



M. E. N. D.

Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death

Infertility and Pregnancy Loss

I had it all planned out. When I was a little girl I decided I would marry young, enjoy marriage for a few years, then have three children: three boys, to be exact. The first one would be a junior, named after my husband. The second one I would name Jonathan, and the third one, well the name just never came to me, so I decided I would wait until I was actually pregnant with him to make up my mind.

Most of my naïve childhood dreams came true. I married my husband Byron when I was only nineteen, we had our first son, Byron, Jr., after 3 ½ years of marriage, then a few years later I became pregnant with our second son, Jonathan. It was during my seventh month of pregnancy that my perfect dreams turned into a nightmare. Jonathan was stillborn due to his umbilical cord completely snaking around his body and becoming pinched. There would never be a little boy named Jonathan growing up in our household. I would never cheer his name at t-ball or soccer games. I would never have my patience tried as he and his older brother engaged in sibling rivalry. And my life would never again be the same.

Six years later we conceived again, not because it took that many years of trying, but because a kidney disease and ultimate kidney transplant prohibited us from doing so – another part of our lives that was not in “my plan.” As I mentioned, I never could come up with a name for my third son when I was a little girl, but as I thought, the name came easily once I was actually pregnant. I chose Samuel Jon for a boy and in case I was carrying a girl, Valerie Grace (named after my dear friend who gave me a kidney).

In December 2001, I very excitedly went to the doctor for my ten-week sonogram. I was anxious to see the little head, tiny forming arms and legs, and most importantly, the beating heart. However, once again my plan turned into another crushing heartbreak. My precious little baby had already gone to Heaven with no explanation.

Despite my losses and the devastating grief that followed both of them, I took pride in being able to say, “at least we’re fertile myrtles.” Each of our three conceptions took place after just one attempt. It wasn’t until a few years later when I was asked to endorse and review a book on infertility that I discovered Byron and I actually are considered infertile. Because we have had a successful live birth, followed by two pregnancies that did not result in full term live births, we have been given the label “secondary infertility.”

Secondary infertility, as defined on the Resolve website (www.resolve.org), is “the inability to become pregnant, or to carry a pregnancy to term, following the birth of one or more biological children. Even though the couple already has a child, the couple experi-

ences secondary infertility as the loss of a child, the loss of pregnancy, and the loss of childbirth.”

Like I did before studying the basic aspects of infertility, most people assume the term infertile only relates to couples with trouble conceiving. I had no idea it also refers to those of us who had one or more successful pregnancies prior to losses. Because of this misinformation, our suffering is not as acknowledged as those with primary infertility. Yet we all suffer in our own and different way.

When I began M.E.N.D. in 1996, my heart broke for the families who attended our support group and shared their journey of infertility treatments. Many were finally able to announce their miracle pregnancy, only for it to tragically end. How terribly cruel and unfair! These families would continue explaining their dilemma of whether or not to try again. Most were out of financial resources for further treatment, exhausted from the experimental pokes and prods, and completely depleted of energy from grieving the death of their baby. For years I felt as a ministry, were not adequately meeting the needs of this group of couples. I was so grateful last fall when one of our faithful members, Melissa Stephens, talked to me about forming another type of support group within M.E.N.D. Because of her own infertility trials, including first primary and now secondary infertility, she knows firsthand the heartache of this path. We were not sure how many of our members would be interested in this special time of sharing with one another or how many would actually make the effort to come. To our amazement, though it only opened a few months ago, this unique area of support has grown to be our second largest support group.

A few weeks after opening the new group, Melissa began an online message board for those suffering with fertility issues. This has been a wonderful avenue for those who do not live in the Dallas area to communicate with others around the world to share various infertility challenges. If you have not already, I encourage you to check it out. You can get there by going to our website at www.mend.org, click on Support/Events, then the first option on the scroll down, “M.E.N.D. Online Forums.”

And if you live in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, I invite you to join us the third Monday of each month for a time of sharing face-to-face. (See page 13 for more information.)

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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.

For inquiries, subscription requests, deletions, and submissions to the newsletter, contact us at

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Letters to the Editor

I am writing to voice concerns I had after reading "The Risks of VBAC," by Yvette Grau (July/August 2007).

My daughter Hope was born via emergency cesarean section on November 5, 2005. Angels carried my spunky little girl to Heaven three days later. Since Hope's birth I have done a tremendous amount of research about elective repeat cesarean section and vaginal birth after cesarean (VBAC). I am now a strong supporter of VBAC in nearly every situation.

I can understand and support Yvette in the legacy she has created for Erika in campaigning the risks of VBAC. Erika's story needs to be told and her life was not in vain. What concerns me about the article is that some vague facts regarding VBAC uterine ruptures were stated, yet none of the risks of elective repeat cesarean section (ERCS) were. To give the reader a more realistic view of the situation, a baby is three times as likely to die as a result of an ERCS than a vaginal birth. A mother is four times as likely to die during an ERCS than a vaginal birth. Recent studies regarding the safety of VBAC show that it is medical interventions, especially induction with Cyotec, that substantially increase the risk of uterine rupture, not the VBAC itself. Also noted in the studies, women who have unscarred uteri are also having uterine ruptures when induction drugs are used.

Yvette was absolutely right to say that VBAC is not as fervently supported as they were ten years ago. It is also appropriate to add that many doctors are faced with losing their insurance because of medical insurance companies who will not cover them if they choose to openly practice VBAC births. The power that insurance companies have in dictating a woman's birth choices is both mind-boggling and unethical. The tables have turned in the past ten years within the medical community. Now women who want cesareans can readily have them, even without medical indication, and women who want VBAC births are often faced with hospitals that have VBAC bans and physicians afraid to help them. The core issue of women being coerced into a birth that they do not necessarily want is the same today as it was ten years ago, just in the opposite direction.

It would be beneficial for a woman who has to make a decision regarding ERCS and VBAC to fully investigate both sides of the issue, including the long term effects for baby and mother, before making her decision. International Cesarean Awareness Network (ICAN) www.ican-online.org is a fantastic resource for women in the decision-making process.

Statistics can be a starting point, but including God in the decision-making process is invaluable. 1 Timothy 15 tells us, "Yet she will be saved through childbearing – if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control."

Sincerely,

Alyson Kirkpatrick

Mommy to Hope, November 5 – 8, 2005

I greatly appreciated last month's article by Yvette Grau about the risks of VBAC. Last September our daughter was delivered by c-section since I had reached her due date. If I went into labor before that date, she was to be a VBAC. During her c-section, it was discovered that I had a "window" on my uterus, which meant that my 15-month old c-section scar had opened approximately two by four inches. Had I labored with my daughter, the scar could have ruptured, endangering the lives of both my baby and me.

We struggled with our decision to try a VBAC but felt that since the doctors thought it was relatively safe, it would be. I am reminded that a risk, no matter how small, is not small if it touches another human being.

