

“To love is to remember; to remember is to keep loving.”

Rosie Schaap



The St. Peters group are now holding their 1st Thursday 7pm monthly meetings at:

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



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THANK YOU FOR
YOUR LOVE GIFTS



In Memory of Darren Young
12.19.68
10.22.89

"Perhaps they are not stars, but rather openings in heaven where the love of our lost ones pours through and shines down upon us to let us know they are happy."

- Eskimo Proverb

"We never lose the people we love, even in death. They continue to participate in our lives in so many ways - in the memories we carry, the values they instilled in us, and the ways that their love leaves an imprint on our hearts." - Joanne Rowling

2026 KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



BEREAVED PARENTS OF THE USA NATIONAL GATHERING
July 24-26
Pittsburgh Airport Marriott

WHERE HEALING HEARTS MEET

2026 Gathering

John DeDakis **Lenny Hunt** **Erin Blechman** **Janet Geller-Lesko**

Exciting News About Our 2026 Keynote Speakers!

This year, we were thrilled to receive 25 applications from individuals eager to share their stories, wisdom, and hope as keynote speakers for our 2026 National Gathering. The passion and dedication within our community continues to inspire us, and we are deeply grateful to everyone who took the time to apply.

Choosing just a few speakers from such a heartfelt group was no easy task — each submission reflected courage, compassion, and the desire to help others heal.

We're excited to introduce our selected keynote speakers over the next two pages. Each one brings a unique perspective shaped by loss, resilience, and love. We can't wait for you to meet them and experience the strength and connection they'll bring to our Gathering in Pittsburgh next July.

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN

Every year, the National Gathering becomes a place where something rare happens.

You walk into a room where no explanations are required.
Where names are spoken freely.
Where your child is understood—not just remembered.

The Gathering isn't about fixing grief. It's about being surrounded by people who already get it. Parents, siblings, grandparents—each carrying their own story, each walking a path none of us chose, but all of us understand.

Over the course of the weekend, you'll find:

- Space to honor your child openly and safely
- Meaningful workshops led by people who truly understand loss
- Quiet moments, shared tears, unexpected laughter
- And connections that often last long after the weekend ends

So many families tell us the same thing afterward:

"I didn't realize how much I needed this until I was there."

Because space at the Gathering is limited, we strongly encourage you to register early.

If you're even thinking about attending, trust that nudge.

You can register here: <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/bereaved-parents-of-the-usa-national-gathering--2026>

DON'T FORGET THAT YOU MUST USE THE LINK IN THE REGISTRATION FORM TO GET OUR GROUP RATE. ROOMS ARE LIMITED SO BOOK NOW!



2026 NATIONAL GATHERING CONFERENCE
JULY 24-26
PITTSBURGH AIRPORT MARRIOTT

Bereaved Parents OF THE USA



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

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



Ullie Kaye Poetry · Follow
Poster based in Canada · 1d ·

"Particles Of You"

My mouth still cracks a tender smile
whenever people talk about you.
And I hope that no one ever feels they
need to whisper your name under their
breath as though you are now some
kind of glimmer from the past.

You are still very much alive in me.
Every particle of me holds particles of you.
My being lives to carry your presence
everywhere I go.

And you are certainly alive
in too many ways to ever be
left unspoken.

ullie-kaye



GRIEF IS LIKE A ROAD
CLOSED WITHOUT
WARNING.



Izzy Roe

You are near,
even if I don't see you.
You are with me,
even if you are far away.
You are in my heart,
in my thoughts,
in my life-always.

In My Heart



My mind
knows you died.
Yet I sit here day after
day waiting for you
to come back.

- Unknown -



There's a kind of exhaustion that grief brings that almost no one talks about.

Not just being tired...

but the heaviness of having to carry a world that no longer feels the way it used to.

You can sleep all night and still wake up weary.

You can do almost nothing all day and still feel completely spent.

Because grief isn't passive.

Even on the quiet days, your mind is revisiting memories.

Your heart is adjusting to an absence it never agreed to.

Your body is living with a stress it can't put down.

That's work.

Invisible work but work all the same.

Yet so many grieving people sit there wondering,

"Why am I so drained?"

"Why can't I get more done?"

"What's wrong with me?"

Nothing is wrong with you.

Grief consumes energy.

Grief asks your system to do something extraordinarily difficult,
to keep living while missing someone who mattered deeply.

Some days surviving grief looks like productivity.

Other days it looks like sitting still,

staring out a window,

getting through the hours one breath at a time.

Both are valid.

Both are part of the same road.

So if today feels heavy...

if your motivation is gone...

if even small things feel like too much...

Be gentle with yourself.

You're not doing "nothing."

You're carrying loss.

