



**BEREAVED
PARENTS
of the USA**

A JOURNEY TOGETHER

NATIONAL NEWSLETTER OF THE BEREAVED PARENTS OF THE USA



Volume XX No. 3
Summer 2015

We, as bereaved parents, help grieving parents and families rebuild their lives following the death of a child.

LIFE GOES ON

When asked, "What is the most important thing you have learned about life?" Frost replied, "Life goes on." As bereaved parents it is sometimes hard to believe this simple truth: When your child dies and life feels like you have been punched with a metal press, life goes on. When you cannot get up in the morning because of exhaustion life goes on. When you are not sure what day it is, life goes on. When you cry in the cereal aisle life goes on. When friends hide from you, life goes on. When your partner does not understand you, life goes on. When the boss tells you to pull it together, life goes on. When you do not recognize yourself, life goes on.

BUT, when you get up, get dressed and go to work, life goes on. When you realize that love never dies, life goes on. When you can laugh even a little, life goes on. When hope returns, life goes on. When new friends offer a hand, life goes on. When a small hand fits into yours, life goes on. When people say your child's name, life goes on.

Our children wait for us to realize life goes on. It was meant to go on. It has to go on and so do we.

Keith Swett,
Seymore, WI

OUT, OUT

By Robert Frost

The buzz saw snarled and rattled in the yard
And made dust and dropped stove-length sticks of wood,
Sweet-scented stuff when the breeze drew across it.
And from there those that lifted eyes could count
Five mountain ranges one behind the other
Under the sunset far into Vermont.
And the saw snarled and rattled, snarled and rattled,
As it ran light, or had to bear a load.
And nothing happened: day was all but done.
Call it a day, I wish they might have said
To please the boy by giving him the half hour
That a boy counts so much when saved from work.
His sister stood beside him in her apron
To tell them 'Supper.' At the word, the saw,
As if to prove saws knew what supper meant,
Leaped out at the boy's hand, or seemed to leap—
He must have given the hand. However it was,

Neither refused the meeting. But the hand!
The boy's first outcry was a rueful laugh,
As he swung toward them holding up the hand
Half in appeal, but half as if to keep
The life from spilling. Then the boy saw all—
Since he was old enough to know, big boy
Doing a man's work, though a child at heart—
He saw all spoiled. 'Don't let him cut my hand off—
The doctor, when he comes. Don't let him, sister!'
So. But the hand was gone already.
The doctor put him in the dark of ether.
He lay and puffed his lips out with his breath.
And then—the watcher at his pulse took fright.
No one believed. They listened at his heart.
Little—less—nothing!—and that ended it.
No more to build on there. And they, since they
Were not the one dead, turned to their affairs.



From Our President:

Mike Francisco, President BP/USA



Welcome to summer (in the Northern Hemisphere, June solstice until the September equinox) with June 21st serving as the longest day of the year. Our days get shorter and we'll feel cooler in just a few short months. This year, our summer's main event is Seasons of Healing, the 2015 National Gathering presented by the Bereaved Parents of the USA in Hartford, Connecticut, July 24-26. The Gathering is the most important program for our leadership, newly bereaved and seasoned grievers. It provides training for our leaders and reinforces training of those who've previously attended. The Gathering provides workshops which present information and give support to those seeking *HOPE* in their lives. It's a respite from most distractions and hopefully, a time for reflection. Time may be taken for workshops for which you have an affinity, and sharing sessions up until late-night hours, or you may spend time with friends seen annually as you catch-up with their lives. The Gathering is what you make of it. For more information and to register, please go to www.bereavedparentsusa.org. I hope to see you in Hartford!

"A Journey Together" will be "going green" with the change of the New Year. The national newsletter will be available by "softcopy" (electronic) without charge. Hardcopy (printed) subscription will be available for a low, yearly fee via PayPal. There will be a sign-up for "AJT" as an annual payment (subscribers would be billed annually until they no longer wish to receive it). PayPal offers the use of "subscription buttons," so the customer controls when the subscription ends. There will be more information available in the Fall edition of "AJT" and will coincide with placement of PayPal buttons on the "AJT" page.

