



M. E. N. D.

Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death

Growing Families Through Nontraditional Journeys

I was a little girl, probably in elementary school, when the news hit of the birth of the first “test tube baby.” This fascinating, scientific success was reported on the front page of newspapers all over the world and was the top story of the ten o’clock news for days. Despite this medical phenomenon, several years later as I entered into the world of childbearing and motherhood myself, the topic of infertility and the possible treatments and options of such remained taboo. A handful of my friends discovered that becoming pregnant was not happening easily for them, and I later learned that they grieved in silence. We just thought they were not yet ready for parenthood.

In our early years of marriage, my husband, Byron, and I had some close friends who were a little older than we were and had been married a few years longer. We became pregnant 2-1/2 years into our marriage, and we couldn’t figure out why they didn’t seem all that excited about our pregnancy and why they weren’t yet expecting a baby of their own. Finally, one night while we were out to dinner, I boldly asked them when they were going to start a family. The response: “Not a good subject.” Very naïve to the underground world of infertility, we chalked it up to one of them wanting a baby and the other one just not being ready. Five months after our son was born, they finally confided in us that they had been trying to have a baby for years, and they were about to venture into a new procedure called GIFT (Gamete Intra-Fallopian Transfer). Of course we had absolutely no idea what this procedure was, and we weren’t even quite sure if something like this was spiritually okay. Was this playing God?

Today our friends have four children: a lovely 19-year-old girl and 16-year-old triplet boys. Being a little privy to the emotions that our friends endured during their years of infertility gave us our first exposure to what couples experience when they can’t become pregnant on their own.

However, it wasn’t until we lost our stillborn son, Jonathan, and were told that because of my health issues we should not have another baby, that I got a taste of how couples will consider and attempt drastic measures out of passionate desperation to become parents. Yet the question remains: how far is too far, and when is medical technology playing God?

I personally feel if I had not lost a baby myself and had not been classified as having Secondary Infertility (two “failed” pregnancies), I could be a tad judgmental toward couples taking drastic measures to become parents. However, I fully know and understand the thought of “I’ll do anything to have a baby - whatever it takes.” While I believe any sort of method of becoming a parent should be thoroughly researched and completely agreed upon by both husband and wife, I feel God has given scientists and doctors the intelligence and knowledge to perform all the amazing techniques that are available to couples today. God is the author of life and death, and I feel if He does not want a life created, it will not be - and that includes creation via medical procedures. I have witnessed the immense joy of many families I know personally and through M.E.N.D. who have been given the gift of raising a baby through measures that were not afforded to parents of past generations. I, for one, am thankful these incredible options are available to longing parents, and I hope as you read some of their stories you will rejoice with them.

♥ *Rebekah Mitchell, M.E.N.D. President/Founder
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 pagina numero 23.

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

M.E.N.D.

P.O. Box 631566

Irving, TX 75063

Phone and Fax: (972) 506-9000

(Please call before faxing)

E-Mail: rebekah@mend.org

jennifer@mend.org

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

M.E.N.D. Board of Directors

Rebekah Mitchell

Byron Mitchell, D.D.S.

DaLana Barsanti

Brittney Fish

Shannon Outen

Brandee Dill

Marilyn Brown

Amber Zuckerman

State Coordinators/Chapter Directors

M.E.N.D.—Dallas: Rebekah Mitchell

M.E.N.D.—Houston: Jaimie Crump

M.E.N.D.—Texarkana: Monica Davis

M.E.N.D.—Tulsa: Lisa Daily

M.E.N.D.—SW Missouri: Heather Fann

M.E.N.D.—Bryan/College Station:

Jennie Drude

M.E.N.D.—Amarillo: Becky Anderson

M.E.N.D.—NW Washington: Susan Crow

M.E.N.D.—Hot Springs: Amy Humphries

M.E.N.D.—Wichita Falls: Sarah Fukasawah

Advisory Board

Yvette Grau, Melissa Stephens, Paula Schear,

Liz Walker, Cheryl Davis and Calli Stanley

Medical Advisor

Gonzalo Venegas, M.D.

General Counsel

Dennis G. Brewer, Sr., Attorney at Law

Newsletter

Editor: Jennifer Harrison

Co-Editors: Byron and Rebekah Mitchell

Newsletter Volunteers:

Heather Fann,

Sharlene Libby, Melissa Stephens,

Brittney Fish and Sara Elliott

M.E.N.D. is a member of

First Candle/SIDS Alliance

International Stillbirth Alliance

The Heart of the Leader - Jaimie Crump

Gerald and I had been married for four years when we decided to try to get pregnant. We had absolutely no problems and were pregnant before we knew what hit us. We were so excited! However, my world started closing in on me when my grandmother, whom I was very close to, died on December 23, 2002. She had been in the hospital for four weeks, slowly deteriorating. She was the first one I told that I was pregnant (around five weeks). Even in her ICU bed, breathing tube and all, her eyes welled up with tears. I would never have guessed that the first one to know of my baby would also be the first one to meet her.

At Christmas, we gave our parents "I love my grandpa" and "I love my grandma" bibs to tell them the great news. They were a little confused at first, but then it sunk in. Everyone was thrilled! This was to be the first grandchild on all sides.

I started visiting my OB on the regularly scheduled checkups. However, at each appointment, the nurse would give me a different due date. Looking back, I am sure my doctor had it in the back of his mind that this wasn't normal. When I was 16 weeks pregnant, he asked me to have a triple screen.

A few days later, I was called by a lab nurse at my job and asked if I was "sitting down." She proceeded to tell me that my triple screen test had shown a high probability of Trisomy 18 and that I should come in for an ultrasound. I drove home in tears and Gerald came home from work early to console me. The next day, we went in for the ultrasound only to see the look on the tech's face confirming what I thought to be "the impossible." I could tell that my doctor, who is also a family friend, was just as hurt by the news. He recommended we see a neonatal specialist for an amniocentesis.

After waiting for two hours in the waiting room, I was finally called back to have the amnio. It was more scary than painful, and was over pretty fast. The stoic doctor was very cold and insensitive, making the whole experience even worse. After he had performed the in-depth ultrasound, a nurse shuffled us to his office so the doctor could explain the results. I only remember him saying right off the bat that our daughter did, in fact, have Trisomy 18. The rest, Gerald would have to write. After he gave us the long list of things wrong with our daughter, the doctor offered us an abortion right away. Gerald was very firm and told him that with the help from my doctor, we would carry this baby to term.

I went to my OB every two weeks for an ultrasound to measure the progression of Abby's growth and the level of amniotic fluid. The head nurse would sneak me in the back door so that I did not have to wait with other pregnant moms, and the sweet ultrasound tech took a lot of pictures (which she kept and later gave to me after the birth of my second daughter).

A friend of mine from Dallas who had lost a baby sent me information on M.E.N.D. I emailed the president, Rebekah Mitchell, not really knowing what I wanted to know or ask. She "introduced" me to many other moms via email who had lost babies due to Trisomy 18. During the next 17 weeks, I spent countless hours emailing people who understood what I was going through. They gave me a lot of helpful information, so I was very prepared (materially) at the hospital.

At 34 weeks, my amniotic level was measuring 40 weeks, so my doctor decided to induce me. We went in to the hospital on June 30, and had Abigail Grace on July 1, at 2:43 in the morning. Our parents and siblings were there, and we all held her for hours. I was the only one in the room who was not crying (nurses included). To this day, I believe that the Holy Spirit gave me such a peace for those few hours with her that I was able to fully take her in without my emotions getting in the way. I had mourned her already for 17 weeks. I was the only one who felt her live and knew her intimately. It was time for the rest of my family to grieve and time for me to meet this little person who had changed my life forever.

♥ Jaimie Crump,

Mommy to Abigail Grace

M.E.N.D.—Houston

Book Reviews

What Was Lost:

A Christian Journey Through Miscarriage

By Elise Erikson Barrett

Elise Erikson Barrett is a pastor, a writer, a wife and a mother. A mother who knows what it is like to endure the loss of a baby, something she has experienced more than once. Her book is divided into three parts: "The Journey Through Miscarriage," "The Journey with God," and "The Journey Forward." At the end of each chapter, the author has included a couple of questions for reader reflection, as well as an exercise of expression for the reader to try. While many of the questions/exercise are geared toward the grieving mother, they could easily be adapted for the father, as well. *What Was Lost* is the winner of the 2011 Christianity Today Book of the Year Award in the Christian Living category.

In part one, Barrett shares the story of her first loss, chronicling her path from joy and anticipation to heartbreak and pain. As a reader, I was most impressed by the author's honesty and clarity. Time has not reduced her memory of the rawness of her emotion, but it has allowed her to share that rawness without the sharp edge that exists in the midst of such hurt. She candidly recounts the impact her loss had on every aspect of her life, her feelings about herself and her body, her relationships with those around her, and most significantly, her relationship with God. It is her willingness to share openly about how her loss affected her relationship with God that resonated with me most. She is willing to share things that many have felt, but few have been brave enough to admit, let alone write down. Blended into the author's story are the experiences and thoughts of other mothers who have endured similar losses. A mother or father who has endured such loss would be hard-pressed to come away from this section without having identified with at least one, if not all, of their stories. For the father trying to understand the mother's hurt or for the reader who has not lost a baby, but rather seeks to better support a family enduring a loss, this section gives the fullest picture I've found of the uniqueness of pain that comes from suffering a miscarriage.

In part two, the author addresses the difficult theological questions and struggles that arise after a miscarriage. Barrett is not afraid to walk down the very difficult paths of these questions. She is willing to walk into the mysterious things of God without compromising what is known about God: His nature and His character as revealed in the Bible. She invites the reader to join her personal search for answers. Why did God let this happen? What about the baby? The author does not dismiss these questions with the usual platitudes, but rather faces them head on. I was surprised to find new ideas concerning these questions, and yet I did not feel anything I read was out of step with God's Word, which she uses to support her conclusions. While it is impossible for any writer to fully answer these questions, Barrett brings some very satisfying thoughts to the table.

In the third and final section, the author talks of the journey forward. She writes about life after a miscarriage, the pain others around you are feeling, how to tell people, and some of the long-term effects. Many readers will appreciate the chapter on how to respond to the hurtful things people say, as Barrett not only gives an example of how to respond, but also explains why the comment is hurtful. It might be helpful to share a page or two with a friend or family member who does not understand why what they said brings you pain. There are also suggestions for how to make your baby a part of your family and story, including ideas for how to remember your baby and examples of

Continued on page 13...



