



## *Holiday Traditions...old ones lost, new ones found*

While I was growing up, Christmas at our house was always (and still is) a really big deal. A tradition that my mom began was decorating the house into a beautiful fairyland. There was not a nook or cranny that was not adorned with some sort of spectacular décor. Attending Christmas Eve communion at church always began the two-day celebration, followed by dinner at whatever restaurant was open. Falling asleep that night was certainly a challenge, for we knew what joyful events to expect the next day. When the six of us kids were young, none of us were allowed to go downstairs until we sat on the stairs in our pajamas for a family photo. Then we nearly killed each other racing down the 14 steps to the den, where all our gifts were displayed in sections with our name posted on our individual gift stations. We were lavished with an exorbitant amount of clothes, toys, and gadgets, followed by a huge breakfast that was primarily cooked by my dad. The day continued with a feast that could have fed an army, then more gifts from grandparents and a few extended family members. We were exhausted by bedtime, but went to sleep excited from the day and filled with new memories that have lasted a lifetime.

Christmases at our house really weren't just about a decorated home or tons of gifts. First and foremost, it was about celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ. And secondly, it was about tradition. Traditions that my parents created for us and to this day have special meaning and wonderful memories. Traditions that I planned to re-create in my home when I got married and became a mom. Traditions that I hoped my children would pass down to their children someday.

I'm pretty sure the first Christmas I really remember was when I was four years old. That is the exact age my son Byron, Jr. was the first Christmas after we lost our stillborn baby, Jonathan. Up until then I was pretty much able to continue the customs I had grown up with, sprinkling a few new ones in that were conducive to our little family. But as the holidays drew near that season of 1995, I couldn't imagine how in the world I was going to emotionally survive, let alone play elf, Santa Claus, wife, mommy, daughter, sister, and every other role I had so enjoyed having before then. My main concern was that I would ruin perhaps the first Christmas my son would ever remember.

How could I even go into Toys R Us and shop for him? How could I have him pose all alone on the steps when he should have a baby brother in his lap? How could I set up only one gift station when there should be two? How could I "do" Christmas without ruining it for everybody?

Only by the grace of God did we survive Christmas that year. My husband, Byron, and I went to the toy store together and made the best of it. Certainly the mood was a bit somber in that we weren't also buying toys for a baby, but we tried to focus on the newest and greatest toys for our happy, energetic four-year-old son. Like every year, we joined my family for communion on Christmas Eve and dinner at a restaurant. I had my sad moments when I awakened the next morning but was able to plaster on a smile when my little boy was ready to bound down the stairs after his picture was taken in his new Christmas PJs. We laughed as he squealed with every new toy he found under the tree, and we happily sat around the kitchen table as we ate the traditional cinnamon rolls and chocolate milk breakfast. However, the tears could not be contained any longer when we stopped by the cemetery to visit Jonathan's grave on our way to my parents' house. Reality that our second little boy was not with us hit harder than I ever expected. I was absolutely inconsolable when we got to my parents'. They truly thought something horribly tragic had just happened. When they realized why I was so upset, they announced to the rest of the family that everyone was to stop what they were doing, load in their cars, and caravan to the cemetery. As an extended family we held hands and gathered in a circle around my baby's grave. My dad led us in a time of prayer, thanking God for his little life, and asking for peace and comfort for us all.

I realized then that a new tradition had begun in my family. We don't collectively go to the grave every year on Christmas Day, but certainly my little Jonathan and the baby we miscarried a few years later are ...

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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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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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## Reader's Corner

Rebekah,

Your recent article "Who Am I? Finding a New Identity in Grief" resonates with me as I find myself in a mid-life crisis of sorts, while I mourn the life that I had expected for my son, who has autism, and for me. Although I have the maturity, the energy and the enthusiasm to work in a formal setting, Mark's special needs require me to be more flexible with my time.

The older I get, the more I realize that life does not work out as we had planned and that we must learn to accept all that has happened, including that which we do not understand or appreciate. I will never forget the three babies I lost, and my memories of them shape how I see everything. I don't like some of what I have endured, but I don't know who I would be today if I had not met people like you after my first two losses, or a psychotherapist after my third, or many autism moms now. Your path does not cross much with mine these days, but you are always there when I need you as a friend.

You help so many people through M.E.N.D. I do not have the desire or the courage to keep my pregnancy losses a large part of my public identity as you have, but I hope that you feel proud, and that your work with M.E.N.D. has been rewarding. Although I am sorry that you did not get to raise the number of kids that you had hoped for, I am glad that you are finding peace with what you have.

I can imagine ways in which having one child can be wonderful in a different way from having more than one. You wrote once about rarely missing Byron's baseball games. Because of having two kids, one with special needs, I miss many of Ali's softball games, and I regret that. More importantly, I hope that you think of M.E.N.D. as your child, because I do. Now that Byron is older and more independent, you have time to nurture this "baby" of yours.

As parents, we struggle to raise our children to be kind and to help others. The organization that you gave birth to clearly has accomplished that, and in doing so has kept alive the memory of Jonathan. Thank you, Rebekah, for your friendship and for M.E.N.D.

♥ Shary Gentry,  
M.E.N.D.—Dallas

Hello Rebekah,

I just had to take a minute to sit and write you to let you know how inspirational I found the newsletter to be this past month. I found it to be filled with HOPE. I know it always is, but something about all the women's stories this month—they were God-focused and encouraging in a way that truly blessed me.

Something I have been praying about for months for the women in our group is that they would grab hold of the HOPE that comes only from the Lord. I know that for all the ladies who are so fresh in their grief that can be hard, but when I read the newsletter I just knew that many of the women in our group would be blessed by the amazing Christian women who God has "made new." How He is the one and only answer to our grief, pain, and the confusion that a loss can bring.

I absolutely loved it. I always enjoy it and it touches me each time I get it, but there was an underlying HOPE that struck a chord with me for the women in Houston specifically. Immediately after reading this I was prompted to write and tell you how wonderful I thought this edition of the newsletter was.

What a huge blessing M.E.N.D. is in my life, and I am thankful that God has gathered so many women together to glorify Him through their losses. Each and every month I stand amazed at how God uses this ministry in my life and so many others! Thanks for all you and Jaimie do.

♥ Sarah Winebrenner,  
M.E.N.D.—Houston

## Book Review

### *Giant Hero*

Told by Angie and Cecil Bellephant  
Written by Tracy Ahrens  
Infinity Publishing  
[www.infinitypublishing.com](http://www.infinitypublishing.com)

*Giant Hero* is the story of little Titus Bellephant, who lived for 15 short hours. Titus was diagnosed with Potter's Syndrome (Bilateral Renal Agenesis) when his mom Angie was five months pregnant with him.

*Giant Hero* tells the heartbreaking story of Titus' diagnosis, the tough decisions the Bellephants were asked to make, and the continuation of a pregnancy they prayed would have a miraculous outcome. The Bellephants openly share how they spiritually dealt with the diagnosis and subsequent death of their baby. They also express some conflicts in their relationship with each other, yet they share how they could not have survived the grief without one another.

The book concludes with extensive medical information and research explaining the varying classifications of Potter's. Additionally, several resources on Potter's Syndrome are listed.

♥ *Review by Rebekah Mitchell,*  
M.E.N.D.—President

### *A Symphony in the Dark:*

#### Hearing God's Voice in Seasons of Grief

by Rebecca Rainey Mutz and Barbara Rainey

<http://www.shopfamilylife.com/symphony-in-the-dark.html>

This beautiful book is intimately and powerfully written from the two different perspectives of a mother and grandmother about a precious little girl, Molly Ann Mutz. It is a story about a little girl who was on this earth for seven days and whose parents, grounded in their faith, chose to depend the Creator of Life to get them through all the decisions that had to be made concerning her. The sweet symphony of Molly's life is echoed in each page of this book; teaching a family how to enter into grief with faith, pulling them closer together by celebrating each day, and cherishing memories and learning how this tiny life will play a bigger part in God's ultimate plan. This book is for anyone who has had to make the agonizing decision to take their baby off of life support, but also for anyone who would like to see a vivid picture of what absolute dependence on God looks like and the blessings that come from it.