We should have been even more sensitive to the fact that having a rare statistic hit us once could not protect us from being hit again. Fifteen months prior to our daughter's birth, our son died of multicystic dysplastic kidneys. This usually occurs in 1 in 2,400 live births in the United States. Only 25% of these cases are affected bilaterally (which is incompatible with life). Also, girls are two times as likely as boys to have it bilaterally- leaving our son's condition statistically small, but one that nonetheless blew our world apart. I am only grateful that our world was not blown apart once more.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Howald

Mother of Will, Emma, Cecelia, Ann Marie,
Lowell (in heaven) and Evelyn

Sharing the Struggle

By Melissa Stephens

Five years ago at about this time, my husband and I were on a two-week vacation in Italy. This was our second trip to Europe. The previous year we had visited parts of France (including about a week in Paris) and Switzerland (where we trekked up a glacier and ice climbed into a massive crevasse!). We were incredibly blessed with good jobs, a wonderful family, and a bright future. Until this point, our entire relationship had been every teenage girl's fantasy. Rob and I met the summer after I finished high school. I was barely eighteen years old, and he was almost twenty. We dated exclusively throughout college and were married two weeks after my twenty-second birthday. We traveled a lot those first couple of years and bought our first house in a neighborhood teeming with kids. It wouldn't be long, we believed, before we would be adding to that number.

Soon after that carefree vacation in Italy, Rob and I decided to "start our family." That's a phrase I have grown to dislike, as I now realize Rob and I were already a family, with or without children. Conceiving our first child wasn't as easy as we had hoped. However, once we sought treatment, it only took two cycles of using a drug called Clomid before I became pregnant. The extra time it took us to get pregnant allowed us one more trip overseas in the fall of 2003. Soon after returning from Germany, our pregnancy with our son, David Atkins, began to go downhill. He was stillborn at 25 weeks gestation on October 23.

With broken hearts, Rob and I immediately began trying to conceive another baby. Another pregnancy couldn't come soon enough as far as we were concerned. But God had other plans for us. Clomid wasn't going to work this time, so my doctor sent us to a reproductive endocrinologist. I was diagnosed with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome, endometriosis, a septum in my uterus and, after a biopsy of my uterus, adenomyosis. If you're not familiar with these terms, suffice it to say this was all bad news. After 15 months of arduous treatments that challenged my body, my mind, my relationships and even my faith, we were blessed with another pregnancy. Christopher James (C.J.) was born healthy and beautiful on September 29, 2005.

When C.J. was only four months old, we decided it was time to start fertility treatments again. Our doctor fully supported our decision, because we knew our best chances at pregnancy would be as soon as possible after a previous pregnancy. That was over a year and a half ago, and I'm still not pregnant. Just a couple of months ago, I was told the septum in my uterus has grown back, and a cyst was found on my left ovary that needed to be removed. Surgery was scheduled, and we will start treatment again as soon as possible afterward.

It's often difficult for me to look back on those first years of marriage: the traveling, the fun of buying our first home, the hope and excitement we felt looking into the future. We have been blessed beyond measure with the birth of our second son, but the shadow of infertility still rests heavily over our family. It's hard to hold onto those same feelings of hope and excitement I used to feel when I think about the years ahead of us. Still, I know it won't always be this way. My life won't always revolve around trying to get pregnant. One year, Rob and I will be able to take another two-week vacation (perhaps even to Europe, again!) without worrying that we'll be missing a cycle of treatment.

Anyone who has experienced the loss of a child has probably turned their hearts and minds toward God and asked the heart-rending question, "Why?" For those of us who are dealing with infertility after our loss, there is yet another burden. We may find ourselves questioning why God would take our precious child and then allow us to struggle so much to have another one. These are tough questions, and I certainly don't pretend to know the answers. What I do know is that it helps to share with others experiencing these same difficulties. If you are struggling with infertility after a miscarriage, stillbirth or early infant death, please come join our online message board at <http://www.mend.org>. And if you are in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area, I hope you will consider attending our monthly Infertility After Loss Support Group meeting. Let's hold one another up with prayers and encouragement during this trying time! ♥

Melissa Stephens leads M.E.N.D.'s infertility after a loss support group, which meets the third Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. For more information, e-mail Melissa at Melissa@mend.org.

November/December Topic

Getting Through the Holidays
Deadline: October 10, 2007

January/February Topic

When Your Loss Is Your Last Child
Deadline: November 30, 2007

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 Web site 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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Letters to the Editor should be sent to sharlene@mend.org. All letters submitted to the editor are subject to be published in future issues, both in the print version and online, unless a letter's author expressly requests that it not be published.

Visit our Web site at:
www.mend.org



Birthday Tributes

For Tristan

A Mother's Loss

Everyday is a fight to make it through,
Without my Tristan, what do I do?
No one really knows the pain I am in,
With this smile I hide just how much I miss him.
I will never again hold my son in my arms,
And this pain will forever dwell in my heart.
Why he is gone, I will never really understand,
I just have to believe it is part of God's plan.
I would give ANYTHING to see him again,
And my longing just to hold him will never end.
And God help me to remember, he is in a better place,
And one day I will again see his beautiful face.
Lord, help me hold on with each passing day,
And in the midst of this sorrow, show me there is a way,
To take care of the children you have given me,
Until the darkness lifts and the light again, I will see.
Tristan, mommy loves you and please know I always will,
For there is a place in my heart only YOU can fill.
I will never forget the short time that we shared,
Watch for me, my precious son, until I get there.
Love Mommy, big sister Jessica, and little sister Grace.

*Written by Kristie A Donovan,
in memory of her baby boy Tristan*

Tristan Donovan

August 3, 2003

Cord Asphyxiation

Mom: Kristie Donovan

Siblings: Jessica and Grace



To my sweet Baby M,

Your little life changed mine forever. I wonder what you would be like today as a big seven-year-old: would you be contemplative like your brother Asher, joyful like your brother Brock, or feisty like your sister Ava? Would you have my brown eyes or your daddy's blue? Someday, I will meet you in a much better place. Until then, I miss and love you, little one.

Love,
Mommy



Baby M

Miscarried October 15, 1999

Antiphospholipid Antibody Syndrome

Parents: Sam and April Moreton

Siblings: Asher, Ava and Brock

Also remembering Baby Boy Moreton and Angel #3

Miscarried March 17, 2000, and August 1, 2000.

For MIRA

Through Me You Live

Sometimes I still get angry
At times I still weep

My arms still ache to hold you
Because my soul has been hurt so deep

I held you in my arms only a short while
I should have touched and kissed you a thousand times

I now wish to watch you grow
I still long to be your mother

Such a great love for you my daughter
It is a love unlike any other

I had only once my darling child
Thoughts of regret in my mind at times run wild

You died four years ago in actuality
And still pain of yesterday floods today's reality

I call each year to pass your angelversary
You are far too extraordinary for the ordinary anniversary

Priorities you certainly rearranged
My life you touched and forever changed

My heart to yours is all I have to give
Through me MIRA...

You live

© MIRACLE's Mom
Kahlilia Woodlon



MIRA

July 23, 2003

Stillborn due to prematurity

Mother: Kahlilia Woodlon

Happy 2nd Birthday Rylee!

I can't believe it has been two years! I love and miss you and think of you everyday. I hope you have a wonderful birthday with Jesus.

