

## ▶ Monthly Newsletter

### Ways We Have Remembered Our Babies

Volume 2, Issue 1, January/February 1997

#### *Table of Contents*

- [Remembering Our Babies](#)
- [Ways We Remember Our Babies](#)
- [Resource Reviews](#)
- [Parent Panel Shares Experiences](#)
- [Ideas for Remembering Your Baby](#)
- [Home Free](#)
- [Book Request](#)
- [In Loving Memory](#)
- [Future Newsletter Topics/Submission Deadlines](#)



*Praying today that  
in the silent moments  
you will find peace  
in knowing God's  
promises are true.*

[Acknowledgements](#)

### ▶ Remembering Our Babies

M.E.N.D. would like to wish everyone a happy new year. With the holidays now behind us, hopefully we can all relax and prepare for a fresh, new beginning. For some, 1996 was filled with heartache and sorrow; for others it brought yet another anniversary of our baby's death along with other dates that were filled with bittersweet memories. I pray 1997 will bring all of us hope and continued comfort as we journey through life without our beloved children.

In this issue we will focus on how we and others can make memories of our babies. I think we sometimes wonder if anyone still remembers we have a child who is no longer with us but whom we will always deeply love. I am continually touched when someone acknowledges the existence of my son, Jonathan, and has not forgotten the little boy I once carried in my womb.

Some of you may want to commemorate your baby but aren't sure how or what to do. So to help you with this endeavor, several women have graciously shared their own keepsake and remembrance ideas that they and their families have created. As you read them, hopefully it will give you a place to start for making memories that will last a lifetime. And remember, there is no *normal* way to reminisce your loss. You should never worry what others may think; do what is most meaningful to you.

Rebekah Mitchell

## Ways We Remember Our Babies

- [Sandy Tennyson, Seattle, Washington](#)
- [Stacey Bunnell, Austin, Texas](#)
- [Mindy Haines, Millersville, Maryland](#)
- [Jeanette Wayne, Winston-Salem, North Carolina](#)
- [Lynne Böer, Duncanville, Texas](#)
- [Julie Baima, Macon, Georgia](#)

[Return to the Table of Contents](#) 

### **Sandi Tennyson**

Our daughter, Melanie, was diagnosed with Trisomy 18 by amniocentesis at 22 weeks gestation. Since T.- 18 is incompatible with life," we began preparing for her death even before she was born. Melanie lived eight weeks after being born at full term. Perhaps having those six months of knowing she would die graced us with being able to celebrate and honor her life and her death in some very special ways.

The memorial mass for Melanie was bittersweet. Just one week prior to her funeral, Melanie had been baptized at Mass in front of the same parish community. The familiar ritual of a procession, two readings, a homily, and Eucharist provided much comfort for all of us that day.

Two weeks after her death we held an open house. We invited our friends and family to write down their memories of her short life and bring it with them to the open house. We received many beautifully written cards and letters, songs, and audio tapes, making it clear to us how much Melanie's short life touched others in a very profound way. Months later, we still would receive letters and poems that people were finally able to put pen to paper and write. What a gift those words were to us!!

One month after Melanie's death, our friend, Anna, who is originally from Ireland, came over to the house with a home-cooked meal and stayed to share dinner with us. Anna told us that in Ireland there is a tradition called the Month's Mind, where Mass is held and prayers are said for the deceased one month after their death. In our cases we simply shared a meal, gave thanks for her short life, and shared memories of Melanie.

For nearly two years, on each month anniversary of her death, I would honor my daughter's life by setting a couple of hours aside to be reverent, to remember her, and I would visit her grave. I would take a single rose and offer it as a symbol of my everlasting love. The cemetery became a place of peace for me and a symbol of healing. Babies are buried in rows at Calvary Cemetery. The first time I saw a new grave next to hers I was devastated, reliving her burial, and the pain of her loss, all over again. Now, three years later, there are many babies who died and were buried after her. I am witness to my own healing process as I note that now I welcome the new burial sites with a touch of sadness, but with an open heart and a sense of peace.

