



Seeking Professional Help

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Admitting we need help is extremely difficult for many of us, especially those of us with strong personalities who seemingly have it all together. When we are the ones others call for help and advice, it can be hard to seek help for ourselves.

The first year following the loss of my baby was very lonely. I had feelings, thoughts and emotions that were foreign and frightening to me. I was so overwhelmed that I kept most of what was going on in my mind to myself. My husband, family and friends were extremely encouraging, sympathetic and offered all the comfort they could, but it just wasn't enough to pull me out of my pit of misery.

A few times I considered attending a grief recovery course that was offered at my church but could never muster the courage to go. I knew everyone attending would be there to grieve the loss of a spouse or adult child. I was certain that once they learned I was there mourning the loss of my baby whose eyes I never saw open and whose cries I never heard, I'd be scoffed out of the class. How wrong I was, and what a mistake I made by not going! I now know that no one would have thought I didn't belong, and they would have welcomed me with open arms. Perhaps I would have met an older

lady who suffered a loss like mine many years ago who could have been a great source of comfort for me. Or possibly there could have been someone at the same stage of grief as I was, and we could have been there for each other. But most importantly, I missed out on having my grief validated and being told that my feelings were real and normal.

The old school of Christian thinking tells us that we don't need professional therapy, because we have the Lord who is our Counselor. We may think attending counseling sessions signifies a weak link in our walk with Him. Or that it's not being strong; it's not allowing God to rule over our hearts and minds. Don't be trapped in this old way of thought! The Bible tells us to encourage one another and build each other up. Is that not really what a counselor does? He encourages us by giving us permission to grieve, guides us through the tough days, and assures us we will survive. Seeking professional help does not mean something is wrong and needs repair. It just means you need a little direction and someone to listen to your heart's cry.

If you feel you could use some extra guidance and reassurance, don't be afraid to seek professional help. While researching whom you should see, I strongly recommend only visiting with a Christian counselor whose expertise is in the area of grief. If at all possible, I further suggest looking for a therapist who has also lost a child and can therefore completely relate to the type of grief you are enduring. Once you've secured an appointment, go without shame or embarrassment and trust that one day soon you will be able to move on with your life with a healthier and more spiritual perspective.

Rebekah Mitchell



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THE EFFECT OF UNGRIEVED LOSSES ON MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Kenneth J. Fallin, Ph.D.

The National Institute of Mental Health has stated that “the greatest mental health issue in America today is ungrieved losses.” The underlying assumption is that there are experiences of loss that have either not been acknowledged or have been discounted or minimized. Failure to work through a grieving process with these losses will likely have a negative impact on mental and emotional well-being. Since a number of loss experiences appear to lie outside one’s conscious awareness, there needs to be a way to access and identify these losses in order to prevent the negative effects on current mental and emotional functioning.

Imagine a person walking along a path with a backpack filled with stones that have been picked up along the way. Assume that these stones represent unacknowledged experiences of loss as one makes his or her way along the pathway of life. These stones will be variable in size and appearance. Some will seem to be quite large and imposing, while others may appear quite small and insignificant. Each in its own way, however, has a significant place in one’s life journey. As these stones accumulate over time, the backpack becomes quite heavy and burdensome. Suddenly the person is confronted with a current loss of major proportions. While the grief of the moment can seem overwhelming, it is further complicated by the weight of these “ungrieved losses.”

The literature identifies two types of losses. There are primary losses and secondary losses. While primary losses refer to death, secondary losses refer to a wide range of life experiences. The following grief recovery questionnaire identifies several loss experiences.

- Did you move more than twice before the age of ten?
- Did you ever have a pet die?
- Have you ever experienced a major change in financial condition?
- Have you ever been fired from a job or quit a job?
- Have you ever been divorced?
- Have you ever experienced the death of a close family member?
- Have you ever experienced the death of a distant family member?
- Were you ever physically abused during childhood? As an adult?
- Were you ever sexually abused during childhood? As an adult?
- Have you ever experienced a miscarriage or stillbirth?
- Have you ever experienced an abortion?
- Did you graduate from high school? From college?
- Do you have a strained or painful relationship with a living parent, spouse, friend or co-worker?
- Do you harbor resentment or ill-feelings toward a deceased parent, spouse, friend or relative?
- Have you ever experienced the loss of the use or function of any part of your body?
- Have you ever experienced the death of a spouse?
- Have you ever experienced the death of a child?
- Are there long stretches of your childhood that you cannot remember?
- Have you experienced a series of illnesses or accidents?
- Have you been involved in a long series of unsuccessful relationships?

These questions are only a partial list of possible losses. If you answered yes to any of the above questions, there is a possibility that you may have some ungrieved losses in your life. If you answered yes to several there is a strong probability that you may have some ungrieved losses in your life.

People with low levels of loss awareness tend to experience more intense denial and have a more difficult time moving through the grieving process. Raising loss awareness to a conscious level allows for hidden feelings to surface where they can be explored, processed, and ultimately resolved. Loss awareness often reveals a pattern of losses. For example, there may be multiple losses very close together. There may be a series of very sudden, tragic losses. There may be a series of losses spread out evenly from childhood through adulthood. Working through these past feelings of grief and pain frees up energy for living today. Placing life events into some meaningful perspective allows one to bring closure to the unfinished business of the past.

Loss is the currency of therapy. It is loss that brings people to the therapist’s office. The loss may be primary or secondary. Grief therapy allows one to confront their losses in an emotionally safe environment. Too often in our death-denying culture, people are not afforded the opportunity to grieve their losses. It is not emotionally safe to express intense, negative feelings of sorrow in our culture. We are encouraged to move through the grieving process as quickly as possible. Emotional efficiency seems to be the goal.

The process of grieving is extremely variable, often lasting much longer than expected. Each new season, holiday, and anniversary is likely to re-evolve the painful sense of loss. The work of grieving takes time. No two people experience grief in exactly the same way. Just as no two people walk at the same pace, neither do they grieve at the same pace. The Psalmist said, “Yea, though I *WALK* through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.” Grieving is much like walking. We are not given the option of running through the valley, flying over the valley, or staying in the valley and making it our home. We are to walk *through* the valley of grief and loss at our own pace.

