



M. E. N. D.

Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death

Mother's Day and Father's Day

Each year our May / June newsletter's topic is "Mother's Day / Father's Day," yet admittedly our publication tends to center more on Mother's Day, rather than Father's Day. So this year I decided to write my front page article about the dads.

By human nature I am sure Mother's Day is more difficult on us moms than Father's Day is on the dads, but I know they hurt, too, maybe just more privately and internally. From my own personal experience, as well as what I have observed from countless couples who have lost a baby, the men tend to be far more concerned for their wives on Mother's Day than we are for our husbands on Father's Day. True, perhaps they don't grieve quite as openly as we do on this particular Sunday, but let's not assume they aren't hurting just because they may not be showing their sorrow as outwardly as we do.

I've written many times in this newsletter the phrase, "Yes, you are a mom!" to the women who lost their only child and wonder if they "qualify" to be recognized on Mother's Day. But I've never said the same to the men who wonder if they deserve to be acknowledged as a father on Father's Day. So now I will say it, "Yes, men, you are dads!" I know June 20 will be a bitter-sweet day for you, but take pride in the fact that you are a father. You made a child who may not be here to serve you breakfast in bed or gift you with a tie, but you have indeed fathered a child and should be proud of it!

Ladies, I encourage us all to bestow extra love on our men on this day. Give him a gift in memory of your baby, talk to him, and let him know you know he's hurting even if he's silent.

On both of these Sundays, plan to spend the day together meeting each other's needs the best you can. Openly talk about your baby, remembering the excitement and joy you experienced together while you were expecting or during the time your baby lived. Create memories, and most importantly, celebrate that, indeed, you are both parents!

♥ *Rebekah Mitchell*

mommy to Jonathan Daniel and Baby Mitchell

Nota Español

El artículo de Rebekah Mitchell aparece en cada emisión de nuestro boletín para la audiencia latina. Para ver el artículo de este mes en español, por favor vea la página número 13.

You're A Man Now

Anita Robertson

You're a man now, son, and men don't cry.
You'll never see a tear in a real man's eye.

Macho, he-man, the leader of the pack,
Walk on alone and never look back.

That's what they say, but it's not exactly true.
There's a much finer man, son,
who lives inside of you.

You had nothing in your hands
when we brought you into life.
Never use those hands, son,
to bring discord and strife.

Put your arm around a shoulder
and a twinkle in your eye.
You can even love your enemies if you want to try.

Be a man of compassion with a heart full of love,
A strong, iron hand in a velvet-covered glove.

Lift a load that is heavy,
bandage wounds that are sore.
If you want to be a leader,
you must be a servant more.

The world will promise laughter
and good times in a pill;
Be careful what you swallow in seeking for a thrill.

And when there is a time to cry for promises unkept,
Remember, when there was a need...even Jesus wept.

♥ *Submitted by Ruth Sonnenberg
grandma to Alexis Raine Sonnenberg*

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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M.E.N.D. is a member of
First Candle/SIDS Alliance
International Stillbirth Alliance



Medical Moment



Low production of serotonin in the brainstem a likely cause for SIDS Doctors closing in on mysterious cause of death in infants

Boston, Mass. – Taking the next step in more than 20 years of research, researchers at Children's Hospital Boston have linked sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) with low production of serotonin in the brainstem, based on a comparison of brainstem samples from infants dying of SIDS compared to brainstems of infants dying from other, known causes.

The findings, published in the Feb. 3, 2010 issue of *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, may give a concrete approach to identifying babies at risk for SIDS, the leading cause of death for infants between 1 and 12 months old in the United States.

In the brainstem, serotonin helps regulate some of the body's involuntary actions, such as breathing, heart rate and blood pressure during sleep. The researchers, led by Children's neuropathologist Hannah Kinney, MD, believe that a low serotonin level impairs the function of the brainstem circuits that regulate these activities, putting a baby at risk for sudden death from stresses such as rebreathing carbon dioxide when sleeping in the face down position.

Parents should remove unnecessary SIDS risk factors, Kinney says. During pregnancy, there is no safe level of alcohol a mother can drink and no safe level of smoking, both firsthand and secondhand. Until 12 months of age, babies should sleep on their backs in a crib with a firm mattress, and without toys, soft pillows, excessive blanketing or excessive clothing.

This study was supported by funds from the First Candle/SIDS Alliance, CJ Martin Overseas Fellowship, the CJ Murphy Foundation, the National Institute of Child Health and Development, and the Developmental Disabilities Research Center at Children's Hospital Boston.

Citation: Jhodie R. Duncan, PhD, David S. Paterson, PhD, Jill M. Hoffman, BS, David J. Mokler, PhD, Natalia S. Borenstein, MS, Richard A. Belliveau, BA, Henry F. Krous, MD, Elisabeth A. Haas, BA, Christina Stanley, MD, Eugene E. Nattie, MD, Felicia L. Trachtenberg, PhD, Hannah C. Kinney, MD. Brainstem serotonergic deficiency in Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. *JAMA* Feb. 3, 2010, Vol. 303, No. 5.

Children's Hospital Boston is home to the world's largest research enterprise based at a pediatric medical center, where its discoveries have benefited both children and adults since 1869. More than 500 scientists, including eight members of the National Academy of Sciences, 13 members of the Institute of Medicine and 12 members of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute comprise Children's research community. Founded as a 20-bed hospital for children, Children's Hospital Boston today is a 396-bed comprehensive center for pediatric and adolescent health care grounded in the values of excellence in patient care and sensitivity to the complex needs and diversity of children and families. Children's also is the primary pediatric teaching affiliate of Harvard Medical School. For more information about the hospital and its research visit: www.childrenshospital.org/newsroom.

We Are Mothers

It's been just more than four years since I've had the privilege and the honor of becoming Jordan's mother. From conception to now, I know of no greater blessing. Although too many of us share in the agony of having to love our children from afar, we love them all just the same. We are mothers. I proudly celebrate Mother's Day as the mother I am! Happy Mother's Day, everyone!

