



Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death

Miscarriage, Stillbirth and Infant Loss Support

Volume 28, Issue 1

January/February 2023

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Triggers

A sound, a song,
a scent, a room,
a store display...
a name.

These are things
that to most people
seem so ordinary.
Yet to us, they were
part of a life – the
life of our baby who
is no longer with us.

In this issue, moms
share their loss,
and the triggers
for them, as well
as tips on how
to work through
those moments and
prepare yourself for
future ones.

In this issue...

Triggers

Even after 27 years, Rebekah still finds there are triggers for her... things that choke her up, and triggers that are unexpected and expected, yet still cause grief.

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Surprise Triggers

When our loss occurs around a holiday, that holiday can unexpectedly become a trigger to us.

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Grief Triggers and How to Handle Them

Unfortunately we cannot avoid the grief triggers, but we can prepare ourselves on how to manage them.

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March/April Topic

Men's Issue: Fathers Grieving
Deadline: January 31, 2023

May/June Topic

Mother's Day/Father's Day
Deadline: March 31, 2023

Stories, poems, thoughts, and/or feelings regarding these topics are welcome. Submissions must be received by the deadline to be considered for publication in the magazine. Unfortunately, there is not enough room to include all submissions. Choices will be left to the discretion of the editors. Please send any submissions to our Magazine Editor, Jennifer Harrison, at jennifer@mend.org. Any submission printed in our magazine will also be posted to our website indefinitely. Because our magazines are posted online, please understand your name will be attached to your submission when searched on the Internet.

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to be published in future issues, both in the print version and online, unless a letter's author expressly requests it not be published.

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Birthday Tributes: M.E.N.D. publishes heavenly birthday tributes in the corresponding magazine. Tributes must be submitted via the online form at www.mend.org.

<u>Heavenly Birthday</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
January/February	November 30
March/April	January 31
May/June	March 31
July/August	May 31
September/October	July 31
November/December	September 30



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Feature Article

Feature from our M.E.N.D. President and Founder, Rebekah Mitchell, Mommy to Jonathan and Baby Mitchell

Triggers

More than 27 long years have passed since the stillbirth of my son, Jonathan. After so long, it is not often I get that old piercing stab in my heart, but there are definitely times I am unexpectedly wounded again. Because of my position in M.E.N.D., I talk about and think of Jonathan and my baby I miscarried every single day, and admittedly, without much emotion. So, when something hits me, I'm usually taken by surprise.

Very regularly I give bereavement presentations to healthcare providers. One topic of discussion I know is a trigger for me is when (or even if) I talk about when Byron and I had to tell our living son, who was three years old at the time, that his baby brother died and would never be coming home. Because I try to keep a professional manner when I speak, I know to avoid that area of my story. But if someone asks about how I dealt with our living son losing his baby brother, I know I'll get choked up. That's okay, but I don't always want to go there when standing in front of a crowd.

Since I am in hospitals a lot, I was not prepared for one certain visit to Labor and Delivery. A few years ago, I was invited to attend an event at the hospital where I delivered my babies. A loss family generously donated a Cuddle Cot to the hospital, and the gift exchange took place in an L&D room - the same room where I was once a patient while pregnant with Jonathan. It wasn't even the same room I was taken to after his delivery - just a room I was in once when my blood pressure was really high. I could barely put on a game face, and it would have been horribly awkward for me to break down. It had been more than 20 years; what was wrong with me?! I am in hospitals all the time and have been to "mine" on several occasions. But the emotions just hit me with a vengeance, with no warning! It happened again just a few months ago. I was at my hospital giving a presentation to a group of nurses. I got to the part of my story when I said, "My nurse Chris came in..." A nurse in the back of the room slowly raised her hand. I said, "Yes, do you have a question?" She quietly said, "I'm Chris." What?! After 27 years, she remembered! She was there to hear my talk. I'll never know how I was able to finish that training!

Then, there are smells. In 1995, a popular scent from Bath & Body Works was vanilla sugar. I had the lotion with me when I was on bedrest in the hospital

and during Jonathan's stillbirth. To this day I cannot handle anything that smells like vanilla.

A different type of trigger for me is when I'm the only one at a family function without a child or now, a grandchild. My sisters and brother have multiple children and grandchildren. I have one living son, and now one grandson. They and my daughter-in-law live in another state, so it's rare for them to be at our big family functions here in Texas. I never say anything to my family, but I'm very aware when I'm the only sister who doesn't have an offspring at the birthday party, holiday or just a fun day on the lake. I can't help but think what if... Would Jonathan or Baby Mitchell (who would now be 20 years old) live nearby and be here with us? I'm so very grateful for the deep love I have for my nieces and nephews, and how close we all are, but my son, daughter-in-law, and grandson are certainly irreplaceable.

So, what do we do when these triggers fire off?

Sometimes we just turn our heads, take a deep

breath, maybe choke back a few tears, and are able to resume our activity. And other times we may need to leave the room to have a good cry. I also find it helpful to vent to another loss mom in M.E.N.D. if needed.

That's what I love about this ministry! There's always someone who knows and understands our feelings. We're on this road together, no matter how many years have dragged by. And I'm very thankful for the peace and joy the Lord gives me every day. I may have my moments of sadness, but overall, I'm happy and love life. Only God could have restored those horrible early months of grief.

Yes, there will always be events, smells, songs, or any number of things that may resurrect those old unpleasant and sad emotions, but rest assured they are usually only for a minute. And when they do happen, it's okay. It's normal and even sweet to remember our little ones, even if it causes some tears. We'll never stop loving our babies, missing them, or remembering them.

Sometimes we just turn our heads, take a deep breath, maybe choke back a few tears, and are able to resume our activity. And other times we may need to leave the room to have a good cry.

Birthday Tributes



Happy 10th Birthday, Camden!

Camden means a powerful force to all lives whom he touches. Our sweet boy, you have sure lived up to your name. Carrying you for nine months with a textbook pregnancy only to say goodbye right before birth has been our greatest heartbreak and life-altering experience.

I will never understand why us, why our family, but I will always make sure you are remembered and acknowledged for the impact you made on our lives.

I can't believe you would be 10! Ten years closer to holding you once again. We love you always and forever. Some people dream of angels; we held one in our arms.

