



# M. E. N. D.

Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death

## Infertility/Loss of Life at Embryo Stage

A new year has begun. Many of you might sadly sigh and say, "another year..." meaning another year has passed without the joy and hope of a baby. Perhaps some of you were so sure 2014 was YOUR year, THE year. And now it's gone and 2015 is underway.

Though I cannot completely relate to infertility in the traditional sense of the word, I am considered to have secondary infertility since the last two of my three pregnancies ended early with a loss. I never had trouble conceiving, just keeping my babies. Jonathan was stillborn due to a cord accident at 29.5 weeks, and Baby Mitchell was miscarried at 10 weeks, likely due to a partial molar pregnancy (my own unofficial diagnosis). Because I have a kidney disease and had a kidney transplant between Jonathan and Baby Mitchell, continuous pregnancy attempts were not an option for us. Even though becoming pregnant posed a huge health risk for me, the desire and even obsession to be pregnant and have more children did not go away, not for many years, anyway.

When I became pregnant with Baby Mitchell, I was excited and scared to death at the same time. My innocence of thinking a pregnancy equals a healthy baby in nine months was long gone. My risk levels were pretty much in uncharted territory, because I was a transplant recipient taking numerous anti-rejection medications to suppress my immune system. With my first two babies, Byron Jr. and Jonathan, I was in love with these boys the minute conception was confirmed. But, with Baby Mitchell ... I was afraid to love "it." I didn't want to get attached to another baby, only to have to say goodbye again. My guard was up, and I was not going to allow myself to endure the heartache of losing again. I loved being pregnant, but at the time, I was too afraid to admit I loved my tiny baby. When I lost that little baby, I had to deal with the guilt of wondering whether he or she knew Mommy REALLY did love this child. That baby truly was loved and wanted more than anything. That little one was supposed to be our happily ever after - our reward for the suffering we had endured for so many years of grieving Jonathan and having a kidney transplant.

Because I had a very complicated miscarriage, which resulted in two D&C surgeries and a few days in the hospital on triple IV antibiotics, the grief of that loss did not fully hit for a full calendar year. But when it hit, it hit hard! By that

time, I think many people had already forgotten about our little one, who should have been 4 or 5 months old. I felt it was too late to really explain to anyone other than my husband why I was in such a funk. He got it and was sad along with me. However, I felt no one else would understand, because not only had it been a full year since the miscarriage, I was only 10 weeks along when I lost the baby. Byron and I saw our little one's beating heart and developing body through sonogram images, but no one else did. Unless one is educated on embryonic development, I'm sure most assumed we lost "a blob." No, the last time we saw it alive, it was a tiny person with a beating heart, a round head, a developing body, and the beginnings of arms and legs.

There are many arguments about exactly when life begins. Is it at conception? Is it a couple of weeks after conception when the heart starts beating? Is it at eight weeks, when the embryo is considered a fetus? Or is it actually when the baby is delivered and breathing outside the womb on its own? Personally, I believe life begins at conception, even before the fertilized egg implants in the uterus. Therefore, to me, an embryo is a life - the beginnings of a little person whom God created in the image of Himself, and a life that He cherishes. Why do so many people discount life at that stage? Ignorance? Naiveté? Not really wanting to know? I'm not sure. But I do know that when parents lose a baby at this stage, it's still a significant loss. Maybe the mom didn't endure labor, get to see her baby, hold her baby, or have time to create very many memories, but she still lost her beloved child.

If you have experienced an early loss, especially after enduring infertility, don't be afraid or embarrassed to grieve that little one. Don't allow anyone to minimize your sorrow and tell you reasons you shouldn't be sad. A life is a life, is a life, is a life, as we often say in M.E.N.D. If 2014 was a year full of disappointment for you, I pray along with you that 2015 will be your year! I pray this new season will bring you your heart's desire. But if not, like He did for me several years ago, I pray this will be your year of supernatural peace, joy and contentment.

♥ *Rebekah Mitchell,*  
*Mommy to Jonathan Daniel and Baby Mitchell*  
*M.E.N.D. President/Founder*

*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 8.

Volume 21, Issue 1 • January/February 2015

© Copyright 2015 M.E.N.D.

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

For inquiries, subscription requests, deletions, and submissions to the newsletter, contact us at

M.E.N.D.  
 P.O. Box 631566  
 Irving, TX 75063  
 Phone and Fax: (972) 506-9000  
*(Please call before faxing)*  
 E-Mail: [rebekah@mend.org](mailto:rebekah@mend.org)  
[jennifer@mend.org](mailto:jennifer@mend.org)  
[www.mend.org](http://www.mend.org)

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).

**M.E.N.D. Board of Directors**

- Rebekah Mitchell
- Byron Mitchell, D.D.S.
- DaLana Barsanti
- Brittney Fish
- Shannon Outen
- Brandee Dill
- Marilyn Brown
- Amber Zuckerman

**State Coordinators/Chapter Directors**

- M.E.N.D.—Dallas: Rebekah Mitchell
- M.E.N.D.—Houston: Stormy Mitchell
- M.E.N.D.—Texarkana: Monica Davis
- M.E.N.D.—Tulsa: Lisa Daily
- M.E.N.D.—SW Missouri: Heather Fann
- M.E.N.D.—Bryan/College Station: Jennie Drude
- M.E.N.D.—Amarillo: Becky Anderson
- M.E.N.D.—NW Washington: Stacy McGhee
- M.E.N.D.—Wichita Falls: Sarah Fukasawa
- M.E.N.D.—Chicagoland: Sara Hintz

**Advisory Board**

Paula Schear, Liz Walker, Cheryl Davis, Calli Stanley and Norma Jordan

**General Counsel**

Dennis G. Brewer, Sr., Attorney at Law

**Newsletter**

*Editor:* Jennifer Harrison

*Co-Editors:* Byron and Rebekah Mitchell

**Newsletter Volunteers:**

Heather Fann, Sharlene Libby, Brittney Fish and Sara Elliott

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

## Thank You to Enterprise

A huge thank you to Enterprise Holdings Foundation (Enterprise Rent-A-Car) for awarding M.E.N.D. a \$2,000 grant! Thanks also to Randy Barsanti for applying and making this happen!



## Texarkana Christmas Ceremony



Shawn and Monica Davis with Landon and Kylie



Randy and Toni Sherman

### Sponsors

- Ale's Closet
- Jana Bucheit
- McAlister's Deli
- Baker Bros. Restaurant
- Chili's Restaurant
- Cold Stone Creamery
- Red Lobster Restaurant
- Front Porch Treasures
- Golden Chick Restaurant
- Lifeway Christian Bookstore
- Origami Owl

- Starbucks
- Younique
- Olive Garden Restaurant
- Painting With a Twist
- Super 1 Foods
- Timeless Treasures by Tanya
- Junior League of Texarkana
- Michael's Floral Arrangement
- Christus St. Michael
- Health and Fitness Center



## Medical Moment



Prenatal care, in the form of pregnancy counseling, physical checkups, lab tests, and delivery preparations, can have a significant impact on the health and wellness of parents and their children. According to the Guttmacher Institute, newborns are 40% more likely to die within 28 days of delivery if their mothers have not received prenatal care. Whether the pregnancy is planned or unexpected, there are important steps every family can take. PublicHealth.org provides a guide at <http://www.publichealth.org/prenatal-care/> for expectant mothers on the following:

- Healthcare provider options
- Nutrition and lifestyle changes
- Newborn care
- Trimester-by-trimester guide to staying healthy during pregnancy

The information is provided through PublicHealth.org, an organization dedicated to connecting patients, students and professionals to the latest and most useful healthcare information and resources available. They offer

- A comprehensive look into the expanding field of public health
- The latest in health policy updates and recommendations
- Information on launching a career in public health

For more information on the prenatal care guide or about PublicHealth.org, please call (281) 846-3085, or email at [contact@publichealth.org](mailto:contact@publichealth.org).



**PublicHealth**

## Stay Connected!

In an effort to reach more families and spread awareness for M.E.N.D., we have expanded our social media presence by joining Twitter and adding a M.E.N.D. facebook page.



Follow M.E.N.D. on Twitter @MENDinfantloss



Like the M.E.N.D. Facebook page



Find local chapter facebook pages at [www.mend.org](http://www.mend.org)

## Notes from our Readers



“The M.E.N.D. newsletter continues to be a blessing in my life. I have been telling new families about it as I hear of their losses. Thank you for your dedication to M.E.N.D. and serving families. You are making a difference and spreading God’s love and hopeful message.”

♥ Aly, Mommy to Hope

### March/April Topic

Early Diagnosis and Carrying to Term  
Deadline: January 31, 2015

### May/June Topic

Mother’s Day/Father’s Day  
Deadline: March 30, 2015

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 website indefinitely unless we receive notice in writing that you are only granting permission for your submission to appear in the printed version of the newsletter. Because our newsletters are posted online, please understand that your name will likely be attached to your submission when searched on the Internet.

