



# M. E. N. D.

## Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death

### Roller Coasters of Grief

Within the first few weeks of my baby Jonathan's stillbirth, I read something that said, "Grief is like a roller coaster. You slowly inch upward, then, without much warning, you come crashing down, seemingly, right back to the place where you started." Though some grieving people may find that discouraging because they want to continue climbing their arduous journey of grief and never come down, I personally found it helpful and hopeful knowing that my "down times" were very normal, and the slow climb back up would eventually come again.

Holidays, various anniversaries and the announcement of others' pregnancies were events that typically caused me to fall from my then current precipice. When I fell, I usually fell hard! Around four months after Jonathan's death, I truly thought I had made great strides toward "finding our new normal," but a certain series of events caused me to crash on my face. It really scared me. I truly feared I would never be the same again: never happy, never joyful, never nice, never fun, and never again content.

I soon learned that over time, those emotions would resurrect within me. I would fall again, rise up, fall yet again, and struggle to the top once more. Over the years, those ups and downs came less often. The top got higher, as did the lows. Seventeen years later, I can testify that rarely do I find myself coasting downward, but when I do, it's not far at all, and the climb back up is quick.

As I reflect on those times of living in the lonely valley of sorrow, I realize how much I learned while I was there. I discovered the *only* way I would ever make progress is by turning to the Lord, lifting my eyes to the hills, seeking His help and acknowledging that He continuously watched over me (Psalm 121). I knew that when I fell, He would be by my side to pick me up and help me move again.

Further, I saw a glimpse of what David in the Bible must have felt on a regular basis. If you're familiar with his life, you know that it seems things were always great with him (going from a lowly shepherd boy to the king of Israel) or absolutely beyond dreadful (running for his life and the death of his sons). We read in the book of Psalms the beautiful praises King David wrote while he was living life to the fullest on a mountain top or cries for help when he was desperate beyond measure in the valleys (literally). I conclude with an excerpt of one of David's writings, found in Psalm 116:1-7, that I pray will be an encouragement to your hurting heart.

*I love the Lord, for he heard my voice;  
He heard my cry for mercy.  
Because he turned his ear to me,  
I will call on him as long as I live.  
The cords of death entangled me,  
The anguish of the grave came upon me;  
I was overcome by trouble and sorrow.  
Then I called on the name of the Lord:  
"O Lord, save me!"  
The Lord is gracious and righteous;  
Our God is full of compassion.  
The Lord protects the simplehearted;  
When I was in great need, he saved me.  
Be at rest once more, O my soul,  
For the Lord has been good to you.*

♥ *Rebekah Mitchell, M.E.N.D. President/Founder  
Mommy to Jonathan Daniel and Baby Mitchell*

### Stages of Grief

**Denial**  
Avoidance  
Confusion  
Elation  
Shock  
Fear

**Anger**  
Frustration  
Irritation  
Anxiety

**Depression**  
Overwhelmed  
Helplessness  
Hostility  
Flight

**Bargaining**  
Struggling to find  
meaning  
Reaching out to others  
Telling one's story

**Acceptance**  
Exploring options  
New plan in place  
Moving on

*Nota Española:* El artículo de Rebekah Mitchell aparece en cada emisión de nuestro boletín para la audiencia latina.  
Para ver el artículo de este mes en español, por favor vea la página número 17.

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

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

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## The Heart of the Leader

Amy Humphries

My name is Amy Humphries, and I am the director of the M.E.N.D.—Hot Springs chapter. My husband and I found out four and a half weeks before my due date that the son we were so eagerly awaiting had Trisomy 9. We were told Trisomy 9 is fatal. Four weeks later on March 23, 2009, I gave birth to Carson Lewis Humphries, and we held him until he passed away shortly thereafter. The grief that my husband and I both experienced was overwhelming. I longed to be surrounded by other women who could truly understand my grief. Shortly after losing Carson, God orchestrated my finding out about M.E.N.D. I realized that no such organization, which reaches out to the entire community, existed for Garland County. God gave me the burden and desire to reach out to other families who have suffered the loss of a baby. I consider it a privilege to direct M.E.N.D.—Hot Springs and pray that God will work through us to heal broken hearts.

♥ Amy Humphries,

*Mommy to Carson Lewis*

*M.E.N.D.—Hot Springs*

## Still a Reason to Celebrate

It was five months on July 27, since my baby girl, Grace, passed away. This has been the most difficult journey that I have experienced thus far in my life. Along my journey of grief, I have learned numerous things about myself. I have learned that I am stronger than I thought. I have learned to depend on and reach out to others. Most importantly, I have increased my faith in God.

I have friends, family and strangers tell me that they do not know how I have made it this far without going out of my mind. The response that I want to say is “I don’t know either.” I have learned to say, “I take it a moment at a time.” I can be up one moment, down the next. It is in my moments of utter despair that I cry out to God in my heart and soul to comfort me, to carry on through that breath, because at times I want to give up and not go on without my Grace. It is during those moments that God whispers in my heart and lets me know in my lowest moments of immeasurable grief and sorrow that He has not left me. He has His hands on my life, He is continuing to guide my steps, and He will get the glory and praise out of the loss of my dear Grace.

For all of those mommies enduring the loss of your sweet loved ones, PLEASE be assured, that it does get better. I am a believer, a witness and am still in the PROCESS. A dear friend of mine who has experienced two losses has told me to SCREAM OUT LOUD...and I still do that to this day. Five months after my daughter’s death and with each scream, heaven hears my call, and I can hear my baby saying, “Mommy, I am okay. I am safe with Jesus.” Not a day goes by that I don’t think about Grace, but my faith and promise is knowing that I will see her again in the presence of the Lord. Continuing to pray for you all as we endure this journey together.

*We must be willing to let go of the life we have planned,  
so as to accept the life that is waiting for us.*

♥ Shauniesa Sisk,

*Mommy to Grace*

*M.E.N.D.—Dallas*

## Grieving the Same Differently

*Grief: Deep sorrow, especially that is caused by someone's death; Trouble or annoyance*

While grief can be defined in words, grief has no measure and no constants. Two people experiencing the same loss can be at two different levels in the grieving process. From the moment Emily died, I wanted another baby right away to fill the empty void in my heart. My husband, though, did not even want to discuss the topic for at least a year after having our 12-day-old baby suddenly ripped from our arms without warning. I knew my desires were based on my heart fighting with my head—my head knew that a new baby would not replace the other or fix the hurt, but my heart continued to ache. I desperately wanted my husband, Barry, to understand this. This was only the beginning of the roller coaster of my grief.

Throughout the days following Emily's death, Barry and I were told to "lean on each other," "remain strong as a couple" and "don't let this break apart your marriage." How could we even think about being without each other during all of the emotions we were faced with? Barry couldn't even leave a room without my falling apart. When it seemed that no one else knew the pain, I knew he felt it. After the funeral was over and all of the visitors ceased, we were left with the pieces of our lives that we had to somehow figure out how to put back together. We knew we had to be strong for our then 15-month-old daughter, Hailey. While it seemed so easy to hide beneath the covers, we forced ourselves out of bed to face the day for the sake of our living child and our marriage.

Soon Barry had to go back to work. It seemed his pain grew less as he was able to go on about his life while mine only grew stronger. I feared that my husband was moving on and forgetting about our precious daughter, so confusion, hurt and anger began to build. From the horrible flashbacks of the night in the emergency room, hearing those painful words, "I'm sorry. There's nothing else we could do," to the "what if's" and overwhelming guilt that I had done something wrong to cause Emily's death, I felt stuck. I was on an upside-down loop on my roller coaster, while happy people below me went on about their lives. How would I ever get the cart of life back in motion? Life continued, but I was just going through the motions and felt very alone, even with family surrounding me.

At this point I knew I had two choices: either remain stuck on the upside-down loop and let the grief take over at the expense of my young living daughter's childhood as well as my marriage, or face it head on and work through the pain. I chose to face it, but not alone. What helped me most was to help others. Whether it was taking meals to other families who were experiencing losses or making donations to the children's hospitals, I found joy and felt close to Emily. I also began focusing on my body's health as I wanted to make certain it was possible for me to have a healthy baby going forward. Eventually I began to feel movement again.

As this issue is printed, it has been two years since the birth and death our daughter, Emily, and Barry and I are still happily married. We even went on to have another beautiful, healthy daughter named Hope. As I think back to the advice we were given to "lean on each other," and to not let the death of our daughter break up our marriage, it makes complete sense now. Grief is a roller coaster. No two rides are ever the same. When it seemed that Barry was moving on about life, he was being strong for me. When he had his sad times, I was able to be there for him.

Once you hop on the ride of grief, it's not easy to find the exit, it's hard to know where the dips are and you have to find good tracks that will bring you back up. Our babies, no matter how they left us, will always be a part of who we are. Just as we knew our lives would never be the same when we found out we were expecting, our lives will never be the same after seeing our precious creations lay lifeless before our eyes. I know that the grief we have for Emily will always be with us, but I am so thankful for my Emily and what she has taught me about life. That's what keeps me going.

