



Tampa Bay Chapter

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

MEETING INFORMATION

Regular Monthly SUNDAY Meeting

(held the second Sunday of the month)

December 12 & January 9, 6:30 p.m.

St. Joseph's Hospital

Medical Arts Building, Auditorium

3001 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

(We will have separate break out sessions for men and women)

Call Beverley Hurley at 813-832-3175 for directions or information.

Regular Monthly DAYTIME Meeting

Riverview/Gibson/Brandon areas

(held the second Friday each month)

Friday, December 10 & January 14,

10:00 a.m. to Noon

The Greater Brandon Chamber of Commerce

330 Pauls Drive, Brandon, Florida 33511

Please call Linda Delk at 813-661-0680

for directions or information.

Regular Monthly PLANT CITY Meeting

NO DECEMBER MEETING—SEE

YOU IN JANUARY

(Normally held the fourth Monday each month)

Monday, January 24, 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.

UPCOMING EVENTS

YOU DO NOT WANT TO MISS!!

Special Presentation by guest speakers

“How Men and Women Mourn
the Death of a Child ”

Sunday, February 13, St. Joseph Meeting

6:30 p.m. sharp!

Special refreshments will be served!

Come alone or with your spouse for this very insightful special presentation. We are very fortunate to have Dave and Sue Alexander come to Tampa to present this for us as they have presented this program nationally.

Another Special Presentation by a guest speaker Dr. Kim Lockwood

Sunday, March 13, 6:30 p.m. Sharp!

St. Joseph Hospital MAB

“Small Steps that lead to Recovery”

Dr. Lockwood has presented his mini workshop nationally and we are fortunate to have him come to Tampa to do this for our Chapter.

Special refreshments will be served!

December 2010/January 2011

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		
DECEMBER 2010						

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	31					
JANUARY 2011						

Love, Love changes Everything!

By Webber Andrew Lloyd

A beautiful song but....replace "Love" with "Grief".... amazing how similar they are!!!!

'Love', 'love' changes everything
Hands and faces, earth and sky
'Love', 'love' changes everything
How you live and how you die

'Love' can make the summer fly
Or a night seem like a lifetime
Yes 'love', 'love' changes everything
Now I tremble at your name
Nothing in the world will ever be the same

'Love', 'love' changes everything
Days are longer, words mean more
'Love', 'love' changes everything
Pain is deeper than before

'Love' will turn your world around
And that world will last for ever
Yes 'love', 'love' changes everything
Brings you glory, brings you shame
Nothing in the world will ever be the same

Off into the world we go
Planning futures, shaping years
'Love' bursts in and suddenly
All our wisdom disappears

'Love' makes fools of everyone
All the rules we make are broken
Yes 'love', 'love' changes everyone
Live or perish in its flame
'Love' will never, never let you be the same

'Love' will never, never let you be the same!

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

TEMPLE TERRACE WOMAN'S CLUB 2011 CALENDAR

We are pleased to announce that the TT Woman's Club has published a calendar featuring photographs of the Temple Terrace (including the Angel of Hope) submitted by local citizens. This 14 month calendar is a fundraiser and the cost will be \$8.00. For additional information, please contact Elaine Coniglio at 813-625-1468.

2010 Angel of Hope Brass Ornament \$15.95

We are very honored to have been selected for this commemorative Temple Terrace tradition ornament.

Checks payable to:

GFWC Temple Terrace Junior Woman's Club

P.O. Box 16206, Temple Terrace, FL 33687

Thank you for your support of the ornament project. Many charities benefit! Call 813-988-6159!