**Reprint Policy:** Articles printed in the M.E.N.D. newsletter are copyrighted by M.E.N.D. and/or by the individual authors of certain articles. Articles may not be reprinted without permission from the editor, Jennifer Harrison, or president, Rebekah Mitchell. The newsletter may be reproduced for the purpose of providing it to pregnancy loss support group members or other bereaved families so that they may also have access to the information. The material may not be reproduced in any way, shape or form for profit. Some authors of articles included in the newsletter may carry their own copyright and their articles may only be reprinted with permission from the author.

**Letters to the Editor** should be sent to [jennifer@mend.org](mailto:jennifer@mend.org). All letters submitted to the editor are subject to be published in future issues, both in the print version and online, unless a letter’s author expressly requests that it not be published.

**Birthday Tributes:** M.E.N.D. publishes heavenly birthday tributes in the corresponding newsletter. Tributes must be submitted via the online form at [www.mend.org](http://www.mend.org).

<u>Heavenly Birthday</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
January/February	November 30
March/April	January 31
May/June	March 31
July/August	May 31
September/October	July 31
November/December	September 30



# Birthday Tributes

## Happy 20<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Benjamin!

It's hard to believe 20 years have already gone by. I think about you and your big brother all the time. Losing you and your brother has made me a vessel to glorify God by helping friends who are going through what I went through many years ago. We love you and wish you were here to grow up with your sisters. Always on our minds and in our hearts.

Love,  
Mommy, Daddy, Heather and Hannah

*Benjamin H. Jones IV*  
*November 1, 1994*  
*Premature labor*  
*Parents: Ben and Llorra Jones*  
*Sisters: Heather and Hannah*



## Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Lil' Ned!

We love and miss you so very much!  
We cannot wait to see you again!

Love,  
Mommy and Daddy

*Ned McCaster IV*  
*November 14, 2013—January 23, 2014*  
*SIDS*  
*Parents: Ned and Erica McCaster*



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

Oh, Stella, boy have I missed you this past year! My heart literally hurts when I am hit by my hard moments of grief. I long to hold you, sing to you and watch you play with your brother and sister. Your life has been such a blessing, and God has made so much good come from your death. Although my wish would be to have all my kids under one roof, I am so thankful you have Dharma to play with in heaven. It is comforting to know you are not alone. I love you, sweet Stella, and I am so thankful to be your mommy! Please ask George Harrison to sing "Happy Birthday" for me to you!

*Stella Darling Drude*  
*Stillborn January 23, 2014*  
*Anencephaly and exencephaly*  
*Also remembering:*  
*Dharma Lucille Drude*  
*March 31—April 1, 2008*  
*Anencephaly*  
*Parents: Jennie and Jason Drude*  
*Siblings: Max and Mollie*



## Happy 4<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Lance!

There is still a void that will never be filled since you left us. You are thought of every day, spoken of often and have never been forgotten. Your birthday is a sweet reminder of you and what could have been. You are so loved, sweet boy. Do me a favor and ask God to shine down on your sweet Nana, the one who takes care of your birthday celebration every year. She is my rock, and I know she would be yours, too, if you were here with us. Just know that we love you! Happy 4<sup>th</sup> birthday!

Love,  
Daddy, Mommy, Emma, Nana, Papa and family

*Lance Cole "Kaleb" Bollier*  
*January 3, 2011*  
*Cord accident*  
*Parents: Kevin Bollier and Crystal Spohn*  
*Sister: Emma Kaye*



## Happy 7<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Brandon Isaiah!

Happy 7<sup>th</sup> birthday, my sweet angel. I can now say your name without tearing up or losing it, and smile knowing you're okay and you live forever in my heart. One day we will be together again. You were a gift from God, and I will always treasure you. Missing you always!

Love and hugs,  
Mommy and Brother Ethan

*Brandon Isaiah Alafaro*  
*October 19, 2007—February 7, 2008*  
*Spinal muscular atrophy*  
*Mommy: Jennifer Alafaro*  
*Brother: Ethan*



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

Dearest Bryson, happy 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday to our little cherub! We miss you. Even though we can't wrap our arms around you, we know you are being held by our sweet Jesus. On this birthday, play like a little boy and run and jump around and have fun! This one thing we know: heaven is blessed because of you. Until we see you again, little one, we are sending hugs and kisses to you.

Love,  
Mommy, Daddy, Landon, Grandma and Grandpa

*Bryson Alexander Dobbs*  
*December 2, 2011—January 4, 2012*  
*CDH*  
*Parents: Jason and Julie Dobbs*  
*Brother: Landon Eric*



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

Happy birthday to our beloved Luke. We eagerly await the day we will look upon your precious face and see your smile and hear your laughter. What a glorious day that will be, when Death has been forever defeated, at last! We love and miss you, our darling son.

Love,

Mama, Daddy and Noelle

“I am the resurrection and the life.

He who believes in me will live, even though he dies.”

John 11:25

*Luke Anthony Sehmel*  
*Stillborn January 19, 2013, at 24 weeks*  
*Unknown cause*  
*Parents: John and Rachel Sehmel*  
*Big sister: Noelle Joy*



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

It's hard to believe it has been a year since we lost you. You brought so much joy to us during your short life. I cherish every second you were in my belly. We would've given anything to have been able to keep you and raise you, but Jesus thought you were too beautiful to stay on this earth. We will never forget you, and we will hold you in our hearts until the day we meet again. Happy 1<sup>st</sup> heavenly birthday, sweet baby boy! We love you, Kelby!

*Kelby Nathaniel Hale*  
*Miscarried January 26, 2014*  
*Also remembering*  
*Baby Hale #2*  
*August 2014*  
*Chemical pregnancy*  
*Baby Hale #3*  
*September 2014*  
*Chemical pregnancy*  
*Parents: Zachary and Laura Hale*



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

Happy 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday to our little boy! It's hard to believe it has been three years since you went to heaven. Feels like yesterday I held you in my arms. I cannot wait to hold you again. We miss you so much! Lilly tells everyone she has a brother in heaven and one on earth. You will never be forgotten, and we love you so much. We will all be together again.

Love,

Mommy, Daddy, your big sis Lilly and little brother Eli

*Mason Shreve*  
*January 15, 2012*  
*Amniotic web*  
*Parents: Gary and Stacy Shreve*  
*Siblings: Lilly and Eli*



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

Every February we honor Tyrese by going to his tree planted in his memory. We sing “Happy Wing Day” in tune to “Happy Birthday.” We always love him and remember every day since this tragic loss. Until we meet again, we will miss you every minute, every hour and every day we are on this earth.

Love you and miss you,  
 Mommy, Nate and Teanna

*Tyrese Hunter Malcolm Scott*  
*Stillborn February 24, 2007*  
*Unknown cause*  
*Mommy: Dawn Scott*  
*Siblings: Nate and Teanna*



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

We love and miss you every day. Not a moment passes we do not long for you to be in our arms.

Love,  
 Dad and Mom

*Clara Shillingford*  
*January 3, 2014*  
*Unknown cause*  
*Parents: Clarke and Nichelle Shillingford*



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

My sweet Grace, there is not a day goes by that you do not cross my mind. I constantly wonder what you would be like and look like if you were here and the distinct characteristics you would possess. You send me gentle reminders you are in the Father's care, which gives me great comfort. I love you, miss you, and until we meet again.

Happy 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday,  
 Mommy

*Grace Saniya Tisby*  
*February 27, 2012*  
*Premature*  
*Mommy: Shauniesa Sisk*



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

It's hard to believe it's been a year since we had to give you back. As much as it hurts, we are grateful to have been chosen as your parents. We are proud to call you our son, and there's no doubt you're the brightest and best at what you do. Fly high with the angels, sweet baby. We will meet again.

Love always,  
 Mommy and Daddy

*Liam Asher Bradley*  
*Miscarried January 3, 2014, at 7 weeks*  
*Parents: Joseph and Devon Bradley*



### Happy 6<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Aiden and Cameron!

To my sweet angels up above, Mommy misses you every day. I often wonder what you look like at this age and what experiences you would have, funny faces made and cute sayings you would share. I know you are in God's hands in a far better place than here. Know that you are missed and loved beyond words. Until we meet again...

Love,

Mommy, Daddy, Nathan and Noah

*Aiden and Cameron Lewis*

*January 1, 2009*

*Incompetent cervix*

*Parents: Erica and Andre Lewis*

*Brothers: Nathan and Noah*



### Happy 10<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Cece!

We hope you have a great birthday surrounded by lots of love, happiness and joy! We miss you so very much! We hope your birthday is as special as you are.

