



## Face-to-Face *versus* Social Media

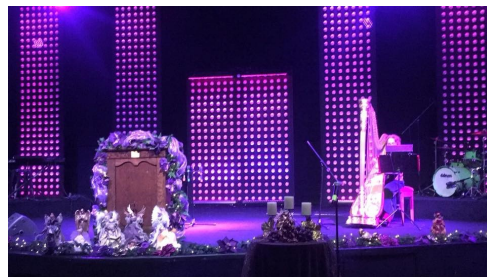
Volume 23, Issue 1

January/February 2018

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From a world of silence, perhaps even told to forget...  
To a conversation slowly beginning between two moms,  
maybe even a picture shared...

To now, stories shared in support groups,  
on a blog, on Facebook, on Instagram, on Twitter,  
and all the other social media outlets, to hundreds, thousands, ...  
With one thing in common, our love and our grief for our babies in heaven.



## Remembering Our Babies at Christmas

M.E.N.D. chapters celebrated Christmas by remembering little ones in heaven. Some held Christmas Candlelight Ceremonies honoring babies, and others, like M.E.N.D.—Chicagoland, remembered the lives of their babies with a special tree decorating at the local zoo, hanging ornaments in memory of each little baby. More special ceremonies are shared throughout the newsletter.

**March/April Topic**

SIDS: Healthy Baby to Empty Arms  
 Deadline: January 31, 2018

**May/June Topic**

Mother's Day/Father's Day  
 Deadline: March 30, 2018

Stories, poems, thoughts, and/or feelings regarding these topics are welcome. 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.

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**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published in future issues, both in the print version and online, unless a letter's author expressly requests that it not be published.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



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

# Sharing Via Social Media vs. Face-to-Face

My baby, Jonathan, was stillborn in 1995, when the Internet was just starting. It was years before Facebook, Instagram, and the like were introduced. When Jonathan died, we didn't even own a personal computer – hardly anyone did. So, my only support system was my wonderful family and a few close friends. Several months after our loss, we purchased a computer, but it sat unused in the corner of our bedroom for weeks. I'm not even sure why we bought it. We eventually decided to "join the Internet," obtained an email account and dared to surf the World Wide Web. Yet, I didn't know what exactly I was surfing for. I had heard of chat rooms, but had also been warned of the potential dangers of virtual strangers learning too much about you. So, I stayed away from those ominous places.

## Virtual Friendships

I then learned of something called a Listserv, which was an electronic mailing service that allowed people to communicate about specific topics via email. The Listserv I joined was called *Infanlos*. I spent hours and hours communicating with the members of this group. I read their woes, cried with them, and over time became comfortable enough to share my own intimate feelings. They were complete strangers, yet we all became fast friends due to the unique bond we shared as mommies with empty arms.

They were  
complete strangers,  
yet we all became  
fast friends ...

I finally felt I had connected with people who truly got me. They understood me, and I understood them. Though my family was as loving and supportive as they could possibly be, I needed to talk to others who had walked the same lonely journey of losing a baby. It was then that I understood my secret thoughts and feelings were a normal part of this type of loss. I realized I wasn't the only woman who felt a literal ache in the crook of her arm. I wasn't the only mom who had gotten out of bed to feed her crying baby, only to horrifyingly remember her baby was dead and couldn't possibly be crying in the middle of the night. I learned the sensations I continued to feel in my womb for months were called "phantom kicks." Mainly, I learned I was not alone.

After a few months of communicating with these new virtual friends, I learned I was seemingly a minority with a supportive and loving family. Both my family and my husband Byron's family deeply grieved with us (and still do after all these years). Sadly, I became aware many grieving moms did not have this same type of compassionate support from their families. Many women on this group were grieving alone and felt miserably isolated by those around them. As a result, their mental and physical health were failing, their marriages were suffering, and some could hardly hold down their household responsibilities. I began to realize if I, even with the love lavished upon me by my family, felt alone, then these moms who didn't have a support system must have felt as though they were dying – and quite possibly wanted to die.

## Seeing the Need for Something Different

So, I decided as great as this Internet group was, there was a need to organize a face-to-face group. This is hugely what prompted me to start M.E.N.D. a year after Jonathan's death. The Listserv gave me insight into the sorrow of others and the bravery to openly share my story with people I didn't know. Several months later, M.E.N.D. hosted its first support group. Today, 21 years later, more than 880 families have attended one of our support groups in the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex. Many more families have attended a support group hosted by one of our chapters. To compare the benefits of virtual sharing vs. in-person sharing is of personal opinion. Sometimes people feel safer sharing and saying things behind

*(Continued on page 20)*

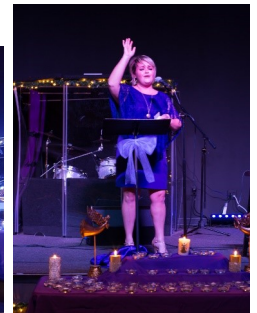
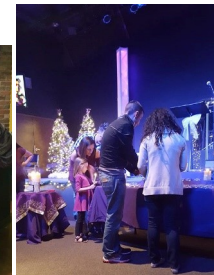
# M.E.N.D.—Houston Christmas Candlelight Ceremony



The M.E.N.D.—Houston 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Christmas Candlelight Ceremony was beautiful and a wonderful way to remember the lives of babies gone too soon. It was the perfect way to include our heavenly babies in our Christmas season festivities. They are still our family and still loved by us, so we honor and remember them at Christmas and always.

Kara Wilkerson spoke about her daughter, Catherine, and shared their story. Julie Hicks remembered her grandbaby as she shared her gift of song with us, and we worshipped the Lord. I am thankful for all the volunteers who helped put this together: Stefanie and Greg Miller, Kara and Charlie Wilkerson, Leslie Roberts, Kessi and David Wilhite, Amanda Harrison, Jennie Middleton, Faith Story, Candi Witt and Kimberly Adams (who visited us from Denver!). Without you this event would have never been possible. We also want to thank everyone who sponsored our Christmas ceremony and who purchased raffle tickets. Because of you, we were able to help offset

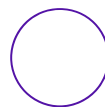
some of the cost of the ceremony. We are thankful M.E.N.D. provides all of our services and ceremonies at no cost to our families.



# M.E.N.D. Holiday Ornament Exchange



Organized by our Kimberly Waeger  
Mommy to Anderson and Baby Boy Waeger  
M.E.N.D. Online Support Group Director



Our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual M.E.N.D. Holiday Ornament Exchange joined together 80 M.E.N.D. families across the United States from Washington,

Oklahoma, Texas, New Jersey, Georgia, New York and even military families stationed abroad! We remembered 115 babies this holiday. Each family was randomly assigned a family to spend time remembering - crafting or purchasing an ornament

in their honor. The ornament was then sent to that family as gift to remember their child during this holiday season. It's amazing to see families and how they each take time to remember another family's baby while honoring their own - to see this tradition grow each year and how families truly come together shows just how strong we are as a community and how each of our children has forever changed us, shaped our future and left a lasting legacy. I'm honored to organize this exchange each year and pray that this tradition and these ornaments bring joy during a time of year that can be difficult to navigate. I look forward to opening our ornament in memory of our boys on Christmas morning. Thank you to all the families who participated this year!



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# M.E.N.D. OUTREACH

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## ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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We shared on our M.E.N.D. Facebook page tips for surviving the holidays. Follow “Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death (MEND)” on Facebook and @m.e.n.d.1996 on Instagram for more tips, words of comfort and announcements.