Love,

Mommy, Daddy, Jared, and Hunter

Rylee Lynn Crye

Stillborn October 31, 2005

Multiple brain malformations

Parents: Gene and Randi Crye

Big brothers Jared and Hunter

Remembering:

Baby Crye #1

March 21, 1994

Baby Crye #2

January 14, 1997



Ethan James Papendorf

In loving memory of Ethan celebrating a year in heaven, we miss you very much, with love from your family and friends.

Ethan, eight days with you just wasn't enough,
 Though in that short time you brought us so much!
 Having you as our first-born boy gave us great joy!
 An angel on earth, and now in heaven you'll always be
 Nine pounds and 13 ounces, cooing and smiling joyfully.

Jesus allowed us time to show you our love.

A true blessing you were, given to us from up above.

Memorable moments we will cherish, and with loved ones we will share.

Ethan, we know our life will never be the same but we continue to pray:
 Strengthen us Lord and fill our emptiness with peace, hope, and love each day.

Perhaps we will never understand why you had to go so soon.
 Although we know God has a plan, He must have needed you.

Paths in life keep us wondering just where we will be next,
 Even in laughter or in sorrow, we will live to be our best.

Now that you're safe with God, we will carry on

Day by day, no matter how long.

Our little angel is watching over us, and that keeps our love growing strong.

Rest easy little angel, dear to our hearts you'll always stay.

For your sweet angelic face is what we'll remember each and every day.

By Crystal Strasse

*"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."
 (Matthew 5:4)*

*"But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will
 soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary,
 they will walk and not be faint." (Isaiah 40:31)*



Ethan James Papendorf

August 24—31, 2006

Massive stroke

Parents: Jim and Stacy Papendorf

Happy 4th Birthday, David!

Wow! Four years old! You're our little man now, aren't you, David? Daddy and I were watching your brother play the other night and Daddy said, "I wonder what David would be like." We both ask ourselves that question so often! Sometimes I lie awake at night and wonder what life would be like with you here. Things would be so different! You'd be in pre-school now and C.J. is reaching the age when you two could truly play together. You would have so much fun! But for now, we can only have you in our hearts and in our memories. Just know that you are so very, very loved, and we wait anxiously for that day when we can have you in our arms once again!

We love you more than words can say!

Mommy, Daddy, and C.J.



David Atkins Stephens

October 23, 2003

Parents: Rob and Melissa Stephens

Little brother: C.J.

Happy 1st Birthday Chloe!

Happy birthday sweet little one! We love you and miss you so much. Here is a poem I wrote for you.

I once held a sleeping angel
 Ten tiny fingers, ten tiny toes
 Her daddy's wavy brown hair
 Her mommy's fingers and a button nose

She never made a sound
 She was as still as she could be
 Everything we ever wanted
 A tiny version of us you see

Her life on earth was very short
 But not without abundant love
 Each day I often think of her
 That blessed gift from above

I once held a sleeping angel
 For now we must be apart
 Someday I will hold her again
 Until then she will remain in my heart.

Love, Mommy and Daddy
 And your sibling on the way!

Chloe Madison Kring

September 29, 2006

Stillborn Umbilical Cord Accident

Parents: Greg and Sherri Kring



Happy 3rd Birthday to our "Little Ladybug!!"

Mattie Bell,

Happy birthday, big sister!! It has been three years since we got to hold you in our arms. We miss you so much. Your little brother is perfect, just like you. God must have let you help pick him out. We hope you are having fun playing with your Pap and all the angels. Until we get to hold you again, you are always in our hearts and minds! We love and miss you so much!!

We Love You, Forever!!

Momma, Daddy, & Eli

Mattie Bell Horton

Stillborn October 30, 2004

Pentology of Cantrell

Parents: D'Ray and Mandy Horton

Little Brother: Eli



Madison,

I'm thinking of you today and always.

Once I held you in my womb,

Forever I'll hold you in my heart!

With love from Mommy, your brother Nick, and sisters

Crystal, Monica and Angelica

Madison Faith Hunlock

September 16, 2004

Stillborn due to prematurity

Mom: Erin Hunlock

Siblings: Nick, Crystal, Monica, and Angelica



AIDAN, HAPPY 2nd BIRTHDAY!

Happy Birthday little Aidan,
 A year has come and gone,
 My love for you has never faded,
 After all you are my son.
 I'm sure you have heard my prayers,
 It was tough to let you go,
 But I know the Lord had a plan,
 That is why he took your little soul.
 I've cried so many tears,
 Because I miss you oh so much,
 What I wouldn't give,
 To have just one more touch.
 Now I'm trying so hard not to be sad,
 After all this is your day,
 So it should be good and not bad.
 I can only imagine how wonderful
 Heaven must be,
 And I look forward to when it's my time,
 You will be there to welcome me.
 But until that time comes,
 My wish for you will be,
 Is that you are smiling and playing,
 In a world filled with glee.
 So Happy Birthday my little angel,
 Because that's who you are,
 From the day that you were born,
 You stole away my heart.
 Love,
 Mommy

Aidan Shaw VanderCruyssen
 October 2 – December 3, 2005
 Polycystic Kidney Disease
 Mom: *Shane VanderCruyssen*
 Grandmother: *Jean VanderCruyssen*

**Happy 10th Birthday Schuyler**

Schuyler, my big boy! I can't believe you would be turning ten on September 28. Your little siblings talk about you all the time. Your memory is still very much alive in our house. Happy 10th Birthday! We miss you and love you!

Daddy, Mommy, Ashton, Alexa and Benjamin

Timothy Schuyler Morren, II
 September 28 – December 23, 1997
 SIDS

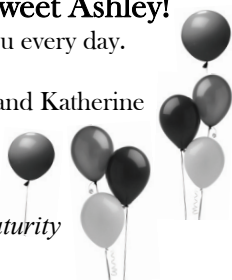
Parents: *Tim and Pam Morren*
 Siblings: *Ashton, Alexa, and Benjamin*

**Happy 8th Birthday, Sweet Ashley!**

We love you and miss you every day.

Love,
 Mama and Daddy, Laura, and Katherine

Ashley Renee Dedear
 October 29—November 1, 1999
 Placenta abruption, extreme prematurity
 Parents: *Tim and Cindy Dedear*
 Siblings: *Laura and Katherine*

**Birthday Wishes to Our Precious Baby Boy Christopher...**

Mommy and Daddy love you so much. We know you are just full of joy in God's loving arms, and for that, we praise Him. We miss you beyond what any words could ever express. We think about you all the time and long to hold you, feeling your tender face against ours. We wish we could have been with you to celebrate all that you've accomplished in your first year. You are forever in our hearts. We send you all our hugs and kisses, sweetheart.

Love you always,
 Mommy and Daddy



Christopher Michael Peplinski, II
 September 25, 2006, Umbilical cord blood clot

Happy First Birthday Isaac

Isaac,

We can't believe its almost been a year. We still think of you constantly and our hearts are still empty for you. We hope you are happy in your new home. We'll be there someday. We can't wait to hold you again; our arms feel so heavy without you in them. We wish you the very best of first birthdays. Please be with Daddy and Mommy, it will be one of the most difficult birthdays we've ever been through. We know Jesus is taking good care of you. You're in the best place, Isaac. You're never far from our thoughts. Sometimes the thought of you keeps us going, knowing that one day we'll see you again.

