



Making it Through the Four-Month Mark

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“Grief is like a roller coaster.”

“Grief is like an onion. We go through it one layer at a time and cry along the way.”

These are common phrases we use when describing the grieving process, yet do we really stop and think how true they are? I often use these clichés myself when counseling fellow bereaved parents. I tell them it is very common to seemingly become gradually better, then out of nowhere hit rock bottom. This can be extremely discouraging to parents. They feel no progress has been made toward moving on with their lives following the loss of their baby. I encourage them, however, that the incline will begin again and eventually, though we never get over such loss, they will once again climb to the top, and the dips will come fewer and farther between.

Four months following the stillbirth of my son Jonathan, I thought I was on the road to my new normal, as we often say in M.E.N.D. But one day I snapped. At that time my husband Byron and I lived next door to my twin sister Rachael and her family. Rachael rang my doorbell one afternoon to question me about a little issue that had transpired between us. When I opened the door, I noticed several neighbors were outside enjoying the cooling weather, yet I didn't care that they undoubtedly heard the heated exchange between us. The conversation ended with my screaming at the top of my lungs, “MY BABY IS DEAD!” Then I slammed the door so hard in Rachael's face that the house shook! I crumbled to the floor in my foyer and sobbed. Those raw emotions of anger, bitterness, confusion, and heartbreak came flooding back with a vengeance. Certainly Rachael did not cause this to happen, she just happened to be the closest target for my emotional release. We have talked about that afternoon many times since then, and I still feel the need to apologize for that unfair outburst. She insists remorse is not necessary, because the episode made her realize how badly I was still hurting.

That day caused great confusion and even fear within me. It scared me that I reacted so harshly to a simple

and mundane issue. I began to wonder if this was how I would be for the rest of my life. At that time I saw no light at the end of my dark tunnel of sorrow, and that scared me to death. I could not imagine how, just when I thought we were making great strides with putting the pieces of our little family back together, one episode could cause them (and me) to break apart again and force me to start from square one. I didn't realize that this experience, though not to this extreme, would become a pattern that would repeat itself over and over for the next couple of years and is a very normal part of healing.

When talking with other parents who have lost babies, I see this same pattern in the majority of them as well. When we lost our babies, we all went through the initial stages of shock, denial, and anger. But on the road to acceptance, we tend to slide back down to the beginning. I have noticed that this usually happens around four months following the loss. This is typically the time when family and friends tend to resume their lives, think of our loss less often, and assume we have done the same. The phone calls, cards, email, and expressions of condolence are less frequent. Reality hits us square in the face that this is our new life. The death of our baby REALLY did happen, it is not a bad dream from which we will awaken, and now we have to learn to live with it. Our family and friends are ready for us to have achieved this acceptance and are not as patient anymore when we tell them about our bad days. This causes great anxiety and a sense of loneliness and isolation, which in turn can result in severe depression and mental breakdowns.

We at M.E.N.D. have coined the phrase, “the four-month mark” when referring to this backslide of grief progression. Oftentimes we warn new families about what is in all likelihood yet to happen around this time. Certainly we do not want to scare our M.E.N.D. parents, and we point out that this is not an absolute phenomenon. But we want to assure our families that if this does happen, this setback is temporary and is very normal.

If you are in the middle of this four-month mark and are desperately seeking relief from this confusion and pain, take heart in knowing the Lord sees your heartache and will rescue you from your darkened days. King David found himself in a state of sadness, fear and desperation many times in his life. Each time he cried out to God and was set free. His mourning turned into dancing, and his nightly weeping was replaced with joy in the mornings. I want to encourage you with his words from Psalm 40:1-3:

“I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song of praise in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God.” ♥

Rebekah Mitchell

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M.E.N.D. is a Christian nonprofit corporation whose purpose is to reach out to those who have lost a child to miscarriage, stillbirth or infant death and offer a way to share experiences and information through monthly meetings, this newsletter, and our Web site.

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Donations make the printing and distribution of this newsletter possible. Your tax-deductible contributions are greatly appreciated and should be sent to the address listed above. If your gift is made in memory of a baby, please include that baby's name (if named), date of birth and/or date of death, the parents' names, and the name of the benefactor. You may also include the cause of death (if known).

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The Four-Month Mark

by Jill Davidson

The four-month mark....I began to forget what she felt like in my arms and what she smelled like. People began to move on with their lives and forget the tragedy I'd been through. No one was ever rude enough to say, "It's time to get back into life and move on," yet I felt the pressure to move on and stop looking back. The pain was still great; I still thought of Grace every day. Yet I had a family who needed life to be normal. I had a very difficult time focusing and completing tasks. My extended family began to expect the things from me that had always been. Some were even ready to unload on me how upset they were that we made the decision to have our baby instead of terminating our pregnancy when we found out 18 weeks into the pregnancy that she was not going to live. It was an extremely difficult conversation to walk away from, yet walk away I did, and time has healed that pain too. I had to keep reminding myself that people don't understand unless they've been through the loss of a baby.

I learned the hard way that telling people I was trying to lose my baby weight was an awkward conversation about to happen. I needed to keep it to myself unless I was really willing to go there. It was hard for me not to tell everyone. I wanted to share how God had graciously and gracefully carried us through such a difficult time, but with busy lives there is not always time to have such conversation, so I'd have to just not say anything. It was very hard for me to know when to say something and when not to. Many times I'd wished I'd just kept my mouth shut. Seeing that others didn't want to know about my tragedy was very painful, and I couldn't believe that people could just glide over the thing I had just told them!