May/June Topic

Celebrating Mother's Day/
Father's Day in Different Cultures
Deadline: March 30, 2012

July/August Topic

Living for Life (Not letting Grief
Steal Your Blessings)
Deadline: May 31, 2012

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

Reprint Policy:

Articles printed in the M.E.N.D. newsletter are copyrighted by M.E.N.D. and/or by the individual authors of certain articles. Articles may not be reprinted without permission from the editor, Jennifer Harrison, or president, Rebekah Mitchell. The newsletter may be reproduced for the purpose of providing it to pregnancy loss support group members or other bereaved families so that they may also have access to the information. The material may not be reproduced in any way, shape or form for profit. Some authors of articles included in the newsletter may carry their own copyright and their articles may only be reprinted with permission from the author.

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

Visit our Web site at:
www.mend.org



Birthday Tributes

Happy 1st Birthday, Jonathan!

Oh, baby Jonathan, how we love you and miss you. Your precious little life changed all of us for the better. God brought you into our lives like a ray of sunshine, and that is how we will always remember you.

Love, hugs and kisses forever,
Your family

Jonathan de Jongh
Miscarried March 12, 2011
Parents: David and Alissa de Jongh
Siblings: Katie, Alexa and Jacie



Happy 26th Birthday, Robin!

It's been twenty-six years since the death of what would have been our first and only child. Today, the child would be a young adult. Now this person is not here. It's very somber that this person is not part of this world!

Robin Whyte
April 1986
Unknown cause
Mommy: Tammy



Happy 1st Birthday, Logan!

My first miracle that never came to be. You would have been due on Thanksgiving 2011, but we were certain you would have arrived 11/11/11, just to be the superstar you should have been. Mommy loves and misses you dearly. ❤️

Logan Shawn McClain
April 5, 2011
Partial miscarriage requiring D&C
Parents: Nicole Bartlett and Charles McClain
Sibling: Kylie Joelle



Happy 4th Birthday, Elliot!

Remembering our precious baby boy.

Elliot Skaggs
April 28, 2008
Birth defect
Parents: Brandon and Sara Skaggs
Siblings: Sydney and Brady



Happy 1st Birthday, Bryce!

My loving son was a purpose and had a mission. We love and miss him dearly and will get to see him again one day to hold forever.

Bryce Binion
March 26 - 27, 2011
Early birth
Parents: David and Bridget Binion



Happy 1st Birthday, Jaliyah Danielle!

My dear, sweet angel, I love you so much, and I miss you more and more every day. It has only been a year, but it still feels like yesterday when I went into labor to have you. I was so excited and scared at the same time, but I knew I had to be strong for you. I wish I could see you every day, Jaliyah, but I know I can't. I know you are in a better place with no pain or suffering, and that makes me a happy mom. I do know one thing - I can talk to you at any time, and I know that you will be there to listen. Jaliyah, as your birthday comes around and the day that you passed away, I will always remember you because whether you know it or not, you are the reason I became closer to your grandma, my mom, and you made me the strongest woman. I love and miss you so very much. R.I.P., my little ladybug.

Love,
Your mommy!

Jaliyah Danielle Rodriguez-Peel
April 29, 2011
Anencephaly
Mommy: Rosa Rodriguez



Happy 1st Birthday, Baby Short!

Baby Short left us very early in life. As soon as we found out Baby Short was growing, we started the regular planning that anyone would do. The doctor thought we were only just a few weeks along. When we started having issues, we discovered through blood work that Baby Short was 12 weeks along. We lost our precious baby just shy of week 13. Even though we did not know what he or she looked like, we still have this precious child in our hearts and cannot wait for the day that we can hold our precious baby again. I love you, Baby Short.

Love,
Your momma

Baby Short
Miscarried March 10, 2011
Parents: Justin and Sarah Short



Happy 1st Birthday, Charles John!

Charles John, we miss you every minute of every day and love you so much! You will always be our little angel baby! Love you with all our hearts!

Charles John Vogel

April 5 - 9, 2011

Cord compression

Parents: Marc and Eileen Vogel

Sister: Katie

**Happy 1st Birthday, Ritish!**

If you see a sunset, it's me,
Smiling from behind it.
If I go away far, and you see a star
If you find it, I'm inside it.
You can fold it, and hold it forever, if you hide it.
If our words and worlds sever - if ever I lose you;
If two thousand light-years or seven confuse you;
Remember me.
Here and in Heaven I'll see you.
I'll be beguiling my filing, still smiling to see you.
When mountains, magenta and molded turn red,
Like you said,
You'll find the feeling you folded not dead.
You'll steal the swirling sky, turning with me.
You won't be bounded, but burning and free.

Ritish Jolicoeur

April 22, 2011

Genetic problem

Parents: Ritish and Kristyna Jolicoeur

**Happy 2nd Birthday, Madison!**

Baby girl, I can't believe you are turning 2. It doesn't feel like it has been that long. I have missed you every day, and one day I will get to hold you in my arms again. Until that day, we love you.

Madison Nicole Parris

Stillborn March 5, 2010

Infection

Also remembering

Michael Stephan Parris

Stillborn April 9, 2009

Infection

Baby Parris

Miscarried January 2010

Unknown cause

Parents: Sam and Stacey Parris

Siblings: Lucas and Seth

**Happy 6th Birthday, Morgan!**

Dear Morgan, we love and miss you so much! The Lord is comforting us until we meet you in heaven. We just can't imagine what our lives would be like if you had not come. We don't know why you had to leave us so soon, but the Lord has richly blessed us because you came! The Lord has given us precious gifts that gold and silver cannot buy. Until we meet again, Sweet One. We are so glad that Jesus is alive and made it so we can come be with Him and you someday!

Love,

Mommy, Daddy, Big Brother,
Grandpa, Grandma and Auntie Michelle

Morgan Shear

March 28, 2006

Unknown cause

Parents: Nobel and Paula Shear

Big Brother: Isaac

**Happy 1st Birthday, Baby O'Neil-Drummond!**

Mommy misses you so much. I think about you every day. Thank you for choosing me, even if it was just for a little while. The 12 weeks we had together were the happiest time of my life. I have always wanted to be a mommy, and you made me one. I had dreams of the day I would get to hold you and love on you, but God had a different plan for us, Baby. I did not understand it at the time, but I know now you are in a much better and happier place than you would have been here. Your light was just too bright to shine on this earth. It still doesn't take away the hurt, but I take comfort in knowing you are safe in God's loving arms. You are forever in my heart, my little angel. Happy birthday, Baby!

Baby O'Neil-Drummond

Miscarried March 13, 2011

Parents: Timmothy Drummond and Carren O'Neil

**Happy 1st Birthday, Chase!**

Chase, we love you and miss you dearly. We praise God for the time we had with you, and we cannot wait to see you someday in heaven!

Chase Reginald Haynes

March 24, 2011

True knot in the umbilical cord

Parents: Damon and Cindy Haynes

Siblings: Cole, Tyler and Madison



Happy 7th Birthday, Jodacie!

Seven years old! Wow! You're a big girl now, but you'll always be my baby girl! I love you, baby. You will always be in my heart. There isn't a day that goes by that I don't wonder what my little princess would have been like. I wish I could hold you, kiss you, walk you to school as I hold your hand, tuck you in bed and kiss your forehead as I watch you sleeping and dreaming. I'll always love you, today, tomorrow, forever!

*Jodacie Guadalupe Diaz Trevino
March 2, 2005
Holoprophencephaly
Parents: Isaac Trevino and Priscilla Diaz*



Happy 5th Birthday, James!

Our oldest son and biggest brother - we miss you every day and wonder what our family would be like if you were still here on earth. We love you and hold you in our hearts. We are blessed to know that if we can't be the ones holding you in our arms, then Jesus and the angels are the ones taking care of you in heaven. We love you, son. We cannot believe that five years have gone by since we saw your little face and felt that new parental pride as we held you, even in your stillness.

Love forever,
Mommy and Daddy
Annabelle, Jackson and Hailey

*James Forner
Stillborn January 5, 2007
Cord accident
Also remembering
Baby Forner 1
Miscarried May 2007
Baby Forner 2
Miscarried June 2007
Parents: TJ and Jen Forner
Siblings: Annabelle, Jackson and Hailey*



Happy 2nd Birthday, Isaiah!

I can't believe you would be 2 today. It would be time for the terrible twos, but it is so worth it in the end. We all miss and love you very much! We are celebrating the big "two" with some cake. I know you would have loved it, because Grandma would have made it. Happy birthday, Isaiah.

Love and miss you lots.
Hugs and kisses,
Mommy, Skyler and Kiley

*Isaiah Joseph Davidson-Tabares
Stillborn March 26, 2010
Mommy: Melissa Davidson
Siblings: Skyler and Kiley*



Happy 1st Birthday, Evan and Nicholas!

Happy first birthday to our sweet angel boys! One year ago today our lives changed forever, and there has not been one day that has passed that we have not thought about you, missed you and wished more than anything for you to be in our arms. You will always be in our hearts, and we treasure the minutes we had with you! Mommy and Daddy love you!

*Evan Joseph and Nicholas James Sternaman
March 16, 2011
Premature birth due to infection, IC, PROM and
Subchorionic Hemorrhage
Also remembering
Baby Sternaman
Miscarried August 27, 2010
Baby Sternaman II (triplet to the boys)
Miscarried December 2010
Baby Sternaman III
Miscarried November 22, 2011
Parents: Jeff and Renee Sternaman*



Happy 1st Birthday, Alexis!

Happy first birthday in Heaven. Wow. It always amazes me how fast a year goes by. I can still feel you in my arms and picture those beautiful lips and cute little nose.

We miss you so much, but the boys remind me you have Hope and Jesus taking care of you. I bet she is a good little mommy.

We love you and speak your name all the time, and can't wait until the day we hold you again.

Happy birthday, our little Butterfly. You are loved so much.

*Alexis Antonette McGraw
Stillborn April 25, 2011 (36 weeks)
Also remembering
Hope Joi McGraw
January 18, 2009
Parents: Zack and Christine McGraw
Siblings: Kyler, Hunter and Isabella*



Happy 4th Birthday, Kaden!

Happy 4th birthday, handsome! Not a day goes by that we don't think about you. We love and miss you so much!

Lots of hugs and kisses,
Mommy, lil sis Kaylee, Mimi, Aunt T and Nanny!

*Kaden Christopher Walter
April 24, 2008 - June 13, 2008
SIDS - Sudden Infant Death
Parents: Ashley Walker
Sister: Kaylee Walter*



Happy 4th Birthday, Mason and Matthew!

