



Tampa Bay Chapter

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

MEETING INFORMATION

Regular Monthly SUNDAY Meeting

Sunday, October 8, 6:30 to 8:30

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

St. Joseph's Hospital
Medical Arts Building, Auditorium
3001 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
(Note: Park in hospital garage or in small lot adjacent to circle drive next to MAB.)
Call Linda Delk at 813-661-0680
for directions or information.

Regular Monthly DAYTIME Meeting

Riverview/Gibsonton/Brandon areas

(held the second Friday each month)

Friday, October 13, 10:00 a.m. to noon

First United Methodist Church of Brandon

In the Office Building, Koinonia Room

120 North Knights Avenue, Brandon

Call Kathy Simone at 813-653-1717

for directions or information.

Regular Monthly BRADENTON Meeting

(held the third Monday each month)

Monday, October 16, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Braden River Baptist Church, 5412 SR 64

I-75 to SR 64 (Exit 220)

Melissa Coxwell at 941-708-7052

Regular Monthly PLANT CITY Meeting

(held the fourth Thursday each month)

Thursday, October 26, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

South Florida Baptist Hospital

301 N. Alexander Street, Plant City

in the Community Conference Room

Call Sue Bowditch at 813-661-9334

for directions or information.

Upcoming Events

Angel of Hope Boutique and Craft Sale

Sunday, October 22, from 10am. to 4pm.

Wal-Mart Super Center

6192 Gunn Highway

Tampa, FL 33625

(in the parking lot)

Gift Night-November Meetings



At our November Meetings, Plan to share a special Christmas story or memory about your child and if you can handle it, purchase a gift that you would have bought for your child - please purchase gifts fitting for ages from infant to 15 years old. All gifts will be donated to a local children's charity. (This is strictly voluntary-please do not wrap gifts!)

October 2006



The Angel of Hope committee
is organizing our
**2nd Annual Holiday Boutique
and Arts & Crafts show**

to raise money for this memorial garden.
Sunday, October 22, from 10 am to 4 pm

Wal-Mart Super Center

6192 Gunn Highway

Tampa, FL 33625

(in the parking lot)

This will be a fun event!! We will have vendors set up to show and offer their goods for your early holiday shopping or just 'window shopping'. We will have a bake sale, raffle prizes and introduce you to the Angel of Hope!

More Vendors Needed!

NOTE: We still have spaces available for more vendors to show their products. This is a great opportunity to sell your products for a good cause!!!

Booth spaces are available for a **non-refundable** donation to the Angel of Hope of \$35 each.

We will try not to duplicate any specific product so please let us know immediately if you or someone you know would like to participate in our event and reserve a space for their product. **The last day to reserve a space will be Sunday, October 15th!!**

Please email Gina Casal at:

GinaCasal15@tampabay.rr.com or

call her at 813-495-7539 to reserve a spot for your product or for more information!

Now Childless Gathering Scottsdale, AZ

Please notify Sandy Fox IF you want another Now Childless Gathering. There will NOT be a gathering if you fail to take the time to let her know you are interested. Sandy would like to know how many would be interested in another gathering for now childless parents in either Scottsdale or nearby. We were wondering if near the end of March would be a better time. It is beautiful weather in Scottsdale at that time of year. Before she and her committee begin to make plans we would like to know how much interest there would be in attending this event. We try to avoid summer as two other major national conferences are always held at this time. Please email Sandy at sfoxaz@hotmail.com or write to her at Sandy Fox 7407 E. Pasaro Drive Scottsdale, AZ 85262. Scottsdale is a BEAUTIFUL city with many interesting things to see and do. It is a wonderful late winter break and interesting city to visit.

Chapter News

September Sharing Meetings Report

Clark's mom, Jeanne O'Neil, Chris Cash's mom, Rita Zvada, and Timmy's mom, Elli Lalis, brought refreshments to the Sunday evening meeting in loving remembrance of their sons.



REFRESHMENTS

Some of us like to remember our child's birthday or the anniversary of his or her death by providing the refreshments and 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!

ANGEL OF HOPE UPDATE

www.angelofohopetampabay.org

We agreed to have a monthly committee meeting (unless a holiday weekend)! Please be a part of this important planning in memory of all of our children! If you are interested in attending, please call Beverley Hurley at 832-3175.



HOLIDAY BOUTIQUE & CRAFT SALE - We are rapidly lining up fantastic vendors for this upcoming fun event!!

2nd Annual Holiday Boutique Arts & Crafts show
Sunday, October 22, from 10am. to 4pm.

