Bereaved Parents OF THE USA

Nov / Dec 2026

VOLUME 49 - NUMBER 6

Chapter Newsletter



Fall Back!

INSIDE	PAGE
Love Gift	2
Mourning Madness	3
Bereaved Parents of the USA - Holidays	4
Weekly Word of Hope - Laura Diehl	5
When Grief Makes Everything Too Much	6
Becky Hemsley Poetry	7
BPUSA National 2027 Gathering Info.	8-10
Messages About Grief - Sarah Kravits	11
Men Grieve Too - Gary Sturgis	12-13
Meetings / Dial a Friend / Board Representation	14-16



Bereaved Parents of the USA

St. Louis Chapter

Invites you, your family, and friends to attend

A Candlelight Memorial Service

In Memory of our Children

Date: Sunday, December 6, 2026
Registration: 1:30 – 1:45 p.m.
Service: 2:00 p.m.

Life Gate International
7575 Veteran's Memorial Parkway
St. Peter's, MO 63376

Due to an anonymous contribution, there will be no $5 charge per picture this year.

To Those I Love

If I should ever leave you whom I love
To go along the Silent Way,
Grieve not,
Nor speak of me with tears,
But laugh and talk
Of me as if I were beside you there.
(I'd come-I'd come, could I but find a way!
But would not tears and grief be barriers?)
And when you hear a song or
See a bird I loved,
Please do not let the thought of me be sad...



In Memory of
Darren Young
12.19.68
10.22.89

For I am loving you just as I always have...
You were so good to me!
There are so many things I wanted still
To do—so many things to say to you...
Remember that I did not fear—
It was just leaving you that was so hard to face...
We cannot see Beyond...
But this I know:
I loved you so -
Twas heaven here with you!

Isla Paschal Richardson

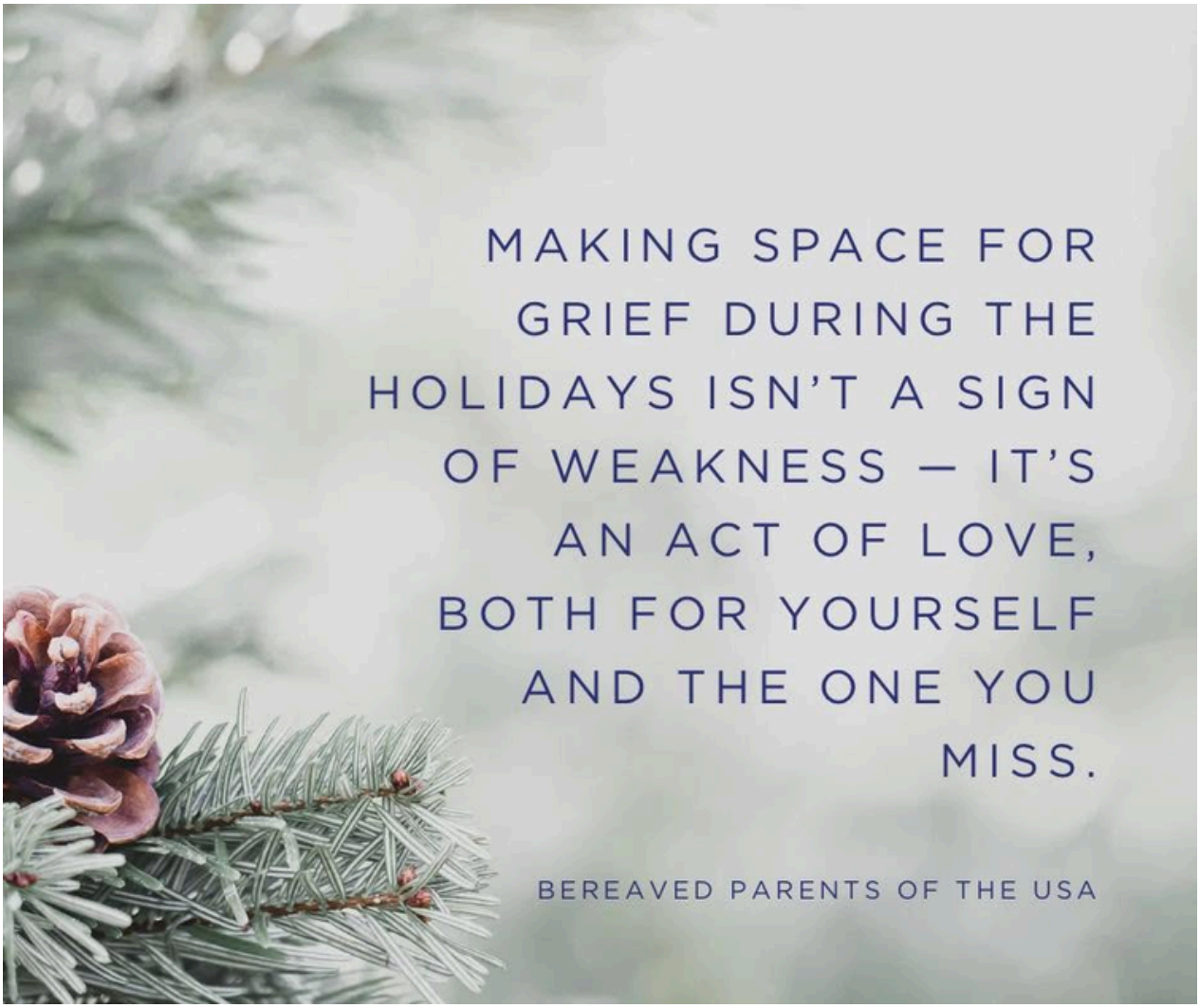
In Memory of Darren Young
Bless you on your birthday -
December 19

