



# Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death

*Miscarriage, Stillbirth and Infant Loss Support*

Volume 29, Issue 2

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## Representation of Loss: Making It Okay to Share

"Speaking openly about pregnancy loss is not 'attention-seeking' — it is connection-seeking."

~ Darcy Hathaway

There are a myriad of ways we create these connections: participating in a 5K or candle-lighting, wearing a special piece of jewelry or shirt, sharing on blogs, podcasts and social media, or publicly showing honor on their heavenly birthday. As we participate in each of these activities to represent our babies, it also gives others permission to share, and even connect and know we are not alone.

### In this issue...

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**May/June Topic**

Mother's Day/Father's Day  
Deadline: March 31, 2024

**July/August Topic**

Infertility and Loss  
Deadline: May 31, 2024

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to be published in future issues, both in the print version and online, unless a letter's author expressly requests it not be published.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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Quote on the cover was included in the article "It's OK to talk about pregnancy loss. That's why I'm talking about mine" posted in the Des Moines Register on October 15, 2023, at [www.desmoinesregister.com](http://www.desmoinesregister.com) and retrieved on February 11, 2024.



## Feature Article

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

# Representation of Loss: Making It Okay to Share

Our second son, Jonathan, was stillborn in 1995 when I was just a 26-year-old young woman. I'm a talker, so sharing about the cord accident that resulted in his death when I was 29 weeks pregnant was not hard for me. I needed to talk about our tragedy, so I'm sure every person I encountered those first several months heard about our sorrow, whether they wanted to or not. And if I didn't tell them, our then 3-year-old son was sure to fill them in on our family's heartbreaking grief.

I started M.E.N.D. a year after Jonathan's death, which gave me a legitimate reason and platform to keep talking about him. M.E.N.D. connected me with numerous fellow loss moms, who I quickly realized had a need to talk about their babies, too. I noticed one of the biggest fears we have as loss parents is people forgetting our babies. I have learned it's up to us to make sure that doesn't happen. We keep our children's memories alive by talking about them, which then lets others know they have permission to speak of our babies in heaven as well.

One of the benefits of M.E.N.D. is giving new loss parents ideas on how to talk about their baby, sharing advice on ways to respond to sensitive questions and insensitive comments. We also host annual remembrance ceremonies, which give families the opportunity to publicly acknowledge and remember their babies. Additionally, we have an online store (<https://www.M.E.N.D.org/shop>) where families can purchase keepsake items such as ornaments, jewelry and t-shirts. We as loss families can be as subtle as we desire with adorning these items,

or wear them boldly and proudly, knowing we may get questions. A few years ago, some of our leaders were together eating lunch at Chick-fil-A and were all wearing a M.E.N.D. sweatshirt that had our logo on the back. A man standing behind them in line couldn't help but curiously read their shirts, which gave him unspoken permission to ask what exactly M.E.N.D. is because he knew someone who had recently suffered a loss and desperately needed support. What a great opportunity that was for these ladies to indirectly reach out to a hurting mom who felt all alone in her sorrow!

But let's be honest...candidly sharing about our loss also means we're vulnerable to potential hurt from people's rude and hurtful comments. Unfortunately, that just goes with the territory. We'll always have to deal with those who will never get it, but as a seasoned loss mom, I encourage you not to let those upsetting responses hinder you from telling others about your little baby who died, yet is still a part of your family. I hope you'll say your baby's name to others for the rest of your life with joy and pride! If this is all new to you and you're not sure how to openly remember your little one, I pray the suggestions in this magazine issue shared by fellow loss parents will give you some ideas and the courage to open up as well. You never know... someone you talk to or who reads something on your t-shirt might be a desperate loss parent as well who needs to hear your story so she knows she's not alone.



### Happy 12<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Paislee!

Every year we can't believe another year has passed, but every day is one day closer to you. Your little life was not in vain, sweet girl. Your story continues to make an impact every year, and sometimes we're surprised by how God uses it. He's been so faithful to make sure your story did not end in death, just like His Son's did not, and for that we are so grateful. The pain of you not being here still hits us at times, but we know you are having the best time in heaven. We love you and miss you!

*Paislee Ann Frette*

*April 4-5, 2012*

*Wolf-Hirschhorn Syndrome*

*Parents: Brent and Courtney Frette*

*Little sister: Colbie*



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

You were beautiful;  
doctors and sonographers told us so  
almost every chance they got.

You were healthy;  
all your parts in working order and  
genetic testing looked great.

You were long-awaited;  
especially by your grandparents and  
great-grandparents and  
everyone side-eyeing our 8 years of marriage.

You passed in the womb at  
22 weeks and 6 days.

You were 1 pound, 0.2 ounces  
and 12.5 inches long.