Wal-Mart Super Center

6192 Gunn Highway
Tampa, FL 33625
(in the parking lot)

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

Telephone Friends

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

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



Doug Parrish

In loving memory of his son

Scott Douglas Parrish

8/9/1979 to 1/1/2002

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.

Chapter Library Books

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

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

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. We limit monthly sponsorship pages to four (4) a month so as to limit our printing costs and still have room for articles and poems. Your contribution supports the chapter and helps pay for the printing of the newsletter.

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

To sponsor a newsletter page, contact Beverley Hurley at (813) 832-3175 (email address: bee.hurley@gte.net). Please note that sponsorship pages are due by the 15th of the month BEFORE the publication month. So please get your sponsorships in early and by the 15th of the month BEFORE the publication month so you will not be disappointed if there is not room left for your page in memory of your child.

Electronic Newsletter

The Newsletter is available electronically. To receive it by Email, send your name and email address to: www.bpusatampabay.org 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.

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



Our Children . . . Remembered

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

October Birthdays

Baez, Roberto G. 10/30/1985 - 10/3/2005 M-Jeannette Carrasco Baez	Glim, Melissa 10/15/1995-10/15/1995 GP-JoAnn Glim	Peters, Chalama 10/29/1988 - 10/4/2005 P-Veronica & Thaddeus Francis	Thomas, Destiny Jean 10/1/1990 - 4/24/1998 F-Craig Thomas B-Braxton S-Justin GP-Augie & Betty Thatcher and Marty & Carol Thomas
Baker-Dixon, Lori Kathleen 10/29/1975 - 4/12/2001 Child - Ryan Spouse - Rusty P - Donna & Ron Budd and Marie & Bill Baker S - Tracy Goodson & Phylicia Baker B - Jamey Baker	Hester, Debbie 10/14/61 - 07/15/98 P - Buddy & Sue Butler	Pippin, Shawn 10/16/1984 - 9/16/2002 M-Anita Pippin	Thompson, Timothy A. 10/27/70 - 01/07/93 P- Bettie & Richard Thompson
Baker-Dxon, Lori Kathleen 10/29/197 - 4/12/2001 P-Ron & Donna Budd and Bill Baker Mother to Ryan & Wife of Rusty Dixon S-Jamey Baker & Tracy Howard	Jennings, Chris 10/04/86 - 04/24/02 P - Charles & Dawn Jennings	Quincannon, Mark Milton 10/5/1981 - 2/17/1996 P - Alana & Joe Quincannon S - Emi I y & Shannon GP - Walter Milton GM - Margaret Quincannon	Townsend, Chris 10/8/1978 - 8/18/2000 P - Walter & Carol Townsend B - Brian
Burger, Teresa 10/26/58 - 07/10/87 M - Cecelia Burger B - Hal & Curt Burger	Kerby, Kristen Elizabeth 10/21/1979 - 3/31/2002 P-Larry & Vickie Kerby S-Kimberley B-Mark	Nathan, Schmedlin 10/27/1968-2/2/1990 M-Rose Schmedlen	Wall, Vilma Joyce 10/07/1949 - 10/19/2001 P-Raul & Nelida Reyes Wife to Gordon, Mother to Chris Wandemberg & Kimberly S-Linda B-Raul, Jr.
Carpenter, Ben 10/3/1965-5/10/1995 P-Carl & Marilyn Carpenter	Knight, Arleen Diane 10/16/1947 - 5/4/2004 P-Arthur & Ethel Fernandez S-Elaine Rogers	Short, Kimberley 10/21/1969 - 2/11/1993 P - Terrance & Sue Short	Wallowicz, Michael (Mikey) Kevin 10/23/1981 - 4/28/1990 P - Jim & Judy Wallowicz B - Jimi Wallowicz GM-Josie Varselona
Cason, Todd 10/28/1968 - 4/12/2003 P-Earl and Kay Cason Child- Spouse-	Daughers-Trina Fuller, Amy Diaz, Katie Tuclula Partner-Darryl Fiorilla	Smith, Clay Daniel 10/24/1967 - 9/30/1996 P-Francia & Chuck Smith B - Jed & Kyle	Welch, Kimberly Michelle 10/24/1971 - 8/28/2003 M-Nancy Welch Child-
Chilson, Candice 10/24/83 - 11/10/01 M - Wendy Chilson Fitzpatrick, Brad R. 10/8/1972 - 10/27/2000 M - Barbara Fitzpatrick	Mercer, Bret 10/5/1988 - 6/25/1992 P - Eddie & Darlene Mercer S - Lindy, Crystal & Kaley GP-Loren & Christine Mercer GP-Beverly Jaudon Quincannon	Snyder, Janna Marie 10/21/1978 - 11/11/1995 GP Marian & Paul Bullard P - Dana & Connie Snyder B - Jeff Snyder	Theriault, George L. 10/13/1951 - 6/1/1996 P - Mae Theriault
Miller, Tyler Lee 10/16/2003 - 10/16/2003 P-Perry and Barbara Miller	Nichols, Shannon Jr. 10/5/1979 - 3/29/2004 M-Terrena Nichols F-Shannon Nichols S-Brandy& Melissa Nichols	Rayburn, Geoffrey (Jeff) Ware 3/2/1970 - 10/15/1995 P-Robert and Sue Moos B-Bobby Moos S-Amy Rayburn GP-Richard & Jeannette Roberson and Josephine Rayburn	Wynne, Adam Charles 10/13/1971 - 4/24/1993 P-Chuck & Gloria Judson S-Lori Wynne Father to Morgan Wynne

