



# M. E. N. D.

Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death

## *New Situations—*

### *When your life changes and how to include your babies*

Each Spring during the annual M.E.N.D. Leadership Conference, those of us on the newsletter committee attend a session to discuss newsletter topics for the next couple of years, or more. When this topic was scheduled for this particular issue, it did not occur to me that I would be writing my traditional front page article during a time when I would truly be going through a major change. Byron's and my only living child, Byron, Jr., is heading to college in just a couple of weeks—well, actually by the time this issue goes to print, he will be settled in his dorm room and classes will have started.

I have grieved profusely over the past few months, especially in May when Byron, Jr. was finishing his senior year at the same private Christian school he has attended since Kindergarten, and where his dad graduated. It seems like only yesterday that he was a little boy who needed his Mommy for everything. Now he's practically a man and we are empty-nesting.

There's a small part of empty-nesting that sounds fun and exciting. We plan to travel more on the weekends (no more high school football games to attend), spend more time with just the two of us, and basically lighten our schedules a bit. However, the fact that we are empty-nesting, but shouldn't be empty-nesting yet, has caused some of that old, ugly, and painful grief to re-surface. Without sounding melodramatic, I honestly feel like I'm about to suffer the loss of a child all over again. Oh, I know it's not at all the same because Byron, Jr. is alive and well. But the idea of dropping him off at a university in another state and driving away, leaving my child, just brings back emotions I don't care to ever again experience.

Last fall I had the privilege of talking to author Nancy Guthrie ([Holding on to Hope](#)) at the M.E.N.D.—Houston Walk to Remember. She and her husband, like Byron and

me, have only one living son and lost her two youngest children. Her son is a year older than mine so she went through these very emotions this time last year. I asked her: "Nancy, how does it feel to be empty-nesting when you shouldn't be empty-nesting yet?" She thought a few seconds before answering then basically told me that it just seemed the natural thing to be doing. She said like so many of the emotions we went through when we were grieving our babies that died, the anticipation was far worse than when they actually had to leave their son at college and drive away. I sure hope she's right!

So how do I plan to include my babies during this new season of my life? Well, I guess work more with M.E.N.D. I know our plan is to lighten our load a little, but there are a lot of M.E.N.D. events with other chapters that I have missed because my first priority has always been Byron, Jr., and making sure I never missed anything really important in his life. Now that he's gone, my weekends are void of high school activities, my weekdays are now free of room mom responsibilities, and so I'm assuming I'll have more spare time to travel. By the way, Byron, Jr. will be going to school in Springfield, Missouri where we just happen to have a chapter of M.E.N.D. Maybe I'll have the both of best worlds—attend all of the M.E.N.D.—SW Missouri events AND be with my son!

♥ *Rebekah Mitchell*

*mommy to Jonathan Daniel and Baby Mitchell*

#### *Editor's Note:*

Rebekah, We'd gladly welcome you up in Springfield for any of the Southwest Missouri chapter events. And, if Byron, Jr. needs anything, he knows he can call us!

♥ *Heather Fann*

#### *Nota Español*

El artículo de Rebekah Mitchell aparece en cada emisión de nuestro boletín para la audiencia latina. Para ver el artículo de este mes en español, por favor vea la página número 13.

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

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



## Medical Moment



The following abstracts for recently published research studies are shared with M.E.N.D. by First Candle/SIDS Alliance:

1. Randall BB, Wade SA, Sens MA, Kinney HC, Folkerth RD, Odendaal HJ, Dempers JJ

#### ***A practical classification schema incorporating consideration of possible asphyxia in cases of sudden unexpected infant death***

Forensic Sci Med Pathol. 2009 May 31. [Epub ahead of print] University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine, 2441 Stanton Drive, Sioux Falls, SD, 57103, USA, fornix@aol.com.

Although the rate of the sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) has decreased over the last two decades, medical examiners and coroners are increasingly unwilling to use the SIDS diagnosis, particularly when there is an unsafe sleeping environment that might pose a risk for asphyxia. In order to reliably classify the infant deaths studied in a research setting in the mixed ancestry population in Cape Town, South Africa, we tested a classification system devised by us that incorporates the uncertainty of asphyxial risks at an infant death scene. We classified sudden infant deaths as: A) SIDS (where only a trivial potential for an overt asphyxial event existed); B) Unclassified-Possibly Asphyxial-Related (when any potential for an asphyxial death existed); C) Unclassified-Non-Asphyxial-Related (e.g., hyperthermia); D) Unclassified-No autopsy and/or death scene investigation; and E) Known Cause of Death. Ten infant deaths were classified according to the proposed schema as: SIDS, n = 2; Unclassified-Possibly Asphyxial-Related, n = 4; and Known Cause, n = 4. A conventional schema categorized the deaths as 6 cases, SIDS, and 4 cases, Known Cause, indicating that 4/6 (67%) of deaths previously classified as SIDS are considered related importantly to asphyxia and warrant their own subgroup. This new classification schema applies a simpler, more qualitative approach to asphyxial risk in infant deaths. It also allows us to test hypotheses about the role of asphyxia in sudden infant deaths, such as in brainstem defects in a range of asphyxial challenges.

2. Paterson DS, Hilaire G, Weese-Mayer DE

#### ***Medullary Serotonin Defects and Respiratory Dysfunction in Sudden Infant Death Syndrome***

Respir Physiol Neurobiol. 2009 May 26. [Epub ahead of print] Department of Pathology, Children's Hospital Boston, 300 Longwood Avenue, Boston, MA 02115, USA.

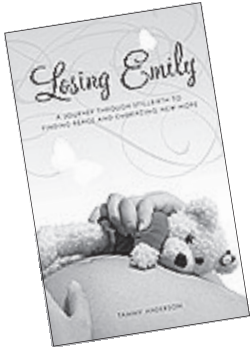
Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) is defined as the sudden and unexpected death of an infant less than 12 months of age that occurs during sleep and remains unexplained after a complete autopsy, death scene investigation, and review of the clinical history. It is the leading cause of postneonatal mortality in the developed world. The cause of SIDS is unknown, but is postulated to involve impairment of brainstem-mediated homeostatic control. Extensive evidence from animal studies indicates that serotonin (5-HT) neurons in the medulla oblongata play a role in the regulation of multiple aspects of respiratory and autonomic function. A subset of SIDS infants have several abnormalities in medullary markers of 5-HT function and genetic polymorphisms impacting the 5-HT system, informing the hypothesis that SIDS results from a defect in 5-HT brainstem-mediated control of respiratory (and autonomic) regulation. Here we review the evidence from postmortem human studies and animal studies to support this hypothesis and discuss how the pathogenesis of SIDS is likely to originate in utero during fetal development.