We buried you in Frisco  
the day before Good Friday.

Your name,  
sweet baby girl,  
is Whitney Lynn,  
and your daddy and I  
will love you forever and always.

*Whitney Lynn Baldia*

*April 3, 2022*

*Subchorionic hemorrhage*

*Parents: Justin and Natasha Baldia*

*Little brother: Calvin, due May 31, 2024*



### Happy 13<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Lily!

Dear Lily-girl, thirteen sounds like a big number. Isaac said the same thing when everyone was marking birthdays on their calendars for the year. They all mark your birthday as a special day. I can only imagine the young woman you would be today, passing into the years between childhood and adulthood. I think of you so much and will forever wonder about all the spaces you would fill in our family. I am left with a million unanswered questions about who you would be and a deep longing to know the answers. I feel your absence always. Happy birthday, darling. I love you more than ever.

Love,

Mom

*Lily Joy Moore*

*Born to heaven March 2, 2011*

*Parents: Jeremy and Kathleen Moore*

*Siblings: Isaac, Judah, Mercy and Glory*



### Happy 9<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Evelyn

Sweet Evelyn, each and every day, we love you and miss you. We wonder so many things about how you would be, and what joy you would add to our family. We think of you in heaven, in the most perfect place of pure love. We hold onto hope that someday we will be with you forever!

Love,

Mom and Dad

*Evelyn Faith Luedtke*

*April 17, 2015*

*Parents: Eric and Becky Luedtke*

*Siblings: Simon and Norah*



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

Happy 1<sup>st</sup> heavenly birthday to our dearest angel daughter, Amina. Even though we only held you a few hours, we will hold you in our hearts forever. You will always be our #5 and last daughter. We are so grateful to be your parents. Until we can hold you again, keep watching over us, angel Amina.

We love you, Amina. Happy 1<sup>st</sup> birthday!

*Amina Maguette Omar Sow*

*March 12, 2023*

*Unknown cause*

*Parents: Omar Sow and Maguette Sow*

*Siblings: Farani, Zaynab, Yazmin and Jibry*



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

We hope you have a wonderful day celebrating in heaven. Your short life continues to bring much joy to our family. We continue to share the impact you had with those around us. Thank you for watching over your big brother. We all love and miss you so much.

*Rowan Everett Peterson Dougherty*  
*March 30 – April 7, 2023*  
*Premature at 22 weeks and 1 day*  
*Parents: Rachel and Kyle Dougherty*  
*Big brother: Theo*



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

Happy 4<sup>th</sup> birthday, Ethan! We think of you every day, and we think you'd absolutely love your little sister. She may not have met you, but she knows of you and actively includes you in daily activities. For example, when we were looking at the chocolate cake and caramel frosting recipe Mommy makes for you each March, Elizabeth pointed to your picture. She even tries to offer you food at dinner time.

Mommy and Daddy like to think you'd be a big fan of dinosaurs and Legos. We love and miss you always. Wishing you a happy heavenly 4<sup>th</sup> birthday, E.

Love,  
 Mommy and Daddy

*Ethan Alexander Kozar*  
*March 29 – April 2, 2020*  
*SIDS*  
*Parents: Ryan and Katelynn Kozar*  
*Little sister: Elizabeth Grace*



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

Dear Abi, happy 7<sup>th</sup> heavenly birthday! Time marches on, and yet we often stop to wonder what you would look like, what interests you would have, and who you would be. We will never stop wondering. We miss you every day!

All our love,  
 Mama and Daddy

*Abigail Marie Papendick*  
*March 3-4, 2017*  
*Incompetent cervix*  
*Also remembering*  
*Baby "Darth" Papendick*  
*Miscarried September 6, 2018*  
*Baby "Nugget" Papendick*  
*Miscarried December 27, 2019*  
*Parents: Brian Papendick and Becky Johnston*



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

Addie, I can't believe this year you would be turning 5. It has gone so fast yet so slow all at the same time. You'd be getting ready to start school, and, based on how bright your sisters are, I just know you'd be leading our pack of girls with your brilliant mind. We'd give anything to be able to see you nurture and care for them and be the best of friends. You're loved and missed so much, but we know it's because of you we are blessed with your sisters here and that they are well protected. We love you, baby girl! Happy 5<sup>th</sup> birthday, cupcake!

Love,  
 Mommy, Daddy, Riley and Evie

*Adele Haven Sutherlun*  
*January 29, 2019*  
*Bilateral Renal Agenesis*  
*Parents: Kristin and Aaron Sutherlun*  
*Siblings: Riley and Evie Sutherlun*



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

Happy 1<sup>st</sup> heavenly birthday, my angel baby. April 15, 2023, will be a date that will stick with us forever. I know you're in heaven watching over Daddy and Mommy. Although you're not physically here, you'll always be with us in our hearts.

