



# M. E. N. D.

## Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death

### *How Extended Family Grieves—Or Doesn't*

More than 14 years have passed since my son Jonathan was stillborn due to a cord accident. In a way it feels like forever ago that my doctor held my hand as he silently shook his head, indicating that my baby no longer had a heartbeat. Yet, the memories are so fresh that it seems like it was only yesterday. I am sure that because of M.E.N.D. I still talk about him after so many years more than I would otherwise. Sometimes I wonder if Jonathan and the little baby we miscarried several years later would be only a faint memory to my family had I not started this organization. Certainly M.E.N.D. keeps my babies' memories very much alive.

Most of my family freely talks about Jonathan very regularly. Quite often we reflect on the ways they were each told of his death, how we've changed and grown spiritually as a result, and how his life—through his death—continues to bless countless people all over the world. My family is faithful attendees at our annual M.E.N.D. remembrance ceremonies, they remember him at Christmas, and some of them purchase a token for us on his birthday each year.

I am thankful beyond words that they "get it." They have never hinted that I made too big of a deal out of losing a baby, they never tire of hearing about him, and they continue to grieve his loss. However, after years of directing an infant loss support organization, I realize I am a minority in this area. It hurts me when couples share at our support groups how their parents (the grandparents of the baby), their siblings, and various other relatives urge them to move on and try to forget "what happened." Regularly couples come to M.E.N.D. and share that certain family members have decided it was time for them to just get over the loss. They are showered with hurtful clichés such as "You just need to have another one," or "It is time for you to move on with your life and forget about what happened." Honestly, I cannot even begin to relate to a family member being so harsh and insensitive about the death of a baby—someone's beloved child. How could we ever forget? Even if we go on to have ten more babies, one child never replaces another. And furthermore, for most of us the circumstances surrounding the loss were extremely traumatic. The situation alone can never be forgotten, not to mention the fact that a baby died in the process.

I have also learned over the years that sometimes family members just need to be educated. A generation ago the loss of a baby was dealt with very differently. Moms were not allowed to hold the baby, they were not encouraged to see it, and sometimes they were not even told the sex of the baby. We've come such a long way over the years with educating nurses and doctors on the emotional attachment

and deep love we have with our babies and the extreme importance of creating memories and validating our losses. But we still have a long way to go with educating our community—our families. I know of numerous parents in M.E.N.D., who after arguments and becoming deeply offended and hurt by family members, have had to sit them all down and attempt to explain that they lost a child. They've had to tell them that they couldn't just "go have another one," as if it were a dog they could pick out at the pet store. They've resorted to pouring their hearts out, admitting how hurtful it is when the baby who died isn't included in the answer to "how many grandchildren do you have?" Or that no one recognized the fact of how painful it was at Christmas when Santa didn't have a reason to stop by their house. Or why they couldn't join the family or go to church on Mother's Day. Or why attending a cousin's baby shower just wasn't going to happen. Or why holding their newborn niece or nephew was incredibly painful, so please don't shove the baby in my arms!

The vast majority of the time, this course of Grieving the Loss of a Baby 101 has proven to be very beneficial. It's really just about making others aware. But even after all that, if extended family still doesn't get it, then it's their loss. They are the ones who lose out on being a part of a little life that was so precious and is missed so much. Additionally, they are missing a multitude of opportunities to be a blessing to you by loving you through the darkest days of your life. If that's the case, it may sound like a spiritual platitude, but the scripture is true that says, "Jesus sticks closer than a brother." Even if it appears that no one else seems to know how you feel, the Lord does. He is always there for you. Lean on Him to be your Comforter and pray He will soften the hearts of the ones you love. Also pray He will give you the ability to forgive those who have hurt you so you don't have a heart of bitterness along with your grief. Finally, know that we at M.E.N.D. are here for you. We're not biological family members—and we're certainly not Jesus — but we are a family of those who share the common bond of losing a child. We understand, we've walked the road, and we definitely get it.

♥ *Rebekah Mitchell*

*mommy to Jonathan Daniel and Baby Mitchell*

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

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## A Plea To Health Care Providers

When you tell me that something is wrong with my baby, please look me in the eye.

Please train your staff not to whisper and look at me with pity, but instead ask them to be helpful, knowledgeable and prepared to help patients with the very real possibility that sometimes bad things happen during pregnancy and birth.

Please don't ever say "You can try again" or "There is still time."

When I beg to go to the hospital after my baby has died during the twenty-first week of pregnancy, please don't refer me to a new doctor's office who begins my labor and sends me home in pain until my baby can be removed in his outpatient office the next day. Please, please send me to the hospital where I will be made comfortable, monitored and receive grief care. When I tell you that I don't want to repeat my miscarriage experience of being alone all night in my bathroom in excruciating pain, losing my baby, please listen to me.

Please inform your financial office of my situation so I don't get a call a few weeks later requesting pre-payment of the physician's birthing charges.

If I have been referred to you urgently as a new patient, please take a moment to become acquainted with my struggle so when you remove my baby, even if I couldn't have held him or looked at him because of his condition, you would know how much he meant to me.

Please don't expect me to arrange for his remains to be transferred over to a laboratory that I would also have to contact on my own to request an autopsy.

When you are doing my follow up gynecological examination to make sure that I am healing after the procedure that occurred on the worst day of my life, please don't ever, ever, ever say, "Case closed."

♥ Tracey Reeves,

mommy to Jackson Wyatt, Baby Reeves I and Baby Reeves II

M.E.N.D.—Houston

## What is An Appropriate Sympathy Gift

By Sharae Taylor ©

When a friend or loved one is grieving, it is hard to know what to say or how to show your support. When you want to provide comfort and support and show your concern for a family member, a friend, or an associate, a personalized gift is always an ideal choice. The best gifts are those given and chosen from the heart. It says that you really care and have taken the time to think about the time after the initial grief of losing a loved one ... during the alone and lonely times.

Here is a list of some elegant and comforting gifts, that are simple and appropriate expressions of sympathy for the family and are alternatives to the standard flowers ...

