



Tampa Bay Chapter

P.O. Box 3226
Tampa, Florida
33601-3226
www.bpusatampabay.com

September 2011

*This month's newsletter lovingly sponsored by
the family of:
Caylee Marie Cepero*

MEETING INFORMATION

Regular Monthly SUNDAY Meeting
(held the second Sunday of the month)
September 11, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
*St. Joseph's Hospital
Medical Arts Building, Auditorium
3001 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Call Beverley Hurley at 813-832-3175
for directions or information.*

Regular Monthly DAYTIME Meeting
Riverview/Gibsonton/Brandon areas
(held the second Friday each month)
Friday, September 9, 10:00 a.m. to Noon
The Greater Brandon Chamber of Commerce
330 Pauls Drive, Brandon, Florida 33511
Please call Debbie Nemitz at (813) 907-1441
for directions or information.

Regular Monthly PLANT CITY Meeting
(Normally held the fourth Monday each month)
Monday, September 26, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.
South Florida Baptist Hospital
301 N. Alexander Street, Plant City
in the Community Conference Room
Call Janice Falcon at 813-779-9353
for directions or information.






*We, as bereaved parents, help
grieving families rebuild their lives
following the death of a child!
Please join us at one of the sharing
sessions as we all work toward
healing from the death of our child.
Grief shared is grief diminished. You are
not required to talk and this is
not a group therapy
session—just parents sharing in a
safe environment.*

UPCOMING EVENTS YOU DO NOT WANT TO MISS!!

*Planning meetings to be announced for
the 2012 BP/USA Gathering being held in
Tampa and hosted by the Tampa Bay
Chapter! We welcome your help! Next
Meeting:*

***Tuesday, August 30, 7 PM
at St. Joseph Medical Arts Bldg.***

*Annual December Candle Light Service
and Ceremony, Sunday, December 11, St
Joseph Hospital, MAB 7:00 p.m. More in-
formation to follow next month!*

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5 	6	7	8	9 	10
11 	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19 	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29 	30	
SEPTEMBER 2011						

God Bless America



I wonder what she thought
As she stood there, strong and tall.
She couldn't turn away.
She was forced to watch it all.
Did she long to offer comfort
As Her country bled?
With her arm forever frozen
High above her head.
She could not shield her eyes
She could not hide her face
She just stared across the water
Keeping freedom's place.
The smell of smoke and terror
Somehow reduced her size
So small within the harbor
But still we recognized ...
How dignified and beautiful
On a day so many died
I wonder what She thought
And I know She must have cried.

Author unknown

*(In memory of all those who died on 9/11/2001 in
the terrorist attacks.)*

Chapter News



ANGEL OF HOPE UPDATE

www.angelofhopetampabay.com

Located at:

Riverside Park

201 Riverhills Drive, Temple Terrace

Mailing Address:

P. O. Box 2573, Lutz, FL 33548

813.495.7539

Brick Orders:

Bricks Orders are always welcomed and will be included in the Spring Dedication. Please see our website for brick order information and form.

Angel of Hope

Address Change

If you have an address change, the Postal Service will NOT forward! They return to us—FOR A FEE, SO **PLEASE** LET US KNOW IF YOU HAVE A NEW ADDRESS.

Telephone Friends

Need to talk? Having a bad day? 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

Sue Bowditch (Adult Child) (813) 390-9734

Theresa Farmer (Homicide) (813) 994-0707

Traci Cooley (Drowning) (813) 464-4525

Ron Ellington (Suicide/Grandparent) (727) 410-2308

Charles L'Homme (Accidental Death) (813) 335-7628

Debbie Nemitz (Long Term Illness) (813) 907-1441

Barbara or Tommy Dietrich
(Death of an Only Child) (813) 340-9120

Serena Graves (Sibling Contact) (813) 810-7169

Violeta "Cookie" Fernandez
(Se Habla Espano) (813) 996-4281

CRISIS CENTER 211

Bereaved Parents/USA National Office
Post Office Box 95, Park Forest, IL 60466
Phone/Fax: (708) 748-7866
www.bereavedparentsusa.org

