



M. E. N. D.

Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death

What I Wish I Had Known Before Leaving the Hospital

Pregnancy and infant loss support groups have proven to be extremely beneficial for parents who lose a baby. Sharing and connecting with others who have endured a similar experience is comforting and makes us realize we are not alone. However, there is also a downside. As families share their experiences, the good and the bad, some come to the realization that they were not given optimal care at their hospital and were not given as much information and choices as perhaps they should have been given. After twelve years of directing support groups, I have noted three areas in which I feel hospitals need to improve when a patient loses a baby: keeping the baby for as long as parents desire (if possible), taking photographs of the baby, and informing parents of their options once the baby has died.

I was on bed rest in the hospital when Jonathan died in my womb; he had become completely entangled in his umbilical cord. An acquaintance of mine, who was a labor and delivery nurse in the hospital, briefed me on what to expect once I was delivered later that night. She told me I could hold Jonathan for as long as I wanted, take pictures of him, share him with family and friends, and even gave me permission to have him spend the night in my hospital room rather than having him sent to the morgue. I was comfortable with the idea of holding him and taking a few photographs, but could not fathom having his lifeless little body in my hospital room, especially overnight. She further explained to us that if we did opt for him to go to the morgue, we could request him any time we wanted.

Once I saw my perfectly formed, beautiful baby boy, my perspective changed a bit. I wanted everyone to see him, have their picture taken while holding him, and found it very natural to have him in my hospital room. My husband Byron and I had our private moments with him after he was born, then his daddy lovingly carried him down the hall to a room full of close family members, friends, and pastors from our church. Several tender moments were captured on film that night as everyone carefully passed Jonathan around and had their special time with him. We did send him to the morgue that evening instead of having him in our room all night, but we requested our baby again early the next morning. All day

visitors stopped by the hospital to express their condolences and to see our precious baby boy. Before we knew it, it was close to 10:00 at night, and Jonathan had been with us for more than twelve hours. The next day was Monday, the day the funeral home would arrive to pick up our baby and prepare him for burial. Before they came, I requested to spend time with him once more. After about an hour, the chaplain gently took him from my arms for the last time.

A few years later I calculated the approximate total hours we had the opportunity to spend with our stillborn son, and it was about seventeen. I have since learned that most parents of stillborn babies or infants who die shortly after birth are only allowed one to two hours, especially if an autopsy is requested. I thought having your baby with you for as long as you wanted, even over the course of two to three days, was normal. I was told later that several nurses and chaplains at my hospital were horrified and disturbed that we kept our baby for so long. They were worried we were in denial that he was dead and were pretending everything was okay. Quite the contrary! Because my nurse friend gave us permission to have him as long as we desired, I assumed that was routine and what everyone did who lost their baby. I am told the post-partum floor at the hospital had a special meeting over our family's way of dealing with Jonathan's death. After a roundtable discussion of whether it is okay or not to allow families to have their babies for so long, the overwhelming consensus was "yes." Methodist Medical Center in Dallas now has the policy of allowing families to spend as much time with their deceased baby as they want, as long as an autopsy is not going to be performed, and as long as the baby is still in "good condition."

Many hospitals have now adapted this same concept. But it frustrates me when some couples come to

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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.

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

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What Few Things We Would Do Differently

When we found out, that our sweet Ethan had been born to heaven, we handled it the best we knew how.

Looking back, we know that we did everything right, but...there are a few things we wish we had known.

First, we took lots of pictures, but we have always felt we should have taken more. For example, now I wish I had pictures zoomed in on each of his features.

Second, we would have liked to have known that we were allowed to give him his bath and be the ones to cut a lock of his hair. It is your right to do these things with your baby.

Third, we wrote everything down that we could think of from that day. We should have started from the moment I was in labor.

We were always told, "You both are handling this so well." And truthfully, we were, if "well" meant we can still function, even though we were torn apart. No matter how "well" we were functioning, we weren't "well" in our decision making.

This leaves us with a last piece of advice. A big loss plus a big decision can equal a BIG mistake. Life has a new-found meaning after losing one of your kids. We thought a new start, in a new home, in a new town, was the best thing for us. We were wrong. Ethan was born still on January 31, and four-and-a-half months later we closed on our first house.

We found out that I was pregnant (high risk) two weeks before our closing date, and on top of that, my husband deployed to the Middle East, two weeks after closing. While we knew of these two MAJOR issues before the closing, we did not know of the many problems our house would bring us. We now know that buying a new house was a decision to be made only by people who have not been recently traumatized.

We have lived through our problems, but it made grieving so much harder than it should have been. Our advice: take more pictures than you've ever taken, stand up for your rights, write everything down immediately, and don't make ANY big decisions for at least a good year.

Take the time to grieve. Our prayers are with all of those who have, or are having to, travel this road. God bless you and yours.

♥ *Melissa and Nate Beaty,
mommy and daddy to Gavin and Ethan*



Search and Support

How often do you search for something by using the Internet? Today's savvy Internet surfer now researches everything from everyday household items to cars and homes. Now all that searching can now help to support the ministry of M.E.N.D.

GoodSearch.com is a search engine that donates half its revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. Powered by Yahoo!, it is used like any other search engine.