- Angel painting ... personalized
- Jewelry ... pendant or bracelet
- Music CD
- Book of poems or poem by you
- Gift basket personalized to the family
- Photo album or scrapbook of good times shared
- Plant a tree
- Favorite photograph framed
- Garden stepping stone or bench
- Angel suncatcher
- Journal for memories
- Angel candle and votive holder
- Memory box
- Table fountain
- Bible or rosary

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## Book Review

### *From Crisis to Purpose: A Mother's Memoir*

By Tonya Dorsey  
www.tonyadorsey.com

Tonya Dorsey and her husband Dennis had only been married a short time when they decided to start a family. They excitedly planned and prepared for their sweet little one on the way and could not wait for her arrival. However, things quickly changed when at 18 weeks into the pregnancy Tonya awakened one morning not feeling well, then realized her water broke. The Dorsey's fought hard to keep their little girl, but an infection set in, and an emergency surgery was required.

Dorsey openly shares the deep heartache and raw emotions she endured the months and years following the loss of her little girl Alexandra. Additionally, She touches on subsequent pregnancies, telling her subsequent children about their big sister, and always keeping Alexandra's memory alive.

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

*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).*

## Medical Moment



**Parental grief responses and personal growth following the death of a child.**  
*Riley LP, LaMontagne LL, Hepworth JT, Murphy BA. Death Stud. 2007 Apr; 31 (4):277-99.*

**Objective:** Conceptualizing parental grief as a psychosocial transition, this cross-sectional study of bereaved mothers (N = 35) examined the relationship of dispositional factors, grief reactions, and personal growth.

**Results:** More optimistic mothers reported less intense grief reactions and less distress indicative of complicated grief. Additionally, mothers who usually coped actively had less intense grief reactions. Mothers who habitually coped using positive reframing had less intense grief reactions and less complicated grief. Personal growth, a positive dimension of grief, was associated with all three coping dispositions; mothers' active coping, support seeking, and positive reframing suggesting more personal growth occurred in mothers exhibiting more of these coping dispositions.

**Conclusions:** These findings increase understanding of dispositional factors associated with bereaved mothers' grief responses and expand knowledge concerning personal growth as an outcome of bereavement.

Source & full-text available at: <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/07481187.asp>

### March/April Topic

Grief Revisited—

Days, Weeks, Months, or Years Later

Deadline: January 31, 2010

### May/June Topic

Mother's Day and Father's Day

Deadline: March 30, 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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[www.mend.org](http://www.mend.org)



# Birthday Tributes

## Happy 4<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Rylie Grace!

Our Precious Baby Girl,

Four years ago I was sure the sun would never shine again, but, incredibly, it just kept coming up day after day. Here we are four years later celebrating your fourth heavenly birthday. It never gets easier to think about all of the days we've missed having you with us. All of the precious moments we've missed out on. I wonder if you miss us too.

Do you know how much we love you? Will you ever know how much you mean to us? They say that time heals all wounds, but I have to disagree. Our hearts will forever ache until you are in our arms again. We love and miss you so much, Rylie Grace. We will cherish you in our hearts forever and ever. Have a wonderful fourth birthday celebrating with Jesus!

Loving you always,  
Momma, Daddy, Blake and Landry

*Rylie Grace Addison*  
*Stillborn November 21, 2005*  
*Parents: Blaine and Shannon Addison*  
*Siblings: big brother Blake*  
*and little sister Landry*  
*Also Remembering: Baby Addison*  
*Miscarried December 22, 2004*



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

Jackson Glen and Tyler Ray,

I hear your laughter in the melody of the birds.

I feel your soft breath in the gentle breeze.

I smell your sweet scent in the coming of the rain.

I see you playing as the flowers flow in the wind.

I miss you.

I love you.

My sweet, sweet princes.

Love,

Mommy and Daddy

*Jackson Glen and Tyler Ray Light*  
*February 23, 2009*  
*Placental Abruption*  
*Parents: Kirk and Diana Light*



## Happy 3<sup>rd</sup> Angelversary, our precious Matthew!

You will always be Mommy's little sugar and Daddy's little man. We love and miss you so much!

Hugs and kisses,  
Mommy and Daddy

*Matthew Wayne Beeler*  
*August 23, 2006—January 12, 2007*  
*Bi-ventricular non-compaction*  
*Mitochondrial myopathy*  
*Parents: Bryan and Kim Beeler*



## Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Cashton Cade!

Already a year doesn't seem possible! You're in my thoughts every day, my sweet son!

Every time I see a child your age, I wonder if that's how big you are. I wonder if you'll take after your daddy or me. Seems like just yesterday I was holding you in my arms. Son, Mommy loves you and misses you so much!

Happy first birthday, son! I love you so much!

Love always,  
Mommy

*Cashton Cade Munns*  
*October 23, 2008*  
*Prematurity, open neural tube defect*  
*and pulmonary hypoplasia*  
*Mommy: Brandee Munns*



## Happy 8<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Elizabeth!

Elizabeth,

We can't believe it has been eight years. Your sisters are growing up so quickly, too. We love you and miss you! Hope your birthday was the best!

Love,  
Mommy, Daddy, Graceanne and Jillian

*Elizabeth Ellen Cox*  
*October 25, 2001*  
*Multicystic Kidneys*  
*Parents: Scott and Kathryn Cox*  
*Siblings: Graceanne and Jillian*



## Happy 4<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Hope!

I can hardly believe it has been four years since I held you, my little pink bundle. Your fighting spirit continues to inspire me each day. Gracie joined you in heaven this summer. I imagine that you are having a lot of fun playing with her. On your birthday we released pink sky lanterns near your special tree and watched them soar. Daddy and I miss you very much, but we know that we will hold you again in heaven.

Love you!  
Mama



*Hope Kirkpatrick*

*November 5 - 8, 2005*

*Amniotic band syndrome*

*Proud Parents: Kirk and Aly Kirkpatrick*

*Little Sibling: Ian*

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

You're in our hearts and thoughts every day!  
Love, Mommy and Daddy

“Life is not about the number of breaths we take,  
but the moments that take our breath away.”

Alexis,

We remember the day you were born. You were beautiful! You were too beautiful for earth, and if we can't have you here with us nothing gives us more comfort than knowing you are “tucked away” with Jesus. We will see you again in heaven someday. You truly are our “Greatest Blessing.” Have a fun birthday in heaven, Alexis!

We love you!  
Grandpa and Grandma Sonnenberg

*Alexis Raine Sonnenberg*

*January 24– February 3, 2009*

*Complications diaphragmatic hernia*

*Parents: Alex and Lindsey Sonnenberg*



## Happy 12<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Maya!

We love you, Maya!  
Love,  
Mommy and Daddy

*Maya Denise Ates*

*January 6, 1998*

*Clot in umbilical cord*

*Parents: Horace and Tammy Ates*

*Siblings: Brandon and Erin*



## Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Leah Grace!

