



# M. E. N. D.

Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death

## Guilt in Grief

Sad, lonely, cheated, angry, betrayed, ashamed, embarrassed, afraid, anxious, panicked ... This is just a short list of emotions we experience while grieving the death of our baby. I believe the one emotion we as moms fight the most is guilt. In our grief, we somehow manage to convince ourselves that the death of our baby was our fault. Most of the time no one makes us feel guilty. We're told a hundred times, "It wasn't your fault." But we tell ourselves that we could have, and should have, done something differently.

In my losses, Jonathan was stillborn at 29 1/2 weeks, due to a cord accident while I was on bed rest in the hospital. Though I was given round-the-clock care by a very adequate nursing staff, I made myself believe that my being on bed rest was the very cause of Jonathan becoming entangled in his cord. I decided that because I was not up and around, he was able to wrap himself up in the cord. I thought that not being sedentary would have allowed him to move around enough to untangle himself. Additionally, I felt guilty that I had let everyone down - or so it seemed to me. I felt responsible for the immense sadness that loomed over our household and over extended family for months. I felt (and honestly still have to fight at times) the guilty sorrow I feel for not being able to provide my husband with more living children and our now adult son with siblings.

Six years after Jonathan's stillbirth, I became pregnant a third time. At my 10-week check-up, I sadly discovered our little baby had died. The sonogram revealed our tiny baby no longer had a heartbeat and indicated that perhaps the baby died at 8 weeks, 6 days (or possibly died a few days later but had deteriorated to the size of 8 weeks, 6 days). If the baby did indeed die on the day the sonogram indicated, that day coincidentally fell on the same day as our annual M.E.N.D. Christmas Candlelight

Ceremony. The morning of the ceremony, I was at our storage unit helping unload our Christmas decorations and transporting them to the church to the awaiting committee. Our storage unit was not on the first floor, and the elevator happened to be broken that day. Although I did not carry heavy boxes up and down stairs, I did sit down and push one super heavy box with my feet across the floor. In my heart, do I think that's what caused my little baby's death? No, I really don't. However, deep down, I've had to fight not feeling guilty that I did something no pregnant woman should do. And I had to deal with emotions of seemingly, once again, letting everyone down with yet another huge disappointment.

We can know in our hearts and in our heads that we were not the cause of our baby's death, but, boy is that emotion of guilt hard to fight! And just when we think we've conquered that ugly feeling, it creeps back in during the most unsuspecting times. So how do we overcome it once and for all? I honestly don't know that we ever overcome it 100%, but certainly over the years that feeling of guilt diminishes. Talking it out with fellow grieving parents at a support group or on one of our Facebook pages is a huge help. Even openly admitting feeling guilty to our husbands, family and close friends is beneficial. And finally, cry it out to the Lord. As a Christian, I know that guilt is not from Him. Conviction is, but that's not what we're talking about. Ugly, self-destructing guilt is definitely not something God puts on us. So, though it is a normal emotion while grieving, fight it. Overcome it, and just believe what everyone around you is saying: "It is not your fault."

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

*Nota Español:* El artículo de Rebekah Mitchell aparece en cada emisión de nuestro boletín para la audiencia latina.

Para ver el artículo de este mes en español, por favor vea la página número 19.

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 at [www.mend.org](http://www.mend.org).

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

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

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

First Candle/SIDS Alliance

International Stillbirth Alliance

## The Heart of the Leader

The day we found out we were pregnant with our second child was the first time I bought a pregnancy test from a grocery store. We announced our miracle pregnancy to our friends and family immediately. We were so excited that our son was going to have a sibling after all. Our first child had taken years to conceive. During that process of having surgeries, painful procedures and fertility treatments, two of Dallas's "Top Docs" came up with six diagnoses of why I couldn't get pregnant. And yet we did. We had the joy of knowing about little Morgan's life from February 13-March 28, 2006.

Nobel and I attended our first meeting right after our miscarriage. Of course, like many couples say, he was resistant to attending the first meeting. I know it sounds funny now if you know him. He wears his M.E.N.D. shirt everywhere. He enjoys serving on the committees. He attended meetings with me for a full year. It doesn't work out for everyone to do it that way, but the Lord knew we needed it after infertility and loss, and Nobel's ministry was not giving us much time together back then. Now we get to serve together on the Walk and Christmas committees. The Lord has taken our sorrow, in His time, and turned it into joy.

It's hard to say what would have been for our family, but something very special happened when Rebekah, Brandee and I were on the trip to Seattle, to help open up their chapter of M.E.N.D. We were on the ferry, and I was on the phone back home to Nobel and our son, Isaac. Nobel said they had been talking and Isaac was ready, when I got home, to ask Jesus into his heart. I made the decision right then that we could do it over the phone. Nobel led Isaac in the sinner's prayer, asking for forgiveness for his sin and putting Jesus first in his life. I felt so blessed to be able to serve with these wonderful ladies in Seattle, but to think that my own family was going to receive such a blessing on top of that was truly amazing.

I am thankful for the opportunity to serve and pray for you all. The Lord always hears us. So often I listen to your testimonies of how the Lord has used your children to touch the lives of others. I am so blessed to be getting to know you on Facebook and at M.E.N.D. events!

♥ Paula Schear,

Mommy to Morgan

M.E.N.D.—Advisory Board



# M.E.N.D. Updates

**Thank you to Max!**

A big *Thank You!* to Max Friz for the redesign of our website. We have a beautiful new look that is adaptable to any web browsing device. The new look and feel of the website is very user-friendly, providing an easy place to find comfort during a time of frustration and hurt. To see Max's wonderful new website, visit [www.mend.org](http://www.mend.org). Thank you, Max, for all your hard work!

**M.E.N.D. selected for Charitable Campaigns!**

M.E.N.D. will participate again this year in the State Employee Charitable Campaign (SECC) and the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). Employees in Texas enjoy the benefit of giving to many of their favorite charities through annual workplace giving campaigns, which feature the convenience of payroll deduction. To give through the SECC, our **SECC** number is **283524**. To give through the CFC, our **CFC** number is **97896**. Please contact your employer's local campaign manager for questions on how to give.



**Mary Kay Makeover Contest**

And for all those who diligently voted in the Mary Kay Makeover Contest:  
 "Hi Friends - Exciting news!!! We did it!! Thanks to all of those who voted for me, M.E.N.D. will receive \$5,000 from Mary Kay. They surprised me a few weeks ago at work and caught my reaction and the excitement on camera. It was truly an unbelievable experience. THANK YOU FOR VOTING!!!! Yea M.E.N.D. !!!" - Amber Zuckerman, Board of Directors

Amber's Story:  
 One Woman Can Be STRENGTHENED:

When our son was stillborn in 2007, my strength was destroyed. I searched everywhere for purpose and inspiration to live again. After attending an infant loss support group (my choice charity), my strength was slowly renewed. When people look at me, I want them to be inspired by my passion, faith, strength and the beauty that has come from our ashes.



Thank you to all those who voted for our M.E.N.D. participants in the Mary Kay Makeover Contest. Your outpouring of support was greatly appreciated.

*November/December Topic*  
 Holiday Joy  
 Deadline: September 30, 2013

*January/February Topic*  
 Going Back to Work  
 Deadline: November 30, 2013

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).

<u>Heavenly Birthday</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
January/February	November 31
March/April	January 31
May/June	March 31
July/August	May 31
September/October	July 31
November/December	September 31



# Birthday Tributes

## Happy 3<sup>rd</sup> Birthday, Michael and Jake!

Three years...WOW! Having your little brother Kyle here makes us think about you both so much! And he looks like a combo of both of you. Allie now understands so much more about your being in heaven, and she REALLY misses you and asks lots of questions! We love you little guys so much and miss you terribly! Your short lives here will always be a blessing to us!

*Michael and Jake Klubnik*  
*September 7, 2010*  
*Infection and preterm labor*  
*Parents: Jon and Tiffany Klubnik*  
*Siblings: Allie, Keegan and Kyle*



## Happy 6<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Brandon Isaiah!

Missing you every day more than anyone will ever know. We love you, until we meet again...

