



# Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death

*Miscarriage, Stillbirth and Infant Loss Support*

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## There Is More to My Story

“What will you be when you grow up?” As children, many of us imagined what our stories would be when we grew older. Astronauts, the president, inventors, train engineers, and some of us may have even dreamed of being moms and dads.

But as we age, our childhood stories generally do not unfold as we envisioned. Changing careers. Challenging relationships. Unexpected circumstances. Medical issues. And unfortunately for us, the loss of a child.

While our story has changed, it still continues. There is more to each of our stories. While painful, it is still beautiful. It is unique, because it is ours. My Story. Your Story. Our Stories.

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While the miracle a mother desired did not happen, another miracle did.

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Liz shares the story she didn't want, but now embraces.

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**July/August Topic**

*Letting Go of Normal and Embracing What Is*  
Deadline: May 31, 2020

**September/October Topic**

*Other Holidays - Halloween/4<sup>th</sup> of July*  
Deadline: July 31, 2020

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 magazine. Unfortunately, there is not enough room to include all submissions. Choices will be left to the discretion of the editors. Please send any submissions to our Magazine Editor, Jennifer Harrison, at [jennifer@mend.org](mailto:jennifer@mend.org). Any submission printed in our magazine will also be posted to our website indefinitely. Because our magazines are posted online, please understand your name will be attached to your submission when searched on the Internet.

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to be published in future issues, both in the print version and online, unless a letter's author expressly requests it not be published.

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**Birthday Tributes:** M.E.N.D. publishes heavenly birthday tributes in the corresponding magazine. 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 Article

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

# There is More to My Story

For most of those who know me, they know my story - or at least most of it. They know my husband, Byron, and I have one living son who is married and became a daddy himself last summer, making us new grandparents. People know my story because of M.E.N.D. - the ministry I started in 1996, one year after our baby Jonathan was stillborn due to a cord accident. So, if they know me, they are familiar with M.E.N.D. and how and why I'm involved with a pregnancy and infant loss organization. They know why we have only one child and why the birth of our grandson, Elias Jonathan, last year was such a beautiful and emotional addition to our family. If they really know me, they know an advanced degenerative kidney disease prevented us from getting pregnant again after Jonathan died, and they know I eventually had a kidney transplant. But one thing a good number of people don't know about my story, or perhaps they just forgot, is the baby we conceived, then miscarried after my transplant. That tiny one is certainly a part of my story, but is a detail often left out, and why that is, I'm really not sure. But indeed, my story is that I have two children in heaven, and one here on earth.

I wonder though, if my story will remain after I join my babies in heaven. I sure hope so! For one, I pray M.E.N.D. lives until the end of time. And secondly, I hope my children and grandchildren and the generations to follow will tell my story. It is my desire for them to remember or to be told, "Hey you know

your Glammie, well she devastatingly lost two babies, and she..." I want that sentence to be completed with words of strength, faith and perseverance. Not finished with something like, "...it just destroyed her. It ruined her. She lived the rest of her life an angry, bitter woman." It's very true that I felt all those things during my fresh months of grief, and sometimes even still when my deepest emotions are triggered. But that is not how I live my life today. A lot of hard work, prayer, and perseverance went into overcoming those raw feelings.

Yes, our babies who died will always be a part of our life story that can never, and should never, be erased. But what will the final chapters of your story be? What legacy will you leave not just for yourself, but also for your baby? Plan today that your story will end in triumph. Determine that those who tell your story for years to come will finish it with beauty and strength, not with ashes and destruction. In time, with the help of the Lord, work on rebuilding and restoring what was ruined in your life and in your family. Certainly, you cannot replace your baby who died, but you can renew your faith, your hope and your legacy. Read the inspirational words of the prophet Isaiah in chapter 61. Let his declaration give you encouragement and strength to mend your brokenness and challenge you to finish your story with boldness, courage, gladness and praise. It may take a long time to get there, I know, but you can do it!

“...to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes,  
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,  
and a garment of praise instead of despair.

They will be called oaks of righteousness,  
a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor.

They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated;  
they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations.”

# Birthday Tributes



**Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> Birthday, Benjamin!**  
You are so loved!

*Benjamin Trujillo*  
*June 23, 2018*  
*Trisomy 18*  
*Parents: Jessica and Tyler Trujillo*  
*Brothers: Anthony and Mason*



**Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Cade!**

Happy 1<sup>st</sup> heavenly birthday to our sweet baby Cade! We can't believe a whole year has passed since we saw your beautiful face. It brings tears to my eyes to write this birthday wish to you. We often wonder how different life would be if you were here with us instead of in heaven. Not a day goes by we don't think about you. We hope you know how loved and missed you are by not only us, but all our friends and family. Cade, we love you so much and are so blessed to be your parents.

*Cade Cashion*  
*June 5, 2019*  
*Anemia and hydrops due to placental abruption*  
*Parents: Holly and Andrew Cashion*



**Happy 9<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Laila!**

Sweet baby girl, we miss and love you more than words can express. Our hearts were broken when you left, and they still ache. But we are thankful you are in the Lord's Presence. We think about you all the time and can't wait to see you in glory!

"When we all get to heaven, what a day of rejoicing it will be. When we all see Jesus, we will sing and shout victory!"

Love always,  
Mommy and Daddy

*Laila Joyce Bray*  
*Miscarried May 8, 2011*  
*Unknown cause*  
*Also remembering*  
*Kimani Renae Bray*  
*Miscarried February 20, 2005*  
*Heart stopped*  
*Jeremiah Earl Bray*  
*Miscarried February 13, 2011*  
*Unknown cause*  
*Parents: Earl III and LaTrina Bray*



**Happy 6<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Bryson!**

Happy 6<sup>th</sup> birthday to our little man! Oh what a 6-year-old you would be! We could only imagine the fun you would have running around with your brother, Brayden, under the eye of your loving big sister, Mackenzie. We could imagine you would share their love of the beach and playing with Clover in the backyard. One day we will meet again. We will share the memories of the past, and make new ones in heaven. Your memory is always on our minds, and you are forever in our hearts. We miss you, our beloved son and brother.

*Bryson Glenn Middleton*  
*June 19, 2014*

*Placental abruption*  
*Also remembering*  
*Baby Middleton*  
*Miscarried April 2007*  
*Parents: Brandon and Jennie Middleton*  
*Siblings: Mackenzie and Brayden*



**Happy 3<sup>rd</sup> Birthday, Olly Bear!**

My goodness, we miss you so much, my son.  
Love,  
Mommy and Daddy

We love you, Olly!  
Happy birthday, baby brother!  
Love,  
Steven, Ozzy, Gabby and David

*Oliver Joseph Rodriguez*  
*June 28, 2017*  
*Thanatophoric Dysplasia*  
*Parents: Juan and Amanda Rodriguez*  
*Siblings: Stevie, Ozzy, Gabby and David*



**Happy 17<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Matthew!**

My dear son, Matthew, you are turning 17 years old! You're no longer a child, but a young man. Your dad and I love you so very much, and we miss you every day. The day you were born in silence was the hardest day of my life, and it's been a long hard road. But God is amazing and gracious to hold our hands on one side while holding you on His other side. Some day, we'll celebrate all together again. Happy birthday, my son!

*Matthew Mifflin*  
*June 6, 2003*  
*Cord accident*  
*Parents: Janet and Dennis Mifflin*  
*Siblings: Thomas and Michelle*



**Happy 3<sup>rd</sup> Birthday, Eli Love Dudley!**

My precious Eli, you are so loved, and deeply missed. Your tiny footprints will forever be in our hearts. Happy 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday to our sweet baby angel, Eli Love!