Sandi Tennyson, Seattle, Washington  
In loving memory of her daughter, Melanie  
11/18/93 - 1/14/94.

## **Stacey Bunnell**

My name is Stacey and I lost my son, Cody, at 24 weeks in August 1991 due to an infection after my water broke. Every holiday and birthday is difficult, but in the last five years I have come up with things that help me remember the precious life that I had growing inside of me for 24 of the most memorable weeks of my life.

On every birthday, I light a candle and sit by myself and just think of everything that I went through most of which I have learned from my family --who was there when Cody was born. I was in shock so I don't remember a whole lot but I do remember how beautiful he was and except for his coloring due to lack of oxygen, he looked so perfect. The memories I will carry with me forever are the feelings of him moving inside of me and hearing his heart beat for the first time. I also have a teddy bear with a corsage with Cody's name on it sitting in a chair in my bedroom that I hug and talk to on Cody's birthday.

Every Christmas my mom and I buy an ornament for the tree in Cody's memory and I also have a small Christmas tree that I used to put on Cody's grave before I moved to Austin. Now I will put it in one of my flower pots at Christmas. I have also done apple ornaments with everyone in my family's name and birth date on them. I have given a set to my grandmother and my mother with their family's names and birth dates. This year I will add one to my tree for Taylor, the baby I lost due to an ectopic pregnancy March 17, 1996 and I will give one to my mother and grandmother. I felt that Taylor deserved a name and a place in my family even though I lost him/her so early. This year I will add one more ornament to my tree and I will have one more Angel to talk with in heaven. I will also light a candle and cry a lot on March 17 which I will always think of as Taylor's own very special day.

Stacey Bunnell, Austin, Texas  
In loving memory of Cody, born and died 8/13/91  
and baby Taylor 3/17/96 (Ectopic pregnancy).

## **Mindy Haines**

On September 1, 1996, my husband and I were extremely excited to learn that we were expecting our second child. We had been trying to conceive for a few months and really didn't expect to be successful that month.

My first pregnancy was normal and yielded a very healthy, beautiful little girl that we named Amanda Lauren. She was born on May 2, 1994, four days before my birthday. Our second child was due to arrive on May 8, 1997. I was excited that we would be having Three birthdays so close together.

At 14 weeks LMP (last menstrual period), I began to notice very mild spotting when I urinated. I was very concerned and was immediately called in for an ultrasound. My OB didn't think anything was wrong, but she wanted to calm me down. I actually went into the ultrasound very excited, expecting to leave with beautiful black and white photos of our baby. Instead, I walked

out in tears. We learned during the ultrasound that I had a "missed miscarriage." I was devastated.

I've come to think of my lost child as our guardian angel in heaven. My family has this special little being watching over us now. We will truly miss that child although we only had a few weeks to get used to him/her. In memory of our "lost angel," I purchased a gold pendant. It is a baby angel, sitting sideways, holding a bird. It is a tangible remembrance for me. Very few people know its meaning, but my child in heaven will always know that I will have him/her near my heart and will never forget. It has helped me in my healing!! There will always be heartache but it eases with time!

Mindy Haines, Millersville, Maryland  
In loving memory of her "lost angel",  
Miscarried 10/15/96.

[Return to the List of Ways We Remember](#) 

## **Jeanette Wayne**

As my beloved Olivia's first birthday drew near, I felt an incredibly strong need to do everything I possibly could to honor her by making her day very special and meaningful. After much thought, I finally decided what I wanted to do...

I bought a very special birthday cake for her (double decker chocolate, of course). I decorated it myself with the tiny baby rattles, a little rocking horse, and a baby bracelet that had been the cake toppers from my baby shower. I placed a "#1" birthday candle in the cake and wrote "We love you Olivia" across the bottom. It was the perfect birthday cake. I also wanted to set a perfect table to accompany the cake, so I gathered up all of Olivia's treasures. First, I framed one of her pictures in a beautiful silver frame that one of my sisters had given me and I set it next to the cake. I even bought little balloons to place around the table. Then I carefully arranged all of the wonderful cards and gifts that loved ones had given in honor of Olivia's birthday.