You entered this world very quietly; only for a moment you stayed. But what an imprint your tiny footprints left on our hearts.

I'm sorry I couldn't do more to keep you here with us for much longer, I will never understand why things happen the way they did, my angel.

You will forever be our biggest blessing. Rest in heaven, my angel baby. We love you, papas.

*Emiliano Juan Sanchez*  
*April 15, 2023*  
*Potter Syndrome*  
*Parents: Lizbeth Hernandez and Juan Manuel Sanchez*



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

Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday in heaven, baby boy. I know your celebration is greater than we could ever replicate here on earth, but know we will continue to celebrate and honor you! We miss and love you every single day, sweet angel!

*Dalton Lucas Troxell*  
*April 15 – June 21, 2022*  
*Smith Lemli Opitz Syndrome*  
*Parents: Justin and Kaysie Troxell*  
*Brother: Garrett Luke*



## Happy Birthday, Maddie and Michael!

Happy birthday, my sweet babies. Another year has passed without you guys here. We miss you guys very much and wish you guys were here so we could celebrate you with us. Michael, with you being 15 and Maddie, with you being 14, it is hard for your mama to think it's been that long since I saw your sweet faces. We love you beyond measure and will be together again one day.

*Madison Nicole Parris*

*March 5, 2010*

*Prevotella bivia/infection*

*Michael Stephen Parris*

*April 9, 2009*

*Clostridium innocuum/infection*

*Also remembering*

*Baby Parris (Madison's Twin)*

*January 2010*

*Unknown cause*

*Parents: Sam and Stacey Parris*

*Brothers: Lucas and Seth*



## Happy 14<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Elliot!

Dear Elliot, on March 21, 2010, as I watched your body be lowered into its resting place, I couldn't imagine I'd ever see sunshine in life again. On March 21, 2011, as the first day of spring unfolded, I realized you gave us a parting gift. Every March 21, we could celebrate the hope that spring brings. And always close by is Easter, the ultimate Spring for our souls, the hope for the end of all death and for life eternal. Thank you for welcoming us into each spring. The grave does not have the victory. We will see you again.

Love,

Mommy, Daddy, Evie, Ethan and Ezra

*Elliot James Gerriets*

*March 18, 2010*

*Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome (HLHS)*

*Parents: Faith and Chris Gerriets*

*Siblings: Evie, Ethan and Ezra*



# It's OK to Talk About Pregnancy and Infant Loss

## Using Social Media to Share Stories of Fertility Struggles Can Help Families Cope

Written by staff at Montclair State University on October 13, 2021.

They are stories of cautious optimism, of fear and anxiety. They are stories of short-lived miracles and unimaginable grief.

The tragedy of pregnancy and infant loss is more common than you might think, but for many it remains a deeply private experience. Social media has helped to change that; today, it's not uncommon to scroll down a news feed and see a somber update from a loved one or even a celebrity openly sharing their struggles.

In honor of World Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day on October 15 and Baby Loss Awareness Week, we spoke to two faculty experts to discuss why the social media age has made it easier for people experiencing this type of loss to share their stories, and to receive and offer support.

### Online communities offer support

First, understand that sharing personal stories online is nothing new, says Joel Penney, associate professor in the School of Communication and Media who specializes in new media and the use of participatory and digital media for social and political advocacy.

The idea of online disclosure even has a body of research behind it, he says. "People feel more

comfortable sharing intimate details of their lives because they're looking for validation, community,

a sense of 'I'm not alone,' and all of a sudden you find thousands of people in the same situation as you."

Add online anonymity to the isolation many have felt during the pandemic, Penney says, and the reason you may have noticed an uptick of "self-disclosure" online becomes clear: "People are looking for that social support, and communication via screen has the psychological effect of disinhibition."

Things get more delicate when discussing certain topics, like miscarriages or infertility, but Jill Wodnick, a certified doula and assistant director for Maternal-Infant Relational Health at the Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health at Montclair State, suggests that with increased representation of women and women's stories in news and media,



it's become easier to speak out. "There is meaningful impact when media outlets have publishers, editors and writers with lived experiences that will document in a public domain areas of women's health that have been previously stigmatized or made invisible."

She adds that peer support and hearing how others have also navigated unanticipated outcomes, even if it comes in the form of an online forum or media article, goes a long way in reducing the feeling of isolation.

When she worked as a birth doula, Wodnick says she frequently worked with families that had experienced infertility and loss. "Outside of their health-care provider, I may have been one of the only people to hear about their journey."