♥ *Review by Jaimie Crump,*  
M.E.N.D.—Houston Chapter Director

M.E.N.D. has a complete list of books, Web sites, organizations, and music resources available online at [www.mend.org](http://www.mend.org).

If you would like to submit a review of books, music, Web sites or other resources dealing with infant loss, please email them to our newsletter editor Heather Fann at [heather@mend.org](mailto:heather@mend.org).

*January/February Topic*  
How Extended Family Grieves—  
Or Doesn't  
Deadline: November 30, 2009

*March/April Topic*  
Grief Revisited—  
Days, Weeks, Months, or Years Later  
Deadline: January 31, 2010

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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# Birthday Tributes

## Happy 7<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Laiken!

My Dear Little Princess Laiken,

Wow! Can it be that this is your 7th heavenly birthday, baby girl? The time sure has flown by. I wonder what you would be doing at 7 years old. What would your favorite color be or your favorite activities? Who would be your best friend at school, and what would be your best subject? Would you have blond hair as you did when you were born, or would it have changed color? Would you be tall like your brothers or petite like your sisters? Would you have my smile? Would you like to joke like your Daddy?

Some days it seems like this was all a bad dream a long, long time ago—did we really go through this? Other times it feels like it just happened yesterday. The world kept moving, even when we felt like it should stand still... and we moved forward even when we were sure we wouldn't be able to. One thing that never changed was that we love you, we miss you, and we will always remember and include you in our family. You are our princess and someday we will be with you again.

I pray that you have the best 7th heavenly birthday with all of your angel friends surrounding you. Know that your mommy, daddy, sisters and brothers will be sending up lots of hugs and kisses to you. I know God is holding you until I can, and for that I have peace. Love you, baby girl.

Love,

Mommy, Daddy, Arianna, Jarod, Gavin, and Alyvia

*Laiken Riley Madison Kale*

*September 15, 2002*

*HELLP Syndrome*

*and severe prematurity (24 weeks)*

*Parents: Rick and Alysha Kale*

*Siblings: Arianna, Jarod, Gavin, and Alyvia*



## Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Jadon and Caleb!

Our precious boys,

Missing you and praying you have a blessed first birthday in heaven.

Love,

Mommy and Daddy

*Jadon and Caleb Sparks*

*December 21, 2008*

*Premature at 21 weeks*

*Parents: Cecil and Brandie Sparks*



## Happy 6<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Caleb Scott!

Dear Sweet Caleb,

This year would have brought so many changes to our lives... you would have started kindergarten this fall, and I'm sure that our weekends would have been filled by various football or baseball practices and games.

It seems nearly impossible that we held you so many years ago. We're busy chasing your little sister around, and she's learning more about you and August all the time. Your cousins are all learning about you, too, and you're such a huge part of our family even though you're so far away.

Mommy and Daddy hope that you are honored by the way that we are sharing our experiences with other hurting families. You made us the compassionate people we are today.

We love you, baby!

Daddy, Mommy, and Maddie

*Caleb Scott Fann*

*December 1, 2003*

*PROM*

*Parents: Jonathan and Heather Fann*

*Sibling: Madison Grace*

*Also remembering:*

*Baby August*

*Miscarried August 13, 2004*



## Happy 3<sup>rd</sup> Birthday, Janelle!

Our precious Janelle,

Happy 3rd birthday in heaven! I can't believe three years have passed since we last held in you in our arms. God has allowed so much healing in our lives. Not a day goes by that you are not missed and thought of.

We will celebrate your birthday with cake and release three balloons for your three years in heaven. We wonder if your hair would be blonde or brown and what your sweet voice would sound like and if you would be a girly girl. Your brothers love you so much. Will especially thinks of you and still feels great sadness. We love so much our sweet princess, Janelle.

Love,

Mom, Dad, Will, Andrew, and Isaac

*Janelle Marie Gibson*

*Stillborn November 17, 2006*

*Possible cause placental blood clot*

*Also remembering Gabriel Gibson*

*Ectopic pregnancy October 31, 2007*

*Parents: Scott and Jodie Gibson*

*Brothers: Will, Andrew, and Isaac*





### Happy 3<sup>rd</sup> Birthday, Logan!

Dear Logan,

Happy 3rd birthday in heaven! We find peace in knowing that God's will is being done, and that we will see you again. Oh, how we can't wait for that wonderful moment! We love you and miss you so very much. Happy heavenly birthday!

Love,  
Mommy, Daddy, and Landon

*Logan James Brewer  
December 18-22, 2006*

*Premature*

*Parents: David and Heather Brewer*

*Little brother: Landon James*



### Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Trinady!

Trinady,

Even though you are up in heaven you are with us in our hearts every second of every day. We miss you more than words can describe. Alexah will probably want to send you some balloons, so keep a look out! We love you and happy birthday, my angel!

Love,  
Mom, Dad, and big sis Alexah

*Trinady Lynn Vance  
November 7—December 12, 2008*

*Brain Tumor*

*Parents: Jeff and Shannon Vance*

*Big sister: Alexah*



### Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Anna!

To our sweet Anna,

It has almost been a year since we held you in our arms, kissed you, and whispered "we love you." Although you lived for just a short while you have changed our lives forever. We feel your presence and will hold onto your memory in our hearts always.

With all of our love,  
Mommy and Daddy

*Anna Jacqueline Radack  
November 1, 2008*

*Severe Preeclampsia/HELLP syndrome*

*Parents: Jeff and Jill Radack*

*Sibling: Baby brother on the way*



### Happy 5<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Cole, Kaylyn, and Hannah!

Sending lots of hugs and kisses to heaven for your special day! We can't believe that you would be five years old now. Hopefully you are having a big party in heaven for your birthday with lots of cake and ice cream! We miss you so much and love you with all of our heart!

Happy birthday to you—our precious angels!  
All our love,  
Mom, Dad and big sister Ally

*Cole, Kaylyn, and Hannah Busker  
December 10, 2004*

*Stillborn—Ecoli Infection*

*Parents: Mike and Kim Busker*

*Big sister: Allison*



### Happy 3<sup>rd</sup> Birthday, our sweet Rachel!

Not a day goes by that we don't feel the hole left in our family with you not here. I know you are safe and happy in God's arms and I can't wait to see you again. Our hearts once again break that we can't spend your birthday with you. We will be celebrating your short life here with the hope that one day our family chain will be linked together again in heaven, and we can all celebrate together. We love you forever and always.

Love,  
Daddy, Mommy, Jake, and Shane

*Rachel Stephanie Blaney  
Blunt force trauma  
due to automobile accident  
December 5, 2006*

*Parents: Sam and Lori Beth Blaney*

*Big Brothers: Jake and Shane*



### Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Nicholas!

We love you so much, Sweetpea, and not a day goes by that we don't miss you or yearn to hold you. We know that you are always with us by the little miracles you send us from heaven, and we look for them every day.

With all of our love,  
Mommy and Daddy

*Nicolas Jan Szajek  
Stillborn December 6, 2008*

*Unknown Cause*

*Parents: Peter and Nicole Szajek*



*Continued on page 6...*

Continued from page 5...

### Happy 3<sup>rd</sup> Birthday, Baby Prado!

It's been three years since you came into my life, and how I miss you so! Not a day has passed where I have not thought about you. Sometimes when I feel a cool breeze pass me by or when I look deep into your brother's or sister's eyes, I feel your presence and know you are with me.

Although I miss you, you were not mine to keep, and you returned home to the Heavenly Father, where you live in His eternal sunshine with the rest of our family.

Keep watch over us always, and know that I love you and carry you in my heart always. You are forever my little baby.

Love you always,  
Mommy, Grandma,  
Noah, and Emmanuelle



*Baby Prado*

*Miscarried December 25, 2006*

*Mommy: Manuela Prado*

*Siblings: Noah Xavier and Emmanuelle Margarita*

### Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Angelina!

It's been a year, and I'm still praying and grieving for you, sweet angel. Your family is still missing you, but we know God is taking care of you. I could not ask for you, darling, to be in a better place than heaven. We love you and miss you so much!