Our dearest Mason and Matthew, we can hardly believe it has been four years since we held you in our arms. We have missed you every day and continue to love you more and more as you show us amazing gifts of your short lives.

All our love,

Mamma, Dada and Little Brothers Miles and Graham

Mason and Matthew Bass

April 10, 2008

Pre-term (incompetent cervix)

Parents: Chad Bass and Leah Robilotto-Bass

Brother: Miles and Graham

**Happy 2nd Birthday, Skyler!**

Your little life was way too brief, but we know we will hold you in heaven one day! We know you and Mackenzie are safe and happy with Jesus! Watch over Paisley until we are all together for eternity! We love you!

Baby Skyler Frederickson

January 2, 2010

Ectopic pregnancy

Also remembering

Mackenzie Noelle Frederickson

Stillborn June 17, 2009

Unknown cause

Parents: Mike and Ashley Frederickson

Little sister: Paisley Noelle

**Happy 1st Birthday, Molly!**

We love you and miss you, our sweet baby girl. We long for the day we will hold you in our arms again. Your sisters send you kisses in their prayers every night. We love you so much and will never forget you, Molly.

Molly Jacklyn Mann

Stillborn January 26, 2011 (37.2 weeks)

Unknown cause

Parents: Troy and Megan Mann

Siblings: Makayla and Maisy

**Happy 2nd Birthday, Andrew!**

As we hold your baby sister, we realize all that you could have been! We think of you constantly, and our hearts ache for you. We look forward to seeing our heavenly angel again someday! Love you, Andrew!

Andrew Michael Pittman

March 23, 2010

Cord accident

Parents: Kindale and Melody Pittman

Sister: Kaylee Drew

**Happy 5th Birthday, A.J.!**

We have survived 1,827 days without you. There have been days when we didn't think we could make it one more day, but we did. There were days when we felt it couldn't hurt anymore, but it could. There were days when we laughed, days when we cried, days we sat there in complete silence and disbelief. There were days when only the grace of God carried us to the next day.

We have missed you for 1,827 days and will miss you each and every day until we are together again. Until then, we will serve as we are called to serve in your honor, as your legacy. Our love for you is endless!

We Love You MORE!

Daddy, Mommy, Eli and Alex

Adrian Joseph "A.J." Zuckerman

March 30, 2007

True knot cord accident

Parents: Alfredo and Amber Zuckerman

Siblings: Big brother Eli and little brother Alex

**Happy 4th Birthday, Dharma!**

Happy (OMGosh!) fourth birthday! Has it really been that long? I still think about you all the time and wonder what it would be like to have you in the mix of chaos of your brother and sister. God has used you and your story so much this year, and I know He will continue to open doors for more families to be helped through you. You were amazing, and I love that I am your mommy!

Love always,

Mommy, Daddy, Max and Molli

Dharma Lucille Drude

March 31 - April 1, 2008

Anencephaly

Parents: Jason and Jennie Drude

Siblings: Max and Molli

**Happy 1st Birthday, Chase Austin!**

Our sweet Chase, it is hard to believe it has been a year since we held you in our arms for those brief moments. We feel like we already waited for you for a long time, and now we will wait for you even longer - but it will be worth it! We love you with all of our hearts and miss you each and every day. We are so comforted knowing you are safe with Jesus, and we can't wait to join you! Happy first birthday, sweet boy.

Love,

Mommy and Daddy

Chase Austin Miller

April 21, 2011

Incompetent cervix

Parents: Greg and Stefanie Miller



Happy 10th Birthday, Elizabeth Abigail!

Wow, we can hardly believe it's been 10 years since you went to be with Jesus. We miss you as much today as we did when you went home. We can't wait to be reunited one day. Your sister Emily talks about you frequently and tells everyone she has a sister in heaven. Happy birthday, and we love you very much.

Love,
Mom, Dad and Emily

Elizabeth Abigail Jackson
April 29, 2002
Trisomy 13
Parents: Jeromye and Angi Jackson
Sibling: Emily Faith

**Happy 1st Birthday, Anika!**

An Angel In The Book Of Life
Wrote Down Your Baby's Birth.
And Whispered as She Closed The Book
"Too Beautiful For Earth"

From the moment we first heard your heartbeat and the first pictures we saw of you, you left footprints on our hearts that will forever be with us.

Happy birthday, baby girl!
We miss you so much.
Love always,
Mommy and Daddy
XOXOXO

Anika Ann Eckstrom
April 30, 2011
Unknown cause
Parents: Adrian Eckstrom and Jamie Bryant
Siblings: Blake, Riley and Tehya

**Happy 5th Birthday, Julian!**

My big boy, you are now 5 years old. Mommy misses you every day. When we are together again in glory, we will celebrate real big, but for now, Mommy is going to give you a big birthday party here. Mommy is going to send you balloons. I love you.

****Happy Birthday****

Julian David Rodriguez
April 1, 2007
Premature
Also remembering
Stepbrother Baby Wall
December 25, 1994
Unknown cause
Parents: Rachel Prado-Wall and Stepdad Michael Wall
Siblings: Michael Jr., Leeana, Mikayla and Sonya Wall

**Happy 3rd Birthday, Sophia!**

Happy third birthday to our little princess, Sophia Elise! Mommy, Daddy and Nicholas love you very much! Te amo con todo mi corazon!

Sophia Elise Lewis
March 25, 2009
Triploidy
Parents: Eric and Janie Lewis
Brother: Nicholas

**Happy 3rd Birthday, Owen!**

Happy third heavenly birthday to our sweet Owen. It seems like just yesterday that you and Sophia were kicking together in mommy's tummy. Not a single day goes by that we don't think of you and miss having you with us here on earth. You and your little sister look a lot alike, and it is a special gift to see glimpses of your face as she sleeps. Sophia will be missing you a lot on your/her birthday again this year - be sure to send her some extra love from heaven that day.

Even though you are in heaven, Owen, you will always remain our precious miracle baby, our first-born son. Mommy and Daddy love you very much!

Owen Patrick Webb
Stillborn April 30, 2009
Unknown cause
Parents: Brian and Melissa Webb
Siblings: Twin sister Sophia and Natalie

**Happy 5th Birthday, "Logie Bear"!**

Wow! How have five years gone by already? We miss you dearly, but know that you are perfectly healthy in heaven. We were lucky enough to have you for 2 months, and for that I am forever grateful. We love you beyond words and will be with you again someday!

Happy birthday, baby boy!

Love, Mommy, Daddy, Conner and Dillon

Logan William Wade
April 18 - June 7, 2007
Prematurity, staph infection
Parents: Shane and Rachael Wade
Siblings: Conner and Dillon (triplets)

**Happy 1st Birthday, Breckin!**

Loving and thinking of our baby girl every minute of every day.

Breckin Nicole Naillieux
March 11, 2011
Trisomy 18
Parents: Jason and Amanda Naillieux
Siblings: Dalayne, Chloe and Adelyn



Happy 2nd Birthday, Rowan!

Happy second heavenly birthday to my sweet baby Rowan. It's hard to believe it's only been two years; it seems like we have been missing you much longer than that. I know you are in amazing hands, but Mommy is a little selfish and wishes you were in mine. We all love and miss you so much, sweetheart! Big kisses from Mommy!

Rowan Marie McCall
Stillborn April 9, 2010
Parents: Ryan and Erica McCall
Siblings: Zeke, Keirsten, Amiah, Jacob and Lilly



Happy 1st Birthday, Lily!

Dear Lily,

The day after you were born I remember wondering how I would make it through one day, let alone 365. Yet, here we are quickly approaching your first birthday.

I remember the moment you were born. I could never have imagined such profound pain and was surprised by an equally unimaginable joy. In that moment, I wept bittersweet tears, hurting to hold you but praising God that you would never have to endure anything like the pain I was feeling that moment. You would never know pain, never be anxious or afraid, never grieve, never shed a single tear, and never doubt God's love for you. How can that truth not bring tremendous joy to a mother's heart, in spite of the overwhelming pain?

Many times this past year I have had to ask God to teach me - how to grieve, how to be a mother to a baby in heaven and how to bring Him glory through my suffering. It is a hard truth, but I know that I am more like Jesus today with you in His arms than I would have been with you here in mine.

Although the world we live in now by and large does not recognize you, you are so much a part of our family. Though visibly three, we are forever a family of four.

As one day turned into one week turned into one month and now one year, the distance between us seems to only grow. However, the real beauty is that the time of our forever reunion is only getting closer each day.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, SWEET GIRL! We love you to heaven and back!

Love,
 Mommy, Daddy and Isaac
 Lily's Life Verse
 Col 3:2

*Set your mind on things above,
 not on earthly things.*

Lily Joy Moore
March 2, 2011
Early pregnancy loss
Parents: Jeremy and Kathleen Moore
Brother: Isaac



Happy 3rd Birthday, Kinley!

Our Sweet Kinley, WOW! I cannot believe that your third birthday is here. It feels like only yesterday I was holding you in my arms. So many things have happened in our little family, and we just keep wishing that you were here to be a part of it all. We always picture you here with us running around with your blonde curls and telling on your new little brothers. We have learned so much from the short time you were here with us, and that is something that we hold dear to our hearts. :) We are so looking forward to the day when our family is together again! I think of you all the time and cannot wait to have you in my arms again! We love you and miss you so very much, baby girl.

With all of our love,
 Mom, Dad, Kylee, Colton and Carter

Kinley Alexis Miles
March 14, 2009
Placental abruption
Parents: Christine and Andy Miles
Siblings: Kylee, Colton and Carter



Happy 4th Birthday, Andrew!

I can't believe it's been four years since we held you in our arms. We miss you so much and can't wait to see you one day.

Love,
 Daddy and Mommy

Andrew Mallette
March 21, 2008
CMV
Parents: Michael and Nicole Mallette



Happy 3rd Birthday, Baby Wheeler!

Happy third birthday, little one! We can't believe you have been gone for three years now. We love you and miss you so much. Please take care of your little brother for us, and we hope you are both being good boys. Your baby sister joined our family in December, and we tell her about you and your brother all the time. Whenever she smiles in her sleep, we know she is playing with you and Michael in her dreams!

"I'll love you forever, I'll like you for always,
 as long as I'm living, my baby you'll be."
 Robert Munsch

Baby Wheeler
Miscarried March 2009
Also Remembering
Michael Noah Wheeler
Stillborn January 27, 2010
Unknown cause
Parents: Jim and Larissa Wheeler
Sister: Julianne Joy



Happy 2nd Birthday, Baby Brooke!