Love Forever,  
Daddy, Momma and your brother and sisters

*Eli Love Dudley*  
*April 22, 2017*  
*Placental abruption*  
*Parents: Justin and LaTrease Dudley*  
*Siblings: Taniyah, Kamora, Kaden,*  
*Justice and Journee*

**Happy 12<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Avery!**

This is your 12<sup>th</sup> birthday in heaven. I almost cannot believe it was 12 years ago we found out about you, and 12 years since we lost you. You were here and gone so quickly, but the moment we knew about you, your daddy and I were beyond elated. You gave us so much in the short time you were here. Gideon, Joy and you give us so much to look forward to because I know we will get to be with all of you in heaven, and we will never have to say goodbye.

*Avery Mitchell*  
*Miscarried May 2008*  
*Unknown cause*

**Happy 9<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Gideon!**

Last weekend, as we often do, we watched Star Wars with your brothers. I looked at your brothers and, in that moment, I could see you there with your bowl of popcorn in front of you. Your curls messy and wild. Your green eyes glued to the screen in awe and wonder, matching the faces of your little brothers. As the movie ended, your brothers grabbed light sabers and pretended to fight evil. In my mind, I could see you battling the dark side with them. It was almost as if you were here. You are in our hearts constantly, even though you are in a galaxy far, far away. Happy birthday. We love you so much.

*Gideon Zeller Mitchell*  
*Stillborn May 17, 2011*  
*Velamentous Cord Insertion*  
*Also remembering*  
*Joy Mitchell*  
*December 2014*  
*Vanishing Twin Syndrome*  
*Parents: Todd and Stormy Mitchell*  
*Brothers: Silas and Justus*

**Happy 6<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Jason!**

Happy birthday, my precious little boy. Even though you are 6, in my world you will always be my little 1-pound bundle of joy. I close my eyes, and I can remember every little detail of you. Oh, how I wish I could just hold you one more time. Sending hugs and kisses until we see you see you again.

Love,  
Mommy, Daddy and Hailey

*Jason Hunter Thomas*  
*June 30, 2014*  
*PPROM*  
*Also remembering*  
*June Thomas*  
*Miscarried January 15, 2018*  
*Jade Thomas*  
*Miscarried July 16, 2018*  
*Parents: Steven and Melissa Thomas*  
*Sister: Hailey*

**Happy 11<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Emma Krymkiewiez!**

Happy 11<sup>th</sup> birthday, our dear Emma. Eleven years have passed, and we miss you so much. Every night I give a kiss to your picture and wonder what life would be like if you were here with us on earth. Your little sister is 9 now, and she talks about you with her friends. I know she also wonders what it would be like if you were here with her. This year it gives me comfort that your grandpa is now with you in heaven. I know he is taking care of you, and I imagine both of you blowing your candles.

We miss you and love you so very much,  
Mommy, Daddy and Bella

*Emma Krymkiewiez*  
*May 5, 2009*  
*Neonatal Hemochromatosis*  
*Also remembering*  
*Baby Girl Krymkiewiez*  
*Miscarried June 13, 2008*  
*Parents: Ana and Hernan Krymkiewiez*  
*Little sister: Bella*

**Happy 3<sup>rd</sup> Birthday, Jaxs!**

Wow, little man, 3 years old! I imagine every day what you would be like and what you would be doing! I know you and all your friends are enjoying it up there in heaven. We miss you like crazy, son.

*Jaxson Ramon Hernandez*  
*March 27 - May 10, 2017*  
*Pertussis*  
*Parents: Tiffany and Juan Hernandez*  
*Siblings: Makaela, Sofie, Mila and Vera*



**Happy 6<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Little Man!**

Happy 6<sup>th</sup> birthday in heaven! Mommy, Daddy and your brother and sisters love and miss you. We are going to celebrate your birthday. We are praying we get to release balloons and have cupcakes like we have been doing since your 1<sup>st</sup> birthday in heaven. I often wonder if you are taller than your older sister Bella, and if you love to play with Legos like your older brother does. I bet you are having fun up in heaven, especially since you now have both your Great-Grandmas and Great-Grandpas in heaven. I hope Great-Grandpa is teaching you how to fish.

Love always,  
Mommy, Daddy, brother and sisters



*Paul Bradley Brady*

*May 29, 2014*

*Parents: James and Jessica Brady*

*Siblings: Matthew, Melissa, Kristen, Ruby and Bella*

**Happy 12<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Javari!  
Happy 11<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Jordan!**

Oh how I wish you were here with us! We love you to no end. We miss you still to this day. You will never be forgotten. You will be in our hearts forever!

Happy 12<sup>th</sup> heavenly birthday, Javari!  
Happy 11<sup>th</sup> heavenly birthday, Jordan!

*Javari King Walker*

*Miscarried June 13, 2008*

*Jordan Walker*

*Miscarried August 9, 2009*

*Parents: Erin Davis and Jasper Walker*

**Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Eva!**

Precious Eva baby, happy 1<sup>st</sup> birthday. I don't know how we will make it without you, but we strive to live to honor you and to live for your beloved twin brother, Javi. My heart dreams that you are with the ancestors, and I look for your wisdom and guidance in my soul. You are forever the North Star, leading me through the night. I am so sorry we couldn't save you, and I would give anything to hold you and sing your song to you again. I sing it to Javi and teach him the words. I look for you always and speak to you in my heart. We love you forever, darling daughter.

*Eva Santamaría Phoenix*

*March 28 - May 13, 2019*

*SIDS*

*Parents: Evin and Michael Phoenix*

*Twin brother: Javi*

**Happy 12<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Dharma!****Happy 6<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Stella!****Happy 5<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Liza!**

To my beautiful girls, each of your birthdays reminds me that we are missing three in our family. Dharma, your birthday just came and for as much fun as we had with cake and family time, it would have been a whole lot better with you here. Stella, Liza and you could all have been there to poke fun at the boys and be chased away with their grossness. We could have a backyard with six kids, all running around making messes, playing on swings and jumping on a trampoline. It feels empty at times without you three here.

While we can go about our daily lives and problems, there are small reminders of what our family should be. Seeing the gap in birth dates between the living kids reminds me of Stella and Liza. Your sister will randomly tell us she is sad because she doesn't have her sisters with her. Even your little brother knows your names and will point you out in pictures. We've shown your brothers and sister your videos, pictures and keepsakes countless times when they've asked.

Our family has moved past the constant grief and pain, but we have never forgotten you. When people ask us how many children we have, we know the answer is six. If we're asked the birth dates, we remember all of yours with your living siblings. We remember your names because you are our children, and you are part of our family, even if you are not with us.

We remember Dharma, Stella and Liza.

*Dharma Lucille Drude*

*March 31 - April 1, 2008*

*Anencephaly*

*Stella Darling Drude*

*January 23, 2014*

*Anencephaly*

*Liza Belle Drude*

*Unknown cause*

*February 23, 2015*

*Parents: Jason and Jennie Drude*

*Siblings: Maxwell, Molli and Milo*

**Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Lucas!**

Lucas, happy birthday to my angel baby in heaven. Every day we will celebrate you. Mommy and Daddy miss you and love you so much!

*Lucas Grant Bush-Anderson*

*Miscarried June 18, 2019*

*Parents: Tara Bush and Tyson Anderson*



**Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> Birthday, Claire!**

Happy birthday, sweet girl! Your family misses you very much, and you are well remembered by all your family and friends who love you. We tell your baby brother about you all the time and show him your bear. We love you with all our hearts, little Claire, and wish we could give you all the birthday hugs and kisses you deserve.

Love,  
Mommy, Daddy and Joseph

*Claire Apa  
May 8, 2018  
Placental insufficiency, IUGR  
Also remembering  
Baby Apa  
Miscarried October 2017  
Parents: Garrett and Charla Apa  
Baby brother: Joseph*

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

Happy 5<sup>th</sup> birthday to my beautiful princess! I cannot believe it's been five years. Time really has a way of flying by. We all love you and miss you more than words could ever say! Though you may not be physically here, you live in spirit within each and every one of us. We remember you forever and always, our little angel. As tradition, we look forward to cutting a cake and sending you your balloon on your birthday! Hope you like it all. Never forget – I loved you since the moment I knew about you and will love you always and forever! Muah! Happy birthday, baby.

