



Tampa Bay Chapter

P.O. Box 3226
Tampa, Florida
33601-3226

www.bpsatampabay.org

August 2006

"Journey of the Heart"

BEREAVED PARENTS of the USA
11th Annual National Gathering
Gateway to Healing
St. Louis, Missouri

Thank you St. Louis for all of your hard work and the love that you poured into this Gathering!

MEETING INFORMATION

Regular Monthly SUNDAY Meeting

Sunday, August 13, 6:30 to 8:30

(We will have short separate break out sessions for Fathers and Mothers)

St. Joseph's Hospital

Medical Arts Building, Auditorium

3001 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

(Note: Park in hospital garage or in small lot adjacent to circle drive next to MAB.)

Call Linda Delk at 813-661-0680

for directions or information.

Regular Monthly DAYTIME Meeting

Riverview/Gibson/Brandon areas

(held the second Friday each month)

Friday, August 11, 10:00 a.m. to noon

First United Methodist Church of Brandon

In the Office Building, Koinonia Room

120 North Knights Avenue, Brandon

Call Kathy Simone at 813-653-1717

for directions or information.

Regular Monthly BRADENTON Meeting

(held the third Monday each month)

Monday, August 21, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Braden River Baptist Church, 5412 SR 64

I-75 to SR 64 (Exit 220)

Melissa Coxwell at 941-708-7052

Regular Monthly PLANT CITY Meeting

(held the fourth Thursday each month)

Thursday, August 24, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

South Florida Baptist Hospital

301 N. Alexander Street, Plant City

in the Community Conference Room

Call Sue Bowditch at 813-661-9334

for directions or information.

Upcoming Events

Angel of Hope "Crop for Hope"

Saturday, August 19th & Saturday, September 16th
from 12.-3 pm.

(See message on Page 2)

2007 BP/USA National Gathering

Next year the 2007 Gathering will be in Chicago, Doubletree Hotel, Downers Grove, July 13, 14 and 15.

Plan to go. It's something you never forget!

Wanted-CHAPTER PICNIC

Someone to **volunteer** to plan and organize a **SPRING PICNIC** for the chapter members. We would like to have a **balloon release** in memory of our children and a wonderful time fun of sharing. If you are interested, please call Beverley Hurley at 832-3175!



Fourteen of our local members traveled to attend the 11th Annual National Gathering and to find healing and hope and a warm welcome by the wonderful members of the St. Louis Chapters.

I want to thank those of you that donated beautiful items in memory of your beautiful children to our very successful raffle or boutique: Dave and Kathy Simone in memory of their son Ben; Sam and Nancy Holdren in memory of their son Mike Steen; David and Beverley Hurley in memory of her daughter Debbie Bray; The Tampa Bay Chapter in memory of all of our children; our national webmaster, Elise Cronin-Hurley; Larry and Jeanne O'Neil in memory of their son Clark; and Barbara and Tommy Dietrich in memory of their daughter Jamie. All proceeds from the raffle help to defray the cost of the Gathering!

The many speakers were very inspiration and passed on a message of Hope to all of us!

Please read below the comments from some of those that attended the Gathering!

"We both were just amazed to realize that everyone, 400 or more people, had suffered the loss of a child or grand-child. We knew we weren't alone in our grief and we could share with complete strangers because they understood. It is not a confraternity I would have chosen but I am so thankful that they are there now that I am one of them.

The one point that really struck me was that I have to find a new "NORMAL". My old life is gone and life will never be the same, but I must find a way to live. Our son would not want us to cry forever, but he would want us to remember him and to help others to keep his memory alive. He always said that when he was gone he hoped he would always be remembered, loved and missed. No doubt about that.

Thanks for letting me share a little of what the Gathering meant and we definitely plan to attend the next one in Chicago."

Jackie and George Loadholtz, Tampa, FL

"I did receive a lot of long term benefits from the gathering in St. Louis. The speeches touched my soul, especially the second night when Father Kempf spoke. The people we met at the gathering were incredible. I never imagined I would be part of their "fraternity." We have all been brought together on a journey that not too many parents travel. It is a learn-as-you-go journey. And, more specifically, pray-and receive-strength journey. In the long run, the gathering of people like us will empower us."