♥ Norma Jordan,
mommy to Jordan Alexander Booker
M.E.N.D.—Dallas

A Father That Day

I didn't think to bring a camera that day. Pain and fear had taken over initially—medication and fatigue soon after. Forty hours it would take. Forty hours in which my husband held my hand, paced the floor, ate sandwiches brought to him and took showers to stay awake. Forty hours of not grasping the reality—forty hours of our life that would change us forever.

My husband was to be a father for the first time. A ribbon on the door let others know—voices were lowered, sympathetic gazes and condolences replaced hearty handshakes and back clasps. Incompatible with life—a term we learned just three weeks prior. HELLP syndrome—a phrase we knew for 40 hours.

3 p.m. Sunday—a father watches his first son being born. Silent and tiny—no cry—no words. Quietly the nurses took Aiden while his father followed. I watched as my husband—a father held his boy. A father called the funeral home and filled out the death certificate. A father worried about his boy: where was he, when would the director come, has he been moved? A father.

There are no pictures of father and son. Yet my mind still sees it clearly. A father was made that day.

♥ *Angelique Sohn*
mommy to Aiden Xavier Sohn, Hope and Whisper
M.E.N.D.—Dallas

Mother's Day Thoughts

I always thought that once I was able to have a child of my own, Mother's Day would not be a challenging day for me anymore. While I celebrate Mother's Day and am so grateful to finally be able to feel a part of this annual recognition, I still think about the babies I lost. No, it's not that kind of intense and complicated grief that I once experienced when so fresh in my pain. But, I do still think about how, if I hadn't miscarried in January 2007, I'd have a little girl this Mother's Day. How she'd be a big sister to my 1-year-old son. How maybe they'd hold hands as we walked up to the church doors. How we might do something cheesy like coordinate our dresses.

The truth is, I missed church on Mother's Day for several years before having my son. My grief was so intense and painful that I knew I would leave the service blubbering, because with that kind of pain there is no dainty "church" cry. While I wouldn't miss attending church on that special day for the world now, I miss those two dreams that I carried in me for such a fleeting time.

It is complicated how the joy of being a mother and the longing for the babies I lost somehow co-exist. It is amazing that anybody can make sense out of it at all... but I know that my Creator understands. While He may not make sense of it all for me, He is there to comfort me when I turn to Him...on Mother's Day and any other day. God bless our babies in heaven.

♥ *Michele Wilson*
mommy to Baby Wilson I and Baby Rose
M.E.N.D.—Tulsa, Chapter Director

July/August Topic
Military Families and Loss
Deadline: May 31, 2010

September/October Topic

New Situations—
When your life changes and how to
include your babies
Deadline: July 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 4th Birthday, Ryker Lee!

Wow! We can't believe that you are turning 4 years old! The last year has been a complete blur for us. Your older sister, Mariah, was in a horrible car accident 11 days after your birthday last year and has a Traumatic Brain Injury. She has been in Nebraska in two different rehab facilities since getting out of the hospital in July. Daddy and I have been driving to Nebraska weekly since the accident to spend our days off of work with her. Derrick turned 11 this year and Kellen will be 3 in July. They have both been troopers through this entire nightmare.

With all this going on, not a day goes by that we don't think about you. We have your picture up in Mariah's room and talk about you all the time. As the days pass and the chaos continues, you would think we might miss you less, but in more ways I think we miss you more. Thinking about you growing up and what your personality would be like. Would you have a temper like your baby brother Kellen, or would you be more passive like Mariah and Derrick? We believe in our hearts that we will be brought together again and get the answers to all the questions we have about you. Until that day, please keep shining down on us through this difficult time with sissy and being without you!

Happy birthday, Monkey!

We love you so much and miss you tons!
Mommy, Daddy, Mariah, Derrick, and Kellen

P.S. Give Grandma Jan, Great-Grandma White Hair, and Great-Grandpa Aldape our love.

Ryker Lee Serrano

May 18, 2006

Lost to CMV

Parents: Carrie and Eduardo Serrano

Siblings: Mariah, Derrick and Kellen



Happy 11th Birthday, Joseph!

We love you!

Love, Mom, Dad, Will, John, and Mary Grace

Joseph Charles Libby

Stillborn May 26, 1999

Cord accident

*Given by parents Wim and Sharlene Libby
and siblings Will, John, and Mary Grace*



Happy 3rd Birthday, Gracie!

It doesn't seem possible that it has been three years since we held you in our arms for such a short while. You were such a special gift and we are so grateful for every minute we got to have you here with us. Not a day goes by that you are not in our thoughts. We have so many things we would have liked to tell you and so many questions about what would have been. Would you have been an ornery little thing like Daddy, with blond hair and blue eyes? Or would you have had Momma's dark curls and hazel eyes? We're sure you would have had all of us wrapped around your little finger. We hope you and your little sister Emma know just how much we love you. Happy third birthday, sweet little one!

We love you more than you know,
with all our hearts, forever and ever.

Daddy and Momma

Gracie Renee Dorr

May 15, 2007

Incompetent Cervix

Also remembering Emma Grace Dorr

October 16, 2008

Parents: Dustin and Janine Dorr



Happy 1st Birthday, Lilli!

Dearest Baby Lilli,

Your Daddy, Emma and I miss you so much every day. Emma talks about you and how she wishes that you were here, and that she could "just hold" you. I think we all feel that way. Emma just turned 4, and you would be turning 1. Emma sent you a balloon on her birthday, and I think we will do that again, for your birthday (I hope that you are getting them). Have fun with your Heavenly Father, and we will see you soon!

All our love,

Mommy, Daddy, Emma, Grammy, Papa, Grandma,
Grandpa, Uncle Stephen, Jack, and Max!

Lillian Minta Brackett

Born at rest June 28, 2009

Placental Abruption

Parents: Charlie and Amy Brackett

Big sister: Emma Abigail Brackett



Happy 1st Birthday, Lauren Ashley!

We can't believe that it has already been a year since you left our world, but for Mommy and Daddy the pain of missing you is as real now as it was then. We may not understand why things happen in this life, but the one thing we are sure about is you are the most precious gift to ever come into ours. There truly is nothing that compares to the love between a parent and a child, and even though you are no longer with us, we still feel that eternal bond every day of our lives. We hope that you have nothing but happiness up in heaven with your grandparents; what a beautiful woman you would have turned into. There will come a time when the three of us will be together again, just as we once were a year ago for a brief moment. Until then we will be celebrating your first birthday with you in our hearts.