### Perinatal issues are more common than you think

But these experiences are not rare; according to the CDC, about 24,000 babies are stillborn each year in the United States and the WHO says 15% of reproductive-aged couples worldwide are affected by infertility. Miscarriages are even more common; the March of Dimes says as many as half of all pregnancies may end in miscarriage - an exact number is hard to determine because a miscarriage can occur before a woman even knows she's pregnant - but for women who know they're pregnant, about 10% to 15% end in miscarriage.

Online communities help destigmatize and correct misconceptions about fertility issues, Wodnick says, adding that they are essential for improving health

literacy and fostering regional resources, "which has too often been invisible."

There are also many instances where a more open discussion about personal struggles resulted in activism, awareness and meaningful legislation.

"That kind of public awareness for these issues is huge," Penney says.

### Do what's right for you

As valuable as online resources and communities can be, Wodnick stresses that there is also nothing wrong with continuing to keep personal stories private, should an individual and/or family choose that route.

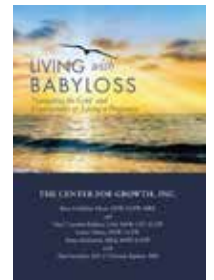
"There is no one-size-fits-all about the perinatal loss experience," Wodnick says. "The needs of an individual are in a broad range from nonlinear and quiet and internal to expressive and moving into advocacy or action. Some people may want to use it for ritual and ceremony with community care and others may want more internal and private space. Ultimately, though, "There are a plurality of ways and paths and resources that can strengthen one's own voice," Wodnick says. However someone chooses to cope is unique to them and their health, culture, religion and community.

Retrieved February 9, 2024 from <https://www.montclair.edu/newscenter/2021/10/13/its-ok-to-talk-about-pregnancy-and-infant-loss/>.

## Book Review

"Living with Babyloss: Navigating Grief and Uncertainties of Losing a Pregnancy"

Written by Erica Goldblatt Hyatt, Alex Caroline Robboy and Peter Gearhart



*Living with Babyloss: Navigating Grief and Uncertainties of Losing a Pregnancy* is a great resource for both parents as you navigate the death of your baby. It walks through the stages of baby loss, covering almost every situation and feelings one may experience.

There's no focus on one specific type of loss as it begins with the medical understanding along with the physical and emotional symptoms. It provides a guide on how to navigate the "new normal," create traditions to honor your baby and the responses and needs of both parents. The book also shares ideas to help surviving siblings cope with the death of their sibling, and ideas on how to talk about the death of your baby to others who may not understand the magnitude of your loss. It covers the difficult questions to ask about the death of your baby and even what to expect with pregnancy after loss.

This book comes across very personal to the reader no matter what type of loss was experienced, which is what made it enjoyable to me. It is very detailed and explores practically every situation. The medical parts discussed were very clear and an easy read even for the non-medical professional. Honestly, I wish I had this book early on in my grief.

Reviewed by Nicole Goforth,  
M.E.N.D.-Dallas/Fort Worth Assistant Director

# Infant and Pregnancy Loss Awareness Month

Written by Staci Tanouye on February 11, 2024, on [drstacit.com](http://drstacit.com).

*From the Editor: While this issue is not published during October, we are sharing this article as Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month has helped encourage representation of loss.*

Infant and Pregnancy Loss Awareness Month in October holds deep significance for me as an OB-GYN. I've shared the joys and sorrows of countless patients over the years.

## Why do we need an Infant and Pregnancy Loss Awareness Month?

Losing a child during pregnancy or infancy can be isolating, as it is often a topic that people don't want to talk about as it's shrouded in grief. However, it's important to raise awareness and have open conversations about it. More specifically, a designated awareness month can help bring people together and provides a safe and supportive space to share stories, grieve, and honor our little angels.

## You are not alone

Infant and pregnancy loss is a topic that stirs up a whirlwind of emotions. I've witnessed the pain, isolation, and loneliness that it brings. As a physician, I'm here to tell you that you are not alone. You are not broken. It's not your fault. You did nothing wrong. There is nothing you or I or anyone could have done to change this outcome. Your pain is valid, and your grief is real.

I've stood by my patients as they grapple with the anguish of pregnancy loss. The hopelessness that engulfs you can feel suffocating. It often feels like a personal failure. You might wonder if your body betrayed you, if you made a mistake, or if you missed something crucial. The truth is, you did not.

## Find your community

One of the most powerful ways to heal after the loss of a child is to connect with others who have gone through a similar experience. Joining a support group, attending a remembrance event, or participating in an online community can provide a sense of belonging, validation, and hope. These connections can help you feel less alone in your grief and provide you with support and understanding.

## Choose your remembrance

Honoring the memory of our children who are no longer with us can bring great comfort and healing. There are many ways to do this. Some parents light candles, create memory books, wear special jewelry, or plant a tree in honor of their little one.