Love you always,  
 Mommy and Lil Brother Ethan Alfaro

*Brandon Isaiah Alfaro*  
*October 19, 2007-February 7, 2008*  
*Spinal Muscular Atrophy*  
*Mommy: Jennifer Alfaro*  
*Little brother: Ethan*



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

It has been five years without you in my arms. I can now say your name and smile through the pain of missing you with everything that I am. Your life here was short, but you live forever in my heart. I love you and long for the day I will be with you once more. Yet until that day I will feel you in every soft breeze, gentle rain and tear that slides down my cheek. Happy birthday, my sweet princess.

*Bethanni Connor*  
*Miscarried October 25, 2008*  
*Mommy: Rebekah Connor*



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

Happy birthday in heaven.  
 You are loved and missed so greatly.

*Raymond Warren Rich*  
*September 21-26, 2011*  
*Unknown cause*  
*Parents: Bob and Camillia Rich*  
*Siblings: Makayla, Oletha, Delaina and Christian*



## Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> Birthday, Baby Steelman!

Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday in heaven, Baby Steelman! You gave us hope when we had none. We love you and miss you so much.

Until we are together again,  
 Mama and Daddy

*Baby Steelman*  
*Miscarried October 12, 2011, at 16 weeks*  
*Unknown cause*  
*Also remembering*  
*Rebel Boone Steelman*  
*Stillborn December 11, 2012*  
*Parents: Matt and Jenny Steelman*



## Happy 6<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Jayden!

Happy 6<sup>th</sup> birthday, sweetheart! Look who's turning 6! This would have been your first year of school, and I would have been excited to have you all dressed up, matching from head to toe. Enjoy your heavenly birthday, sweetie! I still miss you so much.

Rest in love,  
 Mommie and your little sister, Amiyah

*Jayden Breonna Jenkins*  
*September 25, 2007*  
*Toxemia*  
*Mommie: Shanae Jenkins*  
*Little sister: Amiyah*



## Happy 4<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Sereana Joy!

When Mommy and Daddy's hearts come together, the whole you is seen. Beautiful you! You are the present we celebrate. You are the gift! Sereana, you are wrapped up in the heart of both your parents forever. May the gift of you continue to be unwrapped in our lives here on earth. We celebrate wonderful, joyous you. All this ... and all along ... Abba knows the whole you, and the angels sing. Sereana—our girl! Sereana—joyfully dance, sing, laugh, twirl! I love you endlessly and forever, so very much, my first born baby girl!

Love,  
 Na, Ta, Noela and Talei

*Sereana Joy Ratulele*  
*Stillborn September 9, 2009*  
*Unknown cause*  
*Parents: Semi and Laura Ratulele*  
*Siblings: Noela Esiteri and Talei Jewel*



**Happy 11<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Aiden!**

Happy birthday, Aiden! We miss you so much!

*Aiden Xavier Sohn  
October 13, 2002  
H.E.L.L.P syndrome  
Also remembering*

*Baby Hope  
Miscarried May 2003*

*Baby Whisper  
Miscarried October 2003  
Parents: Doug and Angelique Sohn  
Siblings: Joshua, Sebastian and Benjamin*

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

It's hard to believe it has already been two years, but we love and miss you more with each passing year. My love for you will never fade, sweet boy.

Love always,  
Mommy and Daddy

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

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

My sweet baby boy Liam, Mommy and Daddy miss you every day, and we miss what could have been. You would be 2 years old now, and we would have a house full of three little boys. Your big brother Ethan knows who you are and kisses your picture. You are now a big brother yourself! We will always remember, honor, celebrate, miss and love you. We love you as if you had lived for years! Happy birthday, sweet baby Liam.

*Liam Nathaniel Perez  
Stillborn September 2, 2011  
Cord accident  
Parents: Ricky and Brandy Perez  
Siblings: Ethan and Dylan*

**Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> Birthday, Mercy Elizabeth!**

Oh, our sweet Mercy Elizabeth! Happy heavenly 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday! We love you more than words can describe. We are gathering a few friends to help celebrate you and your special day. The Mercy Run is on. May you hear all our feet pitter-pattering in honor of you!

Hugs and Kisses,  
Mommy and Daddy, Bubba and Sissy

*Mercy Elizabeth Whitfield  
September 8-21, 2011  
Trisomy 13  
Parents: Rodney Whitfield and Allison D'Auteuil  
Sisters: Grace and Justice*

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

It's been three years since God called you home. Seems so unreal that you have been gone for that long. The pain continues to feel fresh in my heart; not a day goes by that I don't think of you or talk about you. You will forever live within me. Even if you're not physically here, you continue to change our lives every day. Everything we do is for you; we want you to sit in heaven and tell your angel friends, "Look that's my mom, daddy and my big brother." I know you're safe from all harm and happy, because you're in God's kingdom. Cannot wait to see you again. Happy third birthday!

Love,  
Mom, Dad and Devin

*Nathaniel Cervantes  
October 30-November 16, 2010  
NEC  
Parents: Juan and Leydy Cervantes  
Brother: Devin*

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

Dear little Blessing, happy third heavenly birthday! Mommy and Daddy miss you, darling. We wonder about you still, and our hearts are sad because we wish you were here with us. But we know you are joyful with Jesus, the angels, Grandmother and Jeffy. Daddy put roses on your wee grave, so I know that you touch his heart still. Your baby brother was born healthy, and your big bro puts dandelions on your grave to make it pretty. We don't forget you ever, precious baby. You are our Blessing, and we love you. Hugs and kisses.

*Blessing Names  
Miscarried September 10, 2010  
Parents: Brad and Rachel Names  
Siblings: Jonathan and Noah*

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

It's so hard to believe you have been gone a year. Not a day goes by that we don't speak of you, think of you and miss you dearly. We remember sweet memories like the way you loved Jolly Ranchers and already sucked your thumb, just like your big sis. You are always in our hearts and minds. Although we wish you were here with us, it's so comforting to know you are surrounded by the Lord and that His angels sing you lullabies, and that you are with loving family that has gone before you. Until we see you again, our sweet baby boy...

*Gunnar Reid Campbell Kirk  
October 23, 2012  
HELLP Syndrome and severe maternal preeclampsia  
Parents: Blake and Alizen Kirk  
Siblings: Vanessa, Valerie and Gage*



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

My beautiful angel, you're 2 years old now. By now you should get your terrible 2s! You are always missed by your father and me. Your big brother misses you so much. Your baby sister will learn later on that she has her older brother in heaven looking down at her and watching her every move. You helped me get through this pregnancy without a problem and protected her until she arrived. I love you so much! Give kisses to Grandpa from all of us!

*Adrian Michael Guevara*

*October 11, 2011*

*Polycystic kidney disease*

*Parents: Miguel Guevara and Crystal Duran*

*Siblings: Aiden and Valeria*

**Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Travis!****Happy 3<sup>rd</sup> Birthday, Sienna!**

We love you, our little ones.

Mommy and Daddy

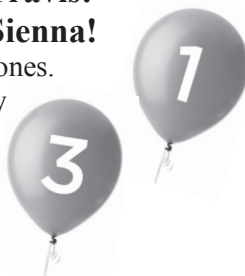
*Travis Glen Gastineau*

*Miscarried October 2, 2012*

*Sienna Gastineau*

*Miscarried September 18, 2010*

*Parents: Brian Gastineau and Kelly Hinckley*

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

"Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage." -Lao Tzu

My sweet angel girl, it's been two years and the pain of losing you isn't any easier. Though you may not be with me physically, you live in my heart forever. Not a day goes by that I don't think of you and long for the life we were going to have. Happy second birthday, my love.

Loving you until I breathe no more.

Mommy

*Kelinda Raye Wright*

*October 13, 2011*

*Unknown cause*

*Mommy: Kera Robinson*

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

Sweet Liza, you are loved and missed so very much.

We hold you in our hearts.