*Alexia Raelynn Mayorga  
Stillborn May 14, 2015  
Parents: Alejandra Rosales and Timothy Mayorga*



## ***In the Middle of the Storm - God is Here!***

**Dr. Susan Adams, Licensed Professional Counselor**  
**"Providing Guidance Through Life's Storms"**  
[www.drsusanadams.com](http://www.drsusanadams.com)

The coronavirus brings fear and death to every continent and every country. It has bound all of humanity in two common goals - finding a cure and stopping the spread! Retail stores, restaurants, businesses, educational systems, and even worship experiences have all had their daily normal replaced by a "new normal" of isolation that is uncertain and unknown.

"Sarah's" home consists of single living quarters in a senior living facility. She is not allowed to leave her room due to quarantine. Her daughter, "Abby," sees no choice but to prevent her two sons (ages 11 and 8 months old) from getting any closer to their grandmother than the opposite side of her window. Abby does not know if any of them are carriers or not, but she does not want any of them to be at risk. Abby's tears of sadness silently fall because she knows that her mother needs to be hugging her grandchildren more than ever.

Three adult children (one daughter and two sons) of a middle aged couple all died within four days of each other from the virus. The daughter delivered the first grandchild which should have been a happy time of celebration. However, the baby died within a few hours of birth, and her mother died within 36 hours. All were in hospitals scattered across the United States, but their families grieved alone because the

hospitals are on lock-down - meaning visitors are not allowed.

This virus has planted both feet firmly in the arena of dying. People are left to mourn alone without a hug or even the simple presence of their loved ones. It has also changed the face of death and the mourning rituals linked with the finality of life.

"Charlie" was stationed overseas when he was informed his retired military father had died of Coronavirus (even though his doctors admitted it was probably a massive heart attack and not the virus). When Charlie's flight landed, he discovered there would be no funeral service, no flag-draped coffin, or burial with military honors that his father had planned. Charlie's children (ages 3, 5, and 8) or any of Charlie's siblings would not be able to witness the burial. The funeral home took his dad's body to the grave with only Charlie's mother and one clergy attending. There would be no personal words of condolences offered or hugs shared - either after the burial or in the sad days ahead. Although heartbreaking, the family understood.

Some funeral rituals are being delayed or replaced with a future plan to celebrate the deceased's life. How do you postpone the painful emotions that follow death? After the death of her mother, Reba McEntire

Continued on page 14

# Jacob and Isaac

*Written by Kessi Wilhite*

*Mommy to Jacob, Isaac, and 4 babies whose names we will learn in heaven*

*M.E.N.D.—Katy Chapter Director*

As I write this, it is the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent. Across the world, socially distanced churches are remembering the story John tells in his Gospel's 11<sup>th</sup> chapter - the miracle of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. And, on this day, as we prepare to welcome the rising of the Son at Easter, I'm reminded of both resurrection stories from the Bible... but also of two resurrection stories I begged God for that did not happen.

This week, we will celebrate the 5<sup>th</sup> birthday of my third-born son, Isaac, and later this month, we'll celebrate the 8<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the day my second-born son, Jacob, briefly entered this world.

If you had been there in those first days following my boys' deaths, you'd know that I prayed repeatedly, in countless words and tears numbered only by God himself, that my boys would be resurrected. That suddenly, their lifeless bodies would wake, that they would cry, that they would open their eyes on this side of earth, and not just at the feet of the Father.

I cried out in anger to the Lord when my demands were not met in the way I wanted them to be.

Sometimes, I still do.

In full disclosure, I'm struggling now with the urge to ask the Lord to change HIS mind - not to change mine. I'm not sure being filled with understanding will ever make the reality of their deaths easier.

For years, I have wondered what my life would look like had Jesus answered my boys' deaths in the same way he answered his friend, Lazarus.

Lazarus, a friend held in high regard of the Lord, is ill. Like, not Flu-A-ill. He's like COVID-19, in the worst way, ill. (And y'all, I'm not making that reference to make light of our Quarantine Situation; Lazarus's illness was scary and dire, just like the illness ravaging so many we know and love at this very moment.)

Yet, as told in John 11, Jesus does not go to his friend with life-saving measures, and, as a result, Lazarus dies. Jesus arrives, days after Lazarus's death, to find Mary weeping. She basically calls the Lord out and tells him that Lazarus would still be alive had Jesus come when he first heard of the illness.

Hey, God... had you just answered my cries and pleas BEFORE my children died, I wouldn't have to ask you to, you know, perform the miracle of resurrection...

I wish I could call myself a Mary, but I know full-and-well that I don't have her obedience and faithfulness.

So here we are - a biblical story and my life story - crudely juxtaposed but in a similar place:

Lazarus is dead. Jacob and Isaac are dead.

Jesus is saddened on all accounts.

Mary is distraught. My life has never been the same.

Mary has faith in the Lord. I try... really, really hard.

This is also where the stories go in very different directions.

One of the reasons that the resurrection of Lazarus is such a vital part of the ministry of Jesus is that Lazarus LIVES. I mean, that's the definition of resurrection, right? Was dead, is now alive. That's how resurrection works. (And let's face it: this would be a lack-luster story had it ended in that tomb.)

Lazarus was brought back to this world, but my Jacob and my Isaac were not. But my boys' stories are far from lack-luster, though different they may be.

Jesus explains that Lazarus's death and his resurrection were events that were orchestrated to bring direct glory to God. That, in this tragedy-turned-miracle, people would see and believe the Messiah. For, as Jesus says to Mary, "Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?"

Mary believed, and she saw the glory of God in the supernatural healing of her pal, Lazarus.

I believed, with all of my being, in those days of April 2012 and April 2015, that the Lord COULD save, and then, when that didn't happen, that He COULD resurrect, my boys. But I can't honestly say that I believed that He WOULD. My faith in the COULD was solid. My faith in the WOULD was shaky at best.

Had my faith in the WOULD been solid, would that actually have changed my sons' stories from one of death to one of earthly life? Who am I to even say? But what I can say is that, approximately 363 out of 365 days of the year, I can comfortably not ask God these would-have-been and whys.

I know that the Lord desires us to know HIM. That He longs for us to seek Him in hardship and pain. That He uses our tragedies to further His kingdom. That He does not want us to live in eternal punishment.

God has a greater purpose than my comfort and joy - even when that greater purpose looks like my suffering. Suffering is discipline for sin (Hebrews 12:4-17). In fact, He calls us to a life of suffering (Matthew 5:10-12). He wants us to endure trials so that we can, in turn, pursue holiness (1 Peter 1:16).

This is my suffering. It is my story.



There's more to my story - it doesn't end at the gravesides of my children. He makes beautiful things out of dust - even out of the dust of a broken-hearted mommy's cries.

Jacob and Isaac - they're my life's greatest heartbreak. They're the tragedy that broke me and the resurrection of my faith that completely healed me in ways I didn't know I needed healing. They are the calling to my love relationship with a God who has never given up on me, even in my prodigal ways.

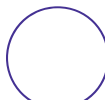
Jacob and Isaac are my ministry. They have given me the platform of M.E.N.D., and have helped me to connect and share Jesus with other broken and lost mommies.

Jesus didn't resurrect Jake and Zac like he did Lazarus. That's not their story.

But let me tell you - their story is beautiful. It is the story of a love relationship with a God who creates miracles and never, ever abandons us. They're the story of a shattered mother's heart being mended so miraculously that the heart itself is a resurrection story. They're the story of surrender and abandon and a desire to give up my comfort to further the Lord.

Do I wonder what it would be like had Jesus shown up two days earlier or come in for a resurrection story? Sometimes. But I also have found gratefulness and comfort in my suffering, and that, I think, means I'm at least on the right track.

## Olivia Abigail

 Olivia Abigail was born, yet never took a breath.

She was wrapped, but never warmed. She

shared a story, yet never spoke a word. But thousands heard her story, including you.