Love Gifts

Donated by Rita and Tom Zvada

In loving memory of her son

Christopher Cash

9/13/1977 - 8/23/2004

Donated by Mike and Pam Harris

In loving memory of their son

Eric Michael Harris

2/4/1984 - 9/12/2003

Donated by Natalia Lavallee

In loving memory of her daughter

Grace Amelia Lavallee

5/13/2009-7/17/2010

Donated by Susan Antinora

In loving memory of her son

Joseph Antinora

8/18/1967-12/09/2006

Donated by James and Elaine Rogers

In loving memory of their son

Jason Rogers

01/08/1978 - 03/21/1990

Donated by Mary Ellen Holmberg

In loving memory of her son

Michael Holmberg

05/18/1976 - 3/2/2011

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.

Refreshments

Some of us like to remember our child's birthday or the anniversary of his or her death by bringing a cake or cookies to the meeting that month. We would appreciate having you bring a special treat to any meeting. You may also want to bring and share a picture of your child. Thank you!

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 Tommy or Barbara Dietrich at (813) 234-4705 or visit one of our three monthly sharing meetings to return a book, arrange a donation or inquire about an available title.



Our Children . . . Remembered

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

September Birthdays

Arnold, Ryan 9/1/1988-11/28/2007 P-Ron & Marcia Arnold B-Jason and Matt GP-Charlie & Kathy Arnold, Allan & Florence Knopf	Daly, Cole 9/9/1983 - 12/17/2001 M-Katie Brock	Holland Jeffrey K. Moses 9/10/1986-7/7/2009 P-Thomas & Donna Holland and Henry Moses Sibs-Derrick & Logan GP-Beverly Cash, Joan & Steve Holland	O'Berry, Michael Sean 09/13/94 - 12/15/97 P - Mike & Valerie O'Berry B - Christopher O'Berry GM - Linda Hoffman A - Joyce Weil U - Mike Kasrich
Brady, Mark A. 09/27/57 - 01/03/89 M - Margaret Brady S -Margaret J. Bruner B - Hayward L. "Bubba" Brady, Jr. GP-Wallace & Josephine Bagley and Wm. & Cinderalla Brady	Dechant, Matt 9/26/1984—4/14/2007 F-Tom Dechant	Knight, Matthew A. 9/1/1982 - 12/28/2001 P-Ron & Sandy Knight GM-Jack & Mary Griffin & Doris I. Knight	O'Neil, Clark Dean 9/1/1962 - 10/24/2004 P-Larry and Jeanne O'Neil B-Kevin & wife Rene' S-Kitty & husband Joseph; Jennifer & husband Randy
Cash, Christopher 9/13/1977 - 8/23/2004 M-Rita & Thomas Zvada F-Charles & Mika Cash Child-Leah Cash B-Charles Cash II GP-Gustavo & Ida Arencibia	Donnarumma, Sophia Marie 9/1/2000 - 12/23/2004 P-Benjamin & Diane S-Olivia GM-Pat Donnarumma	Kushner, Jonathan 09/13/62 - 10/28/73 P - Lorraine & Gil Kushner B-Andy & David	Peel, Matthew Shane 9/9/92 - 9/9/92 A - Beth Biggs U- Eddy Biggs GM - Patricia Campbell
Castellano, Lina 9/15/1966 - 2/20/2004 P-Sam & Jean Castellano	Eddy, Steven 9/16/1960 - 7/9/2008 M-Marilyn Eddy S-Pam Bishop & Tammy Eddy B-Sonny N-Angie Valente & Missy Bishop	Lane, Jim 9/7/1966 - 1/2/2005 M-Carol Lane	Perrotti, Paul 9/5/1969 - 9/25/1995 F - Donald J. Perrotti
Cepero, Caylee Marie 9/3/2000 - 3/8/2005 P-Dawn and Lee Cepero B-Corbin S-Kennedy GP-Sandy Boehning	Funk, Benjamin 9/9/1976 - 6/25/2001 P - Mr & Mrs Funk	Mart, Aaron Paul 09/24/96 - 09/11/99 P - Hank & Donna Mart B - Daniel GP-Betty & Trevor Harvey, Michael & Iris Willsher, Gene & Mim	Will, Madison Kathleen "Madi" 9/2/1995 - 10/4/1995 P - Carl & Lisa Will S - Megan & Rachel Will B- Zachary & Seth Will
	Gould, Richard J. 9/26/1981 - 3/3/2001 M-Cindy Phelps-Wise F-Ralph Gould B-Ryan, Bryan & Mark S-Karen	Morrill, Daniel 9/30/1972 - 9/8/2007 M-Amelia Lubrano	Williams, Travis Aaron 9/11/1979 - 4/19/2000 P - Bill & Linda Williams GP - Loretta Ayers, Raymond Ayers & Edna Williams
	Gray, Jay 09/07/70 - 11/09/01 M - Dee Gray		