Happy Birthday Isaac,

We love you, We love you, We love you
 and can't tell you enough times how much.

Love and Light,
 Mom and Dad

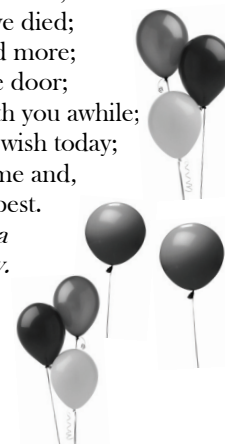


Isaac Thomas Duck
 September 8—9, 2006
 Hypoxic Ischemic Encephalopathy
 Parents: *Jonathan and Jamie Duck*
 Siblings: *Adelaide Elizabeth Duck*

For Garrett

A million times we've needed you; a million times we've cried;
 If love alone could have saved you; you never would have died;
 If all the world was ours to give; we would give it, yes and more;
 To see you coming up the steps and walking through the door;
 To hear your voice, to see your smiles; to sit and talk with you awhile;
 To be with you the same old way; would be our fondest wish today;
 Almost eight years ago a cold sad night in December came and,
 God broke out hearts to prove to us; He only takes the best.
We Love You, Mom and Dad, and little sister Samantha
 Have a Happy Birthday and know we miss you everyday.

Garrett Anthony Mayer
 October 12—December 18, 1999, Tetralogy of fallot
 Parents: *Anthony and April Mayer*
 Little sister: *Samantha*

**Happy Birthday Logan**

With all our love,
 Mom, Dad, Landry, and Hudson

Logan Wayne Fish
 September 17, 2002, Skeletal Dysplasia
 Parents: *David and Brittney Fish*
 Siblings: *Landry and Hudson*



Resource Review

When the Cradle Is Empty: Answering Tough Questions about Infertility

By John and Sylvia Van Regenmorter
Tyndale House, April 2004
ISBN: 978-1589971578

Anyone looking for Christian support during the difficult journey of infertility will find exactly that in *When the Cradle Is Empty: Answering Tough Questions about Infertility*, by John and Sylvia Van Regenmorter. Encouragement isn't all readers will find between the covers of this book. The authors, who have experienced infertility themselves and have counseled countless other infertile couples, offer sound Christian advice as well as discussion about numerous Web sites and organizations that serve as excellent resources for couples facing the challenges of infertility. I found myself taking notes throughout many of the chapters as the authors shared this valuable information, much of which I had not previously been aware. The Van Regenmorters do a beautiful job of balancing personal stories, encouragement, and their own advice for couples with facts about infertility, treatment options, and other resources for infertile couples. Topics discussed include: keeping your marriage strong, holding onto faith, pregnancy loss and infant death, high-tech treatments, secondary infertility, adoption, and numerous other timely topics. I wholeheartedly recommend this book and hope other readers will find it as helpful as I have. ♥

Review by Melissa Stephens

M.E.N.D. has a complete list of books, Web sites, organizations, and music resources available online at www.mend.org.

Our Battle with Infertility

By Paula Shear

"I can't believe you got pregnant," my doctor said several times during our sonogram visit. He went on to talk about reasons why it was so amazing that an embryo found its way. That was the one and only time we saw our little miracle's heart beating. It has been sixteen months since our loss, and no new little miracle. Our first child was conceived with the help of IVF after other procedures and a surgery failed. We are so incredibly thankful for him. He is an amazing gift from God. However, we still miss the child we lost and long for the one we have yet to conceive.

Certainly our battle with infertility is different now than it was the first time. Back then, every time we had a procedure done, someone at my work got pregnant. I lived with the reminder of what could have been on nearly a daily basis. During those years, I tried to avoid any place where I would see families. Now since our son is three, we are very involved with activities that put us in places where we see families with kids about two years apart all the time. Isaac and Baby Morgan would have been two years and three months apart. Thoughts of things they could have done together are difficult to handle sometimes. Now, pictures in a friend's photo album of a sister and brother hugging at Christmas or getting ready to leave for the prom bring pain.

Still, it's easier for me to see new babies or pregnant mothers than it used to be. I recently saw a girlfriend who has a four-year-old little boy. She is one of the moms who got pregnant when we had one of our failed fertility treatments. I did not think about the "what could have/what should have been" at all. Now that we have had our son, that time has faded.

God is so amazing, how He fills our life up with so many experiences, how He has designed us to persevere forward. I see it through M.E.N.D. all the time. Those moms and dads determine in their hearts to keep trying for that next precious life, after they have grieved for a while and feel it is God's will to have children. It's a strange sensation, longing for more children while missing the child we lost. We so often fear that our little miracles will be forgotten, but I read somewhere recently that the experiences we go through become interwoven into who we are. We do not have to worry that our little ones are being forgotten, because our time with them is a part of who we are. Every day, we are drawing from life's experiences just to live out one day.

I keep praying that those at M.E.N.D. who are finding the courage and desire from God to move on and try again will get to have the joy of looking into their next baby's eyes for the first time. For us, at times I imagine holding a little miracle at the hospital. Sometimes I imagine seeing my little one for the first time, toddling along in a room with other children from the orphanage. But we also must remember that of all the joys we can experience, the miracle of Jesus giving his life for us and allowing us to have a personal relationship with God is the most amazing miracle in all of eternity. When we see Jesus for the first time, face to face, that will be the greatest miracle ever. And the babies we lost already are experiencing that miracle! ♥

Subsequent Births

Chris and Rachel Nye,
along with big sister Carissa,
of Spring, Texas,
joyfully announce the birth of
Deason Wade,
born July 3, 2007.
He weighed 6 lb., 15 oz.,
and measured 20 ½ inches long.
The Nyes lovingly remember
David James (DJ),
stillborn July 19, 2005.

Karen Nettles and Nathan Schockmel,
along with siblings Alexandra
and Benton,
of Frisco, Texas,
welcome with love
Catherine Belle,
born February 21, 2007.
She weighed 6 lb., 3 oz.
They sadly and lovingly remember
Elizabeth Mai,
stillborn May 13, 2002,
Intrahepatic Cholestasis.

Miriam and John Lein,
along with big sister Elise,
of Siloam Springs, Arkansas,
joyfully announce the arrival of
William Phillip (Will),
July 19, 2007.
He weighed 8 lb., 15 oz.,
and measured 21 ½ inches long.
The Leins lovingly remember
Emma Anne,
with the Lord on February 21, 2006,
due to respiratory issues.

Kevin and Kelli Mainz,
along with big brother Tanner,
of Sachse, Texas,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Avery Lynn,
born June 29, 2007,
weighing 7 lb., 13 oz.,
and measuring 19 ½ inches long.
The Mainz family lovingly remember
Andrew Stephen,
stillborn April 7, 2006,
due to Fifth's Disease.