Mommy, Daddy and big sister Posie

*Liza Rose Schroeder*

*September 30—October 10, 2012*

*Suspected cord accident*

*Parents: Chad and Kara Schroeder*

*Big Sister: Posie June*

**Happy 11<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Laiken!**

Our little Laiken, how can it be that it has been 11 whole years since you were here? You were such a beautiful gift. You had the sweetest lips, the tiniest fingers and toes, and the lightest bit of peach fuzz for hair. We kissed you dozens of times, but it will never be enough. We miss you and think of you always, baby girl.

We wish you a happy 11<sup>th</sup> heavenly birthday, sweet princess. We love you more and more each day. Until we can hold you again, we send you all our love,

Love,

Mommy, Daddy, Arianna, Jarod, Gavin and Alyvia

*Laiken Riley Madison Kale*

*September 15, 2002*

*HELLP, severe prematurity,*

*Antiphospholipid Syndrome*

*Parents: Rick and Alysha Kale*

*Siblings: Arianna, Jarod, Gavin and Alyvia*

**Happy 3<sup>rd</sup> Birthday, Cambri Jade!**

Cambri Jade, we love you, baby girl! We can't believe it's been three years without you; it seems like yesterday we held you in our arms. Not a day goes by that we don't think about you. Have a happy heavenly birthday with all of the other baby angels and family. Until we hold you in our arms again, fly high, baby girl.

We love you with all our hearts,

Daddy, Mommy, Clara Paige and Chandler Grace

*Cambri Jade Jenkins*

*September 8, 2010*

*Placental abruption*

*Parents: Jeff and April Jenkins*

*Sisters: Clara Paige and Chandler Grace*

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

Happy birthday, Miranda Panda! We love you and miss you very much. You are always in our thoughts and will be forever in our hearts. We can't wait to hold you again.

*Miranda Micaela Medrano*

*October 1, 2008*

*Preterm*

*Parents: Jose and Marvelia Medrano*

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

"Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced." - George Baldwin

You will never be forgotten. We love you, our angel, now and always.

*Zoe LaRose Storms*

*Stillborn October 27, 2012*

*Parents: Josh Storms and Madison Moore*



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

Dear Samuel, we can't believe it's been seven years since we held you in our arms. You were so precious, so perfectly formed. Our very first sweet boy. Now, you would probably be into snakes, Legos and superheroes. We wish we could play catch with you, go on bug hunts and have stick fights. Your brothers and sister miss you so much. We can't wait to meet you again in heaven one day soon. We love you so much, our sweet little Samuel. Happy heavenly birthday!

*Samuel James Nienhuis*

*October 14, 2006*

*Factor V Leiden, MTHFR*

*Parents: Seth and Marcie Nienhuis*

*Siblings: Landon, Olivia and James*

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

I can't believe it's been three years since I held you in my arms. I imagine what you would look like now ... wavy auburn hair with flecks of gold, dark chocolate brown eyes with eyelashes that could reach the moon, and a sprinkling of freckles across your nose and cheeks. You are loved and missed so much by your family. Happy birthday, sweet baby girl. You are always loved!

Love,

Mommy, Daddy, Kegan, Kastle and Kanon

*Ginger Sandoval*

*September 25, 2010*

*Renal anomalies*

*Parents: Keith and Katherine Sandoval*

*Siblings: Kegan, Kastle and Kanon*

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

Happy 5<sup>th</sup> birthday and angelversary. We love you and miss you so very much. Until we meet again...

Love,

Mommy and Daddy

*Isabella Alorah Baca-Lopez*

*July 11, 2008*

*Interuterine distress*

*Also remembering*

*Baby Baca-Lopez*

*Miscarried April 17, 2009*

*Parents: Jose E. Lopez, Jr. and Delores Baca*

**Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Baby Finley!**

Mommy, Daddy and your older sisters miss and love you!

*Baby Finley*

*Miscarried October 10, 2012*

*Parents: Summer Browning and Jame Finley*

*Siblings: Victoria Finley and Mindy Burgett*

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

Always in our heart, miss you every day.

You are our angel girl.

Love you,

Mommy, Daddy and sisters

*Catelyn Ryan Cornell*

*October 5-12, 2008*

*Premature lungs born at 26 weeks (Twin B)*

*Parents: Dewayne and Alesia Cornell*

*Sisters: Brookelyn Marie (identical Twin A)*

*and Madelyn Kay*

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

To my little angel I never got to meet, you changed my life forever. For such a tiny little person, you've got the biggest part in my heart. Mommy loves you forever—Until we meet officially!

Love always,

Mommy

*Neaveh Renee Allen*

*Miscarried September 8, 2012*

*Mommy: Brittany Allen*

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

Happy birthday, Little One! How amazing to think that it has been five years since you entered our lives and quietly slipped away to rest in heaven. We miss you every day and wish we could be together to celebrate your birthday. Your little brother, Wyatt, talks about you often. He tells us he can see his angels and when we asks the names of his angels, he smiles big and says "Gracie and Emma." Look for the balloons we will send you on your birthday and know we are thinking of our little angel.

We love you more than you know

With all our hearts

Forever and ever,

Daddy, Momma, and Wyatt

*Emma Grace Dorr*

*October 16, 2008*

*Prematurity due to incompetent cervix*

*Parents: Dustin and Janine Dorr*

*Brother: Wyatt*

**Happy 14<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Ashley!**

Happy birthday, sweet angel. We miss you here but know you are having the best of birthdays in heaven. Hugs and kisses on your 14<sup>th</sup> birthday!

*Ashley Renee Dedear*

*October 29-November 1, 1999*

*Parents: Tim and Cindy Dedear*

*Sisters: Laura (Ashley's twin) and Katherine*



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

Happy birthday, our precious angel Londyn. It is hard to believe that you would be 3 years old. We miss you every day and tell your sister all about you and the short time we were able to spend with you. Please know that you will never be forgotten, and until we meet again, we love you!

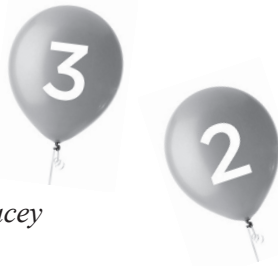
Love,  
Mommy, Daddy and Ashtyn

*Londyn Schmitter*  
*August 24, 2010*  
*Unknown cause*  
*Parents: Aric and Amber Schmitter*  
*Sister: Ashtyn*

**Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> Birthday, Madelyn!  
Happy 3<sup>rd</sup> Birthday, William!**

Madelyn and William are deeply missed by their family. They are in heaven with our precious Lord and Savior! Maddie and William are keeping a close watch on their mommy!

*Madelyn Stacey*  
*Miscarried September 2011*  
*William Stacey*  
*Miscarried October 2010*  
*Parents: Shawn and Kristina Stacey*  
*Half-Sister: Brylenn*

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

You blessed us in every way possible that we could never be able to thank you enough. "God touched you and you slept." Your love of 43 days is enough to suffice a lifetime. Happy second birthday, Pumpkinlator. We love and miss you dearly.

Love,  
Your Family

*Genevieve Jane Weaver*  
*October 24—December 5, 2011*  
*Undetermined/SIDS*  
*Parents: James Weaver and Maria Reyes*

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

Micah, Mommy and Daddy love you and miss you so much. We think about you every day and wait for the day that we get to hold you in our arms. Until that day you will remain in our hearts.

Love you always,  
Mommy and Daddy

*Micah Rashad Walker*  
*October 15, 2011*  
*Ectopic pregnancy*  
*Parents: Eric Walker and Denise Steels*

**Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> Birthday,  
Jackson, Lindsay and Brooklyn!**

There's not a day that goes by that we don't think of you or wish you were here. We look forward to the days we're all together again as a family. Until then we'll carry you in our hearts! We love you and miss you!

Love always,  
Mommy, Daddy and Brenna

*Jackson, Lindsay and Brooklyn Thompkinson*  
*September 10, 2011*  
*Molar pregnancy/premature birth*  
*Parents: Bryan and Nikki Thompkinson*  
*Sister: Brenna*

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

It has been a long road we have walked in the three years since you left us. You are missed with every breath we take. You are a big brother now; your little brother is named after you. You will always be our beautiful angel. I know you watch over us each passing day. I'm sure your party in heaven is wonderful and greater than any party here on earth. I love you to heaven and back, my sweet boy. Mommy and Daddy wish you a happy heavenly birthday! Krystal and Charles say "Happy birthday, brother, we miss you." Until we meet again, hugs and kisses to my angel.