To our precious angel,

What a long year it has been since you found your home in heaven. It has been tough for your dad and I knowing we can not hold you and watch you grow into a beautiful person. We pray one day our heavenly Father will bless us to be together in heaven.

We love and miss you baby girl, so much. There is not one day we don't think about you. It is hard not to shed tears whenever we think about our Leah Grace. You are our first-born, and we will never forget what happiness you have given us during your 30 weeks in your mom's belly and the precious two days you fought here on earth.

We know you are watching over your dad, me and your brother Ellis (who at the time of this writing is 33 weeks in mom's belly). Tell your grandparents we love them and will be there one day as a family.

Mahal Kita, Leah Grace!

We love you Leah Grace!

Mom, Dad, Ellis, Lola, Lolo, Grandma, Grandpa,  
Uncle Ton, Auntie Pam, and Aunt Wendy

*Leah Grace Bravo Cockrell*

*February 6 – February 8, 2009*

*Hydrops*

*Parents: Joahna and Clint Cockrell*

*Little Brother: Ellis (due 2010)*



## Happy 4<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Caleb!

Although we still miss you every day, we know God had a greater plan for you. We are so thankful you were part of our lives and our family, even if it had only been for such a short time. We love you.

Love  
Dad, Mom, Faith, Benjamin, Hope and Joy

*Caleb Eugene Andersen*

*Stillborn January 6, 2006*

*Cord Accident*

*Parents: Kevin and Robyn Andersen*

*Siblings: Faith, Benjamin, Hope and Joy*



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

Happy third birthday, our precious Kennady Ann! We miss and love you dearly. Please continue to watch over us, our little guardian angel.

Love,  
Mommy, Daddy, little brothers Cooper and Camden,  
and your three puppies.

*Kennady Ann League*  
*Stillborn January 17, 2007*  
*Parents: Jason and Jeanelle League*  
*Siblings: Cooper and Camden*



### Happy 3<sup>rd</sup> Birthday, Jordan, My Love!

Happy birthday, Lil' Man!

You are three years old and I miss you like crazy! It's so hard to believe that it has been three years since God called you home to heaven with Him! I know you are celebrating your birthday with Jesus and all the other precious angels there with you, but be sure to take a moment to glance down on Mommy and our loving celebration here in your honor.

I truly miss you, Jordan, my love. I want you here with me, but I have to trust God's plan, endure this temporary separation and continue celebrating all the love that you are. God chose us for a reason, Honey! God chose us for His purpose!

Happy third birthday, Jordan, my love! You are Mommy's very heart. You are the absolute air I breathe!

I love you, Jordan, Honey!  
Mommy and Jazz (your puppy-doggie)

*Jordan Alexander Booker*  
*January 11, 2007*  
*True knot in cord*  
*Mommy: Norma Jordan*



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

We love you and miss you, but we are so thankful that you are celebrating this special day with Jesus. "Fear not, for I have redeemed you, I have called you by name, you are mine." Isaiah 43:1

Love always,  
Daddy, Mama,  
big brother Deacon and little sister Faith Clare

*Maddox Donald Stanfield*  
*January 23, 2008*  
*Trisomy 18*  
*Parents: Dusty and McKenzie Stanfield*  
*Siblings: Deacon and Faith Claire*



### Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Sweet Baby!

Happy first birthday to you, darling little one! As we look back on 2009, we are so pleased that God saw fit to grow our family again despite the very short time we had with you. We know that this is not our true home and look forward to spending eternity together with you! For now, know that you are loved and treasured.

Love, hugs and kisses!  
Mommy, Daddy and C.J.

*Baby Stephens II*  
*January 2009*  
*MTHFR Mutation*  
*Parents: Rob and Melissa Stephens*  
*Older Brother: C.J.*  
*Also remembering:*  
*David Atkins Stephens, October 23, 2003*  
*Baby Stephens I, June 30, 2008*



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

Landon,

We miss you more than words can say! We think of you every day and wish you were here. Please know that your short little life has touched so many and has really made a huge difference in so many people's lives. We will never forget what you have taught us and shown us through your life. We will always hold onto the hope that you give us and will give God all the glory for who you are and what you brought to us!

Love,  
Mommy, Daddy, big sister Kylee and  
younger sibling Baby Schuchman

*Landon Blaine Schuchman*  
*February 12, 2009*  
*Full term stillbirth due to true knot*  
*Parents: Paul and Melissa Schuchman*  
*Siblings: Kylee*  
*and Baby Schuchman, due 2010*



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

Our little baby girl,

Happy second birthday in heaven. We think of you every day. We love and miss you!

*Ximena Hernandez*  
*January 12, 2008*  
*Trisomy 13*  
*Parents: Juan and Griselda Hernandez*  
*Brothers: Juan and Leonardo*



## *When Family Takes the Lead*

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On May 25, 1999, I found myself sitting alone in my doctor's private office. Outside the door was a hallway that led to a waiting room filled with women who would eventually give birth to healthy babies. I, on the other hand, had just gotten off the phone with my husband after telling him that our unborn son Joseph was dead. I felt myself crumbling under the weight of strong emotions that I had never had to carry before, and I couldn't understand why I felt that way. Why was I so upset? I had never even met this baby. My heart was screaming out that this was very wrong, but my head tried hard to convince the rest of me that this really wasn't a big tragedy.

Now I marvel that I even attempted to downplay the horror that I was facing. Maybe it was because I thought that's the way other people would think. I believe that my Southern heritage also played a big role in my response to my baby's death. I grew up in a culture where one would never consider doing anything that would cause inconvenience or awkwardness for others. I also grew up among strong, independent people who rarely displayed strong emotions. The combination of all these factors led me to initially believe that Joseph's death should be dealt with quietly, calmly, and with little ado.

My parents and sister made the 12-hour drive to be with me right away when Joseph was born. I saw my father cry for the first time in my life in that hospital room when he saw his still little grandson for the first time. That was one of the first signs to me that maybe I was underestimating just how much this loss was going to affect me. If Dad was this upset, shouldn't I be allowed to be pretty upset, too?

My mother jumped into protective mode, making sure I got sleep, food, and clothing to wear to the memorial service. She ran the kitchen and the greeting committee as guest after guest came by to visit. Meanwhile, my sister Jenny let me cry and talk, and she immediately called to order a magnolia tree to plant in Joseph's memory back home.