To earn money for M.E.N.D., go to www.goodsearch.com and designate M.E.N.D. as your charity of choice.

Medical Moment



Risk factors for sudden infant death syndrome in a developing country

Pinho AP, Aerts D, Nunes ML, Rev Saude Publica. 2008 Jun;42(3):396-401

Departamento de Neurologia, Hospital São Lucas, Pontifícia Universidade do Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, RS, Brasil

Objective: To analyze whether previously identified risk factors for sudden death syndrome have a significant impact in a developing country.

Methods: Retrospective longitudinal case-control study carried out in Porto Alegre, Southern Brazil. Cases (N=39) were infants born between 1996 and 2000 who died suddenly and unexpectedly at home during sleep and were diagnosed with sudden death syndrome. Controls (N=117) were infants matched by age and sex who died in hospitals due to other conditions. Data were collected from postmortem examination records and questionnaires answers. A conditional logistic model was used to identify factors associated with the outcome.

Results: Mean age at death of cases was 3.2 months. The frequencies of infants regarding gestational age, breastfeeding and regular medical visits were similar in both groups. Sleeping position for most cases and controls was the lateral one. Supine sleeping position was found for few infants in both groups. Maternal variables, age below 20 years (OR=2, 95% CI: 1.1; 5.1) and smoking of more than 10 cigarettes per day during pregnancy (OR=3, 95% CI: 1.3; 6.4), significantly increased the risk for the syndrome. Socioeconomic characteristics were similar in both groups and did not affect risk.

Conclusions: Infant-maternal and socioeconomic profiles of cases in a developing country closely resembled the profile described in the literature, and risk factors were similar as well. However, individual characteristics were identified as risks in the population studied, such as smoking during pregnancy and maternal age below 20 years.

Abstract summarized and submitted by First Candle, August 2008.

Book Review

Forever Altered Yet Unbroken

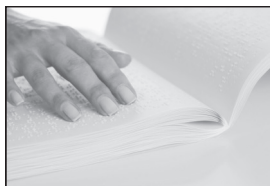
By Kasey M. Carter
www.losssofchild.net

Author Kasey Carter and her husband lost a baby due to anencephaly. Written from a Christian perspective, Carter has several chapters that focus on spiritual issues following a loss, resuming intimacy again, subsequent pregnancies, and encourages readers to turn tragedies around to glorify the Lord.

♥Review by Rebekah Mitchell

M.E.N.D. has a complete list of books, Web sites, organizations, and music resources available online at www.mend.org.

If you would like to submit a review of books, music, Web sites or other resources dealing with infant loss, please email them to our newsletter editor Heather Fann at heather@mend.org.



March/April Topic

A Sibling's Perspective

Deadline: February 28, 2009

May/June Topic

Mother's Day and Father's Day

Deadline: April 30, 2009

Stories, poems, thoughts, and/or feelings regarding these topics are welcomed. Submissions must be received by the deadline to be considered for publication in the newsletter. Unfortunately, there is not enough room to include all submissions. Choices will be left to the discretion of the editors. Please see page two of the newsletter for the appropriate address to send your submissions. Any submission printed in our newsletter will also be posted to our Web site 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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Visit our Web site at:
www.mend.org



Birthday Tributes

Happy 1st Birthday, Elijah Darrell!

I'm am the godmother of what was and is a special little person who didn't make it out here on the outside.

Elijah Darrell, you will always be my first special godson. We will someday meet again, You are greatly loved and missed by your mommy and me! She loves you with every beat in her heart. I love you, too, my little man!

Maria and Alexis love you too!

Love, Janell Williams



Elijah Darrell
Miscarried February 13, 2008
Mommy: Sabria Mason

Happy 1st Birthday, Penelope!

To My Beautiful Baby Girl,

Penny, it has been a year since we met face to face. I can still remember crisply when I first laid eyes on you. I still remember how you felt in my arms. You share so much with your big sister. You are in my thoughts every day. You bring a smile to my face when I think of you, and you bring me sunshine when I have a gloomy day. The only difference is you are not here physically, but we are all only here physically for a short time. You have touched so many lives beyond our families more than I could have even imagined.

I love you and I continuously hold you in my arms, just like I did the day you were born.

Love, Daddy



Penelope Sakura Yamaji
Stillborn January 3, 2008
Parents: Brett and Kathie Yamaji
Big sister: Charlotte

Happy 5th Birthday, Savannah Kate!

We think of you every day and wish you were here with us. Your presence is here in our hearts, and we talk about you often. We are truly blessed to know that our family is eternal and you are ours forever! Until we meet again!

Savannah Kate Stanley
January 3, 2004
Premature due to Incompetent Cervix
Parents: Joel and Calli Stanley
Siblings: Colton and Danika



Happy 2nd Birthday, Jordan, Our Precious Love!

Our Dearest Jordan,

We know you are having a wonderful time in heaven with God and that your birthday celebration is far greater than we could ever begin to fathom, with everyone running around in a room filled with absolute joy, laughter and love!

We know it's amazing! Although we are unable to be there with you this year, know that we are celebrating your precious, blessed birthday here the best way we can! Be sure to take a moment and glance down at our "Special Birthday Celebration" just for you, Jordan, our precious love.