My husband had moved on. He's a male and very much a person who does not dwell on anything. Yes, he missed Gracie. Yes, it was sad and he felt pain. But mostly he felt love and joy when he thought of her, knowing he would see her again in Heaven one day. I, on the other hand, just wanted to hold her again. Yes, I felt joy knowing I would see her again too, but I desperately longed to feel her in my arms.

I may sound very bitter, but I'm not. God showed me so much about people, and it has made me a better person. I am more understanding knowing now that some people are just not strong enough to see that much pain. I also try very hard to look at people and think, "I have no idea what they've been through in their life. I need to treat them with love and kindness as if they've been through something terrible so I can be part of God's love to them and not part of the world's ugliness!" I reflect and know that I got to love an incredible person through my whole pregnancy and for 40 days and nights until she went to be with her heavenly Father. I also got to feel the very intense love and support from my heavenly Father and truly experienced how much God loves me. It was life-changing in my walk with the Lord to be sure. And know that in writing this to you, to all the others who have gone through such a tragedy, I have renewed my outlook on people once again and felt my heavenly Father at work in me. When we think we will bless others by doing something I have often found I am the one who is blessed. So when it comes time to send in your thoughts on issues for the M.E.N.D. newsletter, I strongly encourage all of you to consider sending in your thoughts. It can be a moment that God intended for your healing more than you'll ever know. May God bless each and every one of you as you continue to heal. ♥

Jill and her husband Todd are the parents of Grace Ann Davidson, born April 7, 2003. She died May 17, 2003 due to complications from Trisomy 18. Grace has two big brothers, Noah and Aidan.

INVISIBLE

by *Monica Gregory*
January 2006

The hole in my heart that can only be filled by you ... invisible.

The tears that I shed as I, alone, hang your ornaments on your
siblings' Christmas tree ... invisible.

The scar tissue that has formed around my heart and gets thicker as
the years go by ... invisible.

The pain that I feel when I still ask God why? ... invisible.

The grief that wells up inside on your birthday as if I were
transported right back in time to that silent minute you arrived ...
invisible.

The tremendous amount of love that continues to grow for you ...
invisible.

The child for which my broken heart will forever long ... invisible.

For Gabriela Faith
January 24, 2002
Anomaly of umbilical cord
Parents: Monica and Chris Gregory
Siblings: Daniel, Amarise, and Eliana

Mark Your Calendars

M.E.N.D.'s 2006 Walk to Remember will be Saturday, October 7 at 2:00 p.m. We are requesting sponsors to help make our Walk possible. If your family or business would like to donate to this 2006 event, please make contributions by September 1, 2006, in order to be acknowledged in the program. Remember to put "Walk Sponsorship" on the memo line of your check.



May/June Topic

Mother's Day and Father's Day
Deadline: March 31, 2006

July/August Topic

Long-Term Grief
(When grief revisits years later)
Deadline: May 31, 2006

Stories, poems, thoughts, and/or feelings regarding these topics are welcomed. Submissions must be received by the deadline to be considered for publication in the newsletter. Unfortunately, there is not enough room to include all submissions. Choices will be left to the discretion of the editors. Please see page two of the newsletter for the appropriate address to send your submissions. Any submission printed in our newsletter will also be posted to our website indefinitely unless we receive notice in writing that you are only granting permission for your submission to appear in the printed version of the newsletter.

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Visit our Web site at:
www.mend.org

Tributes to Our Special Babies

Dear Gabriela,

We wish you a happy fourth birthday!!!! We miss you terribly and wish you could be here with us! Your brother and sister love to blow out candles, so you certainly would have had lots of help with that. When I watch them sing and play I close my eyes and try to imagine what you would have looked like on your fourth birthday. It still breaks my heart, but I know that God is good and perfect and you are with Him. Daddy sends his biggest hugs and kisses and also sheds his tears for you on your special day. You are absent from our physical lives, but you are thought of daily. We love you very much and celebrate with you. You walk in the presence of the Holy One daily, and there is no better life than that!!

Love always,
Mommy, Daddy, Daniel,
Amarise and Eliana

*In loving memory of
Gabriela Faith Gregory
January 24, 2002
Anomaly of umbilical cord
Parents: Monica and Chris Gregory
Siblings: Daniel, Amarise, and Eliana*



Happy Seventh Birthday Lauren Paige

Happy birthday, my Little Angel! It is hard for us to imagine that you would be seven years old! All these years later, I still find myself wondering who you would look like now and what kind of personality you would have. We see little girls your age and think, Wow ~ this should be you! It brings sadness to our eyes because you are not here with us. Your sister Rileigh knows all about you and her twin in heaven. She is very inquisitive about you and knows you watch over her. We actually feel your presence at times, but you already know that. We love and miss you so very much and wish you were here with us but know that you can't be! Until we meet again.....have fun playing with Jesus.

Happy birthday and with much love!
Mommy, Daddy, and Rileigh

*Remembering Lauren Paige Grimes
March 6, 1999, unknown causes
Also remembering Baby Angel (Rileigh's twin)
January 25, 2001
Parents: John and Paula Grimes
Sister: Rileigh*



Happy 3rd Birthday precious baby girl!

Shauna Elisabeth Winebrenner

"God is Gracious"

We miss you and love you!

Thank you for coming into our lives. Your short time here with us has changed our lives forever.

Love,
Mom, Dad, and little brother Saul
Isaiah 40:31



*Shauna Elisabeth Winebrenner
Stillborn April 12, 2003, Trisomy 18
Parents: Tim and Sarah Winebrenner
Little brother: Saul*

Happy Fifth Birthday to Our Little Peanut!!