Ernie and Mandy Tschoepe,
along with big sisters Clara and Katie,
of Plano, Texas,
are blessed to announce the birth of
Bennett Erin,
born July 31, 2007,
6 lbs., 14 oz., and 19 inches long.
The Tschoepe family lovingly remember
Spencer,
stillborn July 24, 2000,
unknown cause,
Baby Jordan,
miscarried August 1, 1999.

Continued on page 11

In Loving Memory



Logan James Brewer

December 18 - 22, 2006
Prematurity
Given by parents
David and Heather Brewer

Kaylyn Rial Busker

Cole Michael Busker
Hannah Elizabeth Busker
December 10, 2004
E-Coli Infection
Given by parents
Mike and Kim Busker
and big sister Allison

James Newton Cochran

Stillborn May 18, 2007
Unknown Cause
Parents: Sallie and Stuart Cochran
Given by David and Marie Crowe

Madison Noel Coffee

Jordan Alexander Coffee
October 6, 2006
Premature Labor
Parents: Stacey and Robert Coffee

Gift of Support

Dr. Randal M. Cox
Therapeutic Optometrist
of Atlanta, TX

Jackson David Crowe

August 22 - September 9, 1998
Congenital Heart Defect
Given by parents
David and Marie Crowe
and siblings Hannah and Andy

Abigail Grace Crump

July 1, 2003
Trisomy 18
Given by parents Jaimie and Gerald Crump
and little sisters Cami and Karli

Abigail Grace Crump

July 1, 2003
Trisomy 18
Parents: Jaimie and Gerald Crump
Little sisters: Cami and Karli
Given by Julie Von Heimburg

Faith Elizabeth Durham

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

Kyler Paul English

Stillborn January 20, 2006
Cord Accident
Given by parents Laurie and Bob English
and brothers Justin, Kinser, Kelson, and Kayden

Margaret Grace Fletcher

July 28, 2001
Incompetent Cervix, Chorioamnionitis

Angelica Faith Fletcher

September 2, 2005
Incompetent Cervix, PROM
Given by parents Bob and Natalie Fletcher
and siblings Lexie, Bobby, and Aidan

James Forner

Stillborn January 5, 2007
Cord Accident

Baby Forner I

Miscarried May 2007

Baby Forner II

Miscarried June 2007
Parents: Jennifer and T.J. Forner
Given by great-aunt and great-uncle
Chuck and Debbie Walter and cousin Meghan

James Forner

Stillborn January 5, 2007
Cord Accident

Baby Forner I

Miscarried May 2007

Baby Forner II

Miscarried June 2007
Parents: Jennifer and T.J. Forner
Given by great-grandparents
Doreen and Jack Peacock

James Forner

Stillborn January 5, 2007
Cord Accident

Baby Forner I

Miscarried May 2007

Baby Forner II

Miscarried June 2007
Parents: Jennifer and T.J. Forner
Given by grandparents Cheryl and Tom Forner

Michael Garabedian, Jr.

Stillborn February 2, 1998
Cord Accident / Velamentous Cord Insertion
Adam Michael Garabedian
Stillborn July 25, 2001
Cord Accident
Given by parents Mike and Cindy Garabedian
and sisters Victoria, Elizabeth, and Catherine

Michael Garabedian, Jr.

Stillborn February 2, 1998
Cord Accident / Velamentous Cord Insertion
Adam Michael Garabedian
Stillborn July 25, 2001
Cord Accident
Parents: Cindy and Mike Garabedian
Siblings: Victoria, Elizabeth, and Catherine
Given by Garabedian Properties

Elizabeth Gentry

Stillborn August 24, 1996
Cystic Hygroma and Anasarca

Baby Gentry

Miscarried May 10, 1997

Meghan Elizabeth Gentry

June 3, 2001
Kidney Abnormality
Given by parents Shary and John Gentry
and siblings Alison and Mark

James "Jack" Henvey

July 4, 2001
Tetralogy of Fallot

Baby Henvey

Miscarried October, 2003
Given by parents Chris and Renee Henvey
and little siblings Evan and Luke

Grace Eleanor Hilshire

Miscarried September 8, 2005
Given by mom Jacquelyne Hilshire

Lowell Mitchell Howald

June 13, 2005
Bilateral Multicystic Dysplastic
Kidney Disease
Parents: Matthew and Cheryl Howald
Siblings: Will, Emma, Cecelia, Ann Marie,
and Evelyn
Given by grandparents
David and Rita Andrews

Gift of Support

IBM Charities

Sarah Ann King

Stillborn June 22, 1995
Unknown Cause
Parents: David and Lori King
Siblings: Brooks, Kaylee, and Brady
Given by David H. King Insurance Agency

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!

Hope Kirkpatrick

November 5 - 8, 2005
Amniotic Band Syndrome
Parents: Aly and Kirk Kirkpatrick
Given by Shirloynn Moffett

Chloe Madison Kring

Stillborn September 29, 2006
Cord Accident
Given by parents Greg and Sherri Kring

Joseph Charles Libby

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

Gift of Support

Metropolitan Baptist Church of Houston

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 Aunt Rachael and
Uncle Mark McClelland
and cousins Mark, Jr., and Mia

Christopher Michael Peplinski, II

Stillborn September 25, 2006
Umbilical Cord Blood Clot
Parents: Chris and Chrissy Peplinski
Given by grandparents
Carmen and Richard Quinn

Christopher Michael Peplinski, II

Stillborn September 25, 2006
Umbilical Cord Blood Clot
Parents: Chris and Chrissy Peplinski
Given by Peter Wehseler

Christopher Michael Peplinski, II

Stillborn September 25, 2006
Umbilical Cord Blood Clot
Parents: Chris and Chrissy Peplinski
Given by Jason and Jessica Epps

Christopher Michael Peplinski, II

Stillborn September 25, 2006
Umbilical Cord Blood Clot
Parents: Chris and Chrissy Peplinski
Given by Ladee Roper

Christopher Michael Peplinski, II

Stillborn September 25, 2006
Umbilical Cord Blood Clot
Parents: Chris and Chrissy Peplinski
Given by Randall and Heidi Isaak

Christopher Michael Peplinski, II

Stillborn September 25, 2006
Umbilical Cord Blood Clot
Parents: Chris and Chrissy Peplinski
Given by John and Kathleen Brouwer

Christopher Michael Peplinski, II

Stillborn September 25, 2006
Umbilical Cord Blood Clot
Parents: Chris and Chrissy Peplinski
Given by Cameron Smith and Associates

Christopher Michael Peplinski, II

Stillborn September 25, 2006
Umbilical Cord Blood Clot
Parents: Chris and Christine Peplinski
Given by great-grandmother Carmen Quinn

Kayci Lynn Pickard

Stillborn November 11, 2000
Placental Abruption
Given by parents Kevin and Diane Pickard
and sisters Kayla and Kaitlyn

Alexis Leigh and Nicole Leigh Rudeen

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

Gift of Support

Savoy 4-H Club of NW Arkansas

Christian Allen Scott

June 1, 2005
Bilateral Renal Agenesis

Savannah Scott

Miscarried January 7, 2003
Given by parents Scotty and Mary Scott
and siblings Lenny, Will, and Ariel