♥ *Lindsay Ford*

*Mommy to Emily*

*M.E.N.D.—Dallas*

*November/December Topic*

Holidays

Deadline: September 30, 2012

*January/February Topic*

When Your Loss is Your Last

Deadline: November 30, 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. Because our newsletters are posted online, please understand that your name will likely be attached to your submission when searched on the Internet.

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**Letters to the Editor** should be sent to [jennifer@mend.org](mailto: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.

**Birthday Tributes:** M.E.N.D. publishes heavenly birthday tributes in the corresponding newsletter. Tributes must be submitted via the online form at [www.mend.org](http://www.mend.org).

Heavenly Birthday

January/February

March/April

May/June

July/August

September/October

November/December

Deadline

November 31

January 31

March 31

May 31

July 31

September 31



# Birthday Tributes

## Happy 15<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Austin!

Happy birthday, baby brother! Your mommy, daddy, Arren and I miss you very much. I think about you all the time. I visit you and talk to you whenever I'm feeling down, and you always make me feel better. I know Big Mama and Aunt Dot are up there spoiling you; give them a kiss for me. I hope you met your cousin, Walker, and you take good care of him, ok? We all love you!

All my heart,  
Your big sister, Ashley

*Austin Jeremiah Davis*  
*Stillborn September 16, 1997*  
*Also remembering*  
*Cousin: Walker Francis Smith*  
*November 2010*  
*Parents: Dana and Tracy Davis*  
*Siblings: Ashley and Arren*



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

Happy birthday, sweet baby girl! I love and miss you more than words could say. God gave us more than we could have ever asked for, and that's an angel. I wouldn't go back and change what happened for the world. O, my precious angel, I can't wait to see you in heaven. It's those seven precious minutes that I had with you that help me make it through each day.

Love always,  
Momma  
xoxo

*Talin Devyn Scott*  
*October 5, 2010*  
*Premature*  
*Parents: Donny Scott and Avorie Davis*



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

Our beautiful little Liam is missed every day. We wish we could call your name, and you would come running down the hall with your big brother. We feel very blessed to be the parents and brother to such a sweet and beautiful little angel. You will forever be loved and honored as our son and baby brother. Happy first angelversary, baby Liam. We love you as if you had lived for years.

*Liam Nathaniel Perez*  
*September 2, 2011*  
*Cord accident*  
*Parents: Ricky and Brandy Perez*  
*Big brother: Ethan*



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

I can't believe that you are already 3 years old. Such a beautiful baby. I miss you so much every day, Jordan, and like I promised you then, I am promising you now, I will never forget you. Continue being joyful, baby. I will always love you!

Your loving mother,  
Kiiyana

*Jordan Eunice Deshaun Chapman*  
*Stillborn September 29, 2009*  
*Parents: Kiiyana Heath and Kevin Chapman*



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

Gabriel was sent to us for just a short while, yet he taught his mom and dad so much. He taught us what it means to love without measure, and he brought us closer together. He strengthened our relationship with God by allowing us to realize what His sacrifice was with His Son and that He will never take us to something we cannot make it out of. We love you, Gabriel! One day we will take you out of God's lap and hold you in ours!

*Gabriel Malachia Cremer*  
*September 17, 2011*  
*Miscarried/Stillborn at 19 weeks, 4 days*  
*(May have been PPROM)*  
*Parents: Chris and Chrissy Cremer*



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

To our little angel, let God bless you and keep you safe until we are reunited with you again.

*Jolene Danielle Lemarr*  
*September 30, 2011*  
*Umbilical cord knot*  
*Parents: James and Candi Lemarr*  
*Siblings: Ryan and Clara*



## Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Kenton and Elijah!

Kenton and Elijah were born and sent to heaven on September 17, 2011. Kenton and Elijah were born at 17 weeks. Our love for them is unexplainable. "I prayed for this child, and the Lord has granted me what I ask of Him, so now I gave him to the Lord." 1 Samuel 1:27-28

*Kenton and Elijah Joseph*  
*September 17, 2011*  
*Unknown cause*  
*Parents: Nemesi and Shawona Joseph*



**Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> Birthday, Laila!**

Laila, not a day that goes by that we don't think of you.  
You are forever in our hearts.

*Laila DeAnn Nelson*  
*Stillborn October 16, 2010*  
*Unknown cause*  
*Parents: LaTrell and Arnechia Nelson*  
*Sibling: Jada*

**Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Adellae!**

I can't believe it has been a year since you went to heaven. We miss you so much, but I know you are happy in heaven with Jesus. We will always remember those special 20 weeks that you were here with us. Know that we love you so very much, and you will always be our firstborn daughter.

Love,  
Mama and Daddy

*Adellae Constance Stilwell*  
*Stillborn October 17, 2011*  
*Triploidy*  
*Parents: Richie and Sarah-beth Stilwell*  
*Brother: Isaiah (due September 2012)*

**Happy 13<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Larmie!**

We love you and miss you, son!

*Larmie Dane Barton*  
*Stillborn October 13, 1999*  
*Cord accident*  
*Parents: Travis and Deeon Barton*  
*Siblings: Devin, Briana, Shelby, Jordan and Thayer*

**Happy 10<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Aiden!**

Dear sweet boy, ten years have passed. In those first dark days I didn't even know how I was to make it ten days—let alone ten years. Listening to your brothers play, I often wonder what color straw you might have liked and which ninja would have been your favorite. Daddy and I grieve that we will never know these things in this life, but know we will someday! Ten kisses and hugs and ten thousand more. Happy birthday, Aiden.

*Aiden Xavier Sohn*  
*October 13, 2002*  
*HELLP syndrome*  
*Also remembering*  
*Hope Sohn*  
*Miscarried May 2003*  
*Whisper Sohn*  
*Miscarried October 2003*  
*Parents: Doug and Angelique Sohn*  
*Siblings: Joshua, Sebastian and Benjamin*

**Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Royce!**

Royce, the day I knew you were forming inside my womb, I instantly fell in love. What a precious gift, an angel, formed perfectly from above. Each and every day I felt more and more in awe of God's little blessing that soon would call me "Ma."

The day you were born, oh did the trumpets play and the angels sing. They were welcoming my precious Royce, whose name means "son of the king."

I never knew or could imagine how soon you would depart, but I knew instantly how much I loved you, right from the very start. Royce, you made me a mommy and are my special son. You fill my thoughts and capture my heart until each day is done. I can't wait till the day when I will see you again face to face. I will cradle you in my arms and my tears will be erased. Until then, sweet boy, let the angels sing you lullabies, and Jesus rock you to sleep, and I will carry you through every day of my life—a mother's promise, I will always keep.

~Letter written with love from Mom

Happy first birthday, Royce. We love you and miss you so much. We are blessed to have an angel as our son.

Love, Mommy, Daddy and Addison

*Royce Haskell Dugan*  
*October 9, 2011*  
*Cord accident*  
*Parents: Sean and Ashley Dugan*  
*Sister: Addison Elizabeth*

**Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Zayda Renae!**

I can't believe you are 1 already. I miss you more and more every day, but I feel comfort in knowing that when I look to heaven and tell you I love you, you are smiling down at me saying, "I love you too, Mommy." I look forward to the day I get to see you again! Mommy loves you, tiny angel!

*Zayda Renae McKinney*  
*Stillborn September 28, 2011*  
*Premature due to infection by a blood clot in the uterus*  
*Mommy: Jana Thrush*  
*Siblings: Jaden and Leiara*

**Happy 13<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Ashley!**

We miss you every day.

xoxo,

Mama, Daddy, Laura and Katherine

*Ashley Renee Dedear*  
*October 29 - November 1, 1999*  
*Extreme prematurity*  
*Parents: Tim and Cindy Dedear*  
*Sisters: Laura (surviving twin) and Katherine Dedear*



**Happy 5<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Ethan!**

Always in our hearts, we miss you every single day.

Love,

Mom, Dad, Thomas and Jakob

*Ethan Kane Spurrier  
Stillborn September 5, 2007  
Cord accident*

*Parents: Bruce and Sandra Spurrier  
Siblings: Big brother Thomas and little brother Jakob*

**Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> Birthday, Ainslee!**

My sweet Ainslee, to say you are missed seems so inadequate. I cannot believe you are 2 years old. I imagine all you'd be doing and all you'd be, and my heart aches at the loss of a future with you. You were such a beautiful baby, and it is wonderful to see you grow through your brother and baby sister. Thank you for sending us such hope, that's been the greatest gift. I pray you have a happy heavenly second birthday! You are thought of every day, but especially on the day you were born. I'll never forget holding our first daughter and all that meant to me. I love you, my sweet girl. We all do. Happy birthday, Ainslee girl!

All our love,

Daddy, Mommy, Adrian and Hadlee

*Ainslee Ryan Soppe  
October 29, 2010 - February 8, 2011  
SIDS*

*Parents: Travis and Channan Soppe  
Siblings: Adrian and Hadlee Hope*

**Happy 3<sup>rd</sup> Birthday, Kaiya!**

We miss you. Your 49 minutes on this earth have touched this world more than the many years of others. Love you!