We love you and miss you more than words can say!

Always and Forever Baby Girl,
Mommy and Daddy

Lauren Ashley Scott
Stillborn June 23, 2009
Trisomy 18
Parents: Troy and Emily Scott



Happy 1st Birthday, Amani!

Amani,

As this year approaches, Mommy still has a very big hole in her heart. My love, my angel, I miss you so much as every day goes by. I wish I could hold you in my arms one more time and see that beautiful tiny face.

One year has gone by and it hurts so much not having you my love. Your big sister Ashley will always miss you. She was ready to share her room with you, my angel. Daddy was ready to be the best dad ever. Don't forget to watch over your little sister Faith and now it is time to go play with the angels.

Love,
Mommy, Daddy,
Ashley and grandma

Amani Jada Harp
April 28, 2009
Premature at 21 weeks 6 days
Also remembering siblings:
Baby Harp
Miscarriage, October 18, 2008
Faith Jada Harp
Pre-mature at 18 wks, January 10, 2010
Parents: Thomas and Janette Harp
Big sister Ashley



Happy 2nd Birthday, Sweet Boys!

My Dear Three,

Another year has gone by and I can still feel the wonder and awe from the first moment I saw your sweet faces. The little time that I had you in my arms has made me such a better person and a better mother. Your little brothers were born this year and with each new discovery as a mom, I can't help but think of you boys. You will always be such an important part of our lives and I know that you are always so close. I love you so very much Hudson Wrenn, Weston Cole and Jackson Reed. You're Mom's little angels and I am so grateful for you.

We love you so much,
Mom, Karry, Collin and Holden,
Binks, Muv, Pop and Bama

Hudson Wrenn Crumley
Weston Cole Crumley
Jackson Reed Crumley
June 30, 2008
Premature
Mommy: Alisha Crumley
Little brothers: Collin Reed and Holden Grey



Happy 7th Birthday, Matthew!

Can it be that you now turn seven;
another birthday up in heaven?

These years are not easy without you;
we adjust to ways that are new.

We love you so much in every way
and miss you countless times each day!

Someday in heaven together we'll be;
hearts filled with joy for all eternity.

But for now, on this your special day
we celebrate you and pause to say:

Happy, happy birthday, Matthew!
With all our hearts, we love you!

Matthew Joel Mifflin
Stillborn June 6, 2003
True knot in umbilical cord
Also remembering:
Little One, miscarried February 6, 2006
Lil' rosebud, miscarried March 10, 2007
Parents: Dennis and Janet Mifflin
Siblings: Thomas and Michelle



Continued on page 6...

Continued from page 5...

Happy 1st Birthday, Lindsay Claire!

Our Little Bird,

We can't believe it has already been a year since you landed in our nest. Not a day goes by that we don't long to hold you again in our arms. We are very proud of you and so thankful for the time we had together. God showed us your beauty and strength made perfect in His kindness as you held on for Mom and Dad.

"Come on Little Bird, you can do this (and now so can Mom and Dad)! Your Mommy loves you, your Daddy loves you, your sister Haley loves you, and Jesus loves you!"

Love,
Daddy, Mommy and Haley

Lindsay Claire Alexander
May 24-27, 2009
VLCAD (Fatty Acid Oxidation Disorder)
Parents: Lane and Leslie Alexander
Sibling: Haley



Happy 1st Birthday, Emma!

Dear Emma,

Your short life has changed the life of many people forever. We can't believe it has been a year since we first met you and held you.

We always remember how you fought and how you pulled out the cables with your tiny hand. We also remember that you were strong enough to hold daddy's finger and open your eyes to look at mommy, even though you were very tired.

We can't stop thinking about what you would be doing, playing, or how you would be waiting for daddy to come home every week from work. We just want to have a peaceful 5th of May. We should be celebrating your first birthday with you, but we are celebrating your short life instead.

We do really miss you and love you.
Mommy and Daddy.

Emma Krymkiewicz
May 5, 2009
Neonatal Hemochromatosis
Also remembering
Baby Girl (Tatasita) Krymkiewicz
Miscarried June 13, 2008
Parents: Ana Ayon and Hernan Krymkiewicz



Happy 10th Birthday, Colten!

We all love and miss you so much.
Hugs and Kisses on this special day.

Colten Benjamin Ballmer
Stillborn May 28, 2000
Umbilical Cord Stenosis - Congenital
Parents: Jamieson and Regan Ballmer
Little brother: Logan Tanner



Happy 1st Birthday, Jackson!

Wow, has it been a year already? It doesn't seem possible! It seems like only yesterday we held you in our arms, kissed your cheeks and said good bye! Daddy and I talk about you a lot, and miss and love you so much! Your grandparents and Aunt Heather miss you so much; they all talk about you and tell us how much they love you. Your cousin Eden calls you bubba when she sees your picture! We wish we had you here on earth, but know you are waiting for us in heaven, and until the day we meet again, we love you and miss you!

Love,
Mommy and Daddy

Jackson Connor Wood
Born into heaven on June 6, 2009
Parents: Darin and April Wood



Silent Footprints

We never had the chance
to play to laugh to rock to wiggle.

We long to hold you touch you now
and listen to you giggle.

I'll always be your mom;
He'll always be your dad.

You will always be our child—
the child we never had.

But now you're gone,
and yet you're here;
we'll sense you everywhere.

You are our sorrow and our joy;
There's love in every tear.

Just know our love goes deep and strong.
We'll forget you never.

The child we had,
but never had,
and yet will have forever.

Author unknown

Happy 1st Birthday, Matthew Lane!

We can hardly believe it's been a year since we held you in our arms. We know you are happy in heaven with Jesus, and we can't wait to see you again! We miss you every day!

We love you,
Mommy, Daddy, Renee', and Mark

Matthew Lane Stewart
May 13, 2009
Extreme Prematurity
Parents: Mark and Connie Stewart
Siblings: Renee' and Mark



Happy 4th Birthday, Ava Grace!