Hannah Grace Sherman

August 12, 2005
Cystic Hygroma Due to Turner Syndrome
Given by parents
Tommy and Toni Sherman
and big sister Kaitlin

Tylor R. Smith

Given by Kim York

Gift of Support

West Conroe Baptist Church,
Conroe, Texas

Aiden Xavier Sohn

October 13, 2002
HELLP Syndrome

Hope

Miscarried May 2003

Whisper

Miscarried October 2003
Given by parents
Doug and Angelique Sohn
and brothers Joshua, Sebastian,
and Benjamin

Mercedes Ruth Spigener

Stillborn September 21, 1995
Intramembranous Insertion
of Umbilical Cord

Twin Blossoms

Miscarried July and August 1996

Baby Spigener

Miscarried February 2004
Parents: Grant and Jana Spigener
Brothers: Wyatt, Ford, Porter, and Calvin
Given by grandparents
Barry and Sheryln Spigener

Savannah Kate Stanley

January 3, 2004
Prematurity/Incompetent Cervix

Baby Stanley

Miscarried November 10, 2004
Parents: Joel and Calli Stanley
Siblings: Colton and Danika
Given by L J Stanley & Assoc / IB Roofing

David Atkins Stephens

October 23, 2003
Possible Complications from Omphalocele
Given by parents
Rob and Melissa Stephens
and little brother C.J.

Spencer Charles Tschoepe

July 24, 2000
Unknown Cause
Given by parents
Ernie and Mandy Tschoepe
and siblings Clara, Kathleen, and Bennett

Gift of Support

James and Pam Urbanowicz

Aidan Shaw VanderCruyssen

October 2 - December 3, 2005
Polycystic Kidney Disease
Given by mom Shane VanderCruyssen

Ysenia Celeste Vergara

Stillborn August 22, 2006
Unknown Cause
Given by parents C.J. and Jennifer Vergara

Alivia Elizabeth-Grace Walker

July 24, 2006
Incompetent Cervix
Parents: Liz and Robert Walker
Given by Dale and Marnie Sanders

Praying through Infertility

By Stacey Coffee

We have been dealing with infertility for two years. In this time my husband and I have felt all the highs and lows regarding this struggle. I think one of the hardest parts about infertility is finding out the initial diagnosis. We went through our whole life not even thinking about the idea that we would have trouble starting a family. We even planned the specific month we were going to conceive. Needless to say, those dreams did not happen. We went to a specialist after months of trying Clomid without success. We actually became pregnant the first month we went to the specialist. We found out at five weeks we were expecting twins. The pregnancy went well until the end of the fifth month. The day after we went for a level II ultrasound and found out we were having a healthy boy and girl, I went into labor. We prayed for years to have children, and now our blessing was turning into a nightmare. I delivered my baby boy, Jordan Alexander, who lived only 20 minutes, and then my baby girl, Madison Noel, who lived an hour. This was the hardest thing that we ever had to go through.

October 6, 2007, will be one year since our children were born and died. I have gone through many emotions concerning God. I prayed to Him to let me conceive, I prayed for my children to live, I prayed for Him to take away my pain, and I thanked Him through it all. It was hard at times to worship Him when I felt so abandoned, but I know that Jesus felt abandoned, too, on the cross. Now I find myself at the beginning again, praying to conceive. I have gotten my reality check that I am not spared from suffering, but suffering has made me stronger. Although I have felt the pain of infertility and loss, I have to believe that God has a bigger plan and my suffering was not for nothing.

I share this story because I believe it will help other people feel that they are not alone. There are many people suffering and hoping as my husband and I are. M.E.N.D. has helped me to realize that. Right now we are taking a break from seeing the specialist but are still relying on God to answer our prayers.

Upcoming Events

October 6

- Walk To Remember in Irving, TX
- M.E.N.D. - Houston Walk To Remember

December 3

- M.E.N.D. - Texarkana Christmas Ceremony

December 4

- Christmas Ceremony in Irving, TX

December 7

- M.E.N.D. - Houston Christmas Ceremony

December 11

- M.E.N.D. - NW Arkansas Christmas Ceremony

This is a poem that I wrote the day of our precious twins' funeral. We miss them greatly, but we know that God is holding them close.

Our Precious Two Babies

*Our precious two babies
That are blessed from above,
Can you feel our hearts
And everlasting love?*

*You both grabbed our fingers
And moved all around;
You opened your mouths,
Yet there was no sound.*

*We felt your hearts beating
In your little chests,
But we knew it wouldn't be long
Til they would rest.*

*You were blessed with water
As soon as you arrived.
We knew it was only
Minutes that you would survive.*

*Jordan Alexander,
You looked so much like your daddy;
You had his handsome face.
Looking at him holding you
Is a thought I can't replace.*

*You died in your daddy's arms
As tears ran down his face.
The Lord took you in His arms
And is holding you extra safe.*

*Madison Noel,
You looked like your mommy
With pretty little fingers and a small pink nose.
I loved feeling you grab my fingers
And wiggle your little toes*

*Your heart stopped beating too soon
As I held you tight,
But I knew your older brother was waiting
To take you to the light.*

*The way you looked so perfect
Is something we can't believe.
You looked like little angels,
A mirror of daddy and me.*

*We picture you playing with Zima,
Pulling on his ears.
Knowing he is keeping you safe and warm
Alleviates our fears.*

*Our precious two babies
That are blessed from above,
Can you feel our hearts
And everlasting love? ♥*

*In loving memory of Madison Noel and Jordan Alexander Coffee
October 6, 2006, premature labor
Parents: Stacey and Robert Coffee*

Subsequent Births ... continued

Gregg and Stephanie Edmonds
of Spring, Texas,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Colter Allen,
born June 7, 2007,
8 lb., 4 oz., 20 inches long.
The Edmonds family lovingly remember
Baby Edmonds, miscarried December 1, 2005.

Julianne and Jamie Linn,
along with siblings

Lydia, Chloe, Christian, and Ava,
of Keller, Texas,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Gabriel Tate,
born June 23, 2007,
7 lb., 4 oz., and 21 ½ inches long.
The Linn family lovingly remember
Annelise Joy,
August 18 - 20, 2003,
Anencephaly.

Ed and Carrie Serrano

of Emporia, Kansas,
welcome with love
Kellen Eduardo Tomas,
born July 9, 2007,
6 lb., 14 oz., 18 1/2 inches long.
The Serranos lovingly remember
Ryker Lee,
stillborn May 18, 2006, CMV.

Lauren and Jason Kunz,
along with big sister Mallory,
of Midlothian, Texas,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Grant Charles
(4 lb., 6 oz., 17.2 inches long)
and Gavin Paul
(4 lb., 1 oz., 17.2 inches long)
on June 9, 2007.

The Kunz family lovingly remember
Gabriel,
March 11, 2005,
and Connor,
October 29, 2005.

Karla and Jeffrey Davis,
along with siblings Barbara,
Rebekkah, and DeLana,

of Houston, Texas,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Seth Clinton Davis,
born July 5, 2007,
weighing 7 lb., 15oz.,
and measuring 19 inches long.
The Davis family lovingly remember
Sofia Cassandra,
stillborn on July 30, 2006,
due to Trisomy 18.