Our darling Brooke, it is hard to believe that is has already been two years since we last held you. You would be walking and talking by now. Sarah wants to know if you are playing with Naya. She hopes so. We still miss you and think about you each day. Your life continues to teach us new things and has been more valuable than we could have imagined. Your life is simply a blessing beyond words.

We love you,
Momma, Daddy and big sister Sarah

Brooke Sophia Daily

March 11, 2010

Vasa Previa

Parents: Jeremy and Lisa Daily

Big Sister: Sarah

**Happy 2nd Birthday, Connor!**

We love you so much and think about you all the time. We know you would have been the best big brother! We are put at ease knowing you are up above watching over us and your brothers!

Love you so much,
Dad, Mom, Caleb and Kyle

Connor Eugene Tidman

April 21, 2010

Unknown cause

Parents: Geoff and Rachel Tidman

Little Brothers: Caleb Scott and Kyle Eugene

**Happy 2nd Birthday, Elliot!**

Are you a toddler now in heaven, our Elliot? Regardless of your heavenly age, at our celestial reunion we believe Jesus will give us joy in each other's presence for eternity that will erase the pain of these lost earthly years. Until then, Jesus collects our tears for you in a bottle. We wonder if heaven's Sun will reflect those tears, creating a rainbow that we will sit under together someday. Maybe you are already playing beside it. Your daddy and I love you very much.

Elliot James Gerriets

March 18, 2010

HLHS

Parents: Chris and Faith Gerriets

Siblings: Evie and Ethan

**Happy 12th Birthday, Joshua and Caleb!**

With all our love,
Mom, Dad, Landon and Kylie

Joshua Mark and Caleb Matthew Davis

April 14, 2000

Incompetent cervix

Parents: Shawn and Monica Davis

Siblings: Landon and Kylie

**Happy 10th Birthday, Zane!**

We want to say just because you are not here with us playing together with your brother and sisters, reading books, watching the TV shows you want to watch, eating at your favorite place, the every day things, don't think for one moment we have forgotten. We think of you, Zane, as if you're doing all those things with us all the time. And just as we know Jesus and God, we know we will see you one day again, and we will catch up on all those every day things. We really do miss and love you SO much, Zane. Always!

Love forever,
Mommy, Dad, Hunter, Chenoa and Kai

Zane Jeremiah Takoda Moses

March 19, 2002

PROM

Parents: John and Kris Moses

Siblings: Hunter, Chenoa and Kai

**Happy 3rd Birthday, Michael!**

I can't believe it has almost been three years since we saw your beautiful face. We miss you, and there is not a day that goes by Mommy doesn't think about you. One day I will get to hold you in my arms again. Until then, we love you very much.

Michael Stephan Parris

Stillborn April 9, 2009

Infection

Also Remembering

Baby Parris

Miscarried January 2010

Unknown cause

Madison Nicole Parris

Stillborn March 5, 2010

Infection

Parents: Sam and Stacey Parris

Brothers: Lucas and Seth

**Happy 3rd Birthday, Ella and Evan!**

Love you always,
Mommy, Daddy, Daisy and Brady

Ella Garland

March 4 - April 18, 2009

Premature birth

Evan Garland

March 4 - 5, 2009

Premature birth

Parents: Mary and Brett Garland

Siblings: Daisy and Brady



Happy 2nd Birthday, Mila!

I love you so much, my sweet girl. Though I had you for just a short time, my life is forever changed. Your mommy and daddy will always love you and will never forget how much you mean to us. Take good care of your little sister.

Mila Gonzales
Miscarried April 9, 2010
Unknown cause
Also remembering
Charlotte
October 2, 2011
Trisomy 13
Parents: Precia Wheat and Dustin Gonzales

**Happy 2nd Birthday, Alexander!**

Our little angel, happy birthday! There must be a big party in heaven. Wow, two years and we still miss you so much! Good news my baby: we are expecting again, and you will have a brother to watch! Love you so much! Te extrañamos!

Mama, Daddy and everyone in your family

Alexander Seely
April 30, 2010
Cord accident
Parents: Ron Seely and Raquel Robles

**Happy 2nd Birthday, Zariah!**

My precious angel Zariah,

I can't believe it has been two years since I held you in my arms. There is not a day that goes by that I don't think of you. I miss you so much, and I wish you were here with us. Losing you was the hardest and worst thing I have ever gone through, but I thank God every day for what your loss has taught me and our family. You will be in our hearts forever. Until we meet again my beautiful baby. Hugs and kisses!

Love Always,
 Mommy, Daddy and Dreon

Zariah Ane Green
April 17, 2010
Cord accident
Parents: Kellie Jackson and Deon Green
Sibling: Dreon Jackson

**Happy 3rd Birthday, Matthew!**

It's hard to believe it's been three years since we met you and said goodbye. Each year has its difficulties, but also joys when we remember you as a family. You are a part of our lives every day. You are greatly missed and we love you so much.

Matthew Schultz
February 21, 2009
PPHN and malpractice
Also Remembering
Simon Schultz
Miscarriage October 2009 (18 weeks)
Exposure to medication
Parents: Amery and Christiane Schultz
Siblings: Stephanie, Michelle, Emilie, Cole, Jacob, Andrew and Daniel

**Happy 2nd Birthday, William!**

Happy Birthday, sweet boy! We love and miss you more each day. Thank you for filling our hearts with such intense love. You are the best angel to your baby brother, and we love you so much!

XOXO,
 Mommy and Daddy

William Stehl
April 24, 2010
Unknown cause
Parents: Erik and Ada Stehl
Brother: Erik

**Happy 1st Birthday, Zachary!**

It's so hard to believe you're already 1. I miss you so much, little boy. I'll see you again someday, baby boy. Happy Birthday!

Love, Mommy

Zachary Whitecrane
February 13, 2011
Unknown cause
Mommy: Miranda Choriki



The Paperwork Pregnancy

“Why does it have to be so hard? Time consuming? Expensive? Difficult?! There are kids waiting...why does it take so long?! Just once I'd like to get one of my kids here easily!”

That's right. I'll admit it. I'm not going to pretend that the path to adoption has been “an amazing blessing,” although I know the end result will be. I'll own up to the fact that over the past 19 months I've said or thought all of the things above. And yet, I keep pushing through. Just like I did more than eight years ago when my water broke too soon and Caleb Scott was born at 32 weeks, dying shortly after birth. Just like I did when the radiologist couldn't hide the problems he saw from his face when Baby August left us at only eight weeks. And just like I did when bleeding caused me to be on bed rest for nine weeks before welcoming Madison Grace into our lives in August 2007.

Adoption was always an option for us - even before we had problems getting and staying pregnant. So, after God closed the door on more biological children, we were so excited to finally start the process of finding our Forever Child and bringing him or her home. We prayed a LOT, and the Lord clearly led us to an international adoption and to the country of Colombia. In July 2010, we completed our first application, and thus began the longest and hardest of any of my pregnancies...the Paper Pregnancy.

For goodness sakes, if I were an elephant I'd be having a baby in three months! As it stands now, we've completed our home study and pre-adoption classes, filed our immigration paperwork, turned in our dossier, waited for it to be translated, panicked when we thought we'd be declined because the country was taking so long, cried tears of joy when we later learned we were approved the month before, and then waited.

And here's the fun part: I get to do a lot of it all over again. Don't get me wrong. We knew going into this process it would be long, and truthfully, the wait is good for our family, because my husband is currently deployed, and we wanted a year for him to reintegrate before we travel to get our baby. However, because the wait is long, the tedious paperwork I so diligently completed in record time is now expiring. Just this

month I started gathering updated letters from doctors and friends, resubmitting background checks, gathering financial data, and we're scheduled to update our home study in February so we can then update our immigration paperwork in April. Bonus: my husband's deployment means I have to email things to him to print, sign, have notarized and then snail mail home so I can do the same. And he gets to Skype his interview with our home study social worker.

Truth be told, I'm probably going to have to do all this over a third time during the next three years and nine months wait to bring home a healthy baby (0-4 years-old) boy or girl. Yes, you read correctly: this entire process will take nearly five years. I knew this going in, and I'm not complaining...okay, well maybe I am, but I just didn't want this article to be another sugar-coating of a very long and difficult process. If adoption is something you're considering, you should have a fair warning about the reality of how it works.

And yet, I know in my heart of hearts it is so incredibly worth it! I know that our family isn't complete. I know that Christ has a baby for us in Colombia. I know that it melts my heart when I hear Madison trying to say things in Spanish, or when she prays for her little brother or sister from “Ca-mum-bilee” (you can't convince her she's saying it wrong either). How about when she gets excited about being both a little sister to Caleb and August and a big sister to our Forever Child? Precious!

I guess the bottom line of our story is that the harder you work for something, the more you appreciate it. That's been true with my two babies in heaven, my precious miracle 4 1/2-year-old, and I know it will be for our new baby. Adoption is not for the faint of heart! But all of us in M.E.N.D. are amazingly strong families simply surviving what we've been through. If anyone can do this, we can! Join me in growing your family through adoption. It gives a whole new meaning to “Jesus loves the little children of the world.”

♥ Heather Fann,

Mommy to Caleb Scott and Baby August

M.E.N.D.—Southwest Missouri

Gifts through Shopping

M.E.N.D. received a donation of \$226.90 from Tom Thumb because this past quarter, shoppers requesting a portion be donated to M.E.N.D. spent \$22,689.50. If you shop at Tom Thumb but do not have your Reward Card linked with M.E.N.D., please contact Rebekah at rebekah@mend.org for the form. M.E.N.D. will then receive 1% of your grocery bill.



“God often uses difficulty and suffering to complete His good work in us. Don't get the feeling that we signed up for suffering when we received Jesus. Beloved, we live in a fallen world where every human being suffers to some extent. The difference is that our suffering need never be in vain. As we allow God to minister to us in our fiery trials, He is glorified, the church is edified, and we are qualified for greater reward.”

Beth Moore, *Believing God*,
2005.Lifeway Christian Resources.

A Journey to an Open Adoption

We all have our dates when we lost our babies; mine is April 10, 2008. Our journey for parenthood began in 2004 and, with the help of fertility doctors, we became pregnant in November 2007, but sadly said goodbye on April 10, 2008. Finally, nine days after the second heavenly birthday of our twin boys, Mason and Matthew, I got the call we had been waiting for - we were finally bringing a baby home to raise and love the rest of our lives. My husband and I jumped in the car and drove to Dallas, where we held our baby son for the first time and named him Miles.

