



Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death

Miscarriage, Stillbirth and Infant Loss Support

Volume 27, Issue 1

January/February 2022

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To Share or Not To Share

"So tell me about your family."

An innocent question asked
over a cup of coffee.

For many moms and dads, though,
we pause:

"Should I tell my story?
Am I emotionally able
to tell my story?
Am I able to handle
their reactions to my story?
Or my emotions if
I choose not to share?"

Our stories are sacred to us,
treasured in our hearts.

Yet we are the only ones who can
share the story of our children.

And sometimes sharing our story
gives them permission to tell their
child's story.

We hope this issue will provide you
with comfort, whether you chose to
share or not to share the story of
your sweet little baby(ies).

In this issue...

Jewelry Tells a Story

Many of us have special jewelry
in honor of our babies. Becky
shares the story behind her
pieces of jewelry.

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Inviting Others to Share

Tiffany shares the story of her
struggles in her loss, and how
she responds now to others
with an opening to share their
story.

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Treasured in My Heart

The journey of grief for Joyce
has been filled with questions
and struggles, yet finds peace
in the Chicagoland M.E.N.D.
Christmas tree.

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March/April Topic

Lasts - Deciding When and How to Cope
Deadline: January 31, 2022

May/June Topic

Holiday Issue
Deadline: March 30, 2022

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to be published in future issues, both in the print version and online, unless a letter's author expressly requests it not be published.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

<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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As a national organization, M.E.N.D. Leadership continues to monitor conditions in the United States relating to COVID-19. Since restrictions differ in each state, please follow your chapter on Facebook or connect with your Chapter Director for updates regarding support groups. For information on support groups, including the M.E.N.D. Nationwide Support Group that meets year-round, please see page 15.



Feature Article

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

As year after year passes since the loss of our baby(ies), people assume we no longer think of them during the holidays.

I am an extremely open person and will pretty much tell anyone anything about myself they want to know. I have never been private about my baby losses nor my health issues. And, I'm a very inquisitive person. I ask people a lot of questions about themselves, that I suppose comes across as nosy sometimes when really, I just care and am curious. I want to know others better and hear their stories. I share details and I like to find out details.

Although I'm very willing to talk about my two babies in heaven, I'm sometimes guarded because I know I could be setting myself up for an insensitive comment or a shocked and horrified facial expression.

When I was pregnant with Jonathan, I ran into a high school friend and her mom at a children's boutique. My childhood friend was also expecting a baby, so we excitedly talked for quite a while and discovered our due dates were almost the same day. A few months after Jonathan was stillborn, I took my then 4-year-old to get his haircut. While sitting in the salon waiting for my son, coincidentally my friend's mom walked in. After greeting her, I noticed her looking back and forth from my little boy getting his haircut back to me, and I knew she must be wondering where my newborn was. Sure enough, she sat down next to me and innocently said, "Where's your new baby?" The hair salon was very small and most of the employees knew about my loss. When this woman asked the question, you could practically hear a pin drop. I felt as though all the hair stylists were holding their breath, waiting to hear how I was going to respond. I took a deep breath myself, and told her what happened. For some reason, I felt brave enough to pull a picture of Jonathan out of my purse to show her. She took the photo out of my hand and studied it for a second. She looked confused and questioned, "I thought

you said he was stillborn." I said, "He was". With wide eyes she asked, "You mean he's dead in this picture?" I softly replied, "Yes." She literally tossed the picture in my lap and exclaimed, "Why would you show me that?!"

I learned that day not everyone is comfortable with talking about babies dying. People just want to close a blind eye and a deaf ear to the horror of infant death. That experience did not stop me from talking about Jonathan, but it definitely caused me to be more careful. Over the years I experienced more of those awkward and heartbreaking situations. That is why I am passionate about educating others concerning pregnancy and infant loss, and giving fellow loss moms permission to talk about their babies. The death of our babies should not be a secret, considered shameful, or something we don't feel okay sharing. Therefore, it's up to us to teach those who have not endured the loss of a baby about our sorrow, explain that our babies are our children forever, and they will always be a part of our lives, no matter how many years go by or how many living children we may go on to have.

I know sharing your baby and your experience with others could set you up for more sadness, but it may also open the door for unexpected compassion and understanding. Don't be afraid to talk about your baby, for you never know what story your listener may have to share with you. If they don't understand, shake the dust off your feet and try to move on. Not everyone will get it, but likely more than you think do sadly understand from either their own personal experience, or from someone close to them. Allow those who truly do care to love on you, and if needed, you certainly may be able to comfort them as well.

*"...that we may comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God."
2 Corinthians 1:4*

To Share or Not to Share

Birthday Tributes



Happy 1st Birthday, Princess Ava!