Laura Marchetti, Tampa Florida

"Like all Gatherings, I just don't know a more accepting, caring, supportive, safer place for a bereaved parent to be than the National Gathering. I was especially impressed with a new workshop, A Grief Model by Paul Balasic, that put a formula and numbers to grief. Although it sounds cold, it provided a very realistic way to look at and understand where you are in your grief. As I told the presenter, "the workshop sounded interesting, I had no idea it would be so useful too!"

Dave Simone, Tampa

"It is hard to explain why we want to spend three days with hundreds of other grieving parents... Guess they just have to be there to understand, don't they?"

It's not just the workshops or the speakers; in fact, they almost seem like the background for what really counts. The time sitting with new friends and catching up with your once-a-year friends is so affirming.

Each Gathering is different, and it's not just the locale or venue...it's where you are in your life and in your grief journey.

The one expectation that I believe is always fulfilled is that your loss will be validated and you will feel understood."

Donna Corrigan, Chicago, IL

Chapter News

July Sharing Meetings Report

The Sunday evening meeting was spent with attendees who were at the Gathering discussing the healing that they brought back from the Gathering and what really made a difference for them.

The Daytime meeting was small and intimate and we had an opportunity to concentrate on so many grief issues that the newly bereaved are faced with. Tyler's mom, Tammy Hill, brought his favorite cupcakes for our refreshments in loving memory of him and told us about the candle light ceremony she was planning for Tyler.

ANGEL OF HOPE UPDATE

www.angellofhopetampabay.org

We agreed to have a monthly committee meeting (unless a holiday weekend)! Please be a part of this important planning in memory of all of our children! Next meeting August 7 at Perkins Restaurant, So. Dale Mabry.



We have reserved a date for our 2007 Spring Tea so mark your calendars for Saturday, April 28, Comfort Inn, I-275 and Busch Blvd.



Crop For Hope—Many are having a wonderful time scrap booking together or learning about scrap booking and helping to fund the Angel of Hope. More dates are being scheduled so check out the website for more information. The next two Crops for Hope will be :

Saturday, August 19th & Saturday, September 16th from 12.-3pm.

I will have a beginner class and a brief Croptalk. This is a great way for you to work on your scrapbooks, and get motivated!!! Better yet, it will raise money towards the Angel of Hope!!!

Snacks are provided & Friends are welcome too!

Children's Board of Hillsborough County,
1002 East Palm Ave. , Tampa, FL 33605
in Historic Ybor City (Palm Ave. & Nebraska)

I Hope to see you there!!

Telephone Friends

Need to talk? Call one of our Telephone Friends. They're here to lend a knowing ear because they've been there. Don't hesitate to call, we understand.

Linda Delk (General Information)	(813) 661-0680
Theresa Farmer (Homicide)	(813) 994-0707
Traci Cooley (Drowning)	(813) 654-1381
Ron Ellington (Suicide/Grandparent)	(727) 410-2308
Serena Graves (Sibling Contact)	(727) 239-2471
Violeta "Cookie" Fernandez (Se Habla Espanol)	(813) 996-4281
Crisis Center	211

Bereaved Parents/USA National Office

Post Office Box 95, Park Forest, IL 60466

Phone: (708) 748-7866

www.bereavedparentsusa.org

Love Gifts

Freddie and Patricia Schulman
In loving memory of her son
Adam Schulman
6/6/1971 to 9/26/2004

Jeanne and Larry O'Neil
In loving memory of their son
Clark Dean O'Neil
9/1/1962 to 10/24/2004

For a donation of two audio books
by Joan Didion "The year of Magical Thinking"

A special Thank You to the Hillsborough County Sheriffs Department for selecting our Chapter to receive a Community Enrichment Grant. Some of our members speak with the First Offenders Shock Program sponsored by the Sheriff's office about how the choices the teens make can affect the whole family for the rest of their lives.

Love Gifts-A Thoughtful Way to Remember

Love Gifts are a beautiful and loving way to remember a loved one. Through Love Gifts, we are able to reach out to others with our brochures and newsletters as well as obtain books and other information for our library. We truly appreciate every Love Gift, donation and sponsorship. Our Chapter work is done by volunteers and these donations help us reach out in many ways, including the preparation and mailing of the newsletter.

Sponsor A Newsletter Page

Anyone can sponsor a page in this newsletter in memory of their child. The price for a full page is \$60 which includes one black and white scan of one photograph and your tribute to your child, which can include poems, stories or whatever you like. Your contribution supports the chapter and helps pay for the printing of the newsletter.

Additionally, sponsorship pages will be posted on our Website for one (1) year. Simply click on "How we remember."