Eventually I did learn to allow myself to fully hurt and grieve, and I think that my parents and sister helped me do that. The concern they showed for me in the beginning affirmed the emotions I was experiencing. However, later, we had different perspectives about how to remember Joseph and how long grieving should last. Sometimes my displays of grief seemed too extreme or a little scary to them. I hit a real low about ten months after Joseph's death, and I could tell from the concern in their voices that they thought this wasn't normal. However, because of the initial denial I experienced, I was better able to understand my extended family's later responses to my grief. As a result, I could see their reactions to what I'm sure they thought were illogical displays of pain with compassion instead of anger.

My family still touches me with their remembrances of Joseph. My mom and sister still tend to Joseph's grave and regularly place new flowers there for me. My dad tells his friends about his grandson who is his namesake. I think one of the kindest gestures I've seen from my family lately was a caption my mom put under a family photo on my parents' anniversary. It was a picture of my parents with all their children and grandchildren gathered around them. Under it she wrote, "This is the results of 42 years of marriage. We have one grandson who is not in the pictures; he is in the arms of God. We actually have nine grandchildren."

Years after Joseph died, I asked my mom to tell me what the hardest part of the whole experience was for her. She said, "I couldn't feel what you were feeling. I couldn't understand that kind of pain. All I knew was that you were hurting more than I could imagine, and it was almost more than I could take watching my daughter suffer so much." My parents hurt, but in a different way and for different reasons than I did. Just like they couldn't feel what I was feeling, I couldn't understand how it must have felt to watch your own child suffer the way I did and not be able to do anything to make it better. This was a new experience for all of us, no matter what our perspectives, and we all had to struggle through as best we could with a lot of help from the Lord and a lot of love for each other.

♥ *Sharlene Libby,  
mommy to Joseph Libby  
New Mexico*

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*Continued from page 2...*

Remember, there are no words when someone has experienced the loss of a loved one and when flowers aren't enough to express your caring ... an elegant way to comfort the heart ...personalize it for the family or person you want to bring comfort to ... a continuing expression of love and support with loving thoughts in sympathy.

In the following weeks be sure and stay in touch with the family or individual by making personal contact with them. Plan a trip or outing if the relationship is a close one. The gift of continual caring and friendship is always appropriate and well received if given from the heart. Sometimes it is the intangible gift that is most appropriate and lasting.

## In Loving Memory



### **Nicole Louise Alfano**

March 17, 2006  
Parents: Rebekah and John Alfano  
Gift given by friend Mary Ruth Kelly  
Gift given by Margy Lafond

### **Matthew and Mason Bass**

April 10, 2008  
Premature birth 22 weeks gestation  
Given by parents  
Chad Bass and Leah Robilotto-Bass

### **Michael Joseph Boër**

Stillborn July 17, 1996  
Trisomy 18  
Given by parents Paul and Lynne Boër  
and siblings Paul, Maggie, Juan, and Lily

### **Jordan Alexander Booker**

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

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

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

### **Baby Cardiff I**

Miscarried November 18, 2008

### **Baby Cardiff II**

Miscarried December 21, 2008

### **Baby Cardiff III**

Miscarried April 13, 2009  
Given by mommy Samantha Cardiff

### **Elizabeth Ellen Cox**

October 25, 2001  
Multicystic kidneys  
Given by parents Kathryn and Scott Cox  
and siblings Graceanne and Jillian

### **Abigail Grace Crump**

Stillborn July 1, 2003  
Trisomy 18  
Given by parents Gerald and Jaimie Crump  
and little sisters Cami and Karli  
Gift given by grandparents  
Gerald and Ellie Crump  
Gift given by Marti Boone

### **Lyle Donald Daggett**

September 18, 2002  
Unknown cause  
Given by parents Brad and Lisa Daggett  
and little siblings Alexander, Benjamin,  
and Madeline

### **Riley and Parker Davis**

November 14, 2006  
Prematurity  
Given by parents Robert and Cheryl Davis  
and little sister Annalise

### **Caleb Scott Fann**

December 1, 2003  
PROM

### **Baby August**

Miscarried August 13, 2004  
Parents: Jonathan and Heather Fann  
Little sister: Madison Grace  
Given by Kelsey and Neva Sartin

### **Kyler Paul English**

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

### **Dylan Carolos and Trystan Macario Estala**

December 11, 2008  
PROM, pre-term labor at 22 weeks  
Given by parents  
Stephanie and Adrian Estala

### **Ethan Lloyd Gereke**

Stillborn October 23, 2000  
Group B Strep  
Parents: John and Wendy Gereke  
Siblings: Matthew, Will, and Celeste  
Given by grandparents  
Lloyd and Sandy Hoffman

### **Gift of Support**

Century Golf Partners Management

### **Baby Gerth**

Miscarried April 2006  
Given by parents Mark and Holley Gerth

### **Janelle Marie Gibson**

Stillborn November 17, 2006  
Possible placental blood clot

### **Gabriel Gibson**

October 31, 2007  
Ectopic  
Given by parents Scott and Jodie Gibson  
and siblings Will, Andrew, and Isaac  
Gift given by grandparents  
Joyce and Bill Esser  
Gift given by Janelle's godparents  
Collin and Angela Geis

### **Barbara Grace Hamilton**

Parents: Allison and David Hamilton  
Given by friends  
Burdette and Monica Huffman

### **Samuel Mark Hintz**

October 29, 2008  
Possible cord accident  
Parents: Greg and Sara Hintz  
Given by Tom and Karen Bramlett

### **Teighton William Hoffart**

Stillborn December 9, 2007  
Severe pre-eclampsia  
Given by parents  
Matthew and Kimberly Hoffart

### **Taryn Kennedy**

December 11, 2008 - January 9, 2009  
Congenital heart defect  
Parents Steve and Vi Kennedy  
Given by Bless Her Heart

### **Maria Kettrey**

May 10, 2001  
Complications due to amniocentesis  
Given by parents Claudia and Billy Kettrey  
and siblings Dalila and Aiden Alois

### **Baby Girl Krymkiewiez**

Miscarried June 13, 2008

### **Emma Krymkiewiez**

May 5, 2009  
Premature at 30-weeks  
Given by parents  
Hernan Krymkiewiez and Ana Ayon Lopez

