

ST. LOUIS CHAPTER
BEREAVED PARENTS U.S.A.
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ST. LOUIS, MO 63141

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St. Louis Chapter Newsletter

Bereaved Parents USA

January • February 2010

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Promise to Sameer

—Tara Talwar

Thank you for offering me this opportunity to speak at tonight's candlelight ceremony. My life as I knew it ended in a monumental year- we had been married 25 years, had a child going to his dream college, one of us would turn 50 and our youngest would turn 16 and remain 16 forever.

Sameer was a bundle of energy, a kid with charm and "kala". Kala is an Indian term and stands for that indefinable description of energy, pep, charm and an exhilarating enjoyment of life. He had a quick repartee and a warming smile, he was the one who skated up a storm, saving his money for a skate board and practicing for hours till he was better at it. He took to heart a gym teacher's advice on wrestling and jumped into it willingly and with enthusiasm winning the rookie silver in 7th grade. He wanted to be a basketball player and a football player and had dreams of doing well academically and going to a great college. He was an avid follower of the sports and music - the drums were his passion. His time capsule letter written in 7th grade said that he would grow to be 6 ft. 2 in. and weigh 180 lb., that he would be bigger at 18 but would remain a child at heart.

Little did he know that it would be a prophetic term as we would forever remember him as a child or a man-child. He was one who was inches taller than me, needed to shave at times and yet wanted spaghetti and meatballs at 10 pm at night and played the Beatles

with abandon at 1 am in the morning. His love of life and his involvement in his activities be it playing the drums, practicing football catches, shooting baskets and pouring out his frustration on a punching bag were an integral part of the child we lost. Sameer means wind- it rages from a soft summer breeze with leaves stirring in the spring to the gusts that herald autumnal storms. He came into this world in a hurry- all of 25 minutes after we left home for the hospital and left this world in a hurry.

He was a 10th grader and was a bundle of energy and as I had mentioned we were no strangers to awakening at all odd hours to the sound of the piano being

"Let us all go forward and remind everyone that we should compose each day as we would like the rest of our lives to proceed and remember that we are all eminently capable of being stronger than the strongest and braver than the bravest."

played as he tried to figure out how the drum beats would go. The last song he was practicing was one by the band "Cold Play". (continued pg 2) ▶

Bereaved Parents of the USA 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 BP/USA to provide a haven where all bereaved families can meet and share our grief journeys. We attend monthly gatherings whenever we can and for as long as we believe necessary. We share our fears, confusions, 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, what our color

or our affluence is 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.



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These lyrics translate to "God give me style and give me grace, God put a smile upon my face."

I often think that this is a motto for me to live the rest of my life- a life as a Bereaved Parent. As parents we are the backbone of the family with a rigid steel core and a molten rod of steel which carries us through life. It melts when our child cuddles up to us trustingly and yet braces us for the unkindest cut of all. We walk erect and yet bonelessly and shiver in the warmth of summer. The adrenaline that shocked our system into a stupor unable to believe in the loss of a precious bundle of energy eventually makes us take notice of the world around us. We brace ourselves for the iciness of loss and come face to face with a world of sympathy and empathy while remaining somewhat detached from everything around. The molten steel twines itself around each breath giving us the strength to face the world and try and remember our child for all that they stood for. We have to put each foot in front of the other and go forward in a role we never wanted and can never shed for the rest of our lives.

Sameer was a passenger in a car driven by a 16 year old friend. They were at a sweet sixteen party where the parents retired for the night and the partygoers indulged in Captain Morgan and Beer. At close to curfew they headed out with the driver hurrying to meet his curfew and rushing the talkative Sameer whose last words were to the effect of "What are you doing Dude?" The Ford explorer was thought to have been going 52 miles per hour while still in the driveway, with the revving of the engine waking up neighbors. It rolled before they entered the subdivision street and Sameer was ejected and died at the hospital two hours later. The driver failed his field sobriety test and three hours later tested much higher than the limit for underage drivers in Missouri. Sameer may never have had the time to snap his seatbelt and it only took a handful of seconds to change everyone's lives.