To sponsor a newsletter page, contact Beverley Hurley at (813) 832-3175 (email address: bee.hurley@gte.net). Please note that sponsorship pages are **due by the 15th of the month BEFORE the publication month.**

Note: The Tampa Bay Chapter Steering Committee recently voted to increase the cost of the newsletter sponsorship to \$60 (only a five dollar increase), which we have not done in over ten years, due to ongoing increases of postage and printing costs. We also decided to limit monthly sponsorship pages to four (4) a month so as to limit our printing costs and still have room for articles and poems. So please get your sponsorships in early and by the 15th of the month BEFORE the publication month so you will not be disappointed if there is not room left for your page in memory of your child.

Chapter Library Books

If you have finished reading a BP/USA Library book, please, **please** return it to our library. There is no time limit for how long you can have a book, but the longer you borrow a book, the less opportunities other bereaved parents have to read it. We also gladly accept book donations.

Contact Dave or Kathy Simone at (813) 653-1717 or visit the Sunday monthly meeting to return a book, arrange a donation or inquire about an available title. A complete list of available books can be found at www.bpusatampabay.org.



Our Children . . . Remembered

*So long as we live, they too shall live ...
For they are a part of us as we remember them.*

August Birthdays

Art, Thomas Gregory
08/31/1989 - 01/05/1990
P - Greg & Katie Art
S - Ashley & Abby Art
B - Andrew Art

Bishop, Krystal Lee
8/1/1988 - 12/24/2001
P-Pam & Rick Bishop
S-Angie Valente & Missy Bishop
B-Greg Bishop
BM-Marylynn Eddy

Darrigo, Anthony & Domenic
08/11/1994 - 08/11/1994
P - Sam & Vanessa Darrigo

Faber, Nicholas (Nicky) Paul
08/13/1989 - 06/08/1995
P - Paul & Kathy Faber
S - Danielle Faber
GP - Esther Kubler & Anna Banks

Ferrera, Alex
8/11/1977 - 10/4/1997
Ferrera, Crista J.
8/23/1975 - 03/11/1997
P - Nelson & Guisela Ferrera
B - Paolo Ferrera
GM - Magda Alvarez
Aunt - Mirta Diaz
Uncle - John Ferrera

Gallian, John Charles
8/8/1963 - 3/21/1998
M-Virgian Gallian
S-Paige Mask

Gardner, Gary Jr.
8/25/1995 - 10/4/2000
P - Gary & Janelle Gardner
B - Jacob Gary Gardner

Goldman, Ariel Nicole Rothschild
8/30/1989 - 5/15/2001
P - Steve and Lynn Goldman

Graves, Matthew Regan
8/8/1979 - 8/31/2000
M - Linda Graves
S - Serena Graves
B-Dutch & Allen Jr.
GF-Wilson Harmison

Harrington, Zachary Michael Evans
8/4/1992 - 8/7/1992
P - William & Barbara Evans-Harrington
GP Wm. & Barbara Evans

Harrison, Leigh Ann
08/11/1984 - 08/11/1984
P - Trudy & Tim Harrison
GP - Bobbie & Jerry Meeks

Hermann, Jason Lee
08/27/1976 - 09/25/1985
P - Donna & Lee Hermann
S - Tammy Hermann

Howard, Steven T.
8/11/1970 - 6/30/1999
M-Cay Pelaez

Hubbard, Shelby Janeen
08/03/1991 - 01/19/1995
P - Robin & Gordon Hubbard
B - Stephen & Scott Hubbard

Hutchcraft, Sharon
8/21/1935 - 2/12/1997
M-Lois Hutchcraft

Muse, Jennifer Lee
08/07/1971 - 04/04/1992
M - Gretchen Muse
F - Robert Muse, Jr.
GP - Bob & Gladys Muse
GM - Dorothy Deisch

Orsi, Kristen McCall
8/5/1980 - 6/27/2002
P-Kimberly & Leo Orsi

Parrish, Randy
08/22/1957 - 02/10/1997
M - Juanita Bodiford
B - Dough Parrish

Parrish, Scott Douglas
8/9/1979 - 1/1/2002
P - Doug Parrish and
P - Karla & Rick Brown
S-Sabrina Lee Shannon
GP - Juanita Bodiford & Ada Smith