I received the most incredible gifts. Another of my dear sisters hand-crafted a lovely little banner onto which she painted Olivia's tiny footprints and the words, "A precious gift." She also gave me a beautiful little angel pin made of emeralds, which is Olivia's birthstone, and diamonds, which is the birthstone of our second baby whom we lost to miscarriage. One of my friends also gave me a darling angel pin that she thought looked like Olivia would have. My whole family gave me an exquisite Mother's ring that is heart-shaped and also has an emerald and a diamond in it. I wept over every one of these priceless, loving gifts. They each mean EVERYTHING to me because they honor and memorialize my beloved daughter and I will cherish these precious gifts for the rest of my life.

My husband and I searched high and low for our gift for Olivia. It was of utmost importance that we find the MOST perfect gift for our sweet angel baby. We finally decided on a tiny gold-braided baby's ring. I wear this ring on the necklace that holds my precious locket of Olivia's picture and the inscription, "Our beloved Olivia Grace, 5/11/95." Without a doubt, there isn't a more valuable necklace in existence.

I arranged all of these treasures around the table and took pictures that I have placed in Olivia's

baby book. Then I lit the birthday candle and my husband and I both made a great big wish and blew it out together. We both wished for the same thing -- another child to love and cherish and then we ate a piece of the delicious cake, and talked about our memories of Olivia.

Doing these simple yet meaningful things made me feel close to her somehow, and I believe that she looked down from heaven and smiled at her Mommy and Daddy's efforts to love and honor her on her birthday. And that brought such comfort to my soul.

Jeanette Wayne, Winston-Salem, North Carolina  
In loving memory of Olivia Grace, Stillborn 5/11/95  
and Raby Wayne, Miscarried 4/20 96.

[Return to the List of Ways We Remember](#) 

## **Lynne Böer**

We have many ways we and others have remembered our son, Michael Joseph, that are really special to me.

My sister arranged for the rest of my family to go together and buy a "Birthstone Babies" necklace that included Michael's as well as our two living children's birthstones. I LOVE IT and wear it often. It helps me feel a little closer to him and serves as a quiet reminder to others that I have three children - not two.

Another way I have remembered Michael is by making two shadow boxes. In them, I have arranged the newborn shirt and one of the booties that we had bought for him to wear, the sea shell that he would have been baptized with had he been born alive, the hospital bracelet with the date and time he was stillborn, a toy that we had bought for him, flowers from the funeral, the measuring tape from the hospital with his weight and length written on it, the bassinet card with all the usual information that belongs on it (i.e. name, date, time, length, weight, doctor's name, etc.), and his hat from the hospital.

I have also made a scrap book that holds all the cards we received from people as well as anything and just about everything that has anything to do with Michael (i.e. death certificate, obituaries, funeral program, flower cards, chromosome karyotype, poems and other items used on the memorial table at the funeral, birth certificate, etc. etc. etc.). It's nice to be able to pull it out from time to time and remember all that we've been through and that Michael was real. He really did exist if only for such a short time.

Another thing I've done is to create a collage of pictures using a multi-picture frame. It holds about 20 pictures and includes pictures of the medical staff and our family members who were with us during labor and delivery, pictures of me pregnant with Michael, pictures at the funeral, and other pictures taken of events happening during the few short months of Michael's life and death. It's a nice concise pictorial review of the life and death of our son.

At the funeral, one of my sisters brought many blue and white balloons for everyone to release and every month on the 17th we go to the cemetery and take flowers and balloons. My other two children draw pictures or notes on the balloons or attach them to the string of the balloon and send it to their brother in heaven. They really seem to enjoy this way to remember Michael.