*Kaiya Dawn Walker  
October 23, 2009  
Prematurity*

*Mommy: LaRhesa Johnson  
Sibling: Kaidyn Jamiel Walker*

**Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Avery!**

Mommy and Daddy love and miss you every second of every day.

"No one can know how much I love you, because you are the only one who knows what my heart sounds like from the inside."

*Avery Alexander Napaluch  
Stillborn October 24, 2011  
Parents: Kenneth and Adrianna Napaluch*

**Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Molly!**

Happy first birthday to our princess! We miss and love you so much, Molly! Wish you were here with us!

*Molly Lorena Gilliam  
August 3, 2011*

*Unknown cause*

*Parents: Matthew and Melissa Gilliam*

*Brother: Malachi*

**Happy 10<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Laiken!**

Our sweet little Laiken, we can't get over that you will celebrate your tenth heavenly birthday this year! We miss you and think of you each and every day. You are always a very special part of our family, and we never forget to include you or speak of you. It warms my heart to hear your younger brother and sister always speak of you even though they never met you in person, just as your older brother and sister do. They know you are their sister and love you just as if you were still here.

Somehow it seems like it was just yesterday that Mommy and Daddy were holding you and trying to get a lifetime of love into a few hours. It will never feel like enough time together. We wanted you so much. You are forever loved and forever cherished, baby girl.

Happy 10th Birthday, Laiken Riley Madison!

Love,

Mommy, Daddy, Arianna, Jarod, Gavin and Alyvia

*Laiken Riley Madison Kale  
September 15, 2002  
HELLP Syndrome, severe prematurity,  
Pulmonary failure, Antiphospholipid Syndrome  
Parents: Rick and Alysha Kale  
Siblings: Arianna, Jarod, Gavin and Alyvia*

**Happy 3<sup>rd</sup> Birthday, Joey!**

Our sweet Joey, we love you and miss you so much! I know your little brother will one day know he has a beautiful sister in heaven. I wonder what it would've been like for you both to play together. Mommy and Daddy wish you were here for your third birthday! Kisses from all of us!

Love,

Daddy, Mommy, Ayden and Doggie Angel

*Josephine Ann Lee  
October 9, 2009  
PROM/incompetent cervix  
Also remembering  
Baby Juno Lee  
November 2010  
Blighted ovum  
Parents: John and Patty Lee  
Sibling: Ayden*



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

My sweet, sweet angel Brae, it is hard to believe it has been three years since you entered and left my world. Oh, how different life would be. You are loved, missed and remembered today and always. Enjoy celebrating your special day with our heavenly Father and all your angel friends. I love you "Lil Bean" and send lots of hugs and kisses your way!

Forever in my heart~  
Love,  
Mommy

*Braelyn Grace Pinto*  
*Stillborn October 13, 2009 at 39 weeks*  
*True knot in cord*  
*Mommy: Kelly Pinto*



### Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> Birthday, Cambri Jade!

WOW! Two years already! I can't believe it! I miss you the same if not more every day. Your big sister talks about you all the time. We will have to tell your little sister, Chandler Grace, all about you! We love you and miss you bunches!

*Cambri Jade Jenkins*  
*September 8, 2010*  
*Placental abruption*  
*Parents: Jeffrey and April Jenkins*  
*Sisters: Clara Paige and Chandler Grace*



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

Mackenzie, I can't believe it's been two years without you. Mommy and Daddy miss you very much and think of you every day. We love you very much! Happy birthday, our angel in heaven!

Love,  
Mommy and Daddy

*Mackenzie Dawn Payne*  
*Stillborn October 8, 2010*  
*Unknown cause*  
*Parents: Matt and Sarah Payne*



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

Not a day goes by that our hearts don't ache for you. Your short little life taught us so much, and while you should be chasing around your sisters right now, we know you're safe and healthy in heaven.

We love you, little Angel Emily!

*Emily Rose Ford*  
*September 28 - October 10, 2010*  
*Myocarditis*  
*Parents: Barry and Lindsay Ford*  
*Sisters: Hailey and Hope*



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

My dear dumpling, this is your first birthday that you won't be here with us. We miss you dearly! We would love to see your face on your special day, but as long as you're with us, that is all that matters for us. Take care of Grandpa and make sure he spoils you rotten for us on your special day! We love you and hope you have a spot for us with you and Grandpa.

*Adrian Michael Guevara*  
*October 11, 2011*  
*Multiple cysts in the kidneys*  
*Parents: Miguel and Crystal Guevara*  
*Siblings: Aiden Miguel and Valeria Alicia*



### Happy 3<sup>rd</sup> Birthday, Sereana Joy!

They're at it again, Heaven's Birthday Club  
Throwing a grand party - a great hub-bub.  
Designed and delivered, the invitations have gone out  
For wonderful, dear you - it's all about!

On your birthday this year you'll turn three  
My oh my, is that right? How can it be?!  
I know the party will be in out-of-this-world style  
We each will be with you, but some after a while.

TaTa's Na, NaNa's Ta, plus several cousins  
Family members there - why! so many dozens.  
Jesus is there, Abba, lots of angels, too.  
It's a birthday celebration, all for you!

Gift to Ta and Song of Na - you are our love  
Now, big sistering our Noela, even from above.  
We'll all gather around in spirit or in heart  
All these things I ponder, treasures in my heart.

Black, shiny curls bouncing, and a smile as you twirl  
Joyfully dancing away at your party - that's our girl!  
So - yes! Mommy will look up and truly agree  
How you've grown - oh so special - now, you are three.

A bright, true light - a little girl to honor  
To sing and celebrate You! - my sweet Sereana.

Happy 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday, Sereana Joy!  
We love you so much,  
Mommy, Daddy and Noela

*Sereana Joy Ratulele*  
*Stillborn September 9, 2009*  
*Full-term, unknown cause*  
*Parents: Semi and Laura Ratulele*  
*Sister: Noela Esiteri*



**Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Jaxson!**

Jaxson's Poem

Mommy and Daddy, I know that you miss me,  
But I promise you I'm in good hands.  
Even though heaven is my home,  
We'll see each other again.  
God told me I was special, thanks to you,  
Which for that, I'll always love you.  
Mommy, if you think about me and begin to cry,  
Look up: I'm hugging you, up there in the sky.  
Daddy, when you feel some tears coming along,  
Listen to the wind: I'll be singing you a song.  
When my brothers and sisters are born  
And ask you about me,  
Tell them I'm looking down at them,  
Happy as can be.



By Monique Vann (Cousin)

Jaxson, Mommy and Daddy love and miss you so much. You will be in our hearts forever.

*Jaxson Henry Holloman  
Born sleeping October 13, 2011  
Diaphragmatic hernia  
Parents: Jason and Sharrisse Holloman*

**Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> Birthday, Isaiah!**

We still miss you. I often think of how it would be if you were still here. Your big brother needs a playmate, but if all goes well, he'll get a sibling about a month after your second birthday!

Love always,  
Mommy, Daddy and Danny

*Isaiah Niekoley  
October 28 - 29, 2010  
Trisomy 13, 18 and 21  
Severe prematurity*

*Parents: George and Esther Niekoley  
Siblings: Danny and Baby Niekoley (due November 2012)*

**Happy 7<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Christian!**

We miss you!

*Christian Erin Desjarlais  
Miscarried October 1, 2005  
Also remembering  
Alyssa Jane Desjarlais  
Miscarried December 1, 1990  
Bailey Noel Desjarlais  
October 30 - November 1, 1995  
Eclampsia/HELLP syndrome  
Parents: Travis and Stephanie Desjarlais  
Brother: Matthew*

**Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> Birthday, Drayven!**

Two years without you—a journey I never would have chosen. You are in my mind daily and in my heart always! I imagine what you would be doing, running around here with your brothers and sisters. You are missed!

Sweet baby boy, give Jesus a hug for me. Let Him hold you in His arms in my place! I hope there really are birthday celebrations in heaven for those who missed them here!

We will celebrate your life—the little time I held you within me. I am forever grateful I am your mom, but I wish you were here with me! We miss you so very much! We love you!

*Drayven McGuire Hall  
Miscarried September 25, 2010 (17.5 weeks)  
Unknown cause  
Parents: Les and Mandy Hall  
Siblings: Moraviah, Anikan, Savannah,  
Tolkien, Josiah and Baby Brother Thatcher*

**Happy 4<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Rylan!**

Dear Rylan, happy fourth birthday in heaven! We hope you have a wonderful day celebrating with Jesus! We miss you so much and think about you every day. Your impact on our lives has forever changed the way we love one another and cherish each day. We love you and can't wait to see you again some day. You are forever in our hearts.