## Book Review

### *Losing Emily*

A Journey Through Stillbirth to Finding Peace and Embracing New Hope

By Tammy Anderson  
www.inkwaterbooks.com



Author Tammy Anderson openly shares the story of losing her precious baby girl, Emily, at 37.5 weeks to a cord accident. Anderson details personal information regarding her divorce, then marrying her current husband, Darren (Emily's father), as well as a few other family emergencies and losses. *Losing Emily* concludes with the joy of a subsequent birth, in which much of the happy ending is detailed. I personally would caution those fresh in grief that the chapters pertaining to the Anderson's subsequent pregnancy and delivery may be too emotional for you. However, if you are at the stage

of wanting to try again or are currently pregnant following your loss, this is a great story of encouragement and hope.

Available at [www.inkwaterbooks.com](http://www.inkwaterbooks.com)

Or by sending \$16.95, plus \$4.80 shipping to:  
T. Anderson  
Box 1723  
Jasper, Alberta, Canada  
TOE 1E0

♥ *Reviews by Rebekah Mitchell,*  
M.E.N.D.—President

*M.E.N.D. has a complete list of books, Web sites, organizations, and music resources available online at [www.mend.org](http://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](mailto:heather@mend.org).*

*November/December Topic*

Holidays

Deadline: September 30, 2010

*January/February Topic*

Subsequent Losses

Deadline: November 30, 2010

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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[www.mend.org](http://www.mend.org)



# Birthday Tributes

## Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Sereana Joy!

I love you so much. Your Dad loves you so much. Have a wonderful party and smile big for the pictures we take in our heart. You are so beautiful and we are proud of you every single moment. We love you. Happy birthday our first-born, beautiful daughter.

*Sereana Joy Ratulele*  
*Stillborn September 9, 2009*

*Unknown Cause*

*Parents: Semi and Laura Ratulele*

*Sibling: Your new little sibling on the way*



## Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> Birthday, Rylan!

Dear Rylan,

We wish you a happy birthday in heaven! We know your celebration will be amazing since it is with our Lord, Jesus! We will continue to keep your memory alive this birthday by donating children's Bibles in your name to the Mexico Missions. You are always in our hearts. We love you so much and can't wait to see you again.

Hugs and Kisses,

Daddy, Mommy, Camden, Everett, and Anna Claire

*Rylan Elizabeth Slate*  
*October 17-20, 2008*

*Unknown Cause*

*Parents: Daniel and Kristah Slate*

*Big Brothers: Camden and Everett*

*Little Sister: Anna Claire*



## Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Rachel Ann!

Your first birthday is already here, we can't believe how fast time has passed. It seems like it was just yesterday we had you among us. We miss you very much precious little girl. We will always remember you; we love you with all our heart. We wish you a wonderful birthday with Christ Our Lord and all the angels from heaven.

We love you very much, baby girl!

Mommy, Daddy, and Jacob

*Rachel Ann Boche*  
*October 29, 2009*

*Incompetent Cervix*

*Parents: Gary and Shirley Boche*

*Big brother: Jacob*



## Happy 8<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Laiken!

Our little princess Laiken,

It is so difficult to believe that it has been 8 years since we held you and kissed you as we said hello and goodbye all in the same breath. It just seems so unreal. At the beginning, I was sure that I wouldn't be able to make it from one day to the next, and yet, here we are- 8 years later!

This year you should be going into the third grade. I wonder if you would love to read and to do art like your brothers and sisters? Would you like the swings or going down the slide the best? What would your favorite color be? I wonder if you would be shy or outgoing. As each passing year comes along, there seem to always be more and more questions... more and more wondering. As we see your siblings grow and change, we can't help but think of all the things we are missing out on by not experiencing them with you.

You are in our thoughts, conversations and hearts each and every day, Baby Girl. We love you so very, very much and take comfort in knowing that we will hold you again someday.

We wish you a beautiful eighth heavenly birthday surrounded by all of your angel friends and your family. Know that we will be sending you up pink balloons on your special day along with many hugs and kisses. Look for them, Princess. Happy 8th heavenly birthday, Laiken Riley Madison!

Love,

Mommy, Daddy, Arianna, Jarod, Gavin, and Alyvia

*Laiken Riley Madison Kale*  
*September 15, 2002*

*HELLP Syndrome,*

*Severe prematurity, pulmonary failure,*

*Antiphospholipid syndrome*

*Parents: Rick and Alysha Kale*

*Siblings: Arianna, Jarod, Gavin, and Alyvia*



## Happy 3<sup>rd</sup> Birthday, Avery!

We love you and miss you so much. We wish you were here to play with your little sister. She will help us send you balloons on your birthday.

Love,

Mommy, Daddy, and Halle

*Avery Merae Longgood*  
*August 2-3, 2007*

*Cause: Stroke*

*Parents: Neil and Jamie Longgood*

*Little sister: Halle Merae Longgood*



## Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Rylie!

Our Dearest Rylie,

It is hard to believe that a year has gone by. There are so many days it feels like yesterday still. We love you dearly and think about you so often.

Enjoy your birthday in heaven with Jesus. Mommy will be baking a cake down here for you and we will celebrate. Keep an eye out for balloons in heaven to be sent your way. It makes it easier to get through each day knowing that each day brings me closer to the day when I will be able to hold you and kiss you again. Until then Jesus will hold you in His arms while we hold you in our hearts. Please continue to watch over us and don't forget to let us know you are there with us every now and then.

Loving and missing you forever,  
Mommy, Daddy and big sister Lauren

*Rylie Ranae Rowan*  
*October 23, 2009*

*Stillborn at 23 weeks*

*Possible cause:*

*Factor V Leiden blood clotting disorder*

*Parents: Troy and Nichole Rowan*

*Big Sister: Lauren Ashlie Soberon*



## Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Joey!