Submitted by Darren's mom
Doris Young

Thank you for your love gift.

Mourning Madness - (*Facebook*)





The holiday season sweeps in with its endless to-do lists, gatherings, and expectations. It's easy to get caught in the whirlwind, leaving little room for what your heart truly needs. But grief doesn't pause for the holidays — it quietly lingers, waiting to be felt.

Amid the holiday rush, remember to save space for your grief. Step away from the noise when you need to. Light a candle in their memory, take a reflective walk, or listen to a song that connects you to them. It's okay to let traditions change or skip them altogether if they feel too heavy this year.

Making space for grief during the holidays isn't a sign of weakness — it's an act of love, both for yourself and the one you miss. In honoring that space, you create room for authentic connection, gentle healing, and the memories that matter most.

Weekly Word of Hope

It always amazes me how some days memories can make me smile, and other days they bring tears.

Holidays and special events definitely have this issue. Some years are filled with tears, and others are filled with warm memories that bring smiles and even laughter.

And I have learned that it's okay.

- It's okay to be smiling one moment and crying the next.
- It's okay to be able to go to one event but not go to the next event.
- It's okay to want to talk about my child with someone who misses her.
- It's okay to not want to talk about my child right now to anyone.
- It's okay to fall apart and be a mess because something triggered a wave of grief, and it's okay to have that happen with no explanation.
- It's okay to finally have a burst of energy one day, and the next day not even get out of bed.

It's okay to not be okay! Let me say that again, a little louder this time. Especially as a bereaved parent:

IT'S OKAY NOT TO BE OKAY!

And that is encouraging. Well, maybe not to those who have never faced a deep loss like ours. But if you are anything like me, this was a relief when I found out it is not only okay to be like this, but it is ***NORMAL***!

GPS HOPE
GRIEVING PARENTS SHARING HOPE

Laura Diehl

It gave me so much hope to know that there are other bereaved parents who seem to have figured out how to live without their child, who were once in the same "not okay" place that I still find myself in at times.

This is actually a good reminder for myself, because this week we hit year 15 of Becca being gone from this world.

Many of us are told in this life, "It's not about you." But the truth is, sometimes it is. As a bereaved parent, quite often it *is* about you and what you need as you live through the painful life-long loss. Only you know what is right for you as a bereaved parent hour by hour, day by day, and the celebration events of others.

If you are just in survival mode right now, *that's okay*. Do what you need to do to get through it!

When Grief Makes Everything Too Much

There are days when absolutely everything gets on your nerves.

The television is too loud. Someone keeps asking you questions. Your phone won't stop malking noise. You're in a store with people all around you, and suddenly all you want to do is leave.

And it isn't necessarily because you're having a particularly sad day.

You just can't stand one more sound, one more conversation, or one more person needing something from you.

People who once loved the television or radio on all day now prefer complete silence. People who enjoyed big gatherings find themselves looking for somewhere quiet to sit. You get home from an ordinary day and don't want to talk to another human being for the rest of the evening.

What bothers me is how easily we start thinking there's something wrong with us.