Since then I have carried the mental image of this dynamic child who jumped for the stars and keep reminding myself that he would not have wanted me to roll up into a ball of depression and that he would want to me to go ahead. He was the one who picked up the garden snake and helped it to a green

patch of grass so that it would not get hurt and he was one with ambition and dreams even if it was to be a rock star. He would want me to go out and spread a message. He was too young to die and yet we open the newspaper daily and read about other teenagers who die in similar circumstances.

The teen fatality rate is much higher than for experienced drivers and inexperience and peer pressure often result in a chain of events culminating in tragedy. I have met legislators who have felt that personal freedom, the ability to date and socialize are more important than restrictions placed on teen drivers. We made a Promise to Sameer and vowed to spread the word for safe driving practices and the assessment of destructive decisions. I have spoken about safe driving cultures at a drivers program we started through a local hospital, and addressed teens at summer driving camps and pre-prom MADD sponsored events. Even a single passenger in a car driven by a new driver more than doubles the accident rate with fatalities occurring at the witching hour after midnight. Some States have restricted teens to no passengers for the first 6 months and only one till age 18 and yet others restrict new drivers to daylight hours and school events. A primary seat belt law has saved innumerable laws in other states and Missouri and Missourians have resisted this measure.

Teenagers believe that they are invincible and yet many more die every year in car accidents, a number exceeding yearly deaths in Iraq and they continue to die and get injured in alarming numbers.

I have discussed facts such as the use of a cell phone to talk and to text while driving, this has been shown to be more detrimental than being under the influence and yet hundreds of teens continue to do so ,because, laws which mandate seat belts and no texting for minors only serve to raise the need to rebel as the teens are aware that there is no bite to these restrictions. Personal freedom is a word much touted by many who feel that the need to protect oneself and others should not be mandated by others. As a mother I think that a primary seat belt stop law and a generalized cell phone usage ban would save a generation that will one day be productive members of society and our future parents and grandparents. This is the normal cycle of life and we need to work

Meeting Times & Places

ARNOLD-IMPERIAL

Please see So. County Fenton Group

BOWLING GREEN

(3rd Thursday, 7-9 PM)
Prairie Edge Garden Center,
18011 Business 161 S.
Bowling Green, MO 63334
Fac: Cindy Morris (636)462-9961
Bowling Green's SIBLING GROUP
(Meet time same as Bowling Green)
Fac: Wendy Koch (573)822-6123

TROY, MO Group

(2nd Tuesday, 7 PM)
Ingersoll Chapel in Troy
Fac: Cindy Morris (636)462-9961
Troy's SIBLING GROUP
(Meets same time as Troy)

ST. PETERS

(1st Thursday, 7:00 PM)
Knights of Columbus Hall
5701 Hwy N, Cottleville MO
Fac: Cindy Morris (636)462-9961
Greg Klocke 636-441-5304
St. Peters' SIBLING GROUP
(Meets same time as St Peters)

Tri-County Chapter

(2nd Thursday)
First Baptist Church
402 North Missouri St
Potosi, MO 63664
Fac: Brenda Wilson (573)438-4559

JEFFERSON COUNTY, SOUTH

(1st Thursday, 7 PM)
St Rose Catholic Church,
Miller & 3rd St
Desoto, MO
Facs: Ginny Kamp (636)586-8559
Co: Debbie Larson

SOUTH COUNTY Fenton

(2nd & 4th Monday, 7 PM)
Abiding Savior Lutheran Church
4355 Butler Hill Rd.
St. Louis, Mo 63128
Fac: Kathy Myers (636)343-5262
Co: Darla McGuire (636)671-0916

WASHINGTON MO Group

(3rd Tues, 7 PM
every other Month)
First Baptist Church (use East door)
11E. 14th St. Washington, MO
Fac: Betty Werner (636)3904422

NORTH COUNTY Group

(3rd Saturday, 9:30 AM)
Coldwell Banker
Gundaker Bldg (rear)
2402 North Hwy 67
Fac: Pat Ryan (314)605-3949

 Volunteer interpreter for hearing impaired, call ahead!

WEST COUNTY Group

(4th Tues, 7 PM)
Shaare Emeth Congregation,
11645 Ladue (Ballas & Ladue)
MO 63141
Fac: Judy Ruby (314)994-1996



Newsletter Submissions:

Cut off date for March • April issue is March 10th

Send your submission to:

Jamie Ryan
6309 Washington Ave
St. Louis, MO 63130

Include a self addressed stamped envelope, please make checks payable to BPUSA Thankyou!