For Christmas, we bought a couple of special ornaments for our tree that will remind us of Michael every year and we bought gifts for a child who would be close to Michael's age and donated them to charity. My parents also plan to purchase a special ornament each year to remember their grandson in heaven.

All of these keep the memories of Michael alive in our hearts.

We love you, Michael, and will remember you always!

Lynne Boer, Duncanville, Texas  
In loving memory of Michael,  
Stillborn 7/17/96.

[Return to the List of Ways We Remember](#) 

### **Julie Baima**

I ordered a memory book from Centering Corporation called LITTLE FOOTPRINTS, A SPECIAL BABY'S MEMORY BOOK. In the book, I have pictures of my baby, footprints, handprints, lock of hair, hospital bracelet, a copy of the obituary, poems, cards, and accounts of the birth, funeral, memories, and feelings my husband and I had and are still having.

In honor of my baby for Christmas, I am donating a children's Christmas book to the local library. They place a book plate in the front of the book telling who the book is in memory of and who donated the book. My best friend is donating I'll love You Forever to the library in my baby's memory. I also plan to buy a Christmas gift for a five month old (our daughter would have been 5 1/2 months old at Christmas) and place it under the Christmas tree at church. The gift will be given to a needy family.

My daughter, Ashley Brooke, has a memory marker on her grave. The bronze marker is a 6 x 6 with a marble base that is 8 x 8. The marker has a bow at the top and a rose at the bottom. It reads Ashley Brooke Baima, July 9, 1996.

Julie Baima, Macon, Georgia  
In loving memory of Ashley Brooke,  
Stillborn 7/9/96.


[Return to the List of Ways We Remember](#) 

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## Resource Reviews

- [A Deeper Shade of Grace \(Book\)](#)
- [Mommy, Please Don't Cry \(Children\)](#)
- [Resolve Through Sharing \(National Organization\)](#)
- [Home Free \(Music\)](#)
- [Centering Corporation \(Additional Resources\)](#)
- [Hygeia Online \(Internet\)](#)

**Note:** M.E.N.D. has no financial interest in any of these product reviews. The purpose in reviewing them here is to let others know what we have found to be helpful in our own situations so that you may find some comfort in these resources as well.


[Return to the Table of Contents](#) 

### **[A Deeper Shade of Grace](#)**

by Bernadette Keaggy. Published by Bethany House Publishers.

*Bernadette Keaggy*, wife of Christian recording artist Phil Keaggy, openly shares her struggles of three pregnancy losses due to incompetent cervix. Keaggy candidly writes about the hurt and confusion she experienced during the years of her losses that caused her to search deep within her soul for answers. Although no simple solutions are discovered, she brings the reader to a spiritual understanding of trusting the Lord through all sufferings.

Keaggy concludes, "When there are many questions, and the answers are vague or nil, it causes us to stretch a little further to open ourselves to God until we understand that there are deeper shades of grace." *A Deeper Shade of Grace* is published by Bethany House Publishers and can be purchased or ordered at most Christian Bookstores.

[Return to the List of Resources](#) 

### **[Mommy, Please Don't Cry](#)**

by Linda DeYmaz. Illustrated by Sabrina Smith. Vision House Publishing.

*Mommy, Please Don't Cry, Tender Words for Broken Hearts* is written in memory of the author's own little girl. A simple book with brightly colored illustrations, the author hopes it will help quench your innermost desire to know that your child is alive in Heaven. The book is written from the standpoint of a child telling his/her mommy what heaven is like.

Included in the back of the book are the author's thoughts about heaven with excerpts from the Bible that refer to heaven. As well, there are a few pages in the back to write down your own thoughts and feelings.

You should be able to purchase or order this book from a Christian bookstore or you can contact the publisher at:

Vision House Publishing  
1217 N.E. Burnside, Suite 403  
Gresham, OR 97030

[Return to the List of Resources](#) 

### **[Resolve Through Sharing](#)**

*Resolve Through Sharing, Bereavement Services*. For information about an RTS support group in your area, contact their national headquarters at:

RTS

1910 South Avenue  
LaCrosse, WI 54601  
(800) 36209567, Ext. 4747  
(608) 791-4747

[Return to the List of Resources](#) 

### **Home Free**

Wayne Watson, Word, Inc.