Daddy and Mommy cannot believe that one year has flown by since you were born sleeping. We think about heaven every day and wonder what you are doing with Jesus. We are trying to be strong each day because you wouldn't want us to stay in sorrow. God keeps reminding us that we will see you soon! Be ready to get a big hug and a kiss from us!

We love you!  
Mommy, Daddy, Doggie Angel

*Josephine Ann Lee*  
*October 9, 2009*

*Stillborn at 21 weeks PPROM*

*Parents: John and Patty Lee*



## Happy 3<sup>rd</sup> Birthday, Jailyn Nicole!

Another year has gone by and your presence is not here with us. You're always in our hearts.

We miss you my little angel. Always.

*Jailyn Nicole Carter*  
*September 24, 2007*

*Cord Accident*

*Parents: Derrick and Cynthia Carter*

*Siblings: Kaitlyn and Devon*



## Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Braelyn!

Today is your very special day! I know you and all your angel friends are celebrating in style and eating lots of cake! Though you were already with Jesus before you were delivered, I am forever grateful for the time we had together in the hospital. I will keep those memories in my heart forever. You have gone to heaven to be eternally happy in the company of the Lord and all His angels. I look forward to the day I will get to see and hold you again, what a wonderful day that will be! You are loved, missed and thought of every day! Happy heavenly birthday Angel Brae!

Lots of love,  
Mommy, Gigi, G-Paw, Uncle Paul  
and all your family and friends

*Braelyn Grace Pinto*  
*Stillborn October 13, 2009*  
*True knot in cord*  
*Mommy: Kelly Pinto*



## Happy 7<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Jordan!

Dearest Jordan,

We miss you so very much. You would be seven years old and we long to see your smiling face. Your sisters know all about you and look forward to visiting your grave and bringing the flowers they so carefully pick out. Our hearts will forever be broken for you.

Love,  
Mommy, Daddy, and the girls

*Jordan Claire James*  
*Septmber 29-October 15, 2003*  
*HLHS*

*Parents: John and Julie James*

*Siblings: Bailie, Lauren, and Claire*



## Happy 3<sup>rd</sup> Birthday, Ethan!

We miss you and think of you every day. Your little brother Jakob is going to know about you as he grows up. Your big brother Thomas wishes you were here to enjoy life with him and Jakob, but you are always with us in spirit.

Love,  
Mom, Dad, Thomas, and Jakob

*Ethan Kane*  
*September 5, 2007*  
*Stillborn – Cord Accident*  
*Parents: Bruce and Sandra Spurrier*  
*Brothers: Thomas and Jakob*



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Continued from page 5...

### Happy 5<sup>th</sup> Birthday Aidan!

Five years. Five years. I cannot stop repeating the words. My sweet angel Aidan would be five years old today.

I've written him sweet rhyming poems in the past, letting him know how much I missed him, and how much I wanted him home. But his Mom has changed over the years, and can now look at Aidan's life in a joyful light.

I can picture my sweet boy sitting in front of his Father's throne, raising his little hands in praise and singing along with the angels.

He is in that heavenly place where we all want to go. Living his days in peaceful harmony without knowing the sins of the world today.

This year I will celebrate his life and remember all the good he brought to me. Because of him, I know what unconditional love feels like.

Because of him, I have a beautiful 3-year-old daughter.

Because of him, I have found the wonderful women of M.E.N.D.

Because of him, I reconnected with a God I once abandoned.

Because of him, I knew what it felt like to be a Mom for the first time.

This celebration does not mean I don't miss my son. I will forever be missing a piece of my heart, but five years should be a special birthday and I can't think of a better way to celebrate than praising God for giving me the opportunity to meet such a precious baby boy.

*Aidan Shaw*

*October 2- December 3, 2005*

*PKD*

*Mommy: Shane Meyer*

*Little Sister: Cameron Shaw*



### Happy 5<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Rylee!

Happy 5th birthday, Baby Girl! I can't believe it has been five years already! We love you and miss you!

Love,

Mommy, Daddy, Jared and Hunter

*Rylee Lynn Crye*

*Stillborn October 31, 2005*

*Parents: Gene and Randi Crye*

*Big brothers: Jared and Hunter Crye*

*Also Remembering:*

*Baby Crye #1*

*Miscarried March 21, 1994*

*Baby Crye #2*

*Miscarried January 14, 1997*



### Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> Birthday, Hailee!

Dearest Hailee,

May you know, our greatest blessing was having you! Happy birthday, Baby Girl!

*Hailee Olivia Thompson*

*July 29, 2008*

*Cord accident*

*Parents: Ben and Kim Thompson*

*Sibling: Nathen*



### Happy 3<sup>rd</sup> Birthday, Jayden B.!

I think about what you would be doing now that you have turned 3 years old. I look at your little cousin JJ and wonder if you would be as curious as he is since he 5 months younger. My heart is still empty without you, but I know God is going to fill this void. I'm much stronger and I give all the glory to God for giving me that peace that I need to go on. I have faith and know that one day I will be blessed with a healthy loving family. I love you and miss you. Happy birthday, Baby Girl! Rest in peace my princess.

Love always and always remembering you,  
Mom, Grandma, Uncle Jamie,  
your cousins Jeron, Dequincy, and J.J.

*Jayden Breonna Jenkins*

*September 25, 2007*

*Toxemia*

*Mommy: Shanae Jenkins*



### Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> Birthday, Emma!

It's hard to believe it has been two years since we were blessed to have you here with us for a few hours. We will treasure that short time forever. We miss you every minute of every day. We have told your new brother Wyatt all about you and sister Gracie—you are the beautiful angels who guided him into our home and hearts.

We love you more than you know,  
with all our hearts, forever and ever.

Daddy, Momma, and baby Wyatt

*Emma Grace Dorr*

*October 16, 2008*

*Incompetent cervix*

*Parents: Janine and Dustin Dorr*

*Little brother: Wyatt Dorr*

*Also Remembering:*

*Gracie Renee Dorr*

*May 15, 2007*

*Incompetent cervix*



## Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Kaiya!

We miss you daily but know you are in the arms of Jesus watching over us.