Continued on Page 11

I don't know why I hesitated to find a counselor to talk to after we lost our two babies. I went to a counselor three months after we lost Angel, but our personalities didn't blend well. I also didn't ask if she was a Christian, and after our three appointments I felt like we were coming from very different backgrounds. I stopped going and didn't try to find a different counselor for nearly two years. After being frightened by my own anger and depression I asked for help from two trusted friends from church, the pastor and my Sunday School teacher, and was given the name of a counselor who was definitely a Christian. I am so thankful that I finally took the step to get help. I have learned volumes about myself, God's love for me, grief, and the healing process. My counselor hasn't answered all of my questions, and she never pretends to understand what it's like to lose a child. But she has helped me to believe in myself and to trust God once again. I see before me a long and winding road, but now I am *on* the road, and I am moving *forward*.



Jennifer Brimmage
Mother to Angel Hope,
June 8, 2002,
Spina Bifida,
and Precious,
Miscarried December 23, 2002
Siblings: Lindy and Mark
Dad: Ashley

May/June Topic

Mother's Day and Father's Day
 Deadline: March 31, 2005

July/August Topic

How Hospitals Handle Bereaved Parents
(We welcome articles about how your hospital was helpful or not helpful before and/or after your delivery)
 Deadline: May 31, 2005

Stories, poems, thoughts, and/or feelings regarding these topics are welcomed. Submissions must be received by the deadline to be considered for publication in the newsletter. Unfortunately, there is not enough room to include all submissions. Choices will be left to the discretion of the editors. Please see the back page of the newsletter for the appropriate address to send your submissions. Any submission printed in our newsletter will also be posted to our website indefinitely unless we receive notice in writing that you are only granting permission for your submission to appear in the printed version of the newsletter.

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M.E.N.D. Support Group Meetings

Join us for a time of sharing experiences.

M.E.N.D. meetings
 are held the

2nd Thursday of every month
 from 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Our Daddies group

meets the 2nd Thursday of
 March, June, September, and December
 from 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

This is a special time for daddies to get together and discuss concerns unique to them as fathers. Our moms and dads meet together for introductions before dividing into two groups for discussion.

Subsequent pregnancy group

meets the 4th Tuesday
 of each month from
 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.

For families who are considering becoming pregnant or are currently pregnant after a loss. Led by Christine Oxendine (bearpals@charter.net).

All main chapter support group meetings are held at:

1159 Cottonwood Lane, Suite 150
 Irving, Texas (Las Colinas) 75038

(This is on the west side of MacArthur Boulevard, across the street from the Four Seasons Resort. There is a Holiday Inn Express at the entrance of Cottonwood Lane.)

For more information or directions,
 call (972) 459-2396.

Playgroup

For families with children born prior to or subsequent to a loss.

Contact DaLana Barsanti
 at (817) 589-0588
 fivekids@ev1.net

(Playgroups meet at various locations around the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex.)

New Chapter Meetings:

M.E.N.D. - NW Arkansas

meetings are held the

1st Tuesday of every month

From 7:00—8:30 p.m.

at the Jones Center for Families,
 922 East Emma Avenue,
 Springdale, AR 72765.

For information, call 479-524-3500
 or e-mail april@mend.org.

Coming Soon:

M.E.N.D. - Kansas

Opening in Emporia, Kansas,
 June 9, 2005

**Mommies AND daddies are both welcome
 at all M.E.N.D. meetings.**



Tributes to Our Special Babies

Happy Birthday Chandler!

We miss you and think of you often! Enjoy your sixth birthday in Heaven, Little Love Bug! We love you!

Love,
Mommy and Daddy



Happy Birthday Chandler!

It's hard to believe that six years have passed. You would be such a big boy. We love you and miss you. Have a great birthday in heaven!

Love,
Nana and Papaw



*Chandler Allred
Fetal Acrania, stillborn March 4, 1999
Parents, Mark and Amy Allred
Younger brother, Christopher
Younger sister, Kyleigh*

Happy 6th Birthday Lauren Paige

Wow! It doesn't feel like six years have gone by since you left us to be in heaven with Jesus! Thinking back to that day on March 6, we have come such a long way ~ some days it feels like it just happened, and other days it seems so long ago. I see myself looking at six-year-olds thinking you would be doing what they do. As you know, you have a little sister, Rileigh, here on earth and Rileigh's twin in heaven with you. Rileigh asks about you all the time. Just the other day out of the blue, she said to me that in two weeks you were going to come down from heaven to play with her. Oh, how I would love for that to happen, but I know it will not. We long for you to be here with us but know you can not. I look at Rileigh, especially when she is sleeping, and she looks a lot like you did when you were born. There is not a day that goes by that we don't wish you were here with us. We love and miss you so much, and one day we will meet again in heaven, but until then.....keep playing in the clouds with Jesus and Baby Angel.

*Happy 6th Birthday! We love and miss you!
Mom and Dad*

*Lauren Paige Grimes
Stillborn March 6, 1999
Unknown cause
Remembering Baby Angel
Miscarried January 25, 2001
Parents: John and Paula Grimes
Sister: Rileigh*



Happy 8th Birthday Rianne!

We love you and miss you every day.
Love, Daddy, Mommy, Chanie, Cassie and Canlie

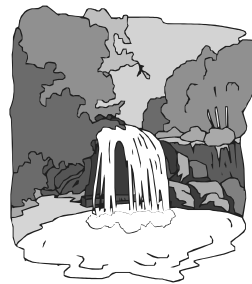
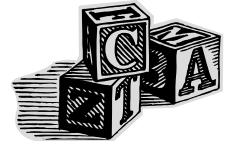
*Remembering Rianne Ellisa Scrivner
March 4-7, 1997
Severe Hydrocephaly
Parents: Bill and Rae Scrivner
Little sisters: Chanie, Casidy, and Canlie (2 yrs).*

Joseph Shane Jackson, Jr.

I can't believe it's been two years already. I think of you every single day. You are the most beautiful baby I've ever seen. I'm not just saying that either. Your grandma, aunt, and great aunt who were there agree. I can't wait to hold you again. Happy birthday, my sweet son Joey.

Love you forever,
Your Mama

*Joseph Shane Jackson, Jr.
March 18, 2003
Stillborn due to prematurity
Mom: Amie Cross
Step-Dad: James Bridges*



*Many, O LORD my God,
are the wonders you have done.
The things you planned for us
no one can recount to you;
were I to speak and tell of them,
they would be too many to declare.
Psalm 40:5*

*The LORD your God is with you,
he is mighty to save.
He will take great delight in you,
he will quiet you with his love,
he will rejoice over you with singing.
Zephaniah 3:17*

Joseph Zephaniah, you completed a work here. You showed God's incredible power and grace and healed what I thought was permanently broken the day your sister died. Thank you, little man, my treasure. Thank you God for what you did through him. We miss him but are so grateful for even 14 weeks.