*William Charles Dillard*  
*October 19, 2010*  
*Micro preemie*  
*Parents: Chris and Amanda Dillard*  
*Siblings: Krystal and Charles*

**Happy 6<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Ethan!**

We love you so much and miss you every day.

Love,  
Mom, Dad, Thomas and Jakob

*Ethan Kane Spurrier*  
*September 5, 2007*  
*Umbilical cord accident*  
*Parents: Bruce and Sandra Spurrier*  
*Brother: Thomas and Jakob*

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

My Dearest Calla Lily Ladybug,  
Your life forever changed mine.  
You will never be forgotten.

Love,  
Mommie

*Cremsyn Cross Castille*  
*September 2, 2012*  
*Parents: Chavalin Cross and Rodney Castille*





## My Story

I woke up one morning feeling like there was a third person in the room, though only my husband and I were there. I felt another presence. Present. Before Mike could wake up, I'd already run to the grocery and back ... and had received a positive result on a pregnancy test. I woke him up waving the strange thing in front of his face! We were scared, overjoyed and scared some more. I made an appointment for the Friday of my ninth week.

At 10:00 a.m., July 1, 2010, the midwife did the ultrasound, and she couldn't find the heartbeat. She measured the sweet body, and we learned the baby stopped growing at seven weeks. I felt like the room collapsed on us. We spent the weekend in utter shock.

I never really considered pregnancy loss as an option. What I couldn't get over the most was that I had no idea the baby wasn't alive those two weeks between when the heart stopped and we learned that it had stopped. I felt like my body tricked me, and that I no longer knew myself. Or my body. Or my husband. Or my faith. Was it all just some cruel joke?!

I spent the next several months being told that "it was probably for the best," that "God is in control" and that "you'll have another one!" I nodded in agreement on the outside. But in my heart, I was in a dark, cold, shameful closet. I was angry, hurt. I didn't know how to cry out to God, other than scream, "Why??!"

At exactly one year later, we became pregnant again. This time I was serious. I planned to do everything in my power to keep THIS baby. Mike and I would have this child. At five weeks I started spotting. I went back to the same group of midwives every week because I was bleeding off and on, and each time we wanted to make sure I wasn't losing the baby. The way it was explained to me, when this baby implanted into my uterus he went a little too far into the lining, which created a wound that never healed. So with every move he or I made, more blood came out of the wound. Basically, each time I went in, they would measure the baby and the bleed. And each time, BOTH were growing.

At 19 weeks, I was scheduled to see a high risk specialist to find out the gender. As Mike and I watched the ultrasound tech fidget, tell us the doctor would be in any moment, and try to make awkward small talk with us, I knew something was wrong. I remember bursting into tears as Mike tried to console me. The doctor came in, and she confirmed that I had no amniotic fluid in my womb. There were no life-giving nutrients for our child to grow and flourish. Once again my body had betrayed me. As I had been bleeding, the amniotic fluid leaked, and I had no idea.

The ride home from that appointment was devastating. I think we had been in a state of shock for the 19 weeks leading up to that moment, and now the devastating rains came pouring down.

The hardest part of this particular circumstance was that our child still had a heart beat. He was alive. But he could not live outside the womb. And he could not live inside the womb. I had no amniotic fluid to sustain him. We prayed for miracle of miracles, that the Lord would provide that fluid before our next appointment. It didn't happen.

I delivered the most handsome, beautiful son on September 1, 2011. Our parents, siblings, friends and two pastors from our church came to the hospital that evening. They held our son, gazing at him, this warrior prince who was loved and adored. We had a memorial service for him that night, and my sister took a million pictures because I never wanted to forget my son.

For 30 days straight, each time I took a shower, I played a CD by the band Selah, and the first song that came on was the prayer I sang through my tears, "Into my heart, into my heart. Come into my heart, Lord Jesus. Come in today, come in to stay. Come into my heart, Lord Jesus."

In the month following that evening, I read more than 15 books, wrote email updates to our biggest cheerleaders, I cried, we invited everyone to our home so they could see the photos of him and be with us in our loss. Our son. Ah... He was beautiful.

We cried a lot. We experienced such pain in the depths of our souls that it physically hurt. We visited a life group on the week before Thanksgiving and started attending it. I remember that the two pastors who supported us at the hospital were and are still members of our life group. We shared our story with them, and through my reading, praying, crying, sharing and just letting myself feel this way, one day I heard the birds chirping again.

It just happened. The birds chirped, they flew from tree to tree, and I started taking notice of all the birds in the air.

And I recalled the truth, that our God cares for the birds in the air. And that if he cares for and tends to all of their needs, that He will do the same for me.

## The Cast of *Return to Zero*

M.E.N.D. is a proud sponsor of the new movie, *Return to Zero*. This movie captures the lives of a successful couple preparing for the arrival of their new baby, only to find out weeks before the due date that the baby has died in the womb and will be stillborn. The film focuses on the heartache and many issues that follow after the loss of a child.

This film will be released in March 2014. M.E.N.D. is encouraging our members, family and friends to support this movie when it comes to theaters, and to draw as many as possible to a showing of this film.

To learn more about this film, please visit [www.returntozeromovie.com](http://www.returntozeromovie.com). Many states have also created Facebook pages in anticipation of the release of this film, and links can be found at the Return to Zero website.



### **Minnie Driver—Lead role as Maggie Royal**

Best known for her Oscar-nominated performance as Skylar in *Good Will Hunting* and also nominated for an Emmy and Golden Globe for her work as Dahlia Malloy/Cherien Rich in the television series *The Riches*

### **Paul Adelstein—Starring role as Aaron Royal**

Best known for his role as Dr. Cooper (Coop) in *Private Practice* and Paul Kellerman in *Prison Break*. Also played supporting roles in *Intolerable Cruelty* and *Memoirs of a Geisha*

Also the lead singer of Doris and just released their second album called *All the Details*



### **Alfred Molina—Robert Royal, father of Aaron Royal**

Nominated over 30 times for performances both on stage and screen, including on screen as “Doc Oc” in *Spiderman 2*, “Diego Rivera” in *Frida* and on stage in *Art* and *Fiddler on the Roof*.

His comment on the script of *Return to Zero*: “Loved the script, Sean! Really moving and powerful. It’s an amazing story, deeply touching and truly universal”



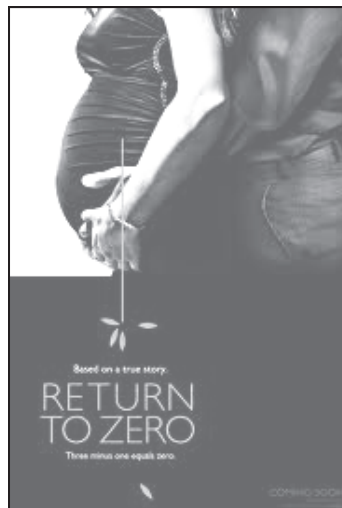
### **Connie Nielson— Dr Claire Holden**

