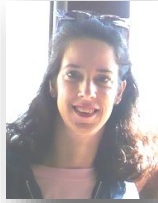
Children of BPUSAS^tL's Board Representation



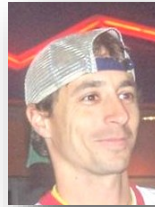
Julie Bardle
*Daughter of
Marilyn Kister
Newsletter
Editor*



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*



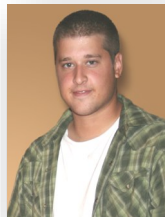
J. P. Rosciglione
*Son of Terre
Rosciglione
Trivia
Coordinator*



Patrick Salyer
*Son of Anne Marie
and Steve Salyer*



Rosie Umhoefer
*Daughter of
Rosann Umhoefer*



Matthew Wiese
Son of Kim Wiese

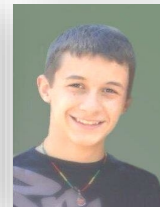


Arthur Gerner / Emily Gerner
*Son & Granddaughter of
Deceased Margaret Gerner
Founder of BPUSAS^tL*

Children of BPUSAS^tL's Special Events

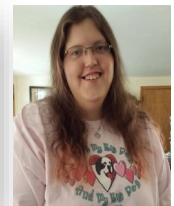
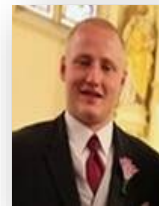


J. P. Rosciglione
*Son of Terre
Rosciglione
Trivia
Coordinator*



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 pages 2 & 3 of this newsletter)

NAME _____

PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

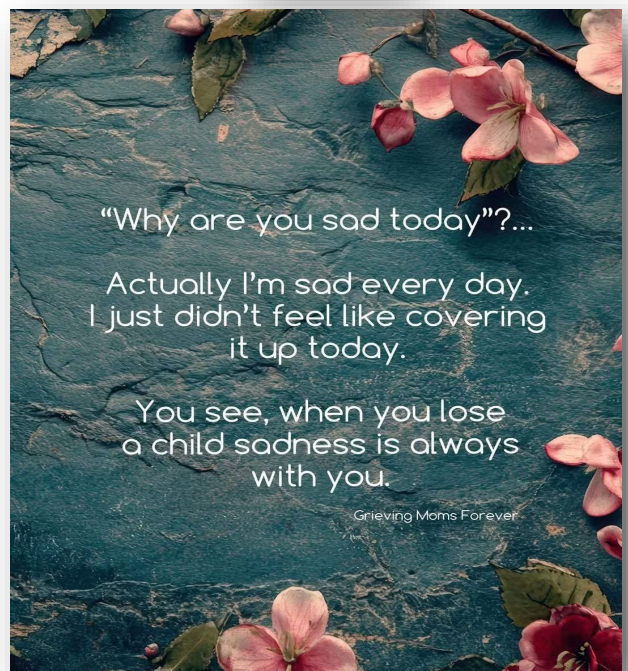
CITY _____

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**





*Grief doesn't fade –
it just learns how to fit
in our pockets.*

Izzy Roe



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