Hugs and kisses!

Mommy, Daddy and Ally

*Celeste Kimberly Reid*

*December 7-8, 2004*

*Neonatal Hemochromatosis*

*Also remembering*

*Connor Boston Reid*

*Stillborn April 27, 2006*

*Trisomy 13*

*Baby Boston Reid*

*September 1999*

*Unknown cause*

*Parents: Skip Reid and Andie Boston*

*Sister: Allyson Kate*



### Happy 6<sup>th</sup> Birthday,

### Jackson Glen and Tyler Ray!

Six years ago you changed our lives.

Made us parents. Made us whole.

You taught us the meaning of true love, of sacrifice and kindness.

You taught us to forgive and mature, to accept and comfort.

You changed us so much in your brief time.

Now we honor you with compassion that we didn't know we had.

We are better people because of you.

Happy 6<sup>th</sup> birthday to our Sweet Princes.

We miss and love you every day.

Mommy and Daddy

*Jackson Glen and Tyler Ray*

*February 23, 2009*

*Placental abruption*

*Parents: Kirk and Diana Light*

*Siblings: Brayden and Alexis*



### Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, My Queen!

Not a day goes by I don't miss you more and more. I hope you're being a good angel in heaven, and I hope you're having fun with your big sister. Daddy and I love you so much. Everyone misses you so much. The six weeks I spent with you were beyond amazing. I know you're looking over me, Daddy and your baby brother. I pray you continue to give me the strength to keep pushing over because you and your siblings are my best motivation. I love you, my beautiful angel. You are my sunshine.

*Ariel Annette Suniga*

*December 28, 2013—February 14, 2014*

*Pneumonia*

*Also remembering*

*Athena Suniga*

*Miscarried August 25, 2012*

*Parents: Selena Suniga and Jaime Guerrero*

*Sibling: Baby Rainbow due on March 2, 2015*



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

Happy birthday to our brave little warrior who fought to live for eight glorious hours when medical knowledge said he'd not last one. He did the impossible and got his blood oxygen levels up to 100% with underdeveloped lungs. The nurses had never seen anything like it. You're in heaven now, fighting in the Lord's army with the strength and will God gave you. We can't wait to see you again. We love you, son.

*Elijah Gracen Clark*

*February 19-20, 2014*

*Potter's Syndrome*

*Parents: Jason and Christa Clark*

*Siblings: Bailey, Caden and Devan*



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

Happy 5<sup>th</sup> birthday, Jett Josiah! You are so dearly missed. I cannot believe it has been five years since we held you in our arms! You are thought of every day. You are loved and missed so very much. We know we will see you again in heaven. Until then, give Papa Jim a hug for us and tell him we love and miss him, too, please!

I held you in my womb, I held you in my arms and until we meet again, I will always hold you in my heart!

Love always and forever,

Mommy and all your brothers and sisters

*Jett Josiah*

*February 25—March 9, 2010*

*Renal failure*

*Mommy: Andrea Ball*

*Siblings: Justin, Zoe, Dokota, America, Jeremy,*

*Jon Jon and EJ*



**Happy 4<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Kylie!**

Happy 4<sup>th</sup> heavenly birthday, my sweet angel. Thank you for continuing to watch over us and protect us. We love you and miss you.

Love,  
Mom, Dad, Hailey and Kaleb

*Kylie Danielle Bohuslav*

*January 4, 2011*

*Placental abruption*

*Parents: Kevan and Stefanie Bohuslav*

*Siblings: Hailey and Kaleb*

**Happy 5<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Tristin!**

My sweet Tristin, it's your 5<sup>th</sup> birthday, and I hope you are having a great party. We miss you and think of you every day. Happy birthday, baby. Sending you hugs and kisses.

Love,  
Mommy, Daddy, big brother Kyle and little brother Aiden

*Tristin Patton*

*Miscarried February 15, 2010*

*Parents: William and Christina Patton*

*Brothers: Kyle and Aiden*

**Happy 5<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Hudson Parker!**

Five years is a huge milestone. For five years you have been in heaven, and for five years we have been missing you. We love you and know some day we will be together again. Until then, we will keep your life and legacy alive here. We love you, and we miss you. Happy birthday, big boy!

Love,  
Mommy, Daddy and Presley

*Hudson Parker Jones*

*Stillborn January 9, 2010*

*Lower bladder obstruction*

*Parents: Travis and Jennifer Jones*

*Sibling: Presley*

**Happy 5<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Tomas Andres and Isabela!**

Our precious twins, happy 5<sup>th</sup> birthday! It's hard to believe it's been five years. We love you and miss you so much! You are always in our hearts! We send you many hugs and kisses on your day!

Love you always,  
Mommy, Daddy and little brothers Tomas Eduardo and Andres Ignacio

*Tomas Andres Castillo*

*January 11, 2010*

*Isabela Castillo*

*January 18, 2010*

*Premature at 20 and 21 weeks*

*Parents: Marisela and Jesus Castillo*

*Siblings: Tomas Eduardo and Andres Ignacio*

**Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Baby Simon!**

As an 18-year-old getting pregnant in the middle of my senior year, it was difficult. It was difficult with my parents, teachers and my boyfriend as well. What wasn't difficult was loving my baby more than anything the very second I found out that I was pregnant. Nobody should have to experience the death of their child, much less a high school student. I was about seventeen weeks along when I found out I had miscarried. I had a D&C about three days later because my body would not fully dilate. My baby would have been born around July 28, 2014.

*Baby Simon*

*February 11, 2014*

*Unknown cause*

*Mommy: Cade Simon*

**A Letter to Mommy**

I am your precious baby who didn't make it to your arms. I went straight to be with Jesus, free from any earthly harm.

Many dwelling where I live waited years to enter in.

They struggled through a world of sorrow,  
marred by pain and sin.

For a few short weeks we felt each other  
and we'll never be the same.

A love, so fierce,  
entwined our hearts the very moment I became.  
How do you love a person you never got to meet?  
Or try to envision a face you didn't even see?  
Nobody understands that a piece of you has died,  
but I knew the day I crossed over to the other side.

I saw all of your hopes, your plans and such.  
No words can describe the life you dreamt for us.

But all is not lost! There is coming a day  
when all earthly sorrow will be melted away!  
Soon you will be called to this glorious place,  
I'll jump into your arms and we'll see each other's face.

I can't wait to call you "Mommy,"  
but until then you should know, I miss you so much, too!

You're not going through this alone.

Let Jesus hold and love you,  
He will wipe away your tears.

He will take you by the hand  
and lead you through the coming years.

Then, on that day when you are called to our eternal home,

I'll be waiting for you at the gates,  
we can walk together to God's throne.

So Mommy, please don't sorrow,  
though I was happy in your womb.

I came to live with Jesus and you will join me very soon!"

♥ *Zachary and Laura Hale,*  
*Parents to Kelby Nathaniel,*  
*Baby Hale II and Baby Hale III*  
*M.E.N.D.—Tulsa*

## Infertilidad / Pérdida de Vida en Etapa de Embrión

Ha comenzado un nuevo año. Para muchos de ustedes, lamentablemente puede suspirar y decir, "otro año ha comenzado", lo que significa otro año transcurrió sin la alegría y la esperanza de un bebé. Tal vez algunos de ustedes tenían animo de que 2014 era su año; EL año. Y ahora se ha ido y 2015 está en marcha.

Aunque no me identifico completamente a la infertilidad en el sentido de la palabra tradicional, soy considerada tener infertilidad secundaria por razón de que los últimos dos de mis tres embarazos terminaron temprano con pérdidas. Nunca he tenido problemas para concebir, solo manteniendo mis hijos. Jonathan nació sin vida debido a un accidente de cordón a las 29 1/2 semanas y bebé Mitchell fue abortado involuntariamente a las diez semanas, probablemente debido a un embarazo molar parcial (mi diagnóstico inoficial). Porque tengo una enfermedad renal y he tenido un trasplante de un riñón entre Jonathan y bebé Mitchell, varios intentos de embarazo no eran una opción para nosotros. Sin embargo, el hecho de que quedara embarazada planteaba un riesgo enorme para mi salud, el deseo y obsesión incluso de estar embarazada y tener más hijos no se me quitava. No por muchos años.