September Anniversaries

Carter, Cassandra D. "Casie" 2/22/1982 - 9/28/1999 P-Ted & Gayle Carter B-Justin Carter GP-Luna Carter	Kowall, Spec. Corey J. 2/1/1989-9/20/2009 M-Kelly Kowall Sibs-Kyla & Kristen GP-Marshall & Marty Schoeff	Nichols, Melissa 11/9/1982 - 9/4/2002 M-Terrena Nichols F-Shannon Nichols S-Brandy Nichols B-Shannon Nichols, Jr.	Roberts, J. Michael 5/31/1963 - 9/25/2002 M-Ann Roberts Mitchel GP Merle H. Brunson
Cooley, Malena Rose 3/23/1998 - 9/4/2000 P - Scott & Traci Cooley B - Nolan S - Madelyn & Olivia	Kenefick, Aaron Michael 2/5/1979-9/8/2009 M-Susan Price Sibs: Jacque & Jade GM-Carol Price	Peel, Lee Anna Campbell 8/5/1972 - 9/9/1992 M - Patricia Campbell S - Beth Biggs B - Eddy Biggs GP - Estele & James Carleton	Russell, Karron Michelle 1/20/1967 - 9/12/2000 P - Ben & Sue Bowditch and Children - Brytani, Derak & Melody Sisters - Catherine, Roben & Laurie Bobby Jr. & Scott GP-Cathren Dickerson and Jimmy & Kay Senseney
Gereaeu, Ryan 5/20/1987-9/12/2008 M-Laurie Gereaeu	Lowe, Anna 1/30/1994-9/30/2007 M-Beth Lowe	Peel, Matthew Shane 9/9/92 - 9/9/92 A - Beth Biggs U- Eddy Biggs GM - Patricia Campbell	Schulman, Adam J. 6/7/1971 - 9/26/2004 M-Pat Schulman Freddie Kelly Jr. and Kenny Schulman
Gravette, Austin Lee 8/31/1993-9/26/2009 P-Randy & Pamela Gravette S-Jessica Lynne Beauchamp GP-Oscar & Penny Rodriguez	Mart, Aaron Paul 09/24/96 - 09/11/99 P - Hank & Donna Mart B - Daniel GP-Betty & Trevor Harvey, Michael & Iris Willsher, Gene & Mim	Perrotti, Paul 9/5/1969 - 9/25/1995 F - Donald J. Perrotti	Scragg, Keith Joseph 8/4/1986 - 9/5/2008 P-Richard & Lori Son-Macklin B-Matthew S/O-Emily Popke
Harris, Eric Michael 2/4/1984 - 9/12/2003 P-Mike & Pam Harris B-Mark GM-Joan Matthews & Verna Harris	McMillion, James Christopher 7/26/1984 - 9/26/2003 GP-Ralph & Martha Hamilton	Pippin, Shawn 10/16/1984 - 9/16/2002 M-Anita Pippin	Smith, Clay Daniel 10/24/1967 - 9/30/1996 P-Francia & Chuck Smith B - Jed & Kyle
Henry, Sumara Raquel 07/12/88 - 09/18/93 P - Louis & Cindy Henry GP-James & Ruby Reese & Bernice Henry	Metallo, Armando 5/3/1984 - 9/15/2005 P-Angelo & Luisa Metallo S-Ana, Angelo, Luisa, & Joe Metallo GP-Armando & Ana Metallo and Graciela & Dorotheo Martinez	Pispitos, Richard John 01/23/72 - 09/14/98 P - Catherine Webb & Philip Finkelstein S - Michelle Webb GP-Anne & Owen Beglane	Thornton, Teresa E. 01/12/66 - 09/24/81 P - Ken & Mirta Thornton S - Lisa Buckner B - Nick Thornton GP-Tony & Berneda Pino
Horst, Trey 4/16/1974 - 9/8/2000 P - Art & Linda Horst B-Todd & Thad S-Trisha & Tammy	Mink-Miller, Deborah 3/26/1965 - 9/27/1991 M-Diane Mink S-Renee Mink Crosby	Rainey, Wendy Michelle Price 3/7/1968-9/27/2006 M-Shelia Farmer B-Peter Price S-Emily Furst	
	Morrill, Daniel 9/30/1972 - 9/8/2007 M-Amelia Lubrano		