TO DONALD

reprinted from the first *A Journey Together* issue: Fall 1995

Hands, Hands, little hands;
to hold safely crossing the street
to be busy playing during the day
to make casts for mommy and daddy to keep
to be folded in nighttime prayers.

Hands, Hands, larger hands;
to hold another hand going to the dance
to hold the wheel learning to drive the car
to hold the certificate that made schooling complete
to fill out that very first job application.

Hands, Hands, motionless hands;
that won't hold another hand at the alter
that won't sign that first mortgage plan
that won't hold a babe of your own.

Those hands, folded across your chest, hold our hearts forever!

Much love, Mom and Dad
Linda M. Trimmer
York, PA



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BEREAVED PARENTS OF THE USA

A Journey Together is a national newsletter published quarterly by Bereaved Parents of the USA. You may subscribe or unsubscribe to this newsletter by going to www.bereavedparentsusa.org, and clicking on *National Newsletter* on the menu on the first page. You will find the proper forms through that site. You will also find articles, locations of chapters, and links to other organizations on that web site. For other information, contact:

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Bereaved Parents of the USA
2015 NATIONAL GATHERING
HARTFORD, CT • JULY 24 - 26

**For more information and to register go to
www.bereavedparentsusa.org**

Awesome Speakers:

Sara Ruble, Deb Carlin Polhill, Scarlett Lewis,
Dave Roberts, Kelly Buckley, Bart Sumner

Thursday Night Special Program:

"Growing Up Jordy Pordy"
with Jordan Herskowitz

Workshops Presented By:

Deanna Emberley Bailey ~ Paul Balasic ~ Kay Bevington ~ Kelly Buckley
Anne Castaldo ~ Deb Carlin Polhill ~ Nancy Cayward ~ Clifton & Michelle
Cottom ~ Bettie-Jeanne Rivard-Darby ~ Jim Darby ~ Jacqueline DeVito
Cary Gregory ~ Jordan Herskowitz ~ Lorraine Hughes ~ Dr. Doug & BJ Jensen
Scarlett Lewis ~ Chris Mulligan & Jane Bissler ~ Terry Murphy
Alan Pedersen ~ Dave Roberts ~ Sara Ruble ~ Becky Russell



2015 National Gathering, Hartford, Connecticut

Please join us in our Bereaved Parents of the USA "Seasons of Healing" at the 2015 National Gathering conducted at the Sheraton Hartford Hotel at Bradley Airport, Hartford, Connecticut, July 24-26. For additional information and to register, please go to

www.bereavedparentsusa.org.

Catch our special Thursday night "Kick Off" program: "Meet and Greet" with Optional Pizza Buffet and Entertainment provided by Jordan Herskowitz, "Growing Up Jordy Pordy. There will be a special appearance by the "Love in Motion" signing choir.

Our keynote speakers include: Sara Ruble, Deb Carlion Pohill, Scarlett Lewis, Dave Roberts, Kelly Buckley and Bart Sumner. These accomplished speakers will deliver messages of hope and healing in conjunction with our meals.

Over 40 workshops are available on a variety of topics. Workshops are presented by: Deanna Emberley Bailey, Paul Balasic, Kay Bevington, Kelly Buckley, Anne Castaldo, Deb Carlin Pohill, Nancy Cayward, Clifton & Michelle Cottom, Jordan Herskowitz, Lorraine Hughes, Dr. Doug & BJ Jensen, Scarlett Lewis, Chris Mulligan & Jane Bissler, Terry Murphy, Alan Pedersen, Dave Roberts, Sara Ruble, and Becky Russell. There are workshop topics and ac-



tivities for siblings, both young and older.

On Thursday, July 23rd, Chapter Leadership Training (CLT) will be presented by Becky Russell. All training will be conducted in the same room. We ask that chapter leaders take part in this program and register on the separate Chapter Leader Training Registration Form. CLT is an important resource for new Chapter Leaders, those contemplating stepping-up to be a Chapter Leader, or as refresher training for those who have previously taken the training.

On Friday and Saturday evenings, "Sharing Sessions" will be led by facilitators. Participants will share experiences on specific topics.

There will be a candlelight service after the dinner on Saturday night which includes a slide show presentation.