How has it been one year?! One year since Daddy and I heard your first cry, and held you for our first family photo? We can only imagine the sassy, feisty, adventurous and smart little girl you're growing into! Your cousin, Robert, picks the prettiest flowers for you and wishes he could hug you! Nana sends hugs and kisses with lots of love! Mema, Pop-Pop, Titi Tiff and Titi Lizzy send their love and wish they could spoil you rotten! We wish you could be here to celebrate on earth! Until then, we'll keep looking for your monarch butterflies. Until we meet again, Princess, we love you so much!

Ava Josephine Lacy
January 29–February 5, 2021
Heart failure due to several CHDs
Parents: Jennifer and Willie Lacy IV



Happy 3rd Birthday, Addie!

Happy 3rd birthday to our sweet Addie! We look forward to celebrating your special day like we always do. Any amount of time we get to celebrate you is always enjoyable. While you may have only been physically with us for a short time you're ALWAYS in our hearts. You are missed and loved so much! Hugs and kisses!

Love,
 Mommy, Daddy, Riley, Yaya,
 PawPaw, TeeTee, and Uncle Corey

Adele Haven Sutherlun
January 29, 2019
Bilateral renal agenesis
Parents: Kristin Neathery and Aaron Sutherlun
Sister: Riley



Happy 1st Birthday, Jaxon!

To our precious boy, we may have only spent 14 weeks with you in my tummy, but we love you more than anything.

Jaxon Reign Villarreal
Miscarried January 14, 2021
Incompetent cervix
Parents: Thomas and Briana Villarreal



Happy 5th Birthday, Cora!

Wishing you a happy heavenly birthday, sweet baby Cora. We can't believe you would have been 5 years old. Not a day goes by without us thinking of you and what you would be doing. We miss and love you tremendously.

Cora Anne Casarez
January 20, 2017
Cord accident
Parents: Leslie and Andrew Casarez
Sister: Agnes Marie



Happy 5th Birthday, Emelyn!

Celebrate big in heaven.
 You are dearly loved and missed!
 Love,
 Mommy and Daddy

Emelyn Rose
January 14, 2016
Ectopic pregnancy
Also remembering
Baby Joel Munoz
2018
Parents: Allison and Joel Munoz Jr.



Happy 15th Birthday, Baby C!

You are forever loved and missed
 more than you know!
 Mummy, Daddy, Mario and Gabe

Baby C
Miscarried February 2007
Also remembering
Isaiah Matthew Campbell
February 4 - April 22, 2008
Sudden Unexplained Infant Death Syndrome (S.I.D.S)
Parents: Raymond and Caroline Campbell
Siblings: Mario and Gabriel



Jewelry Shares a Story

*Written by Becky Luedtke
Mommy to Evelyn Faith
M.E.N.D.—Chicagoland*

Jewelry often tells a story. I have received two lovely necklaces. A dear friend gifted one that has a nest with a Mama bird, two turquoise eggs for our living children, and one pearl egg for our Evelyn Faith, born too soon. On the Mama bird, Isaiah 43:1-2 is engraved on the back. Compliments are often heard when this necklace is worn. A breath is taken each time, "Thank you" is always said, and then I brace myself for how much of my story I am willing to share.

My husband gave me my most treasured necklace. The first Mother's Day after each of our children were born, I received a pendant with our baby's birthstone. Our third child, Evelyn Faith, entered heaven at 18 weeks in my pregnancy; she only knows perfect love. A few weeks after losing her was Mother's Day. That day, I was given a pendant with all three birthstones: a pearl, an aquamarine, and a tiny diamond. Unfortunately, one day years later, the clasp broke, and the necklace was lost. Despite a lot of searching, it was not found. Grief hit me hard, yet then I realized things are things, and she continues to be perfectly loved in heaven. We will always remember and love her. It has been six years since losing her; grief is present, yet changes over time. This year, her "heaven date" was peaceful. I reflected on the blessings she has given us, the friendships and connections made, the gift of being more compassionate and the ability to comfort others. Her greatest gift to me has been learning true peace, even in the midst of a storm.

I have recently heard the phrase "Grow through what you go through", and then saw a ring with leaves. This ring will remind me of all that I have learned and how I have grown by what we have gone through. I encourage and pray that over time, that you will also "grow through what you go through."



Isaiah 43:1-2

"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have summoned you by name; you are mine.

When you pass through the waters,
I will be with you;

and when you pass through the rivers,
they will not sweep over you.

When you walk through the fire,
you will not be burned;
the flames will not set you ablaze.

Inviting Others to Share

Written by Tiffany Marshall

*Mommy to Baby Jordan, Everleigh Grace and Annabelle Rose
M.E.N.D.—Tulsa*

As a little girl I remember telling my grandmother that I wanted to have identical twin girls someday. She smiled, and said, "They are so cute, but it's very rare to have identical twins." Still I quietly held the dream in my heart. I grew up, got married, and had a daughter, a heartbreaking miscarriage, and then another daughter. On the 2-year anniversary of my first loss, I learned I was expecting twins, and a few weeks later, I learned they were identical twin girls. I felt like I was living in a fairytale.