Famous for her role opposite Russell Crowe in *Gladiator*



### **Kathy Baker— Kathleen, mother to Maggie Royal**

Best known for her role as the small-town doctor on *Picket Fences*



### **Andrea Anders— Maggie’s friend Trish**

Famous for roles in *Joey*, *Better Off Ted* and *The Class*

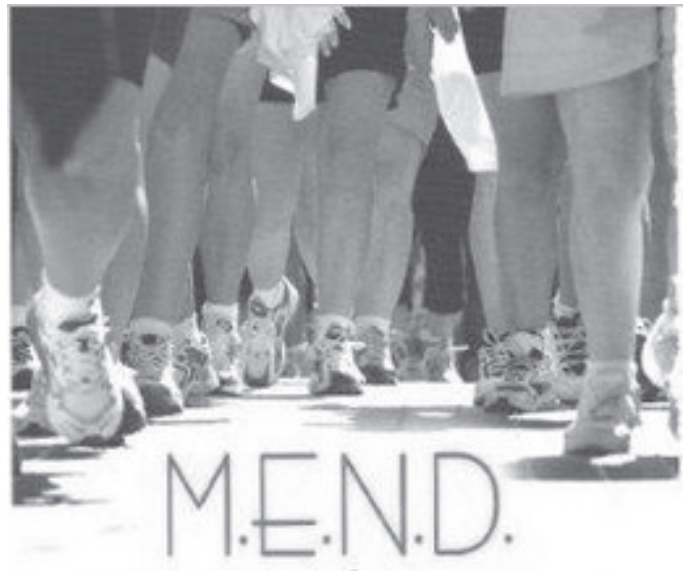


### **Sarah Jones— Aaron’s coworker, Dana**

Best known for roles in *Vegas*, *Sons of Anarchy*, *Ugly Betty* and *House*

# Walk to Remember

In 1988, President Ronald Reagan declared October as Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness month. M.E.N.D. hosts a Walk to Remember to provide a special time for family and friends to remember their little ones and to publicly acknowledge their child. Dallas and Houston Walk to Remember ceremonies will be held on **Saturday, October 5, 2013**. Visit [www.mend.org](http://www.mend.org) for more information, FAQ, to order Walk t-shirts, memory signs (Dallas Walk only) and to register your family to attend. Online registration will be available until midnight, October 2, 2013.



M.E.N.D.—Dallas  
*17<sup>th</sup> Annual*  
 Walk to Remember

**October 5, 2013 - 1:00 PM**  
 Calvary Church  
 4401 N. Highway 161  
 (at Walnut Hill) in Irving  
 Place orders, register or read FAQ at  
[www.mend.org](http://www.mend.org)  
 Deadlines:  
 T-shirts: September 9, 2013  
 Memory Signs: September 21, 2013  
 Registration: October 2, 2013

M.E.N.D.—Houston  
*8<sup>th</sup> Annual*  
 Walk to Remember

**October 5, 2013 - 2:00 PM**  
 Bammel Road Church of Christ  
 2700 FM 1960 West  
 Houston, Texas 77068  
 register, order t-shirts or read FAQ at  
[www.mend.org](http://www.mend.org)  
 by midnight, October 2, 2013

For other Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness month activities for other chapters, please see page 16 for dates and details.



## theMERCYrun5K and 1 Mile Fun Run

**When:** Saturday, September 21, 2013

**Where:** Andy Brown East Park  
 260 East Parkway Blvd Coppell, TX 75019

**Event Schedule:**

- 6:45 am - 5K and 1 Mile Fun Run registration/packet pickup Opens
- 7:30 am - Pack Pick Up Closes
- 7:30 am - Pre Race Announcement/ Pep Talk
- 7:45 am - 1 Mile Fun Run starts
- 8:10 am - 5K run starts
- 8:45 am - Post Race Cupcake Celebration



Like us on Facebook  
 To register go to: [teammercy.org](http://teammercy.org)

For more info contact:  
[Mercy5Kinfo@gmail.com](mailto:Mercy5Kinfo@gmail.com)



## As If Sadness Wasn't Enough - Then There Was the Guilt

Guilt in grief – I was not prepared for the amount of guilt I would struggle with after the stillbirth of my son, James. First it was the guilt that I did something wrong during pregnancy – maybe eating something wrong or rolling out of bed in the same direction every morning had caused him to die. This particular guilt didn't last very long; it moved on quickly. As my grief began to include anger toward anyone who was pregnant or had their baby born alive, there was extreme guilt in those feelings. How could I have so much anger toward people who got to have their happiness while I got pain and despair? Shouldn't I feel happy for them instead? This was the guilt that I struggled with for years. As I healed, I realized that it was never about hating them for being happy; it was just easier to feel anger instead of sadness – I was carrying around enough sadness and just couldn't take anymore.

Then along came the intense guilt that I was a horrible person and was being punished for something I had done in life, but I had no idea what that awful thing was I had done. Oh, this guilt haunted me for years. A friend I recently met told me that my life reminded her of the Bible story about the two men who built their homes, one on the sand and one on the rocks. Both houses were subjected to the same storms. The foundations of the homes did not stop the rain from falling – just in the same way that my foundation in faith would not protect me from painful things happening to me in this life – but the foundation of both the house on the rocks and my own faith allowed them to survive. This discussion happened about seven and a half years after my son was stillborn,

and at this moment, the guilt of having “done“ something to cause this pain finally drained out of me.

Another layer of guilt was feeling that it was my fault that my husband couldn't have a baby at home. This struck me to my soul. Here was my match in life, the person who was my best friend, the love of my heart, the father of my child. He was grieving this intense loss of our son, and it was my fault. I felt as if I had caused this. He might never have living children because of me – because of my poor egg quality – it felt like this was all my fault. I told my husband he could leave and go have a family with someone else, that I wasn't sure it would happen for us and that I wanted at least one of us to find happiness that included a baby at home. He told me that leaving was not at option; this was our loss and our life and our future – together. That guilt left me quickly after we talked.

I never expected any of this painful grief journey to include guilt. In fact, most of this grief journey has not been anything I anticipated. Seven and a half years after our son was stillborn, I did not imagine still having tough moments or for happy pregnant women to tug at my heart. But I am here, still surviving, still making it through – only now nearly all of the guilt has gone away. It has only been through repairing my relationship with God and listening to his Word that my heart has been able to let the guilt go and allow myself to continue to heal.

♥ Jennifer Forner,  
Mommy to James

M.E.N.D.—Dallas/Fort Worth

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*Continuation from “My Story,” page 9*

Looking back, if I were to compare our two losses, I think the first one was the hardest for me personally. And this is for a number of reasons, but mostly because I never saw him or her, I was afraid others didn't think it was that big of a deal because it happened in the first trimester, and I didn't invite or allow others to be a part of my healing process.

With our son, I invited people in from the beginning. I had a weekly email, people prayed for and with me, I openly and actively mourned our loss, and I felt like I needed to honor his life by sharing about him when I was compelled. I also had the image of God offering his son to die on the cross ... and in a way, I had to continually offer my son back to God. Every day, every minute. Every second.

Last September, after 10 weeks of bed rest, I delivered our daughter, Grace. We named her Grace, our gift, and you better believe that when I sing lullabies to her, in my heart, I am singing them to her two heavenly siblings.

I now have this vision of my kids giggling and playing pranks on Jesus and our family members in heaven. And it brings me comfort.

Thank you for reading my story. I hope you will share your story with the Lord, and with others one day too.

♥ Kim Akel,

Mommy to Angel Baby and Gene Michael

M.E.N.D.—Houston

## Happiness Versus Joy: The Grief Paradox

A week after saying a heart-wrenching goodbye to my baby boy, I left a few stones in the shape of a heart at Bug's plot. I didn't want his plot to be bare, but we couldn't get flowers. I wanted to retrieve it the next time we came, and replace it with something else special so I could use it to make a mosaic stepping stone, but it was gone. Jeff says Bug probably knew they were for him so he took them. I knew he was trying to make me stop crying because I couldn't keep them like I wanted, and it worked. I burst out laughing until I cried again, but it was at that moment that I understood the difference between happiness and joy.

I may have been in the depths of sorrow and grief, unhappy with my circumstances, and angry at God, but I still felt uncontrollable and overwhelming joy at its most raw and elemental form. I now comprehend that joy is not an attitude that can be bitterly peeled off and discarded when life's storms saturate your soul with unending sorrows. Joy is a subtle but steadfast promise, welling up from inside the innermost parts of your very soul to remind you that although devastations and heartaches of this life may leave you discouraged and brokenhearted, the hope that is found in the darkest hours echoes God's promise: every sorrow has an ending, every injustice has its day in a "heavenly court" and every grieving heart will find its missing pieces. This promise is for real.

There may be a tomorrow filled with regret, pain and loss, but one fine day there won't BE a tomorrow! That day will be filled instead with the fulfillment of His promise. All that remains will be eternal joy—the same joy that sustains you now, that lets you appreciate little miracles, little moments and big memories. It makes you smile, laugh and sing in the midst of all the pain.