BPUSA St L Chapter's

Business Meeting: Jan 9
Facilitators Meet: Feb 13
Saturdays @ 9:00 AM
Creve Coeur Gov't Center
Room #1

300 N. New Ballas Road
All interested in how our chapter operates are welcome. **Questions?**

Call: Sharon Krejci
(636) 532-0033

ADDITIONAL MEETINGS

Parents of Murdered Children:

Meetings: 3rd Tues 7:30 p.m.
St Alexius Hospital
3933 S Broadway
Mata Weber (618) 972-0429
Butch Hartmann
(314) 487-8989

LIFE CRISIS CENTER:

(Survivors of Suicide)
2650 Olive St,
St. Louis, MO 63103
Meetings: Weds 7:00 p.m.
(314) 647-3100

P.A.L.S. (Parents affected by the loss of a child by suicide)

Meetings: 2nd Tues 7:00 p.m.
4th Sat at 10:30 a.m.
St Lukes Hospital (141 & 40)
St. Louis, MO
(314) 853-7925

GHOSTS OF MEMORY:

Integrating Our Loss Through Remembering

—David Roberts, LMSW, CASAC is a bereaved parent, whose daughter Jeannine Marie died on 3/1/03 of a rare form of cancer, at the age of 18. Roberts, D., Oct 10, 2009. Retrieved from <http://opentohope.com>.

I recently read a book called: *Ghost Rider: Travels on the Healing Road*, by Neil Peart. He is the lyricist and world renowned drummer for the Canadian rock band, Rush. His daughter Selena, age 19, died on August 10, 1997, as a result of a car accident and his common-law wife, Jackie died on June 20, 1998, of cancer. Peart became a bereaved parent and a young widower in the space of 10 months.

One year after the death of his daughter, he embarked on a 55,000-mile, fourteen-month journey on his motorcycle across Canada, the United States and Mexico. He rode “to try to figure out what kind of person I was going to be, and what kind of world I was going to live in.” (Peart, 2002. Pg 10). The book describes his travels, grief experiences and the intense emotional pain associated with constantly reliving his losses.

Peart’s personal tragedies resulted in a four-year hiatus from Rush. When he returned, he wrote the lyrics to an album called “Vapor Trails.” In his book, he described Vapor Trails as “an off-handed reference” to the ghosts of memory.

Following the completion of his book, I began to give some thought to the specific ghosts of memory that we experience and the roles that they play in our grief journeys as bereaved parents.

This is what I came up with:

1. **Memories of a life that no longer apply:** Before Jeannine was diagnosed with cancer, I was preparing to graduate from SUNY Albany with a masters in social work, do private practice part-time and go on with my life as I knew it. After she died, memories associated with school and dreams of my past life were foreign to me and contributed to the disorientation and alienation that I experienced early in my grief. These types of memories challenged me to redefine my assumptions about life and my worldview.
2. **Memories of our loved ones that are unique to us:** A friend of mine who is also a bereaved parent recently recalled that she cried because she didn’t remember an aspect of her son’s death the way that her husband remembered it. She came to the conclusion that it is more important to remember the essence of our children, and that our memories are a product of our own creations.
3. **Memories of the promise of a future:** When my youngest son graduated from high school in 2006 (three years after Jeannine died), the school band played “I Hope You Dance,” by Lee Ann Womack. This song was played as a tribute to Jeannine’s life at her funeral mass. In the midst of my sadness, I saw a brief vision of Jeannine as a child, smiling and dancing under a blue sky. I interpreted this memory to mean that Jeannine was ok, and that I was going to be ok in the aftermath of the worst loss of my life.

I believe that we can use memories of our past, present and future to develop an essence of our child that we can celebrate and integrate into our own lives and to find meaning and hope in our forever changed worlds.

harder at preserving the gossamer thread which can snap in seconds.

It only takes a second to change someone’s life for the better or the worse and I shudder with each new broadcast about fatalities related to speeding, drivers being ejected from their cars and those that injure or maim others while under the influence of. Why is it that alcohol and drug related ailments are still rampant and why does society turn a blind eye to this?