It is hard to believe that five years have gone by. You are in our hearts and our prayers daily. You are with us always, and we are comforted to know that we will be with you again in the Kingdom of Heaven. We love you so very much!

Love Always,
Mommy and Daddy,
Emily and Eric



*Jacob Theodore Oxendine
April 29, 2001
PROM*

*Parents: Chip and Christine Oxendine
Siblings: Emily and Eric*



Happy Fourth Birthday Rebekah!

It's so hard to believe that it has been four years since we saw your sweet face and met you for the first time. I can still remember it as if it were only yesterday. We love you and miss you so much and look forward to seeing you again someday. We wanted you to know, too, that in addition to your little brother Alex, who is almost three now, you also have a little sister Heidi who was born June 2, 2005.

We talk to Alex about you. He can now say your name, although he says "Beka," but it's so cute. We will be sure that Heidi knows about you, too. Your big sister Heather still talks about you and loves you very much. We all love you, sweet baby girl. We will see you in Heaven. Watch over us all and remember that you are always loved and in our hearts.

Love Always,
Mommy, Daddy, Heather,
Alex, Heidi, and Nana

*Rebekah Lee Suddeath
March 5, 2002, Full Trisomy 18
Parents: Rick and Michelle Suddeath
Siblings: Heather, Alex and Heidi*

For Grace Ann

Each year on your Nana's birthday, we remember your birth because they are on the same day. You were a tremendous gift to her and to all of us. This month you would be three. In Heaven, however, you're complete, and that is way better than being three! We miss you and look forward to seeing you in Heaven, my dear precious Gracie. Thank you for blessing so many in such a profound way. I hope you are able to see how many lives you are still touching in a fresh new way every day. Until our time comes to meet again, know that we love you.

Love,
Mommy and Daddy, big brothers Noah and Aidan

*In loving memory of Grace Ann Davidson
April 7 - May 17, 2003, complications from Trisomy 18
Parents: Todd and Jill Davidson
Big brothers: Noah and Aidan*



My dear Molly,

Happy second birthday my precious Molly!! I do not have a poem this year, just loving words.

I miss you. I miss you and think about you every single day.

You are my second born, and when people ask me how many children I have, I always answer three. Two on Earth and an angel in Heaven. You, sweet girl, are never forgotten.

You have a baby brother, and his name is Garrett. If it were not for you sweet baby, he would not be.

Your big sister Morgan talks about you and how you are playing with Jesus. THAT, I know is true and is my only comfort. So, my precious girl, just know that one day we will meet again.

Love,
Mommy



*Remembering Molly Rene Schramm
March 10, 2004*

*Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia
Parents: Jerry and Suzanne Schramm
Siblings: Big sister Morgan and baby brother Garrett*

To Our Precious Baby Boy Hines

We named you "Little Flipper" because at the time we did not know if you were a boy or a girl, and you were constantly flipping around in Mommy's tummy. Well, to say the least you did a little too much flipping and the umbilical cord wrapped around your little waist too many times. You passed from this world on April 11, 2001. We miss you and now your little sister, Aleah, age three, has been asking daddy and mommy a lot of questions about her big brother. We told her that you are in heaven with Jesus and He is taking good care of you. You also have another little sister Teagan, who is one—not old enough to know she has a big brother—but when she is older we will tell her all about you also. You are in our thoughts a lot. You would have been five years old this year and started kindergarten this fall. We miss you but know that you are a child of God and are in a wonderful place up in heaven. Someday we hope to be reunited with you.

We love you.
Mom, Dad,
Aleah and Teagan

*Baby Boy Hines ("Little Flipper")
April 11, 2001, Cord accident
Parents: Tony and Dora Hines
Siblings: Aleah and Teagan Hines*

**Chandler,**

We can't believe it has been seven years since you came into our lives! We miss you and think about you always. You have touched so many hearts and have changed our lives in so many ways. Christopher has started missing having a brother on earth and talks about you a lot. Kyleigh talks about you, too. Be sure to catch all the balloons they are sending you! We love you, Little Love Bug. Until we meet again, catch our kisses to Heaven! Have a wonderful seventh birthday in heaven celebrating with Jesus!

Mommy, Daddy, Christopher, and Kyleigh

**Happy 7th Birthday, Chandler!**

We love you, miss you, and think of you every day!

Love,
Nana & Papaw

*Chandler Allred
Stillborn March 4, 1999, Fetal Acrania
Parents: Mark and Amy Allred
Siblings: Christopher and Kyleigh
Grandparents: Bill and Doris Yancey*

Happy 1st Birthday Matthew

*Mommy's Precious Baby Boy
and Daddy's Little Man*

It's hard to believe that it has been one year since you were born. Those two months will always be special to us and will forever remain in our hearts! There is not a day that goes by that we don't think about you and miss you. We always wonder what you would look like and what your personality would be. Would you have mommy's smile or daddy's? You left a huge gap in our lives that can never be filled. We love you, our first born, and look forward to seeing you again someday.

Love,
Mommy and Daddy

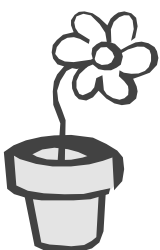
*In Loving Memory of Matthew William Neeley
April 5, 2005 – June 5, 2005
Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia
Parents: Brenda Munguia and Lester William Neeley*

Our Sweet Rianne,

It is so hard to believe that it has been nine years since we were able to hold you. You are still a part of our daily thoughts. I look at your three younger sisters and wonder what it would be like to have you here with us. . . who you would look like, what you would have been interested in, how different our lives would be today, if you were here. I miss "what should have been" with you. Though our hearts continue to long for you, we know that you are in good hands and we know that you are very happy and complete. Until we are together again. . .