In January 2016, I discovered I was pregnant. We were excited and nervous, like most parents. It was our first pregnancy and everything was going rather well. Nothing out of the ordinary, until it was time for genetic testing to be done. We were sent to a maternal fetal medicine doctor because the results were negative for spina bifida, but not negative for Down Syndrome. It was at this specialist appointment that it was confirmed: everything was normal and healthy. Baby was a girl! We were flooded with relief and even more anticipation.



At 19 weeks, I saw the regular OB to discuss the results; she eased my fears, reassuring me that there was "virtually no chance of miscarrying at this point." I was concerned about some cramping and strange stretching feelings to which she replied, "Welcome to pregnancy. Not everything is going to be comfortable." This was to be the new normal.

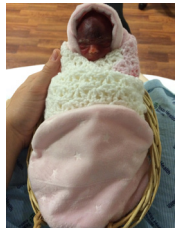
We celebrated Mother's Day knowing we were having a healthy baby girl. I received baby items as gifts, since everyone was so excited. She was the first girl in a long time on my husband's side of the family, and the first grandchild on my side.

That week I began to have some severe cramping, worse than the previous week when I'd discussed it with my doctor. I called in to work, thinking I was just having an off day and needed to rest. I did not know my body was getting ready to go into labor. The

*Written by Mallory Gallagher*  
*Mommy to Olivia*  
M.E.N.D.—*Advisory Board*

following day, my water broke at work. I did not know what was happening or how to proceed, but since there was bleeding, I knew it was not good. I called my husband, Daniel, who said he'd meet me at the doctor. When I called my doctor's office, they told me to go to Labor and Delivery at the hospital. I was so confused! Why was I going there? It wasn't time! It's too early to have the baby!

I gave birth to Olivia Abigail later that night. She never took a breath. After she was washed and measured, they wrapped her in a blanket, handmade with love by someone I will never meet. I was comforted by a nurse in those wee hours of the morning. I never learned her name, but I remember she genuinely cared. She stayed with me for a time while I mourned my daughter, saying, "I'm so sorry. I am so so sorry." It meant the world to me for someone to acknowledge the pain.



We returned home with empty arms, unsure of what to do next. One thing we did know is that we needed God now, more than ever. I was angry with Him, but deep down I knew it was not His will for Olivia to die. We attended church service that weekend and responded to the altar call, going up front for prayer. I could not dare try to speak; I had cried during the entire sermon. Daniel spoke for us both, "We just lost our daughter a few days ago. Our baby died." I will never forget that prayer our brother in Christ prayed over us that day. I could feel his heart grieving with us; he truly cared and reminded us of God's love for us.

This journey through grief has not been easy. Now, four years later, I reflect on who Olivia would be if she were here with us. I wonder what she does in heaven. I imagine her laughing with Jesus, dancing in the breeze. I am thankful that she never knew any of the pain here on earth. I patiently await the day I will hold her in my arms, forever happy and at peace.

# *I Used to Wish It Wasn't My Story*

*Written by Liz Walker*

*Mommy to Alivia*

M.E.N.D.—*Board of Directors*

**Yesterday was a bad dream  
and when I open my eyes,  
I will still have a prego baby pooch,  
and I will be in my bed at home.**

This was my thought. I remember it so specifically after waking up the following day after my loss. I remember the day of our loss like it was yesterday. I still replay it in my head, especially those words.

I opened my eyes the day after my loss, and the story I thought I was on; it was no longer, ended. Unfortunately, that “yesterday” had really happened. I no longer had the baby pooch, no longer carried a baby.

The day had started with me feeling blah, but I was excited we would find out the sex of the baby that day. I had gone to work, and then left early for the doctor. I met my family at the doctor. As my husband, my parents and I were looking at the sonogram, we were told we were having a girl. My father had said “That is amazing; we can see the baby on that little TV.”

## **The News**

My parents were ushered out of the room to the lobby while we waited to see the doctor. Dr. Allen came into the room and told us that my cervix had dilated for some reason to a “two,” and that I would be checked into hospital in the long-term pregnancy area. It was explained so calmly we were not alarmed. We told my parents, and they went to grab lunch planning to meet us after I had been admitted.

I checked into the hospital, and the need to go to the bathroom kept becoming more pressing. I was taken to see the specialist to see what was exactly happening, and went to the bathroom twice due to the pressure on my back. When the doctor arrived, I was on all fours, and my husband was rubbing my back. He told me to lie down, and looked at sonogram as he explained what was happening. Our baby girl was out of her sack and needed to float back into the sack. The pressing I was feeling was labor. He told me I was going to be taken back to long-term care to try to stop the labor. I would be turned upside-down to get her to float back in, and

there was only a 5% chance that would work, and then the doctor left.

## **The Labor**

Labor intensified within 30 seconds of him leaving the room. My requests for knowing what was happening were ignored it seemed; staff were hurrying me out of the office so my screams would not scare the other patients as they rolled me to Labor and Delivery.

I kept thinking “Why am I going to Labor and Delivery when he said we could try? Why was the doctor saying the baby is coming when it’s too early for that? This is hurting bad and someone needs to help me! Oh no what was that? Why am I wet?”

“Water broke,” a doctor said. “We are going to have a baby today.”

My doctor arrived, and told me he was sorry, but I must have the baby today. I asked if the NICU people were coming in to save her. “No, I am sorry, she won’t live through the delivery,” followed by complete silence. People continued to move about, and I would shake my head when asked questions. I watched my husband, Mom and Dad look so sad. They would have to leave and return again repeatedly.

At 5:03 pm, my doctor came to check on me, and said it was time to push. I gave one big push and the doctor said “She is out.” She was taken by the nurse and returned to me. Such a little baby... and not a sound being made.

It was explained I had an incompetent cervix, and there was no way to know this prior to pregnancy. “Why is this my story? I don’t want it! I want to die right now with her! Can you make that happen God, because I can’t live without her?” I thought.

This was the one and only time I saw my husband cry; he wanted this baby just as much as I did. The road for us had not been easy to get to this point; 4 ½ years of infertility, and this was our miracle baby. I went into deep grief, depression and didn’t want to live without her.

A few days after I left the hospital, my milk came in, we held the funeral, people called and visited us. We planted a tree a friend gave us, and I went to bed for a while. We went to a M.E.N.D. support group, made great friends and received the support we needed. I learned how what we were going through was “normal” and necessary to be able to live in this “new normal” in which we found ourselves. I learned how people would say things, and you had to take it with a grain of salt. Not every advice given was one you needed because you were walking in the shoes, not them.

Within a year I was ready to try again and became pregnant on the first try of artificial insemination. I had an incompetent cervix and needed a cerclage. I grew and so much attention was given during this time, it seemed things started changing. I was put on bed rest from December to April. We made it and had a healthy, bouncing baby boy, Jaxson Robert-Allen, weighing 6 pounds and 4 ounces.

### **The Healing**

But that summer I fell apart, and did not understand why. I figured out I had taken my broken soul and rebuilt it on my own without God's help. Total mistake because when we depend on ourselves to mend the hurt, it never works.

There was a recurring dream I had of a broken vase in three different phases. The first phase I saw a hammer shattering the beautiful vase. The second dream was the shattered pieces flying all around in the air. The final part of the dream was when the pieces were put back together. The vase was no longer perfect, it showed the breaks in the pottery and tarnishes, but, because of this,

it was a true masterpiece, worth so much more. That recurring dream spoke to me so much during my grief journey. I was able to understand I was broken by the loss of my daughter, and that if I allowed God to remold and reshape me into his masterpiece, not my own, my life would be so different. By allowing this process to finally happen, my heart grew for the loss community. I wanted to help families who found themselves in the

**I figured out I had taken my broken soul and rebuilt it on my own without God's help. Total mistake because when we depend on ourselves to mend the hurt, it never works.**

shoes my family was in, living with children in heaven.