### **Avery Merae Longgood**

August 2 - 3, 2007  
Possible stroke  
Given by parents Jamie and Neil Longgood  
and little sister Halle Merae

#### 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!**



**Andrew Mallette**

March 21, 2008  
 CMV  
 Parents: Michael and Nicole Mallette  
 Given by grandparents  
 Todd and Kathy Rutherford

**Zachary Neal Matthews**

Stillborn February 24, 2002  
 Triploidy

**Baby Matthews I**

Miscarried April 11, 2001

**Baby Matthews II**

Miscarried January, 2003  
 Given by parents  
 Nick and Marsha Matthews  
 and siblings Katherine and John

**Miranda Micaela Medrano**

October 1, 2008  
 Pre-term labor  
 Given by parents  
 Jose and Marvelia Medrano

**Jonathan Daniel Mitchell**

Stillborn June 24, 1995  
 Cord accident

**Baby Mitchell**

Miscarried December 2001  
 Given by parents  
 Byron and Rebekah Mitchell  
 and big brother Byron, Jr.  
 Gift given by grandparents  
 Dennis and Sue Brewer

**Ashley Nicole Muirhead**

Stillborn January 15, 2007  
 Unknown cause  
 Given by parents  
 Daphne and Craig Muirhead  
 and sister Brooke Ann

**Carson Mitchell Shaw**

Stillborn April 1, 1999  
 Unknown cause  
 Given by parents Randy and Aimee Shaw  
 and siblings Blake and Brooke

**Rylan Slate**

October 17 - 20, 2008  
 Unknown cause  
 Parents: Daniel and Kristah Slate  
 Siblings: Camden and Everett  
 Given by grandparents  
 Michael and Susan Benton

**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

**Alexis Raine Sonnenberg**

January 24, 2009 – February 3, 2009  
 Complications diaphragmatic hernia  
 Parents: Alex and Lindsey Sonnenberg  
 Given by grandparents  
 Mark and Ruth Sonnenberg

**David Atkins Stephens**

October 23, 2003  
 MTHFR mutation

**Baby Stephens I**

June 30, 2008  
 Ectopic pregnancy

**Baby Stephens II**

January, 2009  
 MTHFR mutation  
 Given by parents Rob and Melissa Stephens  
 and brother C.J.

**Kaylee Villarreal**

May 7, 2009  
 Placental abruption  
 Given by parents  
 Arnold and Norma Villarreal  
 and brothers Matthew and Nathan

**Shauna Elisabeth Winebrenner**

April 12, 2003  
 Trisomy 18  
 Given by parents  
 Sarah and Tim Winebrenner  
 and siblings Saul and Ella

**Gift of Support**

Merrill Lynch & Co. Foundation  
 Matching Gift Program

**Gift of Support**

West Conroe Baptist Church  
 Conroe, Texas

**Gift of Support**

Metropolitan Baptist Church, Houston, TX

**Gift of Support**

Longwood Golf Club, Cypress, TX

**Gift of Support**

Steven and Mary Short

**Gift of Support**

Second Baptist Church, Springfield, MO

**Gift of Support**

Rachel Davis Jackson

**Gift of support**

First Baptist Church, Texarkana, TX

*Support From Others*

Don't tell me that you understand.  
 Don't tell me that you know.

Don't tell me that I will survive.  
 How I will surely grow.

Don't come at me with answers  
 That can only come from me.

Don't tell me how my grief will pass,  
 That I will soon be free.

Accept me in my ups and downs.  
 I need someone to share.

Just hold my hand and let me cry,  
 And say, "My friend, I care."

♥ *Author Unknown*

*Not Like You*

I am a mother, though not like you.

You cradle your sweet  
 baby in your arms,

Mine are empty,  
 but I hold him in my heart.

You brush her soft curly hair,  
 and tie pretty pink bows just right.

A lock of his hair is  
 tucked neatly in a book.

You pick daisies and tie them in a  
 chain to wear around her neck.

I cut lilacs and arrange them in a  
 vase to set at his grave.

You look forward to  
 dreams and plans.

I hold on to memories.  
 I am a mother, though not like you.

♥ *Sheri Hess,  
 mommy to Dakota Rain Hess*



## 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 hosted its fourth annual Christmas Candlelight Ceremony in early December. Author and speaker Holley Gerth, mom to Baby Gerth, shared comforting and encouraging words about a “different kind of hope”—one that is authentic, honest, and grounded in the sovereign being of God. Many thanks to Melissa Totty, Aly Kirkpatrick, Tamesha Greenlee, Kaysha Thompson, the Mulkey Family, and Pam Morren who worked behind the scenes to make the event beautiful.

*April Moreton*

### *Kansas*

M.E.N.D.—Kansas is gearing up for our annual Bunco Bash that will take place this spring. Check the websites for updates about the date and time. If you know of parents with losses 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 beautiful Christmas Candlelight Ceremony on Saturday, December 5. Nearly 160 parents, family and friends came to remember their babies at the beginning of this joyful and yet sometimes painful season. We talked about how to find joy when we are grieving by trusting in Christ, serving others and taking care of ourselves.

I want to thank the many volunteers who made it possible for everything to run so smoothly: Robyn Andersen, Ana Ayon, Jeff and Karla Davis, Jason and Jennie Drude, Gerald and Jaimie Crump, Jeanelle League, Sandy Huelsebusch, Emily Lovejoy, Russ and Rosemary Massey, Christine Miles, Jenni and Tyler Trent, Brandy Wilson, Tim and Sarah Winebrenner.

*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 held our third annual Christmas Candlelight Ceremony on December 3 at Beech Street First Baptist Church, Texarkana, Arkansas. We were blessed to be able to minister to more than 75 people. It was a beautiful ceremony in which author Jennifer Hander reminded us to look to God for peace, love, and hope. Melanie Jenkins also delivered a special message through song. I would like to extend a special thank you to all of our sponsors who supported us either through a monetary gift or by giving an item to be raffled. The ceremony would not have been possible without the help of my committee members: Tania Greer, Dawn Kennedy, Toni Sherman, and Melissa Thomas. I appreciate each of you. I would also like to extend a thank you to Amanda Graham, Scentsy consultant, for our November Scentsy fundraiser.