Watson's *Home Free* compact-disc (CD) can be found at most Christian bookstores. We invite you to take comfort in the [Home Free lyrics](#) and pray they minister to you as they have to us.

[Return to the List of Resources](#) 

### **Centering Corporation**

*Centering Corporation* has many excellent resources. You can order a catalog of available resources by contacting them at:

Centering Corporation  
1531 N. Saddle Creek Rd.  
Omaha, NE 68104  
(402) 553-1200  
(402) 553-0507 Fax

[Return to the List of Resources](#) 

### **Hygeia, Online Journal**

by Michael R. Berman, M.D. Journal for Pregnancy and Neonatal Loss.

*Hygeia* is listed as [An Online Journal for Pregnancy and Neonatal Loss - A New Resource for Women's Health and Healing](#). Dr. Berman intends *Hygeia* to be an interactive online journal with an approach to healing via three avenues:

- The Mind through education and information.
- The Spirit through the emotions of poetry.
- Communication through the sharing of feelings and experiences.

[Return to the List of Resources](#) 

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## **Parent Panel Shares Experiences**

Lynne Böer, the editor of this newsletter, and her husband, Paul, were invited to be part of a bereaved parent panel for a [Resolve Through Sharing](#) training seminar in Dallas, Texas. They accepted the invitation and on November 5, 1996 they, along with two other bereaved couples, were given the opportunity to share thoughts, feelings, ideas, and experiences with healthcare professionals from Louisiana, Texas, and Oklahoma.



Not only were they able to offer constructive criticism in dealing with bereaved families, they were also able to commend the efforts of hospital staff in attempting to make a tragic situation a little easier. Thanks Lynne and Paul for a job well done for speaking on behalf of all of us who know firsthand the accolades as well as the necessary changes of which the healthcare system needs to be aware.

[Return to the Table of Contents](#) 

## Ideas for Remembering Your Baby

Here are a few ideas for ways you can remember your baby:

- Plan a memorial service.
- Buy a Birthstone Babies necklace, Mother's Ring, Angel Pin, or other appropriate jewelry.
- Buy a special ornament for your Christmas tree.
- Buy an age appropriate gift for your baby and give it to charity at Christmas and/or on their birth/death date.
- Make a donation to the organization of your choice in memory of your baby.
- Make a sign for your yard to commemorate the anniversary of your baby's birth/death.
- Donate a brick at a school, church, library, etc.
- Donate a children's or pregnancy loss book to your local library.
- Attend a "Walk to Remember."
- Plan a special meal and/or open house with family/friends to celebrate a special date (i.e. birth/death, due date, anniversary date, etc.)
- Create a special place to keep or display your baby's things (blanket, outfit, hospital bracelets, other mementos, etc.). An example of a special place could be a shadow box, small toy chest, curio, etc.
- Make a scrap book.
- Create or buy a special frame for your baby's picture(s).
- Keep a photo album or create a photo collage.
- Write poetry to or about your baby.
- Buy a baby book.
- Make a "birthday" cake.
- Visit the cemetery and take flowers or release a balloon to your baby in heaven with a message on it.
- Reach out to others who have lost a baby to share your experiences.
- Light a candle on special days.
- Buy a special reminder of your baby for your work space.
- Once a month, on the anniversary date, buy fresh flowers. Take a couple of flowers out and put them on your baby's grave. Take the remainder home to enjoy and remember your baby each time you see them.