The road to getting Miles in 2010, and his baby brother, Graham (who is asleep next to me as I write), in January 2012, has ups and downs just like any pregnancy would. Knowing that it was unlikely I could carry a natural pregnancy to term, we started researching adoption in April 2009. We hired an adoption consultant and even interviewed a few agencies and did not find our right fit. I even left one in tears. In early November of 2009, we tried IVF again, but suffered an early miscarriage. The next day I called our consultant and told her I was ready to move forward with adoption. I refused to let the miscarriage, which was almost expected, slow down my quest to bring a baby home.

The Friday after Thanksgiving, we went to Dallas to meet with another agency that our consultant really thought we would like. It was a small agency that was very individualized called LifeTree. As soon as we arrived, I felt more at home than anywhere else. As we told the director the story of our babies in heaven, she shared tears with me and smiled over my babies' pictures. I knew this was where we would find our next child.

As it turned out, a set of birth parents wanted to meet us right away. It looked as though we could have a baby by Christmas! Could we be so blessed? We met the couple and clicked with them. They were adorable, though a bit unsure of their decision to place their baby for adoption. As this was my first match, I did not worry and ignored the adoption consultant's and director's warnings not to get attached.

The baby boy was born on Christmas Eve, and the birth father's aunt came through to help them raise the baby. They decided to parent the child after all. I was crushed. I made the mistake of loving the baby as if the child were already mine. I did continue to be matched but made the conscious decision to love the couple and babies as they belonged to God, for that is who they truly belong to. We had two other matches before we would meet Miles.

During the week leading up to the call to adopt Miles, we were told about him, given his history and asked if we wanted him. Then we waited for his birth parents to decide to place or not. When they did place and we met them, I cried tears of joy and vowed to be the best mother I could.

We have a semi-open adoption; I keep a blog so our children's birth parents can keep updated on what they are doing and see pictures and videos. We go to Dallas once a year to visit. The birth parents write emails to me to let me know how they are doing and letters to the boys on the blog. It is a wonderful way to let the boys know how loved they are by everyone. I truly believe this openness and positive relationship will benefit my children and their birth parents.

♥ Leah Robilotto-Bass
Mommy to Mason and Matthew
M.E.N.D.—Houston

"Book Review"

Continued from page 3

memorial services that a reader can use as is or adapt for her use. Barrett found great comfort months later in having a memorial service for her baby, something she and her husband had not done immediately after their loss.

Barrett's book would greatly minister to the hurting heart of a mother who has suffered a miscarriage, recently or years ago. A grieving mother will find comfort in knowing she is not alone in her feelings and struggles to make sense of her loss. Moreover, Barrett's book would greatly benefit anyone in the role of pastor or counselor who wishes to better understand the pain of a miscarriage in order to better minister to those who endure them. While this book is written from a mother's perspective, a father would also benefit from its insightfulness. It would help him better empathize with the mother and perhaps understand some of the things he may be feeling or questions he may be asking. Moreover, Barrett's book would greatly benefit anyone in the role of pastor or counselor, as well as friends and family members, to better understand the pain of a miscarriage in order to better minister to those who endure them.

♥ Reviewed by Kathleen Moore
Mommy to Lily Grace
M.E.N.D.—Southwest Missouri

*M.E.N.D. has a complete list of books, websites, organizations and music resources available online at 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, Jennifer Harrison, at jennifer@mend.org.*

Trusting in His Plan

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

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

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

We began talking to friends and family about the possibility of adopting. The more we talked about it, the more we felt God leading us to adopt. In September 2001, Shawn and I traveled to Abilene, Texas, for an orientation at Christian Homes. We knew after our first session that this was what we were supposed to do. We both had complete peace about adopting, and we both were excited about the baby God had already chosen for us. Once again, we were faced with challenges because the amount of paperwork that has to be completed for an adoption is overwhelming, not to mention the home studies and background checks that have to take place. I was constantly reminded how unfair this was, but I knew God was in it. I had to keep reminding myself to completely trust Him. While we were waiting for the paperwork to be processed, I was praying and had started recording specific prayers in a prayer journal. In this prayer journal, I had prayed that our adoption would be fast. I prayed for our birth mother while at the same time she was praying for a Christian family for her baby. I prayed that our baby would have olive skin and dark hair, and would look like us. On April 17, 2002 (two years after the loss of our twins), I got a call from our adoption agency. On May 16, just 29 days later, we welcomed a healthy baby boy into our family. My prayers had been answered, even the most specific ones. Our son has dark hair, olive skin, and he does look like us. God's timing is perfect! In Jeremiah, God says He has a plan for us. We just have to trust His plan.

When our son was 2, we decided to adopt again, once again trudging through mounds of paperwork and home visits. After one adoption failed because the birth mom decided to parent, we were devastated again. Once again, we depended on God to get us through. At the time, we certainly did not understand why we were going through this disappointment. Hadn't we already been refined?

On August 25, 2005, while I was in Dallas, I got a call from the agency. Our caseworker informed me there was healthy baby girl for us, and we would need to be in Abilene the next day to welcome her. Our daughter had been in foster care for nine weeks with the most precious foster parents anyone could ever ask for. We had exactly 29 hours to prepare for our daughter. At first, we were doubtful of the situation, and then we quickly realized that if this was the baby God had chosen for us, then we were willing to step out in faith and be her parents. Once again I had prayed for a fast adoption and that our child would look a lot like us. It is amazing how often I get comments about how much my daughter looks like me. He answers prayers.

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

♥ Monica Davis,
Mommy to Joshua Mark and Caleb Matthew
M.E.N.D.—Texarkana

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.”

Jeremiah 29:11

2012 Leadership Conference

Thank you to all who attended the 2012 Leadership Conference. The leadership conference helped us to prepare our minds and hearts for families in need over the next year.



M.E.N.D. - Bryan/
College Station



M.E.N.D. - Texarkana



Advisory Board (AB) and Board of Directors (BOD):
Back row: Max Friz (IT), Cheryl Davis (AB), Calli Stanley (AB), Amber Zuckerman (BOD), Liz Walker (AB), Brandee Dill (BOD), Brittney Fish (BOD), Shannon Outen (BOD), Paula Schear (AB)
Front row: Rebekah and Byron Mitchell (BOD)



M.E.N.D. - Amarillo



M.E.N.D. - Hot Springs



M.E.N.D. - NW Washington



M.E.N.D. - SW Missouri



M.E.N.D. - Houston

A special thank you to all the donors who helped open M.E.N.D.-Wichita Falls

- Carmen Fukasawa
- Michelle Dennis
- Wichita Falls Area Community Foundation
- Patterson Family Donor Advised Fund
- Megan Steinberger
- Brandi Luig
- Tonya Bohannon
- Randi Jones
- Melinda Vascallero
- Dr. Favia Horth
- Emily Nimz



M.E.N.D. - Tulsa

A special thank you to all the M.E.N.D.-Bryan/College Station BUNCO Bash sponsors

- Anita and Clark Bascom
- Poli Shachov
- Still Waters Wellness Spa and Salon
- The Club at Blue Heron Bay
- Erin and John Dominy
- Michelle and Dave Taylor
- Marilyn Branson
- Hortman Family Chiropractic
- Pretty Please Embroidery
- She-She's
- The Shoppes on the Square

Finding Blessings After a Painful Journey

As I sit here in Oklahoma at the end of another day full of homeschooling and basketball, I can't help but glance around the corner into the family room at the incredibly unique family God has given me - but tonight not everyone is present. How did we get to this place in life? My mind instantly wanders to my sweet babies who will never get a chance to enjoy these fun family movie nights with us: Samuel, Joel, the baby that left my womb after a short five weeks, and our six snowflake babies. My heart feels a pang of sorrow. Instantly my eyes wander to our precious 10-month-old miracle Levi, sleeping in his daddy's arms. My heart feels those warm fuzzy feelings of utter joy and thankfulness. Such is the ebb and flow of my days. Feelings of joy and pain intermingled at every turn. How did this come to be my life? Never could I have thought the Lord would build our family in the way that He has.

I know how we got here...a very and long and winding road. When we moved to this new city in July 2008, I was seven months pregnant with our fifth child. This sweet baby was going to be lovingly welcomed by his older siblings Louis, Caleb, Anna and Elijah. I never dreamed that our chaotic but wonderful life would be turned upside down just a couple of months later. A day after my due date, my precious son just stopped moving. Labor was induced, and he was stillborn the following morning. Our Samuel was a perfect 9 pounds, 2 ounces, and beautiful. Our hearts were broken into a million pieces. I thought I was beyond repair with the gut-wrenching pain and sorrow I was experiencing. I was in a new city with very few friends, and so many people who had one day wanted to be a part of my exciting life were disappearing at every turn. I had never felt more alone. After trying to get pregnant for two years, we never expected that after 40 weeks of pregnancy, our arms would be empty and aching for our baby.

We had always had adoption on our hearts, and since conceiving a baby NEVER came easily for us, we felt God leading us to open the door of adoption. While we were working with a local crisis pregnancy center that also facilitates adoptions, we got an email saying that they needed a host home for a pregnant 15-year-old. Why I felt the Lord leading us to open up our home when I could barely look at a pregnant person was beyond me, but I felt we needed to obey Him. So just five months after losing Samuel, we opened up our home to this young girl. Just two weeks later she decided she wanted us to adopt her baby. We were thrilled, and cautiously optimistic. But just a short ten weeks later, on July 3, that baby also was stillborn, born in the exact same room in the exact same hospital as our son Samuel. We named this little baby boy Joel. Our hearts were again sorrowful, filled with questions. How could this happen again? What was God's plan for our family?

On the eve of Thanksgiving 2009, I came across the blog of a friend that would change our family forever. This friend had just announced that she was pregnant through the gift of embryo adoption. Greg and I had just visited our local fertility center, talking to them about this exact thing: embryo adoption.

My heart so badly wanted to carry another baby who would live, but we knew that the chances of my conceiving on my own would be low. Could embryo adoption be the answer?

This friend who was now pregnant through embryo adoption had a friend who was widowed at 29 years old, just 18 months earlier. She and her husband had 3-year-old twins who were the result of in vitro fertilization. They had seven extra embryos that were frozen. Since her husband had passed away, she wanted to find a loving Christian home for them to be raised. I contacted this young mom, and a beautiful relationship was started. We both said we would pray in the coming weeks about the prospect of Greg and I adopting her seven embryos.