We will forever love you! Mommy, Daddy, Chanie, Cassie and Canlie

*In Loving Memory of Rianne Ellisa Scrivner, March 4-7, 1997, Severe Hydrocephaly
Parents: Rae and Bill Scrivner Sisters: Chanie (7), Cassie (5), Canlie (3)*



A Story “Four” Telling

by Rachel Nye

As a teenager, I vaguely remember learning about the four stages of the grieving process: denial, anger, sadness, and acceptance. Of course, this particular lesson “went in one ear and out the other” because I had never lost someone close to me at that point in my life. However, several years later, when the nurses and doctor could not find my unborn child’s thirty-three-week-old heartbeat with an ultrasound in July 2005, those four little words seemed to hit and knock me down with a deafening silence! Intellectually, I knew I was in the beginning of the grieving process; emotionally, my heart seemed to bypass this knowledge and quickly accepted my son’s death. Somehow, I did not seem to have any feelings of shock, blame, guilt, or depression during my hospital stay. I cried of course, but through the tears I accepted the fact that my stillborn son was in heaven with God. My little David James (Baby DJ) could not be crying because there are no tears in heaven. If he was not crying, why should I?

At the time, I thought I was being strong and grounded in my faith. I began to handle things as quickly and calmly as possible. I took pictures of my son and the flowers in the hospital, made funeral arrangements and phone calls, and welcomed visitors while I recovered from surgery. I even wrote thank you cards and emails to nurses, family and friends. People kept saying how proud they were that I was handling things so well.

Looking back, I see that I thrived on those words. I thought that if people were so proud of me, I must be doing things right; I couldn’t let them know that I was really sad inside. I didn’t want to disappoint anyone. If I could just fake it long enough, no one would know that I was really starting to crumble inside. I realize now that sometimes people say, “I’m so proud of you” because they really don’t know what else to say. It is awkward for anyone to talk to someone who has recently lost a loved one, but it is even more awkward to address someone who has buried an infant. People can sometimes understand how you feel when you have lost a friend or parent or cousin; most people can’t truly relate to losing a child. It is as if mothers whose babies have died are somehow “tainted.” We are a rare breed.

Society as a whole also seems to encourage bereaved mothers to “get over it.” Either they say things like, “You are doing so well” or they don’t say anything at all. Sometimes people avoid us altogether. All of these seem to be unspoken ways to rush us through our grief. I guess that is why I subconsciously thought I could just keep all of those painful grieving emotions inside when my son died; I thought that if I could just “keep face” - accept the loss and move on - the grieving period would go by quicker, and life would be better for everyone. I went back to work wearing a fake smile as much as possible and got on with my “new normal” life. On the outside, I seemed to be past the emotional grief; inside, I was a volcano full of gooey gobs of guilt, denial, anger, blame, and sadness. I was on the verge of a huge eruption!

As the weeks and months went by, lava slowly started seeping out of me in the form of moodiness, irritability, exhaustion, and lack of appetite. People at church and work seemed to have for-

gotten about our recent loss. The phone calls, meals, and cards had stopped coming. No one seemed to ask much about us anymore. Had everyone just gone on with their lives as if it never happened? Did anyone really even care? I began to wallow in sadness and depression and isolate myself from everyone as much as possible. All I wanted to do was be alone in the dark and sleep away this horrible nightmare.

Of course, these feelings and emotions began bubbling and brewing just in time for the holiday season. I was anxious and nervous about visiting my out-of-state in-laws for Thanksgiving because I didn’t trust my emotions to lay dormant inside of me much longer. I was preparing for a meltdown. I hadn’t been around them since we lost the baby, and I didn’t want them to see through my tough exterior. Would I yell or cry for no reason unexpectedly? Would I be able to calmly be around my new niece, born just five days before baby DJ? When no one said a word about our stillborn son, I felt anger beginning to explode, so I avoided everyone and hid for most of Thanksgiving Day. How dare they not say anything about the baby! Everyone else seemed to have forgotten my son. Is that what my own family was doing too?

I had been collecting DJ’s pictures, cards, letters, etc. for a few months, but couldn’t seem to bring myself to organize anything into a photo album until that moment. I had brought them all with me on the trip and decided to look through them Thanksgiving Day. In my private, broken state, I felt the hand of God come take all of the negative feelings away, avoiding an eruption. For a few hours, I silently worked through my denial and anger and sadness with each scrapbook page I created. Seeing me do this opened a door for my family to approach me and ask about the baby. I shared my feelings calmly with them as I worked. With each picture or sticker I laid down, it’s as if I were laying down each of my negative thoughts and fears at the feet of Jesus as well. God reminded me that He sent His Son to change our lives. His story written in the Holy Book is ours to share and tell. I now have another story to tell of someone else who also changed my life; his story lies within the pages of a scrapbook.

So for me, for whatever reason, the fourth month was both the best of times and the worst of times. I forced myself to quit faking it to make other people proud. I let the grieving emotions come out on MY time schedule, not that of a rushed society. This resulted in a new truly heartfelt acceptance of the death of my son, David James. It can be found within the pages of a scrapbook, a story book that is mine to share and tell. ♥

Written in loving memory of David James (DJ) Nye by his mother, Rachel Laney Nye. DJ was stillborn July 19, 2005, due to a cord accident. DJ is also lovingly remembered and missed by his father, Christopher.

Keepsake Resources

Memory Baby Book

850 Marion Rd.
Chambersburg, PA 17201
(717) 375-2426
Contact: Barb Eby

Makes sixty-page baby books available for parents who have suffered early infant loss.