Our Gathering Coordinator advises:

- Registration is only \$60
- Room rates at the Sheraton Hartford Hotel at Bradley Airport are \$89 per night, with up to 4 people per room.
- Opportunities are available to sponsor a page in the program book, sponsor a centerpiece or a workshop all in memory of your child.
- You can also order t-shirts or picture buttons!
- Additionally, we are in need of donations for the raffle and silent auction
- We would also like to have table favors for each of the meals, so if your chapter or any individual would like to donate approximately 300 items, that would be greatly appreciated.

We hope that you can join us at the 2015 National Gathering in Hartford, Connecticut and share a healing weekend celebrating our children, grandchildren and siblings who have gone too soon.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Jodi Norman through email at bleachermom2000@aol.com

SEARCH FOR NEW EDITOR

Many years ago Betty Ewart created a newsletter for our organization. Its mission was assisting those whose child had died with writings from other bereaved parents and various pieces of useful information. She did a remarkable job publishing *A Journey Together* every season for fifteen years.

After her death I was approached about taking over AJT. I agreed to give it a try for a "little" while. We made some improvements, added color, cre-

ated some recurring features and generally modernized the newsletter. I tried to keep the content, however, true to its root purpose...helping bereaved families.

It has been an honor and a privilege to be entrusted with such a worthwhile endeavor for the last five years. Of all the things I did after my son's death, nothing helped me more than the time I spent putting each issue together. Now, however, I feel it is time to turn

AJT over to someone with fresh ideas. If you'd like to give it a try "for a little while" then please contact me or Mike Francisco.

Richard Berman
Editor





A HAPPY HOUSE



"I raised three boys. Two are living." This is the response I give when someone asks about children. Of course this response does

not begin to express the many emotions and images that cross my mind when I respond thusly.

When Brad died the life went out of our house. Let me explain: Our oldest, studious and bookish, kept to himself and rarely invited friends home. Our middle son was independent, shared little of his social life with me or his dad, and was usually out of the house on some activity. Brad drew people to him. He had a constant entourage of friends, boys and girls, in our house. And what a mix! The Korean boy who gifted Brad a pet crayfish

(which we had to collect bugs for it to eat when the boys went away to summer camp). The Japanese kid whose dad helped us read the Japanese baseball cards my husband got from a co-worker recently home from Tokyo. The Peruvian lad whose mom hadn't learned English yet so I had to break out my high school Spanish to give her driving instructions to our house. Once he became a teenager there were more than a few mornings I found the basement full of boys sleeping on the floor and the refrigerator empty. The house always seemed alive. I enjoyed hearing about all the activities, antics, and goings-on that Brad, unlike his brothers, loved to share with us.

I miss Brad terribly and the aurora of life that surrounded him. No more stories; no more noise; no

more people. Along with Brad the house itself, seemed to die. As I grieved for Brad, I also grieved for those happy, exciting days.

A dozen years have disappeared and I'm still in my beloved home. There are changes, however. Most welcome are grandchildren that bring commotion and messes. Toys and picture books are scattered hither and yon. Highchairs and port-a-cribs commandeer living space. Bibs, bottles and building blocks blossom from every available surface. The house has re-awakened! New dreams. New hope. New noise. Who knew you could miss it so much.



Susan Berman
Baltimore, MD

SOLITUDE

by Ella Wheeler Wilcox

Laugh, and the world laughs with you;
Weep, and you weep alone;
For the sad old earth must borrow its mirth,
But has trouble enough of its own.
Sing, and the hills will answer;
Sigh, it is lost on the air;
The echoes bound to a joyful sound,
But shrink from voicing care.

Rejoice, and men will seek you;
Grieve, and they turn and go;
They want full measure of all your pleasure,
But they do not need your woe.
Be glad, and your friends are many;
Be sad, and you lose them all,—
There are none to decline your nectared wine,
But alone you must drink life's gall.

Feast, and your halls are crowded;
Fast, and the world goes by.

Succeed and give, and it helps you live,
But no man can help you die.
There is room in the halls of pleasure
For a large and lordly train,
But one by one we must all file on
Through the narrow aisles of pain.