We love you and miss you so very, very unimaginably so. Although we would much rather you be here with us, we know that there is no greater place than heaven! Therefore, we trust God's plan, endure this temporary separation, and continue celebrating all the love that you are.

We love you, Jordan, our precious love!

Mommy and Daddy

Jordan Alexander Booker
January 11, 2007
True Knot in Cord
Parents: Norma Jordan and Mark Booker



Happy 2nd Birthday, Our Precious Kennady!

It's hard to believe it is your second birthday. What a big beautiful girl you would be! Mommy, Daddy and Cooper miss you dearly and wish we could celebrate your special day with you, but please know that we will be celebrating it here and thinking of you the entire time.

We love and miss you dearly, little one. We'll all be together one day. Have a happy and joyous day!

Love,

Mommy, Daddy, Cooper, and your three puppies

Kennady Ann League
January 17, 2007
Unknown Cause
Parents: Jason and Jeanelle League
Little brother: Cooper



Happy 1st Birthday, Maddox!

We can't believe a year has already passed since we held you in our arms and handed you directly over to the Lord. We are so thankful for your life and all the beautiful ways that our God has allowed it to be used to bring glory to Him... Thank you for letting us share your story of His faithfulness to our family. We miss you greatly, especially as we celebrate the arrival of your baby sister, but know that you are whole and well and will see you again one day!

Love you always!
Daddy, Mama, Deacon and Faith Clare

Maddox Donald Stanfield
January 23, 2008
Trisomy 18
Parents: *Dusty and Kenzie Stanfield*
Siblings: *Deacon and Faith Clare*



Happy 2nd Birthday, Benjamin!

Our son we love, our son we miss.
Your short moments linger long in our hearts.
We love you,
Mom, Dad, Ashlyn, Grace, Anna, Gaby, and Josiah

Benjamin Kent Baack
January 10, 2007
Cord Accident
Parents: *Kent and Karen Baack*
Siblings: *Ashlyn, Grace, Anna, Gaby, and Josiah*



Happy 2nd Birthday, Allison!

I can't believe it's already been two years since we held you in our arms for the first time and had to say goodbye all in the same day. I think about you every single day. I wonder what you would look like and what you would be doing. Daddy and I love and miss you so much!

Happy Birthday our precious little Angel!

Allison Jane Frye
Stillborn January 17, 2007
Cord Accident
Parents: *Tim and Kelly Frye*
Also Remembering:
Baby Frye #1
August 2007
Baby Frye #2
November 2008



Happy 3rd Birthday, Caleb!

We still miss you every day. I imagine all the fun things that you would be doing with you big brother and sisters. Although we miss you, I know you are in a better place. I look forward to the day we will see you face to face. We love you so much.

Love,
Mom, Dad, Faith, Benjamin, Hope and Joy

Caleb Eugene Andersen
January 6, 2006
Cord Accident
Parents: *Kevin and Robyn Andersen*
Siblings: *Faith, Benjamin, Hope and Joy*



Happy 11th Birthday, Maya!

We miss you so much!
Love,
Mom, Dad, Erin and Brandon

Maya Denise Ates
Stillborn January 6, 1998
Clot in Umbilical Cord
Parents: *Tammy and Horace Ates*
Siblings: *Erin Delaine and Brandon Medearis*



Happy 4th Birthday, Kayin and Happy 3rd Birthday, Ethan!

We are so wonderfully blessed to be your parents. There is not one day that we don't think of you. Austin and Jordan talk about you two often. They are both excited about your birthdays coming up. Davy will love sending you balloons, I'm sure.

We're amazed at how time goes so quickly. Seems like we just had you two a few months ago. For every birthday you have, we know that we're just another year closer to seeing you both. What a glorious day that will be, when our Heavenly Father and our babies, we will see!

Love to you, on angels wings,
Daddy, Mommy, Austin, Jordan and Davlyn

Kayin Beaty
Miscarried January 15, 2005
Ethan Merrick Beaty
Stillborn January 31, 2006
Unknown Cause
Parents: *Nate and Melissa Beaty*
Siblings: *Austin, Jordan, and Davlyn*



In Loving Memory



Jordan Alexander Booker

Stillborn January 11, 2007
True Knot in Cord
Parents: Norma Jordan & Mark Booker
Given by mommy Norma Jordan

Georgia Alexis Brooks

Mommy: Amy Brooks
Given by Jill Presnal

Julia Eileen Brown

May 1, 2006
Cord Accident
Parents: Rachel and Spencer Brown
Sibling: Sydney Elaine
Given by Elaine Stephens

Cole, Kaylyn, and Hannah Busker

Stillborn December 10, 2004
Ecoli Infection
Given by parents Kim and Mike Busker
and big sister Allison

Abigail Grace Crump

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

Riley and Parker Davis

November 14, 2006
Prematurity
Given by parents Robert and Cheryl Davis
and little sister Annalise

Gift of Support

Safeco Insurance Employee Giving
Programs

Gift of Support

West Conroe Baptist Church
in Conroe, Texas

Gift of Support

First Baptist Church, Texarkana, Texas

Kyler Paul English

Stillborn January 20, 2006
Cord Accident
Given by parents Laurie and Bob English
and brothers Justin, Kinser, Kelson,
and Kayden