Words cannot express how much we miss you! It's hard to believe that it's been four years...there isn't a day that goes by that I don't think about you!

We love you, baby girl!
Mommy, Daddy, Madison, and Spencer

Ava Grace Browning
Stillborn March 7, 2006
Ebstein's Anomaly
Parents: Kevin and Christal Browning
Siblings: Big Sister Madison
and Little Brother Spencer



Happy 7th Birthday, Cooper!

It has been so many years since I last held you in my arms. It is hard for me to grasp that "my babies" are not babies anymore. I look at Paxton and know that you, too, are growing up. I would love to hear about your many adventures of growing up in heaven. Oh, the stories you must have to tell. Until then, Paw-Paw and Zach have joined you to share in the excitement of glory and celebrate your birthday.

All our love,
Daddy, Mommy, Avery, Tate, and Paxton

Cooper Graham Dill
Stillborn May 26, 2003
Twin-to-twin transfusion, cord accident
Also remembering Baby Dill
miscarried May 2002
Parents: Jim and Brandee Dill
Siblings: Avery, Tate, and Paxton (Cooper's identical twin)



What Makes A Mother?

I thought of you all, I closed my eyes
And prayed to God today.
I asked what makes a Mother
And I know I heard Him say, A mother has a baby.

This we know is true.
But God can you be a mother
When your baby's not with you?

"Yes you can!" He replied with confidence in His voice.
"I give many women babies, when they leave it is not
their choice."

"Some I send for a lifetime, and others for a day.
And some I send to feel your womb
But there's no need to stay."

I just don't understand this God,
I want my baby here.
He took a breath and cleared His throat,
and then I saw a tear.

"I wish I could show you what your child is doing today.
If you could see your child smile with other children and
say, 'We go to earth to learn our lessons of love
and life and fear. My mommy loved me oh so
much I got to come straight here.

I feel so lucky to have a Mom who had so much
love for me. I learned my lesson very quick.

My Mommy set me free.

I miss my Mommy oh so much, but I visit her each day.

When she goes to sleep, on her pillow's where I lay.

I stroke her hair and kiss her cheek and whisper in her
ear, 'Mommy don't be sad today. I'm your baby
and I'm here.'

"So you see my dear sweet one, Your children are okay.
Your babies are here in my home
and this is where they'll stay.

They'll wait for you with me

Until your lesson is through.

And on that day that you come home

They'll be at the gates for you.

So now you see what makes a Mother.

It's the feeling in your heart.

It's the love you had so much of right from the very start.

Though some on earth may not realize

That you are a Mother until their time is done.

They'll be up here with me one day

and you're the best one.

♥ Marie Stockdale,
mommy to Michelle,
M.E.N.D.—Georgia

In Loving Memory



Courtney Lea Abare

December 15, 2008

Given by

Parents: Kim and Julie Abare

Big Brother: Bailey

Malen Huck Anderson

Stillborn February 4, 2008

Possible heart attack

Given by parents

Becky and Wesley Anderson

and siblings Lenea and Nathan

Gifts given by

Lloyd and Joanne Haar

Verda Swagerty

Keith and Valerie Williamson

Church of the Nazarene, Sublette, KS

Byron Smith, Martin Smith, and

Howard Smith

Jim and Lana Willimon

Jeff and Deb White

Mike and Donna White

Doug and Kristin Nelson

Western Prairie Farms

Sublette Cooperative, Inc.

Western Motor

Dick and Sally Akers

Margaret and Gary Grice

E. Grant and Kathleen Larkin

Leroy and Jessie Armstrong

David and Marla Bennett

Arthur McCowan

Shirley and John Smith

Also remembering Malen's great grandfather, **Earl Ray White**

Sydney Lynne Brown

May 18, 2000

Cord Problem and other unknown conditions

Ashley MacKenzie Brown

Antiphospholipid antibodies

May 18, 2001

Given by parents Brian and Marilyn Brown and little brother Samuel

Tiffany Brown

July 21, 2008

Incompetent Cervix

Elizabeth Hope Brown

June 21, 2009

Incompetent Cervix

Baby Brown I

Miscarried August, 2006

Baby Brown II

Miscarried January, 2010

Given by parents Eric and Tonya Brown

Abigail Marie Buddin

April 13 - June 17, 2006

SIDS

Parents: Nathan and Cara Buddin

Siblings: Alexander and Anthony

Given by Polly Donald

Also given in memory of

Emily Fields Buddin Honeycutt

Abigail Grace Crump

Stillborn July 1, 2003

Trisomy 18

Given by parents Gerald and Jaimie Crump and little sisters Cami and Karli

Riley and Parker Davis

November 14, 2006

Prematurity

Given by parents Robert and Cheryl Davis and little sister Annalise

Dharma Lucille Drude

March 31-April 1, 2008

Anencephaly

Parents: Jason and Jennie Drude

Little brother: Max

Gifts given by

Barbara Branson

Dennis and Karen Stephens

Craig and Daphne Muirhead

Roy and Dana Harstein

Dr. Johnny Peet

Terry and Jlynn Burks

Brody Gage Duncan

Stillborn November 1, 2008

Mommy: Ashley Duncan

Given by grandfather Paul Coggin

Kyler Paul English

Stillborn January 20, 2006

Cord accident

Given by Jon and Laurie Pike

and brothers Kinser, Kelson, and Kayden

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

Janelle Marie Gibson

Stillborn November 17, 2006

Clot in Placenta

Gabriel

Miscarried October 31, 2007

Ectopic

Parents: Jodie and Scott Gibson

Siblings: Will, Andrew, and Isaac

Given by Joyce Esser

Also in memory of Janelle's great grandmother **Wylene Gibson**, January 31, 2010

Baby Gold 1

Miscarried August 12, 2008

Baby Gold 2

Miscarried July 14, 2009

Parents: Greg and Kathryn Gold

Big sister: Emily Kathryn

Gifts given by

Great uncle and aunt

Loyd and Lillian Gentry

Barb Gentry

Erika Brienne Grau

July 9 - August 3, 1997

Anoxic Brain Injury due to ruptured uterus

Parents: Ray and Yvette Grau

Big brother: Nikryan

Given by little sister Nataly

Lauren Paige Grimes

Stillborn March 6, 1999

Unknown cause

Angel Baby Grimes

Miscarried January 25, 2001

Given by parents Paula and John Grimes and sister Raleigh

Camden Asher Haltom

Stillborn October 31, 2009

Unknown cause

Parents: James and Jill Haltom

Given by Rhoda Stelchek

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!