It's been nearly six years since my identical twin daughters, Everleigh Grace and Annabelle Rose, were born sleeping. My dream was shattered. Friends and family offered platitudes, prayers, and comments that were well-meaning, but utterly unhelpful. Most were uncomfortable with my grief struggling to look into my swollen, blood shot eyes and just be present with me.

In the direct aftermath, I couldn't leave my house. I had already been so disappointed by others' discomfort surrounding my losses that I didn't want questions and comments to come up after church or during a trip to the grocery store with my living children. "Will you try for a boy?" some would ask. "Your girls are so adorable. Will you have any more?" Before loss, questions of

this kind delighted me. I enjoyed talking about my children and my dreams for our family. After loss, the questions stirred anger, longing and sorrow. In the early days it was difficult to know how to respond.

I have a deep need to tell my children's stories, so at some point along the way I decided to answer kindly, but honestly when questions arose. I would offer a response like, "I'm not sure what's next. My journey into motherhood has been more difficult than I thought it would be," or "I always dreamed of having more children, but it's not been an easy journey for me, so I'm not sure." I have found these responses often open the door for dialogue. My hope in doing so is that others sense my invitation to share their own stories freely, and that they would hear mine. It's always a risk, but it's one I've decided to take almost every time.

I don't share the sacred details with strangers. I have a handful of friends who know my whole journey, and a good therapist who holds my babies' stories with great care and kindness. Several of the women in my M.E.N.D. group have heard my three children's stories so many times they could recite the stories themselves. I know their children's names and their stories also. I like that there are places like M.E.N.D. where the really difficult details can be spoken and held by others. I will forever share when given the opportunity, and I hope others feel my invitation to share their own stories.

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





Treasured in My Heart

Written by Joyce Barabicho
Mommy to Baby Raul
M.E.N.D.—Chicagoland

To tell or not to tell is sometimes a dilemma for us that we can only wish we never had to even think about. I know for me personally, I do not openly share with strangers. I think my struggle is with people’s reaction of feeling uncomfortable about my answer. It’s so much easier to say how many living children I have than share about the one who is not.

Don’t get me wrong, I’m very open on my social media about my loss. Many of my friends who took a front row seat when it was occurring are still here and know firsthand the true anguish I experienced at the time. Others have learned from my occasional postings regarding M.E.N.D. or posting tributes.

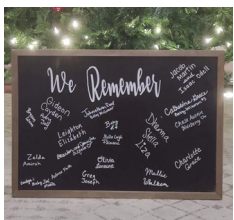
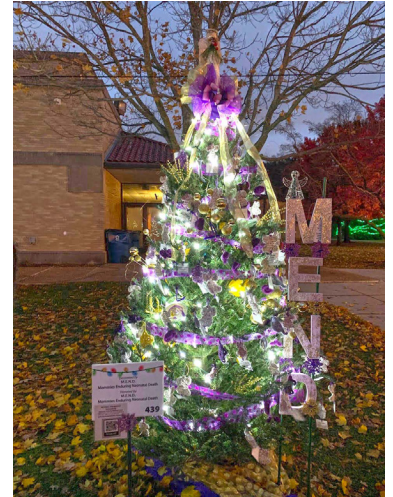
I think that even with my M.E.N.D. group, I sometimes almost feel inadequate and question myself on how I could be suffering such a loss, when some other women were further along or gave birth. I experienced my miscarriage so early on, and yet I sometimes feel silly to feel the amount of loss that I feel.

The M.E.N.D.—Chicagoland tree our chapter decorates every year signifies so much more for

me than just a tree. I feel it’s my place to have something tangible, almost a memorial site. It brings me joy to have a place I can come and marvel and think of my baby and my loss.

At our last support group, I mentioned I was at a good place, and I was finally feeling I had come a long way. Maybe I wasn’t though, because the feeling of sadness crept up on me, and weighed me down. I couldn’t attend the tree decorating this year, but I made it a point to do so the next day. It helped bring me some peace. I especially enjoyed that this year the tree was located across from the carousels at Brookfield Zoo. My first image was our babies taking turns running across to get on one of the carousels.

My grief and my loss is a secret that I keep and hold close to my heart. Regardless of whether I choose to let the world into my grief, it will never change the fact that I carried a baby, no matter how briefly. My baby once had a heartbeat. My baby was real no matter how I want to acknowledge it to strangers or loved ones. It will never change the reality of the love I hold in my heart for Baby Raul.



M.E.N.D.—Greater Houston Area Christmas Candlelight Ceremony



All My Children

How My Miscarriages Fit Into My Family

Written by Erica Kain

Posted on Seleni.com

When people ask me how many children I have, the answer seems obvious: three.

But there are four little ghosts tugging at my jeans when I say this, traces of people who started to grow inside me and then gave up.

My first baby girl arrived healthy and full term, but in the next two years, I had two miscarriages. At the time I wondered if I had failed my babies. Did I have some rare baby-rejecting disease? Or perhaps I hadn't been welcoming enough? When I'd worried that a new child might somehow wreck our lovely one-child family dynamic, did the wee embryo inside me slink off into the afterlife, knowing its mother didn't love it unconditionally?