Most of us catch ourselves being joyful and then miserably stuff ourselves back into a bitter, self-loathing depression. We feel as though somehow our babies would be hurt or offended if we grow out of mourning their loss. What an absurd notion! Of course we will never stop missing and yearning for our babies. Yes, we will have cried oceans of tears before we'll see them again. Joy is not happiness. Just as joy can emerge amidst sorrow, in the same manner, sorrow can exist alongside joy. Yearning for our children gone too soon is not the same as mourning.

With that in mind, we should embrace the joyous outbursts as they come, no matter how unexpected or startling they may be, knowing that our angels are full of joy, too! They rejoice every time we give in to a fit of uncontrollable giggles or slip on our dancing shoes again. They are more than just happy. They are full of joy. You are too; you just have to let yourself be joyful. Happiness is fickle and disappointing, but joy is a promise!

♥ Britta Kratzer

*Mommy to Vladimir Nathaniel ("Bug")  
M.E.N.D.—Dallas/Fort Worth*

### **Graveside Grief**

They never planned to bring their child here, Father.  
They planned to bring their child to school, to the zoo, to kindergarten, to the beach...  
But here? No.  
To piano lessons? Yes.  
To soccer fields? Yes.  
To graduation? Yes.  
But here? Never. No parent plans to bring his child here.  
Children bring parents here. Isn't that the order of things? Sons and daughters bury moms and dads. Who can bear the weight of this reversal? Who can stand to stand near the grave of their child?  
Such a deep sorrow. This elixir of regret, remorse, second thoughts, and "if onlys"... Who can abide its taste?  
We pray for these parents, Father. Our kindest words fall like empty husks. Help us know how to help them.  
You know. You've been here.  
You brought your Son to a cemetery. You witnessed the silent tomb.  
Yet, you resurrected hope from that tragedy.  
Would you bring hope again?  
Through Jesus,  
Amen

*Graveside Grief*, Max Lucado  
Copyright [UpWords Ministries, 2013]  
Used by permission

*Sitting silently beside a  
friend who is hurting  
may be the best  
gift we can give.  
-Unknown*

*In Loving Memory*

**Jason Paul Allen, Jr**  
July 1, 2013  
Placental abruption  
Given by parents  
Tara and Jason Allen

**Malen Anderson**  
Stillborn February 4, 2008  
Unknown cause  
Given by parents Wes and Becky Anderson  
and siblings Lenea and Nathan

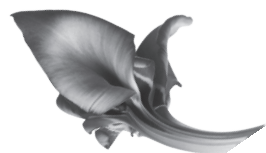
**Liam and Sebastian Callaway**  
Stillborn August 5, 2011  
Unknown cause  
Gifts given by  
Parents Zach and Rori Callaway and  
little brother Miles  
The Harrington School  
William and Norma Groce

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

**Sophie Jane Darnell**  
Stillborn May 28, 2012  
Unknown cause  
Given by parents Tommy and Brea Darnell  
and big brother Luke

**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



**Caleb Scott Fann**  
December 1, 2003  
PROM  
**Baby August Fann**  
Miscarried August 13, 2004  
Parents: Jonathan and Heather Fann  
Little sister: Madison  
Given by  
Frank Rust  
Fred and Beverly Schnieders  
David and Allison Barshinger  
Ty and Jessica Hickok  
Jim and Bonnie Thomas  
Gigi and Granddad Budge  
Mimi and Papa Marshall

**Gabriel David Gimlin**  
Stillborn March 29, 2012  
Given by parents Gary and Andrea Gimlin

**Anderson Maxwell Graham**  
In honor of his father, Aaron Graham  
Given by Judy Graham

**Kaitlyn**  
April 2 - May 5, 1996  
**Baby Gregorcyk I**  
Miscarried 2002  
**Baby Gregorcyk II**  
Miscarried 2006  
**Baby Gregorcyk III**  
Miscarried 2011  
Given by Mommy Amy Gregorcyk

**Serenity Harrison**  
Miscarried December 3, 2009  
Gifts given by  
Parents Curt and Jennifer Harrison  
and little brother Leviticus Aaron  
Don and Imogene Hendrickson

**Denali Kaimana Howell**  
Stillborn May 13, 2013, at 37 weeks  
Given by parents Tim and Kelly Howell

**Alan John Huelsebusch**  
Stillborn March 9, 2006 at 24 weeks  
Unknown cause  
Parents: Don and Sandy Huelsebusch  
Siblings: Ashlie, Courtnie and Cayden  
Given by: Dean and Kim Niesner

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!**

**Luke Noe Johnson**  
July 26, 2010  
Preterm labor due to MTHFR  
**Jude Hope Johnson**  
Miscarried October 30, 2009  
MTHFR  
**Faith Johnson**  
Miscarried September 2, 2011  
MTHFR  
**Abril Johnson**  
Miscarried April 10, 2012  
MTHFR  
Given by parents James and Merle Johnson  
and sister Emma

**JJ Kojich**  
February 19—March 9, 1996  
Omphalocele complications  
Given by mommy Linda Kojich  
and brothers Adam and Alex

**Alexandria Long**  
Miscarried August 2009  
**Baby December Long**  
Miscarried December 2011  
**Baby May Long**  
Miscarried May 2012  
**Baby October Long**  
Miscarried October 2012  
Given by parents Brian and Melody Long  
and siblings Clara and Carlos

**Avery Merae Longgood**  
August 2-3, 2007  
Possible stroke  
Parents: Neil and Jaime Longgood  
Given by grandparents  
Don and Annette Longgood

**Elizabeth Luke Matthes**  
Stillborn July 25, 2012  
Unknown cause  
Given by parents  
Marianne and Lance Matthes

**Jaylen Montrell Matlock**  
Stillborn July 15, 2007  
PROM  
Given by mommy Torie Myers

**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  
Dentistry of Las Colinas/  
Byron L. Mitchell, DDS

**Eli Payton**

July 25, 2011

**Meili Payton**

July 28, 2011

Unknown cause

Given by parents Ryan and Ashley Payton  
and siblings Maximus and Jade**Baby Reed**

Miscarried April 3, 2013

Given by parents Brian and Sandy Reed

**Ginger Sandoval**

September 25, 2010

Renal anomalies

Given by parents

Keith and Katherine Sandoval and  
siblings Kegan, Kastle and Kanon**Elizabeth Mai Nettles Schockmel**

Stillborn May 13, 2002

Intrahepatic Cholestasis

**Baby “D” Schockmel**

Miscarried March 2, 2008

Parents: Nate and Karen Nettles Schockmel

Siblings: Alexandra, Benton and Catherine

Given by grandparents

“Monnie and Bigga” Stone

**Carson Mitchell Shaw**

Stillborn April 1, 1999

Unknown cause

Given by parents Randy and Aimee Shaw  
and siblings Blake and Brooke**Mindy and Maggie Smith**

Stillborn November 4, 1997

TTTS and Polyhydramnios

Given by parents Scott and Karla Smith  
and siblings Travis and Julia**Princess Jahzara Swain**

July 26, 2010

Preterm labor/incompetent cervix

Mommy: Jasmine Swain

Given by Detreatta Williams

**Alivia Elizabeth Grace Walker**

July 24, 2006

Incompetent cervix

Given by parents Robert and Liz Walker  
and siblings Jaxson and Lauryn**Kyle Charles Walton**

November 19, 1998

Group B strep and lack of proper  
nourishment from placenta

Parents: Jason and Kristen Walton

Siblings: Jessica, Laura and Joshua

Given by Joshua's Pest Control

## Never Regretting His Life

After ruling out all other options, the doctor finally said, “It’s probably the pregnancy.” Eight hours after feeling the most horrible pain I have ever felt, and five hours of prodding and tests, this was the conclusion.

A few weeks before, I had been sitting in my bathroom anxiously looking at my watch, so sure that I was pregnant and that I would be bounding out into the living room with a smile on my face. Instead I came out confused. If these weren’t pregnancy symptoms, then what were they? A few days later I tried again. Nothing. A week after that, more nothing. I took five negative tests before deciding I would set an appointment anyway. By then, I was six weeks pregnant.