Others choose to celebrate their child's birthday or anniversary, while others raise awareness and funds for charities that support infant and pregnancy loss.

## The length of your pregnancy does not determine your grief

Miscarriage, stillbirth, and infant loss are painful. It does not matter how early or late they occur. Every pregnancy, no matter how short-lived, carries dreams and hopes. The significance of your loss is not diminished by its timing. It's okay to grieve, to feel lost, to cry, and to scream. These are natural expressions of your emotions, and they are valid. As an OB-GYN, I've learned that sometimes, well-intentioned people say the wrong things. This can make the pain even more profound. Their words may fall short, leaving you feeling emptier than before. I understand how these seemingly comforting words can cause unintentional harm. But please remember this - the intention is not to hurt; it's to help, even if the outcome is not what you expected.

## What to remember if you've experienced loss

1 in 4 pregnancies end in miscarriage. So again, you are not alone. The statistics show that many women go through the heartache of pregnancy loss. It's more common than you might think.

It's not your fault. Blaming yourself only adds to the emotional burden. Your body is not your enemy.

You did nothing wrong. Sometimes, despite your best efforts, nature takes its course. It's essential to understand that the loss was beyond your control.

There is nothing you or I or anyone could have done to change this. Pregnancy loss can be a result of various factors. Most of which are beyond human intervention.

No matter how early it was, this was your baby. This was your dream. It matters, and it's okay to grieve. Every pregnancy carries dreams and hopes. The depth of your grief is not determined by the duration of the pregnancy.

It's okay to feel lost. The overwhelming emotions can make you feel like you've lost your way. Just know it's a natural response to a painful experience.

It's okay to cry. Tears are a way to release your pain. It's alright to cry when you feel the need to.

*Continued on page 10.*



# Dear Baby in Heaven, I Wish You Could See Me Now

Written by Jenny Albers on August 13, 2020, on [jennyalbers.com](http://jennyalbers.com).

**D**ear Baby in Heaven,  
I wish you could see me now.  
Things have changed. Life has changed. I  
have changed.

And I couldn't have imagined that I really would  
be okay.

Losing you broke me.

For so long, I was a crumpled heap of flesh,  
gasping for air, too suffocated by grief to pull  
myself up.

Losing you shattered me.

And it was immediately obvious that the shards of  
my former self were beyond repair.

Losing you changed the way I saw everything.

Your absence colored my whole world black.

The person I was before you existed vanished when  
you did.

No longer could I control my emotions. No longer  
could I dam up the tears. No longer could I pretend  
to be stronger than the heartache of this life. No  
longer was I the person who floated through life—  
instead I had to trudge.

I didn't think I could live without you. I didn't  
think I'd survive. And some days I didn't want to.

The day I lost you was the worst day of my life.  
And the days after, with an aching womb and empty  
arms, were equally as bad.

I didn't think I'd make it.

But here I am. Still.

Still breathing. Still standing. Still alive.

Still missing you, yes.

Still wondering about you, yes.

Still reflecting on what it all means—losing you  
and living without you.

But somehow I'm still here in a place I thought  
I'd never see again.

A place with more laughter than tears.

A place with full arms and busy hands.

A place of hope and gratitude and healing.

A place that's not quite complete, but that's still  
good.

Losing you changed everything, especially me.

But so has living without you.

Because in your absence I've discovered that  
God works in the darkness. That he works in the  
strangest, most mysterious, and best ways. That even  
the worst experiences of this life aren't enough to  
destroy me. Not forever, anyway.

In your absence I've grown. I've learned that  
moving forward doesn't mean forgetting. That  
darkness doesn't last forever. That life is a  
combination of grief and joy and that regardless of  
which cycle I'm in, goodness can be found.

And I have you to thank for that.

I wish you could see how far I've come, Baby.

Losing you broke me, but in some strange way,  
your short existence still managed to gift me with  
new life.

You were my little miracle who God is still using to  
work wonders in my life.

And with every step, I'm moving farther away  
from loss and closer to finding you again.

# In Loving Memory

## **Joshua and Jeromy Barsanti**

Stillborn November 21, 1996  
Anencephaly  
Parents: DaLana and Randy Barsanti  
Given by Faith Crissman

## **Andre Gabriel Broussard**

Stillborn May 29, 2016  
Trisomy 18  
Given by parents Ana Maria and Ross Broussard

## **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 birth  
Given by parents Rob and Cheryl Davis and siblings Annalise and Owen

## **Ashley Renee Dedear**

October 29 – November 1, 1999  
Premature  
Parents: Cindy and Tim Dedear  
Siblings: Laura (Ashley's twin) and Kathryn  
Given by grandmother Melene Dedear