I became wrapped up in this kind of thinking. For example, with my first miscarriage, I had started to bleed heavily while I was on the subway on my way to work. I got off the train instantly and found a bathroom, where the sheer volume of blood confirmed my worst fears - my tiny new baby was slipping out of me. I called my doctor from the noisy station, and she gloomily told me there was nothing she could do to stop what nature had started.

My solution? Never take the subway again and instantly stop working. I became a stay-at-home mother, not because of some long-planned transition, but because I was afraid of disaster - that the subway and working cause miscarriages. I planted a garden in our backyard with obsessive fervor. Something must take root, I decided. If not my baby, then a whole lot of sunflowers! Do you hear me, God?

With the next pregnancy, I was intensely careful. I stayed far away from the subway. I wouldn't lift my child. I remained horizontal every chance I got. And everyone was so hopeful for me. When I threw up all the time, everyone told me that was a good sign. When I saw the baby's heart beating, that was a really good sign. When my uterus grew large and my belly started to pop, all signs pointed to "baby on board."

I took my husband with me to the 10-week ultrasound, so he could share my joy and see the heartbeat too. The physician's assistant paused a long time while we waited for her to turn the screen around for us to see our new baby's heartbeat. But there wasn't one. The baby had stopped growing a few weeks earlier.

Some people told me (in slightly nicer words) that

it was a doomed embryo we lost. But any mother in the world - whether or not she has living children - will tell you that whenever she is trying to grow a life in her body, it is a baby. For me, each of these babies was a grand hope, a gorgeous being, and the product of love - not a mixed-up set of chromosomes that wasn't intended to grow. Each was a heart that started to beat, and then stopped: They were my children.

I lay there on the doctor's table gaping like a goldfish as I was told I would be scheduled for a D&C to remove the dead tissue from my uterus. I kept repeating, "Are you sure? Are you sure? Are you sure?" Then my husband took me home where I clung to the side of our bed like it was a sinking ship and howled in agony.

I saw a grief counselor every week for more than a year after that, and with her my grief became somewhat acceptable. I learned to live with the notion that a baby had started, and then died, inside of me. I named her Eve, and I imagined all the milestones she would have hit over the next year.

The counselor guided me through my next pregnancy, which miraculously went past term and resulted in an actual baby, my second child. I stared at her in bald wonder, thinking, "Did this really happen? Is it safe to hope you're really alive?"

When our third healthy baby girl was born 15 months later, I began to believe that my luck had really turned around. Despite our horrible journey through miscarriage, I had three terrific little girls. But we couldn't resist the urge to try for one more baby.

When I got pregnant again, at 40, I maintained as much skepticism as I could. I didn't buy one stitch of maternity clothing, let alone baby clothes. I also insisted on weekly ultrasounds. I didn't want to be tricked into gestating a dead embryo for one minute longer than necessary. The movie quote that ran through my head constantly was from Beverly Hills Cop. Every time I saw a flickering heartbeat on the ultrasound monitor, I thought, "That's nice, but I'm not gonna fall for a banana in the tailpipe."

By the time I plopped myself up on the exam table for the final ultrasound of my first trimester, I was starting to get excited. But a minute later, the doctor's face fell. There was no heartbeat. Another little baby had died at precisely the same moment her sister had years before.

So I cried, and my doctor cried, and we all met the next morning at the hospital for a D&C to bring an end to another chapter. But a month later I needed another D&C because my enthusiastic uterus continued to build up tissue to care for a baby that had long since been removed.

This past spring, I was fortunate to find myself pregnant again – an exciting surprise. But two weeks later, just before I was scheduled to start my regimen of hawkish ultrasounds, I started bleeding like crazy and another flickering hope sputtered out.

I'm past the unrealistic way of thinking now, and I faced these late miscarriages with a sad pragmatism that saved me the unnecessary guilt. I imagine they were all girls, these four babies who stopped growing inside me. They feel like my children. Intellectually I know that they were arrangements of chromosomes ill suited for life, but the moment I saw each positive pregnancy test my heart bloomed larger and wider.

And when those babies died, I was crushed.

How does a woman describe the feeling of losing a child in utero? It is grief, but not the same kind of grief as losing a child who has walked on this earth. From that grief, I felt certain I would die. It is the most gut-wrenching sorrow I have ever known, and I have no plans to forget those four little ones who might have been.

I met a man recently who told me proudly that he has seven children. And as I shook his hand and congratulated him, I said silently, "So do I."

Retrieved August 4, 2021, from Seleni <http://www.seleni.org/advice-support/2018/3/20/all-my-children>



Cards For a Cause

M.E.N.D.–SW Missouri has a quiet member who recently loved our organization in a big way. Hannah Harding, mommy to Morgan, is an Independent Usborne Books Consultant, and chose to host a "Cards for a Cause" Fundraiser to benefit M.E.N.D. during the month of October.