I propose that each of us call upon our inner reserves and spread the word for careful living where everyone lives well, buckles up, does not drink and drive and remembers that drugs leach life out of the best of us. Look each other in the eye and reinforce the need to proceed in a calculated manner with willpower and faith guiding ones steps. Ultimately we control our lives and in doing so hold the lives of our near and dear in the cupped palms of our love and support. Let us all go forward and remind everyone that we should compose each day as we would like the rest of our lives to proceed and remember that we are all eminently capable of being stronger than the strongest and braver than the bravest.

Hindu philosophy states that there are two fixed points in our lives and the day we were born and the day we died are etched in stone. The quality of our lives and our daily acts will define our lives and Hinduism propagates living each day with a goodness of heart and mind in order to attain salvation. We all hold the happiness of others in the palm our hands and each contact and each interaction weaves itself into the fabric of our lives. As bereaved parents we have a missing piece of the puzzle and need to reweave the fabric of our lives. We each have the capacity to reach out to others with our stories and our message may trigger a reaction which could save a life and we would never know.

We are bereaved parents who have faced the hardest and cruelest cut of all. Let us all garner this strength of molten steel and fashion it into a message that safe and healthy living, both mental and physical, will be the blueprint for the future. We no longer can change the events which have formed us but can ensure that

another child or parent heeds our message and we may never know if our efforts bear fruit. Events which never occur will be the rewards of our labor and hard work.

The events of March 16, 2006 have left a driver who will remember his actions in the death of his best friend, others who will regret their role in the event and yet others will remember their rationale of “Adults leaving restaurants or parties do this every day.” Logical it is not and many tomorrows are wasted by regretting the actions of the past. My message to every one and especially the teenagers is simple. It asks for every seat belt to be on before we turn on cars and for us to not speed and not drink and drive. That was my Promise to Sameer.

“As bereaved parents we have a missing piece of the puzzle and need to reweave the fabric of our lives.”

Sameer was lost because of teenage attitudes to reckless behavior and driving under the influence of alcohol. I am certain that many of you here tonight can relate to that. However, I know that others here lost their children due to many other causes. My message to you is this: Find a cause, a reason, or a way to make something good come from your own tragedy. Help someone else through their grief or do something to help prevent another parent from knowing our pain. Whatever you do, do it in honor of your child. Do it because that is what your child would have wanted from you.

I would end with this quotation and remind all of us to tap into our inner strengths to make this a better place to live and to remember our children for the joy, love and laughter that they symbolize .

“Where do we go nobody knows
Don’t ever say you’re on your way down, when
God gave you style and gave you grace
And put a smile upon your face, oh yeah” . ■

Margaret's

CORNER *By* Margaret Gerner, MSW

TAKING STOCK

*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 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 choose to be on the way to healing 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.***LET US NOT WASTE THIS NEW YEAR! ■*

Have Others Forgotten?

Infant & Toddler

Page

—Clara Hinton, March 30, 2003

The first several weeks following the death of a child are usually filled with lots of emotional grief support. Friends drop by your home with food. Cards arrive daily. Phone calls of encouragement come quite often. Then, almost as suddenly as the support began, it ends. Friends become scarce, and when they are around, they don't know what to say so they often remain silent. As a parent, it feels like everyone has forgotten your child, and that leaves a parent with a lonely, empty feeling.

The death of a child makes others feel very uncomfortable. Friends and family members alike often are afraid to mention the name of the deceased child for fear of bringing up sad memories to the parents. What others fail to realize is that it is very healing for parents to hear the name of their child spoken, as well as to hear stories that bring warm memories to mind. Parents long to hear about their child from others. Fond remembrances are comforting and aid in healing.

As a parent, it often helps to talk about your child to others, breaking the ice of being uncomfortable. Remind others that you love to hear your child's name spoken in a warm way. It will often be up to you to lead the way with talking about your child. Once you make the effort, others will know that they, too, have permission to talk about times spent with your child. They will find that it's healing to them to talk about your child, too. The bond of friendship you share will become even stronger as you walk through this journey of grief hand-in-hand.