*Monica Davis*

*Hill Country*

M.E.N.D.—Hill Country has been busy ministering to grieving families, raising funds for our chapter, and promoting community awareness. I attended a Walk to Remember in San Antonio in October. I was able to talk with many families who lost a baby, and I also made new connections with the San Antonio hospitals. I am very thankful to Hill Country Memorial Hospital for inviting me to speak at their first Remembrance Ceremony, a “service of remembrance for the babies we have lost.” It was a beautiful event, and there were many families who attended. My main message was “You are not alone.” My monthly group has been talking about our plans for getting through the holidays. It is an especially tough season when you have lost a child. I continue to help families also through email who live in the Austin and San Antonio areas.

*Larissa Halford*

*Tulsa*

M.E.N.D.—Tulsa is ministering to the needs of grieving families in Northeast Oklahoma through our monthly support meetings, phone counseling, and carebag ministry. We have started initial planning for our first Walk to Remember Ceremony in October 2010 to offer the community a Christ-based service to commemorate their babies.

*Michele Wilson*

*SW Missouri*

M.E.N.D.—Southwest Missouri continues to serve families in the Springfield area through our support group meetings and our Facebook group. During the holidays I found myself searching high and low for unique memorial Christmas ornaments from some of our new families. As we head into the new year, we are excited about two potential fundraisers this spring and hosting our first Christmas Candlelight Ceremony in December 2010.

*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 [jennie@mend.org](mailto:jennie@mend.org) for more information.

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 fa-  
thers. 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:pkschear@yahoo.com)  
or [dillsforchrist@yahoo.com](mailto: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:  
NEW LOCATION JANUARY 2010  
Wells Fargo Bank  
900 W Airport Freeway  
Irving, TX 75062**  
(Located in the Crystals Pizza parking  
lot, between MacArthur and O'Connor)  
Meetings will be in the bank board room,  
located on the first floor.  
For more information,  
call (972) 506-9000.

**Infertility group**  
Meets the upon request only.  
Led by Paula Schear:  
[pkschear@yahoo.com](mailto:pkschear@yahoo.com)  
*For families experiencing  
infertility after a loss.*



## *Como Lamentar Los Familiares- O no*

Más de 14 años han pasado desde que mi hijo Jonathan murió debido a un accidente del cordón. De una manera se siente como si fuera hace mucho tiempo que mi médico detuvo mi mano mientras silenciosamente sacudió su cabeza indicando que mi bebé ya no tenía un latido. Sin embargo, los recuerdos son tan frescos que parece que fue ayer. Estoy segura de que a causa de la organización de M.E.N.D. todavía hablo muy seguido sobre Jonathan después de tantos años y más de lo ordinario. A veces me pregunto si Jonathan y el bebé que perdimos años después serían sólo una débil memoria a mi familia si no hubiera empezado esta organización. Sin duda M.E.N.D. mantiene sus recuerdos muy vivos.

La mayor parte de mi familia habla libremente y muy regularmente de Jonathan. Con bastante frecuencia reflexionamos sobre la forma que cada uno se les dijo de su muerte, cómo hemos cambiado y crecido espiritualmente y cómo su vida—a través de su muerte—continúa bendecir a personas innumerables alrededor del mundo. Mi familia son los fieles asistentes en nuestras ceremonias de recuerdo anuales de M.E.N.D., lo recuerdan en Navidad, y algunos de ellos nos compran un recuerdo en memoria de su cumpleaños cada año.

Estoy bastante agradecida que mi familia “lo entiende.” Ellos nunca han insinuado que exagere el dolor de perder a mi bebé, nunca se cansan de audiencia sobre él, y continúan a lamentar su pérdida. Sin embargo, después de años de dirigir una organización de apoyo de pérdidas infantiles, sé que soy una minoría en este ámbito. Me da tristeza cuando algunas parejas comparten en nuestros grupos sobre la falta del apoyo de sus padres (los abuelos del bebé), sus hermanos y varios parientes y de cómo de vez en cuando son exigidos olvidar “lo que sucedió.” Incluso y regularmente parejas vienen a M.E.N.D. y comparten que ciertos miembros de la familia han decidido que ya era tiempo para ellos olvidar la pérdida. Les dicen comentarios dolorosos como, “sólo necesitas tener otro.” O “Es tiempo para seguir con su vida y olvidar lo que sucedió.” Sinceramente, yo no puedo comenzar de entender un miembro de la familia que sea tan insensible acerca de la muerte de un bebé—hijo amado de uno. ¿Cómo será posible olvidar? Incluso si vamos tener 10 más bebés, un niño nunca reemplaza otro. Y además, para la mayoría de nosotros las circunstancias que rodean la pérdida fueron extremadamente traumáticas. La situación nunca será olvidada, y además el hecho de que un bebé murió en el proceso.

También he aprendido durante los años que miembros de la familia solo necesitan ser educados sobre esta tema. Una generación atrás, la pérdida de un bebé se trató muy diferente. Las madres no podían celebrar su bebé, no eran alentados a ver y mucho menos pasar tiempo con el bebe, y incluso a veces no se les dijo el sexo del bebé. Hemos caminado un largo camino durante los años con educar

a enfermeras y médicos sobre el apego emocional y profundo amor que tenemos con nuestros bebés y la extrema importancia de crear recuerdos y validar la pérdida. Pero aún tenemos un largo camino que recorrer con educar nuestra comunidad, es decir, nuestras familias. Me doy cuenta de numerosos padres en M.E.N.D.—que después de argumentos y ofensas profundamente dolorosas de parte de los miembros de la familia—han tenido que sentarse con ellos y tratar de explicarles que perdieron a un niño. Han tenido que decirles que no se trata sólo de “tener otro bebe,” como si se tratara de escoger un perro de la tienda de mascota. Han admitido que doloroso es cuando el bebé que murió no está incluido en el número de la respuesta a la pregunta de “cuántos nietos tienen?” O que nadie reconoce el hecho de que dolorosa fue en Navidad cuando Santa no tenía razón de pasar por su casa. O que por qué no podía unirse con la familia o ir a la iglesia en el día de las madres. O, por qué asistiendo a un baby shower de un primo no iba a suceder. O por qué cargando la sobrina o sobrino recién nacido fue increíblemente doloroso así como que por favor no empujen el bebé en mis brazos!