*Kaiya Dawn Walker*

*October 23, 2009*

*PROM*

*Mommy: LaRhesa Johnson*

*Siblings: Kaidyn Jamiel Walker*



## Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> Birthday, Cana Lynn!

As we hold your little sister, Elizabeth Hope, we know the Hope of the Lord is being renewed in our hearts each day. And as our empty arms long to hold you, we remember the glory of the Lord revealed to us in your life and death. We miss you, sweet baby girl. May your death be a bittersweet reminder of His promise of resurrection! We love you!

*Cana Lynn Milbrandt*

*October 8-9, 2008*

*Trisomy 18*

*Parents: Mitch and Christina Milbrandt*

*Also Remembering:*

*Travis and Elizabeth Hope*

*Miscarried January 14, 1997*



## Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> Birthday, Lamon!

He came to us  
From heaven above  
He brought us joy  
And gave us love.

The three short months  
We spent together  
Will remain with us  
In our hearts forever.

Now he's a star above  
With a special twinkle  
He's watching over us as  
Our sweet guardian Angel.

*William "Lamon" Thomp*

*October 7, 2008—January 23, 2009*

*SIDS*

*Parents: Andrea and Vidal Thompson*

*Sister: Kristina*

*Also Remembering:*

*Maalik D. Najee, Jr.*

*Stillborn April 6, 2004*



## Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Olivia!

Dear Olivia,

It's hard to believe it has been an entire year since you came into this world and then went to heaven. We miss you and think of you every day. Happy first birthday, angel baby.

We love you.  
Mommy and Daddy



*Olivia Caetlyn*

*September 28, 2009*

*HELLP, prematurity*

*Parents: Joe and Angie Brooks*

## Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Emma!

Dear Emma,

Happy first birthday! You're a big girl now and your daddy and I miss you so very much! I wish we could have watched you take your first steps or helped you with your first words, but the Lord wanted to teach you these things. We wish we could have watched you grow and helped you up when you fell and dried your tears when you cried, but God wanted to do these things. Words cannot describe the love we have for you and the hole you left when He took you. One day we will be reunited and I will spend eternity telling you how much I love you! Happy birthday sweetheart.

Love,  
Mommy and Daddy

*Emma Rose McKay*

*September 2-3, 2009*

*Trisomy 18*

*Parents:*

*Brittany Veale and Jason McKay*



*Continued on page 8...*

"A wife who loses a husband  
is called a widow

A husband who loses a wife  
is called a widower

A child who loses a parent  
is called an orphan...

There is no word for a parent who loses a child...  
That's how awful the loss is!"

—Jay Neugeboren,  
1976 An Orphan's Tale

Continued from page 7...

## Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Samuel and Faith!

I hold you in my heart forever.

*Samuel Gregory and Faith Marie*  
*Expected due date: October 17, 2010*  
*Died due to miscarriage on: March 2, 2010*  
*Trisomy 13 and 16*  
*Parents: Greg Adragna and Hannah Lange*



### BIRTHDAY TRIBUTE SUBMISSIONS:

To submit a birthday tribute for our upcoming issue, please visit the M.E.N.D. website and complete our online birthday tribute form. This will ensure that all the necessary information required for each tribute is included upon submission. Questions? Contact editor Heather Fann at [heather@mend.org](mailto:heather@mend.org).

## Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> Birthday, Anna!

To our sweet Anna,

We love you so much and miss you dearly. You will always be our special little girl, our first born. We have been watching your tree grow big and strong like you would be. Your baby brother was born in February and we have already been telling him all about you. He will grow up knowing that he has a special older sister who will always be watching over him, as you already did while he was getting better in the NICU. You are in our hearts forever.

With all of our love,  
 Mommy, Daddy, and baby brother Elliot

*Anna Jacqueline Radack*  
*November 1st, 2008*  
*Severe pre-eclampsia/HELLP*  
*Parents: Jeff and Jill Radack*  
*Baby Brother: Elliot Maxwell*  
*Also Remembering:*  
*Baby Radack (Elliot's twin)*



## *A Mom on the Move*

Since my sweet son Joseph was born to heaven 11 years ago, I have lived in nine houses and five states. There were times when I felt shaky and ill equipped to take on anything new, but life has a way of moving forward, even when you don't think you're ready. So, whether it was at a new church, job, or even a new book club or crafting group, I have had plenty of opportunities to figure out how to include Joseph's name in new conversations and honor his memory in new places and situations. Here are few things I learned as Joseph's mom on the move.

Never be afraid to talk about your baby or keep mementoes in plain sight. It can be scary trying to determine how people will react to the news that you are the parent of a baby who died. However, telling potential new friends about your little one in heaven can be a way to find out whether or not your new acquaintances are "keepers," especially if your grief is still fresh. With this in mind, your keychain with the little footprints and the angel pin you wear in your baby's memory don't have to be left behind just because you're afraid they'll lead to questions. If a new acquaintance responds to news of your baby's death with compassion, it's a good sign that the relationship is worth nurturing. I will never forget when I hosted a squadron coffee at our new house about 18 months after Joseph was born. One of the ladies I had just met asked about Joseph's plaster handprints I had on display. She said, "They're perfect. How did you get your baby to be so still?" When I explained that Joseph was stillborn, she got tears in her eyes and gave me a big hug. Those little handprints were the catalyst that started a really good friendship. Though she has since moved many times to places all over the world, she is still a dear friend.

Walk away from something if you realize you're not ready. Some new situations are unavoidable, but there are some we choose because we feel the need to be "normal" or to meet new people. There are plenty of times when new experiences are just what we need, but every now and then you may realize you need more time than you have given yourself before taking on a new activity. I once dropped out of mother/toddler gymnastics with my living children because there were just too many pregnant women in the class. After I had worked through my grief a little more, we gave it another try and did just fine.

Keep a sympathetic ear on standby. It often takes time to find someone in your new situation who can sympathize with the pain you are feeling. Until you find a good friend in your new place, whether it be a new home, a new job, or any of a hundred other changes any of us may encounter, keep in close contact with someone who helped you through the darkest days of your grief. This person may be a friend, family member, pastor, or another bereaved parent you keep in touch with through email. You need a touchstone who "knows" your baby and you well enough to offer trustworthy advice and reliable perspective. In my situation, my sister filled this role. She had never experienced the loss of a baby, but she knew me well and she loved Joseph. Her advice helped me navigate many new situations and changes.