*In memory of Joseph Zephaniah Morris,
miscarried but delivered still at 14 weeks, 10-20-02
Love, Mom, Dad, Sam, Jake, Elia, Zane, Asher, and the new ones, always remembering Rose and Lael.
Parents: Tracy and Chris Morris*

Happy 1st Birthday Molly!
We love you and miss you everyday!!

I Wanted

I wanted to sing you a made-up song,
Now you listen to angels' voices all day long.

I wanted to hold you close to my chest,
Now in Jesus' arms you find comfort and rest.

I wanted to spend hours and hours with you reading,
Now you hear stories from the Almighty King.

I wanted to show you how much Jesus means to me,
Now you worship Him on your bended knee.

I wanted to take you to the beach to play in the sand,
Now you go for beautiful walks, holding our Savior's hand.

I wanted to give you special things from our family's past,
Now God hands you treasures that for eternity will last.

I wanted to show you wrong from right,
Now you see no darkness, only the Light.

I wanted to teach you all about the incredible world we live in,
Now you learn form the Teacher,
Who make all things on Earth and in Heaven.

I wanted to give you a home, where you felt safe and secure,
Now you walk streets of gold, where things are perfect and pure.

I wanted to shelter you from pain and sadness,
Now you have complete joy and everlasting happiness.

I wanted to tell you, "I love you gobs and heaps plus a ton,"
Now you live with One who loves you enough to sacrifice His Son.

I wanted to give you the best of this world by being a great mother,
Now you have the best and even more by living with our Holy Father.

My dear Molly,

I will come with you someday
only now is not my time,
Then we will be together again,
again you will be mine.

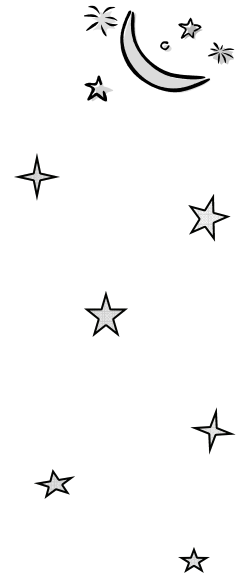
Love,
Mommy



Molly Rene Schramm
March 10, 2004
Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia
Parents: Jerry and Suzanne Schramm
Big Sister: Morgan

Jacob Theodore Oxendine

Four years have passed
Not a day goes by
Without your sweet lil' face
Shinning down from the sky
We can't help but wonder
Why you couldn't be with us
But find comfort in God
With whom we must trust
So for now we will remember
The baby we go to embrace
With beautiful memories
We hold in a special place
Your oldest cousin, Skyler
Still sees you in every star
And tells you that he loves you
To him, you're not so far
Your younger cousin, Denver
She will know of you real soon
And come to understand
Why we talk to the moon
Sweet little nephew,
Words alone cannot define
The feelings you left on our hearts
For a lifetime.



We love you and miss you very much,
Uncle Mark, Aunt Stephanie,
Skyler and Denver



To Our Little Peanut

Time goes by so fast. It is already your fourth birthday. Our love for you grows each day. We miss you so very much. Happy birthday, Jacob!

All our love,
Daddy, Mommy & Emily

Jacob Theodore Oxendine
April 29, 2001, PROM
Parents: Christine and Chip Oxendine
Little sister: Emily Grace



Happy 5th Birthday Richard James!

It doesn't seem like it's been five years already. We miss you and love you.

Love,
Mommy, Daddy, Ashley and Matthew



Richard James Smith
Stillborn March 1, 2000, Spiral Cord
Parents: Diane and Daryl Smith
Siblings: Ashley and Matthew

Happy 3rd Birthday Rebekah

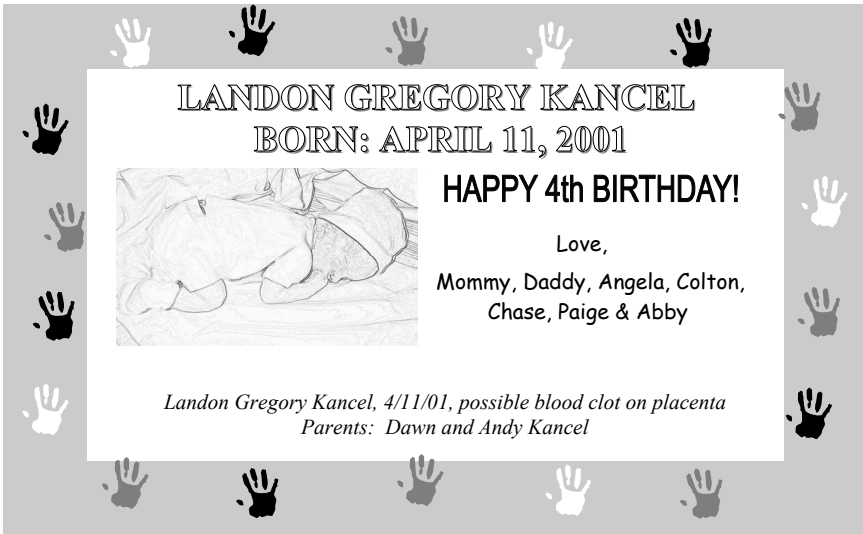
I can't believe it's been three years. You are still in our hearts and we will love you forever. Your older sister Heather and little brother Alex visit your grave often and put flowers on there for you, and we do, too. We will always love you. We will see you someday in heaven. Watch over us all, little angel.



Love,
Mom, Dad, Heather and Alex




In loving memory of Rebekah Lee Suddeath, March 5, 2002, Trisomy 18.
Parents: Rick & Michelle Suddeath. Siblings: Heather and Alexander.



LANDON GREGORY KANCEL
BORN: APRIL 11, 2001

HAPPY 4th BIRTHDAY!

Love,
Mommy, Daddy, Angela, Colton,
Chase, Paige & Abby



Landon Gregory Kancel, 4/11/01, possible blood clot on placenta
Parents: Dawn and Andy Kancel

Happy 6th Birthday, Carson!

