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# Grandparents Views of Infant Loss

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## ● A Grandson's Gifts to His Grandmother

### *A Grandson's Gifts to His Grandmother*

June 24, 1995 will forever be etched in my memory. Our precious little grandson, Jonathan Daniel, was born. We had anticipated his birth with great joy. We realized that he was a miracle and gift from the Lord. His name, Jonathan, was chosen before his birth and means "a precious gift from God."

As I reflect on his still birth, tears still well up and flow from my eyes. Our family's hearts were broken and our grief was deep. We all felt numb and found it hard to comprehend that this beautiful baby with wispy, blond curls was lifeless in our arms. It seemed more unbelievable because he looked just like his big brother, Byron, Jr.

Even though we tried to comfort each other, every step we took was incredibly painful. I remember going to buy a little white christening gown with a matching hat for Jonathan. It was difficult to explain to the saleslady that it did not really matter about the size because this adorable outfit was going to be used for a burial service instead of a blessed dedication ceremony. It all seemed like a dream as we perfunctorily carried out the necessary arrangements for the graveside service.

In my deep sorrow, it was hard for me to feel the truth of God's love and promises. However, a lifetime of knowing Him had laid a strong foundation that supported all of us. I knew in my mind and heart a truth that went deeper than my pain - my trust in a heavenly Father that loved and cared for me. I remembered the song that had sustained me many other times. It spoke of trusting God's character even when we could not see His hands or know and understand His plans. We could still trust His heart. I knew that I could rely on God's grace, goodness, and comfort during this tragic and untimely loss of our grandson.

I began to realize that it is not the suffering that determines our destiny. It is our response to it. I observed Jonathan's parent, Byron and Rebekah, who like Job in the Bible, in no way deserved this calamity that had happened to them. However, like Job's experience, their intense suffering provided a background and opportunity for them to demonstrate their faith. They accepted God's will in their lives and relinquished their wills back to Him for His glory. What a maturing and growing process. They have been and are such examples to all of us. I am so proud of Byron and Rebekah. Out of their loss and suffering, they have responded by helping others. Rebekah is the founder and president of M.E.N.D. Byron is a strong

supporter and participant in this organization.

My grandchildren have given me many tangible gifts that I cherish and appreciate. However, little Jonathan Daniel, may have given his grandmother the greatest gifts of all. These are the intangible gifts that have enriched my life and deepened my faith in God. Several of Jonathan's gifts to me include:

- A greater awareness of life and God's divine creation. I no longer take the birth of a child for granted. I value each child as a heritage and gift from the Lord.
- A grateful and thankful heart for my other grandchildren and family members. They are priceless treasures to me.
- A deeper appreciation of Jonathan's "Big Brother" - Byron Lyle, Jr. and what he means to me. He is a remarkable child with enough energy and love for both brothers wrapped into one. He is handsome, bright, and talented in so many ways, especially sports. He is consistently the star of the soccer, basketball, and baseball teams even at the tender age of six.
- A different perspective of life. My focus has moved from the temporal more to the eternal values.
- A more personal view of heaven. All but one of Jonathan's great-grandmothers are in heaven with him. That makes heaven much more meaningful to me now.
- A stronger commitment to leave a legacy of faith and trust in God to my family. My testimony to Jonathan as well as to others is found in the words of a song sung recently at my dear mother's funeral - "Look for me for I will be there, too."

Thank you, Jonathan Daniel Mitchell, for the wonderful gifts you have given to me. Truly, you were a gift from God. As your grandmother, I will be eternally grateful for these gifts and their impact on my life.

I love you,

Mimi

*Marnie Mitchell  
Paternal Grandmother to  
Jonathan Daniel Mitchell  
Stillborn June 24, 1995*



## *From The Loving Heart of a Grandmother*

How do we measure the pain of grief during the death of a loved one? I say it is immeasurable. How long does the pain last? FOREVER...on this earth. However, we that are in Christ have the blessed assurance of knowing we will be with them again. Meanwhile, how do we face another day of this pain...that is so immeasurable: "by trusting in the Lord with all our heart and leaning not on our own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5) and knowing that our "God will give us His peace which passeth all our understanding." (Phillipians 4:7)

This truth has always been my rock and my salvation. Both of my wonderful parents, Daniel and Issoria Bell were preachers. They taught me well. I have always known, from personal experiences, that no matter what situations I faced God would "carry" me through. My mother was a wonderful role model for me, and still is. All my life I witnessed her strength from the Lord. (Exodus 15:2)

My parents had five children, two sons and three daughters. I am the youngest. They could share their pain of having to bury their precious baby...if they were here. Ruby Joyce, their fourth child, died when she was two months old. Her birth and death changed all of our lives. This was in the year of 1930. My mother would share how she thought she could not live another day. She knew she must for she still had Dad and the older three children to live for. "Everyone" told her Ruby Joyce was in heaven. This did not comfort her, nor did it ease her pain. She started reading the Bible, wanting to know more about this heaven everyone spoke of. And while doing so...became a believer and later...an ordained minister.