Hannah shared with Rachel the Chapter Director of M.E.N.D.–SW Missouri, "I am looking for a way to give back this season, and since the month of October is Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness month, I couldn't think of a better local organization to donate to."

She had such a great interest in the fundraiser she extended the sale to raise \$478 for M.E.N.D. Thank you so much for being a blessing to M.E.N.D.! Below is a little bit about the life of her daughter.

Our daughter, Morgan Edith Harding, was born at 22 weeks due to premature labor on August 11, 2019. I was



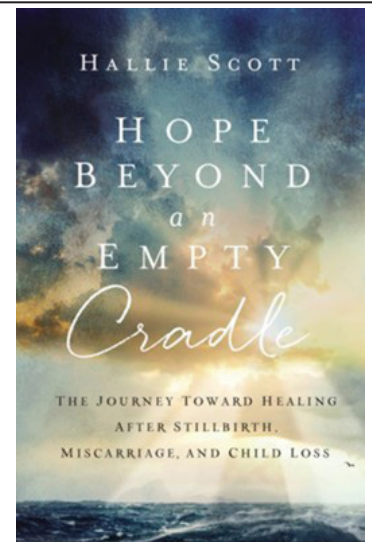
admitted to the hospital on July 28, and stayed there until her birth two weeks later. We were able to hold her in our arms and sing to her for a beautiful two hours before she went to the arms of our Father in heaven. Our life has been forever changed because of our precious Morgan and her story. God has used her story to shape our family and many others. I continually pray for opportunities for Morgan's story to have a greater purpose than what I can see.

Book Review

Hope Beyond An Empty Cradle
Written by Hallie Scotts

The book *Hope Beyond An Empty Cradle* shares Hallie Scotts's raw and honest experience with pregnancy loss. Honestly, while reading this book, my feelings felt so validated. She talks about the big dates like due dates, Mother's Day, heavenly birthdays, etc., and the struggle that those days bring. She talks about how it's okay to be angry at God and that he will not punish us for being angry. She even talks about the fact that relationships change following the loss of a baby. I loved that at the end of the book, she even shared her husband's story with the loss of their daughter, Abby. This book is an excellent Christian resource for those who have experienced loss or even those who just want to better understand how to support someone who has lost a baby.

Reviewed by Kristina Witt,
M.E.N.D.–SW Missouri Assistant Director



In Loving Memory

Levi Samuel Bowmer

April 19, 2013
Trisomy 13 and Tetralogy of fallot with absent pulmonary valve
Given by parents Jenae and Sam Bowmer and sisters Evelin and Valerie

David Jaden Brown

November 1-2, 2021
Parents: Andrea and Kevin Brown
Gifts given by Catherine Lee
Shelia Fairley
Joyce Yim-Hui
Anonymous
Silvia Lam
Lisa Coakley
Lippert Supply Chain Execution Team
Helen and Brian Thatch
Fanny Ho
Han Jang
Kimberly Lisiak
Megan Nowak
Ally Thatch
Alice Wong
Letitia McGuff
Kristen Pavlasek

Abigail Grace Crump

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

Baby Davis

Given by Marra Davis

Riley and Parker Davis

November 14, 2006
Premature
Given by parents Rob and Cheryl Davis and siblings Annalise and Owen

Sofia Rose Diggs

August 7, 2018
Given by parents Damien and Lynna Scott-Diggs

Caleb Scott Fann

December 1, 2003
PPROM

Baby August Fann

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

Logan Wayne Fish

September 17, 2009
Skeletal Dysplasia
Given by parents Brittney and David Fish and brothers Landry and Hudson

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

Briella Skye Garcia

Miscarried November 3, 2020
Given by parents Valerie and Many Garcia III

Lily Hadden

August 20, 2005

Landon Hadden

July 1, 2006
Parents: Amy and Andrew Hadden
Given by HaddenHailers Custom Game Calls LLC

Morgan Edith Harding

Stillborn August 11, 2019
Premature labor
Given by parents Hannah and Luke Harding / Cards for a Cause Fundraiser

Serenity Harrison

Miscarried December 3, 2009
Given by parents Curtis and Jennifer Harrison and siblings Levi, Ziva and Evie

Zachary James Law

October 1-17, 2017
Adeno Virus
Given by parents Carrie and Irwin Law and siblings Scarlett and Lydia

Gracelynn Danielle Kuss

Stillborn August 9, 2018

Jesse Kuss

Miscarried December 2015
Given by Jamie and Michael Kuss

Chase Austin Miller

April 21, 2011
Incompetent cervix
Baby "Blueberry" Miller

Miscarried May 4, 2015
Given by parents Greg and Stefanie Miller and sisters Cora, Hazel and Violet

Jonathan Daniel Mitchell

Stillborn June 24, 1995
Cord accident
Baby Mitchell
Miscarried December 2001
Gifts given by parents Byron and Rebekah Mitchell
Grandmother (Mimi) Marnie Mitchell