Be prepared for the few who might suggest that you should be ready to "move on" with your life, though. Many simply will not understand that your loss

presents a continuing empty void that needs attention. The absence of support leads a parent to believe that their precious child has been forgotten. Actually, others have not forgotten, but they might feel that enough time has elapsed to provide healing. What most people don't understand is that grief, while it does get better, is a slow, difficult journey that takes lots of time and hard work.

How can a parent cope when others are not providing adequate support? It's a great idea to find a local support group, if at all possible. Face-to-face support can be the one thing that keeps a parent going during those lonely, dark moments. It helps to find a group where you can talk freely about your feelings, vent openly without fear of someone making you feel inadequate, and where you can mention your child's name without being made to feel uncomfortable.

When it seems like others have forgotten, bring your child's memory alive by talking about past experiences. Invite some of your child's friends to your home and plan something like an informal get together and perhaps have your child's friends help you begin a memory book or some sort of scrap book. An activity like this can be quite healing to all involved.

Others have a tendency to forget special days, anniversaries, and occasions such as your child's birthday. Rather than waiting for others to send a card, plan a meal and something such as a balloon release, candle lighting, or planting of a flower or tree in memory of your child. Ask your friends and family members to join you for these special occasions for additional support.

Have others forgotten? Not always. Most times they are afraid to bring up memories for fear of adding more pain. When you openly remember your child, so will others. And, you will soon have a built-in support system that can carry you through the difficult days into healing, when we are hurting and so terribly depressed

MY THOUGHTS ON

MRS. ABRAHAM LINCOLN

—Mary LaTour, Dallas, TX

Abraham Lincoln has always been my most admired and respected figure in the history of our country. After standing in front of his statue at the Lincoln Memorial, no one could ever forget the terrible marked sadness in his face, his forlorn and melancholy attitude. I have been picking up from other chapter newsletters the many pieces of prose and poetry attributed to Lincoln, which speak so poignantly of grief, and I have researched the Lincoln life. It is for his wife, Mary, for whom I cringe now when I read how life dealt with her. Washington gossip circles referred to her “mental state”, that she was “deranged” and “eccentric”. The Lincoln’s lost their second son, Edward, almost 4, in February 1850. Their third son Willie was born in December of that year and died in February 1862 at the age of 11. And then, the tragedy of tragedies. In April, President Lincoln was assassinated in front of Mrs. Lincoln’s eyes...her grief must have been worse than inconsolable. How could life deal such a terrible fate to one woman? How could any one of us deal with such multiple tragedies? We know how easy it is to feel as if we are “going crazy” and how common that feeling is. To share that feeling with friends is more than wonderful...to be assured that it is common, to learn and understand from other bereaved parents why we feel that way, and that it will pass helps immeasurably. But tragedy stalked Mary Lincoln’s footsteps, for not quite six years later, her son Tad was killed at 18 in January 1871. History books do not say, but I pray that Mrs. Lincoln had ONE compassionate friend who understood her grief over the death of her three sons and her husband. One friend wrote of her: “Poor Mrs. Lincoln. She has been a deranged person.” Yes, of that I am sure. And then I thank God for compassionite friends. ■

Telephone Friends

Accident, Automobile:

Katie VerHagen (314) 576-5018
Steve Welch (636) 561-2438

Accident, Non Vehicular:

Maureen & Chuck McDermott (636) 227-6931

Adult Sibling:

Mark VerHagen (314) 726-5300
Traci Morlock (636) 332-1311

Drugs or Alcohol:

Patrick Dodd (314) 575-4178

Grandparent:

Margaret Gerner (636) 978-2368

Child with Disability:

Lois Brockmeyer (314) 843-8391

Illness, Short Term:

Jean & Art Taylor (314) 725-2412

Illinois Contact:

Linda Moffatt (618) 243-6558

Jefferson County Contact:

Sandy Brungardt (314) 954-2410

Murder:

Mata Weber (618) 972-0429
Butch Hartmann (314) 487-8989

Only Child:

Mary Murphy (314) 822-7448

Suicide:

Sandy Curran (314) 647-2863

Single Parent:

Mary Murphy (314) 822-7448



“The hurt never goes away.
We never forget.
We never get over it.
We don’t want to.

We hurt so much because we loved so much.
But the focus on death and the event fades and the
warmth of good memories replaces it.”

—Richard E., Tyler, TX

St. Louis Bulletin Board



All Aboard!

