



# 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)

June 14, 6:30 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/Gibson/Brandon areas

(held the second Friday each month)

Friday, June 12, 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

(held the fourth Thursday each month)

Thursday, June 25, 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:

A special gift will be given to each Dad and Grandfather attending our June meetings in honor of Father's Day!

Mary Jane Cronin will be the guest speaker at the St. Joseph Hospital June Sunday evening sharing meeting. Come and find out how she found healing in journaling.

### 2009 NATIONAL GATHERING

ARE YOU ATTENDING? THOSE WHO DO FIND THE SUPPORT AND GRIEF INFORMATION THAT WILL HELP ON THEIR GRIEF JOURNEY. WE HAVE SEVERAL FOLKS FROM OUR CHAPTER ATTENDING. IT WILL BE AN EXPERIENCE YOU WILL NOT FORGET.

See Page 4 for information!

All June Meetings We will be decorating Hearts in memory of our children to be on display at the upcoming BP/USA National Gathering in NY.



June 2009

This month's newsletter lovingly sponsored by the families of

*Josef Varga*

*Lori Kathleen Baker Dixon*

*Rusty Dixon*

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	JUNE 2009			

## NOVEMBER MOURNING

"Don't be afraid to share your story with others"  
BY Mary Jane Cronin

Ten years ago I experienced an event no one wishes will ever happen to them - the death of one of my children.

When sixteen-year-old Jeremy was murdered in 1998, I coped by bottling up my feelings and not talking about his death with my family. I eventually decided to go back to school to become a counselor in order to help others cope with the death of their loved one. A professor encouraged me to write a journal as part of her healing process and that journal became the blueprint of my newly-published book, **November Mourning**.

"Searching for meaning and logic in a situation that did not make sense, I felt alone and out of control of my emotions". "I wanted to find out what other parents had done to help them with their pain and grief." "Writing the book was a healing process in of itself and began with journaling on my computer. Helping others by listening to them share their story and to learn how to journal write has helped me heal and created a new goal - one of helping others who have experienced a traumatic loss find the comfort and support to begin to heal.

Mary Jane earned her Bachelor's Degree in Human Development from Eckerd College in St Petersburg, Florida and her Master's Degree in Community Psychology from Springfield College in Tampa, Florida. Mary Jane Cronin has extensive experience in bereavement counseling for individuals and groups. She has lectured on grief and bereavement and taught bereavement support skills to teenagers, incarcerated women, hospice patients and their families, as well as to volunteers, and fellow health care professionals. Providing counseling services in the Tampa Bay area of Florida since 1999 Ms. Cronin has been employed by The Hospice of the Florida Suncoast since 2004 as a Licensed Mental Health Counselor.

## Chapter News



### ANGEL OF HOPE UPDATE

[www.angelofhopetampabay.com](http://www.angelofhopetampabay.com)

### Angel of Hope monthly meeting

Please call Beverley Hurley 813-832-3175 for info! Next meeting June 1 . (Not July)

### **MUSIC C.D. OFFER**

Please consider supporting the music C.D. campaign offered by **Talesha Hogan, Greg Clifton, and Gary Bosko** and purchase some for yourself and friends at only \$5 each.

They make great gifts and are a wonderful tool to help spread hope in the lives of people you hold dear to your heart!

You can purchase C.D.'s at any of our BP/USA support meetings or call Julie Leyde at (813)

784-6929 [vleyde1@verizon.net](mailto:vleyde1@verizon.net).

All proceeds benefit the Angel of Hope Memorial Garden.

Thank you for your support!

**Please note:** 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!

Please regard this as a safe time and place to come and be with those who know that the grief never disappears although it does lessen. Our meetings are open to all bereaved parents, step-parents, grandparents, and older siblings and are planned to be a source of comfort and support. We need not grieve alone! See you next month.

### 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) 661-9334
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) 234-4705
Serena Graves (Sibling Contact)	(813) 810-7169
Violeta "Cookie" Fernandez (Se Habla Espano)	(813) 996-4281
<b>CRISIS CENTER</b>	<b>211</b>

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

## Love Gifts

David and Beverley Hurley  
 In loving memory of her daughter

**Debbie A. Bray**

11/14/1967—6/1/1990

Bill and Debbie Nemitz  
 In loving memory of their daughter

**Robyn Michelle Nemitz**

12/28/1982—6/25/1992

### **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 June 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. 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.