We wonder when we became so irritable. Why little things make us angry. Why we don't enjoy being around people as much as we used to. And sometimes we feel terrible about the way we react to people who haven't done anything wrong.

But think about how much we're already carrying.

Grief can take up so much of our energy and attention that there isn't always much left for the ordinary noise of living.

I've heard grieving people say they just want everyone to leave them alone, even though they don't really want to be alone.

I think I understand that a little better now.

IZZY ROE
BEREAVED PARENTS OF THE USA

Becky Hemsley Poetry · Follow
January 19 ·

There are so many things I have discovered since I had to go.
And I want to share this one with you - I want to let you in on the secret.

You see, I know you feel a sudden pull of emotions sometimes. Those moments when you lose composure and losing me hits you afresh all over again. And it might be at seemingly trivial, inconsequential times like when you're brushing your teeth or getting into the car for work. Or at 2.30pm on any given Wednesday.

And you won't really know why but you will suddenly remember me. Not that you'll have forgotten me, but that I am - in that moment - all you can think about.
Overwhelmingly so.

Well, here's the secret; that's because of our heartstrings.
We are connected to everyone we love by invisible, unbreakable threads. And when one of us misses the other person, we only need to pull on those heartstrings to bring them a little closer to us.

Sometimes it hurts. Sometimes we grab desperately at the thread like a life buoy in a storm and our string is pulled so abruptly that it burns.
But it never breaks.

And I just wanted you to know this. So that you can be comforted by knowing that, in the moments when you suddenly miss me the most...
It's because I am missing you too.

****

Becky Hemsley 2023
Artwork by Shawna Erback

'Heartstrings' is from When I am Gone: https://amzn.to/3YqC9NL



Used with permission from Becky Hemsley - www.beckyhemsley.com

Bereaved Parents OF THE USA

BPUSA
Where grief meets hope and healing.

LOOKING TO 2027 AND BEYOND

As we look ahead to 2027, Bereaved Parents of the USA is preparing for a year that will look a little different. After much discussion and careful consideration, the National Board made the difficult decision not to hold a National Gathering in 2027.

Our National Gatherings have always been an important part of BPUSA. They provide opportunities to meet other bereaved parents, share our children's stories, learn from one another, and form friendships that often continue long after we return home. We know how much these weekends mean to those who attend, which made this decision especially difficult.

However, over the past several years, we have seen attendance decline. While we recognize that travel expenses, hotel costs, time away from work, and other responsibilities can make attending difficult, we also know that the world is changing. The ways people connect, learn, and seek support are changing, too. Rather than continue doing things simply because they are familiar, we believe it is important to look closely at what today's bereaved families want and need. We are not stepping away from National Gatherings. We are taking a year to explore how we can make them better.

Throughout 2027, we will be researching different formats, locations, schedules, and opportunities that may make future Gatherings more accessible, meaningful, and affordable. We will also be asking for your input. Surveys will be distributed to our chapters and members so that we can better understand what you would like a National Gathering to look like. Would a shorter event work better? Would different activities, workshops, or opportunities for connection encourage you to attend? What has kept you from attending in the past? Your answers will help guide our planning for 2028 and beyond.

Another priority for us is making these experiences accessible to families who might otherwise be unable to attend. This year, BPUSA was able to award four scholarships to help bereaved families attend our National Gathering. We are proud that we could provide those opportunities, but we would love to do even more.

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Where grief meets hope and healing.

LOOKING TO 2027 AND BEYOND

To help make that possible, we are introducing a new Virtual Webinar Series in 2027. These educational webinars will feature knowledgeable presenters discussing topics relevant to bereaved parents, grandparents, siblings, and others who have experienced the death of a child. In addition to providing valuable information and support to families across the country, proceeds from the webinars will help fund scholarships for our 2028 National Gathering. Our hope is that this new approach will allow us to reach more families throughout the year while building a scholarship fund that will open the doors for even more people to attend in 2028.

Change is not always easy, especially when it involves something that has been such an important tradition within our organization. But BPUSA has always been about listening to bereaved families and finding ways to support them through the years that follow the death of a child. We owe it to those families, and to the future of our organization, to be willing to grow and adapt.

We hope our chapter leaders will encourage their members to participate in the upcoming surveys, share their ideas, and support our new webinar series. Your voices matter, and we want the future of our National Gatherings to reflect the needs and wishes of the families we serve.