This all happened before I was born, four years after Ruby Joyce's death. Ruby Joyce was always included in our family. We would celebrate her birthdays the same as we did ours. The difference was in the way we celebrated. We were given big fun parties with lots of friends, gifts, birthday cakes, and games. Her birthdays were celebrated with Mother displaying her beautiful pictures and freshly written notes of love to her. We would visit her little grave with flowers and have family prayer together. I remember being very sad on her birthdays. Mother would comfort me by saying..."God is giving her a great big party in heaven." My parents are now in that glorious heaven...with Jesus...and, at last, their Ruby Joyce. I learned so much from them.

On Saturday, June 24, 1995, their teaching and my strong faith of believing "God would never leave me or forsake me" was put to the test. This became the darkest day of my life.

Only weeks before, my beautiful daughter, Rebekah, was put on bed rest by her doctors. Several years ago, she was diagnosed with a degenerative kidney disease, making her pregnancies high risk. She was in her 24th week of pregnancy with her second child, our beloved grandson, Jonathan Daniel. Her father and I were blessed to have them move in with us so we could, once again, share this time together. We had experienced this before, waiting for baby Bryon's birth. Byron, Jr., now six years old, was miraculously born at full term and very healthy! To God be the glory. Both, mother and son made medical history! We were praying for another miracle with Jonathan.

Rebekah is the youngest of our six children. She has a twin sister, Rachael, three more older sisters, and one older brother. Rebekah was a miracle baby. Rachael was born first and Rebekah 19 minutes later. I should have had a C-section during her birth, but it was too late. She fought for her little life and with all the prayers and her will to live, she was brought home when she was 13 days old. My praying mother spent endless hours every day at the hospital, only to be able to look through the glass window of the nursery until Rebekah was sent home. The rules of

the hospital were so different than they are today. I couldn't even go beyond the glass window. I thought I would die. God gave us our Rebekah and she is still a miracle today.

We shared three wonderful weeks together in our home before the doctors decided to hospitalize Rebekah. Her doctors were afraid she could go into kidney failure. They were thinking they should take the baby.

In high risk pregnancies, you have a lot of sonograms. I will forever be grateful for sonograms because I knew my darling grandson so well by then. Thanks to the wonderful doctor, and Byron and Rebekah for allowing me to share in this special time with them as I watched him grow, month by month. I watched his playful gymnastics. I saw him waving his little hands and feet and sucking his little fingers. I saw his beautiful little face and his adorable little nose. I saw him ALIVE...by way of sonograms.

Big brother, Byron, Jr. would get in bed with his mother and talk to Jonathan. Byron, Jr. knew how to make Jonathan respond! Jonathan would move rapidly, enjoying Lil' Byron's voice. He would move around when he placed a special little musical bear on Rebekah's tummy. He heard the music. I watched my own child, lovingly playing with Jonathan and Byron, Jr., her two sons. Daddy Byron would join in as well. He is my "son-in-love".

These were precious moments I will cherish forever. What we never expected happened. This had nothing to do with Rebekah's kidney disease, nor the fact that the doctors were planning to take Jonathan within a few very short days. We knew he would still be very premature. Prayer meetings were going all over the world for both mother and baby. The umbilical cord wrapped around his little body and he died in his mother's womb. They were taking Rebekah's and Jonathan's vital signs and did not pick up his heartbeat. They took their last sonogram and saw his little precious lifeless body. Rebekah had a C-section and we finally were able to hold our baby.

Jonathan was even more beautiful than I had imagined through my views of the sonograms. He was perfectly made and looked so much like his big brother! He looked like he was only sleeping.

I have never felt so much pain in my life as I saw my children, Rebekah and Byron, holding their little son who only lived in his mother's womb. Then, I had to see my precious three year old grandson trying to understand why his baby brother would not ever play with him again. My own pain, as grandmother, had to be dealt with as well. Actually, it all just became blended together.

We were able to kiss, hold, rock, and love Jonathan for a long time. I knew we were blessed by having these enduring hours with him. I cherish all the special favors we received. I truly believe they were from God. We needed to have that time with our baby. My entire family hurt. We still do.

I know that God is still faithful. I still trust Him. I still cry very easily when I think of Jonathan. He would be three years old now. Even though I have 14 beautiful grandchildren here to daily enjoy, my 15th grandbaby is deeply missed. I know Mother, Daddy, and Ruby Joyce have helped God in caring for Jonathan as well as my big brother who is also there now.