Parrish, Tyler Stephen
8/6/1991 - 10/24/1991
P - June & Terry Parrish

Peel, Lee Anna Campbell
8/5/1972 - 9/9/1992
M - Patricia Campbell
S - Beth Biggs
B - Eddy Biggs
GP - Estele & James Carleton

Rose, Kailyn Dyann
8/22/2000 - 3/4/2003
M-Evelyn E. Rose

Sampson, Charles Roy
8/28/1998 - 8/28/1998
P - Paul & Susan Sampson
GP - Margaret & Clayton Sampson and
Shirley & Charles Osborne

Shearer, Shane
08/03/1973 - 12/06/1989
M - Linda Shearer
SF - Keith Gregory
S - January Shearer

Steen, Michael Anthony
8/4/1956 - 6/20/2003
M-Nancy Holdren
B-Rick, David & Donald
Father to Jessica, Christine & Michelle
Married to Doreen

Thornton, Jeremiah
8/29/1984 - 4/13/2001
M - Tim & Sue Thornton
B - Jason
S - Amanda

Waldrop, Caleb
8/4/1977 - 6/4/1999
F - Randy Waldrop
Children - Charlene & Devin

August Anniversaries

Blanchard, Eric Anthony
2/19/1976 - 8/3/1998
P - Barbara & Wayne Blanchard
S - Lisa, Tammy, Dawn
B - Chris & Michael
Daughter - Samantha

Cash, Christopher
9/13/1977 - 8/23/2004
P-Rita & Tom Zvada
B-Charles Cash
GP-Ida & Gus Arencibia

Darrigo, Anthony & Domenic
08/11/1994 - 08/11/1994
P - Sam & Vanessa Darrigo

Dunwody, Trey
9/14/1989 - 8/12/1999
P - Tim and Cathy Stull
B - Timothy James Stull

Fernandez, Karen Irene
03/08/1968 - 08/23/1988
M - Violeta "Cookie" Fernandez
B-Rik Fernandez

Gilliam, Hayden Charles
6/20/1999 - 8/4/2001
P - Sean & Marion Gilliam
S - Sara
B - Cole

Graves, Matthew Regan
8/8/1979 - 8/31/2000
M - Linda Graves
S - Serena Graves
B-Dutch & Allen Jr.
GF-Wilson Harmison

Harrington, Zachary Michael Evans
8/4/1992 - 8/7/1992
P - William & Barbara
Evans-Harrington
GP Wm. & Barbara Evans

Harrison, Leigh Ann
08/11/1984 - 08/11/1984
P - Trudy & Tim Harrison
GP - Bobbie & Jerry Meeks

Holton, John William
05/20/1952 - 08/10/1994
M - Ann Holton
Leath, Dana
06/02/1968 - 08/15/1994
M - Janet Ross

May, Philip
8/1/1975-1/1/2000
P-Deryl & Jenifer May

Mohammed, Ian Roger
04/19/1973 - 08/02/1992
P - Judy & Rick Mohammed
S - Alison Mohammed
B - Cameron Mohammed

Price, Jacob
3/4/2002 - 8/15/2002
M-Charlann Price

Roark, Kelli Colin
4/30/1990 - 8/30/1998
P - Joe & Angel Roark
B - Kyle & Kaleb Roark
GF - Ron Ellington

Sampson, Charles Roy
8/28/1998 - 8/28/1998
P - Paul & Susan Sampson
GP - Margaret & Clayton Sampson
and
Shirley & Charles Osborne

Shye, John David
05/27/1964 - 08/07/1994
P - Betty Jean & Charles Shye
S - Lydia and Mary Shye
B - Chuck Shye
Father of J.D. and Justin Shye

Slaven, Minnie Leona
7/10/1972 - 8/11/2000
M-Della LaGrone
P-Delbert & Catherine Slaven
S-Charlotte, Della, Betty, Lynn,
Amelia & Sue
B-Ronnie, Jack, Del, & Delbert Jr.