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

Candlelight Donations

Our special thanks to those sending donations to help make our Candle Light Remembrance Service a special evening for our children:



*In Remembrance of **Chris Cash**
 Donated by Rita Zvada*



*In Remembrance of **Arthur Ramirez**
 Donated by Helen Ramirez*

*In Remembrance of **Brendolyn Joyce Baker**
 Donated by Rebecca Mitchell*

*In Remembrance of **Spec. Corey Joseph Kowall**
 Donated by Kelly Kowal*

*In Remembrance of **Jeffrey Moses (Holland)**
 Donated by Donna Holland*

*In Remembrance of **Janna Marie Snyder**
 Donated by Marian Bullard*

*In Remembrance of **Geoffrey Ware Rayburn**
 Donated by Sue Moss*

*In Remembrance of **Jacob Nathaniel Durr**
 Donated by Karen Durr*

Our thanks to all of our special Candle Light participants and helpers. Thanks to Talesha Hogan and Dawn Cepero for singing for us; to Kelly Kowal for sharing her story; to John Meisenbach from New Beginnings Christian Church for his reading; to our other readers and candle lighters: Tom Sluder; Patricia Little child; Linda Delk; Lorie Scragg; Sue Zapata; Brian Ascii; Dianna Reams; Sandy Boehning; Bill Schneider. Special thanks to Chuck and Glenda LaFaye, Bill and Shirley Dowling and Pam Chambliss for serving our refreshments. To Tammy Hill, Janice Falcon and Theresa Farmer for running the boutique. To George & Jackie Loadholtz, Meronda Brown, Tammy Hill and Marvin, and Theresa Farmer for all their help arriving early to set up! To Debbie Nemitz for making the food tents; to Ron Ellington and Jackie for setting up and for our beautiful butterfly board; to Bill and Georgia Schneider for making the buttons. And of course our special thanks to David Hurley for honoring our children in the beautiful slide presentation. We appreciate St. Joseph's hospital staff for all their help and cooperation in making the evening a special event.

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!



Our Children . . . Remembered

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

December Birthdays

Baker, Jennifer
12/13/1973 - 10/15/1995
P-Terry & Susan Baker

Barnes Hannah D. M.
12/28/94 - 12/28/94
P - Alfred & Sabrina Barnes

Flynn, Philip
12/17/1977-8/8/2002
M-Roseanne Flynn

Gonzalez, Miriam
12/10/1948 - 7/26/1995
P-Fernando & Paula Lespier
S-Maria , Aida & George

Hidalgo, Christopher
12/14/1989 - 7/5/2004
M-Tammy Hidalgo

Horton, Ryan
12/21/1980 - 1/23/2005
M-Sue Horton

Lingefelt, Fiona
12/20/1989 - 10/15/2000
P - Karen & Douglas Lingefelt
B-Alexander & Andrew

Lovett, Sandra Sandy
12/3/1968 - 10/4/1997
M - Barbara Bryant

Martin, Amanda Louise
12/31/1971-6/19/2008
M- Toni Martin

Montagano, Anthony J. "Tony"
12/02/91 - 01/02/01
P-Luli and Jim Montagano
S-Alessandra Montagano
GP-Henry and Eloisa Valenzuela

Murphy, Mark Lawrence
12/22/1968 - 2/21/2000
M - Rosalie Baum
B - John Murphy

Nemitz, Robyn Michelle
12/28/82 - 06/16/98
P - Debbie & Bill Nemitz
B - John Nemitz
GP - Laura Nemitz
A & U -John & Linda Goodman &
Marty & Carol Nemitz

Patet, Nathan Gabriel
12/18/88 - 06/10/90
P - Maritza & Jeff Patet
S - Mallory Patet & Gina Patet
GP-Gus & Lourdes Arenas and Don
and the late Betty Patet

Pitts, Joseph David
12/8/1971 - 7/16/1998
P - Ruth & Richard Pitts

Robertson, Kristi Lee
12/15/1969 - 7/29/1994
M - Janice & Joe Robertson
S - Kathy Sanchez & Karen
Demeria
GM-Mildred Trigg

Rucys, Elliott Joseph
12/19/2007-1/18/2008
P-Pete & Libbie Rucys
S-Sydney & Aiden Rucys
GP-Wynn, Cheryl, Jodi
Elliott and Joe & Sandra Rucys,
Nancy Alvis