Just as my mother and dad turned their pain into helping others, I see Rebekah and Byron doing the same. God gave Rebekah the vision of M.E.N.D. Rebekah is my hero. I see her strength, the same strength my mother had. She and Byron are "care leaders," an outreach ministry of our

church, and have monthly meetings in their home. They are teachers, speakers, and are always helping others. They are loving parents to Byron, Jr.

Little Byron knows he has a baby brother in heaven and he will grow up as I did, sharing special times at Old Kit Cemetery where you will see a little gravestone with Ruby Joyce's name...then Issoria and Daniel Bell's gravestone (a double marker) in the middle, and another small gravestone with Jonathan Daniel Mitchell's name on the other side. ALL four are side by side. Only...they are not there...they are having a big party in heaven. We are all invited!

*Sue Brewer*  
*Maternal Grandmother "Ga Ga" to*  
*Jonathan Daniel Mitchell*  
*Stillborn June 24, 1995*



## ● **Grandparents Express Their Views**

### *Grandparents Express Their Views*

#### ● **Bonita Jackson**

While discussing with my daughter, Lori, how wonderful the M.E.N.D. program is for parents who have experienced an infant death, I mentioned how I thought grandparents also could benefit from expressing their feelings and their need for support. Although I think that the grief and emotions are probably very similar to parents, I also feel that there are a lot of differences. I am quite nervous about attempting to put my thoughts into words, but I will attempt to for the first time in three years.

My granddaughter, Sarah King, was stillborn on June 22, 1995, just a few days before her due date. I had planned on taking off work the next week to be at the hospital when she was born and to stay with my daughter and her husband to help when she came home. When the call came from Lori's doctor's office, I was prepared for them to tell me that she had gone into labor. I was not prepared for the nurse to tell me that Sarah was dead - that they could not hear her heartbeat. I had a very difficult time understanding what she was telling me - I asked her to repeat what she said to me, and still could not accept it. She told me that they were going to induce labor because they felt that it would be easier for my daughter (physically) than to perform a Cesarean, but emotionally it would be very difficult. She asked if I could come to Dallas immediately. Of course, I was totally in shock, but managed to call my husband, who quickly made arrangements for us to fly to Dallas (We live in Arkansas.). We were at the hospital in less than two hours. That began the most difficult experience of my life.

We were very fortunate to have a doctor, nurses, and a hospital staff who were so kind and understanding. In fact, I cannot express how thankful I am to one of the nurses. My mother, Sarah's great grandmother, who was 70 years old, was not sure if she could handle seeing Sarah after delivery. The nurse would not take "no." She took my mother's arm and physically took her into my daughter's room to see Sarah. With a stillborn, you have such limited time to see them, touch them, and perhaps, take pictures. We are very grateful that we were strong enough to share those precious moments with Lori and David. For me, the pain was intensified. The loss of Sarah was difficult enough, but at the same time, I was hurting for my daughter. Like all mothers,

if my daughter is in pain, I am in pain. We have always had such a close relationship, that all her life, most times I've been able to ease her pain with just a little understanding and comorting thoughts. In this situation, I felt completely helpless. I was having such a terrible time accepting it. How could I help my daughter?

The next few days were just a series of emotional instabilities for my daughter, my mother, myself, and of course, other family members. I prayed more than I have in my entire life, trying to find comfort and peace, and hopefully, some answers as to why Sarah had to die. I normally have two basic philosophies when I am adjusting to a difficult experience: 1) God has a reason for everything, and 2) you can find a positive in every negative. With regards to #1, I don't know why God needed Sarah - it is not our place to question Him, but I am sure she is a very, very special angel! I am still working on #2. The only positive so far is that I truly realize how thankful I am to God for the precious healthy, happy grandchildren I have, Brooks (five years old) and Kaylee (two years old) and for all my children and family.

My son-in-law, David, was absolutely wonderful. Bless his heart, he took on the responsibility of making all the arrangements for the funeral and handled every detail just perfectly. My daughter was just not able to even talk about Sarah, much less make any decisions. And, I was so afraid I would say or make the wrong decision, I wasn't any help at all. My mother and I wanted Sarah to have something special from us, so we bought the smallest Bible that we could find and wrote a message to Sarah inside. David placed the little Bible in the coffin. I will never ever forget the last moment I saw our precious "little angel" before the coffin was closed. I could hardly make myself leave her because I knew that it would be the last time (at least on this earth).

June 22, 1998 would have been Sarah's third birthday and, although my grief may have softened, I still think of her every day. When I make plans with my grandchildren or talk about my grandchildren (which all grandmothers know is extremely often), especially around their birthdays, holidays, etc., I always think of Sarah. I cry, and then I smile when I think of how sweet and beautiful she would be. I wear a ring in her memory, and I treasure the few mementos I have from the funeral. My daughter and I are doing a lot better talking about Sarah, which helps me in thinking I can finally comfort her some. Although I can sometimes talk about her without completely breaking into tears, my heart still aches to hold her or hear her little voice. With the help of God and the comfort and support of my family, I hope as time goes by, I will smile more than I cry when I think of her, knowing that some day I will get to hold her and talk with her when I go to heaven.