Our Apologies

The following name was omitted from August Birthday and Anniversary list:

Jason Ascii
8/19/1979-2/7/2008
F-Brian Ascii
Children— AJ and Adriana

Our Apologies

The following name was omitted from past Birthday and Anniversary list:

Andrew Glenn Butler
1/8/2009-6/4/2009
GP-Rosemary Perry

Losing Grace

I once had a daughter, but she was taken away
By that one mosquito, on a warm summer day.

She was our little angel, so sweet and so pure.
Everything was perfect, our life was so sure.

But then came that day, it changed our whole world,
When Mother Nature herself took our little girl.

If I could stop time to be with Grace,
To breathe in her scent, to kiss her sweet face.

Even if all the flowers never grow,
I would take that loss, but have her to show.

The trees could wait, the world stop turning.
Yet, it would take away this yearning.

Not a single day, I don't ask "WHY?"
Most days all I can do is cry.

I miss her every single day!
This pain will never go away.

*By Grace's Mother, Natalia Lavallee
BP/USA Tampa Bay Chapter*

Beverley

I hope you are doing well. I thought I would
share some news with you.

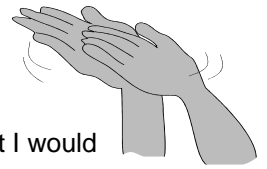
Yesterday I got a voice mail from one of the facilitators
of grief share at Bell Shoals Baptist church (I used to be
a member there). She was given a copy of BP's news
letter that had one of the articles about Jason. One of the
parents that had recently lost a child from drugs brought
it in. She said it made her cry to read, but told me that
she intends to use it in their classes to help parents that
lost children the same way as it shows hope. I guess it's
God's way of telling me I'm on the right path.

It's pretty clear that the BP news letter gets around.
After attending their classes, I looked to BP for answers
which I found through all of you. Bell Shoals and their
Grief Share ministry have gotten to a point where they
are looking elsewhere for answers for parents who have
lost children to drugs. I'm glad that they looked to BP for
some of those answers. Sadly she informed me that
there are a lot of parents losing children the same way I
lost Jason. I guess I didn't realize how bad the drug prob-
lem is. I thought it was nice that their organization recog-
nized and looked up to what BP is doing.

Again, I'm so grateful that I found BP. I'm not sure
where I would be if I hadn't found you all.

Talk soon,

Brian
(Jason Asci's Dad)



[Making the Decision to Look for the Good in Life](#)



Cindy Shufflebarger | August 4, 2011

After my daughter's death, I was tempted to crawl into bed, pull the covers over my head and sleep my pain away. Part of me wanted the world to stop. But I had two other young children to care for, and knew that option wouldn't be good for them or me. Yet, I was devastated. How could I possibly go on?