Ruiz, Marcus Nelson
12/29/1996 - 11/12/2000
P - Aleida & Nelson Ruiz
S - Illana

Sasnett, Debbie Powell
12/14/1956 - 03/31/2000
P-Jackie & Billy Powell
B-Debby & Tony
S-Penny

Thomas, Carol
12/16/1955-2/16/2003
M-Betty Thatcher
Sibs-Deb Waldfoe, Ellen Wil-
liams, Fran Thatcher & Gerri Huston

Waller, Lauren Marie
12/12/1990 - 4/16/2000
M - Kristine Colding & Bryan
Strahan
B-Christopher
S-Faith
GP-Joyce & Gene Waller

Williams, Paul X.
12/2/1986-12/24/2005
P-Amber & Tracy MacDonald
Sibs-Molly & Daniel Williams
GP-John & Rosemarie Binder



December Anniversaries

Antinora, Joseph A.
8/18/1967-12/9/2006
M-Susan Antinora
S-Tina Baxter
GF-Jos. Harnishfeger

Barnes Hannah D. M.
12/28/94 - 12/28/94
P - Alfred & Sabrina Barnes

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

Bliss, Lindsay Rebecca
4/26/1977 - 12/1/1991
P - Jim & Mary Beth Bliss
S - Shannon Bliss

Booker, Michelle Elizabeth
3/25/1987 - 12/1/2004
P-Michael & Bonnie Booker
B-Justine & Dillon Booker
GP-Betty Nichols and Ed &
Janice Falcon

Daly, Cole
9/9/1983 - 12/17/2001
M-Katie Brock

Darby, Marc Steven
3/25/1986 - 12/12/1998
P - Steve & Lori Darby
S - Cody, Austin, Benjamin
Darby
GP - John & Linda Darby

Delk, Melissa Ann
11/13/72 - 12/09/77
M - Linda Delk
B - Louis Delk
S - Meronda Brown

Donnarumma, Sophia Marie
9/1/2000 - 12/23/2004
P-Benjamin & Diane
S-Olivia
GM-Pat Donnarumma

Douglas, Christopher
11/4/1977 - 12/22/1997
M - Laren & Michael
S - Stacy & Leigh
B - Clinton

Durr, Jacob Nathaniel
7/16/1982-12/14/2009
M-Karen Durr
S-Danielle Roberts
GP-Samuel & Margaret Minton

Ellis, Douglas William
01/09/62 - 12/17/83
M - Alicia Ellis West
B-Harry Jr. & Edward Ellis

Hinchey, Ronald
11/17/1974 - 12/10/1999
P - Ronald & Donna Hinchey
S - Tracy Foster

Knight, Matthew A.
9/1/1982 - 12/28/2001
P-Ron & Sandy Knight
GM-Jack & Mary Griffin &
Doris I. Knight

Lespinasse, Bryan
3/8/1991 - 12/27/2004
M-Margarett Lespinasse

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

Pegram, Robin Sue
03/13/73 - 12/05/93
P - Earl & Susan Pegram
S - Jodi Pegram
B - Scooter & Craig Pegram
GM-Betty Jennings

Ramirez, Arthur, Jr.
6/10/1951 - 12/30/1997
M-Helen Ramirez

Schlechty, Michael
2/5/59 - 12/4/01
P - Nancy & Vernon Schlechty
Children - Michael Leann & Morgan
Lynn
B - Mark
S - Amy

Shearer, Shane
08/03/73 - 12/05/89
M - Linda Shearer
SF - Keith Gregory
S - January Shearer

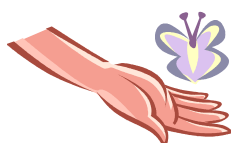
Thompson, Kimberly Karlin
5/5/1976 - 12/6/1999
P - Sam & Ingrid Thompson