[Legacy.com](https://www.legacy.com)

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## IN THE NEWS

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Rebekah Mitchell was recently interviewed by Legacy.com for the article “Grief After Pregnancy and Infant Loss - You’re Not Alone According to M.E.N.D.” To read the full article, visit [www.mend.org](http://www.mend.org) to find the link.




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## IN THE NEWS

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A special THANK YOU to KBTX of Bryan, Texas, for sharing information about the M.E.N.D.—Bryan/College Station Christmas Candlelight Ceremony so local families would be aware of the event and welcome to attend.




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## PROVIDING COMFORT

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M.E.N.D. provides training to hospital staff on how to help families during their time of loss. Since our last newsletter, Rebekah Mitchell presented to medical professionals at Medical Center of Lewisville, Medical City of Las Colinas and Methodist Dallas Medical Center, and Jennie Drude presented to the Texas Women’s University - College of Nursing.



# Birthday Tributes

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

Emma, we love and miss you so much. You will always be our perfect, beautiful baby girl. Your life was brief, but the impact you've made is grand. Just remember, you are our sunshine.

Love,  
Mommy, Daddy, Autumn and Jameson

*Emma Ray Lynn Lewis*  
*January 27—February 7, 2016*  
*Sepsis*  
*Parents: Jacob and Kayla Lewis*  
*Siblings: Autumn and Jameson*



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

James, our baby boy, we miss you so much every day! I can't believe it has been three years since you left us. Life has never been the same without you. Heaven will hold you before we do and keep you safe until we come home to you.

Always in our hearts with love,  
Mom, Dad, Robert, big brother Joseph  
and baby brother Christian

*James Andrew Osorio*  
*Stillborn January 3, 2015*  
*Cord accident*  
*Also remembering*  
*Baby Ashcraft*  
*Miscarried August 24, 2015, at 11 weeks*  
*Unknown cause*  
*Parents: Josue Osorio and Carmina Guzman*  
*Siblings: Joseph and Christian*



## Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> Birthday, Charlie and Hudson!

Our sweet boys, we think of you every day, and how things should be. You are in our hearts, and we will always miss you. Until we are reunited again, look over us. Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday, our sweet boys.

With all our love,  
Mommy and Daddy

*Charles Arturo Aguirre*  
*Hudson Raul Aguirre*  
*January 12, 2016*  
*Twin-to-twin transfusion syndrome*  
*Parents: Nick and Cassandra Aguirre*



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

Happy birthday, sweet boy! We can't believe you have been gone for eight years. You would be a big second grade boy. Julianne and you would be at the same school. She would have been so excited to show off her big brother to all her friends. We would have loved to see you and your cousin together at school performances. Evelyn would have loved to go to your baseball games. She loves pointing at the pictures of you and saying "Baby. I wanna hold baby." We love you and miss you so much, sweet boy. We will never stop wishing you were here with us. We will hold you in heaven!

*Michael Noah Wheeler*  
*Stillborn January 27, 2010, at 24 weeks*  
*Unknown cause*



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

Oh precious baby! We miss you so much. We were so excited we were having twins. We imagined seeing you two side-by-side and laugh at all the trouble you would get into. We thought about you two starting school together and just the special bond you two would have. We were heartbroken when we found out your heart stopped beating. We love you and wish you were here. Evelyn and you would have so much fun together. I try to take comfort in knowing you will always be a part of Evelyn. We will hold you in heaven!

*Everly Hope Wheeler*  
*January 2015*  
*Vanishing twin syndrome*  
*Also remembering*  
*Baby Wheeler*  
*Miscarried March 2009, at 8 weeks*  
*Abigail Mercy Wheeler*  
*Miscarried June 3, 2014, at 14 weeks*  
*Cystic hygroma*  
*Parents: Jim and Larissa Wheeler*  
*Sisters: Julianne and Evelyn (Everly's twin)*



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

Mom and I love you to the moon and back. We are so sad we can't hold and kiss you. I want you to know you are in a better place. I want to hold and kiss you.

*Jolie Felder*  
*Miscarried February 12, 2017*  
*Parents: Ryan and Julia Felder*



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

Carrying you and knowing you will always be the highlight of our lives. Our diva, and our light. 178 days will never be enough, but thank you for showing us the most perfect, unselfish love. Everything...it was all for you. We see you in the butterflies, the corals and the silver turned to gold. Refined and solidified. We are so lucky to have been - to be - your family, and will honor and take good care of your precious legacy. Skyler still talks about you every day! Have a grand 3<sup>rd</sup> celebration in heaven, little one!

*Hannah Addelyn Crow  
Stillborn February 11, 2015*

*Complications of HELLP Syndrome; Placental  
and Umbilical Cord Anomalies*



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

Willow, our larger than life, Pink Polka Dot, Elephant Princess. Thank you for being our Joy! We are so glad you came, even though you could not stay. A lot of sunshine, on the cloudy days. A bright pop of confidence and courage when we all think we've had enough. Through you, we learned how fierce and strong we are. How to make a difference, stand tall and keep going. Please know your life and death were not in vain, sweet girl, and those tiny hand and foot prints will forever leave their marks.

The Anchor Holds.

I hope your sister is chasing after you. Enjoy being 2!

*Willow Meredith Crow  
Stillborn January 28, 2016  
Chorioamnionites and Fetal Hydrops  
Parents: Joey and Kristin Crow  
Brother: Skyler Andrew*



### Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Charlotte! Happy 5<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Henry!

We love you, Charlotte and Henry! We miss you every day! We wish you were here to complete our family circle as you were meant to be here with us on earth! We survive each day for our babies in heaven knowing we can meet them again in the most wonderful place. The most amazing treasure is waiting for us in the arms of Jesus!

*Charlotte Winifred Hazlewood  
January 23-28, 2017  
SUIDS*

*Henry Michael Hazlewood  
Stillborn March 2, 2013*

*Parents: Mike and Becky Hazlewood  
Siblings: Hannah, Lilly, Phoebe, Mimi,  
Emmagene and Charlie*



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

Happy 3<sup>rd</sup> heavenly birthday to our sunshine, Cora Anne. It's hard to believe it's been three years since we held you in our arms. We miss you more each day. Our family has grown stronger in so many ways; you changed our lives forever. You made Daddy and me better parents to your sister, Briehn. We long to hold your sweet hand again when we are reunited in heaven. Please continue to keep watch over us. We love and miss you lots!

Love,  
Mommy, Daddy and Briehn

*Cora Anne Watts  
Stillborn February 10, 2015  
Cord accident  
Parents: Alan and Kenzie Watts  
Little sister: Briehn*



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

Three years ago you made us parents for the first time, and we felt a love we had never known before. Your memory is a steady heartbeat in our family. Your short life was a gift we never knew we needed, sweet baby. We miss you every single day and often wonder who you would have been. Sit a while with Grandpa this year on your special day; he's new there, and he'll take good care of you for us. We hope to honor you in all we do every year until we're with you again.

Love always,  
Momma and Daddy

*Helen Jeannette Fisher-Hatley  
February 12, 2015  
Turner Syndrome  
Parents: Eric Hatley and Jessica Fisher-Hatley  
Little Sister: Judy Lucille*



### Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> Birthday, Ava bear!

Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday to our sweet precious, Ava Faith Jacobs! May this birthday wish reach you to the heavens above, Ava bear. We love and miss you so very much! You are our sunshine, sweet angel, our only sunshine. On this day, February 23, we celebrate and honor you, our beloved angel. We send you all our love, hugs and kisses!

Love you always, sweet angel,  
Daddy, Mommy, James Louis, Breanna and Samantha

*Ava Faith Jacobs  
Stillborn February 23, 2016  
Parents: James and Melissa Jacobs  
Siblings: James III, Breanna and Samantha*



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

Precious Hudson, happy 8<sup>th</sup> birthday! We miss you so much! Your little sister talks to your little brother about you all the time. You will never be forgotten! We love you, and we know you are having an amazing birthday!

Love,  
Mom, Dad, Presley and Grayson

*Hudson Parker Jones  
January 9, 2010*

*Lower bladder obstruction  
Parents: Travis and Jennifer Jones  
Siblings: Presley and Grayson*



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

Baby Mila, even though you were only the size of a poppy seed, you changed my world forever. I think of you day and night. I want to thank you for helping me become a better person. I hope when you look down you are proud to call me your mommy. I love you always and forever.

Mommy

*Mila Garcia  
Miscarried February 16, 2017  
Mommy: Silvia Garcia*



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

To our sweet baby Bradley, we miss you more as each day passes. On what would be your 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday here on earth, we imagine what your voice would sound like, what kind of personality you would have, and how big you would be. We send our love to you every single day, and can't wait to see you again.

Love forever and always,  
Mommy, Daddy, and big sister Mikayla

*Bradley James Alexander Lipka  
February 10, 2016  
Unknown cause  
Parents: Justin Lipka and Victoria Coats  
Big sister: Mikayla*



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

Sweet Julia, happy 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday in heaven! We miss you so very much, but we know you couldn't be any happier than in Jesus's arms. Love you always, baby girl!

Mommy, Daddy, Andrew and Michael

*Julia Mtendere Ozinga  
Miscarried January 1, 2016  
Parents: Isaac and Laura Ozinga  
Brothers: Andrew and Michael*



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

Happy birthday to our beautiful princess,  
Ema Alice Morales.

*Ema Alice Morales  
January 10, 2017  
Anencephaly  
Parents: Wilfredo and Juana Morales  
Big brother: Aiden*



### Happy 10<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Dharma Lucille!

I can't believe you would be 10 years old. Ten years ago I heard you cry. Ten years ago you squeezed my finger. Ten years ago you burped. Ten years ago you made me a mom. Ten years ago I had to say "Good-bye" to you. Ten years ago my heart broke. I am thankful that God fulfilled His promise, and He removed my sackcloth of mourning and clothed me with JOY.

"That's why I know, yes, Oh! I know  
Hallelujah, I just love her so"  
-Ray Charles

*Dharma Lucille Drude  
March 31-April 1, 2008  
Anencephaly*



### Happy 4<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Stella Darling!

FOUR! You would be 4! I miss your sweet face. Your perfect little hands and feet. You looked just like your older siblings. Max and Molli were so excited to meet you and have you be their little sister. I'm sure you are chowing down on a funnel cake at this very moment.

"Just a few more weary days and then, I'll fly away  
To a land where joys will never end, I'll fly away"  
-Carl Sumpter

*Stella Darling Drude  
January 23, 2014  
Anencephaly*



### Happy 3<sup>rd</sup> Birthday, Liza Belle!

You, sweet girl, would be 3! You would be my busy bee. Playing in my make-up, painting Daddy's toes, and I'm sure....driving me a bit crazy. I am so thankful I was able to be your mother, even if it was just for a little bit. I wish you were here to drive me crazy.

"Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, Hangin' tough,  
Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, Hangin' tough  
Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, Just hangin' tough"  
-NKOTB

*Liza Belle Drude  
February 23, 2015  
Unknown cause  
Parents: Jason and Jennie Drude  
Siblings: Max, Molli and Milo*





# M.E.N.D.—Chicagoland Tree Decorating

We had a beautiful day for our 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual M.E.N.D.—Chicagoland Tree Decorating at the Brookfield Zoo lights display. It was a beautiful way to honor and remember every M.E.N.D.—Chicagoland baby. They are forever in our hearts. A special thank you to Kirsten and Michael Fumagalli and Eric and Becky Luedke for all of their time and effort in making this tree so beautiful and meaningful!



# M.E.N.D.—NW Washington Christmas Candlelight Ceremony

Thank you to all who volunteered their time and effort for our 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Christmas Candlelight Ceremony. It was a beautiful evening filled with love and hope. A special thank you to Keldy Spainhour for sharing her heartbreak and love for her baby, Kadence. We hope your Christmas was filled with hope and love, and that however you remember your baby, know that we remember with you.



# In Loving Memory

## Thank YOU for your support

### **Andrew Robert Bateman**

Stillborn October 7, 2014  
Unknown cause  
Given by parents Tim and Laura Bateman  
and siblings Leah, Hannah and Noah

### **Harper Bren Cantrell**

July 18, 2017  
Given by parents Ricky and Kim Cantrell

### **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

### **Sophie Jane Darnell**

Stillborn May 28, 2013  
Unknown cause  
Parents: Tommy and Brea Darnell  
Siblings: Luke and Piper  
Given by Great-Aunt Jeany Martin

### **Cherry Blossom Davis**

Miscarried July 24, 2013  
Given by parents Shawn and Kathi Davis

### **Caroline Elizabeth Ann Davis**

December 29, 2012—March 27, 2013  
Trisomy 13  
Given by  
Parents Kenneth and Gabrielle Davis  
and siblings Cody, Owen, Claire,  
Kate, Nathan, Jacob and Cole

### **Riley and Parker Davis**

November 14, 2006  
Premature  
Given by parents Rob and Cheryl Davis  
and little sister Annalise

### **Dharma Lucille Drude**

March 31-April 1, 2008  
Anencephaly

### **Stella Darling Drude**

January 23, 2014  
Anencephaly

### **Liza Belle Drude**

February 23, 2015  
Unknown cause  
Gifts given by  
Parents Jason and Jennie Drude  
and siblings Max, Molli and Milo  
Grandma Marilyn Branson  
Cousin Chris King  
Tammy Phares

### **Caleb Scott Fann**

December 1, 2003, at 32 weeks  
PPROM

### **Baby August Fann**

Miscarried August 13, 2004, at 8 weeks  
Given by parents Jonathan and Heather Fann  
and little sister Madison Grace

### **Logan Wayne Fish**

September 17, 2002  
Skeletal Dysplasia  
Gifts given by parents David and Brittney Fish  
and brothers Landry and Hudson  
Tracy Wilson

### **Paislee Ann Frette**

April 4-5, 2012  
Wolf-Hirschhorn Syndrome  
Parents: Brent and Courtney Frette  
Little sister: Colbie  
Given by Grandparents James and LuAnn Junkin

### **Airrington Hope Fumagalli**

Stillborn December 22, 2013  
Unknown cause

### **Jakoebi Michael Fumagalli**

November 21, 2011  
Ectopic pregnancy  
Parents: Michael and Kirsten Fumagalli  
Brothers: Gable and Maverick  
Given by  
Papa Mark and Nonnie Maureen Fumagalli

### **CJ Gold**

Miscarried August 12, 2008

### **Marina Gold**

Miscarried July 14, 2009  
Gifts given by parents Greg and Kathryn Gold  
and big sister Emily  
Grandmother Nellie Gold