We can't believe it's your sixth birthday. We think about all the "boy" things you would be doing and how much fun we would be having with you. You live in our hearts each minute of the day. We love you!

Mommy, Daddy, Blake, and Brooke

Carson Mitchell Shaw
April 1, 1999, unknown cause
Parents: Aimee and Randy Shaw
Siblings: Blake and Brooke

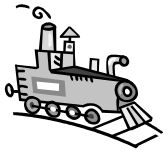


Happy birthday to my little angel, Blake

I am sending hugs and kisses to you in Heaven. Know that I love you, my firstborn son! There is a special place in my heart that is filled only by you!

Love, Mommy & Zachary

In memory of Blake Leland, 4/21/99, premature labor/incompetent cervix
and Lauren Grace, 2/13/00, cord accident
Mom: Jan Allen
Brother: Zachary



Happy birthday, Lauren

We celebrate your birthday in February with your twin brother Zachary. We will send balloons off to you again this year and hope you feel our endless love to you.

We miss you, my little girl!

In an Abundance of Counselors

April L. Moreton, Ph.D.

When your baby dies, your world changes. Thoughts, perspectives, even relationships change. Sometimes those changes take you to the brink of despair, as if you're peering over a precipice into the unknown of discouragement. Perhaps you functioned as a completely independent, highly efficient individual before the death of your little one. Now, it's hard to get out of bed, much less behave as a productive person.

So much of this is normal as you progress through your grief journey. And it is a journey, filled with twists and turns and fraught with setbacks. Sometimes, however, that journey becomes too much to bear alone and you find yourself drowning.

Such was the case during the year my husband and I experienced three miscarriages. Initially, I clung to statistics that proved miscarriages were far more common than realized. After the second loss, I began to ask, "What is wrong with my body?" After the third, it was hard to even acknowledge that I was now the parent of three heavenly babies, and I had little perspective and less hope. I knew that hope was a foundational tenet of my Christian faith, but grief clouded everything. Then, several months after our last loss, a family member announced that my parents' first grandbaby was on the way. The miscarriages had almost been

unbearable, but the thought of watching a sister-in-law progress through a healthy pregnancy brought me to the precipice.

A wise physician gently recommended to my husband and me a professional counselor who had personally experienced infertility. One visit with a trained professional who personally understood our struggles gave us tools to help manage our losses and the impending birth in our family. Though each situation and person is different, our time proved to be invaluable, not only for our coping skills but in protecting the family relationships that were so important to us.

If you find yourself in phases or situations that become confusing and unbearable, don't hesitate to spend time with an individual trained to offer support. Ask friends or a trusted physician for referrals and opt for a counselor who maintains a biblical worldview and will focus on the Truth of God's Word. Do your best to apply what you learn during your sessions. Allow God to use these times to strengthen your heart for your journey and remember, in an abundance of counselors there is safety (Proverbs 11:14).

April and her husband Sam are parents to Baby M, Baby Boy Moreton, and Angel #3 in heaven and Asher and Ava on earth.

Help for Healing

Akili Worthy

The loss of a child is an extremely isolating experience. You become depressed, full of despair, insecurity, and worst of all, you feel guilt. The guilt may come from not being able to save your child, or because you feel partially responsible. When my husband and I lost our first son we felt all of those emotions, and we didn't know what to do next.

We arrived at the hospital to pick up our angel's keepsake box. We looked at the pictures and clothing, and our hearts crumbled. When we got home that afternoon, we knew everything in our lives would be different now. Pain was present in every room of our home, and the stress almost ripped our marriage apart. Instead of reaching toward one another, we, like so many other couples, looked outside our home for support. We talked to friends and family. They provided as much support as they could, but there was something missing. I no longer felt whole. The pain was taking over, and I knew I needed help, but what kind?

The keepsake box also contained literature for various support groups, counselors and therapists. I didn't feel like I needed therapy, and I wasn't ready to talk with a group of strangers about my pain! What I wanted was for someone to tell me that this pain would go away, and that I would be okay. In fact, unrealistically, I wanted them to tell me when the pain would be gone, and when I could start living again. Wasn't there something I could do that would give me some answers? I couldn't find a solution. Some of the answers were only inside of me. I had to decide when I was ready to release the pain and anguish. I had to decide when I would move forward. However, I didn't know. I didn't know how to get to that level on my own. I needed someone to coach me through it.

A life coach is someone who looks at your present life, without bias, and then challenges you to become the person you want to be. The focus is not on your past. Yes, healing is necessary, and grieving is an important part of the process, but as we grieve we must also begin working on the situations over which we have some control.

For instance, what things in your life are you tolerating? What are the things in your life that you are neglecting? Is it your feelings? Is it your free time? Are you taking time to take care of or pamper yourself? Are you replenishing yourself internally by improving your relationship with the Lord? If the answers to these questions are not positive ones, then ask yourself why.

A coach can help you answer these questions, and work with you to develop a new plan for your life. She will look at your strengths, and where your passion lies. Once you start living the way you were meant to, change is inevitable. My question for you is, are you ready to embrace change? If so, it sounds like you're ready to take the next step. Congratulations, on getting to this point! Do not look back!

Akili Worthy is a life coach specializing in working with women or couples struggling with infertility and/or pregnancy or infant loss. She may be contacted at 614-596-0910 or via email at mrsworthy3@yahoo.com.

Keepsake Resources

Memory Baby Book

850 Marion Rd.
Chambersburg, PA 17201
(717) 375-2426

Contact: Barb Eby

Makes sixty-page baby books available for parents who have suffered early infant loss.

A Loss Remembered

2908 South Clemont Dr.
Denver, CO 80222
(303) 692-9668

lossremembered@cs.com

Provides beautiful remembrance cards on the anniversary of a child's death.

Haley's Creations

P.O. Box 13242, La Jolla, CA 92039
Toll Free Phone:
877-538-6446

www.haleyscreations.com

Offers remembrance cards, journals, and keepsakes relating to infant loss.

Angel Babies in Heaven

(843) 871-3071

<http://www.galaxymall.com/children/angelbabies/>

Offers hand-painted memorial stepping stones to honor babies gone too soon.

My Heart's Missing Link

P.O. Box 0992, Allen Park, MI 48101
www.myheartsmisssinglink.com

Offers heart-shaped pendants with a birthstone and a "missing link" to help remember loved ones who now live in heaven and your heart.