Cuando me embaracé con bebé Mitchell, estaba emocionada y tenía miedo al mismo tiempo. Mi inocencia de pensar que un embarazo = un bebé saludable en nueve meses se había ido, y ciertamente desde que fui recipiente de un trasplante tomando numerosos medicamentos contra el rechazo para suprimir mi sistema inmunológico prácticamente me puso en un territorio inexplorado de los niveles de riesgo. Con mis dos primeros bebés, Byron Jr. y Jonathan, estaba enamorada de estos barones desde el momento que la concepción fue confirmada. Pero, con bebé Mitchell... tenía miedo de amar "lo". No me quería apegarme a otro bebé, sólo para tener que despedirme de nuevo. Mi sentido de guardia estaba alta y no iba a permitirme soportar la angustia de perder un bebe otra vez. Me encantó estar embarazada, pero al tiempo, temía también admitir que amaba a mi bebe. ¿Cuándo perdí ese bebé, entonces tuve que tratar con la culpa de pensar y saber si el or ella supo que su mama realmente le tenía amor? Ese bebé era verdaderamente amaba y deseaba más que nada. Se suponía que ese bebe era nuestra felicidad por siempre; nuestra recompensa por los sufrimientos que había soportado durante tantos años con el dolor de Jonathan y por el trauma de un trasplante de riñón. Porque tuve un aborto involuntario muy complicado, que se tradujo en dos cirugías, y unos pocos días en el hospital con triple antibióticos intravenosos, el dolor de esa pérdida no me afectó totalmente hasta un año después, y cuando llegó, el golpe fue duro! Por tanto, creo que mucha gente ya se había olvidado de nuestro pequeñito, que debería tener 4 o 5 meses de edad. Sentí que era demasiado tarde para poder explicarle a cualquiera así solo a mi esposo le pude explicar lo que sentía. El me entendió y también se sentía triste. Sentía que nadie sería capaz de entender porque no sólo había pasado un año pero también sólo tenía diez semanas del embarazo. Byron y yo vimos el corazón de nuestro pequeño palpitando y el desarrollo de su cuerpo a través de imágenes de ultrasonido, pero nadie más lo vio. A menos que uno es educado en el desarrollo embrionario, estoy segura que la mayoría asume que perdimos "una gota". No. Era una persona con un corazón que latea, una cabeza redonda, un organismo en desarrollo y el principio de brazos y piernas, la última vez que vimos con vida.

Uno puede discutir cuando exactamente comienza la vida. ¿Es en la concepción? ¿Es un par de semanas después de la concepción cuando el corazón empieza a latir? ¿O es a las 8 semanas, cuando el embrión es entonces considerado un feto? O ¿es en realidad cuando el bebé nace y respira fuera del útero por sí mismo. Personalmente, creo que la vida comienza en la concepción, incluso antes de que el óvulo fertilizado se implanta en el útero. Por lo tanto, para mí, un embrión es una vida - los inicios de una persona que Dios creó a la imagen de sí mismo y una vida que él aprecia. ¿Por qué tanta gente descuenta la vida en esa etapa? ¿Ignorancia? ¿Ingenuidad? ¿No querer saber? No estoy segura. Pero sé que cuando los padres pierden un bebé en esta etapa, sigue siendo una pérdida significativa. Tal vez la madre no paso por el parto, no vio a su bebé, no cargo a su bebé en sus brazos, no tuvo tiempo para crear muchos recuerdos, pero todavía era su hijo amado.

Si ha experimentado una pérdida temprana, especialmente después de aguantar la infertilidad, no tenga miedo o vergüenza sentir el dolor de ese pequeñito. No permita que nadie minimize su dolor y decirle razones por que usted no debería estar triste. Una vida es una vida, es una vida, es una vida, como lo decimos en M.E.N.D. Si 2014 fue un año lleno de decepción para usted, rezo junto con usted que 2015 será su año! Rezo que esta nueva temporada le traerá el deseo de su corazón. Pero si no, como lo hizo por mí hace varios años, rezo que este será su año de paz sobrenatural, alegría y satisfacción.

♥ *Rebekah Mitchell,*  
*Presidente y Fundadora*  
*Mamá de Jonathan Daniel y Mitchell bebé Mitchell*

---

“The English language lacks the words to mourn an absence. For the loss of a parent, grandparent, spouse, child or friend, we have all manner of words and phrases, some helpful, some not. Still we are conditioned to say something, even if it is only “I’m sorry for your loss.” But for an absence, for someone who was never there at all, we are wordless to capture that particular emptiness. For those who deeply want children and are denied them, those missing babies hover like silent ephemeral shadows over their lives. Who can describe the feel of a tiny hand that is never held?”



## Loss of Two Embryos

It is already difficult for people to understand how you feel when you lose a baby. We have to constantly explain how we feel and all the things we lost when we lost our baby, our child. Even for us, we have to keep their memories alive every time we can because we feel bad if someone doesn't remember our baby or babies.

So when my husband and I lost our two last embryos, we were beyond sadness and despair. Try to imagine explaining to someone losing our two last embryos. How am I supposed to tell someone I lost my two embryos? I bet they were going to say, "What? Your two what?"

I decided it didn't matter; I didn't need to explain to anybody how my husband and I felt.

After losing our first baby girl due to miscarriage at 11 weeks and a year later losing our daughter Emma shortly after birth, and then having a subsequent daughter via surrogacy, we thought we were more than prepared for anything that could come. When we were on our way for a transfer of our two last embryos, we thought we were more than prepared to face anything, but we were wrong.

When one of the nurses called me on my cell phone and told me we lost our two last embryos, I couldn't believe her. I started crying uncontrollably. My husband was driving, simply staring at the road as if he were not there.

We couldn't believe we were facing this, the loss of our two last embryos, our two embryos who were from the same batch as our beautiful daughter Isabella.

We lost the chance of another child; Isabella lost the chance of another sister or brother. We lost again so many dreams and hopes.

I remember that day as if it were yesterday. Two years and four months have gone by since that day. I still wonder what would have happened if those embryos would have lived, as I do with our first baby girl and Emma, but there is nothing I can do about it. What I can do is to keep their memories alive and remember their short lives here with us and how much we love them. No matter if it was a miscarriage or a neonatal death or embryo stage, they changed our lives forever.

As I write this I am with my daughter Isabella. She is helping me with the Christmas decorations, and yesterday she decorated a Christmas tree for Emma. I give thanks because I have her and remember all the love I also have for her siblings, even though they are not here with us. They are in our hearts and in our lives.

♥ Ana Krymkiewicz,  
Mommy to Baby Girl Krymkiewicz, Emma and two little embryos,  
M.E.N.D.—Houston

## NW Washington Christmas Ceremony

### *Sponsors*

Ryan and Rachel Lewis  
Eric and Beatrice Merrill



Matt, Stacy and Micah McGhee and  
Joey and Sheri Vigil lighting their candles  
in memory of Sophia Rose McGhee



Rachel and Ryan Lewis  
lighting their candles  
in memory of their 4 miscarriages



Karen and William Herod  
performing "Still" by Gerritt Hofsink



Assistants Katherine, Lindsey and Joanna  
lighting the M.E.N.D. candles

## The Ridiculous Question With Infertility....

By Lori Ennis

This morning, I had *that* appointment.

You know the one. The yearly one most women dread because, let's face it, it's just awkward and uncomfortable. More, it usually is an in-one's-face reminder of what pains a heart.

"Ever been pregnant?"

"How many times?"

"How many deliveries?"

I think that the matter-of-factness in the way those questions are so bluntly asked is assaulting and sad at the same time. And I hate answering any of them.

But this morning, the one that threw me off guard and made me tear up with hot tears was this: ***"So, do you want a prescription for birth control?"***

For the first time in fourteen years, I did not really know how to answer that question.

Most times I've been asked, I've laughed. Gut-busting laughter at the absurdity.

As if my being pregnant was something in which I had the least bit of "control."

But this time, that question stung. A lot.

I wanted to scream. "No! I do not want birth control! I don't need birth control! Do you not remember to whom you speak?????"

(Of course he did. He was kind and compassionate, and I know his asking me was as uncomfortable for him as it was for me to hear it.)

Instead, I just cried a little bit and softly said, "Maybe. Maybe I should."

Do I think for one absurd second I'll get pregnant ... naturally? Of course not. Good grief. Ludicrous.

But ... what if I did?

My heart is tired of aching. It wants no more ugly silt running through, leaving behind deposits of heartache that muddies the joy I desperately try to culture, claim and cling to.

*Continued on page 12...*

## Dialogue with God A Psalm of Grief

By Phyllis Goodin, First Church, Rockport

"Where are you, Lord?  
Where have you gone?"

"Nowhere," He answers,  
"I'm where I've always been.  
Where are you, my child?  
Where have you gone?"

"To the depths of grief, Lord,  
The never-ending bottomless pit."

"Come with me, Child,  
Let us walk together through the Scriptures.  
Let me show you my promises."

"Will it get better, Lord?  
Will it go away?"

"No, Child, it will always be with you,  
Though not as painful as now,  
For always, you should remember the  
experience."

"Why, Lord? It hurts so badly."

"Oh, yes, Child, I know that grief.  
That grief was mine when I gave my Son.

Through that grief, you will learn  
compassion.

Through that grief, you will learn patience.