### **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.

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

### **Electronic Newsletter**

The Newsletter is available electronically. To receive it by Email, send your name and email address to: [bee.hurley@gte.net](mailto:bee.hurley@gte.net) and indicate your desire to switch from regular "snail" mail to email. Email recipients will also receive additional news and information, while helping our chapter save costs. We very much appreciate your cooperation by helping us out this way!

### **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.**



## Our Children . . . Remembered

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

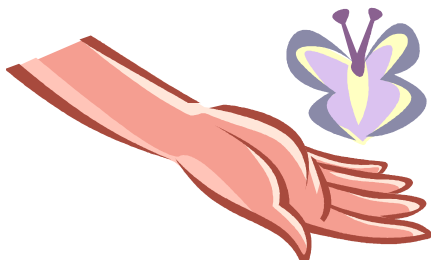
### June Birthdays

Brown, Alex Marie 6/6/1995 - 6/6/1995 P - Jane Ann & Thomas Brown	Hayes, Douglas 6/3/1969-6/3/1969 P-Martha & Michael Hayes Sibs-Cheri Hayes Knapp & Travis Hayes GM-Mary Neeld	Panico, Ryder 6/22/2004-4/27/2005 M-Kristen Panico GM-Jeanne Buckstein	Szczepanek, Daniel 6/21/1988-11/10/2006 M-Debra Szczepanek
Burney, Trevin Sean 06/04/78 - 02/04/97 M - Georgia Burney F - Willie Burney S - Renae & Janae Burney B - Arkiva Burney N - Robbie & Marquiz Burney	Johnson, Georgina 6/10/2003 - 6/10/2003 P-Laurie & George Johnson	Ponder, Manda Lynn 06/13/1995 - 07/03/1995 P - Marilyn & William Ponder B - Travis & Mike Ponder S - Amanda Ponder GM-Grace Ponder	Timothy, Joshua 6/29/2004 - 7/18/2005 P-Doug & Kerri Timothy GM-Mary Ann Negrethe
Carlan, Robert Hope 06/02/78 - 07/25/99 P - Arnold & Linda Carlan	Lane, Matthew Alexander 6/22/2001 - 2/13/2003 M-Mary Ann Muschick S-Nikol B-Devvin GP-Hieu & David Muschick	Prescott, Alexandria 3/25/1990-6/28/2007 Stephanie & Tracy Knox	Valdez, Joseph 6/3/1974-4/24/2007 M-Carolyn Aviles
Eggy, Keiran Catherine 6/4/2004 - 6/4/2004 M-Elizabeth Eggy	Mattea, Vince M. 6/19/1969-12/22004 M-Geri Mattea	Ramirez, Arthur, Jr. 6/10/1951 - 12/30/1997 M-Helen Ramirez	Varga, Jozsef 6/11/1988 - 8/4/2007 M-Carmen Varga B-Kiel Varga & Bruce Senra
Gilliam, Hayden Charles 6/20/1999 - 8/4/2001 P - Sean & Marion Gilliam Sibs- Sara & Cole GP-Joe & Nancy Gilliam & Rosemarie Presbrey GGP-Mary Gilliam & Lora Flowers	Martin, Brian James 06/09/1979 - 07/18/1993 P - Stan & Adrienne Martin B - Christopher Martin GM - Evelyn Golding	Schulman, Adam J. 6/7/1971 - 9/26/2004 M-Pat Schulman Freddie Kelly Jr. and Kenny Schulman	Weber, Barbara Jean 6/4/1953 - 12/14/1994 P - Weldon & Jean Weber S - Kristi, Teresa, & Pamela
	Owens, Kenny Dwayne 6/27/1961-2/25/2005 P-Jimmy & Sylvia Mingo S-Tina Jernigan & Donna	Sorrells, Blake Austin 06/03/1998 - 06/03/1998 P - John & Monica Sorrells S - Cassidy Sorrells	