Perinatal Loss Certificate of Life

<http://www.tearsoup.com/pl/certificate%20of%20life.htm>

Makes hand-calligraphied certificates acknowledging your baby's life.

Angels in Heaven Ministries

www.angelsinheaven.org

Offers framed poems, cards, and audio tapes relating to infant loss.

Once Upon a Family™

www.onceuponafamily.net

Contact: Amy Gill

(214) 725-6116

Offers special pieces to keep memorabilia safe. Donates a percentage of sales of the Baby Keepsake Box, Tiny Treasures Box, and Memory Trunk made to M.E.N.D. members back to M.E.N.D.

Angel Lady

www.angelady.net

Artist Ethel Pontsler offers custom artwork of deceased loved ones based on photographs.

Keri's Kreations

221 W. Hillview St.
Winslow, AZ 86047
(928) 289-0715

A book of remembrance for parents who have lost children through miscarriage, stillbirth, or infant death.

Elena's Inspiration—The Shining Light Fund

www.elenasinspiration.com/shining_light_fund.htm

Offers Mother's Bracelets free of charge to women who have lost a child through miscarriage, stillbirth, or infant death.

For You Lauren, Certificates

Pamela Palmer

For You Lauren, certificates

P.O. Box 1534

Inglewood, CA 90308

pypalmer1@yahoo.com

Creates certificates to recognize, acknowledge, and celebrate the births of stillborn and miscarried babies.

Angel Teddy Bear Foundation

www.angelteddybears.org

kim@angelteddybears.org or (274) 531-0960
Nonprofit organization that delivers teddy bears to hospitals for parents who have lost a baby

Support Groups**ARKANSAS****♥M.E.N.D. – NW Arkansas Support Group**

First Tuesday of every month
The Jones Center for Families
922 East Emma Avenue, Springdale, AR 72765
7:00-8:30 PM, Room 114
479-524-3500, april@mend.org

ARIZONA**♥ Arizona SIDS Alliance**

PO Box 85001-1111, Phoenix, AZ 85001, 1-800-597-7437

♥ Mothers in Sympathy Support (M.I.S.S.)

P.O. Box 5333, Peoria, AZ 85385, (623) 979-1000

CALIFORNIA**♥ Helping After Neonatal Death**

PO Box 341, Los Gatos, CA 95031-0341
www.handonline.org, e-mail info@handonline.org
(408) 995-6102, toll free (888) 908-HAND
Support meetings in the California counties of
Alameda, Contra Costa, Santa Clara, and parts of the
Central Valley - call for info

♥ Good Mourning Pregnancy and Infant Loss Support

3389 Via Dona, Lompoc, CA 93436
(805) 733-5225, ctmontel@best1.net
601 East Ocean Ave Suite 6, Lompoc, CA 93436

♥ HAND of Peninsula

Sequoia Health and Wellness Services
702 Marshall St., Redwood City, CA
Celia Hartnett: (650) 367-6993

♥ Mothers in Sympathy Support (M.I.S.S.)***Riverside Chapter**

Attn: Mia-Riverside Facilitator
P.O. Box 7403, Riverside, CA 92513-7403
Phone: (909) 686-2686
Meet 2nd Monday of each month, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Hunt Park Community Center, 4015 Jackson St.
(Located next to ParkView Hospital --Major cross street:
Magnolia Ave.)

***Merced Chapter (Central California)**

Kim Lotz: kim.lotz@missfoundation.org

***Arcadia Chapter**

Meets 3rd Thursday at 7:00, Church of the Good
Shepherd, 400 W. Duarte Rd., Arcadia, CA 91007
Kristin Jared: (626) 963-9120
kristin@missfoundation.org

ILLINOIS**♥ Healing Hearts of Rockford**

c/o Rockford Memorial Hospital
Dept. of Maternal - Fetal Medicine
2400 N. Rockton Ave., Rockford, IL 61103
(815)971-5186 Lori Forelich
(815) 971-3737 (press number 3 for general information)

INDIANA**♥ Healing Hearts**

219 S. Logan St., South Bend, IN 46615
(574) 282-5276
www.healing-hearts-of-indiana.com

MASSACHUSETTES**♥ P.A.R.E.N.T. (Parents & Relatives
Enduring Neonatal Tragedy)**

Contact: Trish McClean: (508) 427-3028
Meetings are the first Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m.
at Good Samaritan Hospital, 235 N. Pearl St
Brockton, MA, Community Conference Room, 1st floor

♥ A Ripple in Time

Meets 1st Monday at 7:00 p.m. at St. Theresa of Lisieux
Parish Hall, Room 6, Boston Rd., Billerica, MA
Contact Donna McDonnell, 978-663-5477

♥ HOPE

2nd Thursday, 7:30 p.m. at Baldwin Park I,
Woburn, MA, 781-273-2624
Contact Rindy Heubner, DHeub1028@aol.com

NEW JERSEY**♥ UNITE, Inc.**

Has groups in Turnersville, Trenton, and at Princeton.
Call (215) 728-3777 for more information.

♥ MISS

502 Montgomery Ave., Somers Point, NJ 08244
(609) 601-0563

www.missfoundation.org

Kathy@missfoundation.org, Contact: Kathy Evans

**♥ MIDS (Miscarriage, Infant Death & Stillbirth
Support Group, Inc.)**

Contact: Janet Tischler
180 Jillian Blvd., Parsippany, NJ 07054-1605
(973) 884-0061, mids1982@yahoo.com

www.midsinc.org

NEW YORK**♥ GAPS (Guardian Angel Perinatal Support Group)****A SHARE Group**

Molloy College, Wm J. Casey Center, Room #107,
1000 Hempstead Ave, Rockville Centre, NY 11570
Meets 1st Friday of each month, 7:30—9:30 p.m.
Martha Weiss (516) 249-8589, martyk9@optonline.net

PENNSYLVANIA**♥ UNITE, Inc.**

Has various groups across the state. Call (215) 728-3777.

TEXAS**♥ M.E.N.D.**

PO Box 1007, Coppell, TX 75019
(972) 506-9000, http://www.mend.org
Contact: Rebekah Mitchell, Rebekah@mend.org
Meetings are held at 1159 Cottonwood Ln.
Irving, TX 75038, 2nd Thursday at 7:30 p.m.