Three weeks later, on December 11, 2009, another local adoption agency called us saying they had a little girl who needed a home, and we could pick her up that afternoon. We piled our other four children in the car and drove two hours to pick up a 10-month-old little girl we would name Hope. The road to adopting her was wrought with many uncertainties, and at times when we wondered if we would be able to keep her, but praise God, He saw fit to make her a Hintz forever. She is full of spice and sugar, and although she is not flesh of my flesh, she is the daughter that grew in my heart, and we completely love this precious gift from God.

In February 2010, I was thrilled to discover that I was pregnant. After years of trying, we did not think that we would be blessed with another pregnancy. But very shortly after celebrating that great news, we lost that baby to miscarriage. There were many days I so longed for answers that may never come, but there were those few days that I was okay with not having answers to my questions. What an emotionally exhausting journey grief is, no matter how you cut it.

Even now with having Hope in our family, and having the miscarriage, we were still in contact with the wonderful woman who had the seven embryos. I will never forget the email I got from her in May 2010, saying that she still wanted us to have her embryos, but that if we decided against it, she knew that the Lord had another family planned for them. We decided in June that we would make those seven embryos part of our family. I knew that after we thawed the embryos, there was no guarantee; some, all or none may survive. On July 11, 2010, those seven babies that had been frozen for five years were thawed, and all survived. But by July 14, only four were still living. They were all given less than 30 percent chance of implanting; some only a 5 percent chance. The doctor would only transfer three of these babies, and if the remaining embryo survived we could refreeze it and do another frozen embryo transfer down they road.

After a few short weeks, a positive pregnancy test revealed that I was, indeed, pregnant. An ultrasound revealed only one baby was growing in my womb. We were beyond thrilled and were blessed a year ago on March 14 with a healthy baby boy: Levi Ryan Hintz. If I am totally honest, being pregnant after a loss was hard and amazing at the same time. I spent ten weeks on bed rest, the last seven in the hospital. In the end, it was

worth every single second to have our son here safe and sound. He actually shares the middle name of our embryo donor dad. I often wonder if the Lord has brought Ryan together with any of our other children in Heaven, just like he brought our families together here on earth, to give Levi the beautiful gift of life.

I do not take a moment with any of my precious children for granted. I am beyond grateful for the precious women who gave up their children to give us a chance to be blessed by new life in our family. When I think of the sacrifice they went through so we could receive these amazing gifts of Hope and Levi, I am totally consumed with thanksgiving to God. When I think of the creative way the Lord has built our family, I am totally in awe. I could not have ever written it myself. I assure you that even with the addition of Hope and Levi, since the death of our son Samuel, there is not a day that goes by when I

don't think of Samuel and wonder what he would look like now, or what crazy things would he be getting into as a 3-year-old. I still miss him immensely every single day! How I long for the joyful reunion with him and all of my other babies in Heaven. What an amazing day that will be.

Please know that if you are still longing for a baby, my heart hurts deeply for you. I am praying for you—praying that the Lord would give you the desires of your heart if that is His will, and continue to heal your heart bit by bit, more and more with each passing day and each step forward.

♥ Sara Hintz

Mommy to Samuel Mark, Baby Joel,

Baby Hintz and 6 Snowflake babies

M.E.N.D.—Tulsa

Letting Go and Letting God

When I started married life at the young age of 20, I planned to have as many babies as God would give me. In our minds, we thought they would come quickly and without complication. Why wouldn't they? I was young and healthy. Though I loved the Lord, I also felt a sense of control over this topic. Well, as we all know in M.E.N.D., sometimes God's plan doesn't match up with ours.

Just four months into our new life together, we were thrilled to discover that we were pregnant with a little girl. I spent the next few months decorating a room and planning for my new life as a stay-at-home mom. Around 24 weeks into my pregnancy, I noticed that my baby's movements were slowing down. Our fears were confirmed over a weekend that our precious daughter had died. Elaine Kelly Wilson was stillborn on February 28, 2000.

In my first private moment in the hospital after she was gone, I remember crying out to the Lord, begging Him for answers. How was this ever going to be okay? How was He planning on making this right? I left the hospital empty handed and full of doubt that life would ever be full of joy again. I grew up real fast - overnight, in fact.

Days turned into weeks and then months seemed to pass. I remember my only goal each day was to get out of bed. We were shocked to find out just a few months later that we were expecting again. We also were floored to find out that my cervix was damaged. Again, I was totally irritated and horrified that God's plan for me was so hard.

Our sweet Emma girl was born at 34 weeks after months of surgery, medication and bed rest. Just 20 months later we welcomed Evelyn into our world at 30 weeks. Our pregnancy with her was much harder on my body, and I am still shocked that we made it to 30 weeks. Praise God! Evelyn came home after 41 days in the NICU. Her struggle to grow forced us to realize that the risk was too great for us to become pregnant again. With VERY heavy hearts, my husband had a vasectomy. We were so grateful for the girls God had given us, but we had planned to have more children. We never planned to use birth control at all. We wanted God to bless us with as many kids as He wanted to. Making this choice seemed to go against what we felt God had laid on our hearts about children. This verse shaped our desire for a large family: **Psalm 127:3** **“Children** are a heritage from the LORD, offspring a **reward** from him.”

When Evelyn was 18 months old, God showed us His plan to “reward” us with children. We heard our adoption agency interviewed on a local Christian radio station. Within a few moments I could feel the Holy Spirit prompting me to pray. We soon became licensed adoptive parents through that agency. We wanted to adopt a waiting infant out of foster care. We were completely opposed to becoming foster parents. We could not possibly fathom choosing to let another child go. To make a long story short, an “adoption placement” turned out to be a paperwork error, and we lost our first placement after one week. As we all know, one week is plenty of time to surrender your entire heart to a newborn! I was blown away that here I was again, experiencing the loss of a child. What was God doing? Did I hear Him clearly?

So God rocked my world. I started out my marriage planning to have a bunch of babies straight from my womb with no complications. Then I agreed to follow God to adoption under my terms (no risk, straight adoption, healthy infant and it had to somewhat “blend” into our family). The bottom line is that I chose to grow our family in ways that were comfortable to me at first. I can't help but chuckle when I read that now! Praise God that He saved me from myself and my selfish desires!

Our first placement, the one we lost, was NOT adoption like we had been told. He was drug exposed. That precious boy would never “blend” into my family. When I held him for the first time, all those things that seemed important melted away. I was instantly in love with that sweet boy. His birth mother named him Isaiah. That was the name we had written in every baby book for each of my three pregnancies. Ironic? I think not. Having his name be Isaiah was just the proof I needed that God was in control

Continued on page 21



M.E.N.D.

*Chapter Corner*Chapter Meeting Information**M.E.N.D.—Houston**Meets the 3rd Thursday, 7:30 p.m.Northwest Medical and Professional Building
17117 Cali Dr, Suite 112, Houston, TX 77090

Director: Jaimie Crump

jaimie@mend.org, (281) 374-8528

Subsequent pregnancy group meetsas needed on the 3rd Thursday at 7:30 p.m.,

led by Chiara Ott

(chiara@mend.org).

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.—TexarkanaMeets 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.—TulsaMeets the 3rd Tuesday at 7:00 p.m.

Canyon Crossing

1651 E Old North Rd.

Sand Springs, Oklahoma 74063

Director: Lisa Daily

lisa@mend.org, (918) 694-4325 (HEAL)

M.E.N.D.—SW MissouriMeets 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 StationMeets the 2nd Tuesday at 7:30 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. Chapter Updates*Houston*

I would like to thank our Facebook administrators who work hard at keeping our page positive by posting Scripture verses and encouraging words, pointing to the only One who can fully heal and give hope to the grieving: Robyn Andersen, Stefanie Miller, Kristah Slate, Chiara Ott, Merle Johnson, Kimberly Adams, BeverlyAnn Whigham and Diana Light. Thank you for comforting the families we may never get to meet in person at a meeting.

*Jaimie Crump**Texarkana*

M.E.N.D.—Texarkana continues to reach out and minister to families in our area. Tania Greer and I had the opportunity to attend our annual M.E.N.D. Leadership Conference in Dallas. It was wonderful to meet with other chapter directors and assistants and experience their enthusiasm and energy. At the conference, I was humbled to see how everyone is allowing God to use their own experiences to encourage others.

*Monica Davis**Tulsa*

M.E.N.D.—Tulsa would like to thank the entire Dallas chapter for hosting a wonderful Leadership Conference in January. It was highly beneficial and a great learning experience. It was nice to be able to spend time with the board of directors, advisory board and other chapter directors. What a great ministry!

*Lisa Daily**SW Missouri*

Well, 2012 started off busy! In January one of my assistants, Heather Bass, traveled with me to the M.E.N.D. Leadership Conference in Irving, Texas. We visited with other chapters about how best to serve our local families and came away with some great ways to help our growing number of virtual members. Social media outlets like Facebook are providing ways for families to share and grieve even if these families are too far away to attend a local support group. We also hosted our second annual Scrapbook Night Fundraiser in February. Thanks to Second Baptist Church in Springfield for hosting again and to my assistants who provided desserts. A special thank you to my dear friend Patricia Ervin for coordinating all things crafty and donating her talents and products to provide our guests with a fun-filled night.

*Heather Fann**Bryan/College Station*

M.E.N.D.—Bryan/College Station had such a great time at our first BUNCO Bash Fundraiser! I want to thank The Club at Blue Heron Bay for hosting us. I also want to thank Poli Shachov for all her help in putting things together and running the show. We look forward to having another BUNCO Bash in the summer. LaRhesa Johnson, Sandy Huelsebusch, and I also had a great time in Dallas at our annual Leadership Conference. We look forward to the coming year and serving the families of Brazos County.

*Jennie Drude**Amarillo*

M.E.N.D.—Amarillo just got back from Leadership Conference and are refreshed and ready to get our new year going. Amarillo has plans to host our second Bunco for Babies; more details to come.

Becky Anderson

NW Washington

M.E.N.D.—NW Washington is thriving. We feel blessed that despite numerous canceled flights due to snow and ice, we arrived safely in Dallas to attend the annual Leadership Conference in January. I want to thank my assistants Michele Kulhanek, Tia Picini and Carole McKinney for trusting with me that it was God's will for us to attend! We came home full of peaceful excitement for our chapter in 2012. We are in the process of planning to start a MENDING Mommies group, as well as a play group. Numerous chapter members have been opening up their hearts to newer members, and it is amazing to witness these bonds developing. We are planning a few fundraisers and a family barbeque in the summer. Also, on December 10, 2012, we will have our second annual Christmas Ceremony. We thank Doug and Charlotte Watts for graciously opening up their home to us during the Leadership Conference.