A Loss Remembered

2908 South Clemont Dr.
Denver, CO 80222
(303) 692-9668

lossremembered@cs.com

Provides beautiful remembrance cards on the anniversary of a child's death.

Angel Babies in Heaven

(843) 871-3071

www.angelbabiesinheaven.com

Offers hand-painted memorial stepping stones to honor babies gone too soon.

Angel Lady

www.angelady.net

Artist Ethel Pontsler offers custom artwork of deceased loved ones based on photographs.

My Heart's Missing Link

P.O. Box 0992, Allen Park, MI 48101
www.myheartsmissinglink.com

Offers heart-shaped pendants with a birthstone and a "missing link" to help remember loved ones who now live in heaven and your heart.

Angels in Heaven Ministries

www.angelsinheaven.org

Offers framed poems, cards, and audio tapes relating to infant loss.

Once Upon a Family™

www.onceuponafamily.com/amygill

Contact: Amy Gill

(972) 207-7025

Offers special pieces to keep memorabilia safe. Donates a percentage of sales of the Baby Keepsake Box, Tiny Treasures Box, and Memory Trunk made to M.E.N.D. members back to M.E.N.D.

Angel Teddy Bear Foundation

www.angelteddybears.org

kim@angelteddybears.org or (274) 531-0960

Nonprofit organization that delivers teddy bears to hospitals for parents who have lost a baby

Keri's Kreations

221 W. Hillview St.
Winslow, AZ 86047
(928) 289-0715

A book of remembrance for parents who have lost children through miscarriage, stillbirth, or infant death.

Elena's Inspiration—The Shining Light Fund

www.elenasinspiration.com/
shining_light_fund.htm

Offers Mother's Bracelets free of charge to women who have lost a child through miscarriage, stillbirth, or infant death.

For You Lauren, Certificates

Pamela Palmer

For You Lauren, certificates

P.O. Box 1534

Inglewood, CA 90308

pypalmer1@yahoo.com

Creates certificates to recognize, acknowledge, and celebrate the births of stillborn and miscarried babies.

Finding Hope at the Four-Month Mark

By Jennifer Brimmage

I can remember being stunned at how deeply depressed I was around four months, and it seemed that I was only sinking deeper. I remember the frustration of taking one step forward and two steps back, thinking I would never emerge from the dark hole of hopelessness. Wasn't the passage of time supposed to help my healing? Why did I feel worse now than I did a month ago?

As strange as this was to me, it seemed even more odd to many friends and family who weren't familiar with the grief process. I began to feel so alone, and I questioned my future. Would I ever be happy again? Would I ever have joy again? Seeking comfort from people who had never been on this journey proved a disappointing waste of time. In fact, I nearly always felt worse about myself after talking to those same people.

Finding other moms who had been in this place was my only hope. My sweet M.E.N.D. friend, Samantha, would reassure me that it was normal and common for the period of time around three to five months after the loss of my daughter to be more difficult than I would've imagined. I can remember her saying repeatedly, "It will get better." Somehow I felt stronger just knowing that many moms and dads had walked this journey ahead of me and emerged on the other side of this deep, dark, depression. There was hope for healing, and joy would surely be a part of my life again.

My daughter, Angel Hope, went home to heaven three and a half years ago. And I can honestly tell you now, "It will get better." There is hope and joy to be had once again. ♥

Jennifer Brimmage is mom to Angel Hope, who died from spina bifida, June 8, 2002, and Precious Brimmage, miscarried December 23, 2002. She and her husband Ashley are also the parents of Lindy, Mark and a little sister due in June.





Garrett Anthony Mayer
October 12 - December 18, 1999
Tetralogy of fallot
Given by parents
April and Tony Mayer
and little sister Samantha

Faith Elizabeth Durham
Stillborn September 25, 1999
Triploidy
Given by parents
Lisa and Leighton Durham
and little siblings Leighton IV,
Olivia, and Suzanna

Christian Allen Scott
June 1, 2005
Bilateral Renal Agenesis
Given by parents
Scotty and Mary Scott
and siblings Lenny, Will, and Ariel

Christina Fasolo
Stillborn February 5, 1991
Given by mommy Gail Fasolo

Tatiana Yvonne Urquhart
November 3, 2005
Vasa Previa/Velamentous Insertion
of Umbilical Cord
Given by parents
Sudi Beheshti and Russ Urquhart

Gifts of Support
IBM Employee Charitable
Contribution Campaign

Elisabeth Grace Fearheller
Stillborn January 14, 1998
Given by mommy Krista Fearheller

M.E.N.D.

gratefully acknowledges these gifts of love given in memory of a baby, relative, friend, or given by someone just wanting to help. These donations help us to continue M.E.N.D.'s mission by providing this newsletter and other services to bereaved parents free of charge. Please refer to page 2 of this newsletter for more information regarding where to send your donations and what information to include.

Thank you so much!

Jonathan Daniel Mitchell
Stillborn June 24, 1995
Cord Accident
Baby Mitchell
Miscarried December 2001
Parents: Byron and Rebekah Mitchell
Big brother: Byron, Jr.
Given by Dentistry of Las Colinas/
Byron L. Mitchell, DDS

Jonathan Daniel Mitchell
Stillborn June 24, 1995
Cord Accident

Baby Mitchell
Miscarried December 2001
Parents: Byron and Rebekah Mitchell
Big Brother: Byron, Jr.
Given by grandparents
Dennis and Sue Brewer

Jonathan Daniel Mitchell
Stillborn June 24, 1995
Cord Accident
Baby Mitchell
Miscarried December 2001
Parents: Byron and Rebekah Mitchell
Big brother: Byron, Jr.
Given by grandparents
Lyle and Marnie Mitchell

Lawson Thomas Dody
Stillborn January 8, 2006
Cord Accident
Parents: Blythe and Aron Dody
Given by Mr. and Mrs. Larry Sele

Lawson Thomas Dody
Stillborn January 8, 2006
Cord Accident
Parents: Blythe and Aron Dody
Given by Kay and Darrell Arthaud

Lawson Thomas Dody
Stillborn January 8, 2006
Cord Accident
Parents: Blythe and Aron Dody
Given by friends at Parade
of Homes Publications, Inc.