And that's incredibly hard work.

This is one of the most misunderstood parts of grief,
and one I wish someone had explained to me sooner.

That's why I wrote 'SURVIVING GRIEF - 365 Days A Year',

because grief doesn't just break your heart,

it exhausts your entire being,

and on the hardest days,

even a few steady words can make the weight feel a little less lonely.

If you're in one of those seasons, I hope you'll be kind to yourself today.

Gary Sturgis

Author: 'SURVIVING GRIEF - 365 Days A Year'

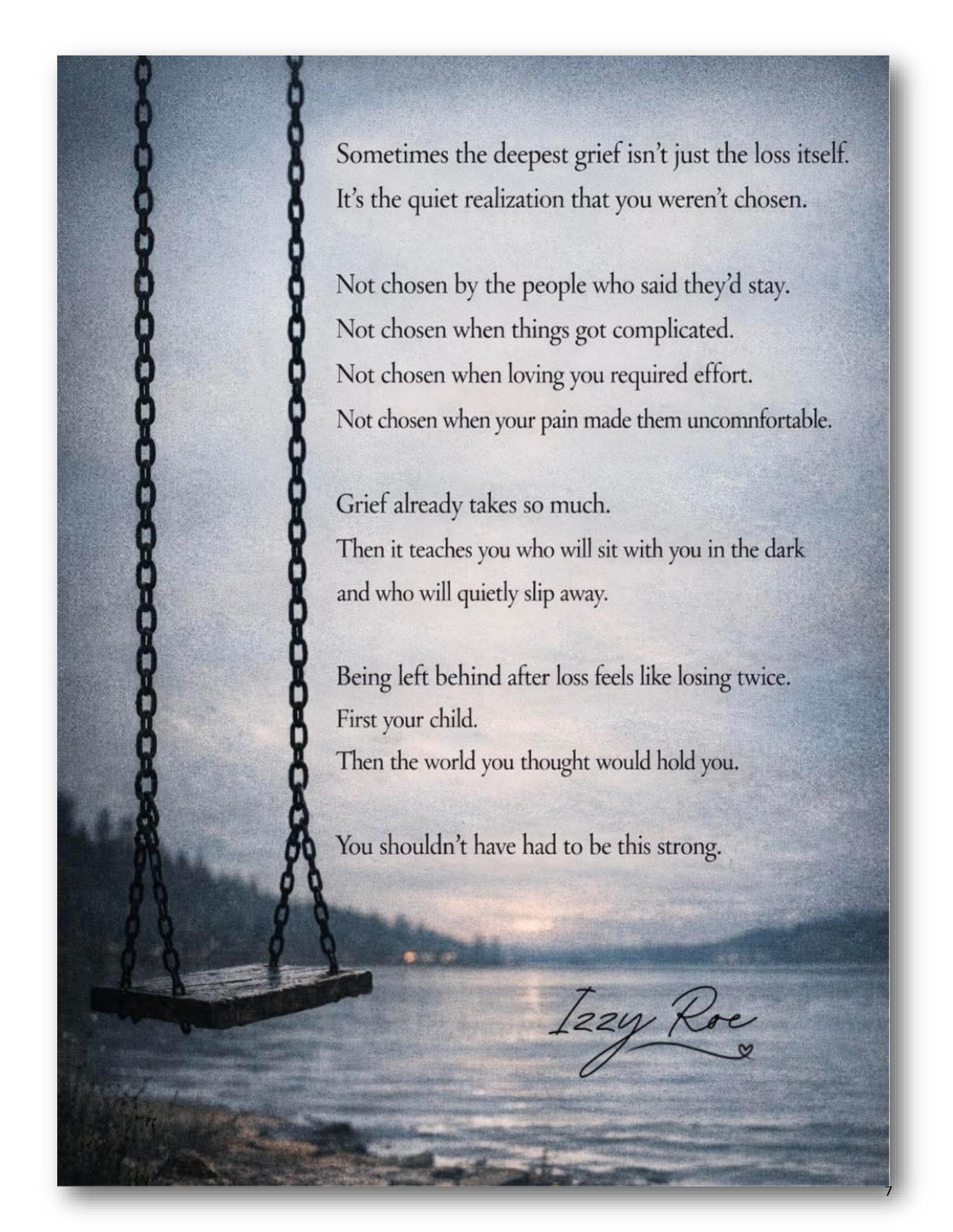
Gary Sturgis

Author: 'SURVIVING GRIEF - 365 Days A Year'



*You're not lazy.
You're grieving.*



A wooden swing hangs from a chain against a sunset background over a lake. The swing is empty and hangs from a dark chain. The background shows a calm lake reflecting the soft light of a sunset or sunrise, with distant hills and a few lights visible on the horizon.