### June Anniversaries

Alvarez, Dean 4/28/1965 - 6/12/2000 M-Diana Stenglein B-Nadie Alvarez S-Athena & Lynette Alvarez	Eggy, Keiran Catherine 6/4/2004 - 6/4/2004 M-Elizabeth Eggy Faber, Nicholas (Nicky) Paul 08/13/89 - 06/08/95 P - Paul & Kathy Faber S - Danielle Faber GP - Esther Kubler & Anna & Bobby Banks	Lawrence, Charles E. 03/23/1965 - 06/22/2001 P-Dave and Terry Lawrence S-Carolyn & Cindy C-Ashley, Christina & Stephanie W-Nicky	Sorrells, Blake Austin 06/03/1998 - 06/03/1998 P - John & Monica Sorrells S - Cassidy Sorrells Steen, Michael Anthony 8/4/1956 - 6/20/2003 M-Nancy Holdren B-Rick, David & Donald Father to Jessica, Christine & Michelle Married to Doreen
Bray, Debbie (Hurley) 11/14/1967 - 6/1/1990 M - Beverley (Bray) Hurley S - Kimberly Gonzalez	Funk, Benjamin 9/9/1976 - 6/25/2001 P - Mr & Mrs Funk	Mercer, Bret 10/5/1988 - 6/25/1992 P - Eddie & Darlene Mercer S - Lindy, Crystal & Kaley GP-Loren & Christine Mercer GP-Beverly Jaudon Quincannon	Stock, Jessica 9/21/1978-6/6/2004 M-Rose Stock
Brown, Alex Marie 6/6/1995 - 6/6/1995 P - Jane Ann & Thomas Brown	Harrill, Jason 1/23/1984-6/12/2006 P-Bonnie & David Harrill S-MiMi Harrill	Nemitz, Robyn Michelle 12/28/82 - 06/16/98 P - Debbie & Bill Nemitz B - John Nemitz GP - Laura Nemitz, William Barbish	Therault, George L. 10/13/1951 - 6/1/1996 P - Mae Therault
Combs, Phillip "PJ" 3/24/1986-6/12/2004 P-Lisa Pyche & Phil Combs B-Travis D. Combs GP-Thomas & Sharon Pyche & Katherine Combs	Howard, Steven T. 8/11/70 - 6/30/1999 M-Cay Pelaez	Noriega, Aiden 4/4/2001 - 6/18/2001 P - Rick & Ethal Noriega	Waller, Albert Marcus 5/2/1994 - 6/16/2000 P - Marc & Charlotte Waller
Cowen, Chad 3/31/1973 - 6/7/1997 P - Mary "Pete" & Mike Cowen S - Tiffany Larson	Johnson, Georgina 6/10/2003 - 6/10/2003 P-Laurie & Goerge Johnson	Orsi, Kristen McCall 8/5/1980 - 6/27/2002 P-Kimberly & Leo Orsi GP-Wm. & Jeanne Armiger and Stephanie & Rich Orashen	
Dart, Tracy 3/11/1970-6/13/2006 M-Sue Milson	Kellogg, Benjamin - 6/7/2002 P-John & Barbara Kellogg	Patet, Nathan Gabriel 12/18/88 - 06/10/90 P - Moritza & Jeff Patet S - Mallory and Gina Patet GP-Gus & Lourdes ARenas and Don Patet	
Durazzo, Richard 12/5/1971-6/8/2006 P-Diane & Paul Durazzo	Landrum, Mark 03/03/79 - 06/24/94 M - Joan Landrum-Adams F - Steve Landrum B - John Landrum	Roberson, Richard Joseph 07/23/1959 - 06/02/1997 P-Richard & Jeannette Roberson S-Sue & Shelby B-Randy	



*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.*

## YOU CAN HELP A GRIEVING HEART

Alice J. Wisler



Oh, we talk about the best cold medications and if cherry cough syrup tastes better to kids than orange. We can recommend preschools and sneakers. But the hardest part of parenting is the least often discussed. The roughest aspect of being a parent is losing a child. Then we clam up. We don't want to hear. We are threatened. If her child died, mine could, too. What can we do when parenting goes beyond the normal expectations? "What do I say?" friends ask me with a look of agony in their eyes. "I feel so helpless. I can't empathize, I haven't had a child die."

**You can help.** You don't have to stand there with a blank stare or excuse yourself from the conversation. You can be informed so that you will be able to reach out to a friend who has lost a child.