Through that grief, you will be able to help  
others through theirs.

Through that grief, you will learn how very  
much I love you.

And through that grief, you will learn to lean  
on Me and learn that faith is very precious."



# Dallas/Fort Worth Christmas Ceremony



Mommy Magen Kaye and Grandmother Cindy Testermen lighting candles in memory of Jayden, Baby Kaye and Tucker



Jaxson Walker, little brother to Alivia Elizabeth-Grace Walker

## Sponsors

- James and LuAnn Junkin
- Dentistry of Las Colinas / Byron L. Mitchell, D.D.S.
- Melissa and Tim Oberlender
- Bob's Steak & Chop House of Grapevine
- Nothing Bundt Cakes, Southlake
- Precious Moments
- Cotton Patch Café
- Spring Creek BBQ
- Deanna Cochran Jewelry
- Design Your Own Labs
- Metal Motif
- Billy Bob's Texas
- Rob & Cheryl Davis
- Al & Amber Zuckerman
- Byron and Rebekah Mitchell
- Dianna Mupeti, Salon Stylist
- Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Arlington

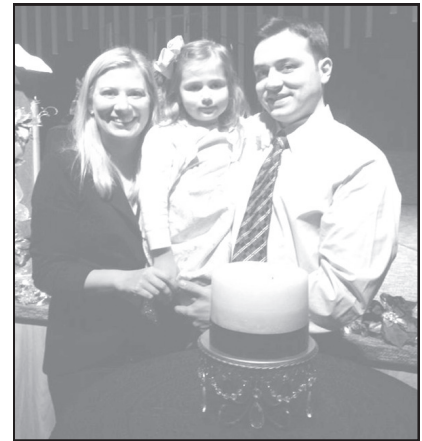
# Bryan/College Station Christmas Ceremony



Jenn and Glen Miller remembering their seven babies in heaven

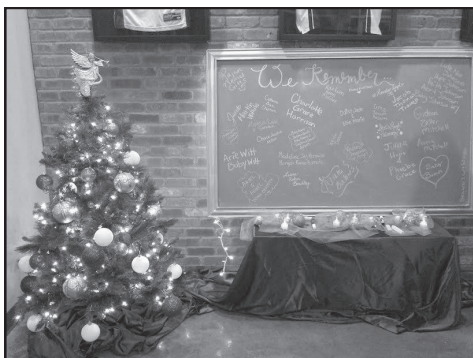


Trinity Divin lighting her candle after reading a poem to Grace, Mary, John and Adam, her siblings in heaven



Rick and Nelly Macias and sister Sophia Grace remember Sam Frances, Christian Valentine, Jo Frances and Jude Frances

# Houston Christmas Ceremony



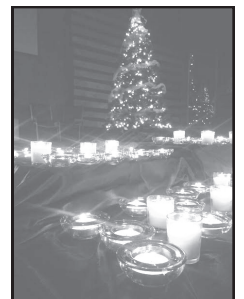
Names of all the babies remembered this Christmas season



Chiara Ott, M.E.N.D.—Houston Assistant Director, Mommy to Daisy Jade and Ellie Marie

## Sponsors

- Taylor Gifts and Creations
- Earl and Karen Zeller
- Frances and Eugene Fisher
- Kessi Wilhite
- Kimberly Adams
- Janelle and Jason League
- Stephanie Miller
- Tiny Treats by Stephanie
- Kim Gill
- Stephanie Diersing
- Kara Chapman



## SW Missouri Christmas Ceremony



William Patton and rainbow baby Aiden remember Tristin

### Sponsors

Second Baptist Church  
Red Crow Marketing/  
Ron and Patty Marshall  
Linda's Flowers  
On Angels' Wings  
Mercy  
Jonathan and Heather Fann  
Windsmore Studio  
Patricia Ervin



Brandon and Angie Butler remembering Gabriel



Chris and Natalie Miller remembering Jaxon Donald

*"The Ridiculous Question with Infertility..." continued from page 10.*

I do not want to lose another baby.

More, I'm not at a great age to bear children. Do women my age (and older) get pregnant (naturally, no less!) and deliver perfectly healthy and happy babies all the time?

They do.

But I am not them. My eggs are not theirs. These eggs of mine were obviously not fabulous when younger and prettier. I harbor no illusions that they have suddenly decided to bloom and that age of egg would not matter when considering risks of chromosomal abnormalities should another pregnancy occur. To risk those because I would like to mother another child? To me (and maybe only to me, but maybe not), the word selfish comes to mind.

So here I am. Sigh. "Done" having children, but still infertile at the same time. Of child-bearing ability, according to medicine (ha ha) and as was told to me this morning, "Your chances of getting pregnant are very, very slim, but stranger things have been known to happen."

Yes. I know. My perfectly healthy and full-term son died the day after he was born for no good reason but a "fluke," and my perfectly normal-chromosomed and healthy baby boy died inside of me at the beginning of my second trimester for no good reason but a "fluke."

I know about strange things happening.

I was about 38 weeks with Matthew when I cried at a check-up with my OB. She asked why I was crying, as I'd just had a lovely exam, and I told her that I was just scared. I told her I was worried that with all the infertility issues we'd fought, perhaps I was just not supposed to be a mother, and yet, there I was about to have a baby anyway because I'd decided to do IVF. She told me that if I really thought I'd figured a way to circumvent God, I should bottle that magic up and take my show on the road. I got her point ... somewhere along the lines of I didn't have any say in it, and God, being the giver of life, made that decision for me regardless of the path I took. Makes sense. That said—look how it turned out. In hindsight, my worry doesn't seem so unfounded after all, does it?

For the first time in my life, terrified that I could *yet again* fall in "fluke" statistics, I don't know that I'd want to be pregnant.

Yet, being infertile for a good portion of my life, having my OB/GYN offer birth control because, "You never know," made my heart leap a little at the possibility.

And then immediately get dragged back down by the fear.

I walked out with a prescription for birth control and pre-natal vitamins.

Talk about ridiculous.

Written for *Still Standing Magazine* on August 2, 2013. Retrieved from [stillstandingmag.com](http://stillstandingmag.com) on December 11, 2014.

About Lori Ennis: I'm small, but scrappy! I have a fierce passion for my family, friends and life in general...I'm a military spouse who has battled infertility for over 13 years, as well as the loss of two babies gone too soon. I love to laugh, and am grateful for every second I celebrate with the ones I love.

## Roller Coaster of Infertility

Having infertility made me feel like less of a woman. I couldn't get pregnant. I couldn't keep my babies. We had infertility for many years. We lost a baby through miscarriage and our son, Gideon, was stillborn at 33 weeks, 4 days pregnant. What kind of woman can't do the one thing her body was designed to do? Isn't that the purpose of being born with a uterus, so we can bear the children we so desire to have?

I grew up wanting to be a wife and mommy. After we had been married for five years, my husband and I decided we really wanted to try to have children. We sought after what God wanted for our lives, and we knew He would want us to grow our family. When I was in my last year of graduate school, we started trying for a baby. I thought it would be easy. Boy, was I wrong! After months and months of nothing, I noticed there was something wrong—something wrong with me. My husband and I went through all the testing, lots of prods and pokes to determine the cause of not being able to have children. PCOS: Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome. It was my fault. It was my fault I could not give my husband children. It was my body that was failing me.

We started fertility treatments. More pokes and prods. More testing. More medical procedures. We ended up having to take injection medication and doing IUIs (Intrauterine Insemination). This was not the way I pictured having a baby. Each month that went by, the more procedures we had done, it made me feel like I was a failure as a woman. I felt like I had nothing to offer. My femininity was wrapped in my ability to have a baby, and with no baby, I wasn't a woman. Women could have babies. So what was I?

I cried out to God for him to show us what to do.

We decided to stop our fertility treatments a month after our miscarriage. I was too overwhelmed with emotions. I was in despair and getting extremely jealous of other women who were able to get pregnant and bring their babies home. I threw myself into my career, husband, family and friends. I was trying to forget the roller coaster of infertility. My heart ached for a child to fill our home, to have chubby cheeks to kiss, to hear the laughter of children. Instead those imaginary sounds echoed in my ears and pained my heart. I was sad. My very sweet husband was so loving and supportive. We took vacations, spent time as a couple, went and did so many things together. Those are special memories I have of a bitter time.