Alysa Tyler Hander

July 27 - August 24, 2005
Premature
Given by parents Jennifer and Lex Hander

Amani Jada Harp

April 28, 2009
Premature
Given by parents Janette Mercado and Thomas Harp
And big sister Ashley Valle
Also remembering

Baby Harp**Loston Harp**

October 18, 2008
And **Faith Jada Harp**
January 10, 2010
Premature

Ximena Hernandez

January 12, 2008
Genetics
Given by parents
Juan and Griselda Hernandez
and brothers Juan and Leonardo

Alan John Huelsebusch

Stillborn March 9, 2006
Unknown cause
Parents: Dan and Sandy Huelsebusch
Siblings: Ashlie, Courtnie, and Cayden Alan
Gifts given by
Keith and Christine Kuhn
David and Donna Heath (Envirolink)
Kim Naumann (Logosagogo)
Jeanette Huelsebusch
Lisa Alexander
Arlene Schneider David
Drs. David and Anna Damian
Gary and Pattie Sims
Martha Tacket

Clara Shea Huey

Stillborn June 16, 2003
Unknown Cause
Given by parents Ashley and Sara Huey
and sister Olivia

Joseph Charles Libby

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

Jackson Glen and Tyler Ray Light

February 23, 2009
Placental Abruption
Parents: Diana and Kirk Light
Given by grandparents RG and NA Light

Kinley Miles

March 3, 2009
Placental abruption
Parents: Andy and Christine Miles
Sibling: Kylee and Colton
Gifts given by
Randy and Lari Jo Bernstein
Shelton and Terri Miles
Larry and Betty Walling

Jonathan Daniel Mitchell

Stillborn June 24, 1995
Cord accident

Baby Mitchell

Miscarried December 2001
Gifts given by parents
Byron and Rebekah Mitchell
and big brother Byron, Jr.
Grandparents Dennis and Sue Brewer

Kaceton Clay Rogers

October 28, 2009 - January 30, 2010
SIDS
Parents: Sean Rogers and Michelle Knowles
Gifts given by:
Carolyn Babet and Chad Washer
Robert Marberry
Susan English
Thomas Henkel and Joleen Bishop
Roberta Wells
E A Rogers
Katherine Bourne
Shannon Shiele

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

David Atkins Stephens

October 23, 2003
MTHFR mutation

Baby Stephens I

June 30, 2008
Ectopic pregnancy

Baby Stephens II

January 2009
MTHFR mutation

Baby Stephens III

Ectopic pregnancy
February 15, 2010
Given by parents Rob and Melissa Stephens
and brother C.J.

Gift of Support

Second Baptist Church, Springfield, MO

Gift of Support

West Conroe Baptist Church
Conroe, Texas

Gift of Support

Redcrow Marketing, Springfield, MO

Gift of Support

Metropolitan Baptist Church, Houston, TX

Legacy Giving

Losing a child has changed each of our lives forever. We appreciate all financial support of the services our organization gives to bereaved parents—no matter the size of the contribution. However, some of you may have the capacity and desire to give a lifelong gift to M.E.N.D.

If you're interested in creating a legacy gift or endowment in honor of your baby, M.E.N.D. would be happy to assist you in gathering the necessary information to remember our organization in your will or trust. Please contact Rebekah Mitchell at rebekah@mend.org for more information about legacy giving.

Looking Ahead

October 2

- M.E.N.D.—Houston Walk To Remember

October 2

- Walk To Remember in Irving, TX

October 22

- M.E.N.D.—Tulsa Walk To Remember

December 7

- Christmas Ceremony in Irving, TX

December 9

- M.E.N.D.—Houston Christmas Ceremony

December 9

- M.E.N.D.—SW Missouri Christmas Ceremony



M.E.N.D.

*Chapter Corner*Chapter Meeting Information**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.—Texarkana

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

M.E.N.D.—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. Chapter Updates**Kansas**

M.E.N.D.—Kansas will celebrate its fifth anniversary in Emporia this May. I would like to thank all the families who have come to MEND for sharing a part of their life.

*Stephanie Metzger***Houston**

M.E.N.D.—Houston is looking forward to our fourth annual Texas Hold'em Poker Fundraiser. Please contact me if you have an interest in playing in this fun event benefiting M.E.N.D.

*Jaimie Crump***Texarkana**

Toni Sherman, Tani Greer, Melissa Thomas, and I traveled to Dallas for a fantastic weekend at the Leadership Conference. Wow! It was great to see all of the chapter directors, assistants, and board of directors. I can't wait to see how God is going to use M.E.N.D.—Texarkana to minister to grieving families in our area.

*Monica Davis***Hill Country**

M.E.N.D.—Hill Country is reaching out to surrounding towns to generate more attendance for our monthly support group meetings. If you know of any bereaved families in the area, please contact me at Larissa@mend.org.

*Larissa Hallford***Tulsa**

First, I would like to give a big "Thank You" to Jo Ann Hammack for all the work she has done in helping M.E.N.D.—Tulsa find an ornament for our upcoming Walk to Remember Ceremony this October. Our chapter could not function without our volunteers! A special thanks also goes to First Baptist Church of Tulsa for their financial contribution for the upcoming Walk to Remember Ceremony as well as supporting the ministry of M.E.N.D. through prayer.

*Michele Wilson***SW Missouri**

M.E.N.D.—Southwest Missouri is excited about "Dreaming" for future outreach through our two major hospital systems, a partnership with volunteers at the Local Global Impact missions conference at Second Baptist Church, and two fundraisers this spring. Special thanks to my assistants Heather Bass, Kathryn Gold and Ruth Sonnenberg for their dedication to our ministry. These women have either attended trainings locally or in Dallas over the last few months, and assisted with setup and tear down, as well as greeting at every one of our monthly meetings. They truly make our mission known throughout their spheres of influence. Our chapter wouldn't be the same without them.