### **Ella Lynne Gonyea**

Stillborn August 24, 2015  
Preeclampsia, IUGR and no amniotic fluid  
Given by parents David and Sable Gonyea  
and little sister Laurel

### **Etta Gonzalez**

Parents Laura and Brian Gonzalez  
Gift given anonymously

### **Gabriella Ariana Guerrero**

August 7, 2017  
Anencephaly  
Given by mommy Yessica Guerrero  
and siblings Isabella and Guillermo

### **Charlotte Grace Harrison**

December 28, 2011—January 4, 2012  
Complications at birth  
Given by parents Luke and Amanda Harrison,  
siblings Evan and Audrey

### **Charlotte Winifred Hazlewood**

January 23-28, 2017  
SUIDS  
**Henry Michael Hazlewood**  
Stillborn March 2, 2013  
Given by  
Parents Michael and Becky Hazlewood  
and siblings Hannah, Lilly, Phoebe,  
Mimi, Emmagene and Charlie

### **Ted Herzog**

April 12, 1952—January 11, 2017  
Given by George and Tari Steberl

### **Kaiya Dawn Johnson**

October 23, 2009  
PPROM  
Gifts given by mommy LaRhesa Johnson  
and twin sister Kaidyn  
Grandma Mary Johnson

### **Elliana Grace Kundomal**

Miscarried July 2010  
Antiphospholipid Antibody Syndrome  
Given by mommy Kali Kundomal

### **Baby Lamar**

Miscarried September 13, 2016  
Given by mommy MarkKesha Lamar

### **Khloe Jean Lanicek**

September 5—October 15, 2017  
SIDS  
Given by mommy Brittany Lanicek

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. For more information on how you can support M.E.N.D., please see page 22.

**Andrew Mallette**

March 21, 2008  
 CMV  
 Given by parents Michael and Nicole Mallette  
 and sister Bree

**Dylan Hailey McClelland**

August 26—September 1, 2016  
 Given by parents Michael and Katie McClelland  
 and sister Elaine

**Caleb McNally**

Miscarried March 17, 2017  
 Parents Joseph and Nina McNally  
 Given by Nonna

**Baby Girl McNeil**

December 31, 2009  
 Unknown cause  
 Given by parents  
 Brandon and Meredith McNeil  
 and siblings Avery and Lauren

**Chase Austin Miller**

April 21, 2011  
 Incompetent cervix

**Baby "Blueberry" Miller**

May 4, 2015  
 Unknown cause  
 Given by parents Greg and Stephanie Miller  
 and sisters Cora and Hazel

**Jonathan Daniel Mitchell**

Stillborn June 24, 1995  
 Cord accident

**Baby Mitchell**

Miscarried December 2001  
 Parents: Byron and Rebekah Mitchell  
 Given by Dentistry of Las Colinas /  
 Byron L. Mitchell, D.D.S.

**Dylan Gregory Muras**

February 21, 2008  
 Given by mommy Sharon Muras

**Emma Grace Myrow**

Stillborn September 18, 2017  
 Cord accident  
 Parents: Keenan and Hayley Myrow  
 Given by grandmother Sharon Sebesta

**Shane Shafer Niesner**

January 22, 2004  
 Fifts Disease  
 Given by John and Shara Niesner and siblings  
 Tucker, dalton, chance, kinley , Presley

**Amar Padakandla**

June 28, 2001  
 Given by parents  
 Bhaskar and Menaca Padakandla

**Andrew Michael Pittman**

Stillborn March 23, 2010  
 Cord accident  
**3 Little Pittmans**  
 Given by parents Kindale and Melody Pittman  
 and sisters Avery and Kaylee

**Trissia Lynn**

October 6, 1981  
 Car accident

**Nikolas Ira**

December 24, 2003  
 Car accident  
 Given by Quin and Tammy Qualls  
 and siblings Karissa and Cassie

**Kyleigh Elaine Rabe**

October 1, 2012—January 26, 2013  
 SIDS  
 Gifts given by parents Kyle and Kristen Rabe  
 and siblings Karson, Kyler, Kayleigh,  
 Kole and Karter  
 Grandparents Gary and Karen Rabe

**Madison James Rinaldi**

Stillborn April 13, 2016  
 Parents: Corley and Matt Rinaldi  
 Little brother: Rush  
 Gifts given by  
 Shelby Whitson  
 Jordan Long

**Emberlynn Marie Sandusky**

February 16-23, 2016  
 Placenta insufficiency  
 Given by Sarah Wilson

**Mindy and Maggie Smith**

Stillborn November 4, 1997  
 TTTS and Polyhydramnios  
 Given by parents Scott and Karla Smith  
 and siblings Travis and Julia

**Jacob Martin Wilhite**

April 25, 2012  
 Incompetent cervix

**Isaac Odell Wilhite**

April 1, 2015  
 Incompetent cervix

**Wilhite babies named in heaven**

Given by parents David and Kessi Wilhite  
 and siblings Caleb and Lilah

**Gifts of Support**

Second Baptist Church, Springfield, MO  
 Highland Park Presbyterian Church, Dallas, TX  
 West Conroe Baptist Church, Conroe, TX  
 Christ Church Assembly of God, Fort Worth, TX  
 Mercy Hospital, Springfield, MO  
 On Angels' Wings  
 Refuge Church  
 Janis Kidder  
 Dr. Stacy Strehlow MD  
 Colby Propes  
 Kyrsten Smith

## Crossings

I came to the swift, raging river,  
 And the roar held the echo of fear;  
 "Oh, Lord, give me wings to fly over,  
 If you are, as You promised, quite near."

But He said, "Trust the grace I am giving,  
 All-pervasive, sufficient for you.  
 Take My hand - we will face this together;  
 But My plan is - not over, but through."

Lee Webber

*I will permanently bear the mark  
 of a woman who has lost her child.*

*Many of us are walking here--  
 in the grocery store,  
 at the neighborhood barbeque,  
 at the movies.*

*We walk without necessarily  
 recognizing each other,  
 side by side  
 and a million miles apart*

*I Will Carry You:  
 The Sacred Dance of Grief and Joy  
 By Angie Smith*

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# M.E.N.D. CHAPTER UPDATES

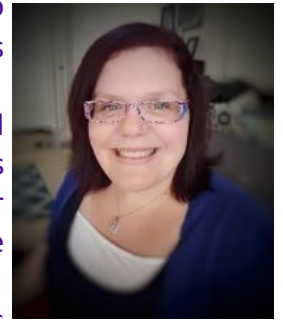
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## Houston

M.E.N.D.—Houston is excited about 2018 and the doors the Lord is continuing to open. This year we will focus on working with funeral homes as well as speaking at churches and women's events.

We are also starting a bear ministry of providing teddy bears for families in the hospital who lose a baby. The bear will be something they can include in pictures with their baby, as well as use in future family photos. We know nothing can take the place of holding your own baby in your arms, but holding a bear while leaving the hospital may provide some comfort while coping with the commonly felt “empty arm syndrome.”

If you would like to help with the bear program or know of churches or women’s events we could share our mission with, please contact Stormy at [stormym@mend.org](mailto:stormym@mend.org).



*Stormy Mitchell*

## SW Missouri

Our chapter ended the year with a beautiful Christmas Candlelight Ceremony helping families remember their babies during the holiday season. We are thankful to all the volunteers and sponsors who help us provide a special time of remembrance for these families. We are already scheduling events for next year’s remembrance ceremonies, and look forward to supporting hurting families.