Thornten, Jeremiah
8/29/1984-4/13/2005
M-Sue Thornten
Townsend, Chris
10/8/1978 - 8/18/2000
P - Walter & Carol Townsend
B - Brian

Ward, Richard Alan
4/25/1964 - 8/7/1996
P - Homer & Imogene Ward
B - Mike & Jeff Ward

Welch, Kimberly Michelle
10/24/1971 - 8/28/2003
M-Nancy Welch
Child-

Our Apologies

The following names were omitted from July Birthday and Anniversary list:

Head, Tyler Wade
2/21/1995 - 7/15/2004
M-Tammy Hill & Jerry Toloff
GF-German Toloff

Emma Victoria Shelton
7/8/2003 - 5/8/2005
P- John & Jennifer Shelton
Sibs-Jacob & Hannah
GP-Peg & Jim Bishop, Tom Musolin, Art & Sam White,
Rober & Judy Shelton, Jim & Juli Arvis

If we have omitted your child, misspelled your child's name, or listed incorrect dates, please accept our apologies and call Beverley Hurley at (813) 832-3175 to correct the information. Call any of our telephone friends if you are having a hard time on these days. We truly understand your pain; for we, too, remember our own children.

*Sometimes we are lucky
to find someone in our lives
who stays in our hearts forever!*

TIME DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE

By Martha Honn
BP/USA Southern Illinois Chapter
Written 03-06

Early in my grief I really couldn't understand what people meant when they said, "time makes a difference", "time heals", or "you'll feel better in time". In fact those trite comments often ticked me off! I thought, "how do you know?" But when another parent who had experienced the death of a child made similar comments I responded differently. I thought, "well you must know, you've been at this grief thing longer than I. Tell me how time is going to heal me or how I'm going to be able to live without my child?" I don't think I have ever received a clear answer to that question, nor do I have the answer to pass on to others, but I will have to admit that time has made a difference. On June 4th my son Cameron will have been gone from this world for seven years. Sometimes seven years seems like an incredibly long time, yet other times it seems as if it has went by quickly. So many things have changed in seven years. I think of Cameron and wonder how he would have felt about some of those changes. In my mind I imagine conversations with Cameron where I tell him about the changes that have occurred since his death.

Cameron's death caused me to question many of my beliefs and to explore new ideas and beliefs. But Cameron's death and my anger about not having him in this world with me actually gave me permission to question and look into my beliefs like never before. By nature I am a people pleaser, a don't rock the boat, go with the flow, don't make waves, type of person. I've always had a strong sense of right and wrong, and a feeling that good will always prevail. Cameron's death shook those beliefs to the very core. Whatever limited sense of security I had prior to Cameron's death was replaced with the thought that if something this bad could happen, than what else could happen? I'd already experienced a lot of tough stuff; the suicide of my father when I was eight, the birth of my first child with spina bifida, my mother's brain tumor, my divorce and then my child's death. Somehow I felt I'd already paid my dues. I heard people say, "God never puts more on you than what you can handle." I thought God had too much confidence in me, or perhaps he didn't know me very well or maybe there really wasn't a God. Nothing seemed very certain in my life at this point. I felt tormented with all the uncertainties. Nothing seemed normal now and I wondered how I could live without one of my children. I seemed to exist in a funny sort of place. I didn't understand how the sun could shine when my world seemed to have plunged into darkness. I did not feel a part of this world. People assured me it would get better, but I wondered if it would? Insecurity and guilt seemed to accompany me day and night. At night when I couldn't sleep I would replay the last days of Cameron's life. I thought that if just one thing had happened differently my Cameron wouldn't have died in the accident. As a parent I felt it was my responsibility to keep my children safe. Somehow I had dropped the ball and failed to keep Cameron safe. "Why" was always the question that remained unanswered?

When did things change? I can't remember an exact date/time when things changed, but the important thing is, things did change.

When I listen to a newly bereaved person talk, I really see that time has made a difference. I usually hear some of the same fears and concerns I had early in my grief. Some of the things I have learned so far are:

- ◆ That it is my responsibility to learn to live with the pain from the death of my son.
- ◆ That attending BP support groups, attending National Gatherings, counseling, talking to trusted family and friends, reading BP newsletters and many grief books have all played a part in my recovery.
- ◆ That grief is hard work!
- ◆ That life is not fair?
- ◆ That bad things do happen to good people.
- ◆ That it's up to me to make a decision to become better, not bitter.
- ◆ That everything I have experienced in this life has had an impact on me.
- ◆ That as I grow and change, so will some of my beliefs.
- ◆ That my life is a work in progress.
- ◆ That there is much to learn in this life and that when I'm ready to learn new lessons a teacher (sometimes an unlikely one) appears in my life.
- ◆ That I need to talk about my son who died.
- ◆ That it's o.k. to be mad at God, - God can handle it. God is a bereaved parent too, so he truly understands.
- ◆ That God knows how long you will live even before you are born. (this means that there is a master plan)
- ◆ That there is life after death, which means I'll get to see my son again.
- ◆ That sometimes we are fortunate enough to be given signs that there is life after death.
- ◆ That allowing myself to be happy doesn't mean I've forgotten my son's death.
- ◆ That while most of the time I move forward in my journey through grief, there will be times when I take some steps backward, but never back to the beginning.
- ◆ That I can love my child as much in death as I loved him in life.
- ◆ That I should share my experience, strength, and hope with other bereaved parents.
- ◆ That life can change in a heartbeat.
- ◆ That I have very little control over events in this world.