La gran mayoría de las veces, este curso sobre la pérdida de un bebe ha demostrado ser muy beneficioso. Realmente se trata de elevar el conocimiento de este doloroso tema. Pero después de todo, si todavía no lo entienden, realmente la pérdida es de los que no tratan de entender. Son ellos los que pierden en ser parte de una vida que es tan valioso y una vida de un bebe que es extrañado demasíadamente. Además, están perdiendo una multitud de oportunidades de ser una bendición a usted en manera de amarlos durante los días más oscuros de su vida. Y si es así, la escritura es verdad que “Jesús se acerca más que un hermano.” Aunque parece que nadie entiende cómo se siente uno, nuestro Señor si lo entiende. Siempre estará ahí para usted. El es su consolador y oren que él ablanda los corazones de sus seres queridos. Oren también que El le dará la posibilidad de perdonar a aquellos que los han herido para no tener un corazón de amargura encima de su dolor. Por último, nosotros en M.E.N.D. estamos aquí para usted. Nosotros no somos miembros de la familia biológicos—y ciertamente no somos Jesús—pero somos una familia de quienes comparten el vínculo común de perder a un niño. Hemos caminado el camino, y lo entendemos!

♥ *Rebekah Mitchell*

*mama de Jonathan Daniel y Bebé Mitchell*



## *Subsequent Births*

### **Alfredo and Amber Zuckerman**

of Grand Prairie, Texas,  
along with big brother Eli,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Alexander Isaiah,  
born April 20, 2009,  
measuring 7 lb., 8 oz.,  
and 19 inches long.

The Zuckermans lovingly remember  
Adrian Joseph "AJ,"  
stillborn March 30, 2007,  
true knot cord accident.

### **Frank and Yolanda McCammon**

of Houston, Texas,  
along with big brother Drew,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Bryce Mitchell,  
born October 14, 2009,  
measuring 5 lb., 8 oz.,  
and 17 inches long.

The McCammons lovingly remember  
Ryann Marie,  
October 31, 2008  
Congenital defect.

### **Jennifer Alfaro**

of Houston, Texas,  
joyfully welcomed  
Ethan Noel,  
on October 14, 2009,  
measuring 7 lb., 3 oz.,  
and 20 inches long.

Jennifer lovingly remembers  
Brandon Isaiah,  
October 19, 2007-February 7, 2008,  
Spinal Muscular Atrophy.

### **Juan and Griselda Hernandez**

of Grand Prairie, Texas,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Leonardo Rafael,  
born November 17, 2009,  
measuring 8 lb., 8 oz.

The Hernandez family lovingly  
remembers  
Ximena,  
stillborn January 12, 2008,  
genetic disorder.

### **Will and Kayla Scott**

of Houston, Texas,  
along with big sister Ashley,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Chelsea Elizabeth,  
born October 21, 2009,  
measuring 7 lb., 8 oz.,  
and 20 ½ inches long.

The Scotts lovingly remember  
Baby Scott II,  
miscarried May 20, 2003,  
and Baby Scott III,  
miscarried September 20, 2007.

### **Brandon and Sara Skaggs**

of Cedar Hill, Texas,  
along with big sister Sydney,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Brady Gantt,  
born October 21, 2009,  
measuring 6 lb., 4 oz.,  
and 18 ¼ inches long.

The Skaggs lovingly remember  
Elliott,  
April 28, 2008,  
multicystic kidneys,  
and Baby Skaggs,  
miscarried December 2006.

### **TJ and Jennifer Forner**

of Fairview, Texas,  
along with big sister Annabelle,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Jackson Thomas,  
born November 5, 2009,  
measuring 8 lb., 7 oz.,  
and 19.7 inches long.

The Forners lovingly remember  
James,  
stillborn January 5, 2007,  
Baby Forner I,  
miscarried June 2007,  
and Baby Forner II,  
miscarried July 2007.

### **Wally and Laura Bracken**

of Broken Arrow, Oklahoma,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Paul Alexander,  
born November 12, 2009,  
measuring 7 lb., 10 oz.,  
and 21 inches long.

The Brackens lovingly remember  
the Bracken twins,  
stillborn September 21, 2008,  
preterm labor.

### **Brittany Widman**

of Houston, Texas,  
along with big sister Zoe,  
joyfully welcomed  
Kinsleigh Love Smith,  
born October 30, 2009,  
measuring 6 lb., 15 oz.,  
and 19 ¾ inches long.

Brittany lovingly remembers  
Baby Gonzalez,  
miscarried March 10, 2003,  
Jude-Michael,  
stillborn November 10, 2006,  
and Drake and Delaney,  
stillborn January 10, 2008.

## Christmas Candlelight Ceremonies

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Our 2009 annual Christmas Candlelight Ceremony was perhaps my favorite one yet. There were more than 175 guests remembering more than 70 babies. Brandee Dill opened in prayer, followed by M.E.N.D.—SW Missouri director Heather Fann and her assistant Heather Bass lighting our M.E.N.D. candles. DaLana Barsanti sang Selah's "Wonderful, Merciful Savior." I spoke on "Broken Praise," which was followed by Meg Everhart singing Mandisa's "Broken Hallelujah." Each family then came forward to remember their baby by lighting a candle in their baby's memory. Heavenly harp music was the background, then Kaylee King, little sister to Sarah Ann (stillborn June 22, 1995) sang "Candle on the Water." The ceremony was concluded with Liz Walker singing "Peace of the Lord." Mark your calendars now to join us next year on December 7, 2010.

♥ *Rebekah Mitchell,*  
M.E.N.D.—*Founder and President*

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## Christmas Ceremony Sponsors

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### Dallas

*Mike and Kim Busker*  
*Bless Her Heart*  
*Francesca's*  
*Shannon Outen*  
*Chris and Monica Gregory*  
*Al and Amber Zuckerman*

*Highland Park Presbyterian Church /*  
*Presbyterian Women*  
*Fruit of the Earth*  
*Scott and Jodie Gibson*  
*ReDeemed Art*  
*Randy and Aimee Shaw*

*Zelda Paredes and Norman Ndambakuwa*  
*Elizabeth Meza / Silpada Designs*  
*Dentistry of Las Colinas /*  
*Byron L. Mitchell, DDS*  
*Rachael McClelland*  
*Nataly Grau*

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### Texarkana

*Appearances*  
*Atlanta Therapeutic Massage*  
*Avon, Dawn Kennedy-Consultant*  
*Bailey Neon and Sign, Rusty Bailey*  
*Baker Bros. American Deli*  
*Beech Street First Baptist Church & Staff*  
*Beech Street First Baptist Church Kidz*  
*Ministry*  
*Chick-Fil-A*  
*Chili's Restaurant*  
*Christus St. Michael Health and Fitness*  
*Center*