October Anniversaries

Baez, Roberto G. 10/30/1985 - 10/3/2005 M-Jeannette Carrasco Baez	Knox, Patricia Lynn 7/27/1964 - 10/21/1997 M - Shelby Jean McClure	Rayburn, Geoffrey (Jeff) Ware 3/2/1970 - 10/15/1995 P-Robert and Sue Moos B-Bobby Moos S-Amy Rayburn GP-Richard & Jeannette Roberson and Josephine Rayburn	Simone, Benjamin Arthur 3/29/1975 - 10/10/1997 P - David & Kathy Simone S - Dawn Figueroa
Baker, Jennifer 12/13/1973 - 10/15/1995 P-Terry & Susan Baker	Kushner, Jonathan 09/13/62 - 10/28/73 P - Lorraine & Gil Kushner B-Andy & David	Schneider, Adam 01/29/71 - 10/23/75 P - Bill & Georgia Schneider	Wall, Vilma Joyce 10/07/1949 - 10/19/2001 P-Raul & Nelida Reyes Wife to Gordon, Mother to Chris Wandemberg & Kimberly S-Linda B-Raul, Jr.
Ferrera, Alex 8/11/1977 - 10/4/1997 P - Nelson & Guisela Ferrera B - Paolo Ferrera GM - Magda Alvarez Aunt - Mirta Diaz Uncle - John Ferrera	Lingefelt, Fiona 12/20/1989 - 10/15/2000 P - Karen & Douglas Lingefelt B-Alexander & Andrew	Shank, Jamie 11/3/1975-10/26/2003 M-Joan Schank	Will, Madison Kathleen "Madi" 9/2/1995 - 10/4/1995 P - Carl & Lisa Will S - Megan & Rachel Will B- Zachary & Seth Will
Fitzpatrick, Brad R. 10/8/1972 - 10/27/2000 M - Barbara Fitzpatrick	Lovett, Sandra Sandy 12/3/1968 - 10/4/1997 M - Barbara Bryant	Milam, Perry 11/4/1974 - 10/01/1994 M - Nancy Milam	
Gardner, Gary Jr. 8/25/1995 - 10/4/2000 P - Gary & Janelle Gardner B - Jacob Gary Gardner	Miller, Tyler Lee 10/16/2003 - 10/16/2003 P-Perry and Barbara Miller	O'Neil, Clark 9/1/1962 - 10/24/2004 P-Larry and Jeanne O'Neil B-Kevin & wife Rene'	
Glim, Melissa 10/15/1995-10/15/1995 GP-JoAnn Glim	Parrish, Tyler Stephen 8/6/1991 - 10/24/1991 P - June & Terry Parrish	Peters, Chalama 10/29/1988 - 10/4/2005 P-Veronica & Thaddeus Francis	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.

If You Had One Day With Someone Who's Gone...

By Mitch Albom

Published: September 17, 2006

PARADE Magazine

Her world shattered in a telephone call. My mother was 15 years old. "Your father is dead," her aunt told her.

Dead? How could he be dead? Hadn't she seen him the night before, when she kissed him goodnight? Hadn't he given her two new words to look up in the dictionary? Dead?

"You're a liar," my mother said.

But it wasn't a lie. Her father, my grandfather, had collapsed that morning from a massive heart attack. No final hugs. No goodbye. Just a phone call. And he was gone.

Have you ever lost someone you love and wanted one more conversation, one more day to make up for the time when you thought they would be here forever? I wrote that sentence as part of a new novel. Only after I finished did I realize that, my whole life, I had wondered this question of my mother.

So, finally, I asked her.

"One more day with my father?" she said. Her voice seemed to tumble back into some strange, misty place. It had been six decades since their last day together. Murray had wanted his little girl, Rhoda, to be a doctor. He had wanted her to stay single and go to medical school. But after his death, my mother had to survive. She had to look after a younger brother and a depressed mother. She finished high school and married the first boy she ever dated. She never finished college.