♥ Mikela's Miracles SIDS Connection

Mike & Chrissy Lipscomb
www.mikelasmiracles.org
2601 Thistle Ln, Rowlett TX 75089
1-866-286-SIDS toll free, 972-463-9243 local
Meets 1st Tuesday of every month, 7 p.m.
at Reinhardt Bible Church. Dinner is provided.
2302 Northeast Pkwy, Garland, TX

♥ Healing Matters I

*Miscarriage, Stillbirth, and Early Infant Death
Through the First Year of Life*

4th Monday of every month, 7:30pm
Plano Medical Center, Classrooms I & II
3901 W. 15th Street, Plano TX

Contact: Ginny Robinson: (972) 519-1588

♥ Caring Hearts

1st and 3rd Tuesdays of every month 7:00pm
Presbyterian Hospital of Dallas, Fogelson Forum, ground
floor, Class C. Call 214-345-2613

Contact: Brooke Arnold, brookearnold@texashealth.org

♥ Bereavement Services/RTS

Methodist Charlton Medical Center
3500 W. Wheatland, Dallas, TX 75237
Meets the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 7:30 p.m.
For info on meeting place call (214) 947-7127

♥ Resolve Through Sharing Denton

119 N Elm St., Denton, TX
2nd Monday of every month at 7:00p.m.
Contact: Tracy Morris: 940-566-5666

♥ Journey of Hope Support Center

(children ages 3-18 and their caregivers)
2nd and 4th Tuesday of every month 6:30 p.m.
(972) 578-6634

♥ Bereaved Parents of North Texas, Inc.

3rd Monday of every month 7:15p.m.
First UMC, 201 S. Locust, Denton, TX
Cole Chapel Lounge

♥ TAPS (Tiny Angel Parents Share)

North Hills Hospital, Grapevine Hwy & Hwy 820
Meets 2nd Thursday, 7:00 p.m.

Contact: Lorin Koemel: (817) 595-0833

E-mail koemel@hotmail.com

♥ SHARE Of The Mid-Cities—Home of the original

© Christmas Box Angel

Harris Methodist HEB Hospital, Bedford, TX
Beverly A. Wallach, RN, CBE, Coordinator
1st Thursday of every month at 7:00 p.m.
phone: 972-601-1676, fax: 866-307-4163
share_rts@yahoo.com

♥ Angels Away

c/o CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Health Care
Chaplain/Facilitator Peggy Hubor
333 N. Santa Rosa Street, San Antonio, TX 78207
Meetings are 3rd Thurs., 7 p.m.

♥ Alliance for Infant Survival, Inc.

4351 Booth Calloway, Ste. 310
North Richland Hills, Texas 76180
(817)589-2124, Fax (817) 590-0060
Toll Free 1 (800) 650-7437

www.infantsurvival.org

e-mail info@infantsurvival.org

Executive Director, Sandi Wiggins
Development/Public Affairs, Juliet Holden
Meet 1st Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m.

♥ The Pregnancy Loss Support Group of Austin

South Austin Hospital, 901 Ben White Blvd.
Austin, TX 78704, (512) 282-4123

Meets 1st Sunday at 2:00 in hospital auditorium

Contact: Pat Ebilsizer

♥ HOPES (Helping Other Parents Endure Sadness)

P.O. Box 103, Valley View, TX 76272
(940) 668-2642, hopesoftexas@yahoo.com

Meets 3rd Tuesday at 7:00 PM,

Gainesville Chamber of Commerce

101 S. Culberson St., Gainesville, TX 76240

♥ COPE'S Angels

(Comforting Other Parents Experiencing Sorrow)

Meeting at Driscoll Children's Hospital
3533 S Alameda, Corpus Christi, TX 78411
Meeting on the basement floor in private dining
room of cafeteria first and third Mondays, 6:30 PM
For more information contact Corina Benevidas,
MS, SWA, (361) 694-4626

VIRGINIA**♥ Empty Arms Support Group**

Sentara Women's Health Source

801 Volvo Pkway, Ste. 120,

Chesapeake, VA 23320

2nd & 4th Monday, 7-8:30

Ann Prescott: 757-545-2667,

ahprnmsed@yahoo.com

♥ The Perinatal Loss Support Group

at Harbourview

(Located at Women's Imaging Ctr. Reception Area)

Harbour View Dr., Suffolk, VA 23435

(757) 673-5800, Contact: Terry Zawacki

(757) 398-4832 or Gayle Deas: (757) 398-4857

Held on the 3rd Thursday of every month

♥ MISS—Perinatal and Infant Loss

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

Forest and Patterson Ave., Richmond, VA

3rd Monday, 7-8:30 p.m., parlor

Contact Twyla Powell, twyla@missfoundation.org

WISCONSIN**♥ Resolve Through Sharing**

St. Michael Hospital, 2400 W. Villard
Milwaukee, WI 53209—Meets 7p 1st Wednesday
www.coperesources.net/iri/fox0i1yqg.htm
(414) 527-8164—Ask for Resolve Through Sharing
(414) 527-8350—Support group info

AUSTRALIA**♥ Murraylands Lutheran Stillborn**

Infant Support Service

11 Ida St., Murray Bridge, South Australia 5253

Lynne Schulz: (08) 85324627 or (08) 85324897

CANADA**♥ Morning Light Ministry**

St. Mary Star of the Sea Church

11 Peter St. South, Mississauga, Ontario L5H-2G1

(416) 969-0545, morninglightministry@rogers.com

♥ Perinatal Bereavement Services Ontario

6060 Hwy. 7 E., Markham, Ontario L3P 3A9

Tel: (905) 472-1807 or 1-888-301-PBSO

www.pbso.ca, pbso cares@pbso.ca

Letting Go of Guilt

Quite often, the first feelings that overtake a mother or father following the death of a child are feelings of extreme guilt. Thoughts of “if only” seem to relentlessly keep returning. “If only” I had taken her to the doctor sooner. “If only” I had not given him the car keys when I knew the roads were icy. “If only” I had not turned my back to answer the phone. “If only” I had not left him playing alone in the bathtub. Guilt is such a heavy burden of grief to carry around!

How does a parent move beyond the guilt of losing a child? How can a parent shed the painful feelings of inadequacy? How does a parent ever find a way to let go of the guilt?

The most difficult step in releasing the tight clutch that guilt holds on a parent’s heart is dealing with the reality of the loss. “My child died” are often the most difficult three words that will ever come from the mouth of a parent. Those words are hard words, yet they are words that are necessary to say and to understand before being able to rid oneself of guilt.