God bless you!

*Bonita Jackson*  
*Maternal Grandmother to*  
*Sarah Ann King*  
*Stillborn June 22, 1995*

● [\*\*Mary Helen Mathews\*\*](#)

I thought our family was so blessed with eight grandchildren and two great grandchildren, but we soon found we were to be more blessed when a granddaughter told us she was expecting. And, about the same time, we knew that our daughter, Joe Ellen, and her husband, Scott, were undergoing fertility testing. This was so exciting for our family because after several years of marriage and no children, we didn't think there would ever be a baby for them. But, God had plans all the time -- they just didn't know! The granddaughter went through her pregnancy with a

breeze, but Jo Ellen was sick from the beginning. We had so many people praying for her. They all began to know her as their number one prayer "project." Then to the surprise of all the family and prayer warriors, we learned that she was carrying twins -- we couldn't be happier -- now 10 grandchildren!

Several months into the pregnancy, though, they learned that something was possibly wrong with one of the babies. They had also learned that they were boys! The remaining months were agony for everyone. We called on everyone we knew for prayer. Our phones rang every day with inquiries about them. Two ladies from our Sunday school called and prayed every day. A friend from San Angelo would sometimes call twice a day to check on them.

On January 20, our granddaughter delivered a beautiful healthy girl. Our family was so thankful and joyful - what a wonderful blessing. Three weeks later, Jo Ellen and Scott were on their way - what an exciting and yet, fearful time this was. February 14th - a very special day for very special babies.

For a time, we were led to believe she had delivered two healthy boys, but within a matter of a few hours, little Jared was placed in I.C.U. We all waited and prayed. Then, he was sent to Children's Hospital and prepared for surgery. As a family, we were all there for Jo Ellen and Scott. Jared did well in this surgery and we were all so thankful and hopeful now. But, we soon learned he would undergo open-heart surgery. This lasted for nine hours. I didn't know nine hours could be so long. Somehow, he survived this and was placed in I.C.U. again. For two weeks, we all watched his Mom and Dad and prayed for their strength as they stood over night and day praying, loving, and holding this tiny one hooked up to so many tubes we couldn't count them all.

After another week, he was moved to a private room and what a joyful day that was. Our hopes soared and this beautiful baby, with the biggest eyes I've ever seen, was able to look at us and smile. Our hearts were so touched. On one day, Jo Ellen brought his brother, Hunter, and placed him in the crib beside Jared. As tiny and frail as he was, he managed to inch himself close and even hold Hunter's tiny hand and put it in his mouth. I'm thankful pictures were taken of this. This was such a special time for all and Jo Ellen and Scott were told he would be strong enough to go home the next day.

What a setback and shock it was that day, after a sonogram, to learn there were some holes in his heart and he would need another open-heart surgery. They were told this one would not be as serious as the previous one and after another six to seven hours, he was in I.C.U. again. After seeing him and knowing he was hooked up again to all the tubes and seemed to be all right, we went home for the night. Jo Ellen and Hunter went home also. Scott and his Dad stayed at the hospital. Scott went in to check on him and stayed with him a long while, then walked out and had just sat down when he was called back. There was a Code Blue. Unbelievably, he was all right just a minute before. We were all called back, but he was gone by the time we all got there. I will never forget that night. Our hearts were broken and all the family in shock - our beautiful, big-eyed, little Angel was gone.

We still don't understand, and maybe we never will, but as a grandmother, I'm so thankful for the short time I got to know this special baby that has touched so many lives. That special place in my heart will never be the same without him. His brother, Hunter, is growing and developing so fast. We are all so thankful for this precious one. I think he already knows his grandmother has a special room in her heart for him also. We are all learning that God has a reason for all things and that He is our strength and comfort.

*Mary Helen Mathews  
Maternal Grandmother to  
Jared Mathew Slough  
February 14, 1998 - March 20, 1998*



● **Luke 1:78-79**

*Luke 1:78-79*

"In the tender compassion of our God  
the dawn from on high  
shall break upon us,  
To shine on those  
who dwell in darkness and  
the shadow of death  
and to guide our feet  
into the way of peace."



● **Dear Michael**

*Dear Michael*

Dear Michael,

For your sake, it is nice to know that your spirit is now free of its containment and is soaring with the angels, abounding in happiness unknown to us.

It is for us to suffer the loss of your smile, your laughter, your character traits, and what might have been.

Love,

Grandad

*Written July 17, 1996  
by Dennis Askew  
Grandad to Michael Joseph Böer  
Stillborn July 17, 1996*



● **Baby of My Dreams**

*Baby of My Dreams*



*by Jennifer Gates*

Many years ago  
I caught a glimpse of you  
Drifting through my dreams.  
Baby-faced and cherub-checked,  
Reflected in moonbeams.