Love always,  
Mommy and family



*Angelina Landeros*

*Stillborn December 5, 2008*

*Unknown Cause*

*Mommy: Angelica Landeros*

### Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Gabriel!

To our precious son,

It is so hard to believe that it has been a year since we saw you for the first and the last time. Your time with us was so short, but your memory will last with us forever. We look forward to the day that we can hold you in our arms once again. We love you and miss you more and more each day. Sending lots of hugs and kisses!

Love,  
Mommy and Daddy



*Gabriel Laws*

*December 17, 2008*

*Hydrops*

*Parents: Joe and Regina Laws*

### Happy 13<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Boys!

Joshua and Jeromy,

Teenage, junior high drama...would we have been ready for that? Would our house be the "cool" place to hang out? Would you boys be on the eighth grade football team? Would I have made mums for homecoming this year? Would you boys be going off to mission trips with your youth group? Gosh, so many questions... and I will never know the answers to any of them.

I feel that I have missed so much. I wanted to share all of these moments with you, but I never got a chance. You left me too soon. I feel sad for your dad, too, because he loves nothing more than sharing time with his boys.

I just hope for the day that we can get to know one another. I long for heaven, where I will see your faces and hear your laughter! Until that day comes, I live vicariously through the lives of your brothers. It is amazing how they never knew you and yet they long for you, too! No matter how much time passes there will always be a void in our family.

I pray that this birthday will be the best one yet in heaven! I believe that you are healthy, whole and having a great time with MaMa and Papa Markum and Uncle Wesley.

I love you so much,  
Mom



*Joshua and Jeromy Barsanti*

*November 21, 1996*

*Anencephaly*

*Parents: Randy and DaLana Barsanti*

*Siblings: Taylor Wesley, Collin, Harrison, and Riley*

### Happy 8<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Catherine Mary!

I imagine your long dark hair with a princess crown on top. As I twirl you around in my daydreams, I imagine you happy and laughing. We send our love to you in your heavenly castle.

We miss you. We miss all the wonderful things you would be doing as an eight-year-old. And, we miss seeing you play with your little brother and sister. Alex and Allison each made a cross for you. They ask about you frequently and we talk about you often. Heavenly birthday wishes to you, most precious angel.

Love,  
Mommy, Daddy, Alex and Allison

*Catherine Mary Martin*

*Stillborn: December 15, 2001*

*Trisomy 18*

*Parents: Nancy and Glenn Martin*

*Siblings: Alex and Allison*



## Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> Birthday, Caley!

Dear Caley,

Happy second birthday, my love. We are missing you daily but know that you are with our Lord and Savior every day, and that brings us peace. I have met some amazing parents because of you and feel blessed in my sorrow. Hoping to do more good here with you in our hearts!

Love,  
Mom and Dad  
xoxoxoxo



*Caley Brianna Joyce*  
*November 12-26, 2007*  
*Born premature at 28 weeks due to severe preeclampsia*  
*NEC*  
*Parents: Jon and Jennifer Joyce*

## Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Jaebird!

Your tiny footprints rest heavy upon our hearts! Your life has touched so many, yet you never took in one breath of air. Sleep peacefully, my angel, and look after your little sister!  
Love always and forever more!

*Jaelyn Walker North*  
*Stillborn November 6, 2008*  
*Unknown cause*  
*Parents: Amber-Rashel Robinson*  
*and Julian North*  
*Siblings: July Kira*



## Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Ashlyn!

Our sweet little angel,  
Mommy, Daddy, the Grands, and family miss you dearly.

*Ashlyn Kaliey Bean*  
*December 1, 2008*  
*HELLP Syndrome*  
*Parents: Anthony and Alicia Bean*



## Happy 3<sup>rd</sup> Birthday, Scarlett!

We love you and miss you, Scarlett!  
Love,  
Momma, Dada, and little brother Ben

*Scarlett Jean Lovejoy*  
*November 24, 2006*  
*Unknown Cause*  
*Parents: Jeff and Emily Lovejoy*  
*Little brother: Ben*



## Happy 5<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Cece!

We think of you often and send sweet kisses  
to heaven for your special day.

In our lives for a moment,  
In our hearts forever...

Love,  
Mommy, Daddy, and Ally

*Celeste Kimberly Reid*  
*December 7 – 8, 2004*  
*Neonatal Hemochromatosis*  
*Also remembering Connor Boston Reid*  
*April 27, 2006*  
*Trisomy 13*  
*Parents: Andie Boston and Skip Reid*  
*Sibling: Allyson Kate*



## Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> Birthday, Kenneth!

Our baby angel is two years old now! I cherish the memories I have with you and always will. Even though your time with me was very short, the impact you have made in my life is immeasurable. You are the greatest love of my life!

Mommy and Daddy love you so much, and we wish you a very happy heavenly birthday!

*Kenneth Bernard Weddington, Jr.*  
*November 7, 2007*  
*Unknown Cause*  
*Parents: Louisa Garza*  
*and Kenneth Weddington, Sr.*



## *I Will Light Candles This Christmas*

I will light candles this Christmas;  
Candles of joy despite all sadness,  
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch,  
Candles of courage for fears ever present,  
Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days,  
Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens,  
Candles of love to inspire all my living,  
Candles that will burn all the year long.

♥ *Howard Thurman,*  
*www.bereavement-poems-articles.com*



## M.E.N.D. Chapter Corner

### Chapter Meeting Information

#### M.E.N.D.—NW Arkansas

Meets the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday from 6:30—8:00 p.m.  
Jones Center for Families, Room 206,  
922 East Emma Avenue,  
Springdale, AR 72765  
Director: April Moreton  
april@mend.org, (479) 524-3500

#### 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 bi-monthly  
on the 3rd Thursday at 7:30 p.m.,  
led by Sarah Winebrenner  
(swinebrenner2004@yahoo.com).

**Daddy's group** meets quarterly on the 3rd  
Thursday at 7:30 p.m.,  
led by Tim Winebrenner  
(swinebrenner2004@yahoo.com).

#### M.E.N.D.—Georgia

Offers peer support via phone and email contact.  
Director: Marie Stockdale  
maries@mend.org, (678) 634-3686

#### M.E.N.D.—Texarkana

Meets 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.—Hill Country

Meets the 1st Thursday at 7:00 p.m.  
Gillespie County Historical Society Building  
312 W. San Antonio St.  
Fredericksburg, TX 78624  
Director: Larissa Hallford  
larissa@mend.org, (830) 456-4178

#### M.E.N.D.—Tulsa

Meets the 3rd Tuesday at 7:00 p.m.  
Canyon Crossing  
1651 E Old North Rd.  
Sand Springs, Oklahoma 74063  
Director: Michele Wilson  
michele@mend.org, (918) 694-4325 (HEAL)

#### M.E.N.D.—SW Missouri

Meets the 1st Thursday at 7:00 p.m.  
Project H.O.P.E.  
1419 S. Enterprise  
Springfield, Missouri 65804  
Director: Heather Fann  
heather@mend.org, (417) 818-0489

## M.E.N.D. Chapter Updates

### *NW Arkansas*

M.E.N.D.—NW Arkansas will be hosting its 4th annual Christmas Candlelight Ceremony on Tuesday, December 8, at the Jones Center for Families. This year we are honored to have as our keynote speaker Holley Gerth, award-winning Dayspring author and mommy to Baby Gerth. If you would like to be involved in the program, please contact me at 479-524-3500 or april@mend.org.

*April Moreton*

### *Kansas*

M.E.N.D.—Kansas continues to minister to families who have experienced the loss of a baby. If you know of parents in need of help, please contact me at [stephanie@mend.org](mailto:stephanie@mend.org).

*Stephanie Metzger*

### *Houston*

M.E.N.D.—Houston had a very successful Walk To Remember and a special evening with Nancy Guthrie in October. A huge thank you to everyone who made the events possible, including my amazing committee and generous sponsors, who are recognized on pages 16-17.

*Jaimie Crump*

### *Georgia*

The Atlanta chapter continues to minister to hurting families through email and by phone. For more information, email [rebekah@mend.org](mailto:rebekah@mend.org) or [maries@mend.org](mailto:maries@mend.org) or call Rebekah Mitchell at 972-506-9000.