Weber, Barbara Jean
6/4/1953 - 12/14/1994
P - Weldon & Jean Weber
S - Kristi, Teresa, & Pamela

Williams, Paul X.
12/2/1986-12/24/2005
P-Amber & Tracy MacDonald
Sibs-Molly & Daniel Williams
GP-John & Rosemarie Binder

Woofter, Kimberly Ann
"Kimie"
2/24/1970 - 12/25/2006
P-Julie & Steve Woofter
Children-Michael & Dystin
Sibs-Angela Huntley &
Donny
B-Donny Killian

Zorn, Wayne
7/15/1964 - 12/30/2006
M-Charlotte Zorn



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.

Our Children . . . Remembered

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

January Birthdays

Baker, Brendolyn Joyce Butterfly 1/1/1948 - 11/9/1990 M - Rebeckah Mitchell SF - Daniel Mitchell B - Daniel Leroy Mitchell S - Sharolyn Mitchell, Rhondolyn Shedrick, Lerolyn Capehart, and Angelyn Capehart	Feierstadt, Keith 01/13/75 - 01/16/94 P - Donna & Sy Feierstadt B - Robert Feierstadt	Langford, Todd Allen 01/05/78 - 04/27/01 P - Fred & Janice Langford B - Robbie Langford S - Kathy Peterson G/P - Betty Williams & H.P & Ruby Langford	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
Clark, Deborah Denise 1/19/1969 - 3/23/2002 M-Ethel Helms S-Valencia Clark B-James Jr. & Jerel GP-Luella Buford & John L.Clark	Gonzalez, Tarik C. 1/16/1976 - 10/12/2007 M-Susan Zapata GM-Jacqueline Rodriguez	Miulli, Matthew Michael 11/27/1987-1/19/2005 P-Jim & Kathy Miulli GP-Rudy Prehnal and Mike & Sue Miulli	Schneider, Adam 01/29/71 - 10/23/75 P - Bill & Georgia Schneider
DeLosSantos, Ailen 1/6/1975-5/5/2009 M-Elena Franklin B-Orlando DeLosSantos Jr.	Harrill, Jason 1/23/1984 - 6/12/2006 P-Bonnie & David Harrill S-Michelle "MiMi"	Pispitos, Richard John 01/23/72 - 09/14/98 P - Catherine Webb & Philip Finkelstein S - Michelle Webb GP-Anne & Owen Beglane	St. Martin-Hamm, Sydney Chanel 1/9/1997 - 7/21/2003 M-Joy St. Martin & the late Rusty Hamm GP-Ramon & Rita Hamm
Diaz, Alexandra 01/28/98 - 01/28/98 P - Llz & Joaquin Diaz	Harris, Charlotte Marie 1/23/2004 - 2/3/2004 P-Tony & Debra Harris	Pittman, Cynthia Marie 1/25/1978 - 2/23/2003 P-Charles & Joan Pittman	Stoeltzing, William (Bill) W. 01/02/57 - 05/09/02 P - Bill & Elvira Stoeltzing S - Cecille Parido Father to Eaton & Brent
Durcan, Andrea Lynn 01/15/1991 - 03/31/1991 P - David & Dixie Durcan S - Lindsey & Lauren Durcan GP-Marie B. Corcoran	Hughes, Jessica Alexis 1/13/86 - 5/11/02 F - Michael Hughes	Powers, Geoffrey A. 1/23/1983 - 7/1/2005 M-Diane Tower Sisters-Lana & Nikki Powers	Thornton, Teresa E. 01/12/66 - 09/24/81 P - Ken & Mira Thornton S - Lisa Buckner B - Nick Thornton GP-Tony & Berneda Pino
Ellis, Douglas William 01/09/62 - 12/17/83 M - Alicia Ellis West B-Harry Jr. & Edward Ellis	Jones, Sherry 1/18/1971 - 4/27/2000 M - Brenda Copeland	Rodriguez, Edwin (Eddy) Jr. 1/11/1971 - 7/28/1993 M-Bertha Dominquez	Wilds, Matthew Leland 01/12/74 - 01/13/95 P - Steven and Karen Catlin B - Daniel Scott Wilds
	Kent, Jesse David 1/6/1981-1/7/2001 P-Bonita & Greg Kent Child-Zoe Sibs-Lali & Daniele GP-Mimi& Grandpa Jim & Grandma Susie	Rogers, Jason R. 01/08/78 - 03/21/90 P-James Roy & Elaine Rogers B-Justin & Jacob Rogers GP-Arthur & Ethel Fernandez	