Sometimes the deepest grief isn't just the loss itself.
It's the quiet realization that you weren't chosen.

Not chosen by the people who said they'd stay.

Not chosen when things got complicated.

Not chosen when loving you required effort.

Not chosen when your pain made them uncomfortable.

Grief already takes so much.

Then it teaches you who will sit with you in the dark
and who will quietly slip away.

Being left behind after loss feels like losing twice.

First your child.

Then the world you thought would hold you.

You shouldn't have had to be this strong.

Izzy Roe 



In Their Footsteps

February 18 at 6:59 PM · 🌐



People love to give advice when you're grieving.

Especially people who have never lost someone they couldn't live without.

They mean well. I know they do. But the advice they give is useless at best and damaging at worst.

Here's what I've heard:

"Everything happens for a reason."

No. It doesn't. Sometimes terrible things just happen. There's no grand plan. No hidden lesson. No reason that makes this okay.

"They're in a better place."

Are they? Because I'd rather have them here. In this place. With me.

"Time heals all wounds."

Time doesn't heal grief. It just makes you better at carrying it. The wound is still there. It's just not bleeding as visibly.

"God needed another angel."

God can have all the angels he wants. I needed them here.

"Stay strong."

I'm not strong. I'm barely standing. And telling me to be strong just makes me feel like I'm failing when I fall apart.

"At least you had time with them."

At least? There is no "at least" in this. They're gone. And no amount of time we had makes that okay.

"You need to move on."

Move on to what? A life without them? I don't want that life. I never asked for that life.

"They wouldn't want you to be sad."

Maybe not. But they're not here. And I am sad. And that's allowed.

"Just stay busy. Keep yourself distracted."

You can't outrun grief. It doesn't matter how busy you are. It's still there waiting for you.

Here's what people who haven't lost someone don't understand:

There are no magic words that make this better. There's no advice that fixes it. There's no timeline that makes it go away.

Continued on page 9

Grief isn't a problem to solve. It's not something you can think your way out of or positive-attitude your way through.

It's loss. Permanent, devastating loss. And all the well-meaning advice in the world doesn't change that.

So, if you want to help someone who's grieving, stop giving advice.

Stop trying to fix it. Stop trying to make it make sense. Stop trying to rush them through it.

Just sit with them. Listen. Say "this is awful and I'm sorry." And then stop talking.

That's it. That's what helps.

Just your presence. Your willingness to sit in the hard stuff without trying to make it easier.

Because the truth is, you can't make it easier.

You can only make it less lonely.

And that's the only thing that actually helps.

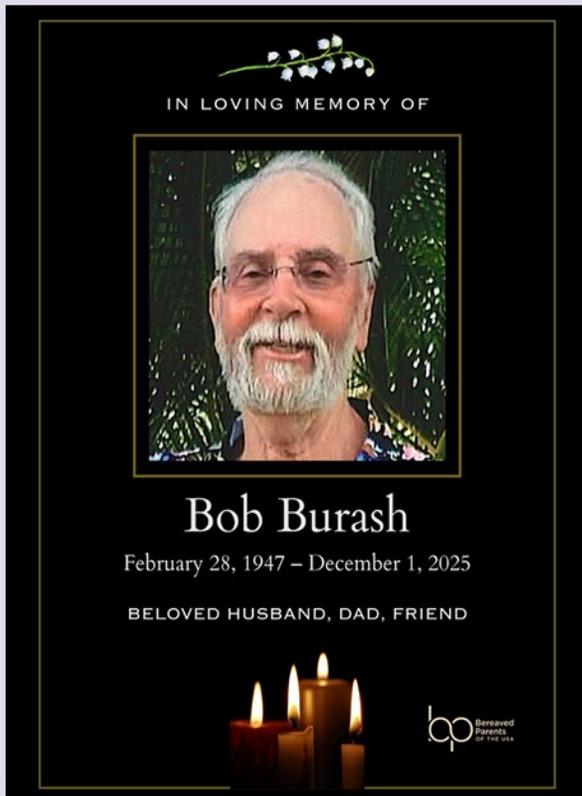
Written by: Aimee Suyko - In Their Footsteps

[#grieving](#) [#widow](#) [#widower](#) [#siblinggrief](#) [#grievingmom](#) [#grievingdad](#) [#memories](#) [#dad](#) [#grievingdaughter](#) [#griefsupport](#) [#Death](#) [#loss](#) [#missingyou](#) [#mom](#) [#intheirfootsteps](#) [#grief](#) [#griefjourney](#)



Many of us had the privilege to know Bob from Gatherings.