Newsletter is going green & digital! Please send Sharon, skrejci@swbell.net your email address.

BPUSA StL’s commitment is to provide space in our newsletter for our parents and families to communicate. Printed in your newsletter are private expressions of writers. We offer the writings for your reflection. Sometimes observing nature or establishing routines signal solace to the writer. Often writers turn to religion or spirituality for comfort and guidance.

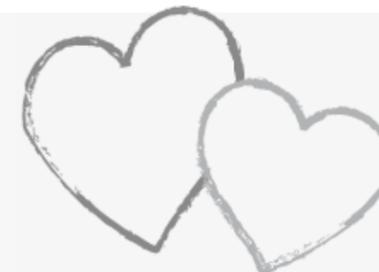
BPUSA StL shares these insights not only for your contemplation but also to acknowledge our community’s many, rich sources for strength and hope.

WWW

Be a...Web Sponsor for a \$20 donation to BPUSA/STL your child will be featured on our home page for 1 month. Includes a scrolling message and your child’s picture (25 words or fewer).

Create a...Web Memorial at the “Meet Our Children” section. The cost is a \$25 donation. Your child’s name will appear below your group as a link to their page.

Interested, contact: Barb Blanton at our website or barb_blanton@yahoo.com. With your donation, specify whether you want to sponsor or to add to the web memorial.



Book & Movie Review

UP PIXAR STUDIOS & DISNEY
Up is storytelling at its best that speaks directly to the bereaved! Carl is a widower whose heart has hardened; he is most definitely stuck in grief. Circumstances “lift” him and we begin a journey that will open his heart & yours. ■

ROSES IN DECEMBER

—Marilyn Heavilin
With deep compassion and empathy, Marilyn Heavilin reaches out to help those who are grieving find God’s comfort. Having lost three sons, she knows the

tremendous sorrows and struggles that come with the death of a loved one. This book will help you understand the grieving process, support family members, give insight into sibling grief, and maintain your marriage during this difficult time. ■

BACK STEPS

—Janice Lopez, Sacramento Valley

I was busy today rushing around the office working on a project, when a new staff member saw your photo on my desk. She picked up the frame and gazed at your face. She raised her head and asked, "Is this your son?" I said, "Yes and I paused... I knew it was coming— I held my breath. She looked at me with the frame still in her hands and asked casually, "Where does he go to school?" Her face was innocent. Her eyes searched my face. Time stood still as my heart sank...

Because I knew I had to tell "the" story, and I wondered if I could say the truth without breaking down. Nine years and I still cry at the question. I knew I had to sum up in a brief moment the pain, the horror, the loneliness of living without you.

I guess sometimes I think I'm normal. I have pictures on my desk like everyone else ... I trick myself into thinking my life is moving on, when actually a large part of my life stopped— The day you were killed. Nine years... and still counting... ■



Grief is Like a Jigsaw Puzzle

Grief is a smorgasbord where you go down the line picking a little of this and a little of that.

Grief is like a jigsaw puzzle, some people get all the edge pieces together first and work from the outside in. Others dump everything out on the table at once and dive right into the middle. Some never open the box at all, they just look at the picture on the lid and wonder why what's inside doesn't match or make sense.

You meet a lot of people when you start a jigsaw puzzle. Some are full of advice, or they may try to make the puzzle look the way it ought to be instead of the way it is.

But, once in a while, you meet someone who shares their own finished puzzle and helps you make sense of yours. Then you find it is not as hard as before. Some of the pieces fit together more easily, and you sigh with relief—and remember. ■

From Suicide Bereavement Support, SW Washington & NW Oregon, July 1998

REFLECTIONS OF A SISTER

—Traci Morlock, Bereaved Parents USA

January 24, 2002 will mark my brother, Sean's, eighth angel year. How could it be so long? Some days it seems that Sean just died. Other days it seems as though it has been an eternity. Each December, I start thinking, "Well, one month and it will be__ years since Sean died." When I was younger I thought that time passed so slowly. When did time start speeding up?