One final special thank you to April Moreton, former director of the NW Arkansas chapter for selflessly passing on her supplies to our chapter for our upcoming Christmas Ceremony.

Heather Fann

Bryan/College Station

M.E.N.D.—Bryan/College Station had our first meeting in March and everything went great! We welcomed many new families and continue to reach out to families in the community who might need us. We are really looking forward to what God has in store for this new chapter in the coming months!

Jennie Drude

Amarillo

M.E.N.D.—Amarillo will hold our first meeting Tuesday, May 11 at 7pm. We look forward to giving our support to the Amarillo Area! For more information, contact me at (806)570-4344 or email becky@mend.org.

Becky Anderson

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.—Bryan/College Station

Meets the 2nd Tuesday at 7:00 p.m.
Hawthorn Suites
1010 University Drive East
College Station, Texas 77840
Director: Jennie Drude
jennie@mend.org, (979) 220-7851

M.E.N.D.—Amarillo

Meets the 2nd Tuesday at 7:00 p.m.
First United Bank of the Colonies
(Lonestar Room)
One First United Bank Parkway
45th and Soncy
Amarillo, Texas
Director: Becky Anderson
becky@mend.org, (806) 570-4344

M.E.N.D. Support Group Meetings in the Dallas Metroplex

Join us for a time of sharing experiences.

M.E.N.D. main chapter meetings
are held the 2nd Thursday of
every month
from 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Daddies group
meets the 2nd Thursday of
March, June, Sept. and Dec.,
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

Subsequent pregnancy group
meets the 4th 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:
NEW LOCATION JANUARY 2010
Wells Fargo Bank
800 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
*For families experiencing
infertility after a loss.*

When Mother's Day is Difficult

On May 9, we'll celebrate Mother's Day once again. For many, it's a time of appreciation and joy. For others, it can be one of the most difficult days of the year. This is often true for women facing infertility, families who have recently experienced the loss of a mother, and many other painful situations.

I've learned what it's like for Mother's Day to be difficult through my work as a writer for DaySpring. Each year we receive letters about our "Difficult Mother's Day" cards. One woman expressed her appreciation and then said, "I spent seven very painful Mother's Days longing for motherhood while dealing with infertility and the losses of eight children through miscarriage and failed adoptions. I've also seen my own mother's grief and struggle through Mother's Day after the death of her mother. And I have many friends in less-than-ideal situations with their children."

I've learned what it's like for Mother's Day to be difficult through my experience as a graduate student in the counseling program at John Brown University. As the final step to completing my degree, I'm doing an internship through the women's ministry and counseling center of my church, which has almost 10,000 members. I've walked the journey of grief with many and I've found that experiencing sadness on special occasions is common. These days often serve as reminders of what we have lost or do not yet have.

Finally, and most importantly, I've learned what it's like for Mother's Day to be difficult through my personal struggle with infertility. So as Mother's Day comes this year, I'd like to share a few thoughts with you. These are taken from my own journey as well as my training at DaySpring and in the Counseling program.

Embrace Your Emotions

First, if Mother's Day is difficult for you then give yourself permission to grieve. When holidays come, we often put expectations on ourselves to feel a certain way. We may think, "This is a special occasion. I have to put on a happy face and make the best of it." But it's okay to feel sad and even cry. As the authors of *The Empty Chair: Handling Grief on Holidays and Special Occasions* say simply and powerfully, "We grieve because we loved."

It's also helpful to realize that emotions are not good or bad. They are just messengers that tell us about what's going on in our lives. Sadness tells us, "You've lost something or someone important to you." It's not a sin to feel sad. Jesus often experienced sadness and the Bible says he was "a man of sorrows, and familiar with grief" (ISAIAH 53:3 NIV).

Sometimes we need to help others understand our sadness. People who are trying to comfort us may say things like, "At least your loved one is in a better place now." Words like these can make us feel guilty for being sad. People who say these things are often really trying to tell us, "I care about you. I want you to feel better. So I'm going to say anything and everything I can think of that might help." Sometimes we need to gently share with those around us that what we really need is for them to just be there and listen.

In Psalm 13 King David pours out his heart to the Lord and asks, "How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart?" He ends by saying, "I will sing to the Lord, for he has been good to me." Does that mean we need to go from feeling broken to blessed in just a few lines? No, absolutely not. But it does show us something important about emotions. They are meant to be detours rather than destinations. If you continually feel sad over an extended period of time, or it seems as if there is no hope, then you may want to consider getting help.

Seek Support

Sometimes we need to be alone to experience our emotions, but usually it is wise to seek support. From the very beginning of creation, God said it wasn't good for man to be alone. This is especially true when we are grieving. Jesus modeled this when he was in the Garden of Gethsemane. He brought several of his disciples with him and said, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me" (MATTHEW 26:38 NIV).

Support can take many different forms. Hopefully, you have close friends and family members who can walk through this time with you. It's important not to assume they know you need their comfort. Unless they have experienced a similar loss, they don't know what it's like. So don't be afraid to call them or tell them what you need. You won't be imposing. They probably want to help but don't know what to do.

Even family members and close friends can grow weary at times, so it's helpful to have other sources of support. Counselors can be a great source of support because they're trained to work with loss. Support groups can also provide comfort. You can learn from those who are further down the road and offer help to those just beginning their journeys.

Of course, our strongest supporter will always be God. This may not feel as if it is true, especially during a time of loss in our lives. Right now you may be angry at God, disappointed in him, or feel as if you don't have any faith left at all. That's normal and many godly people throughout history have experienced similar feelings. God understands that you are hurt. It's okay to bring all of those emotions to him.

Continued on page 14...



Subsequent Births

Michael and Jennifer Grant
of Houston, Texas
along with big sister Abigail,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Jackson O'Neil,
born January 25, 2010,
measuring 6 lb., 12 oz.
The Grants lovingly remember
Jonah,
March 4, 2009,
Trisomy 18.