## **Hadley William James Elliott**

November 4, 2022  
Parents: Raychel and Kyle Elliott  
Given by Kathy Baden

## **Paislee Ann Frette**

April 4-5, 2012  
Wolf-Hirschhorn Syndrome  
Gifts given by parents Brent and Courtney Frette and little sister Colbie  
Grandparents James and LuAnn Junkin

## **Andrew Vincent Gajovski**

Given by Vanguard Charitable, recommended by Michael Savage

## **Serenity Harrison**

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

## **Samuel Hintz**

Stillborn October 30, 2008  
Cord accident  
Given by parents Greg and Sara Hintz and siblings Louis, Caleb, Anna, Elijah, Hope, Levi, Isaiah, Kaliyah and Oakley

## **Sarah Ann King**

Stillborn June 22, 1995  
Parents: Lori and David King  
Given by grandmother Bonita Manning

## **Ethan Alexander Kozar**

March 29 – April 2, 2020  
SIDS  
Parents: Katelynn and Ryan Kozar  
Little sister: Elizabeth Grace  
Given by Grandma Jane and Grandpa Dan Squires

## **Baby Lamon**

Given by Carol Morrow

## **Zachary James Law**

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

## **Moriah Grace Lowen**

November 21, 2019  
Parents: Matthew and Brittany Lowen  
Sister: Georgia  
Given by Dawn Skarzynski

## **Evelyn Faith Luedtke**

April 17, 2015  
Given by parents Eric and Becky Luedtke and siblings Simon and Norah

## **Ketcher Ryan McKee**

Given by Carol Morrow

## **Jonathan Daniel Mitchell**

Stillborn June 24, 1995  
Cord accident  
**Baby Mitchell**  
Miscarried December 2001  
Given by parents Byron and Rebekah Mitchell

## **Douglas James Poirier**

February 8, 1996 — April 3, 2010  
Parents: John and Terisa Poirier  
Given by grandparents Georgia and Richard Loy

## **Blake Ted Wren**

March 18, 2018  
Given by parents Jennifer and Joel Wren

## **Gifts of Support:**

Second Baptist Church, Springfield, MO  
William Turner  
Joshua Glesener  
Gwen George  
Enterprise Holdings Foundation  
Central States Industrial (Mark & Julie Cook)

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.

## **"Infant and Pregnancy Loss..." continued from page 8.**

It's okay to scream. Sometimes, the emotional turmoil may make you want to scream. That's a valid expression of your emotions.

## **Healing is possible**

It may not happen today or tomorrow, but someday, when you are ready, you will find a way to heal. I've cried and grieved with more patients than I could count. Yet, their stories and strength continue to inspire me. Your pain is real, but so is your capacity to heal and find hope again. In time, the scars will fade, and the memory of your little one will remain a

cherished part of your life story. Remember that you are not alone on this journey. You have the support of those who understand and care, and someday, you will find healing and peace. Losing a child is one of life's greatest tragedies, and the grief can be lifelong. While it's important to honor our children and grieve our loss, it's also important to find ways to move forward and find hope. Support groups, therapy, and talking with others who have gone through a similar experience can help parents find a new normal and a sense of hope for the future.

Retrieved February 11, 2024, from <https://drstacit.com/infant-and-pregnancy-loss/>.



## Representación de la Pérdida: Es Bueno Compartir

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

Nuestro segundo hijo, Jonathan, nació sin vida en 1995, cuando yo era sólo una joven de 26 años. Soy una conversadora, por lo que no fue difícil para mí compartir sobre el accidente del cordón umbilical que resultó en su muerte cuando yo tenía 29 semanas de embarazo. Necesitaba hablar sobre nuestra tragedia, así que estoy segura de que todas las personas con las que me encontré durante esos primeros meses escucharon acerca de nuestro dolor, aunque lo quisieran o no. Y si no se lo compartía, nuestro hijo que entonces tenía 3 años seguramente les informaría sobre el dolor desgarrador de nuestra familia.

Empecé M.E.N.D. un año después de la muerte de Jonathan, lo que me dio una razón y una plataforma legítima para seguir hablando de él. M.E.N.D. me conectó con numerosas madres de pérdidas, quienes rápidamente me di cuenta de que también necesitaban hablar sobre sus bebés. Me di cuenta de que uno de los mayores temores que tenemos como padres de pérdidas es que la gente se olvide de nuestros bebés. He aprendido que depende de nosotros asegurarnos de que eso no suceda. Mantenemos vivos los recuerdos de nuestros hijos hablando de ellos, lo que les permite a otros saber que también tienen permiso para hablar de nuestros bebés en el cielo.