*Marie Stockdale*

### *Texarkana*

M.E.N.D.—Texarkana is looking forward to our third Candlelight Christmas Ceremony, Thursday, December 3, at 6:30 p.m. at Beech Street First Baptist Church in Texarkana. We are also meeting at Baker Bros. for food and fellowship the first Tuesday of the month. If you would like to attend or would like more information, please contact me at 903-490-1210 or monica@mend.org.

*Monica Davis*

### *Hill Country*

M.E.N.D.—Hill Country is growing. We are reaching out into the community and inviting all who have experienced the death of a baby to join us. I continue to pray for those who are suffering, lonely, and grieving. I am thankful for a community that supports and encourages me with M.E.N.D.

*Larissa Hallford*

### *Tulsa*

M.E.N.D.—Tulsa continues to minister to hurting families throughout northeast Oklahoma through phone counseling, emails, and monthly support groups. A huge thanks goes out to all those who helped to make our first Bunco Bash fundraiser a great success. Special thanks to Erika Huff for chairing the planning committee and to Lauren Roberts for making the raffle look awesome! Also, thanks to my anonymous donor for the potatoes... yum!

*Michele Wilson*

### *SW Missouri*

M.E.N.D.—Southwest Missouri began meeting in September and have welcomed 14 families to our chapter. We're distributing M.E.N.D. information all over the Springfield area and looking forward to helping these families through the holiday season.

*Heather Fann*

M.E.N.D.'s newest chapter opening soon

M.E.N.D.—Bryan /College Station opening in 2010.

Contact Jennie Drude at [jenni Lovestoshop@yahoo.com](mailto:jenni Lovestoshop@yahoo.com) for more information.



## Fundraising Opportunities... You Can Help!

This year, M.E.N.D. is participating in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) in the Dallas and Houston areas, the Dallas area Texas State Employee Charitable Campaign (SECC), and the Dallas County Charitable Campaign. If you, a family member, or friend work for the federal government, the Texas state government, or Dallas County in any capacity, then you may have a chance to help M.E.N.D. raise some much-needed funds. Ask your employer for more information and make note of our designation codes:

Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death CFC code: 97896

Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death SECC code: 283524



*Continued from page 1...*

remembered and acknowledged. In addition to stockings and ornaments that are hung for them, every year my family attends the M.E.N.D. Christmas Candlelight Ceremony, and together as a group we gather around the three-wick candle and each light our taper in their memory.

This year the holidays may not be what you had planned, and in all honesty, they will never be quite the same again. You will always remember, whether to yourself or openly, that another child or more children should be here. Getting through the first holiday season after a loss is the most difficult, but you will make it. If, like me, you have traditions you don't know how you'll continue, start thinking now of how you can incorporate new ones. Consider inviting your extended family to a M.E.N.D. Christmas service if you live near one of our chapters. A subtle inclusion of your baby on your Christmas cards can be achieved with an angel punch or stamp next to your name. Hang a stocking on the mantle or an ornament on the tree. Purchase gifts for needy children in your baby's honor. Whatever you decide, do it every year. Start a tradition that continues throughout the years that someday your living children will always remember, and perhaps someday carry on with their children.

♥ *Rebekah Mitchell*

*mommy to Jonathan Daniel and Baby 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 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of every month  
from 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

#### **Daddies group**

meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of March, June, Sept. and Dec.,  
from 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:  
brittney@mend.org

#### **Subsequent pregnancy group**

meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday  
from 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.  
Led by Liz Walker:

liz@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 Paula Schear or Brandee Dill for more info: pkschear@yahoo.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 by request only the 3rd Monday  
7:30 - 9:00 p.m.

Led by Paula Schear:  
pkschear@yahoo.com

*For families experiencing infertility after a loss.*

## In Loving Memory



### **Marilyn Jolee Applewhite**

July 27, 2009  
Cause Unknown  
Given by parents  
Leslie Ann Gloyd and Derrick Applewhite

### **Carter Bevins**

September 18, 2005

### **Lucy Bevins**

May 9, 2008  
Hydrops  
Given by parents Kim and Micah Bevins  
and siblings Ty, Ella, and Cash

### **Jordan Alexander Booker**

Stillborn January 11, 2007  
True Knot in Cord  
Parents: Norma Jordan and Mark Booker  
Given by mommy Norma Jordan

### **Jordan Alexander Booker**

Stillborn January 11, 2007  
True Knot in Cord  
Parents: Norma Jordan and Mark Booker  
Given by Luke Dinh

### **Jordan Alexander Booker**

Stillborn January 11, 2007  
True Knot in Cord  
Parents: Norma Jordan and Mark Booker  
Given by Mark and Peggy Grieger

### **Jordan Alexander Booker**

Stillborn January 11, 2007  
True Knot in Cord  
Parents: Norma Jordan and Mark Booker  
Given by Joe and Marie Nolan

### **Jordan Alexander Booker**

Stillborn January 11, 2007  
True Knot in Cord  
Parents: Norma Jordan and Mark Booker  
Given by Aaron and Ashley Blanchette

### **Jordan Alexander Booker**

Stillborn January 11, 2007  
True Knot in Cord  
Parents: Norma Jordan and Mark Booker  
Given by Kym McDaniel

### **Jordan Alexander Booker**

Stillborn January 11, 2007  
True Knot in Cord  
Parents: Norma Jordan and Mark Booker  
Given by Nicole Ouzoonian

### **Jordan Alexander Booker**

Stillborn January 11, 2007  
True Knot in Cord  
Parents: Norma Jordan and Mark Booker  
Given by Denise Robison

### **Jordan Alexander Booker**

Stillborn January 11, 2007  
True Knot in Cord  
Parents: Norma Jordan and Mark Booker  
Given by Marcia and Dudley Calhoun

### **Jordan Alexander Booker**

Stillborn January 11, 2007  
True Knot in Cord  
Parents: Norma Jordan and Mark Booker  
Given by Joanna Jadlow

### **Jordan Alexander Booker**

Stillborn January 11, 2007  
True Knot in Cord  
Parents: Norma Jordan and Mark Booker  
Given by Christopher and Julianne Rompel

### **Logan James Brewer**

December 18 - 22, 2006  
Premature  
Given by parents Heather and David Brewer  
and little brother Landon James

### **Cole, Kaylyn, and Hannah Busker**

Stillborn December 10, 2004  
Ecoli Infection  
Given by parents Kim and Mike Busker  
and big sister Allison

### **Abigail Grace Crump**

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

### **Esme Sage DePardo**

Stillborn June 15, 2009  
Cystic Hygroma  
Given by parents Christy and Brian DePardo  
and siblings Grayson and Holden

### **Esme Sage DePardo**

Stillborn June 15, 2009  
Cystic Hygroma  
Parents: Christy and Brian DePardo  
Siblings: Grayson and Holden  
Given by grandparents  
George and Andre Zeiner

### **Caleb Scott Fann**

December 1, 2003  
PROM

### **Baby August**

Miscarried August 13, 2004  
Parents: Jonathan and Heather Fann  
Little sister: Madison Grace  
Given by Frank Rust

### **Caleb Scott Fann**

December 1, 2003  
PROM

### **Baby August**

Miscarried August 13, 2004  
Parents: Jonathan and Heather Fann  
Little sister: Madison Grace  
Given by grandparents  
Ron and Patty Marshall  
and Redcrow Marketing,  
Springfield, Missouri

### **Caleb Scott Fann**

December 1, 2003  
PROM

### **Baby August**

Miscarried August 13, 2004  
Parents: Jonathan and Heather Fann  
Little sister: Madison Grace  
Given by David and Allison Barshinger

### **Caleb Scott Fann**

December 1, 2003  
PROM

### **Baby August**

Miscarried August 13, 2004  
Parents: Jonathan and Heather Fann  
Little sister: Madison Grace  
Given by Wade and Trellia Drossel

### **Caleb Scott Fann**

December 1, 2003  
PROM

### **Baby August**

Miscarried August 13, 2004  
Parents: Jonathan and Heather Fann  
Little sister: Madison Grace  
Given by Scott and Kristi Morris