I don’t know why I waited. I don’t know why I thought that plastic stick meant so much. I *knew* that there was a baby in me. I *knew* my symptoms were real and not figments of my imagination.

Unfortunately, knowing I was pregnant and going to an appointment right away would not have changed the outcome of my story. An ectopic pregnancy can’t be prevented, can’t be predicted and, most devastatingly, can’t be saved. I finally had the confirmation that I wanted only to be told in the same breath that this child would probably never be in my arms.

I feel guilty about a lot of things. Why didn’t I realize sooner that something was wrong? Why did I wait so long for an arbitrary piece of plastic to tell me what I already knew in my heart? Would that have changed the only six weeks I had with my baby? For weeks after my surgery I felt guilty because I had *let* them take him out of me. I *consented* for a surgeon to remove my baby from me. It didn’t really matter that Rylan was already gone. I felt like I should have treasured those early weeks instead of complaining about morning sickness. I felt like I should have celebrated the one little craving I had. I felt like I should have insisted on seeing the doctor right away when I first felt pain instead of waiting because of course it *can’t* be the baby.

It is heartbreaking to know that I could have avoided the trauma of surgery and recovery had I just gone with my gut, but also to feel guilty, because that would mean I had less time with him than I already had. At least I was sensitive enough to my body to notice the changes quickly. At least I have been surrounded by amazing friends and family who have supported me, held my hand at times, endured my anger at others. At least I had the time I did. Even though “at least” will never truly be enough, I am so thankful he was here, and I don’t regret at all that his life existed.

♥ Kristian Doucette,

Mommy to Rylan

M.E.N.D.—SW Missouri

**Joshua Dallen Weber**

December 28, 2011

Kidney defects

Given by parents Kim and Bryce Weber

**Gifts of Support**

Second Baptist Church, Springfield, MO

West Conroe Baptist Church, Conroe, TX

Abbott Laboratories

James A. Barber, Kennesaw, GA

Rachel’s Gift, Inc

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.  
D. Bradley McWilliams YMCA at Cypress

Creek, Schindldecker Building  
19915 SH 249 Houston, TX 77070

Director: Stormy Mitchell  
stormym@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 Randy Dobbins  
(cortdavis@aol.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

Food and Fellowship  
Meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday 7:00 p.m.  
Hebrews Coffee  
1604 E Republic Road  
Kathleen@mend.org

**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. Chapter Updates

*Houston*

M.E.N.D.—Houston is looking forward to our eighth annual Walk to Remember on October 5. To R.S.V.P. please visit our website at [www.mend.org](http://www.mend.org). You will need to register in order to receive a personalized ornament. If you have any others questions regarding the Walk, please email [stormym@mend.org](mailto:stormym@mend.org) or call 281.374.8528.

*Stormy Mitchell*

*Tulsa*

M.E.N.D.—Tulsa continues to minister to grieving families. We are looking forward to commemorating our babies during our balloon release on October 15, at 7:00 p.m. For additional information, please email me at [lisa@mend.org](mailto:lisa@mend.org) or call 918-694-4325.

*Lisa Daily*

*Amarillo*

BUNCO for BABIES fundraiser is Friday, September 6, 2013, at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are available now. For more information please call or email Becky at [806-570-4344](mailto:becky@mend.org) or [becky@mend.org](mailto:becky@mend.org).

*Becky Anderson*

*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. We look forward to our annual Christmas Ceremony in December.

*Monica Davis*

*SW Missouri*

M.E.N.D.—SW Missouri wrapped up our summer by sending out another fundraising letter campaign to our past members and donors. We pray the Lord will move each individual to give as they can to help us continue this absolutely free ministry to hurting moms and dads. Fall also brings the preparations for our two recognition ceremonies! Mark your calendars for Saturday, October 12, at 10 a.m., for our third annual Breakfast & Balloon Release, and Monday, December 9, at 7 p.m., for our fourth annual Christmas Candlelight Ceremony. Many thanks to Second Baptist Church for hosting both events this year (3111 E. Battlefield, Springfield). If you'd like to make a corporate or individual sponsorship to either event, please contact [heather@mend.org](mailto:heather@mend.org).

*Heather Fann*

*Wichita Falls*

M.E.N.D.—Wichita Falls has had a busy summer! We have welcomed new families every month. On August 15, we had our first M.E.N.D. benefit trunk show fundraiser. We continue to pray for those families who have sadly joined our group, and we are thankful for a successful fundraiser.

*Sarah Fukasawa*

Walk to Remember				
Please contact your chapter for more details on events.				
<i>October 5</i> Dallas, TX Walk to Remember	<i>October 5</i> Houston, TX Walk to Remember	<i>October 12</i> SW Missouri Balloon Release	<i>October 13</i> Bryan/ College Station Balloon Release	<i>October 15</i> Tulsa Balloon Release



**Bryan/College Station**

M.E.N.D.—Bryan/College Station is preparing for our annual balloon release on October 13, at 3 p.m., for Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month. All are welcome to come! For more information email me at [jennie@mend.org](mailto:jennie@mend.org). You can also check our upcoming events and details on our Facebook page.

Jennie Drude

**Hot Springs**

M.E.N.D.—Hot Springs continues to pray for and minister to our families who have suffered the loss of a baby. We are beginning to plan for our second annual Christmas Candlelight Memorial Service and pray it will be a blessing to our families who attend.

Amy Humphries

**NW Washington**

M.E.N.D.—NW Washington is sad to say goodbye to one of our assistants, Bethany Wilson. She is moving back home to Ohio and will be dearly missed. Her involvement in M.E.N.D. the last year has been invaluable to us! We wish her the best of luck in her new adventures.

We walked in our local parade in July and had a good turnout and reception by parade goers. We distributed over 600 fliers, hoping this will help raise awareness that we are here to help those that may need us.

Stacy McGhee

**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](mailto:becky@mend.org), (806) 570-4344

**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  
[stacym@mend.org](mailto:stacym@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](mailto: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](mailto:sarahf@mend.org), (940) 642-3284

**M.E.N.D. Christmas Candlelight Ceremonies**

Please contact your chapter for more details on the events.

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

**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](mailto:brittney@mend.org)

**Subsequent pregnancy group**

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

Led by Liz Walker: [liz@mend.org](mailto:liz@mend.org)  
*For families who are considering becoming pregnant or are currently pregnant after a loss.*

**MENDING Mommies**

Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.

Contact Marilyn Brown:  
[Marilyn@mend.org](mailto: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](mailto: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*

**Edward and Mayra Gonzalez,**  
of Dallas, Texas,  
along with big sisters,  
Abigail and Angeline,  
joyfully announce the arrival of

Edward, Jr.,  
born June 10,  
measuring 7 lb., 11 oz.,  
and 18 inches long.

The Gonzalez's lovingly remember  
Cecilia,  
June 12-13, 2012,  
renal agenesis

**Brian and Melody Long,**  
of Springfield, Missouri,  
along with big sister, Clara,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Carlos Dean,  
born August 3,  
measuring 2 lb., 3 oz.,  
and 17 inches long.

The Longs lovingly remember  
Alexandria,  
miscarried August 2009,  
Baby December,  
miscarried December 2011,  
Baby May,  
miscarried May 2012,  
and Baby October,  
miscarried October 2012

**Anthony and Maria Galindo,**  
of Grand Prairie, Texas,  
along with Christian, Jaeden  
and Nathan,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Jedi Jeremiah,  
born April 22,  
measuring 3 lb.

The Galindos lovingly remember  
Precious,  
miscarried September 9, 2011

**Kim and Aaron Godsey,**  
of Dallas, Texas,  
along with big brothers,  
Tahlik and Aaron, Jr.,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Alexandra Grace,  
born July 31,  
measuring 1 lb., 13 oz.,  
and 13 inches long.

The Godsey's lovingly remember  
Cameron Eddie,  
stillborn November 20, 2012,  
true knot in cord

**Daniel and Melissa Bufe,**  
of Haslet, Texas,  
along with big sister, Briley  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Delaney Hope,  
born July 15,  
measuring 8 lb., 1 oz.,  
and 21.5 inches long.