Susan Crow

Hot Springs

As our one-year anniversary of becoming a M.E.N.D. chapter approaches, we are excited to see how God is using us to minister to our families in the Hot Springs area. We attended the annual M.E.N.D. Leadership Conference in January and gained fresh ideas on ways to even better care for our families.

Amy Humphries

And a new chapter—Wichita Falls!!

My name is Sarah Fukasawa, and I live in Wichita Falls, Texas. We have three children. Our daughter, Ava, is 3 and a half, and our youngest son, Noah, is 11 months old. Our second child, Jacob, was stillborn at 36 weeks due to an unknown cause. I'm excited that we are getting close to our first meeting, which will be held April 12, 2012. Our chapter will meet on the second Thursday of every month at 7:30 p.m. at Christ Home Place Ministries, 1420 Twin Oaks Street, Wichita Falls.

Sarah Fukasawa

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.—NW Washington

Meets the 2nd Monday at 6:30 p.m.
Harrison Medical Center/Iris Room
1800 Myhre Rd.
Silverdale, Washington
Director: Susan Crow
susan@mend.org, (360) 516-8617

M.E.N.D.—Hot Springs, Arkansas

Meets the 2nd Tuesday at 7:00 p.m.
National Park Medical Center/Maurice Room
1910 Malvern Avenue
Hot Springs, AR
Director: Amy Humphries
amy@mend.org, (501) 620-9930

M.E.N.D.—Wichita Falls, Texas

Meets the 2nd Thursday at 7:30 p.m.
Christ Home Place Ministries
1420 Twin Oaks Street
Wichita Falls, TX
Director: Sarah Fukasawa
sarahf@mend.org, (940) 642-3284

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

are held the 4th Thursday of
every month at 8:00 p.m.
at the Corner Bakery in
Southlake Town Center

*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.*

MENDING Mommies

Meets the 2nd Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.

Contact Marilyn Brown:
Marilyn@mend.org.

*MENDING Mommies is a group of
M.E.N.D. moms (and grandmothers)
who create and sew tiny gowns, caps,
and blankets that are donated to area
hospitals for new heavenly babies.*

Parenting After Loss Playgroup

Meets monthly at various locations in the
Dallas / Fort Worth metroplex.
Contact Magen Kaye: Magen@mend.org
or call (214) 435-3870

Infertility group

meets the 3rd Monday
at 7:30 p.m.

Contact Cheryl Davis for meeting
location and information at
Cheryl@mend.org
*For families experiencing
infertility after a loss.*

**Mommies AND daddies are both
welcome at all M.E.N.D. meetings.
Unless otherwise noted, all support
group meetings are held at:**

**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.

In Loving Memory**Benjamin Lucas Bennett**

November 8 - 10, 2009

TTTS

Jerry Jacob Bennett

November 8, 2009

TTTS

Parents: Paul and Katrinia Bennett

Given by grandmother DeeAnne Bennett

Baby Bravenec I

Miscarried December 2005

Baby Bravenec II

Miscarried October 2010

Baby Bravenec III

Miscarried January 2011

Given by parents Renae and Victor Bravenec
and sister Ellen**Baby Girl Crayton**

Stillborn February 21, 1979

Given by parents Will and Kelly Crayton

Abigail Grace Crump

July 1, 2003

Trisomy 18

Given by parents Gerald and Jaimie Crump
and little sisters Cami and Karli**Aidan Shaw Vander Cruyssen**

October 2 - December 3, 2005

Kidney disease

Given by Mommy Shane Meyer
and sibling Cameron Shaw**Brooke Sophia Daily**

March 11, 2010

Vasa Previa

Gifts given by parents Jeremy and Lisa Daily
and big sister Sarah
Bank of America Charitable Foundation
Brad and Cheri Ozee**Riley and Parker Davis**

November 14, 2006

Prematurity

Given by parents Rob and Cheryl Davis
and little sister Annalise**Baby Dill**

Miscarried May 2002

Cooper Dill

Stillborn May 26, 2003

TTTS and cord accident

Given by parents Jim and Brandee Dill
and siblings Avery, Tate
and Paxton (Cooper's Twin)**Royce Haskell Dugan**

Stillborn October 9, 2011

Cord accident

Parents: Sean and Ashley Dugan

Given by Michael Griffin Elementary PTA

Kyler Paul English

Stillborn January 20, 2006

Cord accident

Parents: Laurie McPike and Bob English

Given by Jon and Laurie McPike and
brothers Kinser, Kelson and Kayden**Caleb Scott Fann**

December 1, 2003

PROM

Baby August Fann

Miscarried August 13, 2004

Gifts given by

Parents Jonathan and Heather Fann
and little sister Madison Grace

Deborah Alvard

Jeremy and Kristi Morris

Jason and Christa Waln

Paul and Judy Wacker

Will and Kelly Crayton

C.J. Gold

Miscarried August 12, 2008

Marina Gold

Miscarried July 14, 2009

Parents: Greg and Kathryn Gold

Big sister: Emily

Given by cousins Jerry and Cheryl Cline

Erika Brianne Grau

July 9—August 3, 1997

Anoxic brain injury due to ruptured uterus

Given by parents Ray and Yvette Grau
and siblings Nick and Nataly**Serenity Harrison**

Miscarried December 3, 2009

Given by parents

Curtis and Jennifer Harrison

and brother Leviticus Aaron

Marcus Alan Johnson, Jr.

July 5, 2011

Cord accident

Parents: Marc and Jena Johnson

Given by Holly Hungerford-Kresser

Kennady Ann League

Stillborn January 17, 2007

Unknown cause

Given by parents Jason and Jeanelle League
and siblings Cooper and Camden**Jackson Glen Light****Tyler Ray Light**

February 23, 2009

Placental abruption

Given by parents Kirk and Diana Light
and brother Brayden Christopher**Avery Merae Longgood**

August 2 - 3, 2007

Possible stroke

Parents: Neil and Jamie Longgood

Little sister: Hallie Merae

Given by grandparents

Don and Annette Longgood

Cameron Matthew Mahler

Given by John Campbell

Catherine Mary Martin

Stillborn December 15, 2001

Trisomy 18

Baby Martin I

Miscarried June 14, 2002

Baby Martin II

Miscarried September 2002

Blighted ovum

Given by parents Glenn and Nancy Martin
and siblings Alex and Allison**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

Grandparents Lyle and Marnie Mitchell

Lily Joy Moore

Miscarried March 2, 2011

Unknown cause

Gifts given by

Parents Jeremy and Kathleen Moore
and big brother Isaac

Grandmother Marsha Neely

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!

Elizabeth Mai Schockmel Nettles

Stillborn May 13, 2002
Intrahepatic Cholestasis

Baby "D" Nettles

Miscarried March 2, 2008
Parents: Nate and Karen Schockmel Nettles
Siblings: Alexandra, Benton and Catherine
Given by "Bigga and Moonie" Connie Stone

Maximus Frederick Samples

Stillborn December 7, 2011
Unknown cause
Given by parents
Deborah and Nicholas Samples
and big brother Alex

Adley Taylor Sells

December 30, 2010
Parents: Ashley and Chad Sells
Given by grandparents
Harry and Brenda Patterson/
Wichita Falls Community
Foundation

Elliot Skaggs

April 28, 2008
Multicystic kidney

Baby Skaggs

Miscarried December 11, 2006
Given by parents Brandon and Sara Skaggs
and siblings Sydney, Brady and Bennett

Aiden Xavier Sohn

October 13, 2002
HELLP Syndrome

Hope Sohn

Miscarried May 2003

Whisper Sohn

Miscarried October 2003
Given by parents Doug and Angelique Sohn
and siblings Josh, Sebastian and
Benjamin

Savannah Kate Stanley

January 3, 2004
Prematurity/incompetent cervix

Baby Stanley

Miscarried November 10, 2004
Parents: Calli and Joel Stanley
Siblings: Colton, Danika and Sara
Given by Stephanie Stanley

Braley Lake Thomas

February 2, 2007
Unknown cause
Parents: Cory and Melissa Thomas
Siblings: Hunter, Rip and Rylan
Given by grandparents
Bobby and Rita Braley

Alivia Elizabeth Grace Walker

Stillborn July 24, 2006
Incompetent cervix
Given by parents Robert and Liz Walker
and little brother Jaxson

Kyle Charles Walton

November 19, 1998
Group B Strep/lack of nourishment from
placenta
Given by parents Kristen and Jason Walton
and siblings Jessica, Laura and Joshua

Owen Patrick Webb

Stillborn April 30, 2009
Unknown cause
Given by parents Brian and Melissa Webb
and siblings Sophia (Owen's twin)
and Natalie

Brand and Colt Whigham

August 4, 2011
Umbilical cord knotted together
Parents: Beverlyann and Chris Whigham
Given by great-grandmother Dawn Burson

Shauna Elisabeth Winebrenner

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

Gifts of Support

Junior League of Texarkana, AR
Lara Viola Scott Charitable Trust, Amarillo
Jeremiah and Karla Cunningham, Amarillo
Mary K. Ivey/America's Charities
Second Baptist Church, Springfield, MO
West Conroe Baptist Church, TX

"Letting Go and Letting God"
Continued from page 17

and that He was indeed moving in our life. After kissing Isaiah goodbye, I decided to surrender it all, totally and completely surrender - even if that meant I may be choosing to lose other children in the future. I remember how funny it was that we had to rewrite our home study already. We wanted to change our parameters on what children we would take (age, health, race, sibling groups, etc).

As I write this, we have been foster parents since 2003. We have adopted six blessings out of foster care. We have also loved on many more children who are now back with families. One of the greatest gifts of the whole process is loving on a mom who has lost a child to the system. She doesn't seem to understand my affection for her. What she doesn't know is that I have lost a baby, too. I have been there. God has taught me so much about forgiveness as I have had to accept and pray with women who may not have understood the gift their children are.

Just last summer, we brought in a sibling group of three. One was a 6-year-old boy. The coolest part of this story is that his birth mom also named him Isaiah. When I look at him and see all the loss he has had in his short life, I am reminded about how Elaine's death brought me here. Her death opened parts of my heart that I would never have opened on my own. Thank you, Jesus, for using my daughter's death to bring me such joy through our journey to parenthood...through adoption. I want to encourage each one of you to consider adoption. God has used adoption in the Bible to show His power and love. He used Moses, an adopted son, to bring His people out of Egypt. He also adopted each one of us through salvation. "The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your **adoption** to sonship. And by Him we cry, 'Abba, Father.'" Romans 8:14-16.