January Anniversaries

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	Hernandez, Rebecca 02/10/89 - 01/28/91 P - Regla & Pedro Hernandez	May, Philip 8/1/1975 - 1/1/2000 P-Deryl & Jennifer May	Rucys, Elliott Joseph 12/19/2007-1/18/2008 P-Pete & Libbie Rucys S-Sydney & Aiden Rucys GP-Wynn,Cheryl,Jodi Elliott and Joe & Sandra Rucys, Nancy Alvis
DeRoche, Cameron Gaines 04/11/89 - 01/25/95 P - Peggy & Karl DeRoche S - Mary Amber DeRoche	Horton, Ryan 12/21/1980 - 1/23/2005 M-Sue Horton	Montagano, Anthony J. "Tony" 12/02/91 - 01/02/01 P-Luli and Jim Montagano S-Alessandra Montagano GP-Henry and Eloisa Valenzuela	Thompson, Timothy A. 10/27/70 - 01/07/93 P- Bettie & Richard Thompson
Diaz, Alexandra 01/28/98 - 01/28/98 P - Llz & Joaquin Diaz	Jakenowski, John 4/18/1968-1/15/2008 M-Marsha Shemela B-Jason Jakenowski	Parrish, Scott Douglas 8/9/79 - 1/1/02 P - Doug Parrish and P - Karla & Rick Brown S-Sabrina Lee Shannon GP - Juanita Bodiford & Ada Smith	Walker, Nick 11/12/1983 - 1/11/2001 M - Denise Walker GM - Shirley Walker
Feierstadt, Keith 01/13/75 - 01/16/94 P - Donna & Sy Feierstadt B - Robert Feierstadt	Kent, Jesse David 1/6/1981-1/7/2001 P-Bonita & Greg Kent Child-Zoe Sibs-Lali & Daniele GP-Mimi& Grandpa Jim & Grandma Susie	Rivera, Damian Elijah 11/19/2001 - 01/10/2002 M-Nicole Rivera Robinson, Ashley Lauren 05/20/94 - 01/16/96 P - Sara & Tim Robinson S - Morgan Ashley Robinson	Wheeler, Clifford Denmark 11/1/1979 - 1 /18/1996 M-Donna Wheeler B-John, James & Duane GP-Lynn & Marcel Baker
Garcia, Larry D. 11/8/1983 - 1/10/2007 M-Consuelo Rios	Lane, Jim 9/7/1966 - 1/2/2005 M-Carol Lane		Wilds, Matthew Leland 01/12/74 - 01/13/95 P - Steven and Karen Catlin B - Daniel Scott Wilds
Harris, Joshua - 1/22/2004 P-Charles & Debra Harris	Martini, Michael Gerard 6/18/1964 - 1/26/2009 P-Dianne Ezell & Michael B-Pamela Martini Niece - Destiny Martin		

TAKING STOCK By Margaret Gerner

Happy New Year!! "How can it ever be again?" How will I ever make it through another year of this torment?" When we are hurting and so terribly depressed it is hard to see any good in our New Year, but we must try.

First, we must hold on tightly to the idea that we will not always be this miserable. That we will someday feel good again. This is almost impossible to believe but even when we don't believe it, we must tell ourselves over and over again that it is true, BECAUSE IT IS! Many parents whose children have died some years in the past will attest to this. Remember also, no one can suffer indefinitely as you are suffering right now.