Hannah Rose Flott

January 24, 2004
Given by parents Kristin and Brian Flott

Janelle Marie Gibson

Stillborn November 17, 2006
Clot in Placenta

Gabriel Gibson

Miscarried October 31, 2007
Ectopic Pregnancy
Given by parents Scott and Jodie Gibson
and siblings Will, Andrew, and Isaac

Ian Wesley Giger

August 3 - November 5, 2006
SIDS

Baby Giger

Miscarried February, 2007
Ectopic Pregnancy
Given by parents Noel and William Giger
and siblings Calvin, Jordan, and Gavin

Lauren Paige Grimes

Stillborn March 6, 1999
Unknown Cause

Baby Angel Grimes (Raleigh's twin)

Miscarried January 25, 2001
Given by parents John and Paula Grimes
and sister Raleigh

Jordan Claire James

September 29 - October 15, 2003
Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome
Given by parents John and Julie James
and sisters Bailie and Claire

Marissa Joy Jordan

November 26, 2003
Thanatophoric Dysplasia

Baby Jordan

Miscarried October 8, 1999
Parents: Sean and Sarah Jordan
Siblings: Stephen, Season, Ethan,
Marshall, Clay, and Gavin
Given by Ann Young

Hope Kirkpatrick

November 5 - 8, 2005

Amniotic Band Syndrome
Parents: Aly and Kirk Kirkpatrick
Little brother: Ian
Given by Jenni and Larry Stuart, Margaret
Fritz, and Kasey and Ryan Blackburn

William Joseph Kowalski

August 12, 1997
Placental Abruption/
Premature Labor Caused by Fibroid Tumors
Given by parents Robert and Sheri Kowalski
and little siblings Robert and ??

Grace Melendez

Stillborn December 23, 2006
Given by mommy Kimberley Melendez

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

Jordan Marie Sims

Stillborn November 10, 2006
Unknown Cause
Given by parents Troy and D'Anna Sims
and siblings Jacob and Julia

Shauna Elisabeth Winebrenner

Stillborn April 12, 2003
Trisomy 18
Parents: Sara and Tim Winebrenner
Siblings: Saul and Ella
Given by Matt and Dena Hanks

Gift of Support

Metropolitan Baptist Church, Houston,
Texas

Irving Christmas Candlelight

Ceremony Sponsors:

Francesca's Collections
Al and Amber Zuckerman
Christine Oxendine
Chris and Monica Gregory
Moonshadow Auto Repair
Sam's Wholesale Club
Dentistry of Las Colinas/Byron Mitchell, DDS
Doug and Angelique Sohn
Calvary Church

M.E.N.D.

gratefully acknowledges these gifts of love given in memory of a baby, relative, friend, or given by someone just wanting to help. These donations help us to continue M.E.N.D.'s mission by providing this newsletter and other services to bereaved parents free of charge. Please refer to page 2 of this newsletter for more information regarding where to send your donations and what information to include.

Thank you so much!

Continued from page 1...

our support groups and share that they were not encouraged to keep their otherwise perfect baby with them for very long, or that out-of-town relatives were not given the chance to see their baby once they arrived. When these same families hear stories of others getting to have their babies for extended periods of time, it creates more sorrow and grief for them, not to mention anger at their hospital.

During the hours we had Jonathan with us, I remember my father-in-law continuously snapping pictures of me holding him. At the time I wondered what he expected me to do, smile? I am now immensely grateful that he was bold enough to get the camera out during such a sorrowful time, when most people would have thought such action extremely inappropriate. Additionally, a nurse took a handful of pictures of Jonathan with the hospital's Polaroid camera shortly after he was born, but they turned out dark and unclear. Thankfully, another nurse took our camera in the operating room and captured several priceless shots. Like the issue of not being allowed to spend quality time with their babies, some parents come to our support groups and tell of no one at their hospital recommending they take their own photographs, and the only ones they have are the ones from the hospital which, like mine, are dark and fuzzy.

A few times a year I am privileged to speak to hospital personnel on how to most effectively care for their patients when a baby dies. Picture-taking is one of my points. I explain that we realize nurses are not professional photographers and should not be expected to create masterpieces for their patients. But there are professionals who will come in to take pictures, such as the organization Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep. I further recommend to them that they encourage the families to take their own pictures as well and to use more than one camera in case something goes wrong with the developing.

Before Jonathan was delivered, we were informed that we would need to make burial arrangements for our son. I am very thankful my stillborn son was acknowledged as a human being and we were given the opportunity to have a ceremony for him. This is another issue I address when speaking to hospital staff. In Texas, like most states, families must arrange for their baby to be buried or cremated when their babies die after 20 weeks of gestation or weighing more than 350 grams. However, many families of babies born just under this timeline are not afforded this same choice. Just because a parent is not required to bury their baby because they have not yet reached the 20-week mark, does not mean they should not be given the opportunity to do so. Most funeral homes and cemeteries are more than willing to take care of deceased babies, even if it is before the mandated guideline.