[Return to the Table of Contents](#) 

*M.E.N.D. would like to dedicate this song to our friends, Randy and DaLana Hambrick-Barsanti whose twins, Joshua and Jeromy, were stillborn November 21, 1996 due to anencephaly. And to all the parents whose babies are indeed, Home Free.*

### **Home Free**

I'm trying hard not to think you unkind  
but Heavenly Father, if You know my hear  
Surely You can read my mind  
Good people underneath a sea of grief  
Some get up and walk away  
Some will find ultimate relief

### **CHORUS**

Home free-eventually  
At the ultimate healing  
We will be home free  
Home free  
Oh, I've got a feeling  
At the ultimate healing  
We will be home free

Out in the corridors we pray for life  
A mother for her baby  
A husband for his wife  
Sometimes the good die young  
It's sad, but true  
And while we pray for one more heartbeat  
The real comfort is in You

Pain has little mercy  
Suffering's no respecter of age  
Of race or position  
I know every prayer gets answered  
But the hardest one to pray is slow to come  
Oh Lord, not mine  
But Your will be done

*Words and music by Wayne Watson.  
Used by permission from Word, Inc.*

[Return to the Table of Contents](#) 

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## **Book Request**

If you have any books relating to pregnancy and infant loss that you would like to donate to M.E.N.D., it would be greatly appreciated. These books will be made available to those who attend our monthly share meetings. Please take the liberty of writing "in memory" of your baby inside the book so others can be reminded

that the book was helpful to someone else in their time of sorrow. Books should be mailed to M.E.N.D. Refer to the page entitled [Contact M.E.N.D.](#) for the mailing address.

[Return to the Table of Contents](#) 

## In Loving Memory...

### *Jonathan Daniel Mitchell*

Stillborn June 24, 1995  
Cord Accident

Donation in memory of  
Jonathan by his parents,  
Rebekah and Byron Mitchell  
and brother, Byron, Jr.

Donation in memory of  
Jonathan by grandparents,  
Dennis and Sue Brewer, Sr.

Donation in memory of  
Jonathan by aunt and uncle,  
Rachael and Mark  
McClelland.

Donation in memory of  
Jonathan by Brewer and  
Brewer, Attorneys at Law.

### *Rebekah Ann Middlebrook*

Stillborn December 9, 1993  
Cord Accident

Parents Katherine & David  
Middlebrook and brothers,  
William & Tucker.

Donation in memory of  
Rebekah by Brewer and  
Brewer, Attorneys at Law.

### *Michael Joseph Böer*

Stillborn July 17, 1996  
Trisomy 18

Donation in memory of  
Michael by his parents, Lynne

### *Grateful Acknowledgement*

M.E.N.D. gratefully acknowledges 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 our newsletter, web-site, and other services to bereaved parents free of charge. Please refer to the page entitled [Contributions](#) for more information on where to send your donations and what information to include.  
**Thank you so much!**

and Paul Böer and siblings,  
Paul, Jr. & Maggie.

Donation in memory of  
Michael by his grandparents,  
Jo and Dennis Askew.

***Joshua and Jeromy Barsanti***

Stillborn November 21, 1996  
Anencephaly

Beloved twins of Randy and  
DaLana Hambrick-Barsanti.

Donation in memory of Joshua  
and Jeromy by Shirley  
Strickland.

***Griffen Douglas Lange***

Stillborn May 27, 1996  
Cord Accident

Donation in memory of  
Griffen by his parents, Stacey  
and Doug Lange.

***Cailey Elizabeth Ottinger***

Stillborn June 7, 1996

Parents Laurie and George  
Ottinger.

Donation in memory of Cailey  
by uncle and aunt, Rick and  
Trisha Williams.

[Return to the Table of Contents](#) 

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 **Future Newsletter Topics/Submission Deadlines**

**May/June Topic**


Mother's Day/Father's Day  
Deadline - March 1, 1997

**July/August Topic\***

Health Care Professionals and Loss  
Deadline - May 1, 1997

\*Note: For the July/August topic, we would like to invite health care professionals to write how a patient's loss has affected them.

*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. Refer to the page entitled [Subscriptions](#) for the appropriate address to send your submission.*

[Return to the Table of Contents](#) 

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This page was last updated June 29, 1997.

For Questions or Comments, e-mail [Rebekah Mitchell](#).  
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