Camden Patrick Majcher

February 1, 2013

Possible undiagnosed blood clotting disorder

Parents: Patrick and MaryAnn Majcher

Siblings: Julianna and Jace



Happy 7th Birthday, Emelyn Rose!

Happy 7th birthday, baby girl! I hope another birthday in heaven is celebrated with lots of cake. We miss you dearly and are celebrating you here.

Emelyn Rose Muñoz

January 16, 2016

Also remembering

Baby Joel Muñoz

May 25, 2018

Parents: Allison Ortega Muñoz and Joel Muñoz Jr.



Happy 1st Birthday, Beau!

We love and miss you more than anything, baby Beau! There isn't a day goes by we don't think about you or mourn you! You are our purpose for life, and we will never forget you! You are our first baby and made us a family! We love you and hope you are having a great birthday in heaven, baby Beau!

John Beau Ferguson

January 12-18, 2022

Hypoxic Ischemic Encephalopathy

Parents: Clayton and Calli Ferguson



Happy 2nd Birthday, Princess Ava!

Another year around the sun, missing you more and more with each sunrise. Butterflies have become so meaningful to us as they signify your presence, you checking in on your parents to make sure we're okay. You will forever be our sun, moon, and everything between, our dream girl. We patiently await the day when you are back in our arms. Until we meet again, happy heavenly birthday, Princess! We love you so much Ava, "...but never too much."

Ava Josephine Lacy

January 29 – February 5, 2021

Heart Failure due to several CHDs

Parents: Jennifer and Willie Lacy IV



Happy 1st Birthday, Rosie!

Happy 1st heavenly birthday to Rosie Lynn. Mommy and Daddy love you to heaven and back, sweet girl! We will always honor your life and cherish every second we got to spend with you. May Jesus hold you in His arms until we meet again.

Rosie Lynn Dyer

January 21-23, 2022

Pneumothorax

Parents: Keith and Sarah Dyer



Happy 9th Birthday, Aidynn!

I would give anything for you to be here to celebrate the way you loved to celebrate every year, yet I will continue to celebrate YOU! We miss you so much, baby, but I know you are celebrating in heaven with us.

I love you to infinity and beyond, honey bun.

Love,
Mommy

Aidynn Sebastian Ruiz

January 29, 2014 - June 1, 2022

Brain Cancer-DIPG

Parents: Luis Ruiz and Brenda Berrios



Happy 2nd Birthday, Noelle!

I cannot believe you would have been 2 already.

You are always in my heart, my love.

Sparkle, shimmer, and shine from above, my angel.

Love,
Mommy

Noelle Vera Rak

Miscarried February 2021

Mommy: Kathleen Rak



Happy 1st Birthday, Xavier!

Blessed 1st heavenly birthday, Xavier! We cannot believe a whole year has passed without you here with us. We miss you every minute of the day. It's a strange thought that you're growing up in heaven. We hope you're keeping Jesus and your Great-Mama Coco extra busy. Mama and Abba love you so much and rest in the promise that one day we will reunite.

Abrazos y besos,
Mama and Abba

Xavier Isaac Galan
Stillborn January 14, 2022

Preeclampsia

Parents: Jezse and Neelum Galan



Happy 23rd Birthday, Micah!

Twenty-three years seems like an eternity, but at the same time, just an instant. I remember vividly holding you in my hand for a brief moment, and that is etched on my heart forever. If you were here, I can only imagine what a fine young man you would be. Happy heavenly birthday, and take care of your baby sister who joined you last year. We love you.

Micah Kent Wagner
Miscarried February 2, 2000

Also remembering

MinaBelle Wagner

Miscarried April 1, 2022

Parents: Tim and Christal Wagner

Siblings: Titus and Lincoln



Happy 25th Birthday, Jessie Marie!

Happy heavenly 25th birthday, beautiful "baby girl." Another year has gone by without you, and I remind myself to "just breathe," but also accept not being fully okay this month, as I recall the events of losing you, as if they were just yesterday, and yet a lifetime ago. What gets me through is knowing you are more alive in heaven than I could ever be here on earth. It brings me joy to know you are dancing freely there, and that you know you are so deeply loved by the author of love Himself, and by your family here. I choose to remember your essence with joy in my heart, sweet dancer.

Jessie Marie Donnelly
February 12, 1998

Born Still at 6 months

Parents: Joe and Genevieve Donnelly

Siblings: Moirah, Isaac, Aiden and Aunyah



Happy 4th Birthday, Addie!

Happy 4th birthday, sweetheart! We wonder every day what life would be like with three little girls close in age running around. We know you'd be an amazing big sister and so fun to have here. We love you so much and wish we could celebrate this day with you here, but we also know you're here in spirit. Keep watching over and talking to your sisters. We are so grateful for the blessings you've sent into our lives. We love you beyond compare. Happy birthday, beautiful!

Adele Haven Sutherlun
January 29, 2019

Bilateral renal agenesis

Parents: Kristin and Aaron Sutherlun

Little sisters: Riley and Evlyn Sutherlun



God's Children

Surrounded by children
Loved by them all
Longing to have one—
A child to call her own

Surrounded by children
Whose hugs make her smile
While her heart's breaking
Longing for her own child

Surrounded by children
And can't get away
She holds back her tears
As she watches them play

Surrounded by children
And welcoming them in
Jesus is waiting
At the gates of Heaven

The children we've lost
From accident or miscarriage
My Jesus, He welcomes them,
No matter their age

He welcomes them to Heaven
To live in peace with Him
Until one day soon,
We are able to join them

What a joyful reunion
Will one day be seen
When, at Heaven's Gates,
We'll be reunited again

Written by Kathryn Sirven
Mommy to Samuel Boone
(c) 2022

Surprise Triggers

Written by Genevieve Donnelly

Mommy to Jessie Marie

M.E.N.D.—Northwest Washington Assistant Director

On February 9, 1998, I no longer felt my daughter Jessie Marie, move inside my belly. I was twenty-five weeks along with her when she died while still within my womb. We learned she was a girl during our twenty-week ultrasound, and we had been making plans for our future with her, but when we learned she had died, our hearts and future plans were shattered. I was scheduled to deliver her lifeless body in three days. I was sent home to wait. I was restless, and so with my six-month protruding belly, I walked about half a mile to the store. I was nearing the store when a woman approached me with a joyful, "Congratulations!" She asked me how far along I was. I forced out a smile and responded, "Six months," knowing she was no longer living... knowing I protected a stranger from this difficult to articulate truth.