But I still felt like a failure. My body kept failing me month after month. There was nothing more I could do medically, but I prayed. I kept seeking after the Lord. He brought me from heartache back to joy. It was a long process. I had to find my identity in Him again. I spent so much time with my identity as a woman with PCOS, I lost a little bit of the fact that I was first and foremost a child of the King. I began to dig into the Bible and see what God had to say about my identity. About who I am in Him. Isaiah 43:1 says "...I have called you by name, you are mine." I belong to the Lord. THAT is my identity!! Yes, we kept praying for a child. But the despair had dissipated. I knew God was present and was working in our lives. I kept waiting, but I started waiting with a purpose. I served God in my waiting. Even if I never brought a child home, I would serve Him. I stopped placing my desire for a child over God. I put God first. I found my identity again. I was a woman. A woman of God. Isaiah 64:8 says "And yet, O LORD, you are our Father. We are the clay, and you are the Potter. We all are formed by your hand." I wanted God to mold me into whatever He wanted. If that was to be a mommy, then that would be wonderful. If it wasn't to be a mommy to a child here on earth, then that was truly okay with me, too. My life would be fruitful and fulfilled because He sustained me and would give me an abundant life no matter what.

We kept trying to have a baby naturally and a long time rolled by. But my hope had been restored—not the hope that I would have a child, but my hope in the Lord. My hope was in my relationship with Christ. Eventually we naturally conceived our son, Gideon, who was stillborn due to a membranous cord insertion. After he went to Heaven, we knew since we had a history of infertility, we wanted to start to try for a little sibling for Gideon right away. We were shocked to conceive naturally again only three months later. Gideon's little brother is now 2 and a half. We want to add to our family again, and we find ourselves in the middle of having secondary infertility. We are on the roller coaster of fertility treatments once again. However, I will not sway from my focus. I will not turn my eyes off of Jesus. I will not buy into the lie that I am less of a woman because my body and hormones do not work properly. I am a child of God. Christ is my firm foundation. He cannot be moved. So even though going through infertility again is far from easy, I rest in knowing that no matter what, He loves me and his plans for me are good.

♥ Stormy Mitchell,  
Mommy to Gideon and Avery,  
M.E.N.D.—Houston Chapter Director

*God never promises to remove us from our struggles.  
He does promise, however, to change the way we look at them.*

- Max Lucado

## M.E.N.D.

**Chapter Corner****Chapter Meeting****Information****M.E.N.D.—Houston**

Meets the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday at 7:00 p.m.  
4500 Bissonnet, Ste 337B,  
Bellaire, Texas 77401

Meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday at 7:30 p.m.  
Lone Star College,

3200 College Park Dr, Room A228,  
The Woodlands, Texas 77384

Director: Stormy Mitchell  
stormym@mend.org, (281) 374-8528

**Subsequent pregnancy group** meets  
on odd numbered months

on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday at 7:30 p.m.,  
led by Chiara Ott (chiara@mend.org).

**Daddy's group** meets quarterly  
on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday at 7:30 p.m.,  
led by Greg Miller (stephaniem@mend.org)

**M.E.N.D.—Texarkana**

Meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday at 7:00 p.m.  
CHRISTUS St. Michael Rehab Hospital  
2400 St. Michael Drive  
Texarkana, Texas 75503

Director: Monica Davis  
monica@mend.org, (903) 490-1210

**M.E.N.D.—NW Washington**

Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday at 6:30 p.m.  
Harrison Medical Center/Iris Room  
1800 Myhre Rd.

Silverdale, Washington 98383

Gig Harbor Meeting

Meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.

St. Anthony Hospital/Greenpoint Dining Room

11567 Canterwood Blvd NW,

Gig Harbor, Washington 98332

Director: Stacy McGhee  
stacym@mend.org, (360) 662-6161

**M.E.N.D.—SW Missouri**

Meets the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday at 7:00 p.m.

Project H.O.P.E.

1419 S. Enterprise

Springfield, Missouri 65804

Director: Heather Fann

heather@mend.org, (417) 818-0489

**M.E.N.D.—Amarillo**

Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday at 7:00 p.m.

First United Bank of the Colonies/  
Lonestar Room

One First United Bank Parkway

45<sup>th</sup> and Soncy

Amarillo, Texas 79119

Director: Becky Anderson

becky@mend.org, (806) 570-4344

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

M.E.N.D.—Tulsa recently held our 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Christmas Candlelight Ceremony. It was a beautiful and meaningful time of remembrance for over 70 attendees. The ceremony was made possible by our generous sponsors and volunteers. Thank you to my assistants Angi Jackson, Kathryn Johnson and Marcie Nienhuis for all of their hard work, and Mary Clare Mansfield for organizing all of our desserts and refreshments. Additionally, thank you to Michele Wilson for her inspirational message, as well as Kathryn Johnson, Jeromye Jackson and David Graves for the beautiful music they provided. We look forward to seeing God's plans unfold for our chapter in 2015.

*Lisa Daily*

**Texarkana**

M.E.N.D.—Texarkana held our 8<sup>th</sup> annual Christmas Candlelight Ceremony on Saturday, December 13, at Beech Street First Baptist Church, Texarkana, Arkansas. We were blessed to be able to minister to over 75 people. It was a beautiful ceremony in which Shawn Davis shared his story and Melanie Jenkins delivered a special message through song. I would like to extend a special thank you to all of our sponsors who supported us either through a monetary gift or by giving an item to be raffled, and to Stephanie Desjarlais for capturing pictures of our ceremony. The ceremony would not have been possible without the help of Tania Greer, Toni Sherman, our hostess, Deni Smith, and the staff of Beech Street First Baptist Church. I appreciate each of you.

*Monica Davis*

**Houston**

M.E.N.D.—Houston had a wonderful Christmas Candlelight Ceremony in December. We were so honored and privileged to share in that evening with our fellow M.E.N.D. families remembering our babies in heaven. We are looking forward to all that God is going to do through our chapter in 2015! We are seeing so much fruit and it is amazing getting to watch God mend the hearts of so many mommies.

*Stormy Mitchell*

**SW Missouri**

M.E.N.D.—SW Missouri wrapped up our year with 102 people attending a beautiful Christmas Candlelight Ceremony hosted at Second Baptist Church. Thankfully this year there were no blizzard warnings during our event! We are looking forward to the New Year and the many wonderful things the Lord has in store for this ministry in the Springfield area.

*Heather Fann*

**Chicagoland**

M.E.N.D.—Chicagoland is thankful to be able to minister to a growing number of moms and dads in the Chicago area when they suffer the loss of a baby. We are so thankful for the gift of Jesus that gives us hope as we grieve here on earth and look forward to a future in heaven with our little ones. As a new chapter we continue to try to get the word out about our newly formed M.E.N.D. group.

*Sara Hintz*

**Wichita Falls**

M.E.N.D.—Wichita Falls chapter recently attended training to have a Christmas ceremony in 2015. Our group has been growing in membership over the past few months. We continue to pray for all the families.

*Sarah Fukasawa*

**NW Washington**

M.E.N.D.—NW Washington had a great Christmas Ceremony with 75 people in attendance. What a special night for all who joined us. We pray that all our families who are missing a baby this Christmas were comforted by our time together to remember our babies in heaven.

*Stacy McGhee*

**Amarillo**

M.E.N.D.—Amarillo had a great year. We thank each and every one of you who donated, volunteered and prayed for us. Without you we would not be able to do it! Thank you!

*Becky Anderson*

**Bryan/College Station**

M.E.N.D.—Bryan/College Station has been so blessed this past year! Thank you to Texas Avenue Baptist Church for once again hosting our annual Candlelight Christmas Ceremony and now our monthly meetings. We had such a beautiful night of remembering our babies and reconnecting with other M.E.N.D. families. Thank you Stormy Mitchell for reminding us to not let the enemy steal our Christmas joy. For more information about our monthly support group, our subsequent group, or any upcoming Girls Nights please visit our Facebook page or email me at [jennie@mend.org](mailto:jennie@mend.org).

*Jennie Drude*

**M.E.N.D.—Bryan/College Station**

Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.  
Texas Avenue Baptist Church  
3400 State Highway 6 S,  
College Station, Texas 77845  
Director: Jennie Drude  
[jennie@mend.org](mailto:jennie@mend.org), (979) 220-7851

**M.E.N.D.—Tulsa**

Meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday at 7:00 p.m.  
Canyon Crossing  
1651 E Old North Rd.  
Sand Springs, Oklahoma 74063  
Director: Lisa Daily  
[lisa@mend.org](mailto:lisa@mend.org), (918) 694-4325 (HEAL)

**M.E.N.D.—Wichita Falls, Texas**

Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday at 7:30 p.m.  
Christ Home Place Ministries  
1420 Twin Oaks Street  
Wichita Falls, Texas 76302  
Director: Sarah Fukasawa  
[sarahf@mend.org](mailto:sarahf@mend.org), (940) 642-3284

**M.E.N.D.—Chicagoland, Illinois**

Meets the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday at 7:00 p.m.  
St Peter Lutheran Church  
202 E Schaumburg Road  
Schaumburg, Illinois 60194  
Director: Sara Hintz  
[saraann@mend.org](mailto:saraann@mend.org), (630) 267-9134

**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.*

**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.*

**Food and Fellowship**

are held the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of every month at 8:00 p.m. at the Corner Bakery in Southlake Town Center

*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)

**Infertility group**

meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday at 7:30 p.m.