"I guess, if I saw my father again, I would first apologize for not becoming a doctor," she answered. "But I would say that I became a different kind of doctor, someone who helped the family whenever they had problems."

"My father was my pal, and I would tell him I missed having a pal around the house after he was gone. I would tell him that my mother lived a long life and was comfortable at the end. And I would show him my family—his grandchildren and his great-grandchildren—of which I am the proudest. I hope he'd be proud of me too."

My mother admitted that she cried when she first saw the movie Ghost, where Patrick Swayze "comes back to life" for a few minutes to be with his girlfriend. She couldn't help but wish for time like that with her father. I began to pose this scenario to other people—friends, colleagues, readers. How would they spend a day with a departed loved one? Their responses said a lot about what we long for.

Almost everyone wanted to once again "tell them how much I loved them"—even though these were people they had loved their whole lives on Earth.

Others wanted to relive little things. Michael Carroll, from San Antonio, Tex., wrote that he and his departed father "would head for the racetrack, then off to Dad's favorite hamburger place to eat and chat about old times."

Cathy Koncurat of Bel Air, Md., imagined a reunion with her best friend, who died after mysteriously falling into an icy river. People had always wondered what happened. "But if I had one more day with her, those questions wouldn't be important. Instead, I'd like to spend it the way we did when we were girls—shopping, seeing a movie, getting our hair done."

Some might say, "That's such an ordinary day."

Maybe that's the point.

Rabbi Gerald Wolpe has spent nearly 50 years on the pulpit and is a senior fellow at the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Bioethics. Yet, at some moment every day, he is an 11-year-old boy who lost his dad to a sudden heart attack in 1938.

"My father is a prisoner of my memory," he said. "Would he even recognize me today?" Rabbi Wolpe can still picture the man, a former vaudevillian, taking him to Boston Braves baseball games or singing him a bedtime prayer:

Help me always do the right
Bless me every day and night.

If granted one more day, Rabbi Wolpe said, he "would share the good and the bad. My father needed to know things. For example, as a boy, he threw a snowball at his brother and hit him between the eyes. His brother went blind. My father went to his death feeling guilty for that."

"But we now know his brother suffered an illness that made him susceptible to losing his vision. I would want to say, 'Dad, look. It wasn't your fault.'"

At funerals, Rabbi Wolpe often hears mourners lament missed moments: "I never apologized. My last words were in anger. If only I could have one more chance."

Maury De Young, a pastor in Kentwood, Mich., hears similar things in his church. But De Young can sadly relate. His own son, Derrick, was killed in a car accident a few years ago, at age 16, the night before his big football game. There was no advance notice. No chance for goodbye.

"If I had one more day with him?" De Young said, wistfully. "I'd start it off with a long, long hug. Then we'd go for a walk, maybe to our cottage in the woods."

De Young had gone to those woods after Derrick's death. He'd sat under a tree and wept. His faith had carried him through. And it eases his pain now, he said, "because I know Derrick is in heaven."

Still, there are questions. Derrick's football number was 42. The day after his accident, his team, with heavy hearts, won a playoff game by scoring 42 points. And the next week, the team won the state title by scoring—yes—42 points.

"I'd like to ask my son," De Young whispered, "if he had something to do with that."

We often fantasize about a perfect day—something exotic and far away. But when it comes to those we miss, we desperately want one more familiar meal, even one more argument. What does this teach us? That the ordinary is precious. That the normal day is a treasure.

Think about it. When you haven't seen a loved one in a long time, the first few hours of catching up feel like a giddy gift, don't they? That's the gift we wish for when we can't catch up anymore. That feeling of connection. It could be a bedside chat, a walk in the woods, even a few words from the dictionary.

I asked my mother if she still recalled those two words her father had assigned her on the last night of his life.

"Oh, yes," she said quickly. "They were 'detrimental' and 'inculcate.' I'll never forget them."

Then she sighed, yearning for a day she didn't have and words she never used. And it made me want to savor every day with her even more.

*I would show my father my family.
I hope he'd be proud of me.*

*I'd start it off with a long, long hug.
Then Derrick and I would go for a walk.*

My World Changed

by Sharon Krejci, skrejci@swbell.net

Prior to becoming a bereaved parent, I thought I had at least a glimpse of what parents whose children have died go through. I was an emergency room nurse, and the saddest part of my job was to inform parents that their children had died. After delivering that most devastating news, I would sit and cry with them. When I went home at night, I would think about the parents, pray for them and thank God my two little boys were safe and that my family was intact.