Note from author: This spring when I wrote this article, I felt that I would need to revise the article in a year or so, which is why I wrote the sentence, "Some of the things I have learned so far are:" I feel that I am a work in progress and always learning more so it will be interesting to see what I learn in the future that I can add to my list.

travelers advocate

by Lindsay Adkinson

A Life-Changing Moment No One Wants

"It won't happen to me." That is what every teenager, and even some adults, believe. I know. I lived in that state of mind for 17 years. My best friend Katie Marchetti and I had lived for the moment every time we were together. Being spontaneous could describe the two of us. We had fun no matter what day it was. We always thought that nothing would happen to us.

On the evening of March 3, 2006, my life and Katie's life changed forever. At 10:30 p.m. that night, I called Katie on her cell phone, but it wasn't her voice that answered. It was her boyfriend AJ. He was screaming into Katie's cell phone. Katie was lying in the middle of I-75, having just been ejected from her car that AJ was driving. AJ was screaming and sobbing. I couldn't understand all that he was saying. All I knew was that nothing ever could happen to Katie. That was not Katie's and my plan. We were soul mates with so many plans and dreams.

I soon learned that AJ and Katie were driving back from a member of his family's engagement party. Katie unbuckled her seat belt because she wasn't feeling well, and she was tired. It was a Friday night, the end of a busy school week. AJ, too, was tired, but he had on his seat belt. Katie reclined her seat and unfastened her seat belt. AJ began to doze at the wheel. In a second, life changed for all of us. Katie's dreams crumbled. Her life turned into an eternity at 5:53 the following morning at Tampa General Hospital when Katie died from her injuries. I was at the hospital all night. So were Katie's family and friends. We cried, we prayed, we waited. It was the worst time in my life. I will never forget that night.

Just days after Katie's death, her family realized their pain could have been prevented if she had fastened her seat belt. They have set up "The Katie Marchetti Memorial Foundation" to raise



awareness on the importance of wearing seat belts. Katie's family knows they cannot bring Katie back, but they want to prevent other families from losing their children or other family members.

On April 26, the Marchetti family took their cause to Tallahassee, along with parents and teens from five area high schools. Currently, Florida is the only state in the Southeast that does not have a primary seat belt enforcement law. The police can only pull over someone for not wearing a seat belt if there is another infraction of traffic law. Katie would be proud of what we are doing. I think she has already told us that, because the morning of our trip, as we were heading up I-75 to get on I-10, a huge, beautiful rainbow appeared off the left side of our buses. We were all overcome by its beauty and size.

We all believe we can change the minds and hearts of the legislators in Tallahassee. We will not stop. Katie would not want us to stop. We want everyone to "Click It for Katie." ■

Katie's website is www.thekatiemarchetti.com. There is a link on Katie's website where parents and/or teens can click on the "Cross Your Heart Promise" pledge and sign the form to promise to fasten their seat belts every time they get in a car.

Reflections on the 2006 National BP/USA Gathering



Carol Welch, Gathering Co-Chair, watches her daughter, Tracy Morlock, sing a beautiful song in memory of all of our children and her brother Sean.



Debbly Hunsaker, Carissa's mom, of Arkansas and Sharon Krejci, Andrew's mom, of St. Louis and the Gathering Co-Chair, take time to be a little silly and help people smile!!



George and Jackie Loadholtz place their white flower in the arms of the Angel of Hope in memory of their son Glenn!



Our new National Board of Directors. Congratulations to Beverley Hurley in her new role as President of our National organization of BP/USA. Her endless hours of volunteer work benefit many bereaved families.

Parade Magazine, June 11, 2006 — Keanu Reeve's daughter was stillborn in 1998 and the "love of his life" the baby's mother died instantly in a car accident in 2001. This is an excerpt of the article:

Bolstered by success onscreen, actor Keanu Reeves is determined to find joy.