I was carrying a dead baby within my body. I protected a stranger from this difficult-to-articulate truth. Her bright exuberance held

such contrast to my intense depth of sorrow.

As I entered the store, some of the numbness I had been feeling fell away, and my heart dropped into my stomach as the reality of my situation was becoming more evident. My senses took in all of the Valentine's cards, decorations, chocolates, stuffed animals, and other gifts. Originally, Valentine's for me was a celebratory day when my husband took a knee and proposed. Yet at that point, everything Valentine's became my trigger, and I refused to fully celebrate in the following years. I despised the holiday.

During the first five years after losing Jessie, I was unaware this was my trigger. I would experience the effects of it just as I had that day in the store, but it wasn't until six years in that I truly connected the reason I was being triggered, which came from this awful experience. Because of my Valentine's trigger, my mind somehow put aside remembering that his proposal to me was on that day, just one year prior to our daughter's death. It became solely a terrible day, erasing from my mind all of the beautiful excitement that once was. There was no light left in that day at all.

As I became more aware of this holiday being my trigger, I began to prepare myself each time before going into any store during the months preceding Valentine's Day. I prepare my mind each year during this season, and depending on where I am emotionally, I may avoid certain stores, or certain store aisles, or stay home altogether. I recall walking through a large store

last year while holding onto a great awareness of where the Valentine chocolates were. I shielded my peripheral view as I walked past that aisle in its display in red. It worked for me that time, but each year differs for me. I try to remember to breathe and get through it, and because I cannot give my daughter a life here, I give her what I am able, my intense focus for a few days out of each year.

While working with my therapist, I have become aware that I have PTSD surrounding this specific experience. It is from that place where I am sharing and refer to a memory that I sometimes get stuck and forget the point I was trying to make. I get "stuck" in the memory of my daughter being dead inside of me, and knowing that I would have to carry her for three days, and then deliver her. My mind and body, therefore, are unable to switch off and smoothly continue on with the conversation. Sometimes in my mind, I get stuck there in that store with all those red cards and cannot move on. I go to that scary, dark place where my mind had stayed for two solid years of depression. I have to alert myself to "wake up" again out of those deep memories.

Jessie Marie would be 25 this year, and I have become proficient at shielding myself from this major trigger. Yet, there are still other triggers that come up while I am unaware that feel shocking, such as seeing my friend's twelve-year-old daughter at the skating rink. She was the same age my daughter would have been at that time, and while still pregnant with Jessie, I had held her daughter in the hospital room as a newborn. This was a different sensation I felt within my body. I could hide around the corner for a few minutes and breathe through it, as well as turn my face away multiple times during that skating session, to get through it.

The main triggers for me are Valentine's-related stock on store shelves, but for you it could be anything that makes your heart feel as though it has fallen into



Genevieve with a portrait she drew of her daughter, Jessie Marie

your stomach, or any number of ways our bodies react because of the torment of losing our child. I prepare myself by paying attention to the dates coming up, and I am now all too aware of these triggers. It is helpful to have this awareness, so that it is not as shocking to my system.

In those early years of loss, my heart ached. My whole being ached. And the depth - Oh, there was no depth of tormenting ache I had experienced before, nor after! Darkness enveloped me, and this grief felt unsurvivable. Since identifying my major trigger, I have been able to recall the details of both the celebration as well as the grief, and have better clarity within the contrast of the two. Within the awareness of my grief, I somehow choose to participate in this life, and eventually have deeper joy, without regret or guilt. Now I recognize Valentine's season as a reminder of what our love, with God, created, and what death stole from us. I see it as beautiful as well as painful. I find solace in accepting the experience of multiple contrasting emotions happening in conjunction.

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

The M.E.N.D. - SW Missouri Chapter gathered to remember our babies in heaven during the Christmas season at our 13th Annual Christmas Candlelight Ceremony. More than 75 people gathered to remember 45 babies in heaven. We were blessed by the talent of Pam Gaunt to share with us the song "You're Still God," and Pastor Luke Harding, father of baby Morgan, shared with us a message to remember we not only to celebrate Christmas, but also Easter, for the One who also died so that we can have hope of eternity with our babies, through Jesus's birth, death and resurrection. We lit candles in memory of each baby in heaven, and "loved them to the moon and back" during the song "Winter Bear." It was a precious time to remember our little ones.

Thank you to our sponsors of the
13th Annual Christmas Candlelight Ceremony.

*Jonathan and Heather Fann
Remembering Caleb-Scott Fann
and Baby August Fann*

*Stacey and Sam Parris
Remembering Michael-Stephen Parris,
Madison Nicole and Baby Parris*

*Mercy Hospital
Second Baptist Church*



Ava Josephine

Written by Jennifer Lacy

Mommy to Ava Josephine

M.E.N.D.—*Richmond Satellite*

Picture It. Father's Day 2020. My period was three days late for the first time ever, and I thought, "Well. This'll be interesting." My husband and I had been trying to get pregnant for more than a year and after what felt like months of hopeless efforts, my ClearBlue stick read "Pregnant" that Sunday, the best Father's Day gift I'd ever give my husband. Keeping a promise I'd made ever since we planned on getting pregnant, we took a 90-min drive to Bryan, and visited the prayer garden at a local church nearby an old apartment we'd lived in, to "visit" my grandmother's memorial stone and share our good news. Little did I know how special these "visits" would become in the future.