Then, on September 11, 1997, I became a bereaved parent! The police informed me that my son, Andrew, had died in an auto accident. My life seemed to stop. I wasn't sure if I was going to be able to breathe again without my son, let alone survive his death. In the days that followed one thing was for sure; I hadn't had even a glimpse about what happens to a person when their child dies.

As I walk this journey of a bereaved parent, I notice that my whole world changed. My beliefs aren't the same. My priorities aren't the same and my future is changed forever. My whole life had been shattered, and I didn't know where to begin to pick up the pieces or if I even had the will to pick up the pieces. Everyone around me, even though very attentive to me, continued functioning in their lives. I didn't know where I fit in any more. I was alone ... trying to figure out what happened in that split second when they told me Andrew was dead.

There were many things about my new world that I didn't like, and I knew that if I were to survive my son's death, then some things must be changed and it would be up to me to change them.

I noticed that the silence of people who did not mention Andrew's name or his life was deafening to me. There were no stories about him anymore. It felt like "out of sight out of mind." My son had lived; he had been a part of my life. I had dreams for him. He was my future. I was frightened that everyone would forget him, and I needed to hear other people say my Andrew's name. I needed to say his name and to tell stories about him. I could not stand the thought of going through the rest of my life not ever hearing or saying his name again. I knew then that part of my survival was going to involve keeping the memory of my son alive.

I noticed that people removed Andrew's picture and other remembrances of him from their homes, thinking that seeing them was going to upset me, but I needed to know that he was important to other people. Just because he died didn't mean that memories of him couldn't still exist. As part of my healing, I gave framed pictures of Andrew to family and friends to display in their homes. This let them know I needed to have him around me.

I noticed that people would shy away from me, run down the other aisle of the grocery store rather than chance running into me. I needed more than ever for people to come up to me and give me a big hug. Depending on how I felt that day, I would hunt down those people and show them that talking with me was not going to be a painful experience for them and that being a bereaved parent was not contagious.

I noticed that I struggled with something so simple as not being able to sign a birthday or anniversary card from our family, because to do that, I would have to leave Andrew's name off the card. I had signed his name for twenty-three years and there was no way his name could be left off the cards now. I also knew I needed to continue to write his name or people might forget him. I now sign all cards, "With Love and Memories of Andrew." It's funny, I rarely sent Christmas Cards before Andrew died; now I make sure that I send everyone I know a Christmas card so I can write his name and keep his memory alive. I also notice that people send cards back to me with the same message. It's great!

I noticed that people were uncomfortable about what to say to me, so they would avoid mentioning Andrew's life or death for fear they would remind me of him. They thought they would feel badly if they made me cry, and then "what would they do with me?" It was easier for them not to say anything. What these people didn't know is that they didn't have to remind me of Andrew; I think about Andrew every minute of every day. I will never forget his life or his death. Mentioning Andrew's name only made me feel better. After experiencing a few of these encounters, I knew I had to make people understand that it was okay to talk about Andrew, and that if there were tears, that was okay too. I always thanked people for bringing up Andrew's name and remembering him. If tears came, I would explain that they had not made me cry, and I really appreciated them talking to me about Andrew.

I noticed that when I entered the room at my first bereaved parent meeting, I was surprised to find other parents in that room, some smiling, some laughing, and some making small talk. I thought I was really in the wrong place. It was inconceivable to me that I would ever smile or laugh again, and I assumed they must not have loved their child as much as I did. But once the meeting began, I learned that these parents did love their children as much as I loved Andrew and that maybe someday I would smile and laugh again, too. There was a glimmer of hope that I might survive, and they would lead the way.

I noticed that at those meetings, I learned a lot about my new world from parents who had walked the path before me. They brought to my attention the situations I might encounter, and offered suggestions as to how they had dealt with those issues. They didn't theorize grief; they lived it everyday and shared their coping skills with the group. They gave me strength and confidence and validated that I was on the right path in keeping the memory of Andrew alive. They were patient with me. I knew I was in a safe place where people understood me. They wanted to help me get better. They knew something I didn't know at the time—that I was going to survive.

I noticed that some people thought that because my son was twenty-three-years old, somehow he wasn't a child anymore. Even though I was his parent, they assumed the grief would not be as intense as if he were a baby or younger child. I'll never forget a seventy-year-old man coming into the emergency room, dead on arrival, after a heart attack. I was told his mom was on her way to the ER. When his frail, ninety-year-old mom entered the room, she screamed out, "My baby, my baby." She sobbed; she hugged him; she held and rocked him. She kissed him all the while saying, "My baby, my baby." I learned that night that it doesn't matter how old your child was, because the parent-child relationship never ends. That night her baby died. The night Andrew died was the night my baby died. Our children are our children forever.