"Jump into the midst of things and do something," says Ronald Knapp author of the book, "Beyond Endurance: When A Child Dies." Traditionally there are the sympathy cards and hot casseroles brought over to the bereaved's home. But it doesn't end there. That is only the beginning of reaching out to your friend or relative who has recently experienced the death of a child at any age.

**Here are 15 tips you can learn to make you an effective and compassionate friend to your friend in pain:**

1. **Listen.** When you ask your friend, "How are you doing today?" wait to hear the answer.
2. **Cry with her.** She may cry also, but your tears don't make her cry. She cries when no one else is around and within her heart are the daily tears no one sees.
3. **Don't use clichés.** Avoid lines like, "It will get better." "Be grateful you have other children." "You're young, you can have another baby." "He was sick and it is good he is no longer suffering." There will never be a phrase invented that makes it all right that a child died.
4. **Help with the care of the surviving children.** Offer to take them to the park, your house for a meal, to church. Say "May I please take Billy to the park today? Is four okay with you?" Don't give the line, "If you need me, call me." Your bereaved friend may not feel comfortable with asking for help.
5. **Say your friend's child's name.** Even if she cries, these are tears that heal. Acknowledging that the child lived and has not been forgotten is a wonderful balm to a broken heart.
6. **Give to the memorial fund.** Find out what it is and give, today, next year and the next.
7. **Some mothers start to collect items** that bring comfort after a child dies; find out what it is your friend is collecting and buy one for her. My son liked watermelons and we have many stories of watermelons and him. Therefore my house now has assorted watermelon mementoes -- a tea pot, kitchen towel and soap dispenser. Many mothers find solace in rainbows, butterflies and angels.
8. **Send a card** (I'm thinking of you is fine) but stay away from sappy sympathy ones.
9. **Go to the grave.** Take flowers, a balloon or a toy. How honored your friend will be to see what you have left there the next time she visits the cemetery.
10. **Don't use religion as a 'brush away' for pain.** Stay clear of words that don't help like, "It was God's will."
11. **Don't judge her.** You don't know what she is going through each day, you can not know of the intense pain unless you have had a child die.
12. **Stay in touch.** Call to hear how she is coping. Suggest getting together, but if she isn't up for it, give her space.
13. **Read a book on grief,** focusing on the parts that give you ideas on how to be a source of comfort for your bereaved friend.
14. **Know she has a hole in her heart,** a missing piece due to the death of her child. Holes like these never heal so accept this truth and don't expect her to 'get over' this loss.
15. **Remember that with the death of her child, a part of her died** -- old beliefs, ideals, etc. Her life has been forever changed. Let her know your love for her as well as God's love for her is still the same.

Even as you participate in the suggestions above, you will still feel uncomfortable. It has been three years since the death of my four year-old, Daniel, and even now when I meet a newly-bereaved mother, I am uncomfortable. Talking of the untimely death of a child is never easy for anyone. However, avoiding reality does not bring healing. You will provide many gifts of comfort along the way when you actively decide to help your grieving friend. When my friends and family acknowledge all four or my children, the three on this earth and the one in Heaven, I am honored. Each time it is as though a ray of warm sunlight has touched my soul.

*Printed with permission - Alice J. Wisler founded Daniel's House Publications in memory of her 4-year-old son, Daniel. She is the author of two new novels, both dealing with grief and loss--Rain Song and How Sweet It Is. Visit her website for more bereavement resources: <http://www.facebook.com/1/>; <http://www.alicewisler.com>"*

### Bereaved Parents of the USA 2009 National Gathering *Light My Way*



**Friday through Sunday, July 10,11,12, 2009**

**At Crowne Plaza LaGuardia Airport Hotel**  
104-04 Ditmars Blvd., E. Elmhurst, New York

**Hotel Reservations** 1-888-233-9527 or their  
website at [www.cplaguardia.com](http://www.cplaguardia.com)

The Crowne Plaza LaGuardia Airport Hotel, New York has given BP/USA a generously discounted daily room rate of \$115, w/tax \$133.88 that will be honored July 7-15, 2009, three days before and after the Gathering. Please make your own reservations directly with the hotel at 1-888-233-9527.

**Deadline to register at this discounted rate is June 16** – don't miss out!

Be sure to tell them you are attending the BP/USA Gathering! The hotel provides a Complimentary Shuttle to LaGuardia Airport, Queens Mall, and the 7 Train (minutes to Manhattan).