The Bufe family lovingly remembers  
Hadley D'Layne,  
February 28, 2011,  
PPROM

**Justin and Barbie Fugitt,**  
of Wake Village, Texas,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Carter Alexander,  
born July 8,  
measuring 7 lb., 6 oz.,  
and 19.75 inches long.

The Fugitts lovingly remember  
Jordan Taylor,  
miscarried July 2011,  
and Rylie Peyton,  
miscarried November 2011

**James and Kristen Holland,**  
of McKinney, Texas,  
along with big brother, Logan,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Chloe Kathleen,  
born December 16, 2012,  
measuring 7 lb., 7 oz.,  
and 19.75 inches long.

The Hollands lovingly remember  
Connor James,  
stillborn April 27, 2011

**Greg and Stefanie Miller,**  
of Tomball, Texas,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Cora Ainsley,  
born June 17,  
measuring 6 lb., 15 oz.,  
and 21.25 inches long.

The Millers lovingly remember  
Chase Austin,  
April 21, 2011,  
incompetent cervix

**Semi and Laura Ratulele,**  
of Fayetteville, Arkansas,  
along with big sister, Noela,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Talei Jewel,  
born May 23,  
measuring 12 lb., 3 oz.,  
and 20 inches long.

The Ratueles lovingly remember  
Sereana Joy,  
stillborn September 9, 2009,  
full-term, unknown cause

**JD and Magen Kaye,**  
of Irving, Texas,  
along with big brother, Noah,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Mia Parker,  
born June 28,  
measuring 6 lb., 4 oz.,  
and 19 inches long.

The Kayes lovingly remember  
Jayden Noah,  
stillborn October 10, 2006,  
and Tucker Steven,  
stillborn February 8, 2010

**Ricky and Brandy Perez,**  
of Cedar Hill, Texas,  
along with big brother Ethan,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Dylan Carter,  
born October 16, 2012  
measuring 7 lb., 2 oz.,  
and 19 inches long.

The Perez family lovingly remember  
Liam Nathaniel,  
stillborn September 2, 2011,  
cord accident

## Culpabilidad en Dolor

Triste, solitaria, engañada, enojada, traicionada, con vergüenza, miedosa, ansiosa, con pánico... Esta es sólo una breve lista de las emociones que experimentamos mientras lamentamos la muerte de nuestro bebé. Creo que la principal emoción como madres, que más combatimos, es la culpa. En nuestro dolor, de alguna manera logramos convencernos de que la muerte de nuestro bebé fue culpa nuestra. A pesar de que la gente no nos hace sentir culpables. Nos han dicho miles de veces, “no fue tu culpa.” Pero nosotros mismos nos decimos... hubiéramos podido hacer algo diferente?

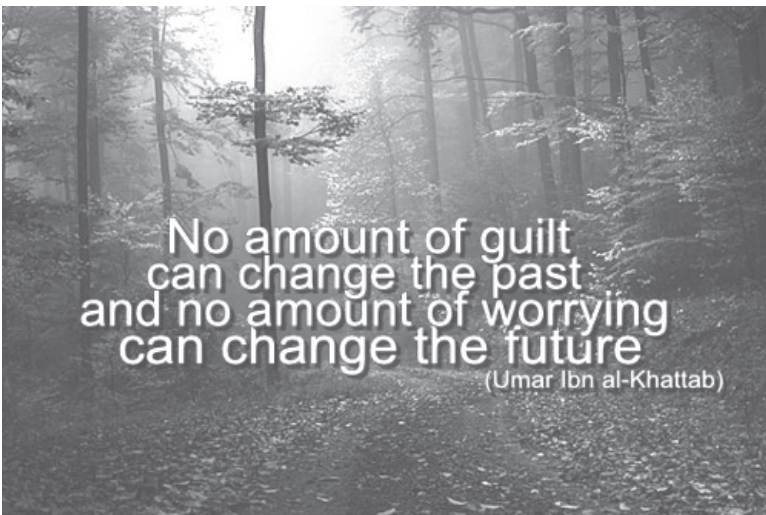
En mis pérdidas, Jonathan nació muerto a las 29 1/2 semanas, debido a un accidente del cordón mientras me encontraba en reposo en el hospital. Aunque fui cuidada por el adecuado personal de enfermeras las 24 horas, me hice creer que el hecho de estar en reposo había sido la causa de que Jonathan se enredara con su cordón. Decidí que porque yo no me mantenía en movimiento en los alrededores, esa había sido la razón. Pensé que por ser sedentaria le causo la incapacidad de moverse lo suficiente para desenredarse. Además, me sentí culpable que había defraudado todos – por lo menos así me parecía a mí. Me sentí responsable por la inmensa tristeza que se vislumbraba sobre nuestro hogar y familia extendida por meses. Me sentía (y honestamente todavía tengo que luchar a veces) culpable por el dolor que siento por no ser capaz de darle a mi marido más hijos y a nuestro hijo ahora adulto más hermanos.

Seis años después de la muerte de Jonathan, me embaracé una tercera vez. En mi chequeo de 10 semanas, descubrí tristemente que nuestro bebé había muerto. El ultrasonido reveló que nuestro pequeño bebé ya no tenía pulso e indicó que tal vez el bebé murió en 8 semanas, 6 días (o posiblemente murió unos días después pero se había deteriorado hasta el tamaño de 8 semanas, 6 días). Si el bebé murió efectivamente en el día que indicada el ultrasonido, coincidió con el mismo día de nuestra

Ceremonia de Velas Navideñas de M.E.N.D. La mañana de la ceremonia, estaba en nuestra unidad de almacenamiento ayudando a descargar nuestras decoraciones de Navidad y transportarlas a la iglesia para el Comité que nos esperaba. Nuestra unidad de almacenamiento no estaba en el primer piso y el ascensor estaba fuera de servicio ese día. Aunque no llevaba cajas pesadas para arriba y para abajo, si me senté y empuje una caja super pesada con los pies en el suelo. ¿En mi corazón, creo que fue lo que causó la muerte de mi bebé? No, de verdad que no. Sin embargo, en el fondo de mi corazón, he tenido que luchar de no sentirme culpable de que hice algo que ninguna mujer embarazada debe hacer. Y he tenido que lidiar con las emociones aparentemente una vez más, decepcionando a todos con otra gran decepción.

Sabemos en nuestros corazones y en nuestras cabezas que no somos la causa de la muerte de nuestros bebés, pero aun, el sentimiento de culpa es bastante duro de luchar! Y justo cuando pensamos que hemos conquistado esa sensación fea, regresa el sentimiento cuando menos lo esperamos. ¿Así que cómo lo superamos una vez mas y por siempre? Honestamente no estoy segura que lo logremos a un 100%, pero sin duda con los años ese sentimiento de culpa disminuye. Hablando con compañeros y padres en el grupo de apoyo o en una de nuestras páginas de Facebook es de gran ayuda. Admitiendo abiertamente sentirse culpable a nuestro esposo, familiares y

amigos cercanos es beneficioso. Y finalmente, clamar al señor. Como cristiano, sé que la culpa no es de él. Convicción si es, pero eso no es lo que estamos hablando. La Destrucción de si mismo por sentimientos de culpa definitivamente no es algo que Dios pone sobre nosotros. Así que, aunque es una emoción normal mientras siente dolor, luche contra él. Supérela y simplemente crea lo que todo el mundo está diciendo, “No es su culpa.”



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

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, go to [www.krogercommunityrewards.com](http://www.krogercommunityrewards.com) and set up an account if you do not already have one. Once you receive the email after setting up your account, click on “My Account,” then go to “Edit Kroger Community Rewards” and input your Kroger Plus card number. You'll see a screen with your information in boxes, at the bottom right, there is a box that says Community Rewards. Click that, then enter the M.E.N.D. number, which is 80513. Once that's entered, you'll confirm that M.E.N.D. is your charity of choice. This link will be good until the 2013-2014 program expires. You must link your card each year 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](mailto: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.



[www.mend.org](http://www.mend.org)