Continued on page 15...



## Forever in My Heart

It's been a little over 9 months now since my husband, John, and I lost our daughter at about 21 weeks. We did not know how to say goodbye to our daughter, Joey, at the hospital. We were lost in our state of denial and shock; we were too afraid to hold Joey at the hospital. I believe that joining the M.E.N.D. support group allowed me to grieve properly and to not be afraid of acknowledging her. We had difficulty explaining, to our relatives especially, how much we yearned for Joey to be recognized and remembered. I suppressed my grief over the holidays last year and no one in the family acknowledged what had happened since it was the norm to hide one's pain. In spite of all this, we decided to do things for Joey and we asked for candlelight pictures in memory of Joey over Christmas. John asked a non-profit organization that helps fight global poverty to create Joey's memorial website for donations.

I admit that we are still hurt from those friends who did not validate Joey. It's still hard to not hold a grudge against them. I am realizing that I cannot wait around for others to validate Joey; sadly, they may never come to that point. I want to be confident in what I believe in – she will forever be in her mommy's and daddy's hearts. As life keeps moving forward, we're doing our best to include her in our daily lives. Joey will not be here for her uncle's wedding yet John may briefly acknowledge her absence at that time. I know that we will continue to take pictures in memory of Joey and create a memorial to be displayed in our living room. For now, John and I value those who remember Joey, like my dad who donated to her memorial website and wrote, "Joey, Grandpa would have loved to hold you and spoil you like I did your mom. We will do that later on..."

♥ *Patty Lee*

*mommy to Josephine Ann Lee, October 9, 2009*

M.E.N.D.—Dallas

### Looking Ahead

*October 2*

- Walk To Remember  
in Irving, TX

*October 2*

- M.E.N.D.—Houston  
Walk To Remember

*October 16*

- M.E.N.D.—Tulsa  
Walk To Remember

*December 4*

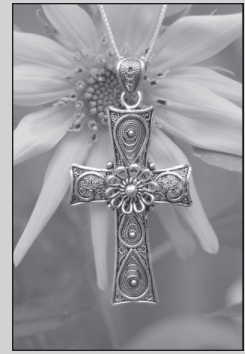
- M.E.N.D.—Houston  
Christmas Ceremony

*December 7*

- Christmas Ceremony  
in Irving, TX

*December 9*

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



### *Sereana*

You belong to the Father  
You belong to Jesus His Son  
You belong to the Spirit  
And with Them you are one

Sereana, Gift to Daddy  
Sereana, our Love  
Sereana, Song of Mommy  
Joyfully received from above

Sereana, child of beauty  
Sereana, so bright  
Sereana, filled with purity  
From above, reflecting true light

~ ~ ~

Sereana, Dad adores you  
Sereana, our Girl!  
Sereana, Mommy loves you  
Joyfully, dance, sing, laugh, twirl

You will make known to me the  
path of life;  
In Your presence is fullness of joy  
Psalm 16:11

♥ *Laura Ratulele,*

*mommy to Sereana Joy,  
stillborn September 9, 2009*



M.E.N.D.

***Chapter Meeting Information*****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](mailto: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](mailto:jaimie@mend.org), (281) 374-8528

**Subsequent pregnancy group** meets bi-monthly on the 3rd Thursday at 7:30 p.m., led by Sarah Winebrenner ([swinebrenner2004@yahoo.com](mailto:swinebrenner2004@yahoo.com)).

**Daddy's group** meets quarterly on the 3rd Thursday at 7:30 p.m., led by Tim Winebrenner ([swinebrenner2004@yahoo.com](mailto:swinebrenner2004@yahoo.com)).

**M.E.N.D.—Texarkana**

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

**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  
Director: Michele Wilson  
[michele@mend.org](mailto:michele@mend.org), (918) 694-4325 (HEAL)

**M.E.N.D.—SW Missouri**

Meets the 1st Thursday at 7:00 p.m.  
Project H.O.P.E.  
1419 S. Enterprise  
Springfield, Missouri 65804  
Director: Heather Fann  
[heather@mend.org](mailto:heather@mend.org), (417) 818-0489

**M.E.N.D. Chapter Updates*****Kansas***

M.E.N.D.—Kansas will have a ZUMBA fundraiser on Thursday, September 30, from 6:45-8:15 at the Emporia Middle School Gymnasium. M.E.N.D. will go RETRO that evening, so dressing in your favorite 80's exercise attire will make the evening even more fun...but not required. Call me at 620-343-6357 or email [stephanie@mend.org](mailto:stephanie@mend.org) for more information.

*Stephanie Metzger****Houston***

We hope all in the Houston and surrounding areas can come to the Walk to Remember on October 2. If you would like an invitation or to RSVP, please let me know: [jaimie@mend.org](mailto:jaimie@mend.org) or 281-374-8528. Our guest speaker this year is Jennifer Hander, author of *A Place of Peace*. We know this will be a wonderful and beautiful ceremony to remember our precious babies.

*Jaimie Crump****Texarkana***

M.E.N.D.—Texarkana is now hosting a Food and Fellowship meeting the first Tuesday of each month at Baker Brothers at 6:30. We'll also be hosting a garage sale on September 11. If anyone is interested in donating items, please contact me at 903-490-1210 or [monica@mend.org](mailto:monica@mend.org).

*Monica Davis****Tulsa***

M.E.N.D.—Tulsa Advisory Board has been busy planning our second annual Bunco Bash fundraiser September 16 and our first Walk to Remember Ceremony October 16. We are also happy to welcome Sara Hintz to the Advisory Board. A special thanks goes to Marcie Nienhuis for creating a beautiful Bunco Bash flyer and working hard to meet deadlines.

*Michele Wilson****SW Missouri***

M.E.N.D.—Southwest Missouri continues to reach out to families throughout the area. We continue to see new members at our monthly meetings as well as on our Facebook page. We are looking forward to beginning preparations for our first Christmas Candlelight Ceremony on Thursday, December 9. If you are interested in assisting with our plans, please contact me at [heather@mend.org](mailto:heather@mend.org).