I noticed that I didn't know what to say when people asked me, "How many children do you have?" This causes me great anxiety when it comes up in a conversation. I answer that I have two boys, and most of the time that is sufficient. If the conversation requires more information, I tell them that my eldest son, Andrew, was a mechanical engineer and he died in an auto accident. My younger son, Elliott, is alive and well and is a graphic designer. I tell them about Andrew, not so they can feel sorry for me, but because I will always be his mom; he will always be my child, and I cannot deny he lived.

I noticed that people compared my loss to their own losses: father dying, grandmother dying and I even had one person compare my loss to their dog dying. I know these people didn't have any intention of hurting me. They were just trying to relate to the worst experience they ever had with death, but I needed to let them know that my father had died, my grandmother and grandfather died, some friends, my aunts & uncles and even my dogs have died. My Andrew's death was like no other experience I have had with death. My life didn't stop with all the other deaths as it did when Andrew died. Even though I grieved the other deaths, they didn't hit the core of my existence the way Andrew's death did. My heart didn't ache every minute of every day of every year, as it has since Andrew died. I would have given my life to let Andrew live, but I wasn't given that choice.

I noticed that the old family traditions at Christmastime, Andrew's birthday and other holidays needed to be changed to include something that kept Andrew's memory alive. We started new traditions. At Christmas I give everyone an ornament that reminds me of Andrew and his life. Friends and family give me Christmas ornaments to hang on our new "Andrew tree" that reminds them of Andrew. We continue to gather on his birthday to celebrate his life. It's not about the ornament, the tree, or his birthday. It's about family and friends taking the time to remember Andrew, to say his name, to let me hear his name, to tell me a funny story they remember. It means so much to me and it has allowed me to continue to survive.

I noticed that even though it's been eight years, Andrew continues to live in the lives of others. What I love most is when my nieces say, "Aunt Sharon, I felt Andrew all around me today, or I heard his song and remembered when..., or when my nephew, comes into the house with a new friend and asks, "Where are the pictures of Andrew; I want to introduce him to my friend." When the little guys say, "I needed to get to first base last week and I asked Andrew to help me, and I made it." Or, when friends send me cards or mementos on his angel date or on his birthday. I will forever need to know that Andrew has not been forgotten. These little mentions of his name let me know that I will survive.

I noticed that after a year or two, people were expecting the "old" Sharon back. They wanted me to move on, to go on with my life, to be happy and to try to forget my son's death. I guess they read one of those psychology or medical books that give bereaved parents one year to recover. I know now, that the writers of those books never consulted a bereaved parent. Society doesn't understand or seem to want to give us the time it takes to get better. I let people know that I was working very hard on my recovery. I didn't want pity; I was not attention-seeking or a martyr. I wanted more than they did to feel like my old self again. I wanted the intense pain to stop. I hated where I was in my life and I hated feeling that bad.

I let them know that I had heard that as the years pass, the pain gets softer and the tears flow less, but I will never fully recover. I will always miss Andrew. I will always grieve his death. He will always be a part of my life and I will never forget him.

My wish for all parents and families whose children have died is that they will find peace and know that their child is with them and will never be forgotten.

I WAS ONCE YOU

By: Colleen Fledderman, Bereaved Mother

I have never met Carlie Brucia's mother, Nicole Brown Simpson's mother, Polly Klass's mother, Princess Dianna's mother, Carolyn Bessette Kennedy's mother or Laci Peterson's mother. But I know them all intimately. I know what dwells in their hearts and souls everyday. Like them I buried my daughter.

What am I now? Am I a daughterless mother? That sounds like an oxymoron, two words that contradict themselves. My eighteen year old daughter, Amy Marie, died on May 25, 2001. My life is forever changed. Burying a daughter is a surreal experience. There are no words in Webster's Dictionary that can explain the grief, the heartache, the pain, the depression or the anguish. Heartbroken is too small a word. The words don't exist because it is not supposed to happen. There are no plausible definitions that could accurately describe "bereaved parent." Groups of words can't be strung together on a typed page to accurately explain the grief. It is impossible to bury your child, yet it happened.

Logically, the factual part of my brain processed the information. The emotional part of my brain argues with the fact everyday. Each and every morning it is still a shock to my entire being! I still peek into her bedroom and expect to find her perfectly made bed a mess of jumbled covers with my daughter snuggled deep inside of them. Parents don't bury children! Headstones read "loving mother," "cherished wife." They don't read "beloved daughter." That is not the natural order of the universe. This was not supposed to happen to me. It always happens to other people. I see reports on the evening news, articles in the newspaper describing horrible events that resulted in the death of someone's child. It isn't supposed to be my child. How can this be? It can't be changed. I can't say, "Amy, want to go to the mall?" "Let's go out to lunch." She can't tell me about her "freaking bio test" that she has to study for all night long.