Uno de los beneficios de M.E.N.D. es ofrecer ideas sobre como hablar de su bebe con con los nuevos padres, compartiendo consejos sobre formas de responder a preguntas delicadas y comentarios insensibles. También organizamos ceremonias conmemorativas anuales, que ofrecen a las familias la oportunidad de reconocer y recordar públicamente a sus bebés. Además, contamos con una tienda en línea (<https://www.M.E.N.D.org/shop>) donde las familias pueden comprar artículos de recuerdo como adornos, joyas y camisetas. Nosotros, como

familias de pérdidas, podemos ser tan sutiles como deseemos al adornar estos artículos, o usarlos con audacia y orgullo, sabiendo que podemos recibir preguntas. Hace unos años, algunos de nuestros líderes estaban almorzando juntos en Chick-fil-A y todos usaron su sudadera que tenía nuestro M.E.N.D. logo en la espalda. Un hombre que estaba detrás de ellos en la fila no pudo evitar leer con curiosidad sus camisetas, lo que le dio permiso tácito para preguntar qué era exactamente M.E.N.D. porque conocía a alguien que recientemente había sufrido una pérdida y necesitaba apoyo desesperadamente. ¡Qué gran oportunidad fue para estas mujeres de acercarse indirectamente a una madre herida que se sentía completamente sola en su dolor!

Pero seamos honestos... compartir con franqueza nuestra pérdida también significa que somos vulnerables a posibles daños por los comentarios groseros e hirientes de las personas. Desafortunadamente, eso va con el territorio. Siempre tendremos que lidiar con aquellos que nunca lo entenderán, pero como madre sazónada con la pérdida, los animo a que no permitan que esas respuestas perturbadoras los impiden contarles a otros sobre su pequeño bebé que murió, pero que aún es parte de su familia. ¡Espero que diga el nombre de su bebé a otras personas por el resto de su vida con alegría y orgullo! Si todo esto es nuevo para usted y no está seguro de cómo recordar abiertamente a su pequeño, espero que las sugerencias de esta edición de la revista compartidas por otros padres de pérdidas le ofrecen algunas ideas y el valor para compartir también. Nunca se sabe... alguien con quien hable o que lea algo en su camiseta también podría ser un padre desesperado que necesita escuchar su historia para saber que no está solo.

# M.E.N.D. CHAPTER UPDATES

## NW Washington

M.E.N.D.–Northwest Washington continues to pray for the grieving families in our community. Our aim for this year is to connect with more local organizations and introduce some innovative ideas to help minister to grieving parents.



*Katherine*

We're excited about our upcoming M.E.N.D.ing Miles Virtual 5K, which will take place from May 5 to May 12, and we hope you'll join us. We're also planning a fundraiser later this spring, so please stay tuned to our Facebook page for more information on these events.

## Greater Houston Area

We are looking forward to our M.E.N.D.ing Miles Virtual 5K. We love to see the pictures of family and friends walking, running, etc in remembrance of their babies. The M.E.N.D.ing Miles Virtual 5K also helps us raise funds for our chapter's Walk and Christmas Candlelight Ceremony.

We are so thankful for all donations received as they help us continue to serve Houston and surrounding areas.



We are also thankful for the donations received for the teddy bears that were recently delivered to local area hospitals.

If you are interested in serving as a volunteer, we would love for you to join our team. Contact me at [nikisha@mend.org](mailto:nikisha@mend.org) for more details.

*Nikisha*

## Southwest Missouri

I would like to say "Thank you!" to past Chapter Directors Heather Fann and Kathryn Gold as they filled in for me while I was in the NICU with our premature rainbow baby. We had new families attend our support groups during those months, and I am thankful for these ladies stepping in to provide comfort to these hurting families.



M.E.N.D.–SW Missouri will be planning an outing for the M.E.N.D.ing Miles Virtual 5K. More details will be available in our Facebook group and by email. Please email me at [jennifer@mend.org](mailto:jennifer@mend.org) if you are not on my email list and desire to be. Even if you are unable to join us in person, we hope you will register to join us virtually as we are "Taking steps for those who never did."

*Jennifer*

## National Online Support

"Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later." Romans 8:18 NLT

I hope this verse gives you hope to know that we have heaven to look forward to! We will see our babies again! The passage goes on to say:

"the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay." Romans 8:21 NLT

We suffer much on earth because of death. We must look to the Lord for our strength and hope.



*Mallory*

## Chicagoland

Thank you to the M.E.N.D. - Chicagoland Chapter members who helped make our Christmas tree at the zoo special by either coming together to decorate or to share photos and stories of visits made during the holiday season.

We look forward to our next big event, which is the M.E.N.D.ing Miles Virtual 5K. We will walk together in May, so please watch our Facebook page or emails for more information. Please spread the word for this event, and encourage as many people to walk alongside you in person or virtually, to remember and honor your baby. While we are sad mommies need a support group like M.E.N.D., we are so grateful for the Chicagoland Chapter.