On October 10, 2020, we revealed the baby's gender: Will and Jenn would be welcoming Princess Lacy on February 27, 2021. Throughout my pregnancy, I would fantasize about the life we would have once our princess came into the world. Family trips to Disney World, Baby's First Christmas, Me and Mommy's First Mother's Day, endless hours spent singing along to all the classic Disney movies, especially my favorite: Cinderella. Planning her magical first birthday themed with unicorns, gymnastics and dance, Mommy and Me dates like trips to the nail salon or shopping with my mini-me, and all the wonderful things that came along with being a #girlmom. I couldn't wait! I began re-watching those Disney classics over some Oreo cookies or Chinese food cravings, investing in "baby bump" headphones to let her listen to music in the womb and feel her kick around whenever Pitbull came on, and learn just how much she loved a good ol' glazed donut with some Sunny D orange juice. My husband and I even put together a Spotify playlist of all the songs we'd play that she would "dance" to, one of them being Luther Vandross' "Never Too Much," because it got her to flip over at her 20-week sonogram appointment! Now that we knew we were having a girl, I wanted her to have a piece of my late grandmother by passing on the middle name of "Josephine," to always have her with my baby girl. I knew how proud my grandmother would be!

Fast forward to January 29, 2021, my 35-week check-up. I'd been seeing a MFM specialist throughout most of my pregnancy for concerns with my placenta cord, but in between those visits, I would see my OB-GYN for routine check-ups and complete

a NST test, which was completed that morning. After some difficulty in recording a steady heart rate with my baby, I was admitted to Texas Woman's Hospital for 24-hour surveillance. Within three hours of admittance, I was told I wouldn't be leaving the hospital without delivering a baby. At 6:14 PM, we welcomed our daughter, Ava Josephine, at 4 pounds, 15 ounces, via emergency c-section. We had never been so happy... Yet just hours later, we were alerted by the NICU Lead Nurse about a concern with Ava's heartbeat - she'd had an arrhythmia and was being transferred over to the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) at Children's Hermann Memorial Center. Our lives would be forever changed.

Three days later, I was discharged from Texas Woman's and was finally able to go see my baby girl for the first time since I held her in my arms the night she was born. The sound of the hospital machines beeping as I entered her room is a sound that triggers me to this day. As I took in the new sight of my daughter in her hospital bed, I found myself yearning for a quick solution to take away all her pain, remove the wires from her body, take her off of the machines and bring her home, where we could keep her safe. None of this made any sense - she was fine throughout the entire pregnancy and never once were there any conversations about cardiac-related concerns. Time seemed to be moving at lightning speed and just when we were trying to absorb one piece of news, two more came in for us to process and understand. When we were asked to sign off on a "Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center" donation page, we noticed a diagnosis of "Several Complex Congenital Heart Defects" was indicated, another piece of information to process. After six days of procedures and tests, we processed the news no parents ever want to hear, "She is not making the progress we were hoping for," and suddenly, the paralyzing, adrenaline rush I'd been experiencing that entire week had begun to disappear, and I began to feel a gut-wrenching pain in my c-section incision that seemed to be taking after the excruciating pain my heart was feeling in that very moment. After our shift nurse, Jessica, put on a Disney princess playlist, we spent those last hours with Ava doing whatever



we could to still be a mother and father despite how powerless we felt. As Moana's "How Far I'll Go" played in the background, we wanted Ava to know that she would always be our perfect daughter, our heart warrior princess.

There isn't a second, minute, hour, or day that goes by that I don't think about my Ava Josephine. For the first six months after she passed away, I would purposely buy Oreo cookies even if I didn't really want them, and eat them whenever I missed her just to feel close to her. I even wanted to hang on to the baby weight I'd gained, almost as if it was a souvenir for carrying her. Eighteen months have gone by at the time I am writing this, yet I am still triggered by anything and everything that remotely reminds me of her, one of the hardest being looking at my husband every day, who she looked just like, and the other being my grandmother, especially having given her a piece of her name. When we go out to eat and see a little girl wearing an outfit with a unicorn on it, or curly dark hair like her Daddy, I think of Ava. When we are out running errands and happen to pass a Memorial Hermann Medical Center, we think of her as we drive by and make the sign of the cross. Buying donuts for the holidays has become a family tradition and every time we buy, we always have a glazed donut for Ava. Celebrating holidays like Mother's Day, Father's Day, Christmas and most importantly, Ava's birthday, are seemingly the biggest triggers as we are reminded of our titles as "angel parents." We miss our baby girl every day and hope that even though she's not on earth with us, she still thinks we are the best parents she could've ever asked for!

Grief Made Me a Slob

Written by Ashley Watkins
Mommy to James

M.E.N.D. - Tulsa

I used to be conscientious
Until death came to knock
I used to care about undone laundry
And that one non matching sock

I used to know what bills and when
Were due and still unpaid
I used to scrub and scrub dishes
Without complaint or strain

I used to follow schedules
Who's going where and when
And which chores needed tending to
I'd skip out to the bin

But now all's lost that doesn't come
By sole necessity
Lost in the fog of a rotted mind
It's blank and just can't see

Grief made me a slob, it's
Certifiably a painful catch
To have just the same high standards as ever
Without ability to match

So days go by in slow motion
Count every tiny grace
Remembering that basic care
Is enough to God's kind face

And healing comes through little moments
Between the dust and clamor
If it takes two weeks to clean the kitchen
It really doesn't matter

Grief made me a slob, it
Seems. To me. My sharp and judging eye
But it gave me my soul and it gave me my strength
To see life and to live not by sight

M.E.N.D. — Dallas/Fort Worth Christmas Candlelight Ceremony



The 26th annual Christmas Candlelight Ceremony, hosted by our headquarter's chapter in Irving, Texas, was held on December 1, with more than 125 family members and friends beginning the holidays remembering their babies who died too soon. Special music was presented by M.E.N.D. dad, Jonathan Nymeyer, and the M.E.N.D. Vice-president, DaLana Barsanti. Rebekah Mitchell, the founder of M.E.N.D., gave the inspirational message on processing the "why" questions we struggle with following our loss. A special thanks to the committee members and the sponsors who made this ceremony possible.



Thank you to our sponsors of the
2022 Dallas/Fort Worth Christmas Candlelight Ceremony.