Second, we must face the New Year with the knowledge that this year offers us a CHOICE. Whether we will be on our way to healing by this time next year, or still be in the pit of intense grief. We must remind ourselves that if we chose to be on the way to healing by the following year we must work to get there. And that work entails allowing ourselves to go through our grief, to cry, to be angry, to talk about our feelings of guilt, and do whatever is necessary to move toward healing.

Third, we must look for good in our lives and find reasons to go on, and accept the fact that our continued suffering will not bring our child back. Many of us have other children and a spouse for whom we must go on. More importantly, we have our own lives that must be lived. Most of us know that our dead children would want us to go on! No, this coming year may not be a happy one, but it can be a constructive one. Through our grief we can grow and become more understanding, loving, compassionate and aware of the real values in life.

The Journey

By Kelly Kowal ,

(Mom to Spec. Corey Joseph Kowall spoke at our Candle Light this year and here is what she said!)

You already know what I am about to say because you are alive and a child that you love is dead. When people say they cannot imagine what it must be like to lose a child.... I tell them they are right.

The only way I can even begin to convey to them the feeling of what we have been though... is to tell them to imagine being in a helicopter that is traveling over an ocean. There is no land in sight. Suddenly... for no reason that YOU can comprehend....you are shoved out the door without a parachute... and then WHAM you hit the water hard.

As the initial shock begins to wear off... you start to feel the pain and it's excruciating. You think... this can't be happening. It can't be true. But then the reality starts to seep in... you are numb with disbelief.

You don't know what to do... you feel you should do something... but you can't think. Your body moves.... but your mind is not working. You look for land... but all you see is water. You know you should swim.... but have no clue as to which way to go.

Your body tires from treading water. It is an effort just to keep your head above the waves. It is an effort just to breathe.

You have fleeting thoughts about how it might be so much easier to just fill your lungs with water and allow yourself to sink... plummeting into the depths of the ocean below. The wind is howling... the sky is black and the waves are enormous. You fear the storm will never end and you don't know how you will survive.

Then one day you start to realize that the turbulent storm is beginning to wane. The waves that were once over 40 feet high are subsiding. You slowly begin to realize that you are swimming... even though you are unsure of your direction.

You begin to start thinking you may be able to survive... if only you can find something to hold on to.... and then you see it. It's just a plank of wood... but it allows you to grab hold and it gives you hope.

As you drift though the water.... still clinging to the board.... you become aware that you are not alone. There are others in the water with you.

Some have been in the water longer than you.... and they have somehow managed to lash their planks together. They have built a boat. And not only have they built a boat but they are rowing.

Throwing you a life line they pull you in. Although they greet you with open arms... they wish they did not have to welcome you aboard... because they know the price you have paid for this trip is way too high.

But without hesitation they take you on board their vessel. With their knowledge and experiences though this tough journey they comfort you, they provide a safe haven for you to tell your story, they listen, and they listen.... and they listen.... because they understand, because they get it. They encourage you to speak your child's name, to share your child's story... to share with them your journey. They give you hope.

Although, unsure of your destination... knowing that your life will never be the same again...you join them and slowly begin to row.

My name is Kelly Kowall and I am the proud gold star mother of Spec. Corey Joseph Kowall. On September 20th, 2009 my son was killed in Afghanistan. My life as I knew it came to an end.

It was on that evening almost 15 months ago that two soldiers knocked on my door and then proceeded to pushed me out of that helicopter. I remember screaming during my fall... and I remember my cries of anguish and pain after hitting the water.

Although the ocean is a treacherous place when there is a storm, when the waters are calm... it can be quite magical and healing. I guess that is why I envision my journey of grief to that of being adrift in an ocean as I try to survive and navigate my way to a new world.