Contact Cheryl Davis for meeting location and information at [Cheryl@mend.org](mailto:Cheryl@mend.org)  
*For families experiencing infertility after a loss.*

**Parenting After Loss Playgroup**

Meets monthly at various locations in the Dallas / Fort Worth metroplex.

Contact Magen Kaye: [Magen@mend.org](mailto:Magen@mend.org) or call (214) 435-3870

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

**Unless otherwise noted, all support group meetings are held at:**

**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.

*In Loving Memory***Joshua and Jeromy Barsanti**

Stillborn November 21, 1996

Anencephaly

Parents: Randy and DaLana Barsanti

and brothers Taylor, Collin,

Harrison and Riley

Given by grandparents Ray and Tina Barsanti

**Andrew Robert Bateman**

Stillborn October 7, 2014

Unknown cause

Parents: Tim and Laura Bateman

Little sisters: Leah Claire and Hannah Elizabeth

Gifts given by

Annette Wells

Nancee Moster

John Ponzio

Leigh Runyan

Morgan Finley

The Stubbs and Bowlin Families

Ro Vinson

Anonymous

Margaret and David Dennis

Jennifer Evans

Melodee Halbach

**Angela Batrez**

July 9, 2013

Parents: Tony and Stefanie Batrez

Given by Abuelita Isabel Tristan and Uncle Ben

**Keiran David Cobler**

October 25—November 1, 2013

NEC

Parents: Brian and Kristina Cobler

Given by Aunt Diane Day

**Abigail Grace Crump**

July 1, 2003

Trisomy 18

Given by parents Gerald and Jaimie Crump

and little sisters Cami and Karli

**Brooke Sophia Daily**

Stillborn March 11, 2010

Vasa Previa

Given by parents Jeremy and Lisa Daily

and sisters Sarah and Savannah

**Riley and Parker Davis**

November 14, 2006

Prematurity

Given by parents Rob and Cheryl Davis

and little sister Annalise

**Grace Dell**

Stillborn March 17, 2008

**Rose Dell**

Miscarried January 3, 2014

Given by parents Peter and Rachel Dell

and siblings Zeke and Kye

**Westin Dobbins**

August 8, 2010

Incompetent cervix

Given by parents Cortney and Randy Dobbins

and siblings Cynlee and Colt

**Drew Daniel Ericson**

June 19, 2013

Trisomy 13 and birth defects to major organs

Parents: Dan and Amanda Ericson

Given by Drew Crew Turkey Golf Tournament

**Caleb Scott Fann**

December 1, 2003

PROM

**Baby August Fann**

Miscarried August 13, 2004

Given by parents Jonathan and Heather Fann

and sister Madison

**Paislee Ann Frette**

April 4-5, 2012

Wolf-Hirschhorn Syndrome

Parents: Brent and Courtney Frette

Gifts given by

Grandparents James and LuAnn Junkin

Carla and Mark Willingham

Reginald and Debra Glaisyer

Dana Cruz

Ranee Ybarra

**Arrington Hope Fumagalli**

Stillborn December 22, 2013

Unknown cause

**Jakoebi Michael Fumagalli**

Miscarried November 22, 2011

Ectopic pregnancy

Given by parents Michael and Kirsten Fumagalli

and brother Gabe

**C.J. Gold**

Miscarried August 12, 2008

**Marina Gold**

Miscarried July 14, 2009

Given by parents Greg and Kathryn Gold

and sister Emily

**Baby Hardy**

Miscarried January 2014

Parents: Scott and Jacqui Hardy

Gifts given by

Mark and Dawn Purney

Keri Mudrick

Marcia and Mark Wahlgren

Holly Starr

Lindsay Breslau

**Isaac David Jackson**

Stillborn June 24, 2013

Trisomy 13

**Elizabeth Abigail Jackson**

Miscarried April 29, 2002

Trisomy 16

Given by parents Jeromye and Angi Jackson

and sister Emily

**Gloria and Lori Jones**

Stillborn January 5, 2013

Chorioamnionitis

Parents: Curtis and LaToya Jones

Given by Bonita Lockings

**Olivia Joy Lewis**

December 20, 2011

Ectopic pregnancy

**Caleb Michael Lewis**

Miscarried October 5, 2012

**Elliott James Lewis**

Miscarried May 8, 2013

**Sophia Grace Lewis**

Miscarried March 10, 2014

Given by parents Ryan and Rachel Lewis

and sisters Madelyn and Leyla Irene

**Jackson Glen and Tyler Ray Light**

February 23, 2009

Placental abruption

Given by parents Kirk and Diana Light

and siblings Brayden and Alexis

**Sam Frances Macias**

Miscarried November 16, 2012

**Christian Valentine Macias**

Miscarried March 21, 2013

**Jo Frances Macias**

Miscarried April 2, 2014

**Jude Frances Macias**

Miscarried October 28, 2014

Parents: Nelly and Rick Macias

Sister: Sofia Grace

Given by Patrick Elko

**Pieper Adelaide Martinez**

August 25, 2014

Mommy: Lauren Martinez

Given by Grandpa Mike and GiGi Angie Balcar

**Oliver James Merrill**

June 14, 2011

Potter's Syndrome

Given by parents Eric and Beatrice Merrill

and siblings Nicolina, Lionel, Jordan,

Savanna and Tyler

**Gideon Zeller Mitchell**

Stillborn May 17, 2011

Membranous cord insertion

**Avery Mitchell**

Miscarried May 2008

Parents: Stormy and Todd Mitchell

Brother: Silas

Given by grandparents Earl and Karen Zeller

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!**



**Jonathan Daniel Mitchell**

Stillborn June 24, 1995  
Cord accident

**Baby Mitchell**

Miscarried December 2001

Gifts given by

Parents Byron and Rebekah Mitchell  
Dentistry of Las Colinas/  
Dr. Byron L. Mitchell

**Samuel James Nienhuis**

Stillborn October 14, 2006  
MTHFR

Given by parents Seth and Marcie Nienhuis  
and siblings Landon, Olivia,  
James and Sarah

**Baby Oberlender I**

Stillborn December 19, 2011

**Baby Oberlender II**

Miscarried May 2012

Given by parents Tim and Melissa Oberlender  
and siblings Grace Ann and Wilhelm George

**Christopher Michael Peplinski II**

September 25, 2006

Given by Mommy Christine Peplinski

**Margot Lily Perry**

Stillborn June 10, 2013

Cord accident

Parents: Brandon and Marissa Perry

Siblings: Adeline and Bennett

Gifts given by

Ruth Perry  
Anne Stimmel

**Hannah Reis**

February 6-8, 2007

Trisomy 18

Parents: Anthony and Kristien Ries

Given in memory of

**Harold Reis (Hannah's grandfather)**

August 13, 1949 - August 13, 2014

Gifts given by

Dick and Marcella Shotwell

**Julian David Rodriguez**

April 1, 2007

Prematurity

Given by Mommy Rachel Prado-Wall

**Mindy and Maggie Smith**

Stillborn November 4, 1997

TTS and Polyhydramnios

Given by parents Scott and Karla Smith  
and siblings Travis and Julia

**Ethan Kane Spurrier**

Stillborn September 5, 2007

Cord accident

Given by parents Bruce and Sandra Spurrier  
and siblings Thomas and Jakob

**Savannah Kate Stanley**

January 3, 2004

Premature/incompetent cervix

**Baby Stanley**

November 10, 2004

Parents: Joel and Calli Stanley

Siblings: Colton, Danika and Sara

Given by IB Roof Systems

**Genevieve Jane Weaver**

October 24, 2011

Mommy: Kitty Reyes

Gifts given by

Daphne Rodriguez  
Maria Reyes  
Heather Williams  
Cheryl Hutcherson  
Joseph Laster  
Will and Adriana Mohler

**Arie Witt**

November 5, 2013

Unknown cause

Parents: Mike and Candice Witt

Given by Paul and Shara Cote

**Adrian Joseph "AJ" Zuckerman**

Stillborn March 30, 2007

Cord accident

Gifts given by

Parents Al and Amber Zuckerman  
and brothers Eli and Alexander

**Gifts of Support**

Second Baptist Church, Springfield, MO  
West Conroe Baptist Church, Conroe, TX

Jennifer Quimby, MD

Custom Ink, LLC

Caldwell Country Chevrolet, Caldwell, TX

Kerry and Valerie Jones

Dennis and Katherine Smith

Shan Durham

SL Hazelbaker

Chick-fil-A, Conroe, TX

Walmart Corporate Giving

Mercy Hospital, Springfield, MO

Michael and Patricia Phillips

Katherine J. Hebard, MD

Brian K Miller, MD

Shell Oil Company, Matching Gifts Foundation

Jenifer Harper / Baby Wraps

Kimberly Clark Foundation

**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. For more information about legacy giving, please contact Rebekah Mitchell at [rebekah@mend.org](mailto:rebekah@mend.org).