Noel Sponsors

*Lu Ann and James Junkin
Remembering Paislee Ann Frette*

*Marisa and Brandon Perry
Remembering Margot Lily Perry*

Enterprise Holdings Foundation

Merry Sponsors

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Angee Montgomery Studio
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Jonah Nymeyer*

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Baby Oberlender 2*

*Berrios family
Remembering Aidenn Sebastian Ruiz*

M.E.N.D. — Tulsa

Christmas Candlelight Ceremony



Grief Triggers and How to Handle Them

*Written by Jennifer Harrison
Mommy to Serenity
M.E.N.D. — Magazine Editor*

Early in our grief, we feel like we are riding wave after wave of emotion. Through time, the waves do not hit as hard, and come less often. We may even feel more at peace. Yet, after feeling a bit settled, we find ourselves hit by a "sucker punch" of grief yet again.

Grief Triggers can cause us to revert back into our grief without warning. We generally experience an intense feeling of distress, pain, and/or sorrow in these moments. Sometimes it hits as crying, anger, rage, confusion, or deep sorrow.

Many times after they hit, we are left wondering "What happened? I thought I was over this..."

It might be a holiday, special date, or a milestone. Or hearing a special song, a fragrance that reminds us of that moment, or just walking past a baby section of the store. Sometimes it's even a lost opportunity, such as bring your child to work day or father/daughter or mother/son events.

Listed are some ways to help identify these moments, and hopefully prepare you to handle them.

Mark Your Calendar

Marking your calendar will help you identify the holidays and special occasions to know when an upcoming date could cause unexpected emotions.

If it is too hard to write those dates on a calendar, have a trusted friend do it. When you see those upcoming dates, have a Plan A, and a Plan B in case Plan A feels too hard on your heart that day.

Identify the Triggers

There are things we can recognize - like baby sections of stores or certain fragrances. Sometimes we need to avoid these areas, and sometimes we can embrace them as special memories with our babies.

Accept Your Feelings

Your feelings are part of your memories. Feelings are sometimes painful, but sometimes releasing. We know there are inopportune times to work through our feelings, and we might block them for a period. Make sure to revisit them at a later time when you are more comfortable to sit with those feelings. Otherwise, the grief trigger might hit harder the next time, and you'll be unable to control the emotional wave.

Prepare Yourself for the Expected

There are times we cannot avoid situations. In these moments, we must prepare our hearts for tough moments, and know it is only a moment. Have a plan on how to handle these moments.

Continued on page 13.

In Loving Memory

Abigail Grace Crump

July 1, 2003
Trisomy 18
Given by
Parents Gerald and Jaimie Crump
and little sisters Cami and Karli

Riley and Parker Davis

November 14, 2006
Premature
Given by
Parents Rob and Cheryl Davis
and siblings Annalise and Owen

Caleb Scott Fann

December 1, 2003
PPROM

Baby August Fann

Miscarried August 13, 2004
Given by parents Heather and Jonathan Fann
and little sister Madison Grace

Logan Wayne Fish

September 17, 2002
Skeletal Dysplasia
Given by parents Brittney and David Fish
and brothers Landry and Hudson

Paislee Ann Frette

April 4-5, 2012
Wolf-Hirschhorn Syndrome
Parents: Brent and Courtney Frette
Little sister: Colbie
Given by
Grandparents James and LuAnn Junkin

Gabriela Faith Gregory

Stillborn January 24, 2002
Cord accident
Given by parents Monica and Chris Gregory
and siblings Daniel, Amarise and Eliana

Mateo David Gurrolo

Given by Amber Cook

Lily Hadden

August 20, 2005

Landon Hadden

July 1, 2006
Parents: Amy and Andrew Hadden
Given by
Hadden Hailers Custom Game Calls LLC

Serenity Harrison

Miscarried December 3, 2009
Given by parents Curt and Jennifer Harrison
and siblings Levi, Ziva and Evie

Jordan Leigh Johnson

November 11-15, 1996
CHARGE Syndrome
Given by parents Kena and Reggie Johnson

Sarah Ann King

Stillborn June 22, 1995
Unknown cause
Parents: Lori and David King
Given by grandmother Bonita Manning

Baby L

Miscarried June 14, 2018

Baby LV

Miscarried July 11, 2020
Given by parents Corrine and Andrew
Latham

Rylee Lynn Manzano-Bautista

Given by Michele Huerta

Jonathan Daniel Mitchell

Stillborn June 24, 1995
Cord accident
Baby Mitchell
Miscarried December 2001
Given by
Parents Byron and Rebekah Mitchell

Rebekah Tikvah Nymeyer

July 16, 2015
Premature
Amasiah Nymeyer
Miscarried October 2010

Jonah Nymeyer

Miscarried June 2012
Given by parents Terri and Jonathan Nymeyer
and siblings Isaac, Abby, Esther and Tirzah

Baby Oberlender I

December 19, 2011

Baby Oberlender II

May 19, 2012
Given by
Parents Tim and Melissa Oberlender

Stephen Paul Paloski

Given by Anonymous

Margot Lily Perry

June 10, 2013
Gifts given by
Parents Marisa and Brandon Perry
Grandmother Marie Perry

Jacob Austin Ryan

January 23, 2018
Given by parents Paige and Austin Ryan

Michael Stephen Parris

April 9, 2009
Clostridium Innocuum/Infection

Madison Nicole Parris

March 5, 2010
Prevotella Bivia/Infection

Baby Parris (Madison's Twin)

January 2010
Unknown cause
Parents: Sam and Stacey Parris
Brothers: Lucas and Seth

Aidynn Sebastian Ruiz

January 29, 2014 - June 1, 2022
Brain Cancer-DIPG
Parents: Luis Ruiz and Brenda Berrios

Brayden Ryan Sade

Born still December 28, 2012
Given by
Parents Steven and Heather Stockford Sade

Rianne Ellisa Scrivner

March 4-7, 1997
Hydrocephaly
Given by parents Rae and Bill Scrivner
and sisters Chanie, Casidy and Canlie

Carson Mitchell Shaw

April 1, 1999
Given by Parents Aimee and Randy Shaw

Genesis Elizabeth Marine

October 14, 2022
Given by Taylor Sikes

Micah Kent Wagner

Miscarriage February 2, 2000

MinaBelle Wagner

Miscarried April 1, 2022
Parents: Tim and Christal Wagner
Siblings: Titus and Lincoln

Gifts of Support:

Second Baptist Church, Springfield, MO
April Jenkins
Matthew Patterson
OneHope, Santa Ana, CA
Mercy Hospital
Enterprise Holdings Foundation

"Grief Triggers..." continued from page 11.