Time drifted on  
As day to day  
A fleeting glimmer you remained.  
Other duties, though, they came first  
Before your place in my life could be claimed.

Dreams, hearts, and minds  
Finally merged as one.  
Deciding to start a family,  
We were blessed to conceive you, our son.

As the hazy vision I once had  
Became clearer in my mind,  
I believed my dream was coming true --  
You, at last I would find.

But on a sun-drenched day,  
I was haunted by death  
As inside my own body,  
You drew your last breath.

Though you are gone,  
I still catch glimpses of you  
In honey-light moonbeams.  
My firstborn, my sweet child...  
Baby of my dreams.

*In loving memory of Andrew Preston Gates  
Died (in utero) August 2, 1997  
Born August 4, 1997  
Son of Tom and Jennifer Gates*

*Written July 17, 1996  
by Dennis Askew  
Grandad to Michael Joseph Böer  
Stillborn July 17, 1996*



● **Subsequent Births After Loss**

*Subsequent Births After Loss*

● ***Andrew John Mitchell***

Kathy & Corey Mitchell  
proudly welcome  
***Andrew John Mitchell***  
born December 30, 1997  
at 1:30 p.m.  
Andrew weighed  
8 lbs. 8 oz.  
and measured  
20 1/2" long.  
The Mitchells lovingly  
remember their three lost angels,  
(March 1996, October 1996,  
and December 1996)

● ***Sarina Raquel Solomon***

Rebecca & Avi Solomon  
of North Miami Beach, FL  
are happy to announce  
the birth of their daughter,  
***Sarina Raquel Solomon***.  
She was born on June 2, 1998.  
They lovingly remember  
their other three children,  
Baby Solomon, stillborn October 1994,  
Baby Solomon, miscarried August 1995,  
& Baby Solomon, stillborn October 1996.

● ***Clayton Andrew Barnett***

DeAnne & Lee Barnett  
and son, Kyle,  
of Campbell, TX  
proudly welcome  
***Clayton Andrew Barnett***,  
born April 24, 1998.  
Clayton measured 20" long  
and weighed 7 lbs. 7 oz.  
The Claytons remember with love  
Cole Avry Barnett,  
stillborn April 13, 1997  
due to heart malformations.

● ***Shea Lauren Pike***

Lisa & Christopher Pike  
of San Diego, CA  
proudly announce

the birth of their daughter,  
***Shea Lauren Pike***,  
born May 9, 1998 at 7:54 p.m.  
while remembering with love her brother,  
Christopher Franklin Pike,  
stillborn due to cord accident  
February 1, 1997.  
Shea weighed 6 lbs. 2 oz.  
and was 18 1/2" long.  
"Mommy and Daddy give grateful  
thanks to our Lord for seeing us  
through this pregnancy and delivering  
to us our precious daughter."

● ***Alison Taylor Gentry***

Shary & John Gentry  
lovingly welcome their daughter,  
***Alison Taylor Gentry***,  
born July 16, 1998  
at 8:30 a.m.  
She weighed 7 lbs. 4 oz.  
and measured 21" long.  
They remember with love  
their two precious babies,  
Elizabeth,  
stillborn August 24, 1996  
and Chris,  
miscarried May 10, 1997.



*Untitled*

A guardian angel  
Flew down from above,  
To teach me a lesson  
About the powers of love.  
She whispers to me,  
Take a hold of my hand,  
There are so many things  
I wish you to understand.  
About the powers of love,  
And all it can do,  
To someone who needs  
To share it with you.  
A pat on the back,  
A kind smile on your face,

Can make someone's life,  
A much brighter place.  
It doesn't take much,  
To show someone you care,  
To give them the love,  
God gave you to share.  
So please keep in mind,  
All the powers you possess,  
To grace someone's life,  
When they're in distress.  
You've been put on this earth  
To bestow the powers of love,  
And with those final words,  
She disappeared up above.

*Author Unknown*



## Dear Grandma and Grandpa

*Dear Grandma and Grandpa*

Dear Grandma and Grandpa,

My mom and dad are very sad, and I know that you are, too. I've heard your cries, and I just wish that I could comfort you.

You're asking "*Why*" I had to die? Wishing it were you. You say you've lived; I really never did, why me instead of you?

Oh, Grandpa, how I'll miss your songs and rides upon your knee. Grandma, I look at you and I know how special my smiles to you would be.

I have one small request I hope that you'll do for me. It's a gift for Mom and Dad, given from me and you.

Please, kiss my Mom and hug my Dad; let your tears mingle as one. Listen to them as they talk about the person I would have become. Circle them within your arms and keep on holding tight. Having your support and love will help them make it through the silent nights.