In the coming years after I allowed God to do this, He made clear the calling I had on my life. After my son was born, I was honored to be the Subsequent Pregnancy Loss leader for the DFW chapter of M.E.N.D. for 10 years. It brought me such joy and great friendships as I was able to encourage and love on families during their next pregnancies and sadly sometimes additional losses. When I began leading the group, I thought that was my calling. As time progressed, I saw there was even more that He wanted me to do. I had to take steps He placed in front of me in order to do this. As time continued, He was teaching me more about trusting Him in the midst of loss and another pregnancy.

In 2012 after 4 ½ years of unsuccessful attempts to become pregnant without infertility treatments, we decided we were content with having a baby in heaven and a son to raise with us since we were not pregnant by our own time line. It is so funny how God allows life to blossom once you are content. In August I learned I was

pregnant. We were in utter shock! I remember sitting in Rebekah Mitchell's house still in shock. She asked me, "Are you pregnant?" and I remember saying the words "Yes I Am."

That pregnancy was a shock in so many ways because it went so well. Cerclage was needed, of course, but no bed rest. I worked until the day before Lauryn Blair decided she wanted to come early. At 35 weeks, a little brown, round-faced little girl arrived. I felt God's love so much more than I had ever felt before. During that pregnancy it was clear He made me unique in every way, and He loved me that way.

In 2011 my family suffered four losses in a six-month period. The most devastating was my father, and I was broken again but in a different way. The kind of grief other types of losses bring are hard to explain, but they hurt deeply as well. Each one taught me something more about grief. Also, He never left me during the losses or the pregnancies or the other losses and never would. I know without a shadow of a doubt that He never leaves me, and I am stronger. Through the crushing and the pressing, He has made new wine in me.

### **My Story**

Through all I have suffered I have been able to accept this is my story. It can't be changed because it is making me into who He wants me to be. I have been able to clearly understand that He has called me to be a counselor specializing in grief and women's restoration. I began school in 2010, and graduated with a Bachelor's in Psychology in 2013. In 2016, I began the journey to get the Master's in Professional Counseling. I should graduate in May of this year, right after Mother's Day. As a mother who has lost a child, a daughter who has lost a father, a sister who lost a sister, an aunt who has lost a nephew, and a friend who has lost a best friend, I know God never has left me and continues to mold me into who He wants me to be. As a woman, I have been disappointed in myself for not being able to do the one thing I was created to do as a woman. I was hard on myself and destroyed my self-esteem in the midst of all of that. The journey on the road to become a counselor has been long, but so worth the remaking of the person God wants me to be and the work He wants me to do. How ironic that in 2006, I became a mother for the calling that He would bring into fruition in 2020 as a Mother's Day gift to me! He is not done by any means because that is only the beginning of the call. I can say today I have truly accepted that this is my story, and there is not one part I would change.

Please let this story of mine encourage you to trust God even in the hurt you may be feeling due to the loss of your baby. He loves you, oh, so much more than you can ever believe. Rest in His promise in Jeremiah 29:11; "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'"

# Wait! What (Not) to Ask When Hope is Deferred

Written by Glenna Marshall

Originally Published in The Gospel Coalition  
on September 25, 2019

wish I were good at waiting. I've sure had lots of practice—15 years of infertility, six years of a chronic pain condition, five years in the adoption process. Yet even with all that experience, I still chafe at how slowly the Lord seems to act when I'm praying for a season to end. I've rarely viewed waiting as anything but a prison. For most of the years, I just wanted out.

We all grapple with unfulfilled desires. Marriage, children, financial stability, physical health—insert your deferred hope here. We long for broken things to be mended, empty things to be filled, tragic things to end. So when we plead with the Lord to change things, but we keep waking to unchanged circumstances, we want to know why. And if we could have a definitive time frame for those changes—even better!

But the Bible doesn't guarantee our deferred hopes will be met with our desired outcomes. Believe me, I've looked. I spent years combing God's Word for a special word that would speak to my empty womb or my broken body. I've longed to know when my waiting will end, and I've wondered why God ordained this path for me. When and why are the questions we ask God the most, but as I worked through Scripture looking for the answers, I discovered I was asking the wrong questions.

## 'Why?' and 'When?' Won't Satisfy

When we can't change our circumstances, we're quick to question why God has let this happen or why he won't change it. Consider Job, who had no inkling of the conversation between God and Satan in Job 1-2. As we read the whole story, we can see purpose in Job's suffering and understand that God was revealing and refining Job's faith. But for Job, it seemed arbitrary.

He longed to know why God had permitted so much sorrow in his life, and he had to endure lecture after lecture from his friends. In the end, God answered Job's why with a who—not with a reason, but with a person. Himself.

When God cuts into the conversation about whether Job's suffering was deserved, he simply describes his mighty acts and unassailable sovereignty. Instead of knowing why he must wait, Job needed to grasp who God was. And remembering that his life was in the hands of his Creator sustained Job. After hearing God's self-declaration, Job came to this conclusion: "I know that you can do all things,

and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. . . . Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know" (Job 42:2-3).

The Lord doesn't fault Job for asking his questions (see Job 42:7), but in his answer to Job, he never explains "why." The truth of God's sovereign wisdom was the answer Job needed, and it was the answer that satisfied him even though he had no explanation for his losses. Job learned he could trust God with his life.

If we can't know the why of our waiting, we often move to when. We long to know that our waiting has a guaranteed expiration date. We can endure, we believe, if we just know when it will end.

The short answer is that there is a guaranteed end to our waiting or suffering, but it's not for us to know when that day will be (Rev. 7:15-17; Matt. 24:36). One day, God will right all wrongs, bringing complete healing and restoration to our bodies and relationships. But eternity can feel like such a long way away, when we're waiting today for a spouse, a child, a diagnosis or treatment, or a way to pay our bills. Perseverance only seems doable if we know how long we'll need to exercise it.

But even if we had a date on the calendar, we'd still find a way to worry about it or try to speed things along. Waiting like that doesn't cultivate trust in the God who cares for us and has ordered our steps. If we hinge our trust in God to a certain, earthly time line, we're not really trusting him. We're trusting in our schedule.

## 'Who?' Will Satisfy

After a decade of waiting, I finally quit asking when and why as I opened my Bible each day. I couldn't bend the Scriptures to say something God hadn't said, and I was weary of trying.

Instead, I began asking, "Who are you, God?" Over the next two years (while still waiting for my circumstances to change), I wrote down all the things I learned about God from Scripture each day. Stacks of spiral notebooks piled up, each page filled with notes about his character, kindness, love, mercy, grace. I'd known these facts in my head, but now I saw them revealed every day. In pain and grief—and in joy and laughter—I learned that he is holy, just, wise, sovereign, faithful, and present.

Learning about God's character taught me to trust him, to wait with peace because he has proven himself faithful time and again. He sent Jesus to meet my greatest need in paying for my sins at the cross. Such a gracious and kind God can be trusted with my waiting

for other, lesser needs. As Paul encourages us: "He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32).

As we wait with deferred hopes, may we find comfort in God's unchanging character, knowing that our ultimate hope is anchored in him.

About the Author: Glenna Marshall is married to her pastor, William, and lives in rural southeast Missouri, where she tries to keep up with her two energetic sons. She is the author of *The Promise Is His Presence* (P&R, 2019). You can connect with her at [glennamarshall.com](http://glennamarshall.com), where she writes about suffering, biblical literacy, and God's faithfulness.