No child should go through life without the love of a family. Who better to love on them than men and women like us who know the value and gift that children are because of our losses? Pray today and see if God might be calling you to the precious gift of adoption.

♥ Brandy Wilson
Mommy to Elaine Kelly
M.E.N.D.—Houston



Subsequent Births

Chad Bass and Leah Robilotto-Bass,
along with big brother Miles,
of The Woodlands, Texas,
joyfully announce the adoption of
Graham Nicholas,
born November 30, 2011,
and joined his forever family
on January 10, 2012.
Graham measured 6 lb., 15 oz.
The Bass family lovingly remembers
Matthew Ryan and Mason Michael,
April 10, 2008,
prematurity,
and Baby Bass,
miscarried November 2009

Noelle and David Pinson
of Irving, Texas,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Keegan James,
born December 15, 2011,
measuring 5 lb., 14 oz.,
and 18.5 inches long.
The Pinsons lovingly remember
Haley Jade Pinson,
October 5, 2010,
Robert's Syndrome

Anthony and Michelle Wright
of Enumclaw, Washington,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Connor Anthony,
born January 24, 2012,
measuring 7 lb., 13 oz.,
and 20 inches long.
The Wright family lovingly remembers
Baby Wright,
miscarried November 7, 2010

Michelle and Kascie Smith
of Carrollton, Texas,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Elijah Jacob Lee,
born February 6, 2012,
measuring 7 lb., 12 oz.,
and 21 inches long.
The Smiths lovingly remember
Walker Francis Tish Smith,
November 4, 2010
incompetent cervix

Jesse and Olivia Riha,
along with big sisters Evie and Amanda
of Houston, Texas,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Isabella May,
born October 21, 2011,
measuring 8 lb., 7oz.,
and 21 inches long.
The Rihans lovingly remember
Laura Olivia Riha,
stillborn May 12, 2010,
heart failure

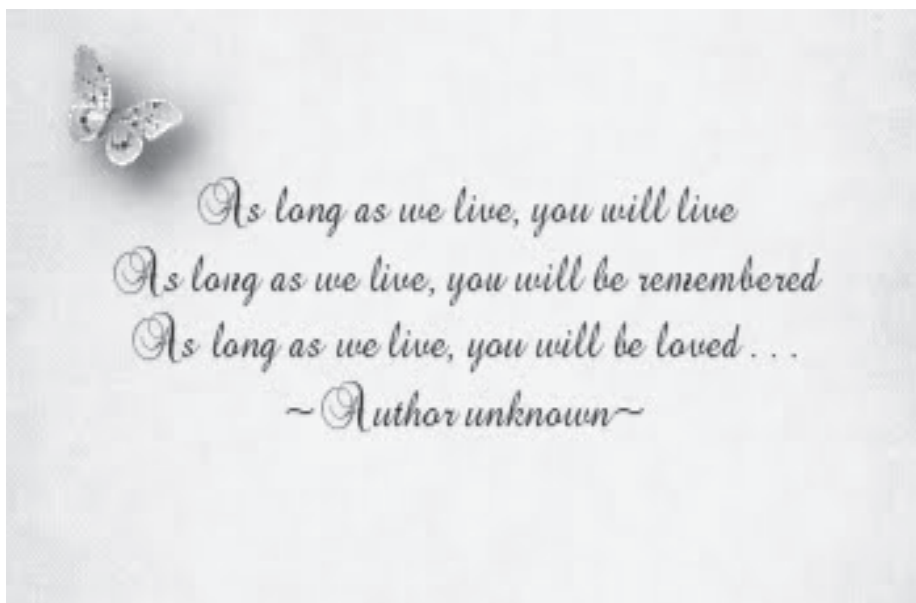
Daniel and Stephanie Hitchcock,
along with big siblings
Madalynn, Paisley and Mason
of Tomball, Texas,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Preston James,
born November 15, 2011,
measuring 4 lb., 14 oz.,
and 17.75 inches long.
The Hitchcocks lovingly remember
Mackenzie Hitchcock,
December 21, 2008 - January 21, 2009,
Herpes Symplex One

Jim and Larissa Wheeler
of Arlington, Texas,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Julianne Joy,
born December 1, 2011,
measuring 6 lb., 6 oz.,
and 18 inches long.
The Wheelers lovingly remember
Baby Wheeler,
miscarried March 2009,
and Michael Noah Wheeler,
stillborn January 27, 2010

Lane and Leslie Alexander,
along with big sister Hayley
of Pearland, Texas,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Jacob,
born December 15, 2011,
measuring 7 lb., 13 oz.,
and 19.75 inches long.
The Alexanders lovingly remember
Lindsay Claire Alexander,
May 24 - 27, 2009,
VLCAD

**Shanae Jenkins
and Stephen McCowin**
of Lancaster, Texas,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Amiyah Breae' McCowin
born October 19, 2011,
measuring 4 lb., 3 oz.,
and 19 inches long
The family lovingly remembers
Jayden Breonna Jenkins,
September 25, 2007,
pre-eclampsia

Terry and Carmyn Hawkins,
along with siblings, Andrew and Kianna
of Fresno, Texas,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Malcolm Elijah,
born January 11, 2012,
measuring 7 lb., 2oz.,
and 20 inches long.
The Hawkins lovingly remember
Terry Hawkins II,
March 15 - April 3, 2009,
septic shock



Creciendo familias a través de métodos no tradicionales

Yo era una pequeña niña, probablemente estaba en la escuela primaria, cuando anunciaron la gran noticia del nacimiento del primer bebe probeta. Este fascinante éxito científico fue anunciado en las portadas de los periódicos alrededor del mundo y fue la noticia numero uno por varios días seguidos. A pesar de este fenómeno médico, muchos años después mientras yo misma entraba en el mundo de la procreación y la maternidad, el tema de la infertilidad y los posibles tratamientos y opciones de tales eran un tabú. Un montón de mis amigas descubrieron que no era tan fácil quedar embarazadas, sin embargo nosotros solo pensábamos que estas parejas aun no estaban listas para ser padres, mientras ellos mantenían este dolor o pena en silencio.

En nuestros primeros años de matrimonio, mi esposo Byron y yo, teníamos unos amigos cercanos que eran un poco mayores que nosotros y llevaban pocos años más, de casados que nosotros. Quede embarazada a los 2 años y medio de nuestro matrimonio, y no podíamos entender por qué ellos no estaban tan entusiasmados con nuestro embarazo y porque ellos todavía no estaban esperando un bebé propio. Finalmente, una noche mientras estábamos fuera cenando, les pregunte atrevidamente cuando iban a iniciar una familia. La respuesta: "no es un buen tema". Muy ingenuo al mundo subterráneo de la infertilidad, nos resignamos al entendimiento de que uno de ellos deseaba un bebé y el otro simplemente no estaba listo para iniciar una familia. Cinco meses después de que nació nuestro hijo, finalmente confiaron en nosotros y nos dijeron que habían estado intentando tener un bebé durante años, y que estaban a punto de incursionar en un nuevo procedimiento llamado GIFT (transferencia de gametos Intra-trompas). Por supuesto, no teníamos absolutamente ninguna idea de lo que era este procedimiento, y aun no estábamos muy seguros de que si algo como esto era aceptable espiritualmente. ¿Estaba esto haciendo el papel de Dios?

Hoy nuestros amigos tienen cuatro hijos: una chica encantadora de 19 años de edad y trillizos varones de 16 años de edad. Siendo un poco privilegiados a las emociones que nuestros amigos

aguantaron durante sus años de infertilidad nos dio nuestra primera impresión a lo que sentían las parejas cuando no pueden quedar embarazadas naturalmente. Sin embargo, no fue hasta que perdimos a nuestro hijo que nació mortinato, Jonathan y cuando nos dijeron que debido a mis problemas de salud, no deberíamos tener otro bebé, que realmente me di cuenta de cómo las parejas consideran y tratan medidas de desesperación apasionadas para convertirse en padres. ¿Pero la pregunta sigue siendo, hasta qué punto es demasiado exagerado, y cuando se considera a la tecnología médica que esta tomando el papel de Dios?

Personalmente, creo que si yo no hubiera perdido a un bebé y yo no hubiera sido calificada para un tratamiento de infertilidad secundario (dos embarazos "perdidos") podría ser un poco critica sobre parejas tomando medidas drásticas para convertirse en padres. Sin embargo, plenamente conozco y comprendo el pensamiento, "voy a hacer lo que sea para tener un bebé - cueste lo que cueste." Aunque creo que cualquier tipo de método de convertirse en padre debe ser minuciosamente investigado y completamente acordadas por marido y mujer, siento que Dios les ha dado a los científicos y médicos la inteligencia y el conocimiento para realizar todas las técnicas increíbles que hoy están disponibles para las parejas. Dios es el autor de la vida y la muerte, y creo que si él no quiere una vida creada, no la va a crear - y que incluye la vida intentando ser creado a través de procedimientos médicos. He sido testigo de la inmensa alegría de muchas familias que conozco personalmente y a través de M.E.N.D. y que han recibido el regalo de criar a un bebé a través de medidas que no se les pudo otorgar a los padres de generaciones pasadas. Yo agradezco estas increíbles opciones que están disponibles para los padres anhelando y espero que cuando lean algunas de sus historias tú te alegres y regocijes con ellos.

♥ *Rebekah Mitchell, Presidente y Fundadora
Mamá de Jonathan Daniel y Mitchell bebé Mitchell*

An excerpt from the song

Heroes

By the Isaacs

They tried for many years to have a baby of their own
But God knew a little girl who didn't have a home
Someone else's burden was their blessing in disguise
And now she's got a mom and daddy there to hold her when she cries

Every single parent who must carry twice the load
And those who sacrifice to raise a child that's not their own
They dedicate their time to make a difference in someone else's life
And in my eyes

He's a hero and she's a hero
It doesn't matter that nobody knows their name
They keep on giving to make life worth living
Might go unnoticed but they're heroes just the same



M.E.N.D. Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death
 P.O. Box 631566, Irving, TX 75063
 USA
 (972) 506-9000
Return Service Requested

Nonprofit Organization
 U.S. Postage Paid
 DeSoto, TX 75115
 Permit No. 614

“... 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.
- **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.
- **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.



www.mend.org