Love,  
Daddy, Mommy,  
Camden, Everett, Anna Claire and Owen

*Rylan Elizabeth Slate  
October 17-20, 2008  
Vasa Previa  
Parents: Daniel and Kristah Slate  
Siblings: Camden, Everett, Anna Claire and Owen*

**Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Maxwell!**

Happy 1<sup>st</sup> birthday to our sweet angel. We miss you so much. Have a wonderful birthday in heaven with lots of balloons! Your big brother doesn't think it is a party without tons of balloons! We love you so much precious boy!

*Maxwell Bentley Booker  
September 9, 2011  
Cord accident  
Also remembering  
Baby Booker  
July 19, 2012  
Parents: Marvin and Chantel Booker  
Big brother: Malachi*





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

Daddy and Mommy cannot believe that you will be 2 years old. Has it really been this long that you were taken away to watch over your big brother and little sister? As we watch Jacob play with Ella and the two interact with your beagle, Gracie, and coonhound, Haley, we wonder what life would have been like if you were here, too. We know that you are in a much better place and look forward to the day in which we can all be a family again.

*Wyatt Paul Schroeder*

*October 14, 2010*

*Placental abruption*

*Parents: Justin and Ashlea Schroeder*

*Siblings: Jacob and Ella*



### Happy 17<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Bailey!

It's been 17 years since we last held you, but not a day goes by we don't think of you and wish you were with us. Happy birthday, baby girl!

*Bailey Noel Desjarlais*

*October 30 - November 1, 1995*

*Born at 26 weeks due to eclampsia/HELLP syndrome*

*Also remembering*

*Alyssa Jane Desjarlais*

*Miscarried December 1, 1990*

*Christian Erin Desjarlais*

*Miscarried October 1, 2005*

*Parents: Travis and Stephanie Desjarlais*

*Brother: Matthew*



### Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> Birthday, Michael and Jake!

We sure do miss you boys! Thank you for impacting our lives so much and letting us know you for the short time you were with us here on earth. We know that you are in an absolutely wonderful place in heaven with Jesus, and that helps our hearts not hurt so much.

We are awaiting the arrival of your little brother in November. Allie is going to be a great big sister to all of her little brothers!

We love you both dearly!

Love,

Mommy, Daddy and big sister Allie Keegan

*Michael and Jake Klubnik*

*September 7, 2010*

*Infection and preterm labor*

*Also remembering*

*Baby Klubnik (one of the triplets)*

*Miscarried June 2010*

*Parents: Tiffany and Jon Klubnik*

*Siblings: Big Sister Allie Keegan and*

*Baby Boy Klubnik due in November*



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

Our sweet little Rachel! We can't believe it has been almost three years since you left us. It seems like it was yesterday. We love you and miss you every day! We wish you a wonderful birthday in heaven.

*Rachel Ann Boche*

*October 29, 2009*

*Incompetent cervix*

*Also remembering*

*Casey Dean Boche*

*August 7, 2010*

*Incompetent cervix*

*Parents: Gary Boche and Shirley Starr*

*Siblings: Jacob and Riley Boche*



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

A precious gift from God. A blessing to have you, to hold you and to know you. You are missed and loved deeply with every breath. May your first birthday be filled with so much love and laughter in heaven that we feel it here.

Love,

Mommy, Daddy, Sissy and Bubba

*Mercy Elizabeth Whitfield*

*September 8 - 21, 2011*

*Trisomy 13*

*Parents: Rodney Whitfield and Allison D'Auteuil*

*Siblings: Grace and Justice*



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

Happy third birthday, baby girl.  
We love you and miss you very much.

*Lilly Claire Pitchford*

*September 11 - 12, 2009*

*Trisomy 13*

*Parents: Shea and Jennifer Pitchford*

*Siblings: Zoe and Emily*



### Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Brooklyn, Jackson and Lindsay!

There's not a day that goes by that we don't think of you. We love you and miss you so much and look forward to the day we meet again.

Love always,

Mommy, Daddy and Brenna

*Jackson, Lindsay and Brooklyn Thompkinson*

*September 10, 2011*

*Molar pregnancy/premature birth*

*Parents: Bryan and Nikki Thompkinson*

*Sibling: Brenna*



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

Happy birthday, sweet little Emma. How we wish you were here to celebrate your birthday! Not a day goes by we don't think of you. We can only imagine the fun you and Gracie would be having here with your little brother, Wyatt. Watch for the balloons he sends for your special day and endless hugs and kisses from all of us.

Think of us as you are surrounded by your angel friends and family and know we are thinking of you and missing you so much.

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

*Emma Grace Dorr*  
*October 16, 2008*  
*Incompetent cervix*  
*Also remembering*  
*Gracie Renee Dorr*  
*May 15, 2007*  
*Incompetent cervix*  
*Parents: Dustin and Janine Dorr*  
*Little Brother: Wyatt*



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

I still don't understand why you are gone too soon, but I cling to the promise I will see you for eternity. I love you!

*Asa Matthew Markham*  
*October 19, 2011*  
*Cord accident*  
*Also remembering*  
*Baby Markham #1*  
*August 2010*  
*Baby Markham #2*  
*June 6, 2012*  
*Parents: Jesse and Catherine Markhm*  
*Siblings: Jesse II, Noah and Lilly*



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

Our sweet baby girl, we miss you more than words can say and think about you all the time. We wish you were here with us, but know that you are always in our hearts and will forever be a part of our lives. You are always loved, Ginger. Happy second birthday!

Love,  
Mommy, Daddy,  
Big Brother Kegan and Little Brother Kastle

*Ginger Sandoval*  
*September 25, 2010*  
*Renal anomalies*  
*Parents: Keith and Katherine Sandoval*  
*Brothers: Kegan and Kastle*



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

Happy fifth birthday to my precious son. I am so grateful to have had the time I shared with you for the little time you were here. God had other plans for you and changed my whole world completely. I thank God every day for blessing me with you. I wish you were still here with me, but I know you're looking over me and your little brother. You're his angel that stays by his side. We will always remember.

Love,  
Mom, Brother Ethan, Grandma and Grandpa

*Brandon Isaiah Alfaro*  
*October 19, 2007 - March 7, 2008*  
*Spinal muscular atrophy*  
*Mommy: Jennifer Alfaro*  
*Brother: Ethan*



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

Bryler, baby, our angel up there, Mommy and Daddy love you and think about you constantly. We are so very blessed to be called your parents. Although your time on earth was short, we are so happy to know you are well taken care of in the arms of many angels. No goodbyes baby—we will see you in time.

*Bryler David Davis*  
*October 28, 2011*  
*Placenta rupture*  
*Parents: Brandon and Amy Davis*



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

When we first learned you were coming, your daddy and I were worried. We were young and didn't know how to care for you, but we knew we loved you and couldn't wait to meet you and hold you in our arms. But God decided your daddy and I needed our own very special angel to watch over us, so He took you to be our angel. Not a day goes by that we don't wish you were in our arms but we know there are no goodbyes, only time till we meet you as our guardian angel. We love you!

*Bethanni Sanders*  
*Miscarried October 25, 2008*  
*Parents: Rebekah Connor and Bryson Sanders*



*Although it's difficult today  
to see beyond the sorrow,  
may looking back in memory  
help comfort you tomorrow.*  
~Author Unknown

*In Loving Memory***Daniel Adeleye**

May 20, 2012

Parents: Ayo and Gbenga Adeleye

Gifts given by

Manulife Financial  
CSIS**Liam and Sebastian Callaway**

Stillborn August 5, 2011

Unknown cause

Gifts given by

Parents Rori and Zach Callaway  
The Harrington School, Inc.  
Robin Rose  
Billy Rose  
William and Norma Groce**Jackson Dean Cochran**

April 24 - May 19, 2004

Premature

Given by parents

Stacey and DeAnna Cochran  
and sibling Christian**Abigail Grace Crump**

July 1, 2003

Trisomy 18

Gifts given by

Parents Gerald and Jaimie Crump  
and little sisters Cami and Karli  
Mike and Monique Davis**Aidan Shaw Vander Cruyssen**

October 2 - December 3, 2005

PKD

Given by Mommy Shane Meyer

and little sister Cameron

**Brooke Sophia Daily**

Stillborn March 11, 2010

Vasa Previa

Gifts given by parents Jeremy and Lisa Daily  
and sisters Sarah and Savannah**Riley and Parker Davis**

November 14, 2006

Prematurity

Given by parents Rob and Cheryl Davis  
and little sister Annalise**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**Janelle Marie Gibson**

Stillborn November 17, 2006

Clot in placenta

**Gabriel Gibson**

Miscarried October 31, 2007

Ectopic pregnancy

Given by parents Scott and Jodie Gibson  
and siblings Will, Andrew and Isaac**Isaac Huff**

August 27, 2005

Preterm labor

Parents: Nick and Erika Huff

Siblings: Rafael, Blythe, and Nash

Gifts given by

Great grandparents  
Bill and Louise Meyer  
Uncle Bill and Aunt Cynda Meyer  
Wayne and Susan Fender**Emmaline Ila Legg**

July 29, 2010

Placental abruption

**Baby Legg 1**

Miscarried 1999

**Baby Legg 2**

Miscarried 2009

**Baby Legg 3**

Miscarried April 13, 2011

Given by parents Ami and Jimmy Legg  
and siblings Mckinley and Madeline  
Anonymous**Olivia Joy Lewis**

December 20, 2011

Ectopic pregnancy

Given by parents Ryan and Rachel Lewis  
and big sister Maddie**Cullen Emmanuel Luce**

October 8, 2008

Placental abruption

Parents: Whitney and Brandon Luce

Given by Wes and Rachel Taylor

**Zachary Neal Matthews**

Stillborn February 24, 2002

Triploidy

Given by parents

Nick and Marsha Matthews

**Jonathan Daniel Mitchell**

Stillborn June 24, 1995

Cord accident

**Baby Mitchell**

Miscarried December 2001

Parents: Byron and Rebekah Mitchell

Big brother: Byron, Jr.