Our chapter will continue to provide a safe place to grieve the losses of our babies through our support groups and Facebook group. Please feel free to join us the first Thursday of each month at Project H.O.P.E. (details on page 23) or find our link to our Facebook page on [www.mend.org](http://www.mend.org).

*Kathryn Gold*

## NW Washington

M.E.N.D.—NW Washington welcomed 10 new families into our chapter in the year 2017. We are grateful the Lord led them to us, and we pray for all the new families who will join us this year. Thank you to all who donated their time and money to continue to help our chapter. We could not do this for our community without you. We look forward to all this year has already begun to offer our chapter with new opportunities to reach out in our community. Please be in prayer with us as we continue to reach hurting families in the area.



*Stacy McGhee*

**Chicagoland**

M.E.N.D.—Chicagoland began the holiday season decorating the M.E.N.D. Christmas tree with ornaments honoring and remembering every M.E.N.D. Chicagoland baby. We hoped as families saw the tree during the holidays they were reminded their babies are thought of, loved and treasured during the holiday season and throughout the year. As we enter 2018, we will continue to love, comfort and support these families, as well as the new families who join us.



Sara Hintz

**Tulsa**

M.E.N.D.—Tulsa was blessed to hold a beautiful Christmas Candlelight Ceremony for the sixth year for families with little ones in heaven. We are so thankful our chapter is able to hold special ceremonies like this to help families love and remember their babies during difficult seasons. We look forward to seeing God's plans unfold for our chapter in 2018 in ministering and supporting grieving families.



Lisa Daily

**Bryan/College Station**

M.E.N.D.—Bryan/College Station wants to thank everyone who made a pledge in December to donate to our chapter! The donations we received helped us end the year with all of our expenses covered.

I am looking forward to 2018 to see what God has in store for us. We will continue to work hard to reach the hurting families of Brazos County.



Jennie Drude

*M.E.N.D. B/CS Pledge Calendar*

Pledge to donate at least **\$32** in the month of December to help us reach our fundraising goal of \$1000.

					Slacy Strehlow	1	Tammy Phares	2					
Karen Rabe	3	Gary Rabe	4	Nicole Mallette	5	Shara Niesner	6	Yessica Guerrero	7	Colby Propes	8	Mary Johnson	9
Brittany Lanicek	10	Shara Niesner	11	Markesha Lamar	12	Jennie Drude	13	Gabrielle Davis	14	Melody Pittman	15	Kessi Wilhite	16
Chris King	17	Sarah Wilson	18	Miller family	19	Gabrielle Davis	20	Miller family	21	Sharon Muras	22	Tammy qualls	23
Kyrsten Smith	24	Rabe Family	25	Jennie Drude	26	Kathi Davis	27	Gabrielle Davis	28	Katie McClelland	29	LaRhesa Johnson	30
Meredith McNeil	31	<i>M.E.N.D. Memmies Enduring Neonatal Death</i>											

Thank you to all who donated to M.E.N.D.—Bryan/College Station to reach our goal in December!



# How to Share Our Story

From our Facebook Community  
Compiled by Jennifer Harrison  
Mommy to Serenity  
M.E.N.D. Newsletter Editor

The question many of us pour over inside our minds: “Do I share? Do I tell them about my child in heaven? Do I show them my pictures or tell them about the 4, 8 or 12 weeks I was able to carry my baby? Do I take the chance? Or just act as if nothing ever happened, keeping it to myself...protecting myself?”

Whether we are sharing our love and our grief for our babies in person or on social media, we all battle through those questions. The majority of the time, we have those hesitations because of the uncertainty of how others will react. Will there be awkward silence? Will there be painful comments posted by someone hiding behind a keyboard? Or will they show us love through kind words and reactions?

Recently I asked the question on each of our Facebook chapter pages about lessons learned from sharing grief face-to-face and on social media. Each avenue has its good points and bad points, as shared in the following:

**Face-to-Face:** Sometimes it’s a close friend or family member, or maybe a stranger in the grocery store, or an acquaintance at work. Sometimes we create our own spaces to share, such as attending a M.E.N.D. support group.

## Positive

- ♥ Builds stronger, deeper **friendships**
  - ♡ Glory shared that it opened doors for others who have suffered in silence to share
  - ♡ New and/or closer friendships are made after meeting someone who has “been there” or understands
  - ♡ The “safe” person to talk to at the work place helps remove the isolation and loneliness there. This person helped Rachel connect with other moms with similar losses
  - ♡ Face-to-face reveals where people stand on grief, so as Anita experienced, she knows which ones to turn to “who have experienced this and understand the loss,” versus those “who see it more as a brief medical event which I should be over by now”
- ♥ **Emotions** can be seen, felt: According to Stormy, a sad emoji posted online is nothing compared to the pain and love seen in someone’s eyes, nods of understanding, and the gentle tear rolling down their cheek
- ♥ M.E.N.D. support groups and other support groups:
  - ♡ At support groups, the “**elephant in the room**” went away, according to Amy, since we are there for the same reason
  - ♡ These are **safe environments** for everyone to share, not just moms. Kathryn learned how men and women grieve differently by hearing from daddies, and how she could help her husband support her better

**Social Media:** Social media is a tool. Sometimes tools are used to build things, but some are used to tear things down, according to Kristian, which required her to thicken up her skin a little, but also made her a better advocate.

## Positive

- ♥ **Audience**
  - ♡ We all know the statistics, but actually seeing those say “Here I am. I am 1 in 4,” speaks volumes
  - ♡ A way to connect to others who understand, who have faced the same heartache, who recognize these lives matter, and that we would never have met in our own circles of family and friends
  - ♡ We know who our audience is because of our friends list, so we can control what we share without fear because they already know our story
- ♥ Connected to other support: it also helped some to find M.E.N.D.
- ♥ **Communicate in a different way:**
  - ♡ Online community makes the unspeakable speakable
  - ♡ Kristian found the right words do not come to mind when with people, so social media allowed her to express feelings when she does find the right words, or say thank you to let someone know how much their actions meant
  - ♡ Social media helped some to realize people do care, but they don’t know how to help, react, what to say, etc. When Glory shared her pain, reminders, love or anniversaries, friends were able to easily respond with support
  - ♡ Mercy stated she learned more on social media and found it was easier for her to “talk” about her loss. Some people may never share verbally about their loss, but will sometimes share by text or social media

Face-to-Face:

## Negative

- ♥ Still seen as **taboo** or **uncomfortable**
  - ♡ People try to change the subject because they don't want to talk about it
  - ♡ Awkwardness grows because people think of it as a "taboo" subject, they don't understand and/or don't know how to respond
  - ♡ Catrina (and many others of us) do not always share face-to-face with strangers because she knows they are just making conversation, so seeing them not care might hurt more

Social Media:

## Negative

- ♥ Freedom to say anything...unfortunately.
  - ♡ Hurtful words written by people who hide behind the computer screen
  - ♡ Shaming and negativity start to creep in
  - ♡ Pictures become blocked and/or reported because someone felt uncomfortable

Overall, sharing your grief, whether face-to-face or on social media, not only gives you a chance to grieve, but it also gives others permission to grieve for their own losses, as Jessica found. It validated their feelings they had experienced, whether the loss happened 2 weeks ago, 2 months ago, 2 years ago or 2 decades ago, and share their own ways they dealt with the grief. Ana stated that sharing about her baby gave an outlet for pain and for love, and removed the isolation of grief as she made new lifelong friends helping her keep moving forward. It revealed that she was "not the only one hurting," and her "story can be an encouragement to others" as through sharing grief.