Michelle Grace Stockdale
August 22 - September 16, 2002
Ebsteins Anomaly
Parents: Marie and Joe Stockdale
Little siblings: Caleb and Audrey
Given by Pat Lee

Jordan Cierra Wright
November 13, 2001
Cord Accident
Given by parents David and Reba Wright

Allison Grace Powell
May 14, 2002
Given by parents James and Twyla Powell

Abigail Grace Crump
July 1, 2003
Trisomy 18
Given by parents Gerald and Jaimie Crump
and little sister Cami

Abigail Grace Crump
July 1, 2003
Trisomy 18
Parents: Gerald and Jaimie Crump
Little sister: Cami
Given by grandparents
Russell and Rosemary Massey

Rylee Lynn Crye
Stillborn October 31, 2005
Dandy-Walker Malformation
Given by parents Gene and Randi Crye
and big brothers Jared and Hunter

Ava Grace Turner
Stillborn February 5, 2005
Cord Accident
Given by parents Lance and Amanda Turner
and sisters Hannah and Sophia

Olivia Joy Cheshire
Miscarried July 31, 2004
Christian Joseph Cheshire
Miscarried April 3, 2004
Patricia Karla Cheshire
Miscarried May 10, 1999
Given by parents Leah and Vince Cheshire
and siblings Nathan and Karla

Catherine Mary Martin
Stillborn December 15, 2001
Baby Martin I
Miscarried June 14, 2002
Baby Martin II
Miscarried September, 2002
Parents: Glenn and Nancy Martin
Sibling: Alexander Lee
Given by Barron Vending

Olivia Grace Wayne
Stillborn May 11, 1995
Jesse Wayne
Miscarried April 20, 1996
Angel Wayne
Miscarried July 23, 1998
Given by parents Richard and Jeanette Wayne
and siblings Emmaline, Chloe, and Benjamin

Joseph Charles Libby
May 26, 1999
Cord accident
Given by parents Wim and Sharlene Libby
and siblings Will, John, and Mary Grace

Alexis Leigh and Nicole Leigh Rudeen
Stillborn March 11, 2002
Unknown Cause
Given by parents Sherri and Randy Rudeen
and sisters Julie, Sara, Jordyn, and Sydney

*In Loving Memory ... continued***William Joseph Kowalski**

Stillborn August 12, 1997
Placental Abruption & Premature Labor
due to Fibroid Tumor
Given by parents
Robert and Sheri Kowalski
and little siblings Robert and Ashley

Matthew William Neeley

April 5 - June 5, 2005
Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia
Given by parents
Brenda Munguia and Lester Neeley

Chandler Allred

Stillborn March 4, 1999
Fetal Acrania
Given by parents Mark and Amy Allred
and little siblings Christopher and Kyleigh

Chandler Allred

Stillborn March 4, 1999
Fetal Acrania
Parents: Mark and Amy Allred
Siblings: Christopher and Kyleigh
Given by grandparents
Bill and Doris Yancey

Loukas Upton Mulkey

Stillborn October 25, 2005
Two-Vessel Cord
Given by parents Elaine and Bruce Mulkey
and siblings Atticus, Aspasia, Demetrius,
Ariadne, and Briseis

Mindy and Maggie Smith

Stillborn November 4, 1997
Twin to Twin Transfusion Syndrome
and Polyhydramnios
Given by parents Scott and Karla Smith
and little siblings Travis and Julia

*"Everyone can master
a grief but he that has
it."*

*William Shakespeare
Much Ado About Nothing
Act 3, Scene 2*

Sydney Lynne Brown

May 18, 2000
Cord Problem & Other Unknown Conditions
Ashley MacKenzie Brown
May 18, 2001
Antiphospholipid Antibodies
Given by parents Brian and Marilyn Brown
and little brother Samuel

Kane Christopher DeLaTorre

Stillborn August 6, 2003
Cord Accident
Parents: Lori and Aaron DeLaTorre
Siblings: Alex, Adyson, and Kolt
Given by AKA Expressions

Xavier and Gabriel Carballo

Stillborn April 23, 2005
Unknown Cause
Given by parents
Gerardo and Nicole Carballo

Music Resources**Held**

Written by Christa Wells
From Natalie Grant's CD *Awaken*,
available for purchase at most
Christian bookstores.

Homesick

By MercyMe
From their CD *Undone*, available for
purchase at most Christian book-
stores.

Cry Out to Jesus

By Third Day
From their CD *Wherever You Are*,
available for purchase at most
Christian bookstores.

Thought You'd Be Here

Words and music by Wes King
From his CD *A Room Full
of Stories*, available for purchase at
most Christian bookstores.

With Hope

By Steven Curtis Chapman
From his CD *Diving In*, available for
purchase at most Christian book-
stores.

Goodbye for Now

Words by Kathy Troccoli, music by
Scott Brasher and Kathy Troccoli
From Troccoli's CD *Corner of Eden*,
available for purchase at most
Christian bookstores.

Glory Baby

Written by Nathan
and Christy Nockels
Found on Watermark's
All Things New, can be purchased
at Christian bookstores.