Given by grandparents

Dennis and Sue Brewer

Grandmother Marnie Mitchell

**Beverly Denae Nienhuis**

September 12, 1988

Given by parents David and Phyllis Nienhuis

**Samuel James Nienhuis**

October 14, 2006

Factor V Liden

Parents: Seth and Marcie Nienhuis

Siblings: Landon and Olivia

Gifts given by

Amos and Rachel Greene  
Jane Baker  
Vic and Cindy Anderson  
Ken and Marti Miller**Braelyn Grace Pinto**

Stillborn October 13, 2009

True knot in cord

Given by Mommy Kelly Pinto

**Emily Lynn Larren Schrader**

Stillborn June 19, 2012

Cord accident

Gifts given by

Parents Dan and Kellie Schrader  
and siblings Nolan and Mary Britton  
Grandparents Stan and Jean McAlpin  
Mr. and Mrs. Bobby Smithhart and  
and family**Mindy and Maggie Smith**

Stillborn November 4, 1997

TTTS and Polyhydramnios

Given by parents Scott and Karla Smith  
and siblings Travis and Julia**Alivia Elizabeth Grace Walker**

Stillborn July 24, 2006

Incompetent cervix

Given by parents Robert and Liz Walker  
and little brother Jaxson**Gifts of Support**

Second Baptist Church, Springfield, MO

West Conroe Baptist Church, TX

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!**

## My Grief Journey

Days 1 and 2: Our sonogram showed that our son, James, had died—he would be stillborn. Shock. Numb. The pain and sadness I thought I felt was nothing compared to what time would bring. I saw myself in the mirror and didn't recognize my own reflection – the tears and pain had already stained my face forever.

Week 1: I cried all day. I woke up crying in my sleep. I dreamed every night that I was still pregnant or that my son was alive. This continued for months. It was only years later that I had my one and only dream where my son was dead. When I would see a pregnant mom, baby or even a family, I became angry at them, angry they had a baby that was or would be born alive. Then the same people that made me mad made me sad, and the flood of tears would come. I stopped going anywhere because it was too painful. I bought all new clothes because I couldn't wear my maternity clothes again—nor could I stand the way my regular clothes I had worn early in pregnancy felt against my skin. I stopped ironing my clothes, wearing makeup or doing my hair. I wanted my exterior to look how I felt inside: broken. I stopped going to church and could no longer pray. I raged at God. I lay on the floor of my home and screamed at Him. “Why did this happen to me? Why did my son have to die? What did I do that was so horrible to make this happen?” I wanted to be dead so the pain would stop.

Week 3: I returned to work. This was one of the last places I had been where I was still happy before finding out my baby died. I walked in the door, and a flood of tears and sadness overwhelmed me. I cried in the bathroom multiple times a day. I would be sitting at my desk and suddenly realize tears were rolling down my face. I sat outside and cried. I cried every day on the way to and from work. I couldn't stand the emotional toll the grief was taking so I cut back to only working part-time. This gave me more time to cry and manage my grief at home. I started weekly therapy sessions. I wondered if I would ever not hurt every second of the day. I felt foggy in my brain. I suffered from constant panic and anxiety attacks. I could not go to the grocery store, church or anywhere but home and work; it was too painful if I happened to see a pregnant mommy or a baby. I hated nearly everyone and couldn't stand to hear people complain about their kids—they should cherish that their children are alive, right?

Months 4 and 5: We got pregnant again and had an early miscarriage. Another miscarriage the following month. My grief spiraled backwards, and I felt captured by it again. I couldn't think, couldn't make decisions and couldn't handle when plans would change. I needed control. I wondered if the day would come that my body would stop bleeding grief, and that the pain I radiated from every cell in my body would cease to exist during every second of the day and every moment of my night. It seemed like this day would never come. It was very hard to understand that I would never be the same person again.

Month 8: We did IVF and became pregnant. I knew the next nine months would be so mentally exhausting – no one would ever understand what I was going through—I was so excited and beyond terrified at the same time. Very early in the pregnancy, we were told that the baby was behind and that given our history, an impending miscarriage was very likely. At this point I stopped going to work or leaving the house. The panic and anxiety and worry were consuming. I worked from home and only left to go to doctor appointments. Over the rest of the pregnancy, I was continuously worried that something would happen to this baby. I was constantly convinced the baby had died and was in to see my doctor at least once a week with the feeling that this was the end. I did not want a baby shower because it was what we had been planning when James died. The thought of planning another one terrified me to the point that I couldn't handle it.

Year 1: The first anniversary was a challenge. I had spent the last year grieving all the “firsts” I was not experiencing with my son. I would never know what his favorite food would be, would never hear his little voice or get a kiss from him. The first year was so long, and the pain was still fresh. We were disappointed by family because no one called us on his anniversary. It felt like the world had forgotten our son. I still cried daily at work and on the drive home.

Year 1, month 4: Our daughter Annabelle was born alive. My emotions were across the board. I was so happy and joyful to have my daughter alive in my arms, but at the same time, it made me miss my son. It was amazing to bring her home, yet at the same time, I was convinced that she would die, too. I made my husband take turns sitting up at night watching her sleep so that she would never be unattended. I cried for two weeks straight after her delivery. I was a mess. The next year was one filled with tears of joy and sadness, sometimes at the same moment. It hit us as we were watching Annabelle grow up, all the things we actually missed with James. It felt like everyone thought we were healed because we now had a living baby at home, but we were still broken.

Year 2: The second anniversary was much more painful than the first year. A lot of women have told me it was that way for them too. I was a mess; I couldn't stop crying. Seeing pregnant women and babies still bothered me. I was surprised at how much I still hurt and how sad I still was most days even after two years. I had thought by this time the feelings would have dampened. We got

pregnant again and were told once again that it looked like we would have another miscarriage. My world was crushed - how could I handle another loss? We made it through nine months, but not without difficulty. I was constantly worried that something would happen to the baby and had many moments where I was convinced the baby had died, just as I felt with Annabelle. At year 2, 11 months, our son, Jackson, was born alive. Holding my living son evoked so many unexpected emotions. For months every time I would look at him, I would tear up with love and happiness. Having a living son at home was more amazing than I could have imagined, and yet it made me long for my son that never got to come home in my arms.

Year 3: The third anniversary was easier than the second. I missed James, but not every day had sad moments. I still felt a long way from being happy, though. My anxiety and panic attacks finally started to go away. I still needed control, and handling change was not something I could do easily. At year 3, 9 months, I finally felt a little like my old self. I will never completely be my old self, but it was nice to get some of her back. We got pregnant again at year 3, 9 months. I was nervous that something would happen to the baby and had a few moments where I was extremely concerned, but for the first time, I didn't experience the complete moments of sheer terror and panic thinking that the baby had died. This pregnancy wasn't completely "normal" like I had before my son died, but it was probably as close as I would ever be able to get.

Year 4: The fourth anniversary was tough. This year, the week between his anniversary date and the funeral date were extremely difficult. This year was the first year that I didn't remember my due date with James. I never believed this would be possible – that I would forget one of the few things that was exclusively his. I was extremely saddened, and yet it felt like a little healing had happened. At this point I realized that I was actually able to live my life now. More than four years after my son was stillborn, that I was actually living life. I was in the moment. I still had extreme moments of sadness and pain, but I felt alive again.

Year 4, 3 months: Our daughter Hailey was born. Holding her was amazing. I just stared and watched her breathe. It was hard to look at our living children and how sweet they were to their little sister, and not wonder how gentle and kind they would have been to their biggest brother. I still miss him every day. My soul aches for my son.

Year 4, 8 months: I started taking an anti-depressant. I gave in—I admitted that this was bigger than I could handle. This was the right time for me. It turned out to be the best thing to help the grieving point that I felt completely engulfed by. For the first time, my highs and lows weren't overwhelming. I still miss my son every day, but I am able to feel the love for my living children, too. I am able to enjoy every moment I get with them in a real way and am able to completely embrace that with a true love.