Don and Sandy Huelsebusch,
along with siblings Ashlie and Courtnie,
of Bryan, Texas,
announce the arrival of
Cayden Alan,
born at August 26, 2007,
7 lb., 11 oz., and 20 ¼ inches long.
The Huelsebuschs lovingly remember
Alan John,
stillborn March 9, 2006.

Jamie and Jonathan Duck

of Marietta, Ohio,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Adelaide Elizabeth,
born August 16, 2007,
7 lb., 2 oz., and 19 ¾ inches long.
The Ducks lovingly remember
Isaac Thomas,
September 8 - 9, 2006,
Hypoxic Ischemic Encephalopathy.

God's Plan for Our Family

By Monica Davis

Shawn and I had been married for about five years when we decided it was time to start our family. Little did we know our plan was not God's plan. After years of struggling with infertility, God blessed us with a pregnancy. We couldn't believe it; we were finally going to be parents! Then on December 23, we found out we were going to be parents of twins. This was something that we had been praying for, so we were beyond excitement when we realized we were going to have two babies. Everyone around us was also very excited. I was pregnant with my closest friends at our church.

I made it through the first trimester so I thought everything would be smooth sailing from here on. On April 14, our world was rocked. I went into labor at 5 1/2 months, and I lost my boys, Joshua Mark and Caleb Matthew, due to an incompetent cervix. Shawn and I were devastated. Even though we had wonderful friends and family that surrounded us, very few had experienced the loss of a baby, much less two. During this tragedy, we had a very difficult time understanding God's plan.

The next two years were a complete roller coaster. Not only had we lost our babies, but we did not know if I would ever become pregnant again. We were in total despair. We decided to try IVF one more time in hopes that I would become pregnant. We were devastated once again when IVF did not result in a pregnancy. We were emotionally, physically, and financially drained.

We began talking to friends and family about the possibility of adopting. The more we talked about it, the more we felt God leading us to adopt. In September 2001, Shawn and I traveled to Abilene, Texas, for an orientation at Christian Homes. We knew after our first session that this was what we were supposed to do. We both had a complete peace about adopting, and we both were excited about the baby God had already chosen for us. Once again, we were faced with challenges, because the amount of paperwork that has to be completed for an adoption is overwhelming not to mention, the home studies and background checks that have to take place. I was constantly reminded how unfair this was, but I knew God was in it, and I had to keep reminding myself to completely trust Him. While we were waiting for the paperwork to be processed, I was praying and had started a prayer journal. In this prayer journal, I

had prayed that our adoption would be fast. I prayed for our birth-mother while at the same time she was praying for a Christian family for her baby. I prayed that our baby would have olive skin, dark hair, and would look like us. On April 17, 2002 (two years from the loss of our twins), I got a call from our adoption agency. On May 16, 29 days later, we brought home a healthy baby boy. My prayers had been answered, even the most specific ones. My son has dark hair, olive skin, and he does look like us. God's timing is perfect! In Jeremiah, God says that he has a plan for us. We just have to trust in His plan.

When our son was two we decided to adopt again, once again trudging through mounds of paperwork and home visits. After one adoption failed because the birth mom decided to parent, we were devastated again. Once again, we depended on God to get us through. At the time, we certainly did not understand why we were going through this disappointment. Hadn't we already been refined?

On August 25, 2005, while I was in Dallas, I got a call from the agency. Our caseworker told me that there was a healthy baby girl for us, and we would need to be in Abilene the next day to get her. Our daughter had been in foster care for nine weeks with the most precious foster parents anyone could ever ask for. We had exactly 29 hours to prepare. At first, we were doubtful of the situation, and then we quickly realized that if this is the baby that God had chosen for us, then we were willing to be her parents. Kylie was in foster care because her birth mom decided really late to place. Her foster parents had taken Kylie home from the hospital. We were able to meet the foster parents when we got Kylie, and they had kept a journal about her during the time with them. Once again I had prayed for a fast adoption. God took care of that. He answers prayers.

It is my prayer for each of you to allow God to heal you then begin a new work and let Him use you in ways that you know are only from HIM. ♥



M.E.N.D. Chapter Corner

Chapter Meeting Information

M.E.N.D. - NW Arkansas

Meets the 1st Tuesday from 7:00—8:30 p.m.
Jones Center for Families, Room 206,
922 East Emma Avenue,
Springdale, AR 72765
Director: April Moreton
April@mend.org, (479) 524-3500

Subsequent pregnancy group meets in the same place the 4th Tuesday, 7:00—8:30 p.m., 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 107
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.
HEALTHSOUTH Houston
Rehabilitation Institute
17506 Red Oak Drive, Houston, TX 77090
Director: Jaimie Crump
Jaimie@mend.org, (281) 374-8528
Subsequent pregnancy group meets in the same place the 1st Thursday, 7:30 p.m., led by Sarah Winebrenner (swinebrenner2004@yahoo.com).

M.E.N.D. - Georgia

Offers peer support through phone and e-mail contact.
Director: Marie Stockdale
Marie@mend.org, (770) 954-1115

M.E.N.D. - Texarkana

Meets 3rd Thursday 7:00 p.m.
CHRISTUS St. Michael Rehab Hospital
2400 St. Michael Drive
Texarkana, TX 75503
Director: Monica Davis
Monica@mend.org, (903) 490-1210

M.E.N.D. - Nacogdoches

Meets the 2nd Thursday at 7:30 p.m.
The Badders Law Firm
4002 North St., Nacogdoches, TX 75961
Director: Lori De La Torre
Lori@mend.org, (936) 569-1739

To find other organizations that offer support groups in your area, visit www.mend.org or call Rebekah at (972) 506-9000.

M.E.N.D. Chapter Updates

NW Arkansas

Our group welcomed another subsequent baby in July, the ninth since our chapter opened in March 2005. It's a tremendous blessing to share these blessings with our M.E.N.D. families.

Our first major fundraiser is just around the corner. Chrissy Peplinski, our fundraising director, and her team, including Aly Kirkpatrick and Pam Morren, are doing an amazing job getting the word out about our fundraiser to NW Arkansas. So far, we've had several major companies donate major gifts to the vital ministry of M.E.N.D. We have received support from over 40 individuals and companies, including General Mills, Blue Bunny, and Marriott.

April Moreton

Kansas

Our group is planning our first benefit Bunco Bash at Flint Halls Mall in Emporia on October 19, at 6:30 p.m. Groups will be made up of 12 people, and there will be prizes for each group as well as drawings for other items. Please mark your calendars for this evening of friendship, fun and food, all the while benefitting a good cause.

In other news, we've sadly welcomed some new faces to our group. Though we always hurt for those who are newly grieving, we welcome the opportunity to comfort them with the comfort we ourselves have received from the Lord.