Losing a baby is perhaps the worst suffering many of us will have to endure in our lives. Grieving a baby is difficult enough without having to later feel angry or bad that we did not do some things others were given the chance to do. This can be alleviated by hospitals being informed of options, choices, and resources, then passing them on to the families. A lot has changed over the years concerning hospital protocol when a baby dies, but a lot more has yet to be achieved. If you are one of the families who were not given some options you have since felt you should have been given, I encourage you to make an appointment with the head of the spiritual care department and/or the nurse manager of labor and delivery to calmly, nicely, and gently express your feelings. Maybe they haven't been informed of these options, and perhaps you can be the one to educate them. If someone did not let you experience your baby to the fullest, you can make a difference for the grieving families who will come behind you.

♥ *Rebekah Mitchell*

Enjoy the time you have

When thinking about "the things I wish I had known," a few things came to mind. We didn't get to leave the hospital with Maddox this past January. First of all, Now I Lay Me Down To Sleep (www.nilmtdts.org) was the best thing we did as we anticipated only a short time with Maddox. Our photographer was amazing, and the pictures we have of our brief time with him are absolutely priceless to me.

There were a few other things I was either told about or thought to do:

- We picked a "life verse" for Maddox (Isaiah 43:1)
- We have his footprints put in our Bibles (mine and my husband's)

We also had our family and friends come in to see him and spend time with us even after he was gone. Many people might not think they want to do that, but for us it somehow gave validation to the journey that we took to meet him. It gave God's plan and purpose for his life more value for us because others got to share in him.

Although it was so hard to lose Maddox, the ability we had to plan and have certain things in mind made it so much easier to just enjoy the time with him.

♥ *Kenzie Stanfield,
mommy to Maddox Donald*



M.E.N.D. Chapter Corner

Chapter Meeting Information

M.E.N.D. - NW Arkansas

Meets the 1st Tuesday from 6:30—8:00 p.m.
Jones Center for Families, Room 206,
922 East Emma Avenue,
Springdale, AR 72765
Director: April Moreton
April@mend.org, (479) 524-3500

M.E.N.D. - Kansas

Meets the 2nd Thursday, 7:00 p.m.
at Cora Miller Hall/Newman
Division of Nursing, Room 107
1127 Chestnut, Emporia, KS 66801
Director: Stephanie Metzger
Stephanie@mend.org., (620) 343-6357

M.E.N.D. - Houston

Meets the 3rd Thursday, 7:30 p.m.
HEALTHSOUTH Houston
Rehabilitation Institute
17506 Red Oak Drive, Houston, TX 77090
Director: Jaimie Crump
Jaimie@mend.org, (281) 374-8528

Subsequent pregnancy group meets in the same
place the 1st Thursday, 7:30 p.m.,
led by Sarah Winebrenner
(swinebrenner2004@yahoo.com).

M.E.N.D. - Georgia

Offers peer support via phone and email contact.
Director: Marie Stockdale
Maries@mend.org, (678) 634-3686

M.E.N.D. - Texarkana

Meets 3rd Thursday 7:00 p.m.
CHRISTUS St. Michael Rehab Hospital
2400 St. Michael Drive
Texarkana, TX 75503
Director: Monica Davis
Monica@mend.org, (903) 490-1210

M.E.N.D. - Nacogdoches

Meets the 2nd Thursday at 7:30 p.m.
The Badders Law Firm
4002 North St., Nacogdoches, TX 75961
Director: Lori De La Torre
Lori@mend.org, (936) 569-1739

M.E.N.D. - Hill Country

Meets the 1st Thursday at 7:00 p.m.
Gillespie County Historical Society Building
312 W. San Antonio St.
Fredericksburg, TX 78624
Director: Larissa Hallford
Larissa@mend.org, (830) 456-4178

M.E.N.D. - Tulsa

Meets the 3rd Tuesday at 7:00 p.m.
Canyon Crossing
1651 E Old North Rd.
Sand Springs, Oklahoma 74063
Michele Wilson
michele@mend.org, (918) 694-4325 (HEAL)

M.E.N.D. Chapter Updates

NW Arkansas

M.E.N.D.—NW Arkansas hosted its third annual Christmas Candlelight on a snowy Tuesday evening in early December. Many of our founding members returned to participate and support our newest chapter members. Our speaker compared and contrasted the differences between the way the world instructs us to grieve with the way that scripture teaches to us to do so. It was a great reminder that M.E.N.D.'s ministry of grieving and sharing in a community is biblical. We welcomed a subsequent baby in November, and sadly, welcomed several new families the same month.

April Moreton

Kansas

We had a beautiful Christmas Candlelight Ceremony and enjoyed our time remembering our babies. Our next event will be our annual Bunco Bash fundraiser on February 27 at the Flinthills Mall in Emporia. For more details, contact stephanie@mend.org.

Stephanie Metzger

Houston

Our third Candlelight Christmas Ceremony was held on December 6 and it was a beautiful evening. Thank you so much to Tiffany and Desmond Vincent, Brandy and Bryan Wilson, and Tim and Sarah Winebrenner for all your hard work that evening. While we know that Christmas may be a difficult season for us without our babies, we hope that the ceremony gave some comfort and hope to those who attended.