In the first year of our grief journey, we racked up \$30,000 on our credit cards along with funeral costs, a piano and a car. These purchases were nothing more than trying to capture a moment when we didn't feel worse. They didn't make us feel better, but we had nothing left to do but spend. It's not like we had a baby to buy things for.

We have spent the last couple of years recovering emotionally and financially from the death of our son. It is a journey and will never end. We will never be done grieving our son. There will always be a reminder every day of his missing existence in our life and in our family. I will always miss the love, time and events that I wasn't able to give him here on earth, and I will also miss those same things that he didn't get to have. I held him in my arms on earth, and I will hold him next to my heart again in heaven— of that I have no doubt.

I have spent the last five and a half years trying to fix my life, my relationships with friends, family and God. Nothing feels like it seems and nothing seems like it feels. It's been a confusing life and nothing like I was ever prepared for. I've struggled with doubts about how we handled his delivery, his funeral and his memory. I've struggled with how I react, feel and love. I've struggled with how people have acted and reacted and not reacted. I've struggled with loving my life, my husband and living children. I've struggled with control issues. I've struggled with depression. I've struggled with everything that I watch everyone else do without hesitation that I cannot even comprehend doing in my life. I am healed to the point where we go to church on Sunday regularly, and while my relationship with God still remains a work in progress, I know there is more healing to come. I have come to a place where I feel comfortable with that. While I do not know why my son died, God is my Father, and just because I don't receive the answer to that question does not mean that He won't take care of me.

5 years, 5 months and 2 days: I held a baby for the first time – a baby who was not my own or my sister's. It was so sweet, and his name is James. At that moment, I knew that while I will always miss my son, there is a life to live. Even though he is not here to live it with me, it is a good life I have to live, and Jesus wants me to be happy. I can feel this happiness, and it is amazing.

♥ Jennifer Forner,  
Mommy to James Forner, Baby Forner 1 and Baby Forner 2  
M.E.N.D. — Dallas

## M.E.N.D.

*Chapter Corner*Chapter Meeting Information**M.E.N.D.—Houston**Meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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** meets  
as needed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday at 7:30 p.m.,  
led by Chiara Ott  
(chiara@mend.org).**Daddy's group** meets quarterly on the 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Thursday at 7:30 p.m.,  
led by Tim Winebrenner  
(swinebrenner2004@yahoo.com).**M.E.N.D.—Texarkana**Meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday 7:00 p.m.CHRISTUS St. Michael Rehab Hospital  
2400 St. Michael Drive  
Texarkana, TX 75503

Director: Monica Davis

monica@mend.org, (903) 490-1210

**M.E.N.D.—Tulsa**Meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 Missouri**Meets the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday at 7:00 p.m.

Project H.O.P.E.

1419 S. Enterprise

Springfield, Missouri 65804

Director: Heather Fann

heather@mend.org, (417) 818-0489

**M.E.N.D.—Bryan/College Station**Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.—Amarillo**Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday at 7:00 p.m.First United Bank of the Colonies/  
Lonestar Room

One First United Bank Parkway

45<sup>th</sup> and Soncy

Amarillo, Texas

Director: Becky Anderson

becky@mend.org, (806) 570-4344

M.E.N.D. Chapter Updates*NW Washington*

It is with mixed emotions that I write this note of farewell. Starting and being the chapter director of M.E.N.D.—NW Washington has been a life changer for me. When God took my angel twins home 30+ years ago, I never imagined the plan He had for me. To have been a small part of all the lives of our chapter members has blessed me beyond measure. Each and every one of their babies have touched my life. It is with complete confidence that I hand over the chapter director role to Stacy McGhee. Stacy will do more than just fill my shoes. I plan to stay in touch with you all and will forever remember you. God has plans for me as I return to my family in Texas, and that is exciting to think about! Love to all.

*Susan Crow**Houston*

M.E.N.D.—Houston is looking forward to our seventh annual Walk to Remember. To R.S.V.P. or to read over our FAQ about the Walk, please visit our website at [www.mend.org](http://www.mend.org), Chapters & Support, Houston, Special Events. You need to register in order to receive a personalized ornament. If you have any others questions regarding the Walk, please email [jaimie@mend.org](mailto:jaimie@mend.org) or call 281.374.8528.

*Jaimie Crump**Bryan/College Station*

M.E.N.D.—Bryan/College Station is looking forward to the Walk to Remember in October with M.E.N.D.—Houston. We will also be hosting our own balloon release in College Station the same month. We are in the middle of a quilt fundraiser. If you would like your baby to be represented on this quilt, please email me for more info at [Jennie@mend.org](mailto:Jennie@mend.org).

*Jennie Drude**Hot Springs*

We are praying and preparing for our first fundraiser. We will be doing a letter campaign and are praying God will bless it. Our first Candlelight Christmas Ceremony will be December 1 at 7:00 p.m. at New Life Church in Hot Springs. Please see the M.E.N.D. website for details.

*Amy Humphries**Wichita Falls*

M.E.N.D.—Wichita Falls continues to hold monthly general meetings and welcome new families to our group. Our chapter was recently featured in an article in the *Times Record News*. We hope this will serve as a way for us to continue to reach out to grieving families.

*Sarah Fukasawa**Looking Ahead***M.E.N.D. Christmas Candlelight Ceremonies**

Hot Springs	Houston	Dallas	Washington	Bryan/College Station	SW Missouri	Tulsa
12/1/12	12/1/12	12/4/12	12/7/12	12/8/12	12/11/12	12/14/12

Please contact your chapter for more details on the events.

*Amarillo*

M.E.N.D.—Amarillo is gearing up for our second annual BUNCO for Babies in September. We want to thank First Nazarene Church of Amarillo for the use of the facilities and also all of the great businesses that have donated to our fundraiser!  
*Becky Anderson*

*SW Missouri*

M.E.N.D.—Southwest Missouri continues to welcome new families nearly every month. We're excited to learn that families are hearing about us earlier in their losses, many attending a meeting within the first month of their loss. We are anxiously awaiting several subsequent pregnancies. Plans are forming for our second annual Breakfast and Balloon Release on Saturday, October 13. Contact me if you would like to help or make a donation for this event.  
*Heather Fann*

*Texarkana*

M.E.N.D.—Texarkana continues to grow and minister to families throughout the Texarkana area through email, phone calls, monthly meetings and hospital visits to grieving families. The opportunities for ministry within Texarkana continue to abound. We look forward to our annual Christmas Ceremony in December.  
*Monica Davis*

*Tulsa*

I would like to thank Sara Hintz, Marcie Nienhuis, Erika Huff and Katie Goodson for all of their continued support with our chapter as well as our fundraising letter campaign. We are truly blessed to have them be a part of our organization and couldn't do it without them. We have had several subsequent births in the recent months. Congratulations on all of your little bundles of joy! It is truly amazing to see God's handiwork!  
*Lisa Daily*

**M.E.N.D.—NW Washington**  
 Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday at 6:30 p.m.  
 Harrison Medical Center/Iris Room  
 1800 Myhre Rd.  
 Silverdale, Washington  
 Director: Stacy McGhee  
 stacy@mend.org, (360) 621-7279

**M.E.N.D.—Hot Springs, Arkansas**  
 Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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

Pregnancy and Infant Loss Events		
M.E.N.D.	M.E.N.D.	M.E.N.D.
—	—	—
Houston	Dallas	SW Missouri
10/06/12	10/06/12	10/13/12

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 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of every month  
 from 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.

**Daddies group**  
 meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of March, June, Sept. and Dec.,  
 from 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.

*A time for dads to meet together and discuss topics relevant to them as fathers. Our moms and dads meet together for introductions before dividing into two groups for discussion.*

**Food and Fellowship**  
 are held the 4<sup>th</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday from 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.  
 Led by Liz Walker: liz@mend.org  
*For families who are considering becoming pregnant or are currently pregnant after a loss.*

**MENDING Mommies**  
 Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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](mailto:Magen@mend.org)  
 or call (214) 435-3870

**Infertility group**  
 meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.



## *Subsequent Births*

### **Damon and Cindy Haynes,**

of The Woodlands, Texas,  
along with big siblings  
Cole, Tyler and Madison,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Naomi Grace,  
born April 25, 2012,  
measuring 8 lb., and 19 inches long.  
The Haynes family lovingly remembers  
Chase Reginald,  
stillborn March 24, 2011, at 38 weeks,  
true knot in the umbilical cord

### **Tony and Kristie Lansdell,**

of Fort Worth, Texas,  
along with big sisters  
Bryleigh and Kynlee,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Hayden Ryan,  
born June 19, 2012,  
measuring 7 lb., 14 oz.  
The Lansdells lovingly remember  
Kaley Brook,  
stillborn January 18, 2010,  
cord accident

### **Dave and Kate Thomas**

of Sapulpa, Oklahoma,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Alice Faith,  
born March 9, 2012,  
measuring 8 lb., 5 oz.,  
and 21 inches long.  
The Thomas family lovingly remembers  
Baby Thomas,  
miscarried June 1, 2010