Life didn't make sense and I couldn't focus. I struggled with even basic tasks and everything was so out of control. I didn't know how to fix my pain or even how to fully embrace it, but I felt the need to "do" something. So, in the middle of my chaos, I made a conscious decision to look for the good in life. I'm not sure what prompted me to do this other than the fact that I had been part of a Bible study several months earlier that encouraged us to thank God for something every day.

With every ounce of energy I could muster, I began looking for something for which to thank God. The first day, I struggled to find something. Even though I was surrounded by loving people and was blessed in many ways, the fog was still very thick. As I pondered my new goal, I looked around the room and it occurred to me that I was encircled by flowers – every surface and corner burst forth with color and aroma. And so, I thanked God for flowers.

I continued this ritual for several weeks until eventually, I had a tangible and lengthy list for which I was grateful. Although this didn't minimize the pain of my daughter's passing, it gave me a fresh perspective. It helped me to step towards healing instead of retreating. It helped clear my thoughts. But most of all, it began my journey of learning to live again.

I wanted to be whole again – not forgetting my daughter, but living with greater purpose as I honored her memory. I wanted to experience life fully, without fear. I didn't want to sleep-walk my way through life. I wanted to be present and engaged. I wanted to enjoy my other children and to give them the gift of a healthy mother – in mind, body and spirit.

The journey was not easy or straight. The path carried me over hills and potholes, around curves, and I even revisited a few stops along the way. But ultimately, I reached the summit where I could see the beauty of our Creator. I could look back and see the progress I'd made while looking forward to the adventure and fullness of life ahead.

As I continue the journey, Ashlynn's memory lives on within me, inspiring me to embrace God's plan. I am thankful for the hope He's given me and for His grace and mercy as He holds my hand along the way.

Cindy Shufflebarger 2011

IF TOMORROW STARTS WITHOUT ME

"If tomorrow starts without me,
And I'm not there to see,
If the sun should rise and find your eyes
all filled with tears for me;

I wish so much you wouldn't cry
the way you did today,
While thinking of the many things,
We didn't get to say.

I know how much you love me,
As much as I love you,
And each time that you think of me,
I know you'll miss me too;

But when tomorrow starts without me,
Please try to understand,
that an angel came and called my name,
And took me by the hand,

And said my place was ready,
In heaven far above,
And that I'd have to leave behind
all those I dearly love.

But as I turned to walk away,
A tear fell from my eye,
For all my life, I'd always thought,
I didn't want to die.

I had so much to live for,
So much left yet to do,
it seemed almost impossible,
that I was leaving you.

I thought of all the yesterdays,
The good ones and the bad,
I thought of all that we shared,
And all the fun we had.

If I could relive yesterday,
Just even for a while,
I'd say good-bye and kiss you
and maybe see you smile.

But then I fully realized,
That this could never be,
For emptiness and memories,
would take the place of me.

And when I thought of worldly things,
I might miss some tomorrow,
I thought of you, and when I did,
My heart was filled with sorrow.

But when I walked through heaven's gates,
I felt so much at home.
When God looked down and smiled at me,
From His great golden throne,

He said, "This is eternity,
And all I've promised you."
Today your life on earth is past,
but here life starts anew.

I promise no tomorrow,
But today will always last,
and since each day is the same way,
There's no longing for the past.

So when tomorrow starts without me,
don't think we're far apart,
For every time you think of me,
I'm right here, in your heart "

**WHAT CAN YOU DO
TO HELP OUR
LOCAL CHAPTER??**

- ◆ Serve as a greeter at monthly meetings;
- ◆ Arrive early to help set up chairs and tables (or make coffee);
- ◆ Volunteer to bring a refreshment to share;
- ◆ Arrive early and put out library books or stay late to pack up our library books;
- ◆ Volunteer to help prepare our newsletter for mailing;
- ◆ Visit a newly bereaved parent, inform them about our support group and bring them to their first meeting;
- ◆ Give a LOVE GIFT DONATION in memory of your child on their birth date or anniversary date;
- ◆ Sponsor our newsletter for \$55 and create a page in memory of your child;
- ◆ Write an article for our newsletter or share a poem you have written (i.e. Father to Father);
- ◆ Make a book donation to our Library in memory of your child (if the book helped you, it may help others).