## Hay Más a Mi Historia

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

Me siento como aquellos que me conocen, conocen mi historia, o al menos la mayor parte. Saben que mi esposo, Byron, y yo tenemos un hijo vivo que está casado y que se convirtió en papá el verano pasado, lo que nos convierte en nuevos abuelos. La gente conoce mi historia por M.E.N.D.. - El ministerio que comencé en 1996, un año después de que nuestro bebé Jonathan nació sin vida debido a un accidente de cordón. Así que, si me conocen, están familiarizados con M.E.N.D. y cómo y por qué estoy involucrada con una organización de pérdida de embarazo y infantil. Saben por qué tenemos un solo hijo y por qué el nacimiento de nuestro nieto, Elias Jonathan, el año pasado fue una adición tan hermosa y emocional a nuestra familia. Si realmente me conocen, saben que una enfermedad renal degenerativa avanzada nos impidió quedar embarazados nuevamente después de que Jonathan muriera, y saben que eventualmente tuve un trasplante de riñón. Pero una cosa que un buen número de personas no sabe acerca de mi historia, o tal vez simplemente olvidaron, es el bebé que concebimos, y pronto perdimos a través de un malparto después de mi trasplante. Ese pequeño es sin duda una parte de mi historia, pero es un detalle que se deja de lado, y por qué es así, realmente no estoy segura. Pero, de hecho, mi historia es que tengo dos hijos en el cielo, y uno aquí en la tierra.

Sin embargo, me pregunto si mi historia permanecerá después de unirme a mis bebés en el cielo. ¡Seguramente espero que sí! Primero rezo de que M.E.N.D. viva hasta el fin de los tiempos. Y en segundo, espero que mis hijos y nietos y las generaciones siguientes cuenten mi historia. Es mi

deseo que recuerden o se les diga, "oye, conoces a tu Glammie, bueno, ella perdió devastadoramente a dos bebés y ella ..." Quiero que esa oración se complete con palabras de fuerza, fe y perseverancia. No que termine con algo como, "... simplemente la destruyó. La arruinó. Ella vivió el resto de su vida como una mujer enojada y amargada ". Muy cierto que sentí todas esas cosas durante mis principios meses de dolor y, a veces, incluso cuando mis emociones más profundas se desencadenan. Pero no es así cómo vivo mi vida hoy. Se necesitó mucho trabajo duro, oración y perseverancia para superar esos sentimientos crudos.

Sí, nuestros bebés que murieron siempre serán parte de la historia de nuestra vida que nunca, y nunca deben ser borrados. Pero, ¿cuáles serán los capítulos finales de tu historia? ¿Qué legado dejarás no solo para ti, sino también para tu bebé? Planifique hoy que su historia terminará en triunfo. Determine que aquellos que cuentan su historia en los años venideros la terminarán con belleza y fuerza, no con cenizas y destrucción. Con el tiempo, con la ayuda del Señor, trabaje en la reconstrucción y restauración de lo que se arruinó en su vida y en su familia. Ciertamente, no puede reemplazar a su bebé que murió, pero puede renovar su fe, su esperanza y su legado. Lea las palabras inspiradas del profeta Isaías en el capítulo 61. Deje que esta declaración la aliente y fortalezca para reparar su quebrantamiento y la desafíe a terminar su historia con valentía, valor, alegría y alabanza. Puede llevar mucho tiempo llegar allí, lo sé, ¡pero puede hacerlo!

“... otorgarles una corona de belleza en lugar de cenizas, el aceite de la alegría en lugar de llorar, y una prenda de alabanza en lugar de desesperación. Serán llamados robles de justicia, una plantación del señor para mostrar su esplendor. Reconstruirán las ruinas antiguas y restaurarán los lugares devastados por mucho tiempo; renovarán las ciudades en ruinas que han sido devastadas por generaciones.”

## In the Middle..." continued from page 7.

posted on social media, "It's awful when you need a community, but you cannot have a community."

There have been many creative solutions that have developed. Some funeral homes are providing online guest books to virtually sign or live-streaming services with only four to five people present to maintain social distancing. Some mourners view the body from a drive-by window at the funeral home. Connecting with family members through virtual media software (e.g., FaceTime, Skype, Zoom, etc.) is better than nothing, but it is not the same as a hug or simply a touch of another human hand.

It does not matter the age or circumstances of the one who died, the ripping pain can be the same. When someone is mourning the death of their baby, it becomes even more difficult to get through the struggles of the family's grief. There may not be any family photos to remember this whisper of special love that was only on earth for a short time. Often people are left to make this grief journey with the impersonal virtual connection of a face on the other side of the monitor screen. The death can also represent more than physical loss. It is the loss of future dreams and hopes. What can you do when there is nothing to do? No flowers to send; no casseroles to deliver? There are no "rules" to address grief, whatever the age or circumstances during this pandemic situation that has commanded everyone's attention on some level.

Here are a few helpful suggestions:

- Do not minimize what someone is going through.
- Validate their feelings - whatever they are. Let them know whatever they are feeling is perfectly normal.
- Make an attempt to reach out regularly - whether by mail, text, phone, email, or virtual visits through Skype, Zoom, or Face Time. (There are others, but these will get you started.)
- Listen, but do not try to "fix the situation." One of the best things we can do to support someone who is grieving is to "hold space for them."
- Virtually gather as family and friends to share your favorite stories or memories. These can be so powerful!
- Send a care package with self-care items like a journal, adult coloring book, gift card for a local restaurant and include the delivery costs.
- Find a place outside to share some beautiful scenery and remember that God is still in control of everything! In the middle of chaos, nature remains with the open air, the trees and fields, the beautiful flowers, the sun by day and the stars of heaven by night.

When we slow down to observe all that is around us, we can behold God's beauty and His Sovereignty. This remains true even today in the middle of the current chaos.

## My Story

*Written by Alicia Ramirez*

*Mommy to Ezra Robert and Abbie Grace*

My story of loss  
 Is not one I'd like to share,  
 It is one I have to.  
 It is not stationary,  
 It is constantly evolving.  
 It is future plans unraveled.  
 Dreams shattered.  
 Grief overwhelming.  
 But then Jesus,  
 He has been my comforter,  
 My Way maker,  
 And my Joy giver.  
 In the darkest hours  
 Of my deepest grief  
 I have been loved.  
 I have been comforted.  
 I have cried.  
 I have laughed.  
 I have prayed,  
 Even when I had no words.  
 My arms may be empty,  
 But my heart is full.  
 And my story isn't over yet.

## Subsequent Births

### Celebrating our Rainbow Babies

**C.J. and Emily Woolf,**  
 of Springfield, Missouri,  
 joyfully announce the arrival of  
 Nolan John,  
 born March 25, 2020,  
 measuring 7 lbs., 14 oz.,  
 and 17.75 inches long.  
 The family lovingly remembers  
 Freya,  
 stillborn October 17, 2018,  
 and Baby Girl,  
 miscarried February 28, 2019