### **James and Merle Johnson,**

of Cypress, Texas,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Emma Grace,  
born July 2, 2012,  
measuring 8 lb., 1 oz.,  
and 20.5 inches long.  
The Johnsons lovingly remember  
Luke Noe,  
stillborn July 26, 2010,  
unknown cause,  
Hope,  
miscarried October 30, 2009,  
and Faith,  
miscarried September 2, 2011

### **Walter and Shawanda Stanford,**

of College Station, Texas,  
along with big brothers  
Xavier and Gabriel,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Caleb Anthony and Chloe Ann,  
born April 26, 2012,  
both measuring 5 lbs., 8 oz.,  
and both over 17 inches long.  
The Stanfords lovingly remember  
Stanford Baby 1,  
miscarried December 2010,  
Stanford Baby 2,  
miscarried April 2011,  
Stanford Baby 3,  
miscarried July 2011

### **Mark and Sally Jurica,**

of Bryan, Texas,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Ashley Jalin,  
born April 19, 2012,  
measuring 8 lb., 12 oz.,  
and 20 inches long.  
The Juricas lovingly remember  
Twin Baby Jurica Boys,  
July 2, 2010,  
unknown cause

### **Jon and Melissa Montgomery,**

of Conroe, Texas,  
along with big brothers  
Dawson, Colin, Landon and Kaiden,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Weston Knox,  
born July 5, 2012,  
measuring 9 lb., 1 oz.,  
and 21 inches long.  
The Montgomerys lovingly remember  
Baby Montgomery 1,  
miscarried in August 2000,  
Baby Montgomery 2,  
miscarried in March 2005,  
and Baby Montgomery 3,  
miscarried in March 2006

### **Amos and Jennette Berry,**

of Collinsville, Oklahoma,  
along with big sister Anastacia,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Sofia Hope,  
born June 2, 2012,  
measuring 6 lb., 4 oz.,  
and 19 inches long.  
The Berry family lovingly remembers  
Isaac Lee,  
stillborn July 13, 2011,  
Trisomy 18

### **Kimberly and Jeff Adams,**

of Spring, Texas,  
along with siblings  
Caroline, Joshua and Weston,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Colton Daniel,  
born July 29, 2012,  
measuring 6 lb., and 14 oz.  
The Adamses lovingly remember  
Anna,  
miscarried August 29, 2005,  
Benjamin Daniel,  
stillborn February 14, 2006,  
unknown cause,  
Baby Adams,  
miscarried July 20, 2006,  
and Jonathan Daniel,  
stillborn September 8, 2011

### **Jeremy and Lisa Daily,**

of Broken Arrow, Oklahoma,  
along with big sister Sarah,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Savannah Rose,  
born June 5, 2012,  
measuring 7 lb., 9 oz.,  
and 19 inches long.  
The Dailys lovingly remember  
Brooke Sophia,  
stillborn March 11, 2010,  
Vasa Previa

### **Brendon and Meredith McNeil,**

of College Station, Texas,  
along with big sister Lauren,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Avery Jane,  
born June 15, 2012,  
measuring 8 lb.,  
and 21 inches long.  
The McNeils lovingly remember  
Baby Girl McNeil,  
December 31, 2009,  
unknown cause

### **Les and Mandy Hall,**

of Climax, North Carolina,  
along with siblings Moraviah, Anikan,  
Savannah, Tolkien and Josiah,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Faigan Thatcher,  
born September 30, 2011,  
measuring 7 lb., 8 oz.,  
and 20 inches long.  
The Halls lovingly remember  
Drayven McGuire,  
miscarried September 25, 2010,  
at 17.5 weeks,  
unknown cause



## *Montañas Rusas de Dolor*

En el transcurso de las primeras semanas después de la muerte mortinato de mi bebe Jonathan, leí algo a lo largo de las líneas “El dolor es como una montaña rusa” es como si fueras subiendo pulgada a pulgada lentamente hacia arriba y de repente sin mucho aviso te vienes en picada hacia abajo, aparentemente justo al lugar donde comenzaste...aunque algunas personas que están en duelo encuentran esto desalentador, ya que quieren seguir escalando su arduo viaje de dolor y nunca venirse abajo en este proceso, yo personalmente he encontrado que es útil y esperanzador saber que es muy normal tener esos tiempos en los que uno va hacia abajo y al mismo tiempo saber que empezare de nuevo el lento proceso de escalar hacia arriba esta difícil cuesta otra vez.

Días festivos, varios aniversarios y el anuncio de otros quedando embarazadas fueron eventos que normalmente me hicieron caer al precipicio en el aquel momento. Cuando caía, generalmente caía duro! Alrededor de cuatro meses después de la muerte de Jonathan, pensé verdaderamente que había hecho grandes progresos hacia “encontrar nuestro nuevo normal”, pero una serie de eventos causo que me estrellara de cara. Verdaderamente, me asuste. Realmente temía no poder ser la misma otra vez; nunca feliz, nunca alegre, nunca agradable, nunca divertida y nunca contenta de nuevo.

Pronto aprendí que con el tiempo, esas emociones podrían resucitar dentro de mí y que caería y me levantaría, y caería de nuevo y lucharía a escalar hacia arriba una vez más. Con los años, esos altibajos llegaron con menos frecuencia. Los altos eran más altos, igualmente con los bajos. Diecisiete años después, puedo testificar que rara vez me encuentro atraída hacia abajo, pero cuando lo estoy, no es muy bajo y la lucha hacia arriba es rápida.

Cuando yo reflexiono sobre aquellos tiempos vividos en el solitario valle de la tristeza, me doy cuenta de lo mucho que aprendí mientras estuve allí, descubrí que la única forma

en la que yo podría progresar era buscando al Señor, levantando mis ojos hacia las colinas, buscando su ayuda y reconociendo que él continuamente mira por mi (Salmo 121). Yo sabía que cuando yo caía el siempre estaría a mi lado para levantarme y ayudarme a moverme otra vez. Además, tengo una idea de lo que debe haber sentido David en la Biblia sobre una base regular, si estas familiarizado con su vida, tu sabes que parece que las cosas siempre fueron grandes con él (pasando de un humilde pastor a ser Rey de Israel) y absolutamente más allá de lo terrible (corriendo por su vida y la muerte de sus hijos.) Leemos en el libro de salmos las hermosas alabanzas y exclamaciones por ayuda que el Rey David escribió mientras él vivía la vida al máximo en la cima de una montaña o desesperado sin medida en los valles (literalmente). Termino con un fragmento de uno de los escritos de David, se encuentra en Salmo 116:1-7 que yo rogaré por que sea un estímulo a tu herido corazón.

*Amo al Señor porque ha escuchado mis suplicas,  
Porque me ha prestado atención.*

*Toda mi vida le invocare!*

*La muerte me enredo en sus lazos,  
la angustia del sepulcro me alcanzo  
Y me halle preso del miedo y del dolor.  
Entonces invoque el nombre del Señor  
y le regué que me salvara la vida.*

*El Señor es justo y compasivo;*

*Nuestro Dios es todo ternura..*

*El Señor cuida de los sencillos.*

*Cuando yo estaba sin fuerzas, me salvo.*

*Ahora sí, puedo volver a sentirme tranquilo*

*Porque el Señor ha sido bueno conmigo.*

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

## *Allowing Time to Heal*

My name is Rosemarie. I lost my daughter, Bailey, on January 21, 2012. Bailey is the only baby we have ever had, and it was a miracle we even became pregnant. At the beginning, all my feelings made me feel like I was going nuts. Since our loss, it just leaves us with questions and what-ifs. At times I still cry by myself, thinking who she would be like more or what kind of person she would have grown up to be. I admit, I would get upset when I would see a woman complaining about her pregnancy or newborn, but eventually I was able to release those feelings. A parent will never forget the pain of losing a child, but time will heal, even when it seems like everything is crumbling down.

♥ *Rosemarie Espinosa,  
Mommy to Bailey  
M.E.N.D. — Dallas*

## Healthy Grief

In Matthew 5:4, Jesus said, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.” We were initially created for a world without sadness, so we try our best to dodge it whenever possible. Some people don’t mourn because it’s too painful. But mourning is a process that helps us deal with our sadness. It’s healthy, even though it’s difficult. As painful as they may be, emotional wounds need to be exposed to Jesus Christ so He can heal them. He accepts us with our sadness, wants to comfort us and promises He will.

### *Tasks of Grief*

You may have heard someone say that grief has different stages and that we have to walk through each stage to “get past the pain.” Talking about stages of grief can be helpful for understanding our reactions. Stages of grief do not always follow a specific progression. Stages can blend, you can skip back and forth between them, you might jump back to one stage you thought you were done with and then skip the next. There is no specific road map on going through the stages of grief, which is why we refer to them as tasks.

**Task 1 — *Accept the reality of the loss.*** When you first hear about a loss, you may experience shock or denial. It may take a few weeks for your mind to catch up with reality. Difficulty sleeping, a change in appetite or a strong desire to be with others may show up at this point in your life. Even thoughts of our loved one still being alive may be dealt with in this stage.