When we live in an “if only” emotional environment, we have not yet come to the full realization that child loss has actually occurred. We are still working through the mental “if only” reasoning which continues to wreak havoc on a parent’s heart. When a parent lives in an “if only” state, the reality of the child’s death can never be completely accepted. As painful as it is, a parent must—at some point—make the hard choice to accept the reality that the child has died.

Because a parent’s primary role is to nurture and care for the child, a parent often has a feeling of deserving punishment when a child dies. That is simply another way of expressing the heaviness of guilt. A parent often wrestles with the thought that “because my child died, I do not deserve to ever smile again.” Guilt continues to prevent many parents from moving forward in this difficult journey we call grief.

It takes a lot of concentrated effort, hard work, and support from others to be able to forgive oneself and finally let go of the gnawing feeling of guilt following the death of a child. Until a parent makes the decision to leave the heavy weight of guilt behind, joy can never return to a heart that has been so deeply wounded by the loss of a child.

Letting go of guilt is a decision that must be made. There is no timetable for making that decision, and others cannot force that decision on any parent. Eventually, a parent will come to the realization that the child’s death is real, and there is a hard choice to be made: to continue to live in the guilt of the loss, or to let go of that heaviness of guilt and begin to experience a bit of peace and joy once again.

Letting go of guilt requires a real effort to put an end to the “if only” questions. Letting go of guilt means that a parent no longer blames himself for the death of the child. Letting go of guilt means forgiving oneself and accepting oneself. Letting go of guilt means being gentle with oneself and allowing time for healing to take place.

Letting go of guilt is one of the most difficult parts of grief work. It takes a lot of energy, understanding, and patience. But, when guilt is finally set free, a parent’s heart can begin to walk the journey of healing through child loss.

Clara Hinton

<http://www.silentgrief.com>

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Subsequent Births

Ken and Lisa Sharpless
along with big brothers Reid,
Tyler, and Cameron

of Helendale, California,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Caroline Elizabeth JingWen Sharpless
to her forever family,
born in China on December 25, 2003,
in their arms on December 28, 2004.
The Sharpless family lovingly remembers
Riley Marshall,
stillborn September 3, 2001,
placental abruption.

Tonya and Brian Bausch,
along with big sister Megan

of Flower Mound, Texas,
proudly announce the arrival of
Blake Gordon,
January 21, 2005,
7 lb., 7 oz., and 21 inches long.
The Bausch family lovingly remembers
Allison Paige,
November 1 - 10, 2000,
prematurity,
and Baby Bausch,
miscarried May 4, 2001.

Rick and Julie Miller
along with siblings Josh, Tim, Joseph,
Jessica, Beka, and Gabriel

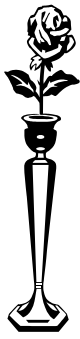
of North Richland Hills, Texas,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Leianna Jewel,
born December 16, 2004.
She weighed 8 lb., 3 oz.,
and was 20 1/2 inches long.
The Miller family lovingly remembers
Caleb Kenton,
stillborn February 15, 2004,
unknown cause.

Doug and Angelique Sohn
along with big brother Josh

of North Richland Hills, Texas,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Sebastian,
born January 18, 2005,
5 lb., 8 oz., 18 1/2 inches long.
The Sohn family lovingly remembers
Aiden Xavier,
October 13, 2002,
HELLP Syndrome;
Hope,
miscarried May, 2003;
and Whisper,



In Loving Memory



**Alexis Leigh
and Nicole Leigh Rudeen**
Stillborn March 11, 2002
Unknown Cause
Given by parents,
Sherri and Randy Rudeen
and big sisters Julie and Sara

Ryan Davis Vermillion
January 30, 1997
CCAMS Disorder
Parents, John Mark
and Misty Vermillion
Given by David
and Jennifer Langley

Garrett Anthony Mayer
October 12 - December 18, 1999
Tetralogy of Fallot
Given by parents,
April and Tony Mayer
and little sister Samantha

Mindy and Maggie Smith
Stillborn November 4, 1997
Twin Transfusion Syndrome
and Polyhydramnios
Given by parents,
Scott and Karla Smith
and little siblings Travis and Julia

M.E.N.D.

gratefully acknowledges these gifts of love given in memory of a baby, relative, friend, or given by someone just wanting to help. These donations help us to continue M.E.N.D.'s mission by providing this newsletter and other services to bereaved parents free of charge. Please refer to the back page of this newsletter for more information regarding where to send your donations and what information to include.

Thank you so much!

Jonathan Daniel Mitchell
Stillborn June 24, 1995
Cord Accident
Baby Mitchell
Miscarried December, 2001
Parents, Byron and Rebekah Mitchell
Big brother, Byron, Jr.
Given by grandparents,
Dennis and Sue Brewer

Jonathan Daniel Mitchell
Stillborn June 24, 1995
Cord Accident
Baby Mitchell
Miscarried December, 2001
Parents, Byron and Rebekah Mitchell
Big brother, Byron, Jr.
Given by Dentistry of Las Colinas/
Byron L. Mitchell, D.D.S.

Griffin Caleb McIntosh
Stillborn June 6, 2001
Parents, Matthew and Naomi McIntosh
Sister, Mya
Given by grandparents
Kenneth and Iweeta McIntosh

Gabriela Faith Gregory
Stillborn January 24, 2002
Anomaly of Umbilical Cord
Parents, Chris and Monica Gregory
Siblings, Daniel and Amarise
Given by Aunt and Uncle
Beth and Sergio Matassa

Gabriela Faith Gregory
Stillborn January 24, 2002
Anomaly of Umbilical Cord
Given by parents, Chris and Monica Gregory
and siblings Daniel and Amarise

Joseph Charles Libby
Stillborn May 26, 1999
Cord Accident
Given by parents, Wim and Sharlene Libby
and siblings Will, John, and Mary Grace

Logan Wayne Fish
September 17, 2002
Skeletal Dysplasia
Parents, Brittney and David Fish
Brothers, Landry and Hudson
Given by Sterling Sales & Solutions

Baby M
Miscarried October 15, 1999
Baby Boy Moreton
March 17, 2000
Angel #3
Miscarried August 1, 2000
Antiphospholipid Antibody Syndrome
Given by parents, April and Sam Moreton
and little siblings Asher and Ava

Catherine Mary Martin
Stillborn December 15, 2001
Baby Martin I
Miscarried June 14, 2002
Baby Martin II
Miscarried September, 2002
Blighted Ovum
Parents, Nancy and Glenn Martin
Little brother, Alexander Lee
Given by Barron Vending

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

Rianne Ellisa Scrivner
March 4 - 7, 1997
Hydrocephaly
Parents, Bill and Rae Scrivner
Little sisters, Chanie, Casidy, and Canlie
Given by grandparents Harold and Roma Ellis

M.E.N.D. would like to recognize the following sponsors for their help in establishing M.E.N.D.'s new Arkansas chapter. Thank you for your generous donations.