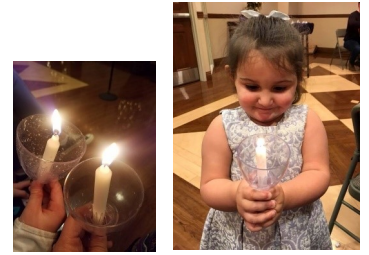
No matter how we choose to share, we all know grief waits. It will be there, waiting to be released. So find an outlet that works best for you, whether you need to sit down with the cup of coffee and a friend, call someone on the phone from your bed in your PJs because that's the most you can do at that point, attend a M.E.N.D. or similar support group, or jump online to share with friends and family or find people or groups who have also been there and understand your need to share. Sometimes we just need to say what we are feeling. Sometimes we just need to know we are normal. Sometimes we just need to say our baby's name when no one else does. And it's all okay. ♥

# M.E.N.D.—Bryan/College Station Christmas Candlelight Ceremony

We had a wonderful Candlelight Christmas Ceremony! We were honored to have Kessi Wilhite of M.E.N.D.—Houston share with us her journey through grief. The "One-a-Chord" singers and instrumentalist from Texas A&M blessed us with beautiful music.



# M.E.N.D.—SW Missouri Christmas Candlelight Ceremony

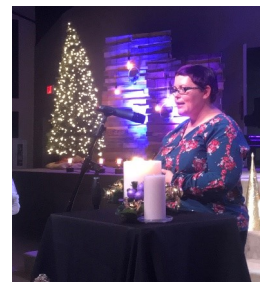
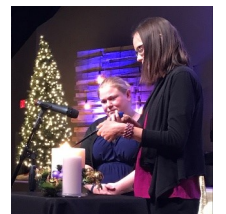


Our 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Christmas Candlelight Ceremony was a beautiful time to honor our babies in heaven. We had 92 in attendance remembering 26 babies. Reverend Hosea Bilyeu and his family blessed us with their musical and speaking talents. We were also blessed again this year to have beautiful handmade ornaments made by Patricia Irvin and Patty Marshall. Thank you to our sponsors for making the event possible: Second Baptist Church, On Angels' Wings, Red Crow Marketing, Patricia Irvin, Patty Marshall, Jon and Heather Fann, and Greg and Kathryn Gold.



# M.E.N.D.—Tulsa Christmas Candlelight Ceremony

M.E.N.D.—Tulsa recently held our 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Christmas Candlelight Ceremony. It was a beautiful and meaningful time of remembrance for more than 30 attendees. Thank you to Marcie Nienhuis, Kristina and Brian Cobler, Cat Markham, and David Graves for all their hard work with set up/clean up, and sound. Thank you to Mary Clare Mansfield for organizing all of our desserts and refreshments. Additionally, thank you to Jeromye Jackson for his inspirational message and beautiful music. The ceremony was made possible by our generous sponsors and volunteers. Thank you to Anthem Church, Merritt's Bakery, Sam's Club, The Vintage Pearl, Michele Wilson Properties, Owasso Realtor, Brian and Kristina Cobler, Jeremy and Lisa Daily, Jeromye and Angi Jackson, and Seth and Marcie Nienhuis.





# M.E.N.D.—Dallas/Fort Worth Christmas Candlelight Ceremony



The M.E.N.D. Christmas Candlelight Ceremonies are always wonderfully bittersweet evenings, as we take a pause from the holiday busyness and acknowledge our sweet babies who died too soon. The Dallas/Fort Worth's 21<sup>st</sup> M.E.N.D. Christmas Candlelight Ceremony was held on Thursday, December 7, 2017, in Irving, Texas. Rebekah Mitchell, the Founder and President of M.E.N.D., delivered the inspirational message, reminding the families that God is our refuge in times of suffering. Liz Walker, DaLana Barsanti and Courtney Frette blessed the audience with their beautiful songs of hope .



# M.E.N.D.—Dallas/Fort Worth Star Wars Fundraiser

We had a fun and unique fundraiser on December 14, as we hosted a movie premier for the newest Star Wars movie, The Last Jedi. Thank you to our sponsors, Garabedian Properties, Dentistry of Las Colinas, and The Pistana Group. Proceeds from the event went toward the maintenance and upkeep of our Garden of Hope in Irving, Texas.



*"Hope is not lost today...It is found." Leia*



# Helping Families Prepare for “Hello” and “Goodbye”

Many know our Chapter Directors facilitate our support groups and hold ceremonies, see us on our Facebook page, and maybe hear about visiting with other families, but sometimes they are called to help in other ways, such as helping a family prepare to say “hello” and “goodbye” to their new baby. Below is an interview with Jennie Drude, Chapter Director of Bryan/College Station, and her experiences in helping these families.

**What do you do for M.E.N.D.?**

Jennie Drude: I am the Chapter Director of Bryan/College Station, which includes facilitating monthly support groups, hospital trainings, visiting new moms, taking care of memory boxes, social media, PR for the area, and relationships with the bereavement coordinators.

**How long have you been a part of M.E.N.D.?**

JD: I first visited M.E.N.D. in May 2008 at the Houston chapter after my first baby died due to anencephaly, and then held my first support group as the Chapter Director for Bryan/College Station in March 2010.

**How did you find M.E.N.D.?**

JD: I remembered getting a brochure from the “I’m so sorry packet” from the hospital, but, like many of us do in our grief, I threw it all away. Later

when I googled infant loss support group Houston, Texas, I recognized the M.E.N.D. angel logo from the bereavement packets I had been given at the hospital.

The majority of families who find M.E.N.D. for support find us after their loss, but recently you helped some families in a different way. Tell us about it.

JD: I went for several years without ever meeting a local mom who had a baby with anencephaly. Then, a mom contacted me from a suggestion from two M.E.N.D. moms in her church and her maternal fetal medicine doctor. She figured it was a God-thing that we needed to meet. Since then, any time there is a mom whose baby is diagnosed with fatal anomaly, and she chooses to carry to term, the doctor provides my name and number. If they call me, I will walk with them through the whole pregnancy. I’ve done that three times now, specifically anencephaly.

**What all do you mean by “you walk with them?” What do you do to help these families?**

JD: First I usually meet them for coffee or tacos, because everybody loves Torchy’s. I show them my photo album, tell them my story, and usually they have a lot of questions for me. Sometimes they have done research; sometimes they haven’t. I offer to help

any way I can. I have gone to doctors’ appointments, hospitals, and even the palliative care meetings. I help with planning things, including the funerals and memorial services if needed.

**What happens at the palliative care meetings?**

JD: That’s where the patient meets with whoever the bereavement coordinator is, fetal medicine doctor, OBGYN, neonatologist, director of women’s services, basically any medical person is there, and we go over a game plan, birth plan, organ donations, etc. I will talk to the family and get their wishes for their baby, and then call all the funeral homes to find the most cost efficient way to meet their needs.

Usually I attend these meetings as a representative of M.E.N.D. and as support to the family. When I go, I arrive early to provide a folder to everyone at the meeting. In this folder I include information on anencephaly, latest research, and a short letter for health care providers on how to care for families like us..to make them informed of what to say and when to say it. I try to have them read it and ask me questions before they talk to the patient.