**Task 2 — *Work through to the pain of grief.*** When the truth finally hits you, you’ll become aware of how this loss will change your life forever. Not only are you likely to feel the deep sense of hurt, but there may be strong anger toward another person, yourself or even God. Recognizing and allowing yourself to feel the pain is an honest reaction that can eventually help you to heal.

**Task 3 — *Accept your world with the loss.*** Once you’ve faced the despair, with time and God’s help, you will increasingly be able to accept the loss and realize that life goes on. Acceptance isn’t about trying to block the loss out of your mind. Instead, it’s about realizing that the loss will change your world, and that you’re still meant to have a whole and healthy life in this new and different world. You’ll have the ability to focus on future living once you’re able to say goodbye with your heart to the things or people you’ve lost.

**Task 4 — *Have a place for your memories, but move on with life.*** Here you are able to take specific, concrete steps to go on with your life in this new world. Memories and sadness remain, but there’s a new strength to move on. In this stage you may be able to look back at how you’ve grown from the entire ordeal, and you may even reach out to others who are hurting.

### *How Can I Grieve?*

So you understand that dealing with your grief and pain is sometimes a long road, and that you may have to walk the same section of it several times before healing starts to happen. There are some specific things you can do while you’re walking that road.

**1. Identify what you’ve lost.** Besides the obvious loss, what are you going to have to live without? Are you losing a friend? Are you losing a source of stability? Are you losing an encourager? Sometimes writing down your losses can allow you to come back later and see how the relationship impacted you.

**2. Touch your pain.** To continue working through your pain, you might write a letter to the person who died. Or you could visit that person’s grave site and speak your heart. Making a scrapbook can also help you sift through tangible reminders of the person. You may experience memories that aren’t enjoyable, but for healing to happen, the hurts and fears connected with it should be felt just as much as the positive memories.

**3. Tell your story.** Although other people may experience the same loss, your story is unique. Feeling the emotions helps, but conveying them to others can bring even deeper healing. Talking to a parent, counselor, minister, youth worker or friend can validate your emotions. Even sharing your experience with a trusted friend or adult in a letter may open the door for loved ones to talk with you about your grief. And once you’ve told your story, you’ll probably need to retell it. You’ll find that each time, your heart will heal a bit more.

**4. Deal with your regrets.** Your mind may race with thoughts and what-ifs, trying to figure out how you could have kept death or loss from happening. Most of the time, our regrets come out of unreasonable expectations of ourselves. We review the event in our minds and come to the inaccurate conclusion that we could have made a difference.

**5. Don’t bury your resentments.** Sometimes the only way to let go of your anger is to give yourself permission to feel it and then let it out in a healthy way.

**6. Take a break.** It takes time to work through loss. You’re not likely to do it in a moment. If grief hit us continually, we probably wouldn’t have the strength to deal with it. Think of it as waves in the ocean. There are moments of calm between the swells, and some of them are smaller than others. There will be times when it feels as though a wave has just smacked you down. The grief will be intense. But then there will be calm times when you can regain your strength and footing until the next experience of grief moves in. Setting aside specific times to write out your feelings can help you identify your grief.

**7. Look forward.** In some ways, you may never get over the pain. The intense times of grief will get farther and farther apart, but you’ll have reoccurring memories that still bring sadness. Although mourning is healthy, at some point you must choose to move ahead. How long should you grieve? That’s a tough question, one that has no definite answer. It really depends on your

experience and personality.

In Lamentations, Jeremiah does just what the title of his writings says — he *laments*: “I have been deprived of peace; I have forgotten what prosperity is. So I say, ‘My splendor is gone and all that I had hoped for from the Lord. I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me.’” Lamentations 3:17-20. A paraphrased and condensed version might read like this: “Life stinks, and God, you made it that way!” But later on, there is a shift in his attitude: “Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail” (Lamentations 3:21-22). Jeremiah opened his heart in gut-wrenching fashion, but in this verse he makes a decision to look for the truth beyond his struggle. And it doesn’t just float into his head. He makes a *choice* to see how the nature of God affects his concern. Sometimes we look at it like a multiple-choice test: *I face the pain, or ...I look at truth beyond the pain*. But it’s not one or the other; we need to do *both*. Two more verses in the third chapter of Lamentations point to both parts of grieving: “For men are not cast off by the Lord forever. Though he brings grief, He will show compassion, so great is his unfailing love” (Lamentations 3:31-32).

*Keep in Mind*

**No two people grieve the same way.**

**Life doesn’t stop for your pain.**

**Old losses may still need to be mourned.**

*The Bottom Line*

No one can make you grieve; you have to decide if you will. Remember, grieving is never an easy process, but God is available to give you His comfort and peace. And in time, you will be able to move forward in His power.

By Glenn Lutchens

Focus on the Family

[www.focusonthefamily.com](http://www.focusonthefamily.com)

Retrieved August 6, 2012

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## Six Months

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*On August 1, 2010, our first child, our daughter, Lydia Grace, was stillborn. I wrote the following piece six months after her stillbirth.*

Six months ago we were holding Lydia in our arms after 16 hours of labor. Six months. It sounds like a long time, but six months isn’t very long. I have read that most people can only tolerate another person grieving for about a month before wanting the grieving person to get back to normal, and sadly I’ve heard this thought reflected in senseless comments by others made toward my husband or me. I want to shake them and tell them to judge only after they’ve buried a child. The remarks never come from someone who has. Grief takes time. Most people seem to forget that we are still grieving her loss while celebrating the pregnancy of another child (*I was pregnant with our second child at that time*).

Six months. Six months of time in which we have endured Lydia’s due date, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s—painful days, to say the least. Six months of grieving, learning to live without the daughter for whom we had prayed and loved. Times in which we have found comfort and support, and times there have seemed to be none.

Reflecting on the past six months, I can identify how my grief has changed. From the first weeks of not being able to sleep at night, waking up in the middle of the night, overcome and consumed with it all to a grief allowing more functioning in the world. Seeing babies in stores (or particularly in church) causes pain, but it has been some time since I have felt the urge to scream and throw things in the store. A grief that is ever present, overwhelming at times, still bringing anger, questions and sadness.

Six months ago I was holding her in my arms. That is the sole reason I resist this passage of time. It takes me further away from that bittersweet moment. Closing my eyes, I am back in that hospital room. My husband, my doctor and one very kind nurse were in the room. A final push, an exhale of relief, and Lydia was placed on my stomach. My first emotion was joy - my first thoughts of admiration, love and amazement at this beautiful baby. I was struck by the perfection of her form. I felt such a possessiveness of her, my daughter, a protectiveness for no one to hurt her little body or dare make a comment.

“*Isn’t she beautiful?*” I remember asking the nurse. She agreed. Lydia looked perfect. Such a perfectly formed, beautifully shaped body. Then why wasn’t she alive? The question still haunts me.

Finding joy in our daughter and experiencing the best closure possible given the circumstances got us through the moment. Six months ago I was able to hold my baby. Indescribable sorrow, profound loss, feelings that this was more than I could bear engulfed me. Yet those precious moments with her were ones I wish had been prolonged, ones I wish I could experience again. I hold on to the hope that I will meet my daughter again in heaven.

♥ Rachel Curtis,  
Mommy to Lydia Grace  
M.E.N.D. — Dallas

M.E.N.D. Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death  
 P.O. Box 631566, Irving, TX 75063  
 USA  
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*“... that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God” (2 Corinthians 1:4)*

**M.E.N.D. Fundraisers** *As a non-profit organization, M.E.N.D. is funded solely by private donations and fundraisers. Any assistance you can give us by participating in any or all of these fundraisers is greatly appreciated.*

- **Kroger grocery stores** donate a percentage of all purchases of those shoppers in Texas and Louisiana who have their Kroger Plus Card linked to M.E.N.D. To link your card, contact Rebekah (rebekah@mend.org) 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](mailto:glmartin@attg.net).
- M.E.N.D. can now earn funds through **i.think inc.**, an online marketing research firm. You can help by signing up as a survey panel member and designating us as the recipient of your fee. Just go to the Web site at <http://www.ithink.inc.com> and choose “Sign up to become an i.think inc. panel member.” Fill out the sign-up survey. Under the “Funds for Charity” section, select M.E.N.D. from the list of names.
- **IBM** employees may now make charitable donations to M.E.N.D. through automatic payroll deductions. Choose Charity Code 0M562 from the *IBM Employee/Retiree Approved Charity List*.
- **GoodSearch.com** is a search engine that donates half its revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. Powered by Yahoo!, it is used like any other search engine. To earn money for M.E.N.D. using Goodsearch.com, go to [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com) and designate M.E.N.D. as your charity of choice.
- **Ebay** has a charitable giving program that can benefit M.E.N.D. If you sell items on Ebay and would like to designate a percentage of your revenue to M.E.N.D. visit [www.missionfish.org](http://www.missionfish.org) to find out how.
- **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.



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