### 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!**

**Caleb Scott Fann**

December 1, 2003  
PROM

**Baby August**

Miscarried August 13, 2004  
Parents: Jonathan and Heather Fann  
Little sister: Madison Grace  
Given by great-uncle and great-aunt Norman and Linda Fann

**Caleb Scott Fann**

December 1, 2003  
PROM

**Baby August**

Miscarried August 13, 2004  
Parents: Jonathan and Heather Fann  
Little sister: Madison Grace  
Given by great-uncle and great-aunt Dwight and June Bookout

**Caleb Scott Fann**

December 1, 2003  
PROM

**Baby August**

Miscarried August 13, 2004  
Parents: Jonathan and Heather Fann  
Little sister: Madison Grace  
Given by Steve and Jennifer McAfee

**Caleb Scott Fann**

December 1, 2003  
PROM

**Baby August**

Miscarried August 13, 2004  
Parents: Jonathan and Heather Fann  
Little sister: Madison Grace  
Given by great-uncle and great-aunt David and Sheila Waln

**Caleb Scott Fann**

December 1, 2003  
PROM

**Baby August**

Miscarried August 13, 2004  
Parents: Jonathan and Heather Fann  
Little sister: Madison Grace  
Given by Kevin and Sheri Hess

**Caleb Scott Fann**

December 1, 2003  
PROM

**Baby August**

Miscarried August 13, 2004  
Parents: Jonathan and Heather Fann  
Little sister: Madison Grace  
Given by great-grandparents Scott and Mae Budge

**Caleb Scott Fann**

December 1, 2003  
PROM

**Baby August**

Miscarried August 13, 2004  
Parents: Jonathan and Heather Fann  
Little sister: Madison Grace  
Given by Aaron and Chere Babcock

**Caleb Scott Fann**

December 1, 2003  
PROM

**Baby August**

Miscarried August 13, 2004  
Parents: Jonathan and Heather Fann  
Little sister: Madison Grace  
Given by Skeeter and Joy Snell

**Caleb Scott Fann**

December 1, 2003  
PROM

**Baby August**

Miscarried August 13, 2004  
Parents: Jonathan and Heather Fann  
Little sister: Madison Grace  
Given by Neal and Sara Elliott

**Caleb Scott Fann**

December 1, 2003  
PROM

**Baby August**

Miscarried August 13, 2004  
Parents: Jonathan and Heather Fann  
Little sister: Madison Grace  
Given by Jerry and Christy Gardner

**Caleb Scott Fann**

December 1, 2003  
PROM

**Baby August**

Miscarried August 13, 2004  
Parents: Jonathan and Heather Fann  
Little sister: Madison Grace  
Given by Russ and Stacey Schultz

**Daniel Griega**

Stillborn September 7, 1997  
Given by parents Mark and Peggy Griega and brothers Ryan, Jordan, and Luke

**Janelle Marie Gibson**

Stillborn November 17, 2006  
Clot in Placenta

**Gabriel Gibson**

Miscarried October 31, 2007  
Ectopic  
Given by parents Scott and Jodie Gibson and brothers Will, Andrew, and Isaac

**Ian Wesley Giger**

August 3 - November 5, 2006  
SIDS

**Baby Giger**

Miscarried February, 2007  
Parents: William and Noel Giger  
Siblings: Calvin, Jordan, and Gavin  
Given by A-Box Connection, Inc.

**Erika Brienne Grau**

July 9 - August 3, 1997  
Anoxic Brain Injury Due to Ruptured Uterus  
Given by parents Yvette and Ray Grau and siblings Nikryan and Nataly

**Samuel Mark Hintz**

Stillborn October 29, 2008  
Cord Accident  
Given by parents Greg and Sara Hintz and siblings Louis, Caleb, Elijah, and Anna

**Taryn Kennedy**

December 11, 2008—January 9, 2009  
Congenital Heart Defect  
Given by parents Vi and Steve Kennedy

**Jackson Glen and Tyler Ray Light**

February 23, 2009  
Placental Abruption  
Parents: Diana and Kirk Light  
Given by great-great-aunt Linda Caraway

**Catherine Mary Martin**

Stillborn December 15, 2001  
Trisomy 18

**Baby Martin I**

Miscarried June 14, 2002

**Baby Martin II**

Miscarried September 2002  
Blighted Ovum  
Given by parents Glenn and Nancy Martin and little siblings Alex and Allison

**Jaxon Henry Massey**

September 17, 2008  
Trisomy 13

**Aiden Christopher Massey**

Miscarried March 4, 2009  
Trisomy 13  
Parents: Damon and Jessica Massey  
Siblings: Austin and Jacelyn  
Given by Tonya Hunt