**What is the toughest part for you in all this?**

JD: Calling the funeral homes. Trying to explain to the funeral homes, that



"Jennie was a beautiful friend during Hannah Grace’s time in the womb, her birth, and her passing. Her compassion, knowledge, and presence made all the difference, not just to me, but to my family and friends as well. She answered so many questions in the most loving way. I am so grateful she was willing to come alongside us and share her story and wisdom with us. Her daughters' legacies live on every time she helps another family going through a similar journey."

-Jennifer Perez, Mommy to Hannah Grace

their baby is a baby, that even if the baby dies, they still want it to be cremated or buried, and that's okay. I've had people tell me, "They are only 16 weeks; they don't need to do this." Legally they can do this, but that's not the point. That's why I call to filter through the funeral homes to see who the nice ones are to try to help this family avoid more heartache. I try to handle anything and everything the family might need to make their life a little more peaceful.

Even though these are so hard to go through, what is something you feel is



rewarding from these experiences?

JD: I like meeting the family and babies, to be part of this, to help them as much as possible, and being allowed to be part of their story.

What is something you learned from your own experience you try to do for these families?

JD: Plan ahead as much as you can, but also be aware that things can change in an instant, and try to be ready for it.

What is something special you have taken away from these experiences?

JD: Each one has been different. Hannah Grace was going to be the first baby with anencephaly I got to hold that was not mine. When Hannah was

born, she was almost identical to Dharma. It was almost like I got to hold Dharma again.

Sometimes it's hard, like when a baby whom we thought would be born alive died during labor. I say to be prepared, but even I wasn't prepared for that.

The best part is I get to share a special connection to families, like even being part of a balloon release in a memorial service for one family. I still get together with these families. I would never have met these families had it not been for our babies. ♥



# More than Support

By Yessica Sotomayor  
Mommy to Gabriella  
M.E.N.D.—Houston

"There is something wrong with your baby, so we need to refer you to the high-risk doctor." Hearing these words at a 12-week ultrasound was the beginning of how my life began to change. At another appointment a few weeks later, during the ultrasound I was given the diagnosis. With what felt like the coldest voice, the doctor said, "Your baby has anencephaly, and it's not compatible with life."

Everything stood still. I could hear my heart beat. I remember her speaking, but I was in such shock I couldn't respond. I do remember clearly her saying the best thing would be to terminate as I wouldn't even make it to 16 weeks. But terminating was never an option for me. I decided only God could make that decision. Only He could make that choice. My goal was to try to make it full-term.

As I was leaving my 16-week follow-up appointment with the high risk doctor, I was crying when I ran into a genetics counselor. As I was telling her my story, she said, "Here, give Jennie a call. She'll know how to guide you."

I remember entering her phone number and praying for answers, for help, for hope, since all I had heard was negative. When Jennie returned my call, she shared with

me how she had been down the same road twice. I was sure God put her in my path to help me find some needed peace. I always felt alone. No matter to whom I spoke, no one could understand. My family was supportive, but they didn't totally understand. Jennie understood since she had been there, twice.

Jennie helped us in so many ways. She helped me switch from my uncomfortable and discouraging doctors to an amazing team of doctors and staff who had worked with cases like mine before, and treated me with respect and like a "normal" pregnant woman. Jennie accompanied us to many appointments, including ultrasounds and doctors' conferences, to provide not just moral support but to ask the necessary questions. Jennie also helped us through the most difficult task of this journey: Funeral homes. No parent should have to make these calls. I am sure this must have brought back many hurtful memories, but she did it to help us.

At 40 weeks, Gabriella made her grand entrance. She was born sleeping. I cannot imagine not having Jennie there that special day. Seeing the love Jennie has for my daughter, how she held her ... she did not see a dead baby, but a tiny person who left an imprint in many lives. Jennie not only guided me when I felt blind and alone, she helped me emotionally, physically, psychologically, but most importantly, she gave us love during this whole process. Gabriella's journey ended smoothly because of all the help Jennie gave. I will never be able to repay everything she did for me, my baby and my family. Thank you for all you did for us. I not only made a new friend during a difficult time; we share a bond no one can break! ♥





Artículo de *M.E.N.D.* Presidente y Fundadora,  
Rebekah Mitchell, Mamá de Jonathan Daniel y bebé Mitchell

# Compartir vía Redes Sociales vs Cara a Cara

**M**i bebé, Jonathan, fue nacido sin vida en 1995, cuando el Internet estaba empezando. Fue años antes de que Facebook, Instagram y similares fueron introducidas. Cuando Jonathán murió, aún no poseemos una computadora personal, casi nadie tenía uno. Así que, mi único sistema de apoyo fue mi familia maravillosa y unos pocos amigos cercanos. Varios meses después de nuestra pérdida, compramos una computadora, pero se sentó sin usar en la esquina de nuestra habitación por semanas. No sé aún por qué lo compramos. Finalmente decidimos “unirnos al Internet,” obtener una cuenta de correo electrónico y nos atrevimos a navegar El Mundo del Web. Sin embargo, no sabía lo que estábamos navegando exactamente. Había oído hablar de salas de chat, pero también había advertido de los peligros potenciales de los extraños virtuales aprendiendo demasiada información acerca de uno mismo. Por lo tanto, me quedé lejos de esos lugares ominosos.

## Amistades virtuales

Luego me enteré de algo llamado el Listserv, que era un servicio de correo electrónico que permitía comunicar sobre temas específicos a través de correo electrónico. El Listserv que me ingresé fue llamado Infanlos. Pasé horas y horas de comunicación con los miembros de este grupo. Leí sus lamentos, lloré con ellos y con el tiempo me sentí suficientemente cómoda como para compartir mis sentimientos íntimos. Eran desconocidos, pero todas nos hicimos amigos rápidamente debido al único vínculo que compartimos como mamás con brazos vacíos.

Finalmente sentí que había conectado con personas que realmente me entendían. Me comprendían y yo los comprendía a ellos. Aunque mi familia era amorosa y llenos de apoyo de los más posible, necesitaba hablar con otras personas que habían caminado el mismo viaje solitario de perder a un bebé. Fue entonces que comprendí que mis pensamientos y sentimientos secretos eran normal de este tipo de pérdida. Me di cuenta que no era la única mujer que sentía un dolor literal en la tutela de su brazo. Yo no

*(“Sharing Via...” continued from page 3)*

their computer screen than they do speaking to a small group of people sitting in a circle. Yet, some feel being in the same room with others, offering a smile or extending a hug is far better than the somewhat anonymity of electronic sharing.

In my opinion, connecting with fellow grieving parents is vital during the grieving process, whether that’s through email or face-to-face. Having someone empathizing with you, checking in with you and you checking in with them is very important. That relationship gives each person a sense of purpose and reassurance that someone cares who is walking that same journey. Few words have to be spoken for the other grieving mom (or dad) to fully get it.