Things I want to say to her are forever left unspoken. How will I go on? I can't go on, yet I do. My body wakes up each day. I don't ask for this to happen, it just does. My lungs take in air, it is automatic, something that I have no control over. My physical body now controls the course of events in my life. I breath, I eat, I walk, I talk, I put one foot in front of the other. I load the washer and shop for food. I can work. I can teach. I can think on the job about the job. My spiritual being merely exists. It cannot flourish or soar ever again.

When my daughter died, my emotional self was buried with her. When she died, I also buried her future husband to be, my future grandchildren, my daughter's future wedding, my daughter's college graduation ceremony, my holiday, my joy. I buried my best friend. I buried the once perfect life that I knew and lived everyday. Tucked into the corner of Amy's casket is my happy husband. My despondent bereaved husband now lives with me. I buried my fifteen year old daughter's future matron of honor. I buried Renee's future nieces and nephews. There is not enough room in Amy's casket for all the things that died with her. Dreams, hopes, joys, lives, emotions, hearts and souls slipped into that casket with Amy. They occupy every square inch of that place. One day my fifteen year old daughter will be older than her older sister. Can my brain every understand that? Renee will have a nineteenth birthday. Amy did not. How can the impossible happen?

Bereaved parents go on. We go on because we have no other road to travel. It is just we are not "normal" anymore. We used to be you. We used to be the PTO moms and the Girl Scout leaders. We brought lovely frilly fancy holiday dresses for our daughters. We were once carpool moms and soccer moms. We sat at musical recitals and listened to the first melodious squeaks and squawks of their instruments. Forgotten homework assignments were rushed to school for our children. In our heads we planned our beautiful daughter's future wedding. Vision of the bridal gown and the reception danced in our heads. We couldn't wait to have grandchildren and baby-sit and enjoy. We wanted to tell our daughters that their children were just like them. Our daughter's christening gown is carefully preserved and awaiting to be worn by her own children. We wanted to hold our grandchildren's chubby little fingers in our hands and remember holding our daughters chubby little fingers in our hand.

We used to answer the telephone and hear, "Hey mom, what's up?" Now the phone doesn't ring. And it will never ring again with that sweet voice we so desperately would love to hear. Now we are set apart. We are not normal anymore. People choose to walk down a different aisle to ignore us. It is too painful for them to think about our lives. They might take a moment to wonder how we go on. They say, "I can only imagine your pain." That is not true. No one can imagine it unless they live it. We now belong to a new group. We never wanted to be a part of this group, bereaved parents. No one lines up for this membership. We wish our membership would never grow. I am glad you are not me.

From:

DON'T TAKE MY GRIEF AWAY FROM ME

By Doug Manning

Grieving is as natural as crying when you
are hurt, Sleeping when
Or sneezing when your nose itches.
It's nature's way of healing a broken heart.
A cut finger...is numb before it bleeds,
bleeds before it hurts,
hurts until it begins to heal,
forms a scab and itches until finally...The
scab is gone, and a small scar is left where
once there was a wound.
Grief is the deepest wound
you have ever had.
Like a cut finger,
it goes through stages and leaves a scar.

October is Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month

*October 15th is the National
Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day*

There are several ways to remember this. Our group gives out pink or blue ribbons for the parent to wear all month. Also they are asked to light a candle in memory of their baby/ies at 7PM in their time zone to honor their baby.

Why have an Awareness Month?

Because each baby, no matter how small, is special;

Because parents want to remember;

Because this increases awareness of infant loss in our community;

Because society needs to be reminded that each baby, even the tiniest life;

....was wanted;

.....was real,

....is loved.

For more information, please contact Karen Frazier
A.M.E.N.D. at 813-631-9519 or email Ksmfrazier@aol.com
Or, National Share Office, St. Joseph Health Center
300 First Capitol Drive, St. Charles, MO 63301-2893
Phone: 1 (800) 821-6819 or (636) 947-6164

2006 Candlelight Ceremony Participation Form

(Please return by November 20 to have your child's name appear in the Program)

To: BP/USA, P.O. Box 3226, Tampa, FL 33601

I (family) will be attending the service on December 10, and will light a candle in remembrance of my child/children

Number of people attending _____

I will be unable to attend the service but would like to have a candle lit in memory of my child/children. NOTE: Due to time restraints, only picture for parents attending the Ceremony will be shown.. Thank you for your understanding.

I have enclosed a picture for the Presentation.

Please use the picture from last year Presentation.