Jaimie Crump

Georgia

The Atlanta chapter continues to minister to hurting families through email and by phone. It is our prayer that God will once again open the door to resume our support group meetings. Please pray about ministry opportunities available through M.E.N.D.—Georgia. If you feel led to apply as a chapter leader or assistant, please email Rebekah@mend.org or Maries@mend.org for more information or call Rebekah Mitchell at 972-506-9000.

Marie Stockdale

Texarkana

M.E.N.D.—Texarkana held its second annual Christmas Candlelight Ceremony on Monday, December 8 at Beech Street First Baptist Church, Texarkana, Arkansas. I shared an encouraging word about trusting Jesus through the storm of losing a baby and about finding purpose in the storm. We were encouraged by the turnout, which included several first time participants. We are excited to see how God is going to continue to use us as we are the hands and feet of Christ.

Monica Davis

Nacogdoches

Families are receiving comfort and encouragement in beautiful ways as members reach out to each other with the comfort they themselves have received from God.

Lori De La Torre

Hill Country

M.E.N.D.—Hill Country continues to meet at the Gillespie County Historical Society Building on the first Thursday of every month at 7:00 p.m. We continue to receive donations from the community, and are still searching for someone to assist with the group.

Larissa Hallford

Tulsa

M.E.N.D.—Tulsa continues to grow in our ministry to hurting families. I would like to thank Jim and Sandy Meyer for the use of their retreat facility as our meeting sight for MEND-Tulsa's first year. This beautiful facility has been perfect for our meetings, and without their provision, M.E.N.D.—Tulsa would not be possible.

Michele Wilson

Mother's Milk

After they took away my twin angels, Sabbath and Amethyst, the doctor came in and sent me home, telling me that my milk may come in, but not to worry about it since it would go away shortly. Unfortunately, I wish he had told me that the slightest thing would make me leak.

I was convinced that since it had not come in by the second day after birth I wouldn't get it (a suggestion the nurse had told me), but the fourth day after birth as I stood in the shower, I noticed my breasts feeling sore. I got out and began to dry off and noticed the milk leaking. I cried so hard!

Every time I heard a baby cry, I dripped.

It was torture to have my milk, but not my children. I am not even sure when it happened, but I began to get used to the milk. One day, two months later, I noticed I didn't leak at the cries of a young baby anymore. I tried to express some of the milk for the first time, only to barely get a small drop here and there.

The next day my milk dried up. Then I became angry and cried for hours on end, because I felt the one physical connection I had to my babies was now gone.

I just wish I had been totally prepared for the amount and the strength of the emotions I faced when finally everything began to clear. I wasn't prepared for the immense anger, fear, tears, longing, and physical aching to hold and cuddle anything my babies' size. I held stuffed bears for almost two-and-a-half years after they died in order to sleep at night.

The mental games you play with yourself are almost unbearable. I didn't think I could make it through, but with the strength of God and my friends and some family, I have been a survivor of the hardest journey of life anyone could ever take.

♥ Kara Lee Thompson,

mommy to Chrizti, Sabbath and Amethyst, Taylor and Falisha

Forever loved, Never forgotten,
Lost to us but forever
held in our hearts...
You are my precious daughter...
Held forever in our hearts.
Love you,
Mommy and Daddy

*Falisha Raven Meeshelle Thompson
Miscarried February 29, 2008
Parents: Kara and Junior Thompson
Also remembering
Chrizti, April 29, 2002
Sabbath and Amethyst, July 20, 2004
Taylor, May 26, 2005*

So Many Decisions

We lost our first child Caleb after four weeks of hospitalized bed rest. We thought he'd be born early and then come home after a few weeks. When the doctors told us there was nothing more they could do, we had to make the first of what seemed like endless decisions: let him go.

Then came all the questions about an autopsy, baths, pictures, in our room or not, our family to be with him or not, and on and on.

We had an amazing nurse who had also been through an infant loss years earlier. She told us, "only make one big decision a day. You want to be sure that you are at peace with those decisions next week, next month, next year."

Over the course of the next four days as I recovered from my cesarean, we had to plan the final arrangements two states away, how to get there, when to have it, where to bury him, pallbearers, music, flowers, and on and on.

Although five years later we've learned about a number of things we could have done, we still believe that the decisions we made were the right ones for our family at the right time.

♥ Heather Fann, *mommy to Caleb Scott and Baby August*

M.E.N.D. *Support Group Meetings*

Join us for a time of sharing experiences.

M.E.N.D. main chapter meetings
are held the 2nd Thursday of every month
from 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.

Daddies group
meets the 2nd Thursday of
March, June, Sept. and Dec., 7:30—9:00 p.m.
*A time for dads to meet together and discuss topics
relevant to them as fathers. Our moms and dads
meet together for introductions before dividing into
two groups for discussion.*

Food and Fellowship
*A time to relax and meet with other M.E.N.D.
parents in a social setting*
Contact Brittney Fish: Brittney@mend.org

Subsequent pregnancy group
meets the 4th Tuesday from 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.
Led by Liz Walker:
rlw8121@sbcglobal.net
*For families who are considering becoming preg-
nant or are currently pregnant after a loss.*

Playgroup
*For families with children born prior to or
subsequent to a loss. Meeting at various locations.*
Contact Mary Steen or Brandee Dill for more
info: Mary_Steen@hotmail.com
or dillsforchrist@yahoo.com

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

All main chapter support group meetings are held at:

**Suggs Law Firm
1522 W. Airport Freeway, Suite 200
Irving, TX 75062**

(Located on the south side of the highway,
Between MacArthur Boulevard
and Story Road)

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

Infertility group
Meets the 3rd Monday from 7:30—9:00 p.m.
Led by Cheryl Davis:
Cheryl@mend.org
For families experiencing infertility after a loss.