Our commitment to bringing bereaved families together has not changed. We are simply looking for the best ways to make that happen.

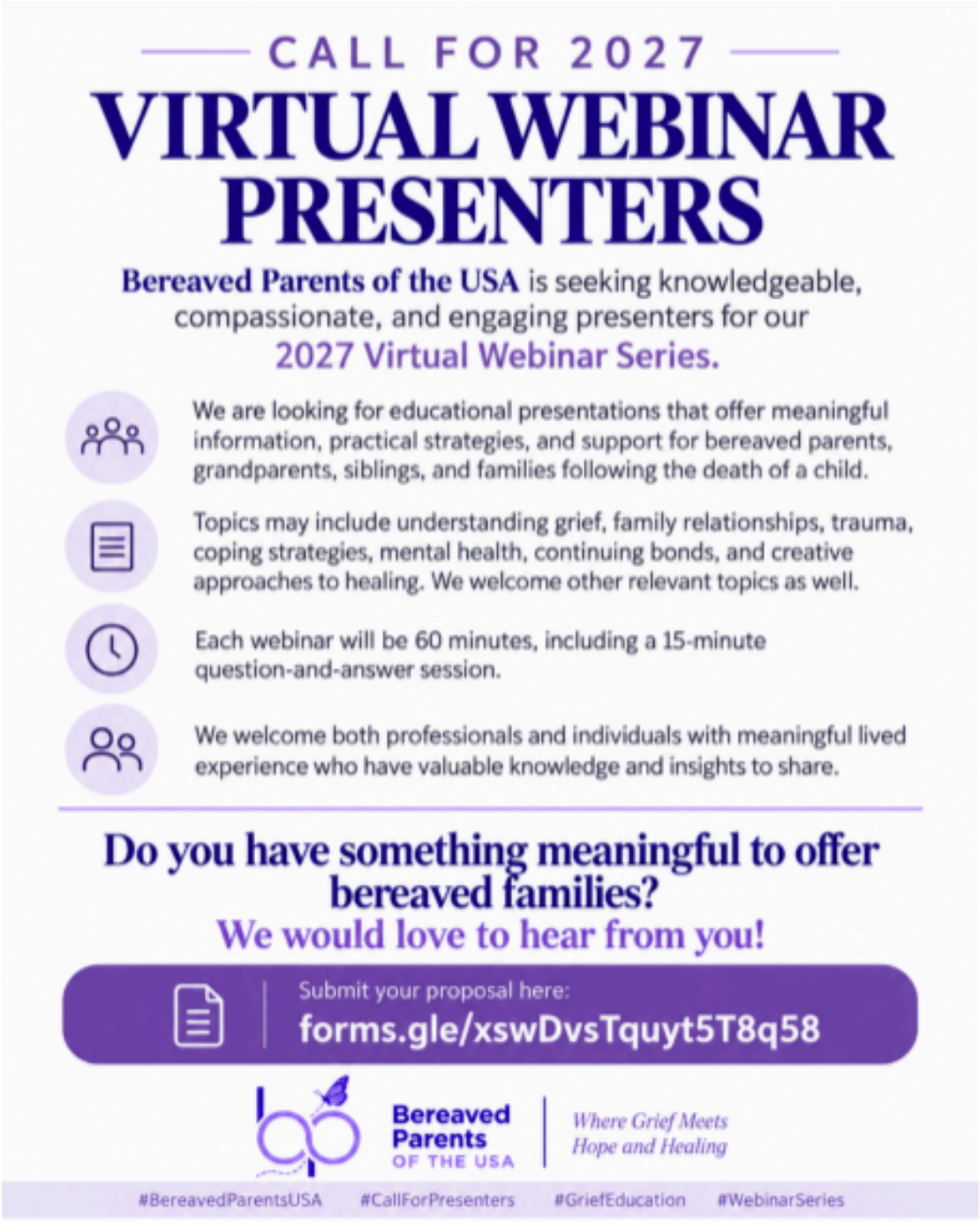
With warmth and hope,

The National Board of Directors
Bereaved Parents of the USA

Bereaved Parents OF THE USA

BP USA
Where grief meets hope and healing.