**Gathering Registration**— \$35. Online Registration is also available and you can pay by PayPal or a credit card.

**Meals:** The complete meal plan is \$161.00 for Friday night through Sunday morning. Separate individual meals are also available.

**Workshop details and Speaker's Bios** are posted online.

**Closing ceremony on Sunday is a butterfly release.**

**Workshop and Speaker's Bios** are posted as well. Check it out!

**For more information, call Beverley Hurley at 813-832-3175 OR see BP/USA National Web-site at [www.bereavedparentsusa.org](http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org)**

## WHY?

By: Traci Morlock, BP/USA Bereaved Sibling, St. Louis, MO



I have asked myself that very question over the last few weeks. A friend at work lost her child the week of my brother's anniversary. Even though Sean has been gone for five years, all of those memories came rushing back to me. The pain was once again fresh and new.

I have only attended one young person's funeral since Sean died. My experience at that funeral was awful. I was close to being hysterical through the whole funeral and when it came time to go up to the coffin, I fled the building. I just couldn't look into the eyes of the child's mother and sister and feel that pain all over again. I later apologized to the mother and she understood so well. Now with my friend's child dying, I was beside myself. I didn't know if I could even go to the wake much less the funeral. I had no idea what was about to unfold for me.

My office is a small office, so when we heard about my friend's child dying the impact was felt intensely. My co-workers and I couldn't think or work. We just kept thinking about my friend and her family. One by one people began asking me what they could do for her. I immediately called my mother and the next day everyone had a pamphlet on knowing how to help a grieving co-worker. Then we began talking about how we were feeling. I let them know some things that they might expect and that if they thought what they were going to say was stupid then to just say that they were sorry. We then made plans to attend the wake. I was taking things one step at a time.

I went to the wake and when my mother and I arrived, car loads of kids were arriving also. I took a deep breath and in we went. I made it to the coffin. My friend had been taken out just before I arrived, so I talked with her sister. When I looked at her beautiful child all I could think of was why. Why did another young life have to end? Why did another mother have to feel this pain? Why did one more sibling have to feel the way I do? Why did another family have to change forever? I will probably never know the answers to those questions. I know that when I looked into that brother's eyes, I knew that pain. When I hugged my friend, I remembered that numbness. I realized that I will just have to take my experiences and help anyone I can - the kids that go to my group, a co-worker, a perfect stranger. I just know that I feel a need to show people that life does go on, but in our own time.

## Father's Day: Help for a Grieving Father

Written by Clara Hinton



Father's are such amazing people. They are strong. They are brave. They are protectors. They are providers. And, they also are grievers. Many times we forget the last part. Fathers have hearts that are kind and sensitive, and they feel pain. So often, when child loss occurs, people will direct their comments to only the mother. "How are you feeling?" "I'm so sorry this has happened to you." "It's going to take a while for you to work through this, but I'm sure your husband will stay strong and help you."

Father's Day is a difficult day for any father who has lost a child, and in many ways it is a doubly difficult day because he knows that he cannot fix or repair the pain that his wife is feeling. That is a double blow to the heart of a father. His heart is hurting both for his loss and for the fact that he cannot take away this pain for his wife.

Reminders of fatherhood are all around. We see photos of dads and their children in magazines, on television commercials, in ads for clothing and toys. Walk into any store that sells bikes, fishing gear, hunting gear, or toys and there will be advertisements for fathers and their children. Seeing these visual pictures are like hot irons searing the heart of a man who has lost a child. And, often he has nobody to talk to, and no place to go where he can shed his tears or show his emotions.

We need to be especially sensitive to men who have lost a child on Father's Day because they often will not express any of their feelings of pain, yet the pain is still there. It's okay to mention the loss of his child. In fact, it's appropriate to do so because a father will be thinking of his child and needs validation of his fatherhood. It's always encouraging to know that you are remembered. It's especially encouraging to know that others have remembered your child.

Keep your comments brief, but don't be afraid to say, "I know this is a hard day for you, but I want you to know I'm thinking about you." Those are powerful words and can help a hurting heart to begin to heal.

Most men like to do things with their hands and often will express their sorrow by building something or working extra hours at the office proving that they can accomplish a hard task. Try to be understanding during those moments when it is hard for a man to speak of his pain with words. Encourage things like working in the yard, going hiking, playing basketball, or building a bird house. Anything that is physical is a way to relieve many of the pressures of a pained, hurting heart.