## Tulsa Christmas Ceremony



Jeremy, Lisa and Sarah Daily remembering Brooke Sophia



Marcie Nienhuis lighting the M.E.N.D. candle

### Sponsors

Paper 8

Jeremy and Lisa Daily

Phil and Katie Goodson

Jerome and Angi Jackson

Liberty Church

Merritt's Bakery

Seth and Marcie Nienhuis

Mark and Kathryn Johnson



Jerome, Angi and Emily Jackson and Penny Richardson remembering Isaac David and Elizabeth Abigail

## Why Miscarriage Matters When You're Pro-life

Back in my former life, I was a proofreader.

We were a fabulous group of gals. But, I'm not going to lie—we were pretty nitpicky. And NOT the most popular in the office. In fact, we had not just one book, but multiple books by which we would mentally check each word, each phrase, each sentence.

We had rules about whether a dash should be the size of a capital “N” or a capital “M” (and yes, we did measure). We ensured the proper use of “insured,” then assured all the writers that, yes, everyone gets those words mixed up. And of course, we must never forget to correct the spacing on an ellipsis. (#.#.#.#). *Very important, that one.*

But we had one rule that trumped all rules: Consistency was king.

You see, on most issues, you could get away with breaking a rule or two -- as long as you were consistent.

And now, after both quitting my job and going through three first-trimester losses in a row (primarily surrounded by pro-lifers), I really wish I could say the same thing about life. And about pregnancy loss.

I must make a disclaimer (to all my friends and family reading this): You did the best you could. And for the most part, I felt loved and I knew that so many of you grieved with me.

To be perfectly honest, before my losses, I didn't quite understand that the way we pro-lifers treat miscarriage is important.

And yet after we lost Olivia, it didn't take long for me to realize that in this Christian microcosm of ours, somehow an aborted baby had so much more to offer the world than a miscarried one.

**Both babies may have died at the same gestation -- one by choice, the other by chance. But the value attached to each child completely depended on how that child died.**

Here are some of the mixed messages I received—sometimes just hinted at, other times outright:

- An aborted baby deserves to be grieved. *A miscarried one deserves to be gotten over. And quickly.*
- An aborted baby could have been the next Einstein or Bach or Mother Theresa. *A miscarried baby was probably damaged goods.*
- An aborted baby was killed against God's design. *A miscarried baby fulfilled God's plans.*
- An aborted baby was a real person, and should have the rights as such. *A miscarried baby was not a real child -- naming them really is kinda weird. Speaking of weird . . . counting them in the line-up of your children? THAT'S weird!*
- An aborted baby should always be missed in this world. God had created them for a purpose, no matter what health issues they may have had. *A miscarried baby was meant for heaven -- and we moms should just be so thankful we have a baby in heaven, and should not grieve the loss of their place on earth. After all, they never TRULY had a place on earth, did they?*
- An aborted baby is a tragedy. *A miscarried baby is slight bump on the road of life.*
- An aborted baby could never be replaced. *A miscarried baby can always be replaced -- “Oh, don't worry, hon - - your time will come again. You'll have more. Just relax and trust God. You'll see.”*
- An aborted baby's mom should know exactly what she's missing out on if she has living children. *A miscarried baby's mom should not grieve that loss, but instead, should just be thankful for the lives of her living children.*

This isn't a debate about abortion. Really, it's not.

It's a call to those of you who say you are pro-life. It's a call to be consistent.

Do you really believe life—**personhood**—begins at conception? If so, standing up against abortion is understandable. But so is treating a miscarriage as a *real death of a real person*.

Perhaps instead of just standing outside of Planned Parenthood . . . Instead of just posting on Facebook your outrage at the laws in the land . . . Instead of praying for your neighbor's cousin's boyfriend's daughter who is considering abortion...

What if you took it one step further?

What if you held the hand of a grieving mom who miscarried at 4 weeks, 6 weeks, 18 weeks or more?

What if you never compared the loss of a 4-weeker to a 20-weeker?

What if you never said anything that started with, “*At least . . .*” As in, “*At least it happened early.*” Or, “*At least you didn’t get too attached.*” Or, “*At least you have one living child. You should be thankful for him.*”

What if you didn’t try to stifle her tears? What if you welcomed them? And matched her tears with your own?

What if you held back any trite, easy answers that promised God’s will and promised easy comfort? What if you just wrapped your arms around her the way Christ would?

What if you made that meal, bought those flowers and wrote that card?

What if you went to the hospital and sat in the waiting room for her, even if you wouldn’t see her? Just because she is your friend. Just because that’s what you do when someone is sick in the hospital or their child is dying.

What if you called her child by name?

What if you went to the service if they planned one? What if you helped her find a support group? What if you offered to go with her?

What if you prayed constantly for that hole in her heart that will one day scab, one day scar, but will never fully heal?

*What if you were consistent?* What if all your actions when dealing with loss of any kind, affirmed that fact that all life—ALL LIFE—is good, worthy of recognition and worthy of grief.

What if you didn’t just affirm to the world that all babies are valuable—but you also affirmed to a bereaved mom that HER baby was irreplaceable, and would forever be missed?

A person is a person . . . no matter how small.

*And I would add . . . no matter when or how they died.*

♥ Rachel Lewis,

*Mommy to Olivia, Caleb, Elliott and Sophia*  
M.E.N.D.—NW Washington Chapter Assistant



### *Subsequent Births*

#### **Curtis and Jennifer Harrison**

of Walnut Grove, Missouri,  
along with big brother Levi,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Zivala Rose,  
born November 4, 2014,  
measuring 7 lb., 15 oz.,  
and 21 inches long.  
The Harrisons lovingly remember  
Serenity,  
miscarried December 3, 2009

#### **John and Lauren Cartwright**

of Silverdale, Washington,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Ivan Alexander,  
born November 3, 2014,  
measuring 8 lb., 4 oz.,  
and 20 inches long.  
The Cartwrights lovingly remember  
Elise Sophia,  
stillborn January 8, 2014, at 20 weeks,  
unknown cause

**Adam and Shana Insley**  
of Port Orchard, Washington,  
along with siblings Hayley and Carson,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Asher Otis,  
born November 3, 2014,  
measuring 5 lb., 14.9 oz.,  
and 18.5 inches long.  
The Insley family lovingly remembers  
Adalyne,  
stillborn October 30, 2012,  
blood clots

#### **Kevan and Stefanie Bohuslav**

of Conroe, Texas,  
along with big sister Hailey,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Kaleb Austin,  
born October 24, 2014,  
measuring 4 lb., 3 oz.,  
and 17.25 inches long.  
The Bohuslav family lovingly  
remembers  
Kylie Danielle,  
born sleeping January 4, 2011,  
placental abruption

**Kyle and Cara Saba**  
of Poulsbo, Washington,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Talon James,  
born November 20, 2014,  
measuring 5 lb., 4 oz.,  
and 17.76 inches long.  
The Sabas lovingly remember  
Malik,  
miscarried December 11, 2013,  
at 18 weeks,  
blood clot

#### **Beatrice and Eric Merrill**

of Poulsbo, Washington,  
along with siblings  
Nicolina, Lionel, Jordan and Savannah,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Tyler Kevin,  
born November 21, 2014,  
measuring 8 lb., 9 oz.,  
and 21 inches long.  
The Merrills lovingly remember  
Oliver James,  
June 14, 2011, at 32 weeks,  
Potter’s Syndrome

M.E.N.D. Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death  
 P.O. Box 631566, Irving, TX 75063  
 USA  
 (972) 506-9000  
*Return Service Requested*

Nonprofit Organization  
 U.S. Postage Paid  
 DeSoto, TX 75115  
 Permit No. 614

*“... 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, go to [www.krogercommunityrewards.com](http://www.krogercommunityrewards.com) and set up an account if you do not already have one. Once you receive the email after setting up your account, click on “My Account,” then go to “Edit Kroger Community Rewards” and input your Kroger Plus card number. You’ll see a screen with your information in boxes, at the bottom right, there is a box that says Community Rewards. Click that, then enter the M.E.N.D. number, which is 80513. Once that’s entered, you’ll confirm that M.E.N.D. is your charity of choice. This link will be good until the 2013-2014 program expires. You must link your card each year 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](mailto: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.
- **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](http://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](http://www.missionfish.org) to find out how.
- **Igive.com** will donate a penny a search and a portion of each purchase made through their website to M.E.N.D. Sign up today! M.E.N.D.’s cause number is 52025.



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