Tom and Carolina Liskey
of The Woodlands, Texas,
along with big siblings,
Thiago and Sofia,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Tobias Emanuel,
born February 17, 2010,
measuring 8 lb., 6 oz.
and 21 inches long.
The Liskeys lovingly remember
Twin Liskeys,
miscarried September 29, 2008.

Andy and Christine Miles
of Montgomery, Texas,
along with big sister Kylee,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Colton Andrew,
born March 3, 2010,
measuring 7 lb., 12 oz.,
and 19 inches long.
The Miles family lovingly remembers
Kinley,
March 14, 2009,
placental abruption.

Jason and Jessyca Vera
of Irving, Texas,
along with big sister Caren,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Noah James,
born April 2, 2010,
measuring 8 lb., 6 oz.
The Vera family lovingly remembers
Cole Jennengs,
stillborn April 3, 2009,
cord accident.

Les and Michelle Barnhart
of Olpe, Kansas,
along with big siblings
Clint, Kyle, and Katie,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Megan Michelle,
born January 16, 2010,
measuring 7 lbs., 11 oz.,
and 20 inches long.
The Barnharts lovingly remember
Ty Colton John,
stillborn April 11, 2008,
anencephaly.

Sam and April Moreton
of Siloam Springs, Arkansas,
along with siblings
Asher, Ava, and Brock,
joyfully announce the adoption of
Scarlett Lele,
born February 18, 2009,
Jiangxi Province, China,
forever theirs, January 18, 2010.
The Moretons lovingly remember
Baby M,
miscarried October 15, 1999,
Baby Boy Moreton,
miscarried March 17, 2000,
and Angel #3,
miscarried August 1, 2000,
Antiphospholipid Antibody Syndrome.

El Día de la Madre y el Día del Padre

Cada año el tema de nuestro boletín de mayo y junio es "día de la madre / día del padre", pero hay que reconocer que nuestra publicación se tiende a centrar más sobre el día de la madre, en lugar del día del padre. Por lo tanto este año decidí escribir mi artículo acerca de los papas.

Por naturaleza humana estoy segura que el día de las madres es más difícil para nosotras las mamás que para los papas en el día de los padres, pero yo sé que ellos sufren también, tal vez de manera más interna y privada. De mi experiencia personal y de lo que he observado en innumerables parejas que han perdido un bebé, los hombres tienden a preocuparse más por sus esposas en el día de la madre de lo que nosotras nos preocupamos por ellos en el día del padre. Y es cierto, tal vez no sufren de manera abierta como lo hacemos nosotras en ese domingo en particular, pero no asumamos que no están sufriendo solo por el hecho de que no están demostrando su dolor externamente como lo hacemos nosotras.

He escrito muchas veces en este boletín la frase "Si, tu eres una mamá" a las mujeres que perdieron a su único hijo y se preguntan si ellas "califican" a ser reconocidas en el día de las madres. Pero nunca he dicho lo mismo a los hombres que se preguntan si merecen ser reconocidos como padres en el Día del Padre. Así que ahora lo diré "Si, tú eres un papá". Sé que este 20 de junio va a ser un día amargo para ti, pero toma fuerza y enorgúllate del hecho de que eres un padre. Tú hiciste a un niño que hoy no puede estar aquí para servirte el desayuno en la cama o para regalarte una corbata, pero de hecho has concebido un bebé y deberías de sentirte muy orgulloso de él.

Esposas, yo las animo a otorgar amor adicional a nuestros hombres en ese día, denles un regalo en memoria de su bebé, hablen con él y hazle saber que tú sabes, que él sufre aunque él lo haga en silencio.

En estos dos domingos, planea pasar el día juntos complaciendo uno al otro lo mejor que se pueda. Hablen abiertamente de su bebé, recordando la emoción y la alegría que experimentaron juntos mientras estabas embarazada o durante el tiempo que vivió tu bebé. Crea recuerdos y lo más importante, celebren que de hecho ambos padres!

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

Continued from page 12...

Normal grief and mourning can turn into serious depression. One of the symptoms of depression is withdrawing and isolating ourselves from others. If you find you are cutting off relationships, have no desire to be with other people, and are spending much more time alone than usual, it may be a sign that you're experiencing depression.

Do Something Special

While doing something special when you are sad may feel a bit overwhelming, it's important because it will help you be proactive rather than reactive in addressing your loss. Many people think that it's better to avoid or bury their grief. But the opposite is actually true. Healing only comes when we acknowledge and embrace our losses. As Dr. Gary Oliver says, "If you bury an emotion, it's always buried alive."

The kind of action you take depends on your personality and the nature of your loss. For example, if you lost your mother then you might write her a letter. If you lost an unborn child, you might donate to a crisis pregnancy center in his or her honor. You and your spouse might look at photos of the sister you lost to breast cancer or visit a place where you used to go together. You may think, "But that will make me sad!"

That's okay. Experiencing grief is part of healing.

Grief and Trauma Counselor H. Norman Wright even recommends a "programmed cry" in which you set aside a specific time to grieve and place yourself in an environment where you are able to do so. He says in *Recovering from Losses in Life*, "Some of us have never learned to cry. We are afraid to really let go with our tears. We live with fears and reservations about crying. We cry on the inside but never on the outside." Each time you allow yourself to grieve through tears, it will become a little bit easier to do so.

You can also simply do something nice for yourself. If you enjoy going to restaurants, then have a special meal with a friend or spouse. If you like taking long walks or bubble baths, make time in the day for that activity. Part of getting through grief is taking care of you. As long as it isn't something harmful or numbing, doing something special for yourself can help you through a difficult day.

Hold Onto Hope

At one point in my journey it seemed as if I couldn't take another step. In addition to infertility, I was facing several other losses. I felt as if I were in a dark cave. But then I sensed the Lord gently and lovingly speak to my heart, "You may be in a cave, but you still have a choice. You can sit in despair or you can diamond-mine your difficulties." I decided I was not leaving that time in my life empty-handed. I was taking every hidden blessing I could find. Of course, I still had difficult days. But choosing hope made a difference.