Ella Wheeler Wilcox, a well known and published poetess of the late 19th and early 20th centuries became a bereaved parent when her infant son died. I think she would appreciate that the opening lines from this meaningful poem have stood the test of time. Editor



BOOK REVIEW



The Terrifying Wind
Judith Sullivan
Melissa's Garden Publishing, 2013

The Terrifying Wind is an interesting approach to dealing with the grief over a number of years after the death of a child. Ms. Sullivan's daughter died in her mid-twenties from heart failure as a result, apparently, of an eating disorder. Our author spends about one-third of the book acquainting us with Melissa and then proceeds to take us on her ten year grief trek.

She covers a lot of territory such as help from friends, professional therapy, the value of support groups, new rituals, triggers, and memorials. Some of the information is from her first hand experiences and some is gleaned from other published works. She blurs the line, at times, between solid advice and explaining the emotions she encountered. That is not uncommon in self-published efforts, but still produces a useful telling of the many faces of grief.

Listen to her describe the guilt when healing commences:

I continued to yearn for Melissa, though the intense daily sorrow that kept me preoccupied with her death had let up somewhat. However, this meant that now she felt farther away. John and I hated that feeling more than anything.

How [do I] have a happy, carefree family life when someone you dearly love has died? I had much to learn.

The Terrifying Wind is the story of Ms. Sullivan's 'education'.

Grief is a process. Recovery is a choice. The way we grieve is a decision.

DID YOU KNOW THEY WERE BEREAVED PARENTS?

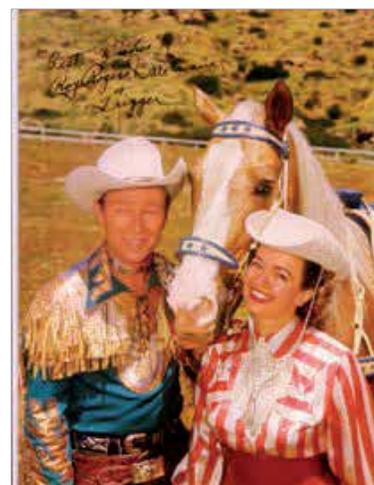
ROY ROGERS (BORN LEONARD FRANKLIN SLYE) WAS AN AMERICAN SINGER AND COWBOY ACTOR WHO WAS ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR WESTERN STARS OF HIS ERA. KNOWN AS THE "KING OF THE COWBOYS", HE APPEARED IN OVER 100 FILMS AND NUMEROUS RADIO AND TELEVISION EPISODES OF THE ROY ROGERS SHOW. IN MANY OF HIS FILMS AND TELEVISION EPISODES, HE APPEARED WITH HIS WIFE, DALE EVANS, HIS GOLDEN PALOMINO TRIGGER, AND HIS GERMAN SHEPHERD DOG, BULLET. HIS SHOW RAN ON RADIO FOR NINE YEARS BEFORE MOVING TO TELEVISION FROM 1951 THROUGH 1957.

IN AUGUST 1950, EVANS AND ROGERS HAD A DAUGHTER, ROBIN ELIZABETH, WHO HAD DOWN SYN-

DROME AND DIED OF COMPLICATIONS WITH MUMPS SHORTLY BEFORE HER SECOND BIRTHDAY. EVANS WROTE ABOUT LOSING THEIR DAUGHTER IN HER BOOK ANGEL UNAWARE.

ROGERS AND EVANS WERE ALSO WELL KNOWN AS ADVOCATES FOR ADOPTION AND AS FOUNDERS AND OPERATORS OF CHILDREN'S CHARITIES. THEY ADOPTED SEVERAL CHILDREN. BOTH WERE OUTSPOKEN CHRISTIANS. IN APPLE VALLEY, CALIFORNIA, WHERE THEY MADE THEIR HOME, NUMEROUS STREETS AND HIGHWAYS AS WELL AS CIVIC BUILDINGS HAVE BEEN NAMED AFTER THEM IN RECOGNITION OF THEIR EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF HOMELESS AND HANDICAPPED CHILDREN. ROGERS WAS AN ACTIVE FREEMASON AND A SHRINER, AND WAS NOTED FOR HIS SUPPORT OF THEIR CHARITIES.