It is also the reason that upon returning home to Florida after my son's funeral, I bought a boat. My son and I always loved spending time together on the water... so it just felt right when I began providing boat outings to a few Veterans, some Active Duty Soldiers and a couple of local Gold Star Families. On these excursions, I would take them out to some of my son's favorite places. I felt it was a way that I could honor him, and at the same time, it was also a way I could thank others for their service and sacrifice. What started out as some simple boating trips... ended up being so much MORE than just a ride.

Soon, friends started getting involved and volunteering their sailboats, fishing boats, canoes and kayaks. What we found is that these boating expeditions could be mentally and emotionally healing to everyone on board. What I found is that by reaching out and trying to do something for others during my pain... I was in fact... beginning the journey to heal myself.

In April of this year, with the help of family, friends and an attorney, we founded a non-profit organization by the name of FAVE Boating Expeditions. It is through these boating experiences that we reach out to other survivors who had experienced the loss of a military hero.

There is just something about the smell the sea air. Feeling the sun on your face; the wind in your hair; the gentle rocking motion of the waves. Your cares and your worries just seem to drift away.... and for that moment you may find peace.

Although the waters are not always calm.... for the moments when they are... these boating expeditions can be a vessel for hope and healing.

How do I know? Because I have been out in that ocean. I have endured many storms... and I will continue to do so as they come.... but mostly I know... because I am a survivor.

God bless each and every one of you during this holiday season. Remember you are not alone. Remember to reach out to others... be involved. And my hope is that each one of us will always be able to find a safe port or harbor when a storm blows in... as we continue on OUR grief journey.

It's a New Year

"HOPE FOR THE DAY" from SilentGrief.com
<http://www.silentgrief.com>, January 11, 2010

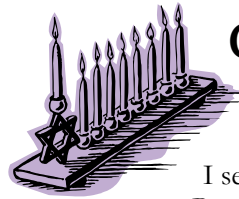
It's a new year, so why don't I feel so new? Why am I still carrying around yesterday's fears, pain, sorrow, and the problems from last year?

This is a question that most of us ask every day. We all know that changing a page or a date on a calendar does not make all things new, but it does give us new hope that we can begin the calendar year with a new mental attitude of resolve to gain inner peace, joy, and happiness - in spite of our outward circumstances.

Try this today: Every time you have a negative, sad thought replace that thought with a statement of thankfulness. "I am thankful for my daily food. I'm thankful for the sunshine. I'm thankful for warmth during those cold, frigid days of winter. I'm thankful for the changing seasons. I'm thankful for the air I breathe, the evening stars that twinkle, and the many small blessings that touch my life each day."

With practice, you can soon find MORE and MORE things to be thankful for, and you will even be able to find some hidden blessings in the pain you are experiencing.

Hope is much stronger than fear. Hope is alive and never dies. Hope is a resource that every person alive has been given. Tap into your reserve of hope to help you - one day, one hour, one minute at a time! Happy New Year!!! Yes, it really is a Happy New Year filled with hope! -C. Hinton



Chanukah is Here

By Ginnetta Krave, Central New Jersey

Chanukah is here,
 I see the candles glow, red, pink and blue.
 But you're not here to see their pretty shadows.

I shop for gifts
 And this year, again, once more,
 I won't be in a quandary of what to buy.

I give you my love, my precious son,
 For that is eternal.

And once again,
 It will have to do.

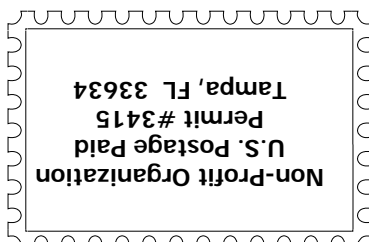
"When the time comes for lighting festive candles, let them remind you not only of what you lost, but also of what you had."

Sascha

During the holiday season, whether you celebrate Christmas or Hanukkah, it is our prayer that each of you find peace in your heart, joy in your families and hope in the future.

Address Correction Requested

December 2010/January 2011
 POSTMASTER - Dated Material
 Please do not delay.



The Bereaved Parents of the USA
 3805 San Juan Street
 Tampa, FL 33629