Augie Moncheski

Given by Michael Shea

Baby Oberlender I

Miscarried December 19, 2011

Baby Oberlender II

Miscarried May 19, 2012
Given by parents Melissa and Tim Oberlender

Brayden Ryan Sade

Born sleeping December 28, 2012
Premature labor
Parents Steven and Heather Sade
Given by grandmother Patricia Stockford

Daniel Len Schulz

December 29, 2020
Pre-eclampsia

Rori Mae Schulz

Miscarried October 6, 2020
Given by parents Rebecca and Nathan Schulz

Jaxson Kolt Scifres

November 27, 2016
Cord accident and inverted placenta
Given by parents Melissa and Justin Scifres

Carson Mitchell Shaw

Stillborn April 1, 1999
Unknown cause
Given by parents Aimee and Randy Shaw

Hazel Rose Holmberg Silva

February 10, 2020
Parents: Ryan and Abbey Silva
Given by Grammy Carol Silva

Genesis Marie Tolbert

Miscarried July 7, 2015
Given by mommy Madisen Tolbert

Walden Babies

Mommy: Kaitlyn Walden
Given by Gunther Swecker

Kaden Utah Whiteley

October 18, 2016

Kinley Jo Whiteley

October 19, 2016
Given by parents Alicia and Rick Whiteley

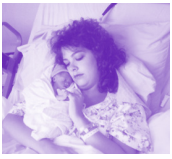
Ryleigh Wiggins

February 25 - March 15, 2015
Type II Lissencephaly
Given by Mommy Sanita Wiggins

Gifts of Support:

LaToya Smith
Matthew Patterson
Brittany White
Williamsen Family Foundation
Fidelity Charitable / Loaves and Fish 241
Sharyn and Chris Kelly
Second Baptist Church, Springfield, MO
Christian Celebration Center, Midland, MI

Kila Hilton
Marie Dew
Helen Lynn



Compartir o No Compartir

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

Soy una persona extremadamente abierta y prácticamente le diré a cualquiera cualquier cosa sobre mí que quiera saber. Nunca he sido privada sobre la pérdida de mi bebé ni sobre mis problemas de salud. Y soy una persona muy curiosa. Le hago muchas preguntas a la gente sobre ellos mismos, supongo que a veces me parezco entrometida cuando, en realidad, solo me interesa y tengo curiosidad. Quiero conocer mejor a los demás y escuchar sus historias. Comparto detalles y me gusta conocer detalles.

Aunque estoy muy dispuesta a hablar sobre mis dos bebés en el cielo, a veces soy cautelosa porque sé que podría estar preparándome para un comentario insensible o una expresión facial de sorpresa y horror.

Cuando estaba embarazada de Jonathan, me encontré con una amiga de la escuela secundaria y su mamá en una boutique para niños. Mi amiga de la infancia también estaba esperando un bebé, así que hablamos con entusiasmo durante bastante tiempo y descubrimos que nuestras fechas de parto eran muy cercanas. Unos meses después de que Jonathan nació sin vida, llevé a mi hijo de 4 años a que le cortaran el pelo. Mientras estaba sentada en el salón esperando a mi hijo, casualmente entró la mamá de mi amiga. Después de saludarla, me di cuenta de que miraba de un lado a otro a mi pequeño cortándose el pelo de nuevo y supe que debía de estar preguntándose dónde estaba mi recién nacido. Efectivamente, ella se sentó a mi lado e inocentemente dijo: "¿Dónde está tu nuevo bebé"? La peluquería era muy pequeña y la mayoría de los empleados sabían de mi pérdida. Cuando esta mujer hizo la pregunta, prácticamente se podía escuchar caer un alfiler. Sentí como si todos los estilistas estuvieran conteniendo la respiración, esperando escuchar cómo iba a responder. Yo mismo respiré hondo y le conté lo sucedido. Por alguna razón, me sentí lo suficientemente valiente como para sacar una foto de Jonathan de mi bolso para mostrársela.

Ella tomó la foto de mi mano y la estudió por un segundo. Ella pareció confundida y preguntó: "Pensé que habías dicho que había nacido sin vida". Dije, "él era". Con los ojos muy abiertos, preguntó: "¿Quieres decir que está muerto en esta foto?" Respondí suavemente, "sí". Literalmente arrojé la foto en mi regazo y exclamó: "¡¿Por qué me enseñas eso ?!"