*Continued on page 12...*

*Continued from page 11...*

**Jaxon Henry Massey**

September 17, 2008

Trisomy 13

**Aiden Christopher Massey**

Miscarried March 4, 2009

Trisomy 13

Parents: Damon and Jessica Massey

Siblings: Austin and Jacelyn

Given by American Automatic Sprinkler

**Ella Grace Medina**

Stillborn February 15, 2009

Cord Accident

Parents: Lisa and Tony Medina

Big brother: Matthew Connor

Given by grandmother Connie Shaffer

**Ella Grace Medina**

Stillborn February 15, 2009

Cord Accident

Parents: Lisa and Tony Medina

Big brother: Matthew Connor

Given by April Redden

**Ella Grace Medina**

Stillborn February 15, 2009

Cord Accident

Parents: Tony and Lisa Medina

Big brother: Matthew Connor

Given by Ted and Kim Boyd

**Bay Miltenberger, Jr.**

Stillborn December 9, 1998

Preterm Labor

Given by parents

Paula and Bay Miltenberger

and little brothers Bryce, James, and Brady

**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

**Anna Jacqueline Radack**

November 1, 2008

Prematurity/Severe Pre-eclampsia/HELLP,

Antiphospholipid Antibody Syndrome

Given by parents Jeff and Jill Radack

and Baby Radack on the way

**Baby Rains**

Miscarried June 30, 2009

Given by parents Brent and Christy Rains

**Baby Roberts I**

Miscarried June 13, 2005

**Baby Roberts II**

Miscarried April 26, 2006

Given by parents B.J. and Lauren Roberts

and little brother Tag

**Landon Blaine Schuchman**

Stillborn February 12, 2009

Cord Accident

Parents: Missy and Paul Schuchman

Big sister: Kylee

Given by Tim and Cheryl Thomison

**Landon Blaine Schuchman**

Stillborn February 12, 2009

Cord Accident

Parents: Missy and Paul Schuchman

Big sister: Kylee

Given by Judy Schuchman

**Lauren Ashley Scott**

June 23, 2009

Trisomy 18

Given by parents Troy and Emily Scott

**Theo Fleurima Shannon**

Stillborn August 10, 2006

Stroke

Given by parents Ted and Geri Shannon

and little sister Ysabel

**Hanna Grace Sherman**

August 12, 2005

Cystic Hygroma

Given by parents Toni and Randy Sherman

and big sister Kaitlin

**Hanna Grace Sherman**

August 12, 2005

Cystic Hygroma

Parents: Toni and Randy Sherman

Big sister: Kaitlin

Given by grandparents

Tommy and Pat Sherman

**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

**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 Josh, Sebastian, and Benjamin

**Savannah Kate Stanley**

January 3, 2004

Incompetent Cervix

**Baby Stanley**

Miscarried November 10, 2004

Given by parents Joel and Calli Stanley

and siblings Colton and Danika

**Nicholas Jack Szajek**

Stillborn December 6, 2008

Unknown Cause

Given by parents Peter and Nicole Szajek

**Braley Lake Thomas**

Stillborn February 2, 2007

Unknown Cause

Parents: Cory and Melissa Braley

Given by Gordon and Janet Braley

**Aidan Shaw VanderCruyssen**

October 2 - December 3, 2005

Polycystic Kidney Disease

Given by mommy Shane VanderCruyssen

and little sister Cameron

**Alivia Elizabeth-Grace Walker**

July 24, 2006

Incompetent Cervix

Given by parents Robert and Liz Walker

and little brother Jaxson

**Baby Wilson I**

Miscarried January 2007

**Baby Wilson II**

Miscarried June 2007

Given by Doug and Michele Wilson

and little brother Gabe

**Adrian Joseph "AJ" Zuckerman**

Stillborn March 30, 2007

Cord Accident

Given by parents Al and Amber Zuckerman

and brothers Eli and Alexander

**Adrian Joseph "AJ" Zuckerman**

Stillborn March 30, 2007

Cord Accident

Parents: Al and Amber Zuckerman

Brothers: Eli and Alexander

Given by Natalie Allen

**Adrian Joseph "AJ" Zuckerman**

Stillborn March 30, 2007

Cord Accident

Parents: Al and Amber Zuckerman

Brothers: Eli and Alexander

Given by Linda Demmin

**Gift of Support**

Metropolitan Baptist Church,

Houston, Texas



**Adrian Joseph "AJ" Zuckerman**

Stillborn March 30, 2007

Cord Accident

Parents: Al and Amber Zuckerman

Brothers: Eli and Alexander

Given by Kay and Isabella Vaughn

**Adrian Joseph "AJ" Zuckerman**

Stillborn March 30, 2007

Cord Accident

Parents: Al and Amber Zuckerman

Brothers: Eli and Alexander

Given by Paul Goyne

**Adrian Joseph "AJ" Zuckerman**

Stillborn March 30, 2007

Cord Accident

Parents: Al and Amber Zuckerman

Brothers: Eli and Alexander

Given by Walt and Susan Beaver

**Adrian Joseph "AJ" Zuckerman**

Stillborn March 30, 2007

Cord Accident

Parents: Al and Amber Zuckerman

Brothers: Eli and Alexander

Given by Scott and Teresa Brasher

**Adrian Joseph "AJ" Zuckerman**

Stillborn March 30, 2007

Cord Accident

Parents: Al and Amber Zuckerman

Brothers: Eli and Alexander

Given by Bobbie Bell

**Gift of Support**

West Conroe Baptist Church

Conroe, Texas

**Gift of Support**

Project H.O.P.E.

Springfield, Missouri

**Gift of Support**

Second Baptist Church

Springfield, Missouri

*In honor of the Second Baptist babies in heaven.***Candlelight Christmas  
Ceremonies**

Texarkana Chapter: December 3

Houston Chapter: December 5

Dallas Chapter: December 8

NW Arkansas Chapter: December 8

*Contact your local chapter director  
for event location and details.***Subsequent Births****Kevin and LaMonica Walker**

of Albuquerque, New Mexico

(formerly of Katy, TX),

joyfully announce the arrival of

Kingsley Carlyle,

born August 4, 2009,

measuring 7 lb., 12 oz.,

and 19 ¾ inches long.

The Walker family lovingly remembers

Johnston Walker,

September 12 - 18, 2007,

SIDS.

**Kimberly Bailey and****Donald Henderson**

of Irving, Texas,

joyfully announce the arrival of

Carly Alana,

born August 17, 2009,

measuring 6 lb., 5 oz.,

and 19 inches long.

They lovingly remember

Maddison Rae,

April 24 - July 16, 2008,

heart disease.

**Craig and Ana De Forge**

of Dallas, Texas,

joyfully announce the arrival of

Isaac Laurence,

born August 18, 2009,

measuring 7 lb., 3 oz.,

and 20 inches long.

The De Forge family lovingly

remembers

Baby De Forge I,

miscarried July 4, 2007,

Noah De Forge,

March 23, 2008,

premature at 20 weeks,

and

Baby De Forge II,

miscarried August 2008.

**Jeff and Lisa Baumann,**  
along with big brother Ethan,  
joyfully announce the arrival of

Jake Alexander,

born August 20, 2009,

measuring 8 lb., 4 oz.,

and 20 inches long.

The Baumanns lovingly remember

their three children

lost through miscarriages.

**Kathie and Brett Yamaji**

of Bella Vista, Arkansas,

joyfully announce the arrival of

Thomas Tsurumatsu,

born August 23, 2009,

measuring 7 lb., 8 oz.,

and 21 inches long.

The Yamaji family lovingly remembers

Penelope,

stillborn January 3, 2008,

unknown cause.

**Jason and Jeanelle League**

of Houston, Texas,

along with big brother Cooper,

joyfully announce the arrival of

Camden Robert,

born September 15, 2009,

measuring 6 lb., 12 oz.,

and 19.7 inches long.

The Leagues lovingly remember

Kennady Ann,

stillborn January 17, 2007.

**Amber-Rashel Robinson and****Julian North,**

of Irving, Texas,

joyfully announce the arrival

July Kira,

born October 4, 2009,

measuring 5 lb., 14 oz.,

and 18 ½ inches long.

They lovingly remember,

Jaelyn Walker,

stillborn November 6, 2008,

unknown cause.

## *The Holiday Army*

By Andrea Gambill

Here it comes again—the Holiday Army—in its annual march against us. Some of its generals are called “Thanksgiving,” “Christmas,” “Hanukah,” “New Year’s Eve,” and “New Year’s Day.” They are no respecters of the heartbroken and emotionally wounded, and their troops are merciless. They take no prisoners! They demand that we participate in their joy and nostalgia or they will mow us down with their militant tanks of holiday spirit.

Sometimes they declare their war on us openly—without shame or remorse. Sometimes, they wait for us in ambush. Their intelligence operators have been working diligently all year, waiting for the Thanksgiving Day (or sometimes Halloween!) trumpet signal to begin their attack. They just don’t seem satisfied to have their celebrations and parties and dinners and festivities unless they can recruit ALL of us into their ranks.

Actually, we wish them well. All we really want is for them to leave us alone and let us mourn in peace and quiet. We prefer our “Silent Nights” to their “Deck the Halls” and “Jingle Bells.” We don’t intentionally spoil their fun, it’s just that our pain makes them uncomfortable. They’ve been conditioned to believe that “The Holiday Season” should have no blemish of suffering or lack of frivolity. We must not only bandage our wounds while in their presence, but cover them with taffeta and sequins besides. They are convinced that all we need is to “put on a happy face” and all our sorrows will magically evaporate.

In their mad pursuit of happiness, they shoot us with the bullets of shopping, piped-in music, special holiday foods and fragrances, gift wrapping, decorations (especially the angels!), joyous children with happy smiles, cards, invitations, parties and gift exchanges. Any other time of the year, snow is considered a nuisance to shovel and plow through. At the holiday season, though, it is touted as romantic and is linked to sleighs and starry nights in front of fireplaces, snuggled close to those we love.

The most devastating bombs they drop into our lives are the images of reunion—times of greeting and hugging folks who are much loved and sometimes not often seen for awhile. They may only be separated by geography; our absent loved ones cannot cross the chasm of loss that looms before our tear-filled eyes. They remind us of things we should be thankful for (and we are more thankful for many of those things than they can ever imagine). They prod us with their spears of delightful togetherness, never realizing that what they celebrate is what we cannot now enjoy. We would not dream of attacking them in these battles for holiday survival. With our noses pressed against the glass that divides us, we actually long to be able to be part of their happiness. We remember the times we joined in their fun and we, too, were part of their army of nostalgia and joy.

Our broken hearts and bleeding wounds do not excuse us from being gracious, however. While grief does not give us permission to be rude and selfish, and we take no overt action against their aggression, we are not without defenses in these battles. We can shield ourselves with the armor of dignity with kind but direct and simple explanations: “We understand your need for celebration, but this year we prefer quiet and private reflection and meditation.” “Right now it’s hard for us to function in large groups and to appreciate laughter and high spirits.” “Our energy is so limited; we’d appreciate some quiet one-on-one time with you in a more spiritual atmosphere.” We can gently remind them of how important it is for us to remember those we love who are gone. These are statements that clarify our position without judging or criticizing them for theirs. In kind and non-threatening ways, we need to tell them what’s good for us, because they won’t think of it on their own, and they can use the education.