EVEN WITH SADDENED HEARTS, ROY AND DALE CONTINUED TO WORK TOGETHER, WITHIN THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY AND OUTSIDE OF IT UNTIL THEIR DEATHS. WE ARE THE BENEFICIARIES OF THEIR EFFORTS.



PRACTICAL ADVICE

RETURNING TO WORK AFTER LOSING A CHILD By Helen Fitzgerald, CT

After a death in the family, the time comes when grieving family members begin to re-enter the routines of everyday life. Out-of-town relatives return home. Children go back to school and grieving adults must get back to work. For some, returning to work is a welcome change. It is a part of their life that did not include their loved one, and it can create a break from what has been an ever-present grief. The office may be the only part of life that seems normal and routine.

But for many who have experienced a recent loss, returning to work can be difficult. If you are grieving, you may be dreading the thought of returning to the business world for several reasons:

*Seeing co-workers for the first time exposes you to "I'm so sorry" comments, and they remind you of your loss. As difficult as these expressions of sympathy may be to hear, they are better than no acknowledgement at all. A simple "thank you" is all the response that is necessary. You do not owe anyone a story you do not wish to share.

*You may have a high-pressure job with many deadlines and little room for mistakes. You have probably noticed that it is hard to concentrate and retain information in your grief. You may be easily distracted, and errors can occur. It is useful to check everything twice, or ask a coworker or supervisor to review what you have done. Let your co-workers or supervisor know how difficult things seem at this time and where you need their help.

*You may worry about breaking down in front of colleagues or in the middle of an important meeting. This can happen, but save yourself embarrassment by briefly letting people know what has occurred in your life. If you need to excuse yourself, do so.

Before returning to work, try some of the following suggestions:

*Be sure your office knows what happened. Give them as much information as you are comfortable sharing. Sometimes the circumstances around a death are very personal; if people ask too many questions, let them know you are not comfortable going into that right now. Allow one key person to have enough information to keep speculation at a minimum. Keep him or her informed about funeral arrangements, time away from work, and how you are doing.

*Let your office know you want to be included in regular e-mail correspondence so you can be kept updated on what is happening at the office.

*You might arrange to go into the office to meet co-workers for lunch, getting past the first encounters and "I'm so sorry" comments. It can make it easier to go back to work at a later date.

*Consider returning for half-days for a week or so, easing your way back into the normal routine.

*Ask a grief therapist — or ask your employer to arrange for one — to meet with co-workers, especially if the death was sudden or traumatic. An example: One employer called a grief therapist to help employees after a co-worker reported the death of her child. These co-workers had some good questions: "What do we do with the pictures of our kids that are on our desks? Should we put them away because it is going to be so hard on her?" The answer: "It will be hard for her to see the pictures. But she must deal with it at some time, and it is better she do it with people like you who care for her. It may be worse if you put all the pictures away. She'd surely notice, and know it is because of her. Expect her to keep the picture of her dead child on her desk, and it is okay to comment on it."

*Encourage your co-workers to learn more about grief so they can better understand what you are going through. Let them know what is helpful to you when you are having a particular hard day: giving you a hug, allowing you to have some alone time, fixing a cup of coffee, or going for a short walk. The more they know what they can do for you, the more comfortable they will be with your tears and the more comfortable you will be in their presence.

*Keep good communication going. Set up regular meetings with your supervisor, colleagues or employees to talk about what is happening. Ask for feedback. Good, clear communication will discourage idle and unhelpful chatter.

*It is important to tell your story. But be careful not to share your feelings too much or too often. If you notice people getting bored, looking at their watch, or changing the subject, you may be overdoing it. Ask a trusted co-worker if you are talking too much. However, the need to talk to help yourself heal is very real; setting up an appointment with your company's EAP (Employee Assistance Professional), contacting your local hospice, or joining a support group can give you an appropriate place where you can say what you need to say.

*You may need help with certain projects or deadlines. Don't forget to thank those who help you. Small rewards are often appreciated, such as coffee break snacks, flowers, public thanks at a meeting, or an appreciative e-mail.

Thinking ahead will make your return to work easier and less painful. Healing from the death of a loved one is a long, slow process, but getting back into a routine is an important step in the journey.



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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 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 fears, 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, 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.