I'm smiling at you, sleepy in your arms of love. So, I'll say good night to you from my bed in heaven above.

Hugs and Kisses,  
Your Grandson or Granddaughter

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## *Double Grief*

The death of my grandchild  
And the grief of my son  
Pull on my heart strings  
And I am undone.

In secret I mourn beyond relief  
For I have been given a double grief.  
God, help me to deal with the pain and sorrow  
Of living without the hope of tomorrow.

*By Andy Cipriano  
Tallahassee, Florida*

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## **Grandparents: Forgotten Grievers?**

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### *Grandparents: Forgotten Grievers?*

I was leading a grief support group, as I have been doing for the past eight years. This particular group was an unusual mix of losses. Although each one takes on a character of its own, this group's flavor was definitely variety. I struggled to find the right words to soothe the hearts of two parents, two grandmothers, a granddaughter, a sibling, and a wife - all at the same time.

We had been meeting for several weeks and I had become well acquainted with a couple who were grieving the death of their teenage son. The boy's grandmother, who was visiting from out of town as the parents struggled to adjust to their loss, attended each of the meetings with them. Each week the parents poured out their pain as the grandmother patted them and lovingly and daintily dabbed at her own eyes.

At first, I thought how wonderful it was that she was able to be with them and how blessed they were to have her to lean on in their time of need. I became cognizant of the importance of loving families in desperate situations. One evening the grandmother spoke to us directly from her heart, however, and opened my eyes to her pain, as a grieving grandparent.

This grandmother, Ann, had suffered the death of her grandson. Because I am a grandmother myself, I know the love felt for a grandchild is unlike any other. It is a pure and unselfish love that makes your heart feel perpetually like the first time you fell in love. When Ann lost her grandson, she suffered a heart-wrenching wound but, in addition to her own pain, she had to

watch and feel the pain of her daughter and son-in-law in their roles as grieving parents. As much as she wanted to and tried to comfort them, there was no way she could bring back their son. All of this resulted in a "double whammy". Pain upon pain multiplying each day she endured her own grief and had to watch helplessly as her children suffered their personal loss.

By watching this family, I came to understand that when a child dies, we all grieve for the parents, but often we forget the grandparents, who can feel left out. We forget they are experiencing that "double whammy," trying to work through their grief with little or no support on their own.

The support a grieving person receives can make a great difference in the grief process. Grandparents should not be embarrassed to attend grief support groups or seek help to aid themselves through the role of forgotten griever.



## 🕯 Birthday Tributes To Our Special Angels

### *Birthday Tributes To Our Special Angels*

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#### 🕯 *Austin Jeremiah Davis*

Happy 1st Birthday to Austin Jeremiah Davis.  
September 16, 1997.

Your family loves and misses you.

Mommie, Daddy, and big sister - Ashley.

*In loving memory of  
Austin Jeremiah Davis,  
Stillborn at 38 weeks  
September 16, 1997.*

#### 🕯 *Joseph Robert Craig*

Guardian Angel

Joey, my baby, you are one year old today.  
I wish I could hold you again.  
There is so much I want to say.

I wish I could hear the pit-patter of your feet running in the house.  
Instead, you are quiet as a mouse.  
I wish I could buy you a great big toy today.  
I wish I could watch you play.

I never thought I could go on without you.  
But, you are in a special place and that makes me not so blue.

I have your brother, sister and dad - they make me happy  
when I'm feeling sad or mad.

I can feel flutters of a new baby in my tummy now.  
Please be its Guardian Angel if you can...

*Love, Mom*

*Caren and Jim Craig,  
big sister, Chelsea and  
big brother, Jake  
In loving memory of  
Joseph Robert Craig.  
Stillborn at 38 weeks  
May 23, 1997.*

● **Hallie Anne Fantine**

A day does not pass that we do not think of you, "Hallie Bop" and wonder how very different life would be if you were here to share it with us.

You have touched our souls in such a profound way that we will never, ever be the same. While the bittersweet lessons that we had to learn from your short life were painful ones, we will always be grateful for them and for the difference that you have made in our lives.

We have learned through you, Hallie, to appreciate life for the miracle that it is, as we long each day to hear your voice, to see your eyes and to hold your hand...such simple pleasures that so often are taken for granted.

It is so hard to believe that a year has now passed. TIME just does not seem to ebb the pain that we still feel deep in our hearts from losing you.

All we know is that our love for you grows deeper with each day as if you were still here. A special gift that only the bereaved could truly understand.

Hallie Anne, we miss you just as much today as the very first time that we held you in our arms. Your beauty and grace will be cherished for a lifetime. Our perfect little girls is what you are and will always be, forever in our hearts and in our precious memories.

Although we will never know the reason why, we do struggle to believe that you are in a better place and hope with all our hearts, *sweet angel*, to meet you there someday.