*Heather Fann****Bryan/College Station***

M.E.N.D.—Bryan/College Station is working hard to reach out to the grieving families of Brazos County. We now have a Subsequent Pregnancy Group that is growing as well! We look forward to joining M.E.N.D.—Houston for the Walk to Remember in October. God is opening doors for this chapter and blessing us abundantly!

*Jennie Drude*

***Amarillo***

M.E.N.D.—Amarillo is continuing to spread the word about our organization. We have had good turnouts at our meetings, and are excited to see what the fall has in store. For more information, contact me at (806)570-4344 or email [becky@mend.org](mailto:becky@mend.org).

*Becky Anderson*

***NW Washington—New Chapter Opening***

M.E.N.D.—NW Washington will officially launch our new chapter and begin meeting on the second Monday of the month starting October 11. If you or anyone in the Northwest Washington area have suffered the loss of a baby and would be interested in attending, please contact me at [susan@mend.org](mailto:susan@mend.org).

*Susan Crow*

**M.E.N.D.—Bryan/College Station**

Meets the 2nd Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.  
Hawthorn Suites  
1010 University Drive East  
College Station, Texas 77840  
Director: Jennie Drude  
[jennie@mend.org](mailto:jennie@mend.org), (979) 220-7851

**M.E.N.D.—Amarillo**

Meets the 2nd Tuesday at 7:00 p.m.  
First United Bank of the Colonies  
(Lonestar Room)  
One First United Bank Parkway  
45th and Soncy  
Amarillo, Texas  
Director: Becky Anderson  
[becky@mend.org](mailto:becky@mend.org), (806) 570-4344

**M.E.N.D.—NW Washington**

Meets the 2nd Monday at 6:30 p.m.  
Harrison Medical Center  
(Iris Room)  
1800 Myhre Rd.  
Silverdale, Washington  
Director: Susan Crow  
[susan@mend.org](mailto:susan@mend.org), (360) 516-8617

***M.E.N.D. Support Group Meetings in the Dallas Metroplex***

Join us for a time of sharing experiences.

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

**Daddies group**

meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of March, June, Sept. and Dec., from 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](mailto:brittney@mend.org)

**Subsequent pregnancy group**

meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday from 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.

Led by Liz Walker:  
[liz@mend.org](mailto:liz@mend.org)

*For families who are considering becoming pregnant 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 Paula Schear or Brandee Dill for more info: [pkschear@yahoo.com](mailto:pkschear@yahoo.com) or [dillsforchrist@yahoo.com](mailto: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:**

**NEW LOCATION JANUARY 2010**

**Wells Fargo Bank**

**800 W. Airport Freeway**

**Irving, TX 75062**

(Located in the Crystals Pizza parking lot, between MacArthur and O'Connor) Meetings will be in the bank board room, located on the first floor.

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

**Infertility group**

Meets the upon request only.

Led by Paula Schear:  
[pkschear@yahoo.com](mailto:pkschear@yahoo.com)

*For families experiencing infertility after a loss.*



### *Subsequent Births*

**Peter and Nicole Szajek**,  
of Highland Village, Texas,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Isabella Sophia,  
born June 8, 2010,  
measuring 4 lb., 13 oz.,  
and 17 3/4 inches long.  
The Szajek family lovingly remembers  
Nicholas Jan,  
stillborn December 6, 2008,  
and Baby Szajek,  
miscarried July, 2009.

**Daniel and Stephanie Hitchcock**,  
of Tomball, Texas,  
along with big sister Madalynn,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Paisley Dawn and Mason Price,  
born June 11, 2010.  
Paisley Dawn measured 4 lb., 13 oz.  
and 17 1/2 inches long.  
Mason Price measured 4 lb., 15 oz.  
and 18 1/2 inches long.  
The Hitchcocks lovingly remember  
Mackenzie,  
December 21, 2008-January 21, 2009.

**Derek and Stephanie Bell**,  
of Katy, Texas,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Kenadie Lauren,  
born June 23, 2010,  
Measuring 4 lb., 6oz., and  
16.4 inches long.  
The Bell family lovingly remembers  
Kyle,  
August 2, 2008,  
and Baby Bell.

**Eric and Janie Lewis**,  
of Cypress, Texas,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Nicholas Joseph,  
born June 28, 2010,  
measuring 5 lb., 12 oz.,  
and 18 1/4 inches long.  
The Lewis family lovingly remembers  
Sophia Elise,  
stillborn on March 25, 2009,  
due to Trisomy 69.

**Chris and Chrissy Peplinski**,  
of Rogers, Arkansas,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Cooper Michael,  
born May 14, 2010.  
The Peplinki family lovingly  
remembers  
Christopher Michael II,  
born still September 25, 2006  
due to cord blood clot,  
Blessing #2,  
miscarried May 2008,  
and Blessing #3  
miscarried September 2008.

**Tim and Crystal Proffitt**,  
of Kingwood, Texas,  
along with big sister Charley Gene,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Samuel James,  
born May 9, 2010,  
measuring 9 lb., 8 oz.,  
and 22 inches long.  
The Proffitt family  
lovingly remembers  
Baby Proffitt #1,  
miscarried December 18, 2002,  
Clara Grace,  
stillborn February 25, 2004,  
and Baby Proffitt #2,  
miscarried in July 2005.

**David and Tammy Rutschman**,  
of Corinth, Texas,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Lauren Mackenzie,  
Born June 25, 2010,  
measuring 7 lb., 6 oz.,  
and 20 inches long.  
The Rutschman family  
lovingly remembers  
Junior,  
stillborn August 29, 2008,  
cord accident.

**Brett and Mary Alice Garland**,  
of Springfield, Missouri,  
along with big sister Daisy,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Brady Jackson,  
born June 2, 2010,  
measuring 5 lbs.,  
and 17 1/2 inches long.  
The Garland family lovingly remembers  
Ella and Evan,  
born premature on March 4, 2009.  
Evan returned to heaven March 5, 2009,  
and was followed by his sister,  
Ella on April 17, 2009.

**Adrian and Stephanie Estala**,  
of Pearland, Texas,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Isabella Dylan and Olivia Trystan,  
born April 8, 2010.  
Isabella Dylan measured 5 lb., 13 oz.,  
and 19 inches long.  
Olivia Trystan measured 6 lb., 2 oz.,  
and 19 3/4 inches long.