**Subsequent Births****Michele & Sabry Samuel**

along with big sister Daniela Faith (our first miracle)
of Avon, Indiana,
joyfully announce a second miracle,
Christina Hope,
blessed to us on
December 11, 2005,
weighing 6 lb., 15oz., and 19 inches long.
We lovingly remember
Gabriela Lael Scheben-Samuel
October 8, 1999,
Potter's Syndrome (Renal Agenesis),
and our two small angels,
miscarried Christmas 1989 and February 26, 2000.

Brent and Karin Peak

along with sister Karianne
of Houston, Texas,
joyfully announce the adoption of
Angela Lu Hu.
Angela was born March 5, 2005,
and adopted into the Peak family December 5, 2005.
The Peak family lovingly remembers
Jason,
stillborn June 1, 2003,
and twin babies,
miscarried May 17, 2001.

Waiting in Hope

by Sharlene Libby

"I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord." Psalm 27:13-14

I don't know about you, but patience is not one of my strongest virtues. I'm the kind of person who never waits until Christmas morning to open all the presents. I'm one of those people who actually sits and watches the water, waiting for it to boil. Gardening has never been one of my favorite hobbies, because I have such a difficult time waiting to see if all my work really paid off. Maybe that's why God blessed me with the gift of music. He knew that I needed an immediate response to my efforts, like that instantaneous note that sounds as I strike the piano key.

Yet, when my son died, there was no rushing through the grief that followed. I felt such a strong desire to meet every obstacle head on, to get them all "over with." I couldn't wait until his due date was past. Then, I was impatient as we waited for the tombstone to be carved and set on his grave. Nothing seemed to happen fast enough for me. I fidgeted and paced my way through all the milestones of that first year, wishing they would hurry up and arrive so that I could say I had survived them.

So, by the time I reached that four-month point, I realized that I was having real difficulty "waiting in hope." I wanted the loneliness to be over. I wanted to feel better. Why hadn't that happened yet? It seemed that the grief stretched on endlessly ahead, and hope was getting hard to find.

King David had hope as he waited for God to deliver him from those who conspired to bring him down (read all of Psalm 27 for a better idea of David's concerns). He stated with boldness that he knew he would "see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." He knew that if he waited long enough, God would deliver him from his enemies. How did David know this? Because God had promised David that He would give him rest from his enemies, that David's name would be made great (2 Sam. 7).

We, too, can be assured that we will "see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." Yes, God has promised us eternal rest one day, but He's also promised to help us during this lifetime. He said He would never leave us alone in our time of trouble. Look up Joshua 1:9, Deuteronomy 31:8, 2 Chronicles 15:2, Psalm 29:11, Hebrews 13:5, Philipians 4:6-7, Psalm 55:22, and Psalm 86:7, among others, if you need proof of this promise. See how long that list is? And that's not even a complete list! The Bible is filled with assurances that our Father cares about our pain and is always there to help us through it. God is serious when He says, "I will be with you."

We can rest assured that God will work with us through our grief so that one day we will see happiness, goodness. No, waiting isn't easy. It seems to take forever before we realize that we are able to smile again. Yet, we know that we will. It happened to me, and I didn't even realize it until it had already been accomplished. I found myself surprised one day that I was actually enjoying life again. How could that be, after suffering such heartbreak?

How could that be? It could be because God keeps His promises. Place your hope in Him, in knowing that He cares for you as you wait for the sun to shine again.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." Romans 15:13. ♥

Written in loving memory of Joseph, stillborn May 26, 1999, due to a cord accident.

Hope in Grief

by Clara Hinton

When sorrow enters our world, we often feel like we have been singled out. We believe that we are totally alone in this dark journey, and we are scared and in need of someone to point us to answers and a way out of our pain. We ask ourselves over and over the timeless questions. "Why?"

"Why me?"

"Why this?"

"Why now?"

"What did I do to deserve this?"

While the questions are valid, there is a problem. We will never really know the complete answers to our satisfaction. We do know that sorrow, loss, and death come to everyone, and we are never fully prepared for the depth of pain that enters our heart. We are suddenly thrust into a different world where everything is foreign to us, and nothing feels joyful or right.

When our lives have been turned upside down by the pain of grief, we need to anchor to something strong and secure. We need to have strength when we no longer have enough strength of our own. We need someone to listen to us, and we need to know that person really cares. We need to feel safe and secure. We need to have hope!

Hope is not pretending that there's never any sorrow. Hope is knowing that we will get through. Hope is hanging on when we'd rather let go. Hope is getting up one more time when we think we can't move. Hope is searching for the sunshine behind the dark, ominous clouds. Hope is trusting God to carry us through!

If you are weary from your pain, be assured that you will be renewed. The same God who created the heavens can perform a miracle for you, too. Remember that when you ask for a simple ray of light, He holds the sun. Our best asking falls far short of His ability to give. When you place your trust in God, you have reason to hope! --Clara Hinton

"In my waiting I gain new hope!" --Clara Hinton ♥

"Behold, God is...the sustainer of my soul." Psalm 54:4

Clara Hinton writes articles and devotionals that minister to families suffering the loss of a child. You can visit her Web site at <http://www.silentgrief.com>

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M.E.N.D.
Chapter Corner

Chapter Meeting Information

M.E.N.D. - NW Arkansas

Held the 1st Tuesday of every month
from 7:00—8:30 p.m.

at the Jones Center for Families, Room 114,
922 East Emma Avenue,
Springdale, AR 72765.

For information, call 479-524-3500
or e-mail april@mend.org.