In December this past year, my husband, my daughter, and I were putting up Christmas decorations. I had been pretty crabby all day. After we were finished putting them up, I apologized to them for being so crabby. They both looked at each other and then looked at me. My husband said, "It's okay. You're crabby every year at this time." He later told me that this year wasn't as bad as years past. I guess I never realized it before. You would think that with the decorations and the Christmas music playing, I could get into the Christmas spirit a little more. I hate to be a crab, but it seems that at Christmas all I can think about is what is coming in January. From my husband's comment, I think I am doing a little better though. For the first year since we've been married, my husband and my daughter went with me to the candlelight. I was surprised at the comfort I felt from them just being there.

In the eight years since Sean's death, I find myself getting a little more mellow over the years. I have always been a pretty sensitive and intense person, but within the last couple of years, I have been standing back and examining myself. Oh, don't get me wrong, I still have plenty of

Sibling Page



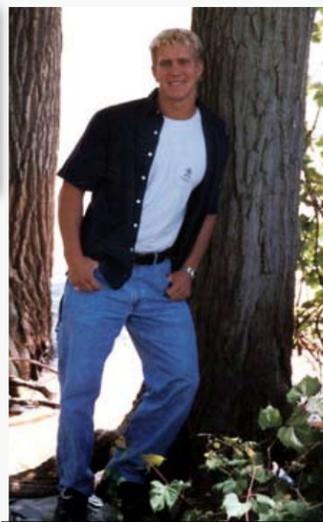
days where I overreact to every little thing, but it is less frequent. Lately at work, I have had the attitude that I'll get it done and I don't need to stress over it. At home, I have rules for my daughter, but if she wants to cuddle for a little longer or play for five more minutes, I let her. I realize that family is more important than work.

I still worry. Since the September 11th attacks, I find myself being more tolerant of others. I'm sure that September 11th affected everyone in a different way. I found myself grieving for those families. I heard a story about a brother that was in the World Trade Center. His sister was on the first plane that hit the Trade Center. He lived, she died. I found myself thinking of that January day in 1994. I remembered the pain I felt, the feeling of loss. I remembered the questions that went through my mind. Why him and not me? I am sure that brother and all of the other siblings and parents who lost loved ones that day asked that question. I'm sure we all have.

I hope that I have learned a lot since Sean's death. I know that I have learned to appreciate what I have, to always tell everyone that I love and care about how I feel, and to tolerate and have patience with others. I hope for everyone that they find peace in the New Year. Peace until next time. ■

love gifts, donations received

In Memory of
Tommy Radesh
Love, Mom



In Memory of
Colin Hopson
Love,
—Mom & Dad



In Memory of
Ricky Lee Douthit
Love, Mom



In Memory of
Harrison Struttman
—Terrill & Michel Struttman



In Memory of
Michael Yackly
—Tonya and James Goforth



In Memory of
Dan Golterman
Love, Mom

In Memory of
Natalie Mehlman
—Julie Ford

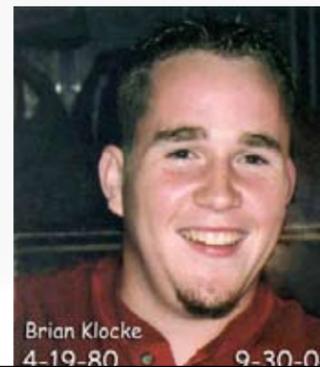
In Memory of
Jeffrey Morris
—BPUSA StL



In Memory of
Natalie Louise Astorino
—Sara Cunningham



In Memory of
Timothy Horrell
June 29, 1988—October 18, 1988
—BPUSA StL



In Memory of
Brian Klocke
April 19, 1980—October 30, 2004
—Greg Klocke

In Memory of
Tracy Hanley Wright
Love, Mom
—Celen Hanley



In Memory of
Dolores Iovaldi
—Tom & Pat Castro

In Memory of
Antonio Bozeman & Elisha Cannon
—Mom

In Memory of
Andrew Schwach
Love Mom & Dad
—Gene & Susan Schwach

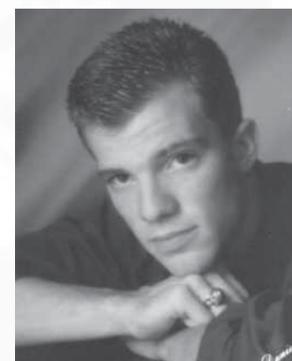
In Memory of
Shawn P. Leach
Love,
—Rich & Mary Leach