Ese día aprendí que no todo el mundo se siente cómodo hablando de la muerte de los bebés. La gente solo quiere cerrar los ojos y tener oídos sordos al horror de la muerte infantil. Esa experiencia no me impidió hablar de Jonathan, pero definitivamente me hizo tener más cuidado. A lo largo de los años, experimenté más de esas situaciones incómodas y desgarradoras. Es por eso que me apasiona educar a otras personas sobre el embarazo y la pérdida de un bebé, y dar permiso a las madres de la pérdida que hablen de sus bebés. La muerte de nuestros bebés no debe ser un secreto, considerarse vergonzoso o algo que no nos sintamos bien compartir. Por eso, nos toca a nosotros enseñar sobre nuestro dolor a quienes no han sufrido la pérdida de un bebé, explicarles que nuestros bebés son nuestros hijos para siempre, y siempre serán parte de nuestras vidas, no importa cuántos años pasen o cuántos hijos vivos podemos tener después.

Sé que compartir a su bebé y su experiencia con otras personas podría generar más tristeza, pero también puede abrir la puerta a una compasión y comprensión inesperadas. No tenga miedo de hablar sobre su bebé, porque nunca sabe qué historia puede tener su interlocutor para contarle. Si no lo entienden, sacúda el polvo de los pies e intente seguir adelante. No todo el mundo lo entenderá, pero es probable que más de lo que crees que comprendan tristemente, ya sea por su propia experiencia personal o por alguien cercano a ellos. Permita que aquellos que realmente se preocupan por usted lo amen y, si es necesario, seguramente también podrá consolarlos.

"... para que podamos consolar a los que tienen problemas con el consuelo que nosotros mismos hemos recibido de Dios". 2 Corintios 1: 4

M.E.N.D. CHAPTER UPDATES

Greater Houston Area

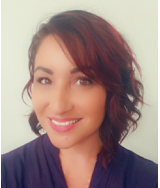
M.E.N.D.–Greater Houston Area is praying for all our families as we welcome a new year. We know a new year can bring a fresh, different wave of grief. Make sure you are a part of our Facebook group so you can get support any time of day or night. We also post information there about our in-person and Zoom support groups.



Stormy

NW Washington

As we enter a new year, we pray for all the families we will meet this year. We will continue to meet in person at The Oak Table Cafe' on the 2nd Monday of every month. Thank you to all who helped make our 11th Annual Christmas Candlelight Ceremony such a beautiful time of remembrance.



Stacy

San Antonio, Texas

M.E.N.D.–San Antonio is excited to continue with in-person support as we start 2022. We are continuing outreach in our community and hope to have a wonderful year of expansion, fellowship and support.



Katie

Denver, Colorado

M.E.N.D.–Denver wishes our families a peaceful, and happy New Year. Please check our Facebook for updates on support groups and for additional support.



Kimberly

East Valley, Arizona

M.E.N.D.–East Valley Arizona hopes everyone had a blessed holiday season! We are looking forward to many local events throughout 2022, so stay tuned to our Facebook group for updates.



Danielle

Columbus, Ohio

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come.. .the old has gone, the new is here!" 2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV



Our monthly support group continues to grow, as we meet virtually to share our journeys. We're praying for your comfort and strength. Please join our private Facebook group where you can share your story and be encouraged... You're NOT alone!

If you need M.E.N.D.-Columbus services, contact me at latrina@mend.org.

LaTrina

Chicagoland

M.E.N.D.–Chicagoland is thankful, that by God's grace, we can continue to minister to and support grieving families in our area. While it is always sad and difficult to see new families each month, we are so thankful we don't have to grieve alone and we can come alongside and walk this journey together. Our M.E.N.D. tree was beautiful this year at the zoo lights, and a touching way to honor and remember every M.E.N.D.–Chicagoland baby.



Sara

Southwest Missouri

Thank you so much to all who were able to attend M.E.N.D.–Southwest Missouri's Christmas Candlelight Ceremony on December 7, at Second Baptist. The evening was a beautiful night of remembering our sweet babies in heaven. I could not have done it all without help from Jennifer Harrison, Magazine Editor, and my assistants, Brianne Mansfield, Heidi Smith, Kristina Witt, Heather Sade and Ashley Sudheimer.



We hope none should need our services in 2022, but we are thankful we can help those who do. We wish for no one to walk their grief journey alone. Please keep an eye on our Facebook group for more detailed updates throughout the year.

Rachel

Men of M.E.N.D.



We recently had a lot of new men join the Men of M.E.N.D. lately. I am so thankful we have a Zoom support group every 3rd Monday of the month, at 8:00 PM CST. If you can't make it, feel free to email me at matt@mend.org.

Matt

Tulsa, Oklahoma

M.E.N.D.–Tulsa held our Annual Christmas Candlelight Ceremony on December 9. We are thankful to be able to provide a space for our grief during this season full of joy and pray it was a blessing to the many families who were able to make it.



M.E.N.D.–Tulsa would like to say a million thanks to Kristina Cobler for the many years she has faithfully served as an assistant here in Tulsa and are saddened that she is stepping down from her role during a busy season of life. Thank you, Kristina, for everything you have done over the years to serve grieving families through M.E.N.D. here in Tulsa, and we are thankful we will still see you at support groups and events as your schedule allows!



Cat

As we are beginning a new year, I am in prayer for all of the families in the Tulsa area we will be serving this coming year and for everything God will do through our ministry this year.