The Things I Wish We Knew...

I was 39 weeks pregnant and having contractions. We went to the hospital to bring home a baby—not a box of ashes. It was late at night when the contractions were close enough for us to go to the hospital. “Something” kept us from making those special calls to the immediate family to announce that I was in labor and that our new baby boy would be here by morning light.

We went in to labor and delivery, followed all instructions, and then silence filled the room as they listened for AJ’s heart-beat. “This monitor can’t find it, I’ll get another,”...“The battery is dead in this one, hang on just a sec”... “Maybe I should get another nurse to try, I just can’t catch him”...to the heart wrenching words...“I’m so sorry.”

Tears filled the eyes of each nurse, doctor and healthcare provider as they entered and exited, careful not to step on our bleeding hearts flopping on the floor. The questions began: “Do I want to be awake?”... “Sedated/fuzzy?”... “Out?”... “Do we want an autopsy?”... “Do we want to hold him?”... “Do we want them to take him away to give him his bath or do it in the room?”... “Do we want to see the chaplain before we deliver?”... “Do we want them to take pictures?”

We answered the questions without the slightest comprehension of what we were answering. “No...I don’t want to miss a minute of this...don’t give me anything that might compromise my memory. Do we need an autopsy?...Wait to see if there are any obvious causes...of course we want to hold him...(I remember thinking are you crazy?...he’s our baby). Keep him in the room with us...I don’t want him out of my sight...Yes, we want to see the chaplain...Yes, please take pictures.”

AJ was born at 5:28 a.m., and the funeral home was there by 1:30 p.m. to take him away...*I wish someone would have told us there was no rush.*

I never thought to put him in the outfit we brought for him to go home in...I wish someone would have suggested it.

I never got to look at his eyes...I wish someone would have told us it was okay to open his eyes.

I didn’t know about the organization Now I Lay me Down to Sleep...I wish someone would have called them to come.

We got footprints, but not handprints...I wish someone would have thought of that for us.

We have pictures that we treasure, but not of his birth, him getting his bath or being weighed...I wish we had those first naked pictures.

In our sadness, we didn’t think Big Brother Eli should come to the hospital...I wish someone would have told us it wouldn’t have ruined him for life if he held his baby brother.

Through all of the “I wishes” above, we were blessed to have wonderful, compassionate healthcare providers. We had nine months with AJ here on earth. Until the day we die, we will remember him, ache for him, and rejoice in the miraculous journey his life has taken us on.

While I wish I had many of the “things” above, they are just “things” and can in no way compare to the treasure we have in being his parents and keeping his memory alive. We often stop to reflect on the blessings we have received because God called AJ home that day: new friends, a greater compassion for others, a deeper respect for life and love, and the constant reminder to “Be still, and know that I am God”—He’s got it all under control.

♥ *Amber, mommy to AJ*

Adrian Joseph "AJ" Zuckerman

Stillborn due to a true knot cord

March 30, 2007

Parents: Alfredo and Amber Zuckerman

Siblings: Ayden Elijah "Eli"

and Baby "Bubble Jack" due April 2009

That I wasn't alone...

The main thing I wish I would have known is that there are support groups. I left the hospital feeling like I was the only person in the world who had ever lost a baby.

My baby was born on August 15, and he lived for about 45 minutes. Although a nurse at the hospital gave me a brochure about M.E.N.D., I didn’t realize it was a support group—I was in such a fog. I didn’t go until the September meeting, and it was such a comfort to know that I wasn’t alone.

♥ *Catherine, mommy to Rex, August 15, 2008*



Subsequent Births

Cynthia and Derrick Carter
of Katy, Texas,
along with big sister Kaitlyn,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Devon Micah,
born December 2, 2008,
measuring 6 lb., 10.6 oz.,
and 19 ¼ inches long.
The Carters lovingly remember
Jailyn Nicole,
September 24, 2007.,
Cord Accident

Mary and Brian Fibiger
of Fort Worth, Texas,
along with big brother Ainsley,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Aubrey Ellen,
born November 20, 2008,
measuring 8 lb., 11 oz.
The Fibigers lovingly remember
Micah,
August 29-30, 2006,
Trisomy 18.

Miriam and John Lein
of Siloam Springs, Texas,
along with siblings Elise and Will,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Seth Ethan,
born November 24, 2008,
measuring 9 lb., 3 oz.,
and 20 ½ inches long.
The Leins lovingly remember
Emma,
February 2006.

Kyla and Jeff Stanford,
of Cypress, Texas,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Ian Jefferson,
born October 16, 2008,
measuring 6 lb., 14 oz.,
and 18 inches long.
The Stanford's lovingly remember
Micah,
stillborn October 22, 2007.