IN MEMORY OF BOB BURASH



Bob and Sandy Burash joined Bereaved Parents of the USA in 1992 after the death of their son in a car accident. They came, as all of us do, searching for understanding in a world that suddenly felt unfamiliar. In time, Bob chose not only to receive support, but to give it.

Several years ago, Bob stepped into the role of Chapter Leader of the Anne Arundel County Chapter, a position he held until stepping down in 2024 due to ALS. He led with quiet strength and compassion, welcoming new families, listening with patience, and offering reassurance simply by being there. Bob knew firsthand what brought people through the door, and he met each person with kindness and respect for their own path in grief.

Bob's dedication extended beyond his local chapter. As a member of the National Gathering Committee, he helped plan our Gatherings and worked behind the scenes to ensure workshops ran smoothly. He was always willing to lend a hand wherever needed, focused not on recognition, but on making the experience meaningful for the families who attended.

Through the years, Bob helped many families feel less alone. His steady presence, gentle spirit, and willingness to serve left a lasting mark on this organization and on all who had the privilege of knowing him.

We will miss Bob deeply and hold Sandy and their family close in our thoughts. We are grateful for the time, care, and heart he shared with this community. His impact will continue to be felt in the lives he touched.



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.

<https://www.gpshope.org>

All At Once

There is something they do not tell us enough.

That we are allowed,
permitted
to feel more than one emotion at a time.

We can feel sad that they are gone but grateful for the time we had with them.
Grateful for the people we still have.

We can feel moments of despair that are softened by little pockets of joy.

We can feel angry and tired and still determined to move forward.

We can feel guilty whilst feeling a little zing of happiness.

You are allowed – no encouraged
to feel as much as you need to as often as you need to.

Our emotions do not exist in isolation.
When you hold the hand of love, you will also hold the hand of grief.
When you link arms with joy, you are also linking arms with sorrow.

Because without love, without joy,
we could never know the ache of loss and sadness.

So, go ahead,
feel.

Feel whatever you need to feel.

Even if what you are feeling
is everything
all at once.



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	Life Gate International Church 7575 Veterans Memorial Pkwy. St. Peters, MO 63376 Please check the website for any updates.	Mike & Jeanne Francisco 636.233.8490	1st Thursday - Please contact facilitators for meeting status	7:00 pm
St. Peters / St. Charles, MO—Siblings Facilitator	Facilitator TBD	Contact info above		
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

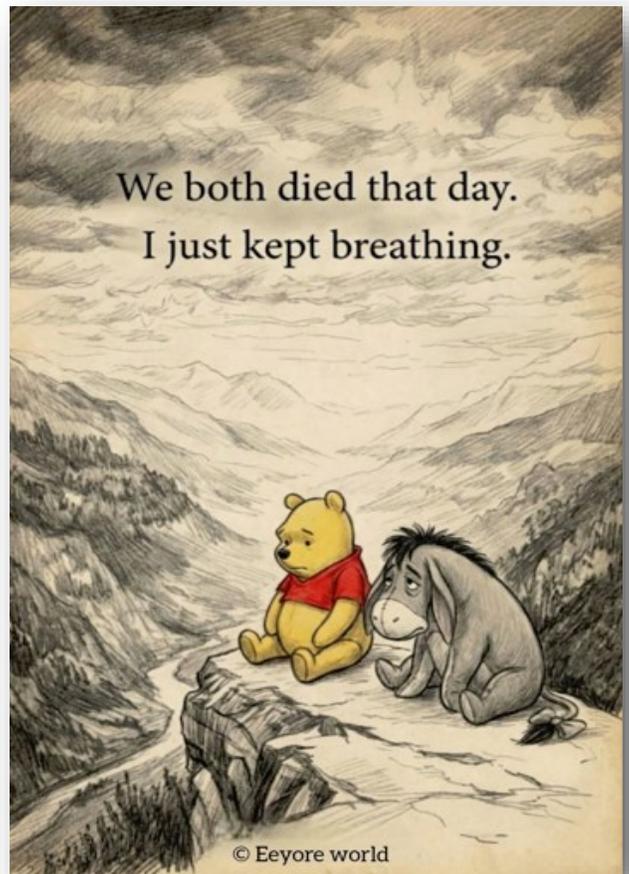
Representation in Lieu of Meetings

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
April 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.

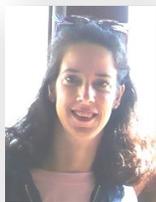
Children of BPUSAS^tL's Board Representation



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**

Some days
you just want
to talk about
your child
the way other
parents talk
about theirs.

IZZY ROE

You are the only
'expert' in your grief
Only you ...
So, carry it your way
speak it your way
live it your way
There is no right
way to miss someone
you love

- TCFV

TCFV



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