Subsequent pregnancy group meets in the
same place the 4th Tuesday, 7:00—8:30,
led by Pam Morren (pam@mend.org).

M.E.N.D. - Kansas

Meets the 2nd Thursday, 7:00 p.m.

at Cora Miller Hall/Newman
Division of Nursing, Room 1007
1127 Chestnut, Emporia, KS 66801

Director: Stephanie Metzger
Stephanie@mend.org
(620) 343-6357

M.E.N.D. - Houston

Meets the 3rd Thursday, 7:30 p.m.

at South Montgomery County
Community Center
2235 Lake Robbins Dr.

The Woodlands, TX 77380

Director: Jaimie Crump
Jaimie@mend.org
(281) 374-8528

M.E.N.D. - Georgia

Meets 2nd Monday at 7:00

McDonough Women's Club

199 Turner St., McDonough, GA 30253

Director: Marie Stockdale
Marie@mend.org
(770) 954-1115

To find other organizations that offer support
groups in your area, visit www.mend.org.

M.E.N.D. Support Group Meetings

Join us for a time of sharing experiences.

M.E.N.D. main chapter meetings

are held the 2nd Thursday of every month
from 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Our Daddies group

meets the 2nd Thursday of

March, June, September, and December
from 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

*This is a special time for daddies to get together
and discuss concerns unique to them as fathers.
Our moms and dads meet together for introductions
before dividing into two groups for discussion.*

Subsequent pregnancy group

meets the 4th Tuesday of each month from
7:30 - 9:00 p.m.

*For families who are considering becoming preg-
nant or are currently pregnant after a loss. Led by
Lori DeLaTorre (lolid@inyourfaceshirts.com).*

Playgroup

*For families with children born prior to or
subsequent to a loss.*

Contact DaLana Barsanti at (817) 589-0588
fivekids@ev1.net

*(Playgroups meet at various locations around the
Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex.)*

Mommies AND daddies are both welcome
at all M.E.N.D. meetings.

All main chapter support group meetings are held at:

Suggs Law Firm

1522 W. Airport Freeway, Suite 200
Irving, TX 75062

(Located on the south side of the highway,
Between MacArthur Boulevard
and Story Road)

For more information, call (972) 506-9000.

M.E.N.D. Fundraisers

As a non-profit organization, M.E.N.D. is funded solely by private donations and fundraisers. Any assistance you can give us by participating in any or all of these fundraisers is greatly appreciated.

Kroger grocery stores donate a percentage of all purchases of those shoppers who have and use a Kroger Share Card back to M.E.N.D. To obtain your Share Card, contact Rebekah (Rebekah@mend.org) and let her know how many you need.

Tom Thumb also has a program in Texas that can benefit M.E.N.D. If you have a Tom Thumb Reward Card, please ask your Tom Thumb cashier to link your card with M.E.N.D. Our number is **6265**. Reward cards can also be used at Randalls and Simon David stores.

Shannon Outen, a M.E.N.D. member, operates **Oh! For Keepsakes**, which offers photographic keepsakes and quilts. For every order that is placed in which the purchaser mentions M.E.N.D., Shannon will donate \$2 to M.E.N.D. Visit her business at www.ohforkeepsakes.com.

Glenn Martin is looking for M.E.N.D. families willing to grant space for small gumball machines in order to raise funds for M.E.N.D. If you have a retail business or connections to a high traffic location in the Grapevine, Southlake, or metroplex area, Glenn will place, stock, and service the equipment and give M.E.N.D. 35 percent of the proceeds. Glenn can be contacted at (817) 874-5366 or glmartin@attg.net.

M.E.N.D. can now earn funds through **i.think inc.**, an online marketing research firm. You can help by signing up as a survey panel member and designating us as the recipient of your fee. Every time you complete a survey M.E.N.D. will be automatically credited. Go to the website at <http://www.ithink.inc.com> and choose "Sign up to become an i.think inc. panel member." Fill out the sign-up survey. Under the "Funds for Charity" section, select M.E.N.D. from the list of names. Once you have completed the sign-up survey, including a valid email address, you'll be contacted with an Internet address and password for specific surveys for you to take part in. At the end of the survey, press the "Submit" button, and M.E.N.D. will be automatically credited as the recipient of all money you have earned.

Bob Nordberg is owner of www.buildatee.com in San Antonio. BuildATee.com is dedicated to providing customers with quality customized shirts, ballcaps, athletic wear, and gift items. Ten percent of online sales at BuildATee.com will be donated to M.E.N.D.

Little Beads & Macaroni & Cheese, owned by M.E.N.D. member Marilyn Brown, offers custom jewelry. Her keepsake angel bracelets are \$20 each, and ten percent of each angel bracelet sale will be donated to M.E.N.D. Marilyn can be reached at 817/996-1920 or msbrown16@hotmail.com.

Tiffany Chalk is a consultant with **Arbonne International**, offering pure Swiss skin care, color, nutrition and aromatherapy. Tiffany will donate twenty percent of all sales by M.E.N.D. members back to M.E.N.D. To find out more, call 302-658-3775 or visit www.arbonne.com. Use Tiffany's consultant ID #15111516 to shop online. Tiffany can also be reached at gr8skin@hotmail.com.

IBM employees may now make charitable donations to M.E.N.D. through automatic payroll deductions. Choose Charity Code 0M562 from the *IBM Employee/Retiree Approved Charity List*.

GoBaby Maternity makes maternity tops that answer most questions regarding your baby. Owner Lori DeLaTorre will donate \$1 per shirt to M.E.N.D. Find out more at www.akaexpressions.com or call 972-259-5697.

M.E.N.D. Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death

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