We also can exercise the muscles of our sense of humor. It will take some effort on our part, but so does anything that is worthwhile and good for us. We can teach ourselves not to fall into the trap of thinking that our grief makes us the center of the universe. We can limit our demands that others treat us in “special” and “deferential” ways because of our pain. We can cut them a little slack and remember that once upon a time, we were just like they are now. It’s good and healthy for us to review our perspectives now and then and decide if we’re being fair and reasonable.

We can express our love in simple and unhurried ways without all the frenetic, expensive and often hysterical hype that the holidays can generate. And we must exercise the expression of our love. Grief does not rob us of our ability to love; it reminds us ever more dramatically of our need to both give and receive love while we are here.

Whenever we can take some control in our situations, we empower ourselves, and then we feel less like victims in what seems like a war of “peace on earth, goodwill toward men.” Any time we can educate and inform with mercy and compassion, we have given a truly spiritual holiday gift of love that will keep on giving forever. May your season be filled with genuine blessings of peace.

### *Article Acknowledgment*

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## *Holidays of Sadness*

By Brigitte Synesael

When you have lost someone very dear to you, the most difficult obstacle to cross is getting through the holidays. That means surviving the days where everyone around you is celebrating and spreading good cheer, while your mind is filled with memories and your heart is heavy with loneliness. It's difficult just making it through what used to be the happiest days that were once shared with a soul mate, and today carries only emptiness. The greatest challenge is to remain in the company of others who love you, when you really want to be alone with your sadness.

It makes no difference whether the loss took place last week, several months ago, or even last year. The holidays always send those deep emotions flooding right to the surface.

Just as how you deal with grief is personal and individual, so is the way you handle the holidays. Remember to be true to yourself, and don't take on too much responsibility. Let people know that your plans may be subject to change, and you can't make long-term commitments just yet. Be honest with yourself and with your friends and family about how you're feeling.

Some people find it best to start new traditions, because the past ones hold memories too difficult to deal with. Talk with your family about setting expectations. Plan together any modifications you will all make to the "normal" holiday festivities. You may want to have a church service dedicated to the memory of your loved one, or make an annual donation in his/her name. Perhaps you could join the Hospice Tree Lighting ceremony. Bring joy to another child by purchasing a special toy for the Angel Tree in memory of your child.

It's a great idea, for both you and your family, for you to write a letter to them asking for their understanding.

Be honest about how you're feeling, but whenever possible, try to include a positive twist into your thoughts. Instead of, "I miss my beloved so much, there is no Christmas without him/her," try, "I do miss my beloved. Christmas will be different this year, but I will try to enjoy it." Instead of, "I HATE this time of year. I can't wait until it's over," try, "This is a difficult time of year for me, but it does give me an opportunity to become closer to my family and friends."

Some people heal best by helping others. Try volunteering at an organization that helps people with a greater need than yours (i.e. a soup kitchen, a homeless shelter, orphanages). Often the best therapy is helping others. Aside from the obvious benefits of keeping your mind occupied and seeing that there are others in worse situations than yourself, charity work gives you a tremendous feeling of fulfillment. It can give you a renewed sense of purpose, which is so important during times of sadness.

Above all else, give yourself permission to enjoy yourself, to laugh, and to find peace. Each of these things are part of healing. Your life will never be the same, but it will go on, and it can still be good. I want you to close your eyes for just a moment. Bring into the room with you the clearest image of the person that you have lost. Now say, "I love you and I miss you. You will always be in my heart. I need to know... is it okay for me to be happy again?"

Now, imagine the answer that you receive. If you remember your loved one in their true light, I'm confident the answer will be YES. Find peace over the holidays, and be good to you.

### *Tulsa Bunco Sponsors*

*Special thanks to the following contributors for making M.E.N.D.—Tulsa's Bunco*

*Bash a huge success:*

Erika and Nick Huff  
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Kay Gullede



## Walk To Remember Update



On October 3, we held our 13<sup>th</sup> annual Walk to Remember at Calvary Church in Irving, Texas. There was a crowd of more than 500 guests, representing more than 170 babies. Although an unexpected rain storm disrupted our ceremony and caused us to move inside, it was still a beautiful event and a day filled with bittersweet memories. Thank you to our tireless committee members and our generous sponsors. Without you, the Walk to Remember would not be possible.

♥ *Rebekah Mitchell,*

M.E.N.D.—*Founder and President*

M.E.N.D.—**Dallas: Top:** More than 500 guests make their way to the M.E.N.D. tree at Calvary Church.

**Right:** Shannon Outen and daughter Erin hang ornaments for Carter Patrick, stillborn November 6, 2000, Baby Outen I miscarried April 3, 2001, and Baby Outen II miscarried November 5, 2002. (Photos by Brittny Fish)



Our 4<sup>th</sup> annual Walk to Remember was such a memorable event this year. The words spoken by author Nancy Guthrie cut straight to our hearts. We learned how to listen for Jesus speaking into our sorrow. We recognized 111 babies with more than 400 in attendance. Not only did the weather cool us off a bit from the Houston heat, the rain was held back and we were able to view a spectacular balloon release at the close of the ceremony.

Friday evening we were very blessed by David and Nancy Guthrie as they spoke to us about "Holding on to Hope." It was an evening filled with tears and joy, and hearts were forever changed.

I want to thank all of our committee. Both nights were made possible by the giving of your valuable time and efforts: Robyn Andersen, Chad Bass and Leah Robilotto-Bass, Gerald and Jaimie Crump, Randy Crye, Jennie Drude, Emily Lovejoy, Nicole Mallette, Amy McDaniel, Kayla Scott, Jenni Trent, Shane VanderCruyssen, Bryan and Brandy Wilson, and Tim and Sarah Winebrenner. Please view our slideshow for the Walk at [www.mendhouston.com](http://www.mendhouston.com)

♥ *Jaimie Crump,*

M.E.N.D.—*Houston Chapter Director*

M.E.N.D.—**Houston:** Good friends Robyn Andersen and Randi Crye support each other as they hang their ornaments for Caleb Eugene Andersen, stillborn January 6, 2006, and Rylee Lynn Crye, stillborn October 31, 2005, Baby Crye, miscarried March 21, 1994, and Baby Crye 2, miscarried January 14, 1997. (Photo by: Billy Winebrenner)



M.E.N.D.—**Houston:** Jason and Jeanelle League, along with their son Cooper, hang their ornament representing Kennady Ann, stillborn January 17, 2007. (Photo by: Billy Winebrenner)





**M.E.N.D.—Houston:** M.E.N.D. president and founder Rebekah Mitchell (left) and Houston chapter director Jaimie Crump (right) with special guest speaker and author Nancy Guthrie (center). Nancy spoke to guests at a pre-walk event on Friday evening, October 9, and then addressed more than 400 guests at the Houston Walk to Remember on Saturday, October 10. (Photo by: Brandee Dill)

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Ana Ayon and  
 Hernan Krymkiewicz  
 Metropolitan Baptist Women's Ministry



## *Festividades Tradicionales...* *viejos extraviados, nuevos encontrados*

Al crecer, la Navidad en nuestra casa siempre fue (y sigue siendo) realmente un gran evento. Una tradición que mi mamá sigue es decorar la casa como si usted ha entrado en una hermosa tierra de las hadas. No hay un rincón o grieta que no se adorna con algún tipo de decoración espectacular. Atendiendo la misa navideña siempre comenzaba la celebración de dos días y después a una cena en cualquier restaurante que se encontraba abierta. Durmiéndonos esa noche era difícil porque sabíamos qué acontecimientos alegres nos esperaban el día siguiente. Cuando nosotros, los seis hijos, éramos pequeños, no nos permitían bajar hasta que todos nos sentábamos en la escalera en pijama para una foto de la familia. Luego, casi nos matábamos uno al otro mientras bajábamos los catorce escalones para llegar a la sala de estar donde todos nuestros regalos fueron exhibidas en las secciones con nuestro nombre en nuestro rincón individual. Nos prodigaban con una cantidad exorbitante de ropa, juguetes y aparatos, y un copioso desayuno que era principalmente cocinado por mi padre. El día continuó con un banquete que podría sustentar un ejército, entonces, más regalos de los abuelos y algunos miembros de la familia. Estábamos agotados a la hora de dormir, pero aun nos dormíamos con sentimientos alegres y llenos de recuerdos tradicionales que nos han durado toda la vida.