# In Loving Memory

## Thank YOU for your support

### **Abraham Peace Cobb**

Given by Daniel Davidson

### **Abigail Grace Crump**

July 1, 2003

Trisomy 18

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

### **Riley and Parker Davis**

November 14, 2006

Premature

Given by parents Rob and Cheryl Davis and siblings Annalise and Owen

### **Grace Kathryn Dell**

March 17, 2008

PPROM

### **Rose Dell**

Miscarried January 3, 2014

Parents: Rachel and Peter Dell

Siblings: Zeke, Kye, Izaiah, Zeffy and Tirzah

Given by great-aunt Barbara Zimbric

### **Autumn Lee Deville**

Given by Jennifer Franks

### **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

### **Serenity Harrison**

Miscarried December 3, 2009

Given by parents Curtis and Jennifer Harrison and siblings Levi, Ziva and Evie

### **Alessandro Benjamin Hood**

Given by Susan and Greg Suhling

### **Kavya Kurishungal**

December 17-31, 2009

Complications from an omphalocele

Given by parents Pravin and Tina Kurishungal and siblings Jacob and Kyra

### **Zachary James Law**

October 1-17, 2017

Given by parents Carrie and Irwin Law

### **Jackson Glen and Tyler Ray Light**

February 23, 2009

Placental abruption

Given by parents Kirk and Diana Light and siblings Brayden and Lexi

### **Sophia Rose McGhee**

Stillborn March 29, 2010

Unknown cause

### **Baby McGhee**

Miscarried July 2002

### **Baby McGhee II**

Miscarried January 2009

### **Baby McGhee III**

Miscarried April 2009

Gifts given by parents Matt and Stacy McGhee and siblings Micah and Scarlett

### **Chloe Mesko**

Given by Pascale Mesko

### **Chase Austin Miller**

April 21, 2011

Incompetent cervix

### **Baby Miller**

Miscarried May 4, 2015

Given by parents Greg and Stefanie Miller and sisters Cora, Hazel and Violet

### **Judah Joseph Miller**

Stillborn February 14, 2017

### **Ester Emerald Miller**

Miscarried July 10, 2017

Gifts given by Mommy Jennifer Miller Pepsico Foundation

### **Jonathan Daniel Mitchell**

Stillborn June 24, 1995

Cord accident

### **Baby Mitchell**

Miscarried December 2001

Given by parents Byron and Rebekah Mitchell

### **Emma Grace Myrow**

Stillborn September 18, 2017

Cord accident

Parents: Hayley and Keenan Myrow

Little brother: Logan

Given by Susan Smith

### **Lillian Belle Noto**

Stillborn January 10, 2019

Unknown cause

### **Eden Noto**

Miscarried September 2014

Parents: Jeffrey and Anna Noto

Siblings: Connor, Emalyn and Renée

Given by Mariel Sawicki

Thank you to those who recently held a Facebook fundraising campaign or donated to M.E.N.D. through one of these. We are so thankful for our family and friends who show love and support during activities like these or other areas such as sharing about M.E.N.D., assisting at events, or simply and most importantly, praying for us.

### **Christopher and Joey**

Given by Jessica Reeves

### **Jaxson Kolt Scifres**

Stillborn November 27, 2016

Cord accident and inverted placenta

Parents: Melissa and Justin Scifres

Little sister: Fiona

Given by grandmother Tammy Vickers

### **Mindy and Maggie Smith**

Stillborn November 4, 1997

TTTS and Polyhydramnios

Given by parents Scott and Karla Smith

and siblings Travis and Julia

### **Geo Strawbridge**

Given by Karen Strawbridge

### **Catherine Grace Wilkerson**

August 10-12, 2012

HELLP Syndrome

### **Baby Wilkerson #3**

Miscarried August 15, 2019

Parents: Kara and Charlie Wilkerson

Brother: Cannon

Given by Nancy Chapman and Margaret McAnally

### **Harry Thomas Wilson**

October 1, 2019

Mommy: Cheryl Wilson

Given by Priya Luedtke

### **Adrian Joseph "AJ" Zuckerman**

Stillborn March 30, 2007

Cord accident

Given by parents Al and Amber Zuckerman

and brothers Eli and Alex

### **Gifts of Support:**

Christ Church Assembly of God, Fort Worth, TX

Second Baptist Church, Springfield, MO

Colleyville Woman's Club, Colleyville, TX

April Jenkins

Bonita Jones

Sean Szaller

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 magazine and other services to bereaved parents free of charge. For more information on how you can support M.E.N.D., please see the "About M.E.N.D." section in the back of this magazine.

# M.E.N.D. CHAPTER UPDATES

## Greater Houston Area

M.E.N.D.–Greater Houston Area raised over \$5,000 for our Bears for Babies fundraiser. Thank you to all who gave so we can provide hundreds of bears to hospitals in the Greater Houston Area, so mommies and daddies who have to leave the hospital without their baby will at least have a bear to hold and remember their babies. We could never



do this without you. We will deliver the bears to hospitals as soon as restrictions regarding COVID-19 are lifted. In these hard times filled with uncertainty, we are here for you always and will support you in any way we can.

*Stormy*

## Bryan/College Station, Texas

M.E.N.D.–Bryan/College Station just celebrated our 10 year anniversary! We are so thankful for all the doors God has opened for us. We are also thankful for all the families we have met over the years. Although we wish we had met under different circumstances, we have enjoyed getting to know them and learning about their beautiful babies. Although these are scary and difficult times, I am glad we can all stay connected via our virtual support groups so we can encourage each other through our grief journeys.



*Jennie*

## MidMichigan

M.E.N.D.–MidMichigan would like to thank everyone for their financial and prayer support during the pandemic. Because of your support, we are able to touch more families during their grief journey of losing a child.



*Karen*

## Denver, Colorado

M.E.N.D.–Denver is participating “virtually” with all our families in our M.E.N.D.ing Miles Virtual 5k. Please continue to watch our facebook page for information on support groups for Zoom links or in-person meetings.



*Kimberly*

## Lynchburg, Virginia

M.E.N.D.–Lynchburg anxiously waits to hold our first support group for the families in our area. Our opening is on hold due to COVID-19. Please continue to watch our Facebook page for when our first support group will be held. If you do need someone to talk to, please feel free to contact me at [melissa@mend.org](mailto:melissa@mend.org), or connect with other families through our Facebook group or online support groups. I am still praying for all of you, especially with Mother's Day and Father's Day approaching. I hope you can find a blessing in these days as you reflect on memories of your babies.



We are thankful to be adding Lori as an assistant to our team. If you are interested in becoming an assistant, volunteering or donating to our chapter, please contact me.

*Melissa*

## Tulsa, Oklahoma

M.E.N.D.–Tulsa held online support groups the last couple of months. We are thankful for the opportunity to serve grieving moms during difficult times.



*Cat*

## San Antonio, Texas

M.E.N.D.–San Antonio is holding our support groups online for the time being, but hope and pray we will be able to gather again soon. We have been checking on members periodically as times of high stress can often exacerbate grief. We are still looking forward to the M.E.N.D.ing Miles Virtual 5k in early May. The beauty of a virtual 5k is we can still participate while social distancing!



*Katie*

## Online Support

The Online Support group continues to grow, and we are working on ways to continue to engage our moms who do not have a M.E.N.D. chapter near them. The next nation-wide online support groups will be May 21 and June 18. Please complete the Online Information form found on the M.E.N.D. website to receive the meeting link. Hope to see you there.



*LaRhessa*



## Columbus, Ohio

M.E.N.D.–Columbus, Ohio continues to connect with families in the Columbus area. While these uncertain times are tough on us all, we want to express thanks and gratitude for the support and donations we have received. While COVID-19 guidelines limit social interaction, we invite you to join our Facebook group to watch for details on upcoming support groups.

As the holidays approach, we are praying for a gentle and peaceful time for you. Holidays can be joyous occasions but are sometimes painful and bittersweet. If you need prayer or to talk, please know we are here and willing to help comfort and encourage you in any way we can...you are NOT alone!

Lastly, we are seeking to expand our dedicated team! We desire to add assistants to help serve the grieving families of Columbus. Please contact me at [latrina@mend.org](mailto:latrina@mend.org) if you are interested in becoming an assistant, donating, volunteering or inquiring more about our services. Our prayers are with you, your families, and all essential workers.

*LaTrina*



## Southwest Missouri

I am deeply humbled to walk alongside you during this time. Not only am I learning how to lead as a new Chapter Director, but I'm also learning how to facilitate our support group online and how to support you in your grief journey when we cannot be together in person. We have had several join us on our online groups. Even if it has been a while since you have been to a support group, I want to encourage you to join us during this time. Please know you are never alone in your grief journey. We are here for you. My email is [rachel@mend.org](mailto:rachel@mend.org), and my phone number is 417-770-0600 if you need to connect with someone.

Our Craft Day Fundraiser set for April 25, 2020, was postponed until the fall. We will announce a date at a later time. Much love and prayers for you all.

*Rachel*



## Men of M.E.N.D.

As word is spreading about us, the Men of M.E.N.D. online chapter is growing. In order to accommodate more people, we held a poll to determine the best time for the majority to attend online support groups. Please follow Men of M.E.N.D. on Facebook for details of our next support group.

*Russell*



## NW Washington

Thank you to all who participated in our MOD Pizza Fundraiser! It was a great success, raising nearly \$300.



We continue to welcome new families to M.E.N.D.–NW Washington via Facebook and our online support groups. We are working with them through their grief and praying for them as new challenges arise during this time of uncertainty and changes in our hospitals for patients experiencing the loss of a baby. Please pray with us!