If you live in a location where we have a chapter of M.E.N.D., and you have not yet attended a support group, I encourage you to try it out. Even if you have to drive several miles to get there, please go. You’ll immediately be loved on by people who completely understand you and who know what you’re going through. If you don’t live near one of our chapters, I encourage you to join one of our Facebook groups. They are closed groups so only those in M.E.N.D. can read your posts. If you don’t feel comfortable sharing, that’s okay – you are welcome to just read the posts of others. And don’t forget, we also offer a monthly online support group the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month at 8:00 PM CST. Whichever your preference for connecting, don’t grieve alone. Know there are many moms just like you who want to walk this road alongside you as you mourn the loss of your sweet little baby. ♥

*“Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.” Romans 12:15*

era la única madre que se había parado de la cama para alimentar a su bebé que lloraba, sólo para recordar espantosamente que su bebé estaba muerto y era imposible que su bebe llorará por la media noche. Aprendí las sensaciones que siguieron a sentir en mi vientre durante meses fueron llamadas "patadas fantasmas." Principalmente, aprendí que no estaba sola.

Después de algunos meses de comunicación con estos nuevos amigos virtuales, aprendí que aparentemente yo era una minoría con una familia que nos apoyaban con mucho amor. Mi familia y la familia de mi esposo Byron sienten nuestro dolor profundamente con nosotros (y siguen sus sentimientos después de todo estos años). Tristemente, me di cuenta que muchas madres con este dolor no tienen este mismo tipo de apoyo compasivo de sus familias. Muchas mujeres en este grupo sufrían solas y se sentían miserablemente aislada de éstos alrededor de ellos. Como resultado, su salud física y mental estaban fallando, sus matrimonios estaban sufriendo y algunos apenas podrían sostener por sus responsabilidades en el hogar. Empecé darme cuenta que si yo, incluso con el amor prodigado sobre mí por mi familia, me sentí sola, entonces estas mamás que no tienen un sistema de apoyo deben haber sentido como si se morían – y muy posiblemente querían morir.

### Viendo la necesidad de algo diferente

Así que, decidí que, aunque este grupo del Internet era bueno, era necesario organizar un grupo cara a cara. Esto fue enormemente lo que me impulsó a empezar a M.E.N.D. un año después de la muerte de Jonathan. Listserv me dio una vista sobre el dolor de los demás y la valentía de abiertamente compartir mi historia con la gente que no conocía. Varios meses después, M.E.N.D. organizó su primer grupo de apoyo. Hoy, 21 años más tarde, más de 880 familias han asistido a uno de nuestros grupos de apoyo en el metroplex de Dallas/Fort Worth. Muchas más familias han asistido a un grupo de apoyo organizado por uno de nuestros capítulos. Para comparar los beneficios de compartir virtualmente y compartir en persona es de opinión personal. A veces la gente se siente más seguro compartir y decir cosas detrás de su pantalla de la computadora en vez de hablar con un pequeño grupo de personas que se sientan en un círculo. Sin embargo, algunos sienten estar en la misma habitación con otras personas, ofreciendo una sonrisa o un abrazo que se

extiende es mucho mejor que el anonimato del intercambio electrónico.

En mi opinión, la conexión con otros padres afligidos es vital durante el proceso del dolor, a través de correo electrónico o presencial. Tener alguien para compartir la empatía, comunicando con usted y comunicando con otros es muy importante. Esa relación da a cada persona un sentido de propósito y la seguridad que alguien le importa quien camina ese mismo viaje. Pocas palabras tienen que ser hablados para que la otra doliente mamá (o papá) entiendan lo mismo.

Si vive en un lugar donde tenemos un capítulo de M.E.N.D., y no ha asistido aún a un grupo de apoyo, los animo a probarlo. Aunque tengan que manejar varias millas para llegar allí, por favor, vayan. Inmediatamente serán amados por la gente que entienden completamente y que saben lo que está pasando. Si no vive cerca de uno de nuestros capítulos, le animo a unirse a uno de nuestros grupos de Facebook. Son cerrados los grupos tan sólo los de M.E.N.D. pueden leer sus mensajes. Si no se siente cómodo compartiendo, está bien, son bienvenidos a leer los posts de los demás. Y no olvide, también ofrecemos un grupo de apoyo sobre el internet mensualmente el tercer jueves de cada mes a las 8:00 PM CST. Según su preferencia para conectar, no lamente solo. Sabemos que hay muchas mamás como usted que quieren caminar este camino junto a usted mientras lamenta la pérdida de tu dulce bebé. ♥

"Alégrense con los que están alegres  
y lloren con los que lloran." Romanos '12:15

## Subsequent Births

### Celebrating Our Rainbow Babies

#### **Isaac and Laura Ozinga**

of Seabrook, Texas,  
along with big brother Andrew,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Michael Patrick Lee,  
born February 21, 2017,  
measuring 8 lbs., 6 oz.,  
and 20 inches long.

The family lovingly remembers  
Julia Mtendere,  
miscarried January 1, 2016

## About 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 support groups, this newsletter, and our website 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. is a member of  
 First Candle/SIDS Alliance  
 International Stillbirth Alliance



## M.E.N.D. Leadership

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

Rebekah Mitchell  
 Byron Mitchell, D.D.S.  
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### General Counsel

Dennis G. Brewer, Sr., Attorney at Law

### Newsletter

**Editor:** Jennifer Harrison  
**Co-Editors:** Byron and Rebekah Mitchell

### Newsletter Volunteers

Rachel Dell, Sara Elliott and Stormy Mitchell

## 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).

M.E.N.D.

## Chapter Information

### M.E.N.D.—Houston, Texas

Meets the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday at 7:00 p.m.  
4888 Loop Central Drive, Suite 200,  
Houston, TX 77081

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  
every other month

on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday at 7:30 p.m.,  
led by Stormy Mitchell  
(stormym@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.—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  
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: Kathryn Gold  
kathryn@mend.org, (417) 770-0600

### M.E.N.D.—Bryan/College Station

Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.  
Texas Avenue Baptist Church  
1010 University Drive East  
College Station, Texas 77840  
Director: Jennie Drude  
jennie@mend.org, (979) 220-7851

### M.E.N.D.—Tulsa, Oklahoma

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, (918) 694-4325 (HEAL)

### 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, (630) 267-9134

### M.E.N.D.—Austin, Texas

**MORE DETAILS COMING SOON!**

## M.E.N.D. Support Groups in the Dallas Metroplex

Join us for a time of sharing experiences.

### M.E.N.D. chapter support groups

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  
*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

#### **Infertility group**

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

Contact Cheryl Davis for group  
location and information at  
Cheryl@mend.org  
*For families experiencing  
infertility after a loss.*

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

**Unless otherwise noted,  
all support groups are held at:**

**Wells Fargo Bank  
800 W. Airport Freeway  
Irving, TX 75062**

(Located off 183,  
between MacArthur and O'Connor)

Support groups will be in  
the bank board room,  
located on the first floor.

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

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

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PERMIT NO. 57

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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.*



Link your Kroger Plus Card to M.E.N.D. to help provide financial support while you do your regular shopping!

Kroger Grocery stores donate a percentage of all purchase of shoppers in Texas or Louisiana,  
who have their Kroger Plus Card linked to M.E.N.D.

Visit [www.krogercommunityrewards.com](http://www.krogercommunityrewards.com) to set up your account or to link your card again.  
After receiving the email about your account, click on "My Account," then "Edit Kroger Community Awards."  
Input your Kroger Plus card number.  
You'll see a screen with your information in boxes, and at the bottom right, click on "Community Awards."  
Then enter the M.E.N.D. number, which is 80513.  
Once entered, confirm M.E.N.D. is your charity of choice.

This card does need to be linked every year,  
so make sure to visit [www.krogercommunityrewards.com](http://www.krogercommunityrewards.com) to link it again!