With love,  
Your Mommy and Daddy

*Laurie and Richard Fantine  
In loving memory of  
Hallie Anne Fantine  
Stillborn September 22, 1997.*

● **Maddison McGeachy & Baby McGeachy**

*You Can't Win With Me*

If you say to me "How are you doing?" with such sympathy and meaning in your voice,  
I reply "I'm fine" and brush you off because to

talk about my loss with you today is just too painful.

If you see me and don't mention the loss that is consuming my thoughts, I think you don't care enough, or are too scared to mention it for fear that you might upset me.

You can't win with me.

If you say "I'm sorry your babies died," it is hard for me to reply to that.

What do you expect me to say?

I want to say "I'm sorry, too!" or "It's awful!"

I want to scream "It's not fair!"

But I won't because I don't want to upset myself today, not in front of you.

So, I reply "Thank you."

That thanks means so much more than that.

It means thanks for caring, thanks for trying to help, thanks for realizing that I'm still in pain.

If you don't know what to say to me, that's okay because I don't know what to say to you either.

If you see me smile or laugh, don't assume I must have forgotten my babies for the moment.

I haven't. I can't. I never will.

Tell me that I look good today.

I will know what you mean.

I'm getting good at picking up unspoken cues from you.

If you see me and think I look upset or sad, you are probably right.

Today might be an anniversary day for me, or some event might have triggered a wave of grief in me.

If you don't say anything, I'll think you don't care about me, but if you do say something, it might make me feel worse.

You could try asking if I want to talk, but don't be surprised if I say no.

You can't win with me.

Don't give up on me; please don't give up.

I need your attempts, however feeble, however trite you might feel they are.

I need your thoughts.

I need your prayers.

I need your love.

I need your persistence.

I need all that, but most of all, I need to be treated normally, like it used to be before all this happened.

But, I know that's impossible.

That carefree, naive person is gone forever and I am mourning that loss, too.

So you can't win with me.



*Brenda McGeachy  
In loving memory of  
Maddison McGeachy,  
Stillborn January 18, 1996  
and Baby McGeachy,  
miscarried February 5, 1997.*

● **David Thane Hatfield**

*The Law of Conservation of Love*

Hope - He is a thought, a prayer, a desire of our hearts.  
Expectation - He is reality, a promise of answered prayer, a life to cherish.  
Anticipation - He is a part of us, a traveler we recognize, a participant in our lives.  
Celebration - He is David, answered prayer, an extension of ourselves.  
Joy - David has returned home, speaks comfort to us, shares our joy.  
Memories - The prayer, the promise, the person are all real now as then.

Love is manifest in all these seasons, and forever!  
As spring is no less because of winter,  
love is not diminished by loss.  
All this joy is none the less because we met so briefly.  
The ripples of love and joy from David  
disturbing the pond of our being are eternal.

*Written July 7, 1996  
by R. Carlisle "Poppy" Phillips  
Father to Dianna & Joel Hatfield  
Grandfather to David Thane Hatfield,  
Born May 14, 1996  
Died May 15, 1996*

● **Jared Mathew Slough**

*Jared, My Angel  
February 14, 1998 - March 20, 1998*

Here lies my grandson, I've known for five weeks  
My eyes are filled with tears and run down my cheeks  
But through all the turmoil, struggles, and strife  
He brought only joy to those who encountered his life  
As I reflect back to the moment we met  
Such perfection, such beautiful eyes, no one could forget  
His memories remain, a rapture divine  
No one will ever forget, he was one of a kind  
His achievements were great to us, no matter how small  
He was a blessing to us all  
A tiny baby, pure, and sublime  
No evil thought ever entered his mind  
Without fear or cries, whatever the plight  
Whatever the procedure, he would always endure

For his faith was fresh and his heart was pur  
So I ask you dear Lord, when I pass through the door  
Show me Jared's mansion, so we can commence once more.

*Written by Mary Helen Mathews  
In Loving Memory of Her Grandson,  
Jared Mathew Slough,  
Born February 14, 1998 and died  
Of Heart Failure on March 20, 1998.*

● **[Austin Jeremiah Davis](#)**

*A Message to My Grandson, "Austin Jeremiah Davis,"  
in Heaven*

When people come into your life, it is sometimes for a reason, often to share and to love. Baby Austin's Grannie had great plans and dreams of taking care of you, helping to raise you and to give you plenty of love.

Austin, God placed you in our lives for only a moment. You were never able to feel the love your family had for you. I often think about the stages that you would be going through and what you would be doing at 11 months of age. There hasn't been a holiday since you came into our lives that we don't talk about you. I also think and smile about how your big sister, Ashley, would be cuddling you and kissing you so much.