Find a Special Place

There are times you might need to step away. At work, at church, at home... find the place you can sit with your grief and feelings, and then return once you feel better.

Avoiding v. Addressing Triggers

Many will seek to avoid the triggers altogether. For a time, this is okay. Early in grief, we can only handle so much, especially when we feel like we cry all the time. Yet there are times we may find ourselves avoiding too much of life in order to not be triggered, which becomes an unhealthy habit. It's okay to politely decline an invitation to a baby shower, yet if we are avoiding going out in public at all for fear of seeing a pregnant person, more help to work through grief may be needed.

Practice Positive Self-Talk

There are times our mind wanders down a path of "what did I do wrong?" or "did I cause ...?" Sometimes we need to address these, and if there is something, forgive ourselves or others. These moments can be helpful in the grief journey, but becoming stuck in these questions can become harmful. If you find you are remaining in this place, seek help, such as a trained counselor with grief experience to help you process these thoughts.

Seek Support

Sometimes we feel alone in this journey. We need to connect with others to know what "normal" is after loss or talk through situations. There were times I

attended a support group, sharing about an invitation to an upcoming baby shower and my feelings about it, or surviving after a close friend gave birth. Find a safe place you can share your feelings and your struggles, either with a close friend, a counselor or a support group such as M.E.N.D., either online or in person.

Delayed Grief Triggers

Sometimes we say in M.E.N.D., "Grief waits." And it does. If we try to push off our grief, or perhaps we become pregnant shortly after our loss and avoid facing our grief, we will find emotions hit harder when these triggers hit us. Be gentle with yourself, but also recognize it is still important to grieve, and give yourself grace when you are in those moments.

Unexpected Grief Triggers

While it may feel impossible to plan for the unexpected, it is doable. When seeing a pregnant mom causes waves of heartache, try to have a plan for the next time you find yourself in this situation, such as practicing breathing techniques or redirecting your focus. It's not to escape the grief, but to just help you get through that particular moment.

While we would love to be able to tell you the stages of grief will be "XYZ", and then you will feel "all better," we know that is simply not the case. Sometimes we cry every moment, and then have times we realize we have not cried in a while. Yet out of the blue, a grief trigger may hit us when we least expect it. Life is full of triggers, and sometimes we respond with tears and other times we respond with smiles. Yet we always make it through. And I know you will too.

M.E.N.D. — Greater Houston Area Christmas Candlelight Ceremony





Disparadores

Artículo de Presidente y Fundadora,
Rebekah Mitchell,
Mamá de Jonathan Daniel y bebé Mitchell

Un pasado más de 27 largos años desde el nacimiento sin vida de mi hijo, Jonathan. Después de tanto tiempo, no es frecuente que reciba esa vieja puñalada penetrante en mi corazón, pero definitivamente hay momentos en los que me hieren inesperadamente de nuevo. Por mi posición en M.E.N.D. hablo y pienso en Jonathan y en mi bebé que aborté involuntariamente todos los días y, lo admito, sin mucha emoción. Entonces, cuando algo me afecta emocionalmente como un golpe, generalmente me toma por sorpresa.

Muy regularmente doy presentaciones sobre la aflicción a los proveedores de atención médica. Un tema de discusión que sé que es un desencadenante para mí es cuando (o si) hablo de cuando Byron y yo tuvimos que decirle a nuestro hijo vivo, que tenía tres años en ese momento, que su hermanito murió y que nunca estaría regresando a casa. Debido a que trato de mantener una manera profesional cuando hablo, sé que debo evitar esa parte de mi historia. Pero si alguien me pregunta cómo lidie con nuestro hijo vivo que perdió a su hermanito, sé que me ahogaré. Está bien, pero no siempre quiero ir allí cuando estoy frente a una multitud de personas.

Dado que pasó mucho tiempo en hospitales, no estaba preparada para una determinada visita a Labor and Delivery. Hace unos años, me invitaron a asistir a un evento en el hospital donde di a luz a mis bebés. Una familia de pérdida donó generosamente un Cuddle Cot al hospital, y el intercambio de obsequios se llevó a cabo en una habitación de L&D, la misma habitación donde una vez fui paciente mientras estaba embarazada de Jonathan. Ni siquiera era la misma habitación a la que me llevaron después del parto, solo una habitación en la que estuve una vez cuando mi presión arterial estaba muy alta. Apenas podía poner cara de juego, y habría sido terriblemente incómodo para mí derrumbarme. Habían pasado más de 20 años; ¡¿Qué me pasaba?! Estoy en hospitales todo el tiempo y he estado en "los míos" en varias ocasiones. ¡Pero las emociones simplemente me golpearon con venganza, sin previo aviso! Volvió a ocurrir hace apenas unos meses. Estaba en mi hospital dando una presentación a un grupo de enfermeras. Llegué a la parte de mi

historia cuando dije: "mi enfermera Chris entró...". Una enfermera en el fondo de la habitación levantó lentamente la mano. Dije, "sí, ¿tienes alguna pregunta?" Ella dijo en voz baja: "Soy Chris". ¡¿Qué?! ¡Después de 27 años recordó! Ella estaba allí para escuchar mi presentación. ¡Nunca sabré cómo pude terminar ese entrenamiento!

Luego están los olores. En 1995, un aroma popular de Bath & Body Works era el azúcar de vainilla. Tenía la loción conmigo cuando estaba en reposo en cama en el hospital y durante el nacimiento sin vida de Jonathan. Hasta el día de hoy no puedo con nada que tenga olor a vainilla.

Un tipo diferente de desencadenante para mí es cuando soy la única en una función familiar sin un hijo o, ahora, sin un nieto. Mis hermanas y mi hermano tienen varios hijos y nietos. Tengo un hijo vivo y ahora un nieto. Ellos y mi nuera viven en otro estado, por lo que es raro que estén en nuestras grandes funciones familiares aquí en Texas. Nunca le digo nada a mi familia, pero soy muy consciente cuando soy la única hermana que no tiene un hijo en la fiesta de cumpleaños, vacaciones o simplemente un día divertido en el lago. No puedo evitar pensar qué pasaría si... ¿Jonathan o Baby Mitchell (que ahora tendría 20 años) vivieran cerca y estuvieran aquí con nosotros? Estoy muy agradecida por el profundo amor que tengo por mis sobrinas y sobrinos, y lo unidos que somos todos, pero mi hijo, mi nuera y mi nieto son irremplazables.