Navidades en nuestra casa realmente no se trataba solo de una casa decorada ni las toneladas de regalos. Primeramente era por la celebración del nacimiento de Jesucristo. Y en segundo lugar, era para seguir la tradición. Tradiciones que mis padres crearon para nosotros que a este día tienen significado especial y memorias maravillosas. Tradiciones que planeé recrear en mi casa cuando yo me casé y llegué a ser una mamá. Tradiciones que yo tenía deseos de pasar a mis hijos algún día

Estoy bastante segura que la primera Navidad que recuerdo realmente fue cuando tuve 4 años. La edad exacta de mi hijo Byron, Jr. que fue la primera Navidad después de perder a nuestro bebé mortinato, Jonathan. Hasta ese punto fui bastante capaz de continuar la costumbre que me había crecido con, rociado con unos pocos nuevos que fueron conducentes a nuestra familia pequeña. Pero cuando los días festivos se acercaron esa temporada de 1995, no podía imaginarme cómo yo iba a sobrevivir emocionalmente, y encima actuar la parte de duende, Santa Claus, esposa, mamá, hija, hermana y varias otras partes que antes yo disfrutaba ser. Mi preocupación principal era que quizás arruinaría la primera Navidad mi hijo jamás recordaría. ¿Cómo podría entrar yo a una tienda de juguetes para comprarle regalos? ¿Cómo lo podría tener colocado solo en los escalones cuando él debería tener a su bebé hermano en el regalo? ¿Cómo podría establecer

una estación de regalos cuando deberían de hacer dos? ¿Cómo podría "hacer" yo Navidad sin arruinarlo para todos?

Sólo por la gracia de Dios sobrevivimos Navidad ese año. Mi marido, Byron, y yo fuimos a la juguetería juntos. Ciertamente el humor fue un poco sombrío en que no podíamos comprar juguetes para un bebé, pero tratamos de centrarnos en los juguetes más modernos y especiales para nuestro hijo feliz y energético de 4 años. Como cualquier otro año, nosotros unimos con mi familia para la comunión en Nochebuena y la cena en un restaurante. Tuve mis momentos tristes cuando desperté a la mañana siguiente, pero pude enyesar en una sonrisa cuando mi hijo pequeño estaba listo para saltar la escalera después de la foto en sus nuevas pijamas navideñas. Nosotros nos reímos cuando él chirrió con cada nuevo juguete que él encontró bajo el árbol y nos sentamos felizmente alrededor de la mesa de la cocina mientras comíamos los rollos tradicionales de canela con leche de chocolate. Sin embargo, las lágrimas no pudieron ser contenidas más cuando paramos por el cementerio para visitar la tumba de Jonathan en rumbo a la casa de mis padres. La realidad que nuestro segundo hijo pequeño no estaba con nosotros fue un golpe demasiado duro. Fui absolutamente inconsolable cuando llegamos con mis padres. Ellos sinceramente pensaron que algo horriblemente y trágico había sucedido. Cuando ellos se dieron cuenta de por qué yo estaba tan trastornada, ellos anunciaron al resto de la familia que pararan lo que hacían, y que todos se montaran en sus coches para ir al cementerio. Al llegar al cementerio, nos unimos en círculo alrededor de la tumba de mi bebé y nos unimos las manos. Mi padre nos dirigió en un tiempo de oración, dando gracias a Dios para su vida pequeña, y le pidió la paz y el consuelo para todos nosotros.

Desde entonces me di cuenta que una tradición nueva había empezado en mi familia. Nosotros no vamos colectivamente a la tumba todos los años el Día de Navidad, pero ciertamente mi Jonathan pequeño y el bebé que abortamos involuntariamente unos años después de Jonathan son reconocidos y recordados. Además de medias y ornamentos que son colgados para ellos, todos los años mi familia atiende la ceremonia navideña de M.E.N.D. juntos como un grupo y nos reunimos para prender una vela en su memoria.

Este año las festividades probablemente no serán lo que usted había planeado, y en toda honradez nunca serán exactamente igual. Usted siempre recordará, en silencio o abiertamente, que otro niño o más niños deben estar aquí. Pasando las primeras festividades después de una pérdida serán los más difíciles, pero usted saldrá adelante. Si, como yo, usted también tiene tradiciones que usted no sabe como continuará pero comience a pensar ahora de cómo usted puede integrar nuevos. Considere invitar a sus familiares a un servicio Navideña de M.E.N.D. Una inclusión sutil de su bebé en sus tarjetas navideñas puede ser lograda con un timbre junto a su nombre. Cuelgue una media en el manto o un ornamento en el árbol. Compre regalos para niños necesitados en el honor de su bebé. Cualquiera que usted decida, hágalo cada año. Comience una tradición que continúa a través de los años que algún día sus niños vivos siempre recordarán, y continuarán quizás con sus niños de ellos.

♥ *Rebekah Mitchell*  
*mama de Jonathan Daniel y Bebé Mitchell*

## Getting Through The Holidays

- Admit that the celebration will probably change, but continue all traditions that you feel you can.
- Proactively plan what you would like to do/what celebrations you would like to attend, but also give yourself permission to change plans as you go.
- Establish a new tradition in honor of your baby:
  - Decorate an ornament with his or her name;
  - Hang a stocking for him or her;
  - Sign Christmas cards with his or her name included.
- Give a gift in memory/honor of your baby or donate to your favorite charity.
- Talk about your baby openly to close family members and friends. Your openness will prevent their awkwardness.
- Write cards to people you met because of the connections relating to your loss (i.e. nurses, social workers, friends made along the “journey”).
- Accept the fact that your loved ones, as well as your baby, would want you to laugh and rejoice during this season. Don’t be afraid to laugh.
- Pray. Paul prayed “without ceasing.” You may need to do the same.
- Think about the promises of God.
- Read the Bible and other uplifting materials.
- Be honest about your feelings and fears.
- Stay around positive, supportive, caring people.
- Call someone in M.E.N.D.

♥ *Jaimie Crump,*  
 M.E.N.D.—Houston Chapter Director



## *My First Christmas in Heaven*

I've had my first Christmas in Heaven,  
 A glorious, wonderful day!  
 I stood with the saints of the ages,  
 Who found Christ, the Truth and the Way.

I sang with the Heavenly choir:  
 Just think! I who loved to sing!  
 And, oh! What celestial music  
 We brought to our Savior and King!

We sang the glad songs of redemption,  
 How Jesus to Bethlehem came,  
 And how they had called His name Jesus,  
 That all might be saved through His name.

We sang once with the angels,  
 The song that they spoke that blest morn  
 When shepherds first heard the glad story  
 That Jesus, the Savior, was born

O dear ones, I wish you had been here.  
 No Christmas on earth could compare  
 With all the rapture and glory  
 We witnessed in Heaven so fair.

I know how you always loved Christmas;  
 It seemed such a wonderful day,  
 With all of your loved ones around you,  
 The children so happy and gay.

Yes, now I can see why you loved it.  
 And oh, what a joy it will be  
 When you and my loved ones are with me,  
 To share in the glories I see.

So, dear ones on earth, here's my greeting,  
 Look up till the day dawn appears,  
 And oh, what a Christmas awaits us  
 Beyond our parting tears.

♥ *Unknown Author*  
[www.bereavement-poems-articles.com](http://www.bereavement-poems-articles.com)

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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)*

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- **Kroger grocery stores** donate a percentage of all purchases of those shoppers in Texas and Louisiana who have their Kroger Plus Card linked to M.E.N.D. To link your card, contact Rebekah ([rebekah@mend.org](mailto:rebekah@mend.org)) to obtain the Kroger Customer Letter. You must only present this letter one time to link your card to M.E.N.D.
- **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.
- **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](mailto: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 Web site 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.
- **Little Beads and Macaroni and 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 [mbsbrown16@hotmail.com](mailto:mbsbrown16@hotmail.com).
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