A good way to help yourself through your grief is to help others through theirs.

**Please call Beverley Hurley at
813-832-3175 !**

*"Enjoy the little things
for one day you may look back
and realize they were the big things ~*

Robert Brault

*When a person is born, we
rejoice, and when they're
married, we jubilate, but when
they die, we try to pretend
nothing happened.*

Margaret Mead

THE GRIEF OF GRANDPARENTS

By Helen Fitzgerald, CT

Remember
Grandparents Day
Sunday,
September 11

There is no bond greater than the bond between parent and child. When a child dies, the pain of parental loss is near the top of the scale of human grief, and there is an immediate outpouring of sympathy and concern for the bereaved parents. But other grieving family members, including siblings, are often seen as secondary players who must provide support to the distraught parents. Among these forgotten grievers are the grandparents.

In many families, the relationships between grandparents and grandchildren are every bit as profound as those between parents and their children. The death of a grandchild also ranks high on the scale of human grief – but it is rarely acknowledged. There are few books or support groups addressing the grief of grandparents, and bereavement counselors who specialize in this kind of grief are rare. Grandparents are usually left to cope as best they can.

When a grandchild dies, the anguish of grandparents is doubled. Their grief for a son or daughter suffering this tragic loss only compounds their pain at the loss of a beloved grandchild. Grandparents who outlast a grandchild struggle with a death that seems out of order; they may cope with survival guilt, perhaps wondering why they couldn't have died instead. Moreover, a grandchild's death chips away at a grandparent's assumed legacy. Most of us hope to make a mark in the world, and the achievements of our children and grandchildren are a part of that dream. When one dies prematurely, that loss resonates through the generations, and like the bell in John Donne's poem – "it tolls for thee."

Many families are fractured by divorce, violence or mere inattention, and struggling single parents are hard pressed to provide the consistent and unconditional love that children need. Grandparents fill the role of the enduring presence, the ones who are available and who can be depended upon for affection and support. The deep, nurturing love shared by many children and their grandparents is a bond that is extraordinarily painful when broken by death. It is a grief out-of-sight, but nonetheless powerful.

If you are a grandparent who has lost a grandchild, you have every reason to grieve deeply. Life is complex, and many of our fundamental questions have no apparent answer: Why do such bad things happen? What is the meaning of such pain? For now, your task is to mourn the death of this child and to take care of yourself as best as you can. If you want help, look for a book that addresses parental grief and substitute "grandparent" as you read. Perhaps your local hospice, faith community or mental health center has a support group for grieving grandparents. If not, ask them start one. There may be other grieving grandparents among your friends and neighbors, and you can share your common grief and mutual comfort.

Above all, be patient with yourself, and:

- ◆ Don't try to suppress your grief. Stoicism won't work
- ◆ Select the relatives or friends who give you comfort, and tell them how you feel.
- ◆ Don't accept a comparison of your grief to that of others; grief is unique to each person
- ◆ Take time off from your grief occasionally. Go visit a friend or take a short vacation at a place that you love.
- ◆ The loss of a beloved grandchild is a severe blow, but avoid thinking that life has no more to offer. Some of the world's grandest music and literature were created out of personal tragedy. Find your own expression of your loss and your search for meaning -- see if you can create your own requiem.

It is important that you find ways to fill the void in your life. The worlds of literature, music, and art are can be sources of great comfort in a time of grief. Think of the great works of Bach, Handel, Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven; what comfort they can bring! If you have always wanted to paint, take some classes and dedicate your efforts to the memory of your grandchild. Sign up as a volunteer for a local hospital or food bank. Helping others can strengthen the nurturing identity that has been injured by this death. By putting your pain to work, the good that comes from it can heal.