Entonces, ¿qué hacemos cuando estos factores desencadenantes se activan? A veces simplemente giramos la cabeza, respiramos profundamente, tal vez ahogamos algunas lágrimas y podemos reanudar nuestra actividad. Y otras veces puede que necesitemos salir de la habitación para echar un buen llanto. También encuentro útil desahogarme con otra madre de M.E.N.D. si es necesario. ¡Eso es lo que amo de este ministerio! Siempre hay alguien que conoce y entiende nuestros sentimientos. Estamos juntos en este camino, sin importar cuántos años hayan pasado. Y estoy muy agradecida por la paz y la alegría que el Señor me da todos los días. Puedo tener mis momentos de tristeza, pero en general, soy feliz y amo la vida. Solo Dios podría haber restaurado esos horribles primeros meses de la aflicción.

Sí, siempre habrá eventos, olores, canciones o cualquier cantidad de cosas que pueden resucitar esas viejas emociones desagradables y tristes, pero tenga la seguridad de que generalmente son solo por unos minutos. Y cuando suceden, está bien. Es normal y hasta dulce recordar a nuestros pequeños, aunque provoque algunas lágrimas. Nunca dejaremos de amar a nuestros bebés, extrañarlos o recordarlos.

M.E.N.D. — Chicagoland Christmas Tree at Brookfield Zoo



Book Review

"I'm STILL A Big Sister!"

Written by Brittany and Eliza Day

Illustrated by Hayley Moore

Although this children's book is written in memory of Eliza's little twin sisters, Sophie and Ruby, this story is written with the perspective of losing one sibling, which may reach more people who can relate. This straightforward storybook is simple enough for children to understand. It is made clear that it is okay to acknowledge they have a sibling. Just because their sibling has died, it does not mean they are not a big sister or a big brother. It also proves that other children are not alone in their grief of losing a sibling. It is teaching children to know it is okay to grieve the loss of the future that they could have had with their sibling. Several healthy ideas to remember their sibling are portrayed, such as lighting a candle. All the way through, there is an unquestionable strength Eliza has of being proud to be a big sister, and this is evident on the last page where she states, "I wear my big sister shirt proudly and tell everyone about our baby!"



Reviewed by Genevieve Donnelly,
M.E.N.D.-NW Washington Assistant Chapter Director

Book Review

"I'm STILL A Big Brother!"

Written by Bella Mody

Illustrated by Anna Lindgren

The book "I'm Still A Big Brother" was an enjoyable read and will be a blessing to bereaved families. A close relative of mine just recently experienced a pregnancy loss (of a baby girl). Through our many conversations she's shared that her living child, 9-year-old son, has expressed the very sentiments shared in this book. This book will be a special gift given to her in memory of her baby girl in heaven. This is such a great addition and help to bereaved families as the feelings of the living children are often unheard.



Reviewed by Tenessa Henderson,
M.E.N.D. - Austin, Texas Chapter Director

M.E.N.D. CHAPTER UPDATES

NW Washington

M.E.N.D.-NW Washington continues to meet on the 2nd Monday of the month at The Oak Table Cafe' in Silverdale at 6:30 PM. (Restaurant is closed during our support group time.)



Katherine

Tulsa, Oklahoma

M.E.N.D.-Tulsa held our annual Christmas Candlelight Ceremony at the beginning of December. It is always a sweet time to remember our babies before the hustle and bustle of the holiday season.

We would like to give a huge Thank You to Austin and Paige Ryan as well as Matt and Cassie Barnett for all their hard work on the Pregnancy and Infant Walk 5k. They raised more than \$5,000.00 for our chapter! We are thankful to be able to support grieving families in the Tulsa area due to their great generosity.



We continue to meet on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7:00 PM.

Cat

MidMichigan

M.E.N.D.-MidMichigan celebrated the holidays by creating memorial ornaments for our babies. We had a great turnout, and it was so nice to see everyone. We look forward to 2023 and the opportunity to reach more grieving families in the MidMichigan area!



Karen

National Online Support

M.E.N.D. National Online Support Group hopes the holiday season was gentle on your heart, and we pray that the new year brings hope back into your life. The holidays can take a toll on our peace and joy, bringing anxiety and sadness. Please join us the 3rd Thursday of every month at 8:00 PM CST for



support during this difficult time, as we have all been there before. We understand what you're going through. For details about the group, email me at mallory@mend.org.

Mallory

Columbus, Ohio

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away, behold, the new has come." 2 Corinthians 5:17 ESV

As we enter 2023, let us all start anew! As we share our journeys and our grief to comfort one another, let us strive for new ways to be a blessing to this community and stay connected. Please join our private Facebook group and be encouraged...You're NOT alone!

If you are in need of M.E.N.D.-Columbus' services, contact me at latrina@mend.org.



LaTrina

Chicagoland

It is with a grateful heart that I led my last M.E.N.D. - Chicagoland infant loss support group in December. My family is moving out of state for a job transfer for my husband. It has been an honor and privilege to hear all the M.E.N.D. - Chicagoland's moms' and dads' stories of their precious babies. I hold each of them, and you, close to my heart. I want to thank my assistant Becky Luedtke for her service all of these years as well as my past assistants Gretchen Hays, Kim Nyquist, and the family of Kirsten Fumagalli (already with her babies in heaven). M.E.N.D. - Chicagoland will continue to meet as we seek a new Chapter Director. Please watch our Facebook



group and online for information about the meetings. Thank you, M.E.N.D. - Chicagoland families, for sharing your hearts and babies with me. My prayers and love continue for you and your precious families.

Sara

Men of M.E.N.D.

Let us come together and talk about our babies. Men of M.E.N.D. holds a monthly Zoom support group every 3rd Monday of the month at 8:00 PM CST. I look forward to seeing you. If you cannot make it, yet need someone to speak with, feel free to email me at matt@mend.org.