CALL FOR PRESENTERS: BPUSA'S 2027 VIRTUAL WEBINAR SERIES



Messages about Grief in Thanksgivings Past

As the twelfth holiday season after my brother Frank's death approaches, I have been reminiscing about the many Thanksgiving celebrations we shared during his life, pulling up my now-solo, and less complete, versions of the memories that we constructed together. When celebrating with my North Carolina-born grandmother, we enjoyed classic cornbread stuffing, and when up north with my Italian-American grandmother, she made delicious sausage stuffing. I had a great uncle who fancied creamed pearl onions on the menu, a dish which took me years to appreciate. When a younger cousin became a vegetarian, my grandmother began baking her a separate tin of stuffing in the oven, outside of the turkey. One year we had Thanksgiving dinner at a restaurant with a great aunt we were visiting a few hours away, which felt odd and exciting and a little like breaking the rules. Then there was the time, much later when we were adults with our own children, when we met up at my parents' home for the Thanksgiving celebration. My mom, a practical sort who likes to minimize fuss, had purchased in-bag microwaveable potatoes. Frank, who had the most refined palate in the family, quietly sent me to the Giant Food to source some spuds to cook the old-fashioned way, and politely convinced Mom to save the bagged potatoes for another night. We served both the canned cranberry jelly and the fruit-laden kind, in an attempt to please all of the diners, and I brought homemade pumpkin pies. I bake them almost every year, but I can't always find the crookneck pumpkins that I like best for cooking down, so I make do with what's available.

I see lessons for grieving in these Thanksgiving stories. When you are with certain people, some options for managing or expressing grief are available, and with others, the options change. Sometimes, you become ready to try out a way of processing loss that didn't appeal to you for a long time. Other times, a choice you've made for years doesn't work for you anymore, and you make a change. Occasionally you might do something that seems to break a rule, but find that it adds a needed spark to your life. There are moments when what someone offers you doesn't work, and you need to assert yourself to choose something else. Variety, and allowing for differences, can help a range of people get what they need. And when you don't have something you normally count on to help you through, you might be able to approximate it with a substitution.

Thanksgiving, for all of its seemingly rigid traditions and Norman Rockwell-inspired expectations, changes in unexpected and nonlinear ways for most people over time. So too does the experience of grief through the years. Reflect on what is changing for you -- or perhaps what you want to change intentionally. Be curious about what you need. Try something new, and keep it or discard it depending on how you feel. Let the way you keep your loved one with you change in ways that honor the changes within and without you.

I think sometimes, if my brother were alive, he would notice the ways that I am changing over time, and adapt to them, and our relationship would continue to evolve. I hope that by responding to my changing instincts around grief over time, I'm finding a semblance of that evolution with him.

I am grateful to share my stories, my grief, and my brother with you in this space. May a moment or two of peace come your way this Thanksgiving.

Men Grieve Too

Thanks to Gary Sturgis - Surviving Grief

"Today I asked for suggestions for my next newsletter and a very nice guy asked why there aren't more posts and blogs about men who are grieving a spouse, a child, or another deep loss. And that question stopped me in my tracks, because he was absolutely right.

For a long time, the numbers on my page told a very specific story. Up until this year, about 96% of my followers were women who had lost a spouse or a child. So a lot of my writing naturally leans into their experiences, their voices, their hearts. Not because men don't grieve, (I mean...please... who knows that better than me) but because so few were actually here reading along.

But something really cool has been happening lately.

More men have been quietly slipping into this space. The number of widowers, grieving dads, brothers, sons, and male friends following this page has grown in a really noticeable way. They may not always comment, but they're here, reading in the background, carrying very heavy stories.

So this one is for them.

For the widower who goes to bed in a house that's too quiet and wakes up wondering how on earth this is his life now.

For the grieving dad who feels like he has to be 'the strong one' for everyone else, even when his own heart is shattered.

For the son who's lost a parent and is hurting.

For the brother who lost a sibling and doesn't quite know where he fits in the family story anymore.

For every man who has ever sat in his car in the driveway a little too long, just trying to pull himself together before walking inside.

You're seen here. You're allowed to hurt here. You're allowed to miss them so much it aches. You're allowed to not have the words.

And yes, you're absolutely allowed to be a man and be devastated.

One of the reasons there haven't been more men on grief pages like this is because so many were taught the same unhelpful messages: "Be strong." "Don't cry." "Take care of everyone else." "Keep busy and you'll be fine."

Somewhere along the way, grief got labeled as 'a women's thing' and men were handed a tool-belt with only two tools: silence and distraction. Not exactly a great kit for a broken heart.