Child's name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Death Date: _____

Type of Death: _____

Son or Daughter of: _____

Sister or Brother of: _____

Grandson or Granddaughter of: _____

I would like to furnish (food or dessert) _____ for the reception.

I am enclosing a donation in the amount of \$ _____ in honor of my child/children.

Your Name: _____

Address/Zip: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Email Address: _____



2006 Candle Lighting Remembrance Ceremony



Bereaved Parents of the USA, Tampa Bay Chapter will hold its annual Candlelight Remembrance Ceremony at 7 p.m. on Sunday, December 10. The ceremony will be held in The Medical Arts Building (MAB) Auditorium at St. Joseph's Hospital in Tampa.

Please join us in this beautiful tribute to our children. Any bereaved parent or family member and friends are invited to participate. For those of you who are newly bereaved, we encourage you to attend. This service can make handling the holiday season a little easier.

KEEPSAKE VOTIVE

Each family who attends will light a candle in honor of their child and take the candle home to light throughout the holidays. We will be using a new keepsake votive candle this year.

RECEPTION

We will have a reception following the ceremony and we invite you to bring, if possible, your child's favorite food (i.e. dessert, snack, sandwiches, etc.) to share with others.

PICTURE PRESENTATION

A Special Slide Presentation of our beautiful Children! If you are planning to attend our Candle Light Ceremony, mail a picture of your child, and include their full name as you want it displayed on the slide presentation and also the birth and death dates, to:

**Dave & Kathy Simone
1230 Carrie Wood Drive,
Valrico, FL 33594**

NOTE: Due to time restraints, only picture of children whose parents are attending the Ceremony will be shown.. Thank you for your understanding.

Picture should be of your deceased child only. If your child's picture was included last year or in any of the National Gathering closing ceremonies or Chapter Newsletters and you want to use the same photo, just let Dave and Kathy know that. Pictures mailed in will be returned to you at the Candle Light Service-please pick them up at the registration desk. You can scan the picture yourself and email to Dave Simone at : davesimone@verizon.net

Any questions please call Dave or Kathy Simone at 653-1717.

BUTTONS

We have the equipment to make picture buttons. Bring a picture no smaller than 3" x 5". Buttons are round and measure approximately 2.25" in diameter. Cost per button is only \$2.00

BOUTIQUE

There will be an Angel/Butterfly Boutique to purchase holiday items or gifts. All items are donated and all proceeds benefit your local BP/USA Chapter. To donate items, please call Beverley Hurley 813-832-3175!

PARTICIPATION FORM

For planning purposes, or to ensure your child's name appears in our candle lighting program, or if you wish to have a candle lit for your child in your absence, please complete and submit the Form above and send it in before November 20 to:

**BP/USA Tampa Bay Chapter
P.O. Box 3226
Tampa, FL 33601-3226**

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.



Gift Night-November Meetings

At our November Meetings, Plan to share a special Christmas story or memory about your child and if you can handle it, purchase a gift that you would have bought for your child - please purchase gifts fitting for ages from infant to 15 years old. All gifts will be donated to a local children's charity. (This is strictly voluntary-please do not wrap gifts!)



The Bereaved Parents of the USA
P.O. Box 156
Gibsonton, FL 33534

October 2006

POSTMASTER - Dated Material

Please do not delay.



HOPE

By: Margaret Gerner, Bereaved Mother and Bereaved Grandmother; St. Louis, MO

I sat down regularly to read the many newsletters that I receive from the chapters across the country. Most of the time there were articles in them that made me cry a little.

I read about children who are dead and parents who were hurting, but never did I come away from those reading sessions depressed.

I came away with hope, hope that the searing torment does lessen and eventually give way to warm, loving memories of our child.

When we are in the deepest throes of our grief, when our beloved child has just recently been snatched from life by a tragic accident or succumbed to a fatal illness, or died in some other way, can we believe we can ever be happy again? When to simply get up in the morning is a major accomplishment, can we believe that we will ever be able to function with enthusiasm or purpose?

When every thought of our children brings excruciating pain, can we believe that we will someday be able to think of him/her and smile? I know it is hard to believe that this will ever happen, but it will.

Words used in defining HOPE are expect, trust, anticipate, wish, desire and confident. These are the key words.

If we expect, trust and anticipate feeling better, we will in time.

If we wish it and are confident, the day will come when we will feel better. Of course, it doesn't just happen. It takes long hard grief work. It takes many painful hours of allowing ourselves to go through our grief.

It takes patience and it takes time. But know you will come to the light at the end of the tunnel.

Know that there is hope. Know that many many bereaved parents who have been in the same painful place that you are now have found life meaningful again.

Know that you will too.