Lastly, remember that Father's Day is a day to remember and honor fathers. Even though a father does not have his child nearby physically, he is still a father. By you validating him as being a father, you will help bring about healing and encouragement to a grieving father's heart.



*In Loving memory of*  
**Josef Varga**  
*June 11, 1988 to August 4, 2007*

*If tears could build a stairway and memories a lane,  
 I'd walk right up to Heaven, and bring you home again.*

*Happy 21<sup>st</sup> birthday Joe. We all love and miss you so much!  
 Mom, Kiel, Bruce, and all your friends*

My Dear Joey Bear,

Another birthday without you. When you turned 18 you were in boot camp. When you turned 19 you were stationed at Camp Pendleton in California. When you turned 20 you had already moved to Heaven. And now you are turning 21 in Heaven.

I miss you so much. This pain has never dulled or lessened. It is very sharp and sometimes almost unbearable. It hurts so badly, but it is also a comfort. It reminds me of how much I love you, how much I miss you, and how empty my life is without you.

I don't understand how time and life can go on without you. I want to scream at the world to stop because my baby boy isn't with me.

I thank God every day for giving me the honor and privilege of being your mom. Of choosing me to watch you grow, share your love, and see all of your accomplishments. I am so proud of the man you have become.

I miss you so much. I miss everything about you, the good and the bad. There is no one for me to talk to like I could with you. Sometimes I feel like I am going to burst with everything I need to tell you. I miss you reminding me of the things that make me special.

Your brothers and friends miss you so much. I am thankful you had so many people that loved you so deeply and unconditionally. I have cried on several of their shoulders. Believe me, they are all worthy of your love.

My life will never be the same. Such a big part of it has been taken away from me. You will always be loved by me and by everyone who was blessed enough to know you during your short life.  
 I love you with all of my heart and soul, Mom

Joe, You are forever in all of our thoughts. There is not a day goes by that we don't think of you. Your smiling face in all your photos is the perfect reminder of all the amazing times we shared together. We love you always.  
 Your sis, ~ Steph

Well Jozsef it's been almost two years since you were taken from us. I can't believe it's been that long... I still won't except that you are gone. Its more like your on a long vacation and I am waiting till you come back home. I guess I have blocked it from my mind. I don't think I will ever be able to except it. But I think about you everyday. I remember the camping trips at Kilby Beach, I remember fishing at Dewdney Slough and your birthday party's at Stave Lake like they were yesterday... You with Sundance trying to eat your hair, man you loved that horse. These are just some of the memories that really stick out in my mind. Bro I really miss you and I wish we could go back in time and spend some more time together. Erika is trying to get our wedding together and I'm having a hard time getting into it now that you aren't going to be there as my best man, even though you will be there in spirit. It's just hard. And I know you would want me and Erika to have a great wedding no matter what. Well let me tell you, the memories we have together, I keep them very close to my heart. And I think that's what keeps me going day to day. You also have a birthday coming up, the big 21. I will be having a couple drinks with you that day. It is very hard for me to write this letter for some reason. It's probably because I can't accept the fact that you're gone. And writing this is making it too real for me... I hope that you have found your way in Heaven and you're not giving God too much trouble... I love you Joe and miss you very much. And look forward to the day that we do meet again. But until that day I will keep celebrating your life and live through our memories with pride and honor. We miss and love you Joe so much... Love Your Big Brother Bruce, Erika And Pebbles. B.F.F.B. Always In My Heart...

To my little brother, my fellow Marine, you are loved and missed deeply. Kiel

**We thought of you with love today, but that is nothing new.  
 We thought about you yesterday, and days before that too.  
 We think of you in silence, we often speak your name.  
 Now all we have are memories, and your picture in a frame.  
 Your memory is our keepsake, with which we'll never part.  
 God has you in his keeping, we have you in our hearts..  
 Love always, Uncle Tony, Aunt Laurie & Cousins Shannon & Amanda**

*"Perhaps they are not stars in the sky, but rather openings where our loved ones shine down to let us know they are looking over us."*

Joe,

You would have been 21! Some say that is the age you become a man. But I believe you already were one. I think age doesn't define a man but what's in your heart that does. We miss you and love you and smile often when thinking of some of the silly antics you would pull! You always amazed us.