Continued on page 13

Continued from page 12

So to the men here:
• You don't have to be the 'rock' all the time. Even rocks crack.
• You don't have to have a polished, poetic way to talk about your grief. Grief understands mumbling, half-sentences, and long pauses.
• You're not weak for missing them. You're human.

And to my incredible female followers (who have carried this page from the beginning):

• If you have a widower friend, a grieving dad, a brother, or a son who's hurting, gently invite them into spaces like this.
• Let them know that reading quietly is okay. They don't have to share their soul in the comments on day one.

And to all you guys that have been following me, thank you for trusting this space with your heart. There will be more posts for you, about you, with you in mind. Your grief matters every bit as much as anyone else's. And your presence here is not only welcome; it's needed.

So here's your official notice: men grieve too...and around here, we're not going to forget that anymore."

Gary Sturgis - Surviving Grief



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

Newsletter Submissions
Cut-off date for our next issue is December 15, **2026**

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

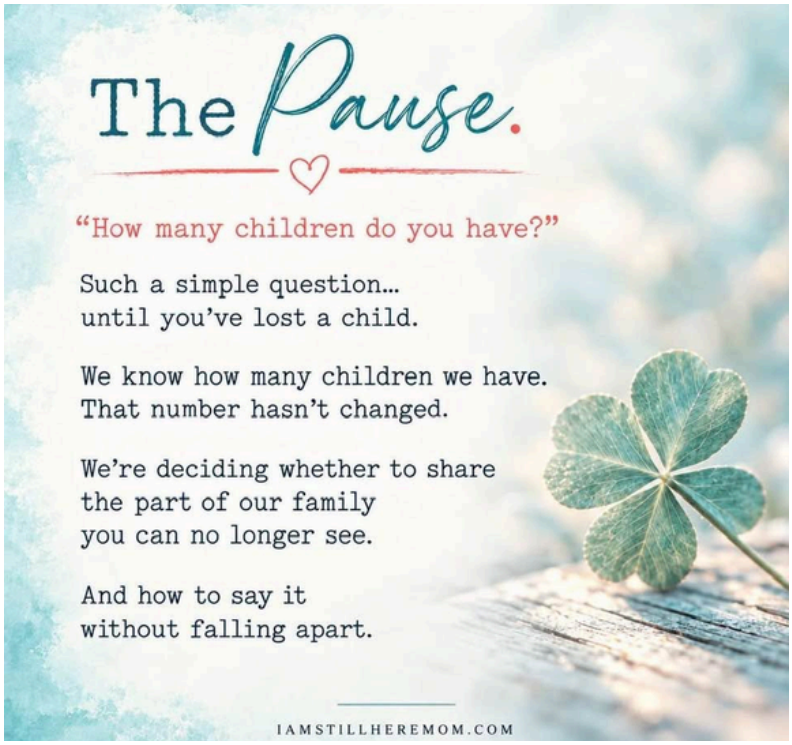
Newsletter
PO Box 1115
St. Peters, MO 63376
or to :
snowwhite6591@gmail.com
Your writings may help someone.

As always, for up-to-date information on BPUSA StL **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



OUR COMMITMENT

Part of **BPUSA***StL*'s commitment to you is that we are the space where our parents and families communicate. Printed in your newsletter are articles to educate and ones that are private expressions of writers. We offer our writings only for your reflection, sometime serving nature or establishing routines signal solace to the writer. Often they turn to religion or spirituality for comfort and guidance.
BPUSA*StL* share these insights not only for your contemplation but also to acknowledge our community's many and rich sources for strength and hope.

Children of BPUSA*StL'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



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 BPUSA*StL*

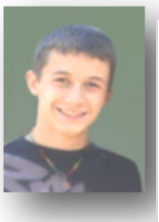




Children of BPUSA*StL's* Special Events



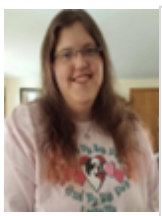
J. P. Rosciglione
Son of Terre Rosciglione Trivia Coordinator



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 am Still Here, Mom
October 15, 2025 ·

Easier?
Grief... not really.
Different.
It gets lighter.
Not so heavy.
But always there.

Sadness.
It waxes and wanes.
Less pain than more.
Most of the time.
Popping up.
When least expected.

Happiness.
Yes. It comes.
It is relearned.
One day at a time.
A new life evolves.

Be graceful to yourself.
It is a work in progress.

~ Michelle Lyn 💛💛💛



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