Nationwide Online Support

My name is Mallory Gallagher and I am the new Chapter Director for the Nationwide Online Support group. My daughter, Olivia Abigail, was born still on May 12, 2016. I have a living daughter, Evelyn, and am married. I am happy to serve mommies and daddies the 3rd Thursday of each month via Zoom. Please email me at mallory@mend.org for more information. Please complete the Online Group Info Sheet found on the M.E.N.D. website to receive the meeting link if you are new. We also welcome you to connect through our Facebook group to support each other between support groups.



Mallory

MidMichigan

M.E.N.D.–MidMichigan had 17 people attend our Memorial Ornament event! It was a great time of connecting and remembering our babes.



MidMichigan did a lot of growing in 2021 through community events and families grieving through a pandemic. We look forward to 2022 and the hope that the New Year brings.

Karen



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



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. For inquiries, subscription requests, deletions, and submissions to the magazine, contact us at:

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jennifer@mend.org
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



M.E.N.D. Leadership

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Magazine

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

Magazine Volunteers

Rachel Dell, Sara Elliott
and Becky Johnston

New Support Group Location!

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

Mommies AND Daddies are welcome at all M.E.N.D. support groups.

Unless otherwise noted, all support groups are held at:

Irving Archives Museum, 801 W Irving Blvd, Irving, TX 75060.

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

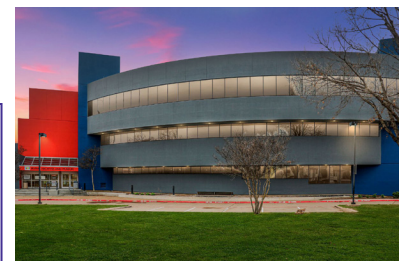
M.E.N.D. chapter support groups meet the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7:30 PM

Daddies group meets the 2nd Thursday of March, June, Sept. and Dec., at 7:30 PM

Moms and dads meet together for introductions before dividing into two groups.

Rowlett Satellite Chapter

A satellite chapter in Rowlett holds support groups to serve families in the eastern area of the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex. Support groups are held the 1st Wednesday at 7:00 PM at the Veterans Resource & Outreach Center, 4210 Industrial St, Rowlett, TX 75088. Visit our Facebook group or email terri@mend.org.



Irving Archives Museum
801 W Irving Blvd
Irving, TX 75060

Subsequent pregnancy group meets the 4th Tuesday

from 7:30 - 9:00 PM via Zoom.

Please visit www.mend.org to join.

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

M.E.N.D. Chapter Information

Due to COVID gathering guidelines, please follow your chapter on Facebook or connect with your local Director for updates if your chapter will meet in person or virtually.

M.E.N.D.–NW Washington

Meets the 2nd 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.–MidMichigan

Meets the 1st 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.–Chicagoland, Illinois

Meets the 1st 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.–SW Missouri

Meets the 1st 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.–Denver

Meets the 2nd Tuesday at 7:00 PM
Crossroads Community Church
9900 S. Twenty Mile Rd.
Parker, Colorado 80134
Director: Kimberly Adams
kimberly@mend.org, (720) 593-0166

M.E.N.D.–Greater Houston Area Greater Houston Area Main Chapter:

Meets the 3rd 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

M.E.N.D.–Tulsa, Oklahoma

Meets the 3rd Tuesday at 7:00 PM
117 S 7th St.
Jenks, Oklahoma 74037
Director: Cat Markham
cat@mend.org, (918) 694-4325 (HEAL)

M.E.N.D.–San Antonio, Texas

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

Satellites in Greater Houston Chapter:

Kingwood Area, Texas:
Meets the 2nd Thursday at 6:30 PM
6450 Kings Parkway
Kingwood, Texas 77346
At Rosemont Assisted Living,
2nd Floor Community Room
Kingwood Director:
Nikisha Perry, nikisha@mend.org

M.E.N.D.–Columbus, Ohio

Meets on the 2nd 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.–East Valley, Arizona

Meets the 2nd Thursday, at 6:30 PM
Queen Creek Library
Edward Abbey room
21802 S Ellsworth Rd
Queen Creek, Arizona 85142
Director: Danielle Radler
danielle@mend.org, (602) 699-6228

Online Support

Men of M.E.N.D.

Held the 3rd Monday at 8:00 PM (CST)
to join, contact,
Director: Matt McGee
Matt@mend.org
Facebook Group:

www.facebook.com/groups/MENofMEND

M.E.N.D.–Nationwide Online Support Group

Held the 3rd Thursday at 8:00 PM (CST)
Please visit <https://www.mend.org/virtual-support-group-links>



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, 2022, will be installed prior to the Walk to Remember in October 2022.



M.E.N.D. Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death
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Did you know?

You can give to M.E.N.D. every time you shop on Amazon?

Go to smile.amazon.com and set Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death as your charity! It's so simple!

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We appreciate your support!