Manuela Prado,
of Houston, Texas,
welcomed her precious twins,
born November 26, 2008.
Noah Xavier,
measured 4 lb., 7 oz.,
and 17 inches long,
and
Emmanuelle "Emma" Margarita,
measured 3 lb., 9 oz.,
and 17 inches long.
Manuela lovingly remembers
Baby Prado,
miscarried December 25, 2006,
and Manuela's baby sister,
Maria Prado,
stillborn December 9, 1961.

Jennifer and Jack Floyd,
of Porter, Texas,
along with siblings,
Samantha, Kimberly, Joseph, and William,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Jaysen Ryan,
born November 7, 2008,
measuring 5 lb., 10 oz.,
and 19 inches long.
The Floyds lovingly remember
the Floyd Twins,
miscarried July 2, 2007.

Kenzie and Dusty Stanfield,
of Katy, Texas,
along with big brother Deacon,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Faith Clare,
born November 12, 2008,
measuring 6 lb., 11 oz.,
and 18 inches long.
The Stanfields lovingly remember
Maddox Donald,
January 23, 2008,
Trisomy 18.

Suzanne and Robin Herrington,
of Spring, Texas,
along with big brothers
Ren, Geoffrey, and Wesley,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Caleb Joseph,
born November 1, 2008,
measuring 7 lb., 8 oz.,
and 21 inches long.
The Herringtons lovingly remember
Ian Thomas,
stillborn April 2, 2007
and Hope Herrington,
miscarried October 5, 2007.

Cissy and Chris Oldner,
of McKinney, Texas,
along with big sisters
Claire and Olivia,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Lily Maydelle,
born November 11, 2008.
The Oldners lovingly remember
Jack Collier,
September 18-19, 2006,
extreme prematurity and
Goldenhar's Syndrome.

Trina and Christopher Echols,
of Spring, Texas,
along with big sister, Hannah,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Savannah Alaine,
born November 6, 2008,
measuring 8 lb., 2 oz.,
and 19 ¾ inches long.
The Echols lovingly remember,
Avery,
miscarried April 13, 2007.

Pictures: Worth a Thousand Words

I wish the hospital had a digital camera and had taken pictures of our babies with my husband and me. We were not ready to give birth, and as such we had no camera of our own. All we have are grainy pictures from a throw-away camera. We were able to turn them in to drawings — it is still not the same.

♥ *Leah Robilotto-Bass, mommy to Mason and Matthew Bass,
April 10, 2008, Prematurity, 22 weeks*

M.E.N.D. Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death
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“... that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God” (2 Corinthians 1:4)

M.E.N.D. Fundraisers

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

- **Kroger grocery stores** donate a percentage of all purchases of those shoppers in Texas and Louisiana who have their Kroger Plus Card linked to M.E.N.D. To link your card, contact Rebekah (Rebekah@mend.org) to obtain the Kroger Customer Letter. You must only present this letter one time to link your card to M.E.N.D.
- **Tom Thumb** also has a program in Texas that can benefit M.E.N.D. If you have a Tom Thumb Reward Card, please ask your Tom Thumb cashier to link your card with M.E.N.D. Our number is **6265**. Reward cards can also be used at Randalls and Simon David stores.
- **Glenn Martin** is looking for M.E.N.D. families willing to grant space for small gumball machines in order to raise funds for M.E.N.D. If you have a retail business or connections to a high traffic location in the Grapevine, Southlake, or metroplex area, Glenn will place, stock, and service the equipment and give M.E.N.D. 35 percent of the proceeds. Glenn can be contacted at (817) 874-5366 or glmartin@attg.net.
- M.E.N.D. can now earn funds through **i.think inc.**, an online marketing research firm. You can help by signing up as a survey panel member and designating us as the recipient of your fee. Just go to the Web site at <http://www.ithink.inc.com> and choose "Sign up to become an i.think inc. panel member." Fill out the sign-up survey. Under the "Funds for Charity" section, select M.E.N.D. from the list of names.
- **Little Beads & Macaroni & Cheese**, owned by M.E.N.D. member Marilyn Brown, offers custom jewelry. Her keepsake angel bracelets are \$20 each, and ten percent of each angel bracelet sale will be donated to M.E.N.D. Marilyn can be reached at (817) 996-1920 or msbrown16@hotmail.com.
- **IBM employees** may now make charitable donations to M.E.N.D. through automatic payroll deductions. Choose Charity Code 0M562 from the *IBM Employee/Retiree Approved Charity List*.
- **GoodSearch.com** is a search engine that donates half its revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. Powered by Yahoo!, it is used like any other search engine. To earn money for M.E.N.D. using Goodsearch.com, go to www.goodsearch.com and designate M.E.N.D. as your charity of choice.
- **Ebay** has a charitable giving program that can benefit M.E.N.D. If you sell items on Ebay and would like to designate a percentage of your revenue to M.E.N.D., visit www.missionfish.org to find out how.
- **Top to Toe Designs**, owned by M.E.N.D. member Heather Klaassen, offers custom hand-painted frames and room décor. She would like to donate 10 percent of purchases made at www.toptotoedesigns.com that mentions our charity.