When a great loss hits us, we are numbed and life seems meaningless for a while. But with the passage of time, we again begin to see that life is still worth living, not just for others but for ourselves, as well. Just as you loved a grandchild, there are others -- friends, neighbors, and even strangers -- who await your love. For all its cruel twists, this life is still the only one we are given. You have every right to be a survivor and to make the most of each day and each year. I suggest you get started today.

Caylee Marie Cepero Happy Birthday "Mini-Me"



September 3rd 2011, you'd be 11 years old. I wonder what you would ask Grandma for on your birthday? Who your best friend would be? Who would you secretly have a crush on? Your brother and sister speak of you often and Kennedy is just as strong-willed as you. I bet the two of you would really do a number on your brother. We have 4 years with you and wonderful memories to share with them, but miss you so very much!
Happy Birthday Caylee! We love you!

Mama, Papa, Corbin, Kennedy, Grandma, and Lelu 

May the road rise to meet you,
May the wind be always at your back,
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
May the rains fall soft upon your fields,
And, until we meet again,
May God hold you in the hollow of His hand.



Our Credo

We are the parents whose children have died. We are the grandparents who have buried grandchildren. We are the siblings whose brothers and sisters no longer walk with us through life. We come together as Bereaved Parents of the USA to provide a haven where all bereaved families can meet and share our long and arduous grief journeys.

We attend monthly gatherings whenever we can and for as long as we believe necessary. We share our tears, confusion, anger, guilt, frustrations, emptiness, and feelings of hopelessness so that hope can be found anew. As we accept, support, comfort and encourage each other, we demonstrate to each other that survival is possible.

Together we celebrate the lives of our children, share the joys and triumphs as well as the love that will never fade. Together we learn how little it matters where we live, our color, our affluence, or what faith we uphold as we confront the tragedies of our children’s deaths. Together, strengthened by the bonds we forge at our gatherings, we offer what we have learned to each other and to every more recently bereaved family.

Grief can be a roller coaster

Instead of a series of stages, we might also think of the grieving process as a roller coaster, full of ups and downs, highs and lows. Like many roller coasters, the ride tends to be rougher in the beginning, the lows may be deeper and longer. The difficult periods should become less intense and shorter as time goes by, but it takes time to work through a loss. Even years after a loss, especially at special events such as a family wedding or the birth of a child, we may still experience a strong sense of grief..

Source: [Hospice Foundation of America](http://www.hospicefoundationofamerica.org)

Are there stages of grief?

In 1969, psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross introduced what became known as the “five stages of grief.” These stages of grief were based on her studies of the feelings of patients facing terminal illness, but many people have generalized them to other types of negative life changes and losses, such as the death of a loved one or a break-up. The five stages of grief:

- Denial:** “This can’t be happening to me.”
- Anger:** “Why is this happening? Who is to blame?”
- Bargaining:** “Make this not happen, and in return I will ____.”
- Depression:** “I’m too sad to do anything.”
- Acceptance:** “I’m at peace with what happened.”

If you are experiencing any of these emotions following a loss, it may help to know that your reaction is natural and that you’ll heal in time. However, not everyone who is grieving goes through all of these stages – and that’s okay. Contrary to popular belief, **you do not have to go through each stage in order to heal.** In fact, some people resolve their grief without going through *any* of these stages. And if you do go through these stages of grief, you probably won’t experience them in a neat, sequential order, so don’t worry about what you “should” be feeling or which stage you’re supposed to be in.

Kübler-Ross herself never intended for these stages to be a rigid framework that applies to everyone who mourns. In her last book before her death in 2004, she said of the five stages of grief, “They were never meant to help tuck messy emotions into neat packages. They are responses to loss that many people have, but **there is not a typical response to loss, as there is no typical loss.** Our grieving is as individual as our lives.”

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