Keep shining on us all, specially your mom.

Aunt Luisa & Cousin Scott



# *Lori Kathleen Baker-Dixon*

*October 29, 1975 to April 12, 2001*

# *Rusty Dixon*

*January 4, 1975 to April 29, 2007*



*Mother to Ryan, Wife to Rusty  
Daughter of Donna Budd and Bill Baker  
Sister to Jamey Baker, Tracy Howard and Phylcia Baker  
Grandchild to Lillian McMullin and the late George Castillo, Vidal  
and Ernestine Torres, and James and Beulah Baker*

*Angels of pure spirit who stands before God  
Gazing upon His unveiled presence.*

*Lori, A Holy week, April 12, 2001, as you lay with no movement but a tear we sometimes would wipe from your face. I whispered in your ear to let you know it was okay if you wanted to go. As I kissed your cheek I felt a sense of calmness and peace, I knew you had entered the gates of glory. So often I tell family and friends that you would never have left Ryan, neither Rusty nor us if there had not been heaven's angels and the light of God's love waiting for your arrival.*

*I'm still waiting to wake up and have difficulty coping with the fact you have crossed over, but each day I feel your presence. I'm fulfilling my promise to you in regards to Ryan, he gives me the will to carry on, and he misses his mommy so much. The brightest star in the sky is your birthday gift to him and he tells everyone his mommy is Jesus' secretary and someday he will see you.*

*Rusty, April 29, 2007, we now know you are happy, forever with the love of your life, no more crying, or searchin for her everywhere you went. Together you can watch over Ryan and guide his path in life. We will never ask "why" because we know God has a plan and we will see your presence each day in Ryan. The day that we are all together again is what we wait patiently for. "The races in heaven must be awesome now that you are there competing with Dale Earnhart."*

*With broken hearts and all our love,  
Your Son Ryan, Mom, Pa, Jamey, Tracy,  
Bobby and Family*

# 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.

We are the Bereaved Parents of the USA.  
We Welcome You.

## Not Today

By Tom Carrigan from "Where Are All the Butterflies", Bereaved Parents of North Texas

One and one-half years had gone by since my step-son Doug's death, yet I was having a bad moment. A co-worker asked what was wrong. I talked about missing Doug. The man found out that Doug was my step-son who had died. The man said, well, at least it wasn't like losing your real son. I was speechless for a minute. Controlling my anger, I turned my head and remained silent. As if that fact should make a difference! Another ignorant remark not needed when silence would have been better. I will learn to forgive him . . . but not today!

## Everyone Has Something to Give and to Receive

By Donna Corrigan

Our former chapter leader, Jack Larson, frequently reminded us to, —Be there when that new person walks thru the door, just as someone was there for you. Unfortunately, we know there will always be newly bereaved parents attending our meetings. The good news is that we can choose to be there for them, but it isn't always easy.

When we come together each month we share our own version of survival. Each child is special, and each parent has a unique story. In the past months our members have shared stories about journaling, tattooing, web pages and non profit foundations. We have heard about visiting psychics and after death communication. We've eaten birthday cake, looked at pictures of beloved children and seen creative displays of cremains. Did you squeeze the teddy bear made out of a boy's shirt or touch the porcelain angel?

You have to admire the mom who is speaking out against teen drinking and the parent who shared their child's story of drug addiction to save other kids. How have they found the strength to do these things? Loving parents, always remembering....

Each of us has something to give as well as receive. In the early days of grief you can barely remember to breathe, let alone consider helping someone else. As you navigate your grief journey, you will find yourself sharing your own, seemingly small, accomplishments. It may be as simple as a tearless trip through the grocery store or as difficult as attending a family wedding or graduation. You made it, you climbed your mountain!

You probably didn't know that most bereaved parents have a mental list of things they can never do again? It's probably one of those things we are not supposed to talk about! (We will, at the next meeting!) As you share your victories, the more seasoned grievers understand the importance of small steps. We are on a long journey, each small step is priceless. You have given, you will receive.

*Lovingly lifted from A Journey Together: BP/USA Hinsdale Chapter Newsletter, www.bpusahinsdale.org*



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Please do not delay.