As a reminder, I now wear two rings. The one on the fourth finger of my left hand represents my commitment to my husband. The one on the fourth finger of my right hand is a simple silver band inscribed with the word "hope" and it represents the commitment I have made to God and myself to hold onto hope no matter what happens.

The story of an inspiring woman named Terrie also reminds me to hold onto hope. She endured the loss of 4 pregnancies and waited 17 years before adopting a little girl. She told me, "I think one of the most important parts of this journey is learning to trust God. I don't mean the flippant kind of trust. It's easy for people to say, 'You just need to trust God.' It's much harder when you're in the middle of all this pain. But He is trustworthy. Through it all, God has given us an amazing story. I wouldn't have chosen this road, but He has been with us. I can look back and truly say every step was worth it."

I don't know how my journey will end and you probably don't know how yours will either. I also don't know how many of you will be silently grieving your losses as we sit in church together on May 9. But I do know that God sees each one of us. He knows how many hairs are on our heads and how many cares are in our hearts. Whatever you're going through this Mother's Day, you're not facing it alone. As King David, a man who experienced many losses in his life, expressed in Psalm 34:18 NIV, "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." May God surround you with love, fill you with hope, and give you strength for each moment—especially this Mother's Day.

*Holley Gerth is an award-winning writer and editorial director for DaySpring. Her new devotional book, *Rain on Me: Devotions of Hope and Encouragement for Difficult Times* (Summerside Press), is now available online and in bookstores. Holley is also a counseling intern for the women's ministry and care center of a mega church with close to 10,000 members. She has been married to her college sweetheart, Mark, for almost nine years. Holley is not a morning person and once put chocolate on her alarm clock to bribe herself but ate it and went back to bed. You're invited to find encouragement any time of day on her blog, *Heart to Heart with Holley* (<http://holley.dayspring.com>).*

What Husbands Want Their Wives to Know

Dear Honey,

I love you. Outside of God, no one is more important to me in this world than you! When you hurt, I hurt. Nothing is more painful for me than to see you hurting. Remember last year, after our miscarriage, when I held you weeping in my arms? We were both grieving the loss of our precious baby, but the deepest wound for me was seeing your devastation. More recently, when you came home in tears because your friend at work announced her pregnancy, I hurt because you were hurting.

When you hurt, my first thought is, “How can I fix this? How can I take the pain away?” I sometimes forget that I am not God. As a wise pastor once said: “Husbands, we may sense how deeply our wives are hurting...and we may think it is our duty to be a tower of strength. Perhaps we feel that any display of weakness or sorrow on our part will only add to her grief. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Indeed, if our wives sense that our losses don’t affect us, that only isolates them in their grief. We husbands do not have to be towers of strength. That’s God’s job. God is our refuge and our strength, a very present help in trouble” (Psalm 46:1 KJV). It is not unmanly to cry with her; it is a caring and loving thing to do. (“When a Husband Hurts,” Rev. Burton Wilbur, Jr., Stepping Stones, June-July ‘02).

Sometimes in an effort to cheer you up, I have said dumb things like: “Don’t cry! It’ll be okay.” Or at times I have tried to remind you that God is in control and everything will work out for the best. I know in my heart that this is all true, but I also know that those words were not helpful at the moment. Little did I realize that “happy talk” from me did not cheer you up; it only made you feel worse. For on top of all the heartache, you had a husband who didn’t understand!

Thankfully I am learning that I can’t fix your pain, but I can understand it. I have learned that the Bible says, “Weep with those who weep;” it does not say cheer them up with a pep talk. I have learned that what helps you the most is when I simply put my arm around you and say, “This is really hard for you right now, isn’t it? I just want you to know that it hurts me too.”

You and I do not always grieve in the same way. When I am hurting, I tend to clam up and want some alone time. At other times, I just want to hang out with friends and forget the stress and strain.

When you are hurting, you tend to open up. It’s healing for you to talk about your ups and downs. Talking is therapy for you.

I want to spend time with you sharing our hopes and dreams, our disappointments and setbacks. That’s an important part of the oneness that God intends for our marriage.

But do we need to talk about our struggles all the time? Can we resurrect the old “twenty minute rule”? You know, that’s the friendly agreement that allows us to talk about our hurts and hopes for twenty minutes a day, but no more. I can easily handle twenty minutes a day—especially if it leaves time for interesting activities to do together.

As much as I love you, I simply can’t be the only person you talk to. I am not equipped for that.

My favorite Christian author, C.S. Lewis, once said that friendship begins when one person says to another, “What? You too? I thought I was the only one.” That’s the kind of friend I want for you—one who doesn’t feel uncomfortable when you express your dreams and hidden hurts.

You have told me that it’s not easy to find someone who understands. Perhaps our pastor could put you in touch with someone in our church who is in a similar situation. Or maybe you could check the Stepping Stones discussion forums to find a friend online (stepforums.bethany.org). Stepping Stones (ssministry.net) and Resolve (www.resolve.org) also maintain a list of support groups. Maybe one meets in our area.

It feels as if we are in a dark valley. How and when God will bring us to the other side, I don’t know. All I know is that one day He will bring us out of the valley into the sunshine again. In the meantime, with the help of God, I know we can travel through this valley together.

Your loving husband

Reprinted by permission from Stepping Stones, a newsletter for infertile couples published by Bethany Christian Services. For more information go to www.ssministry.net.

M.E.N.D. Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death
 P.O. Box 1007, Coppell, TX 75019
 USA
 (972) 506-9000
Return Service Requested

Nonprofit Organization
 U.S. Postage Paid
 Coppell, TX 75019
 Permit No. 139

“... 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) 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 contact Rebekah (rebekah@mend.org) to obtain the Customer Letter. You must only present this letter one time to link your card to M.E.N.D. 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.
- 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 msbrown16@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 and designate M.E.N.D. as your charity of choice.
- **Ebay** has a charitable giving program that can benefit M.E.N.D. If you sell items on Ebay and would like to designate a percentage of your revenue to M.E.N.D., visit www.missionfish.org to find out how.
- **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. Shop the entertaining, cooking and home décor products online at 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.
- **Igive.com** will donate a penny a search and a portion of each purchase made through their website to M.E.N.D. Sign up today! M.E.N.D.'s cause number is 52025.