Austin, you were a beautiful little boy, perfectly formed in every way with no physical flaws. I know that was the hardest part for your Mommie to understand. Ashley often talks to your mom about you and she's now able to smile without crying when your name is spoken. I know your mom and dad miss you terribly. After a long 10 year wait, your family was anticipating the new arrival of a baby. We would have loved for you to have been here with us, but God had other plans and you were taken from us to go to heaven.

God only knows why we don't have you here with us. We trust and understand that God never makes a mistake. So, God sent an angel on Tuesday, September 16th to carry you to heaven.

When you have been touched by an angel, there is no room in your life for bitterness, anguish, or sadness. Austin, you will never know nor imagine how your brief presence affected so many people. Austin, your short mission here has been accomplished.

Happy 1st Birthday,

With love,  
Your Grannie

*Minnie R. Clark  
Maternal Grandmother to  
Austin Jeremiah Davis  
Stillborn September 16, 1997*



Resources published in the printed version of this newsletter can be accessed online directly from M.E.N.D.'s resource pages. To access the resource pages (at any time), navigate to the following URL:

URL: [http://www.mend.org/resources\\_internet.asp](http://www.mend.org/resources_internet.asp)

In the M.E.N.D. resource listing, you will find resources which include internet web sites, national organizations, and family bereavement pages.



In Loving Memory

*In Loving Memory*

**Jonathan Daniel Mitchell**

Stillborn June 24, 1995  
Cord Accident

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

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

Donation in memory of  
Jonathan by his grandparents,  
Marnie & Lyle Mitchell.

**Michael Joseph Böer**

Stillborn July 17, 1996  
Trisomy 18

Given by parents Lynne &  
Paul Böer and siblings, Paul,  
Jr., and Maggie.

**Timothy "Schuyler" Morren**

September 28 - December 23, 1997  
SIDS

Donation in memory of  
Timothy by parents Pam and  
Tim Morren.

*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!

**Mindy and Maggie Smith**

Stillborn November 4, 1997

Polyhydramnios/TTTS

Parents, Karla and Scott  
Smith. Given by The  
Foundation Class, Fellowship  
Church.

**Gift of Love**

Given by:

Alice and Roy Richburg  
Georgia and Richard Loy  
Faye Plaski  
Alta and Lowell Weems  
Terisa and John Poirier  
Glenda Robinette

**Jonathan Christian VanHeukelem**

Died January 1, 1998

Given by parents, Esther and  
Vince VanHeukelem.

**Mia Karlet Vallone**

Stillborn October 1, 1997

Parvo Virus B19

Given by parents Kris & Bob  
Vallone.

Given by big brother,  
Nicholas Vallone.

**Jared Mathew Slough**

February 14 - March 20, 1998

Heart defect/failure

Given by parents Joe Ellen  
and Scott Slough and identical  
twin brother, Hunter Scott.

Given by grandparents, Mr.  
and Mrs. E.E. Mathews.

Given by Kimberly, Kyle, and  
Katy Lou Nielsen.

**Cailey Elizabeth Ottinger**

Stillborn June 7, 1996

## Cord Accident

Given by parents,  
Laurie and George Ottinger  
and little sister, Hannah.

Given by grandparents,  
Patricia and Richard Williams.

### **Benjamin Luke McPherson**

Stillborn July 22, 1997

Trisomy 13

### **Baby McPherson 1**

Miscarried March 4, 1994

### **Benjamin Luke McPherson**

Miscarried October 25, 1995

Given by parents, Joyce and  
Dan McPherson.

### **William Joseph Kowalski**

Stillborn August 12, 1997

Given by parents, Sheri and  
Robert Kowalski.

### **Joseph Robert Craig**

Stillborn May 23, 1997 at 38 weeks

Given by parents, Caren and  
Jim Craig and big sister,  
Chelsea and big brother, Jake.

### **Sarah Ann King**

Stillborn June 22, 1995

Parents, Lori and David King  
and siblings, Brooks and  
Kaylee. Given by Lauri and  
Matt Anthony.

### **Baby Anthony**

Miscarried February 17, 1998

Given by parents, Lauri and  
Matt Anthony and big brother,  
Hunter.

### **Adrianna Haywood Johnston**

April 25, 1998

Bilateral Renal Agenesis

Given by parents, Julianne and  
Terry Johnston and big sister,  
Mackenzie.

**Angel Galen Khorsandi**

Stillborn October 7, 1994

**Angel Sandi Khorsandi**

Miscarried March 20, 1998

Given by parents, Julie and  
Shahryar Khorsandi and  
brother, Ross.

**Hallie Anne Fantine**

Stillborn September 22, 1997

Cord Accident

Given by parents, Laurie and  
Richard Fantine.

**Joshua and Jeromy Barsanti**

Stillborn November 21, 1996

Anencephaly

Given by parents, DaLana and  
Randy Barsanti and little  
brother, Taylor.



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Please review the M.E.N.D.  
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