*Cracker Barrel Old Country Store, Inc.*  
*Geneva Concepts, Lisa Dowdy*  
*Evergreen Christmas Tree Farm*  
*First Baptist Church-Texarkana*  
*Hanner Funeral Service*  
*Hobby Lobby*  
*Johnny Carino's Italian Grill*  
*Junior League of Texarkana*  
*Mary Kay, Sara Mills-Consultant*  
*Michael's Arts and Crafts*  
*Olive Garden Restaurant*  
*On the Border Mexican Grill*

*Ra'Nachels Custom Jewelry*  
*Scentsy, Amanda Graham-Consultant*  
*Scentsy, Melissa Thomas-Consultant*  
*Deni Smith*  
*Sterling Images Photography*  
*TaMolly's Mexican Restaurant*  
*Terri's Treasures*  
*Texarkana Tractor*  
*Totally Hair Salon, Trenia Martin*  
*Train Gang Catering,*  
*Bobby and Rita Braley,*  
*Joe and Lisa Ford*

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### Houston

*Metropolitan Baptist Church,*  
*Women's Ministry*  
*Eric and Janie Lewis*

*Hernan Krymkiewicz and Ana Ayon*  
*Craig and Daphne Muirhead*

*Adrian and Stephanie Estala*  
*Chad Bass and Leah Robilitto Bass*

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### Arkansas

*Penguin Ed's*



**M.E.N.D.—Houston:** Tim and Sarah Winebrenner, remembering Shauna Elisabeth Winebrenner, April 12, 2003. (Photo by: *Gerald Crump*)



**M.E.N.D.—Texarkana:** More than 75 people attended the 3rd annual Christmas Candlelight Ceremony in Texarkana, including (left to right) Tania Greer, Melissa Thomas, Jennifer Hander, Monica Davis, Dawn Kennedy, and Toni Sherman. (Photo by: *Cassy Meisenheimer, Four States Living*)



**M.E.N.D.—Dallas:** Harpist Rebekah Passmore filled the chapel with beautiful Christmas carols before the ceremony and while families remembered their babies in heaven. (Photo by: *Byron Mitchell, Jr.*)



**M.E.N.D.—Dallas:** Andy and Dawn Kancel with little sister Abby Rose light their candles in memory of Landon, April 11, 2001, and Baby Girl Kancel, September 20, 2001. (Photo by: *Byron Mitchell, Jr.*)

## *Grieving vs. Remembering*

When we determined this newsletter topic, I thought, “That’s great! I have a lot to share about how some of our family doesn’t grieve.” Now, as I sit to write this, I think I need to clarify my definitions: all of our immediate family “grieves” the loss of our first son, Caleb Scott, in December 2003, but only a very few actually allow themselves to participate in “remembering” him throughout these last six years.

My husband, Jonathan, and I have instituted a variety of ways to acknowledge Caleb and Baby August, the baby we miscarried in August 2004. We honor them by sharing our experiences through M.E.N.D. We have a special birthday cheesecake and hang stockings at Christmas. We had a family portrait drawn of us because we have no pictures of Jon, Caleb and me during his short six hours of life. And we had that picture framed for each of our parents and siblings.

What’s surprising is the different reactions to this gift: my sister asked not to have hers, although it remains safely in my house until, and if, she wants it. Jon’s brother has his, but chooses not to hang it. Our parents had drastically different responses: Jon’s parents hung it front and center in their living room. My parents didn’t hang theirs, but instead it was set on the floor of the spare room until I told my mother how it bothered me. She immediately apologized and explained that it was too painful for my dad to see each day. At that stage in my grief...I didn’t care. I hurt too much for everyone, so I insisted it be hung.

Over time, I came to realize that my demand may have been completely insensitive, but now the picture is lovingly hung in their new house in a room with all the grandbabies’ pictures. And my dad has since been able to at least talk about Caleb and occasionally acknowledge him in the “grandkid count,” for which I’m so thankful.

The most notable difference is in how our family participates in Caleb’s birthday. My family—mostly my mother and sister—call or email me telling me they’re thinking of me and to call if I need anything. They know I don’t usually answer the phone or go out on that day, so their calls or emails are ways to show they care and respect my boundaries for the day. My dad doesn’t usually do anything, which might bother me, had he not always been horrible with dates—even my own birthday—so it’s not a “snub,” but just “dad” and I love him in spite of it.

That brings me to my mother-in-law, Dorothy. In most cases, you might expect some ranting mother/daughter-in-law war to play out here in my text. Quite the contrary. My mother-in-law is absolute perfection when it comes to Caleb’s birthday. Every year, she’s sought out at least one or two small ornaments with his name or a picture frame with his name cut into the mat. Last year she gave us the most precious book: it was a Precious Moments book from a library sale all about the angel, Caleb, and his adventures in finding his place and role in heaven. She thought I would enjoy reading it to our subsequent daughter, Madison. Whatever the gift, Dorothy always gives it to us in time for his birthday. This year she even drove 30 minutes out of the way to bring it on his birthday, carefully staying only moments so as not to intrude on our mostly private day.

Initially these different responses were extremely painful to me. I thought, “My family should do this the best—not my in-laws.” It sounds crazy, I know. Over the years, I’ve come to give mutual grace and respect for all our family, and to recognize that however much or little they choose to remember my children, it’s always done in love. Everyone has their own coping levels and I know each of our family members love my children immensely...that’s all that matters.

♥ *Heather Fann,*  
*mommy to Caleb Scott and Baby August*  
M.E.N.D.—*SW Missouri*

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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)*

**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 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).
- **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*.
- **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](http://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](http://www.missionfish.org) to find out how.
- **Tastefully Simple** consultant Angie Saurer would like to offer 10 percent off purchases to M.E.N.D. members, and then donate 10 percent of purchases to M.E.N.D. Call or email your orders to Angie at (952) 322-1343 or [angelasaurer@yahoo.com](mailto:angelasaurer@yahoo.com). Shop the entertaining, cooking and home décor products online at [www.tastefullysimple.com/web/asaurer](http://www.tastefullysimple.com/web/asaurer).
- **Mary Kay** consultant Trina Echols would like to donate 15 percent of all sales when you mention M.E.N.D. If you live in the Houston area and are interested in a free facial, please call (832) 276-3664 or shop online at [www.marykay.com/trinaechols](http://www.marykay.com/trinaechols).