*Stacy*

## Chicagoland

M.E.N.D.–Chicagoland knows that all of the stress due to COVID-19 has added another layer to the hurt newly grieving families are experiencing. We honor each of the moms and dads in our chapter who are missing their children this Mother's Day and Father's Day. We are thankful for the support that has been received by our chapter as a result of the many Chicagoland families who took part in the virtual 5k. This enables us to continue to serve grieving families throughout the year.



*Sara*

## Palm Beach, Florida

These last few months have been tough for everyone globally with COVID-19 threatening our health, finances and loved ones. This can be a scary time for most and can magnify our grief and sorrow because of how much we've lost already. At M.E.N.D.–Palm Beach we have taken this time to pray for each one of our families and those on the front lines because our hospitals' staff and first responders are exposing themselves every day they go to work just to help our community through this crisis. We hope you've had the opportunity to do the same as you reflect on the happy memories you have of your baby or babies. My hope is that you've stayed connected via text, email, or social media with other members of your M.E.N.D. family to help each other through this difficult time. Please remember I'm always available if you need to talk, anytime, and I encourage you to take advantage of our virtual support groups until we can meet again. For now, I continue to hope and pray that you and your loved ones are staying safe!.



*Jessica*

## 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 magazine, and our website at [www.mend.org](http://www.mend.org). For inquiries, subscription requests, deletions, and submissions to the magazine, contact us at:

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(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 magazine 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  
Pregnancy Loss and Infant Death Alliance



international  
stillbirth alliance



## M.E.N.D. Leadership

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Co-Editors: Byron and Rebekah Mitchell

### Magazine Volunteers

Rachel Dell, Sara Elliott  
and Stormy Mitchell

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

Mommies AND Daddies are both welcome at all M.E.N.D. support groups. Unless otherwise noted, all support groups are held at: 800 W. Airport Freeway Irving, TX 75062 (building with black windows, located off 183, between MacArthur and O'Connor). Support groups are held in the building's board room on the first floor. For more information, call (972) 506-9000.

M.E.N.D. chapter support groups are held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of every month from 7:30 - 9:00 PM

Daddies group meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of March, June, Sept. and Dec., from 7:30 - 9:00 PM  
Moms and dads meet together for introductions before dividing into two groups for discussion.

### Parenting Groups:

Subsequent pregnancy group  
meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday  
from 7:30 - 9:00 PM

Led by Marisa Perry: [marisa@mend.org](mailto:marisa@mend.org)  
For families who are considering  
becoming pregnant or are currently  
pregnant after a loss.

Parenting After Loss groups are for families  
raising living children after a loss.

Parenting After Loss Playgroup  
(children welcome)

Currently it meets in Irving at the play  
area inside Irving Bible Church, but will  
eventually meet in various locations

For more details, contact:  
Corley Rinaldi at [Corley@mend.org](mailto:Corley@mend.org).

# M.E.N.D.

## Chapter Information

### M.E.N.D.–NW Washington

Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday at 6:30 PM  
The Oak Table Cafe'  
3290 NW Mt. Vintage Way  
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 PM  
Project H.O.P.E.  
1419 S. Enterprise Ave  
Springfield, Missouri 65804  
Director: Rachel Dell  
rachel@mend.org, (417) 770-0600

### M.E.N.D.–Bryan/College Station

Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday at 7:30 PM  
Hawthorne Suites  
1010 University Drive East  
College Station, Texas 77840  
Director: Jennie Drude  
jennie@mend.org, (402) 704-6363

### M.E.N.D.–Tulsa, Oklahoma

Meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday at 7:00 PM  
Canyon Crossing  
1651 E Old North Rd.  
Sand Springs, Oklahoma 74063  
Director: Cat Markham  
cat@mend.org, (918) 694-4325 (HEAL)

### M.E.N.D.–Columbus, Ohio

Meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday, at 6:30 PM  
Paul Mitchell-The School of Columbus  
3000 Morse Road  
(Upstairs Conference Room)  
Columbus, Ohio 43231  
Director: LaTrina Bray  
latrina@mend.org (614) 530-5128

### M.E.N.D.–Chicagoland, Illinois

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

### M.E.N.D.–Palm Beach, Florida

Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday at 7:00 PM  
Embark Lake Worth  
3927 Hadjes Dr  
Lake Worth, FL 33467  
(close to Turnpike and Lake Worth Rd)  
Director: Jessica Gaddie  
Jessica@mend.org, (561) 843-3509

### M.E.N.D.–MidMichigan

Meets the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday, at 7:00 PM  
Ashman Plaza  
713 Ashman Street  
Midland, Michigan 48640  
Director: Karen Kilbourn  
karen@mend.org, (989) 577-5755

### M.E.N.D.–Denver

Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday at 7:00 PM  
Journey Church  
9009 Clydesdale Rd.  
Castle Rock, Colorado 80108  
Director: Kimberly Adams  
kimberly@mend.org, (720) 593-0166

### M.E.N.D.–San Antonio, Texas

Meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday, at 7:00 PM  
8620 N New Braunfels Ave  
San Antonio, Texas 78217  
Director: Katie McClelland  
katie@mend.org

### M.E.N.D.–Lynchburg, Virginia

Coming Soon!  
Director: Melissa Scifres  
melissa@mend.org

### M.E.N.D.–Greater Houston Area

Greater Houston Area Main Chapter:  
Meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday at 7:30 PM  
Lone Star College,  
3200 College Park Dr, Room A228,  
The Woodlands, Texas 77384  
Greater Houston Area Director:  
Stormy Mitchell  
stormym@mend.org, (405) 529-6363

### Satellites in Greater Houston Chapter:

Katy, Texas:  
Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday at 7:00 PM  
Katy Community Fellowship  
24102 Kingsland Blvd  
Katy, Texas 77494  
Katy Director:  
Kessi Wilhite, kessi@mend.org  
Kingwood Area, Texas:  
Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday at 6:30 PM  
6450 Kings Parkway  
Kingwood, Texas 77346  
At Rosemont Assisted Living,  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Community Room  
Kingwood Director:  
Nikisha Perry, nikisha@mend.org

### Subsequent pregnancy group

Meets every other month  
on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday at 7:30 PM,  
led by Stormy Mitchell  
(stormym@mend.org)

### Daddies group

Meets quarterly  
on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday at 7:30 PM,  
led by Greg Miller  
(stefaniem@mend.org)

## Online Support

M.E.N.D.–Online Support Group  
Held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday at 9:00 PM (CST)  
to join, contact  
Director: LaRhesa Johnson  
LaRhesa@mend.org

### Men of M.E.N.D.

Held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday at 8:00 PM (CST)  
to join, contact,  
Director: Russell Gaddie  
Russell@mend.org  
Facebook Group:  
[www.facebook.com/groups/MENofMEND](http://www.facebook.com/groups/MENofMEND)



The Garden of Hope is a place of peace and solace where families can come for a quiet time of reflection, prayer, or even to celebrate the life of their loved one.

The Garden of Hope was established by M.E.N.D. in 2016, and is located on property of Calvary Church in Irving, Texas.



You can remember your loved one by purchasing a brick in the Garden of Hope. Brick purchases can be made at <https://www.mend.org/garden-of-hope>. Bricks purchased by August 15, 2020, will be installed prior to the Walk to Remember in October 2020.

M.E.N.D. Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death  
PO Box 631566, Irving, TX 75063  
USA  
(972) 506-9000  
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**M.E.N.D.ing Miles  
Virtual 5K  
May 3 – 10, 2020**

Taking steps for those who never did.



**Don't think you can 5k? You CAN!**

Support M.E.N.D. with a walk at the park, run on the treadmill, riding a bike, dancing... move virtually **anyWHERE** and **anyTIME**! You can even break up the distance between several days if you need to!

**Get all the details & register at**

[www.mend.org/virtual5k](http://www.mend.org/virtual5k)