"I Don't Want To Flee From Life"

By Dotson Rader

"Grief changes shape, but it never ends. People have a misconception that you can deal with it and say, 'It's gone, and I'm better.' They're wrong. When the people you love are gone, you're alone. I miss being part of their lives and them being part of mine. I wonder what the present would be like if they were here—what we might have done together. I miss all the great things that will never be. Damn it! It's not fair! It's absurd. All you can do is hope that grief will be transformed and instead of feeling pain and confusion, you will be together again in memory, that there will be solace and pleasure there, not just loss." When asked if loss had changed him, he replied, "Much of my appreciation of life has come through loss. Life is precious. It's worthwhile".

*"When the people you love are gone, you're alone. I miss being a part of their lives and them being part of mine."
Keanu Reeve*

(More)Reflections on the 2006 National BP/USA Gathering

"Gateway To Healing – Journey of the Heart" a very appropriate title to the 2006 Bereaved Parents Gathering in St. Louis, MO. It was an incredible event. We had 20 parents and siblings attend from our Central Arkansas Chapter. Everyone hated to see it come to an end Sunday.

You make so many new friends from across the US and learn so much about this journey we are on from other kindred spirits. From the opening program on Friday morning to the closing ceremony at the Angel of Hope in Blanchette Park on Sunday afternoon, it's a whirlwind of educational workshops, lovely meals with great special speakers, getting acquainted with folks in the hospitality room, making special mementos of your child in the Creation Station to take home, shopping for a special butterfly or angel item in the gift shop, to staying up late to talk about your child with others who understand this lifetime grief journey.

So many workshops speak to you right where you are, you relate to what the other bereaved parents are sharing. Realizing we are all in this boat together, you just thought no one understood and you were alone in your pain. There is an extended family out there of gentle broken hearts and warm understanding hugs who come together at the Gathering.

Saturday night's program was a very special picture presentation of our children and candle lighting. It is so touching to see 400 candles light the darkened room in memory of our precious children who left us all too soon. And there is just something magical about placing a white carnation in the arms of the Angel of Hope statue that makes you feel she will help you carry your hurt until your heart isn't so heavy and you can remember the good memories and keep your child alive forever in your heart, sharing them wherever you go. There is HOPE.

Next year the 2007 Gathering will be in Chicago, IL, July 13, 14 and 15. Plan to go. It's something you never forget.

Debby Hunsaker, BPUSA, Central AR Chapter Leader

YOUR FIRST MEETING?

We understand how difficult it is to attend your first meeting. Feelings can be overwhelming; we have all experienced them and know how important it is to take the first step. Our stories may be different, but we are alike in that we all hurt deeply. We can not take your pain away, but we can offer friendship and support. Bring a friend or relative to lean on if you wish! We need not grieve alone! See you next month.

Death is a challenge.

It tells us not to waste time...

It tells us to tell each other right now

That we love each other.

Leo Buscaglia

Visiting Speaker

Rabbi Harold Kushner, well-known author of *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, visited Dallas recently speaking at Temple Emanu-El. Rabbi Kushner spoke on the topic "How Good Do We Have To Be?"

He brought up several points in his wide-ranging and witty talk that I thought are relevant to bereaved parents. He suggested that we humans seem to buy into the myth that we have to be perfect: perfect parents, perfect children, perfect people. Because we humans are *not* perfect, however we feel guilt for our flaws; and when something bad happens to us, we think that we must have done something wrong to have this terrible thing occur. Rabbi Kushner suggested that sickness and death are not a punishment for wrong doing and that God knows us all too well to demand perfection of us.

He also stressed the importance of forgiveness, both in his talk and in response to a question from the floor. A woman asked how one can forgive a drunken driver who kills one's child. Kushner said that for him forgiveness does *not* mean *what you did is all right*. It does mean *I shall not allow the wrong that you did to have power over me and my life*. The Rabbi's talk provided me with much to think about. I look forward to reading his book.

By: Denis Paz

Lovingly lifted from Where Are All The Butterflies by Shirley Cognard Ottman

"For years I never knew whether the twilight was the ending of the day or the beginning of the night and then, suddenly one day, I understood that this did not matter at all, for time is but a circle, and so there can be no beginning and no ending, and this is how I came to know that birth and death are one, and it is neither the coming or the going that is of consequence. What is of consequence is the beauty that one gathers in this interlude called life."

*From "Come Walk Among the Stars"
by Winston Abbott*



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