Matt

Greater Houston Area

M.E.N.D.—Greater Houston Area held a Teddy Bear Drive to provide teddy bears to moms leaving the hospital with empty arms. Thank you to all who donated to bring a bit of comfort to these families.



M.E.N.D. —
Greater Houston Area
Teddy Bear Drive

We also gathered for our Christmas Candlelight Ceremony. We love sharing this special time with our M.E.N.D. families and look forward to meeting and providing comfort at future events.

Nikisha



Southwest Missouri

M.E.N.D. - SW Missouri was very blessed to hold our 13th Annual Christmas Candlelight Ceremony. I am so thankful for my assistants who helped coordinate this event: Brianne Mansfield, Heather Stockford Sade and Stacy Lynn, as well as many other volunteers who helped set up on the day of the event.



We pray our families had a gentle holiday season, and pray for peace and comfort as we enter into the new year.

Jennifer



East Valley, Arizona

M.E.N.D.—East Valley Arizona had a very lovely inaugural Christmas Candlelight Ceremony and look forward already to next year!

We continue to meet monthly and have already started planning some fundraiser events for 2023. Mark your calendars for January 18, to join us at the Queen Creek Backyard Taco! Be sure to join our Facebook group for more information.



Danielle

M.E.N.D. — East Valley, Arizona
Christmas Candlelight Ceremony



About M.E.N.D.

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 support groups, this magazine, and our website at www.mend.org. For inquiries, subscription requests, deletions, and submissions to the magazine, contact us at:

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jennifer@mend.org
www.mend.org

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

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

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M.E.N.D. Support Groups in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex

Mommies AND Daddies are welcome at all M.E.N.D. support groups.

Irving Archives Museum, 801 W Irving Blvd, Irving, TX 75060.

For more information, call (972) 506-9000.

M.E.N.D. chapter support groups meet the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7:30 PM

Daddies group meets the 2nd Thursday of March, June, Sept. and Dec., at 7:30 PM

Moms and dads meet together for introductions before dividing into two groups.

Rowlett Satellite Chapter

A satellite chapter in Rowlett holds support groups to serve families in the eastern area of the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex.

Support groups are held the 1st Wednesday at 7:00 PM at the Veterans Resource and Outreach Center,
4210 Industrial St, Rowlett, TX 75088.

Visit our Facebook group or email terri@mend.org.

M.E.N.D. Chapter Information

Due to COVID gathering guidelines, please follow your chapter on Facebook or connect with your local Director for updates if your chapter will meet in person or virtually.

M.E.N.D.–NW Washington

Meets the 2nd Monday at 6:30 PM
The Oak Table Cafe'
3290 NW Mt. Vintage Way
Silverdale, Washington 98383
Interim Chapter Director:
Katherine Sandoval
katherines@mend.org, (360) 662-6161

M.E.N.D.–SW Missouri

Meets the 1st Thursday at 7:00 PM
Project H.O.P.E.
1419 S. Enterprise Ave
Springfield, Missouri 65804
Interim Director: Jennifer Harrison
jennifer@mend.org, (417) 770-0600

M.E.N.D.–Columbus, Ohio

Meets on the 2nd Monday, at 6:30 PM
Paul Mitchell-The School of Columbus
3000 Morse Road
(Upstairs Conference Room)
Columbus, Ohio 43231
Director: LaTrina Bray
latrina@mend.org (614) 530-5128

M.E.N.D.–Tulsa, Oklahoma

Meets the 3rd Tuesday at 7:00 PM
5401 S Harvard Ave
Tulsa, OK 74135
Director: Cat Markham
cat@mend.org, (918) 694-4325 (HEAL)

M.E.N.D.–Greater Houston Area

Kingwood Area, Texas:
Meets the 2nd Thursday at 6:30 PM
Lone Star College Kingwood
Classroom Building A (CLA) Rm 113
20000 Kingwood Dr.
Kingwood, TX 77339.
Director: Nikisha Perry
nikisha@mend.org, (346) 235-4714

M.E.N.D.–MidMichigan

Meets the 1st Tuesday, at 7:00 PM
Ashman Plaza
713 Ashman Street
Midland, Michigan 48640
Director: Karen Kilbourn
karen@mend.org, (989) 577-5755

M.E.N.D.–East Valley, Arizona

Meets the 2nd Thursday, at 6:30 PM
Queen Creek Library
Edward Abbey room
21802 S Ellsworth Rd
Queen Creek, Arizona 85142
Director: Danielle Radler
danielle@mend.org, (602) 699-6228

M.E.N.D.–Chicagoland, Illinois

Meets the 1st Tuesday at 7:00 PM
St Peter Lutheran Church
202 E Schaumburg Road
Schaumburg, Illinois 60194
Director: Sara Hintz
saraann@mend.org, (630) 267-9134

Coming Soon!

M.E.N.D.–Austin

Contact Tenessa Henderson at
tenessa@mend.org for more information

M.E.N.D.–Greater Houston Area

satellite in the Richmond area
Contact Emily Diamond at
emily@mend.org for more information

Subsequent pregnancy group

meets the 4th Tuesday
from 7:30 - 8:30 PM via Zoom.
Please visit www.mend.org to join.
Led by Marisa Perry:
marisa@mend.org
For families who are considering
becoming pregnant or are currently
pregnant after a loss.

Online Support

M.E.N.D.–

Nationwide Online Support Group

Held the 3rd Thursday at 8:00 PM (CST)
Please visit <https://www.mend.org/virtual-support-group-links>

Men of M.E.N.D.

Held the 3rd Monday at 8:00 PM (CST)
to join, contact,
Director: Matt McGhee
Matt@mend.org
Facebook Group:
www.facebook.com/groups/MENofMEND



The Garden of Hope is a place of peace and solace where families can come for a quiet time of reflection, prayer, or even to celebrate the life of their loved one.

The Garden of Hope was established by M.E.N.D. in 2016, and is located on property of Calvary Church in Irving, Texas.

You can remember your loved one by purchasing a brick in the Garden of Hope. Brick purchases can be made at <https://www.mend.org/garden-of-hope>. Bricks purchased by August 1, 2023, will be installed prior to the Walk to Remember in October 2023.



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Go to smile.amazon.com and set Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death as your charity! It's so simple!

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We appreciate your support!