In Memory of
Brett Alan Blanton
July 15, 1973 ~ August 31, 2000
Love, Mom
—Barb & Ron Blanton



In Memory of
Dylan Murphy
Oct 8, 1984—August 2, 1991
—Mary Murphy



In Memory of
Jeff Ryan
October 3, 1974—July 24, 1999
much love from your family
—Pat Ryan



In Memory of
Timothy Jenkins
Love,
—Tim and Diane Jenkins



In Memory of
Andrew Bryan Krejci
Love Mom & Dad
—Sharon & Wayne Krejci



In Memory of
William Bousman
Love Mom & Dad
—The Bousmans

love gifts, donations received

What Is A Love Gift?

It is a donation made in your child's memory to **BP/USA**. We are self-supporting organization. Our St Louis Chapter runs entirely with volunteer staffers. For that reason fund raising efforts and donations like "Love Gifts" and "Golfing for Angels" pay all our expenses.

If you'd like to have your child's photo printed and **BP/USA StL** doesn't have a picture on file please send a photo along with a self addressed stamped envelope to:

Jamie Ryan, 6309 Washington Ave, St Louis, MO 63130
—Thank you!





In Memory of
Michael Garrison
Love,
—Millard & Christine Garrison



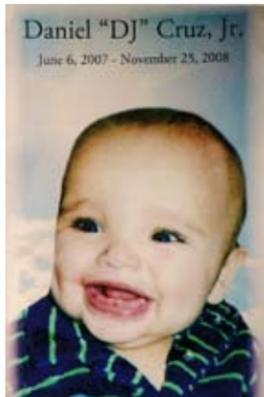
In Memory Of
Jennifer Ameli Daugherty
You remain in our hearts forever
—James & Jeannette Daugherty



In Memory of
Paul Najee Daniels
Love,
—Gladys Daniels



In Memory of
Tony Arnold
Love, your Aunt



In Memory Of
Daniel "DJ" Cruz, Jr.
We love you,
—James & Jeannette Daugherty

In Memory of
Ricky Charles Wrobel
Love, Mom



In Memory of
Christopher M. Meyer
Love,
—Darlene & Stephen Meyer



In Memory of
Brian Ruby
Love Mom & Dad
—Scott & Judy Ruby



In Memory of
Jorge Tumialan
August 11, 1975—
October 19, 2001
We love & miss you, Mami & Papi
—Luis Tumialan

The Bereaved Parents of the USA

2010
National Gathering
*"Rock of Hope,
River of Healing"*

Join us in the natural state of Arkansas
July 9-11, 2010, Little Rock, AR

Little Rock's Gathering Committee
is hard at work.

Start making plans NOW!

*Be part of a
unique time of
inspiration and healing.*



"Each of us has the same opportunities now as we had before. We can permit time to simply pass, or we can work to mold its passage into constructive growth."

—Don Hackett

I Won't 'Should' on Myself

—Jean Corley Lacy

SHOULD- I will not SHOULD on myself today!
I won't let others SHOULD on me today either!

Immediately after my daughter Julie, died, I was bombarded on all sides with lots of SHOULD! "You SHOULD keep a stiff upper lip and be strong for the rest of the family." "You SHOULD not dwell on it." "You SHOULD just accept it as God's will. He knows best.

You SHOULD not cry about it." "Julie left a 22 month-old daughter. You SHOULD live for Autumn." "You have three other children. You SHOULD live for them."

"You SHOULD not keep her paintings and photographs out in plain sight as a constant reminder."

"Above all, you SHOULD keep busy. If you kept as busy as I do, you wouldn't have any trouble sleeping. You SHOULD work in the yard, work in the garden, work in the house, but keep busy!"

"You SHOULD go back to work." "It was fate. It was supposed to happen. You SHOULD just accept her death and try to forget about it."

"There are many deaths everyday. You SHOULD think about all the people killed in wars, earthquakes, floods, airplane crashes, and all kinds of natural disasters and accidents."

"You SHOULD think about Rose Kennedy, who has lost three sons. And Anne Lindberg, whose baby son was kidnapped and murdered. They survived."

"You SHOULD not say such things; you SHOULD not even think them." ■