The Estala family lovingly remembers  
Dylan Carlos and Trystan Macario,  
December 11, 2008,  
PROM and prematurity.



## *Situaciones Nuevas— Como incluir a tus bebes cuando tu vida cambia*

Cada primavera durante la conferencia anual de liderazgo de M.E.N.D., los que participamos en el comité del boletín, asistimos a una reunión para discutir los temas más importantes para los siguientes dos años o más. Cuando el tema de este boletín fue calendarizado, no pensé que yo estaría escribiendo el artículo que tuve en mi página principal durante un buen tiempo, cuando atravesaba un cambio importante en mi vida. Nuestro único hijo vivo Byron Jr. partirá a la universidad en solo un par de semanas, bueno, cuando este artículo sea impreso el ya estará instalado en su habitación y las clases habrán comenzado.

He sufrido profundamente en los últimos meses, especialmente en mayo cuando Byron Jr. terminaba su último año en la escuela cristiana donde empezó a estudiar desde el jardín de infantes y donde también su papa se graduó. Parece que solo ayer era el pequeño niño que necesitaba a su mama para todo, ahora es prácticamente un hombre y nosotros como padres nos quedamos con el nido vacío.

Existe una pequeña parte cuando el nido se queda vacío que suena divertido y emocionante. Planeamos más viajes para los fines de semana (ya que no habrán más partidos de fútbol que asistir), pasar más tiempo solamente nosotros dos, y básicamente darle un pequeño respiro a nuestra agenda.

Sin embargo, el hecho de que el nido se quedara vacío aunque todavía no se debería quedarse vacío, me han resurgido algunos de esos viejos y feos recuerdos dolorosos o sufrimientos del pasado. Tratando de no sonar melodramática, siento que estoy a punto de sufrir la pérdida de un hijo otra vez. Y sé que no es lo mismo ya que Byron Jr. está vivo y sano, pero la idea de dejarlo que se vaya a estudiar a una universidad en otro estado, hace que regresen recuerdos y emociones que desearía nunca volver a experimentar o vivir.

El otoño pasado tuve el privilegio de hablar con la autora Nancy Guthrie (Holding on to Hope) en la reunión anual Camino para Recordar de M.E.N.D.—Houston. Ella y su esposo, como Byron y yo, tienen sólo un hijo vivo y perdieron a sus dos hijos más jóvenes. Su hijo es un año mayor que el mío, así es que ella pasó a través de esta misma situación y el mismo sufrimiento el año pasado. Le pregunté: "Nancy, cómo se siente quedarse con el nido vacío cuando uno no debería tener el nido vacío?" Ella lo

pensó unos segundos antes de contestar, y básicamente me dijo que sólo parecía estar haciendo las cosas de la manera más natural. Ella dijo que tantas de las emociones o sentimientos que vivimos cuando pasamos por el sufrimiento y el dolor de cuando un hijo muere, la anticipación era mucho peor que cuando realmente tuvieron que dejar a su hijo en la universidad y alejarse de él. Espero de que ella tenga razón.

Entonces, ¿cómo tengo previsto incluir a mis bebes durante esta nueva temporada de mi vida? Pues bien, supongo trabajaré más por M.E.N.D. Sé que nuestro plan es alivianar nuestra carga un poco, pero hay bastantes eventos en M.E.N.D. con otros capítulos los cuales me he perdido porque mi primera prioridad siempre ha sido Byron, Jr., y me he asegurado de no perderme nunca nada importante en su vida. Ahora que él se ha ido mis fines de semana están vacíos de las actividades de la escuela secundaria, mi semana ahora está libre de las responsabilidades de mamá de su clase, y por lo que asumo que tendré más tiempo libre para viajar. Por cierto, Byron, Jr. se va a la escuela en Springfield, Missouri, donde por casualidad acabamos de iniciar un capítulo de M.E.N.D.. Tal vez tendré lo mejor de dos mundos—asistir a todos los eventos de M.E.N.D. de SW Missouri Y estar con mi hijo!

♥ *Rebekah Mitchell*  
*mama de Jonathan Daniel y Bebé Mitchell*

## In Loving Memory



### **Lindsay Clair Alexander**

May 24 - 27, 2009  
VLCAD

Given by parents Lane and Leslie Alexander and sibling Haley

### **Gift of Support**

Given by David and Courteney Arquette

### **Jordan Alexander Booker**

Stillborn January 11, 2007  
True knot in cord

Parents: Norma Jordan and Mark Booker  
Given by mommy Norma Jordan

### **Abigail Marie Buddin**

April 13 - June 17, 2006  
SIDS

Parents: Nathan and Cara Buddin  
Siblings: Alexander and Anthony  
Given by Assassination City Roller Derby

### **Riley and Parker Davis**

November 14, 2006

Prematurity

Given by parents Robert and Cheryl Davis and little sister Annalise

### **Abigail Grace Crump**

Stillborn July 1, 2003  
Trisomy 18

Given by parents Gerald and Jaimie Crump and little sisters Cami and Karli

### **Kyler Paul English**

Stillborn January 20, 2006  
Cord accident

Parents: Bob English and Laurie McPike  
Gift given by Jon and Laurie McPike and brothers Kinser, Kelson, and Kayden

### **Baby Gold 1**

Miscarried August 12, 2008

### **Baby Gold 2**

Miscarried July 14, 2009

Parents: Greg and Kathryn Gold

Big sister: Emily Kathryn

Gifts given by

Uncle Cliff and Aunt Mary Allen

Chris Allen, and Laura Willming

### **Josephine Ann Lee**

October 9, 2009

PROM

Given by parents John and Patty Lee

### **Avery Merae Longgood**

August 2 - 3, 2007

Possible Stroke

Parents Neil and Jamie Longgood

Little sister Halle Merae

Given by grandparents Don and Annette Longgood

### **Jonathan Daniel Mitchell**

Stillborn June 24, 1995

Cord accident

### **Baby Mitchell**

Miscarried December 2001

Gifts given by

Parents Byron and Rebekah Mitchell,

and big brother: Byron, Jr.