Stephanie Metzger

Houston

The Houston Chapter is looking forward to our 2nd Annual Walk to Remember on October 6. Russ Massey will be our speaker this year (he spoke at the Dallas Walk in 2006). He serves as a full-time missionary, a Bible teacher, and a grandfather who lost his first granddaughter. We will have wonderful music and a breathtaking balloon release. Invitations went out in mid-August. However, anyone in the Houston area who has lost a baby (along with family and friends) is invited to attend. Each family will receive an ornament with their baby's name. RSVPs are requested to jaimie@mend.org or 281-374-0141.

Jaimie Crump

Georgia

M.E.N.D.—Georgia continues to minister to families in our area in a personal way. We also continue to be blessed with subsequent births. As we go forward and seek the Lord's will for our group, we draw closer to Him and one another. It's an honor and a privilege to be able to reach out to hurting families in our area.

Marie Stockdale

Texarkana

Texarkana had a recent fundraiser dinner at McAlister's Deli. We served, fellowshiped, ministered, and just had a great time. Through this, we were able to get the word out about M.E.N.D. in our community and made some good contacts. A huge thank you goes to Jennifer, Toni, Tania, Christal, and Melissa, who worked hard to make the event a success.

Monica Davis

Nacogdoches

After six months of being in Nacogdoches, we continue to spread the word about M.E.N.D. and keep praying for families who have had to say goodbye to their little ones. We are very excited to get our first fundraiser under way in September.

Lori De La Torre

M.E.N.D. offers an opportunity for families to share Web pages that memorialize babies lost due to miscarriage, stillbirth, or neonatal death. If you have a memorial Web page for your baby and would like to add your link to our site, visit www.mend.org and click on "Resources."

Secondary Infertility

By April Moreton

A friend once quoted Dr. Seuss to me: “A person is a person, no matter how small.” This thought became deeply meaningful to me at the first ultrasound of my first pregnancy. The nurse practitioner casually mentioned that I might not be as far along as I had thought; instead of eight weeks, perhaps I was only six. I knew differently and left the office with a sense of dread. A week later, we lost our first baby. That was October 1999. By February I was pregnant again and was able to see my obstetrician right away due to my recent loss. Immediately, there was concern that my second pregnancy was not normal either. Four weeks later, I lost our second baby. Although disillusionment began to set in, I was gently reminded that the odds were still in my favor to go on and have a normal, healthy pregnancy. However, my obstetrician suggested that my husband, Sam, and I conduct a few tests to rule out possible causes. We learned that both of us were genetically healthy and that our second baby was a normal baby boy.

Four months later, we conceived our third baby. Sam and I did not let ourselves get excited or attached to this baby. Early blood testing confirmed those fears and shortly thereafter, our third baby was gone. With this loss, I became a statistic: I was one of the very few women who experience three or more consecutive miscarriages. I had quite literally beat the odds and, as my medical records indicated, was a “habitual aborter.” Though I conceived easily, I could not carry to term. I was infertile.

Sam and I had spent our adult lives in ministry serving children and youth at Pine Cove Christian Camp. At the time of our losses, Sam was the children’s pastor at Dallas Bible Church. I had recently graduated from Dallas Seminary. We knew all the theological implications of God’s sovereignty. We knew that He was a good God and that He loved us. However, the losses of our babies revealed an entitlement that was unconsciously lurking in my soul: if I faithfully served God, was obedient to His word, sacrificed for His kingdom work, I shouldn’t have to experience the loss of an unborn baby.

However, we were losing babies and decided to use all of God’s resources – physicians, research and wise counsel – to find an answer. We attended the M.E.N.D. Candlelight Ceremony shortly after Baby M died in October and later a support group meeting. Sam and I underwent more testing with a reproductive endocrinologist (RE) in Dallas. We learned that I was normal and healthy with no apparent reason to suffer repeated miscarriages. We spent hundreds of dollars trying to find an answer. In the meantime, I spent a lot of time on an infertility website. From the website, I contacted Dr. Carolyn Salafia in New York, who later evaluated D&C samples from two of my pregnancies. Her words to me: if your heart can stand another pregnancy (and another pos-

sible loss), you should treat for APA Syndrome.

Convincing my RE to support the treatment for APA Syndrome was no small task. Basically, I had to persuade him that I had done my research and knew enough to have an educated opinion. He agreed, and one year later – and to God’s Glory – Asher Luke was born. His biblical name means “blessed” and “happy,” and indeed his life has brought us great happiness.

My infertility diagnosis made me feel like a failure as a woman and wife. For both of us, infertility forced us to dig deep into our true beliefs about God and His will. It revealed disbelief in the depths of my heart. It forced me to trust Him in new ways. And now – seven years later – I can say that it has changed my life for the better. ♥

April L. Moreton
Mommy to Baby M, Baby Boy Moreton, and Angel #3,
miscarried due to
Antiphospholipid Antibody Syndrome,
and Asher, Ava, and Brock on earth.

“Infertility and Pregnancy Loss” ... continued from page 1

Whether you suffer with primary or secondary infertility, my heart hurts for you. Please know you are not alone, and we at M.E.N.D. will do all we can to offer you information, resources, and support. Don’t go through this alone. Come join us either online or in person. There are many couples who fully know your pain and may know something you have not heard about or tried that could be the answer to your situation. Or, you may be the one who has a wealth of information to pass on, or perhaps you have a success story to share. Either way, we invite you to participate, make new friends, and comfort each other with the comfort we have all received from the Lord. ♥

Rebekah Mitchell

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.

Daddies group

meets the 2nd Thursday of

March, June, Sept. and Dec., 7:30—9:00 p.m.
A time for dads to meet together and discuss topics relevant to them as fathers. Our moms and dads meet together for introductions before dividing into two groups for discussion.

Food and Fellowship

A time to relax and meet with other M.E.N.D. parents in a social setting
Contact Brittney Fish: brwniefish@aol.com

Subsequent pregnancy group
meets the 4th Tuesday from 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.

Led by Suzanne Schramm:

Suzanne@mend.org

For families who are considering becoming pregnant or are currently pregnant after a loss.

Playgroup

For families with children born prior to or subsequent to a loss. Meeting at various locations.
Contact Mary Steen or Brandee Dill for more info: Mary_Steen@hotmail.com
or dillsforchrist@yahoo.com

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.

Infertility group

Meets the 3rd Monday from 7:30—9:00 p.m.

Led by Melissa Stephens:

Melissa@mend.org

For families experiencing infertility after a loss.

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 in Texas and Louisiana 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. Just go to the website at <http://www.ithinkinc.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.
- **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.
- M.E.N.D. member Michelle McHone is a consultant with **Arbonne International**, offering pure Swiss skin care, color, nutrition, and aromatherapy. E-mail her at michellemchone@msn.com to place any order and 35% of the sale will go back to M.E.N.D.
- **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.
- **GoodSearch.com** is a search engine that donates half its revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. Powered by Yahoo!, it is used like any other search engine. To earn money for M.E.N.D. using Goodsearch.com, go to www.goodsearch.com and designate M.E.N.D. as your charity of choice.
- **Ebay** has a charitable giving program that can benefit M.E.N.D. If you sell items on Ebay and would like to designate a percentage of your revenue to M.E.N.D., visit www.missionfish.org to find out how.

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"... that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God" (2 Corinthians 1:4)