April and Sam Moreton
Kelly and Bob Maddocks
Amy Sarver, M.D.
J. Todd Hannah, M.D.
Angela Fangmeier, M.D.
Community Physicians Group, P.A.

Several significant factors influence a person's adaptation to loss. One factor is the manner of death. Was the loss sudden or anticipated? When someone dies suddenly and unexpectedly, family members lack time to anticipate and prepare for the loss. No opportunity exists to say goodbye. There is a significant feeling of loss of control in light of the sudden loss. One's world comes crashing down around them. Sudden loss is particularly difficult to manage. So many loose ends remain. There is no opportunity for closure. When the loss is anticipated, the dying process may be prolonged and emotionally draining. Long-term caregiving is likely to produce a depletion of energy and financial resources. Relief at ending the patient's suffering and family strain is likely to produce feelings of guilt.

Ambiguity surrounding a loss interferes with the grief process. Examples of ambiguous loss are soldiers missing in action, hostage situations, or uncertainty about whether a family member is dead or alive. The inability to recover the body is likely to prolong and complicate bereavement.

Violent death is another factor influencing adaptation to loss. Murder, drunk driving, a natural disaster such as a tornado, flash flood, or hurricane can all have a devastating impact that reverberates throughout a family system. Suicide is undoubtedly one of the most anguishing deaths for families to come to terms with.

Neonatal death has the potential for producing complicated grief reactions. There continues to be a significant minimizing of neonatal death in society at large. The impact of neonatal death can produce significant strain in the marital relationship and the family system. The death of a child is considered one of the most difficult losses to process. Child loss goes against nature. There is a reversal of generational expectations. Parents are not meant to survive children. Each of these variables influences adaptation to loss and impact both mental and emotional functioning.

In dealing with ungrieved losses, it is important to allow oneself to experience the pain of loss. Thinking about the loss, talking about the loss in a safe and supportive environment, and writing about the loss will facilitate the processing of pain. Once losses are grieved and painful emotions are beginning to subside, it is time for a cognitive reappraisal and reframe of the losses. Placing the losses in some type of meaningful context will enable one to move forward and find the healing that is available. One of the most helpful resources is the recitation of the Serenity Prayer.

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time. Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace. Taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it. Trusting that You will make all things right if I surrender to Your will, in order that I might be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with You forever in the next. Amen.

-Neihbur ♥

M.E.N.D. Fundraisers

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

Kroger grocery stores donate a percentage of all purchases of those shoppers who have and use a Kroger Share Card back to M.E.N.D. To obtain your Share Card, contact Rebekah via one of the ways listed on the last page of this newsletter and let her know how many you need. This program is valid in Texas, but residents of other states may need to check with store managers to see if they participate.

Tom Thumb also has a program in Texas that can benefit M.E.N.D. If you have a Tom Thumb Reward Card, please ask your Tom Thumb cashier to link your card with M.E.N.D. Our number is **6265**. If you are already linked to another organization, they will split a donation of one percent of your purchases between the organizations. It only takes about five minutes to get a Reward Card, and it can also be used at Rاندalls and Simon David stores.

Stamps.com offers a \$10-\$20 referral program. If you would like to purchase stamps from home and receive a free postage scale, visit www.stamps.com, and use referral code C-4FTJ-TWR. Stamps.com will give the incentive money to M.E.N.D. in the form of free postage.

Shannon Outen, a M.E.N.D. member and co-owner of **Paper Patch**, represents several lines of business stationery, specializing in customized holiday/Christmas cards at a discounted price. Shannon will donate 10 percent of her profits to M.E.N.D. from each Christmas card order. Contact Shannon at (817) 557-4733 or email outencs@aol.com to receive a current catalogue.

Christine Oxendine is now a representative of **Avon**. She has offered to give to M.E.N.D. 10 percent of any orders placed by M.E.N.D. members. To receive a catalogue, contact Christine at 940-381-6617 home or 682-365-7448 cell, or e-mail bearpals@charter.net.

Glenn Martin is looking for M.E.N.D. families willing to grant space for small gumball machines in order to raise funds for M.E.N.D. If you have a retail business or connections to a high traffic location, like a restaurant, and are willing to place a gumball machine in your location, Glenn will place, stock, and service the equipment and give M.E.N.D. 35 percent of the proceeds. His business has most of its route in the Grapevine and Southlake areas and could travel further into the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex for a high traffic location. Glenn can be contacted at (817) 874-5366 or glmartin@attg.net.

M.E.N.D. can now earn funds through **i.think inc.**, an online marketing research firm. You can help by signing up as a survey panel member and designating us as the recipient of your fee. Every time you complete a survey M.E.N.D. will be automatically credited. Go to the website at <http://www.ithink.inc.com> and choose "Sign up to become an i.think inc. panel member" Fill out the sign-up survey. Under the "Funds for Charity" section, select M.E.N.D. from the list of names. Once you have completed the sign-up survey, including a valid email address, you'll be contacted with an Internet address and password for specific surveys for you to take part in. At the end of the survey, press the "Submit" button, and M.E.N.D. will be automatically credited as the recipient of all money you have earned.

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

For inquiries, subscription requests, deletions, and submissions to the newsletter, contact us at
M.E.N.D.
P.O. Box 1007
Coppell, TX 75019
Phone and Fax: (972) 506-9000
(Please call before faxing)

E-Mail: Rebekah@mend.org
Sharlene@mend.org

Donations make the printing and distribution of this newsletter possible.

Your tax-deductible contributions are greatly appreciated and should be sent to:

M.E.N.D.
P.O. Box 1007
Coppell, TX 75019.

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).

Visit our web site at:
<http://www.mend.org>

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