Grandparents Dennis and Sue Brewer

Grandparents Lyle and Marnie Mitchell

### **Zephyr Moyer**

Given by Anonymous

### **Jack Nau**

Given by Amanda Nau

### **Christopher Michael Peplinski II**

Stillborn September 25, 2006

Cord Blood Clot

### **Blessing #2**

Miscarried May, 2008

### **Blessing #3**

Miscarried October, 2008

Given by parents

Chrissy and Chris Peplinski

and little brother Cooper

### **Laura Olivia Riha**

May 12, 2010

Heart Issues

Given by parents Olivia and Jesse Riha

and siblings Evelyn and Amanda

### **David Atkins Stephens**

October 23, 2003

MTHFR mutation

### **Baby Stephens I**

June 30, 2008

Ectopic pregnancy

### **Baby Stephens II**

January 2009

MTHFR mutation

### **Baby Stephens III**

February 15, 2010

Ectopic pregnancy

Given by parents Rob and Melissa Stephens and brother C.J.

### **Alivia Elizabeth Grace Walker**

Stillborn July 24, 2006

Incompetent cervix

Given by parents Robert and Liz Walker

and little brother Jaxson

### **Shauna Elisabeth Winebrenner**

April 12, 2003

Trisomy 18

Parents: Sarah and Tim Winebrenner

Siblings: Saul and Ella

Gift given by

Great uncle and aunt

Norman and Diane Hanks

### **Gift of Support**

West Conroe Baptist Church, Conroe, TX

### **Gift of Support**

Metropolitan Baptist Church, Houston, TX

### **Gift of Support**

Second Baptist Church, Springfield, MO

### **Gift of Support**

Mom's Club of Amarillo, TX

## Legacy Giving

Losing a child has changed each of our lives forever. We appreciate all financial support of the services our organization gives to bereaved parents—no matter the size of the contribution. However, some of you may have the capacity and desire to give a lifelong gift to M.E.N.D.

If you're interested in creating a legacy gift or endowment in honor of your baby, M.E.N.D. would be happy to assist you in gathering the necessary information to remember our organization in your will or trust. Please contact Rebekah Mitchell at [rebekah@mend.org](mailto:rebekah@mend.org) for more information about legacy giving.

### 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!**

## *Ever Changing...Always Remembering*

It's been nearly 7 years since our first son, Caleb Scott, was born and died 6 hours after birth. Instantly I went from an expectant mother, to a grieving mother who now needed to find a job.

Anytime you start a new job it's stressful...add to that the fact that meeting the more than 80 coworkers I had at United Way of Metropolitan Dallas meant that at least 50 times I had to recount the last six months of losing a child and trying to find a new identity. If you asked my colleagues I'm sure they would all graciously say that I handled myself well in sharing my story, but refusing their pity. They'd probably be lying (sometimes friends do that to make us feel better). Not that my peers gave me this title, but so much of my own identity was, "Hi, I'm Heather Fann, the gal with two dead babies." It took a long time to find the balance in sharing our story, but not losing myself or my children in the attempt to be "normal."

I wish I could say that after starting that new job, I would have had it all figured out for future transitions. But then, I'd be lying. Over the years, I've slowly made progress in how much and who I share our story with. At United Way, it was so soon after our loss that I'm sure it was one of the first things I said in an effort to remember Caleb and Baby August. Then moving back home to Missouri, I began to evaluate whether or not a person or a situation "deserved" to know about my beautiful children. Would it really matter to the relationship or career? I thought I found a good balance.

Then I opened the Southwest Missouri chapter and in essence returned the fact that I'm the mother of two children in heaven to the very forefront of my identity. Now, people will see me out at the grocery store and ask where I go to church. I answer and they immediately say something like, "oh, yeah, you have that ministry for families...oh, thank you for doing that." It's bizarre having a complete stranger mention my babies when I would never have told them about it otherwise.

Our latest transition has been moving from 5 acres where interaction with our neighbors was scarce to say the least, to a neighborhood teeming with young families. Now, I can't even walk to the mailbox without getting a wave or hello from our neighbors, which is what we wanted! We were intentional about finding a neighborhood where our subsequent daughter, Madison Grace, would have an easy time finding playmates. So, once again, I find myself wondering how and when to include our first two children when meeting these new families. Subconsciously or not, it must cross a person's mind about the sanity of a couple who talk about their children who have died. "Are they weird...will their daughter be weird...should I let my kids play with her?" I'm not judging them; I'm just voicing what they're probably thinking anyway. As such, I don't want to hinder my daughter's ability—or ours for that matter—to make long-lasting relationships in this neighborhood.

For now, we're taking the approach to meet people where they are. Introduce our daughter and talk about what we like to do, finding ways to interact with these parents and their children. We're allowing the relationships to develop at their own pace and in time, we'll mention our other children. We're investing in them before sharing something so personal, and believe that once those relationships start positively that these folks will understand our unique family. In a way, I believe that protects all my children, both living and not...Caleb and August will only be shared with those people we value and respect, and Madison will not have to overcome her siblings in order to make new friends. That's the plan anyway...I guess you can ask me in six months if it worked or not.

♥ *Heather Fann, Director*  
*mommy to Caleb Scott and Baby August*  
 M.E.N.D.—SW Missouri

*Continued from page 8...*

Pray. Remember that though you may find yourself in unknown territory, nothing is unknown to your Father. He put you exactly where you need to be and has a plan for you there (Jeremiah 29:11). He may lead you through some uncomfortable places, but He alone knows the way to the good stuff that lies beyond those rough times, so keep following Him. Just as loving parents watch while children endure painful things like vaccinations, homework, and lots of other scary things that turn out to work for their benefit, God sometimes allows us to be in places where we don't want to be. He alone knows how, but we can trust that He will work it out for our good (Romans 8:28).

Change can be hard, especially when you feel fragile from the effects of grief, but sometimes the hard things turn out to be the best things. Changes are manageable if you keep your baby's memory near, choose your new friends well, keep in touch with people who love you, and keep your eyes on Jesus.

♥ *Sharlene Libby,*  
*mommy to Joseph Charles, May 26, 1999*  
 Virginia

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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 contact Rebekah (rebekah@mend.org) to obtain the Customer Letter. You must only present this letter one time to link your card to M.E.N.D. 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](mailto: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 and Macaroni and 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](mailto: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*.
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