*Becky*

## Pregnancy and Parenting After Loss Support

M.E.N.D. - Pregnancy and Parenting After Loss Support Group is for parents who are pregnant after a loss or who are considering trying to conceive again after a loss. Our support groups meet via Zoom at 7:30-8:30 PM Central time on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month.



*Marisa*

## East Valley, Arizona

M.E.N.D.–East Valley Arizona had a great fundraiser the other night, thanks to Queen Creek Backyard Taco, to jump start 2024! We enjoyed delicious food and fellowship. We are looking forward to many more events to come and our regular support groups on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month. Be sure to join our Facebook group to stay informed.



*Danielle*

**M.E.N.D. en Español**

Nuestra página de Facebook, M.E.N.D. en español, le brinda apoyo y un lugar seguro a familias en duelo donde pueden compartir sobre sus bebé, expresar sus emociones, o hacer preguntas de otras familias en duelo. Es aquí donde también pueden obtener las últimas noticias sobre eventos locales y nacionales como la caminata virtual de 5k que se llevará a cabo el 5-12 de Mayo, 2024. Este día de las madres en duelo, recordaremos a nuestros bebés con una caminata virtual. Muchas familias comparten fotos de su caminata y comparten su progreso y memorias de sus bebés en nuestras páginas de Facebook. ¡Espero ver fotos de nuestras familias hispanas



compartiendo en este evento tan especial! Para más información únase a nuestro grupo de Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/mendenespanol/> o mande correos electrónicos a [jessica@mend.org](mailto:jessica@mend.org).

Jessica

**Columbus, Ohio**

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." John 13:34 NIV.

This year we celebrate 5 years of being a support resource in Ohio! I want to remind you of what



motivates M.E.N.D. – Columbus - it is LOVE. Everything we do is because we love you! And we are grateful to be your trusted resource. We invite you to come receive help, hope and comfort as you endure the loss of your precious baby.

Your presence at support groups and participation on Facebook positively impacts others. Let your voice be heard! As we walk together on your journey AND in the 5K Virtual Walk in May 2024, let's show love to one another...You're NOT alone!

If you need M.E.N.D.–Columbus' services or desire to serve, contact me at [latrina@mend.org](mailto:latrina@mend.org).

LaTrina

**MidMichigan**

M.E.N.D.–MidMichigan is looking forward to honoring our babes in the M.E.N.D.ing Miles Virtual 5K the week of Mother's Day. We'll be sharing more information as May approaches, but we would love to have everyone who has been touched by pregnancy and infant loss join us on the Rail Trail to remember together.



Karen

**Men of M.E.N.D.**

Men of M.E.N.D. holds a monthly Zoom support group every 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month at 8:00 PM CST. I am looking forward to seeing you. If you can't make it, I pray you have some comfort and peace.



Our M.E.N.D.ing Miles Virtual 5K is almost here. Registration opens on March 18. This is a great way to get out to honor our little ones in heaven.

Matt

**Tulsa, Oklahoma**

As always M.E.N.D.–Tulsa meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month at 7:00 PM. Follow our Facebook group for the most up-to-date info on support groups and events.



We would like to take this opportunity to thank Paige and Austin Ryan and Cassie and Matt Barnett for their generous support of M.E.N.D. Year after year they have been faithful to support us. They held their annual Pregnancy and Infant Loss 5K in October and raised \$5,000 for our Chapter. Their donation allows us to serve grieving families throughout the Tulsa Metro area.

Cat

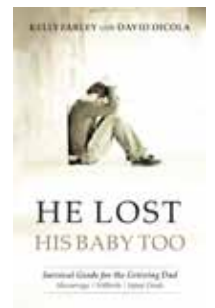


**Book Review**

"He Lost His Baby Too"

Written by Kelly Farley with David Dicola

**H**e *Lost His Baby Too* is a journey through the most difficult times we dads experience with the loss of our baby. This book draws the reader in and give hope to pull us out of the pain and acknowledge the loss of our babies. Loss is something you must process to see brighter days by giving yourself permission to feel sad. This book serves as a necessary reminder to keep up the fight, accept support and live with a purpose to make a positive impact to honor our child.



Reviewed by Timothy Dedear,  
Men of M.E.N.D. Assistant Director

## 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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[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  
Pregnancy Loss and Infant Death Alliance



## M.E.N.D. Leadership

### Board of Directors

Rebekah Mitchell  
Byron Mitchell, D.D.S.  
DaLana Barsanti  
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Stacy McGhee  
Terri Nymeyer

### Magazine

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

### Magazine Volunteers

Rachel Dell, Sara Elliott  
and Becky Johnston

## 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.

**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 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month at 7:30 PM

Daddies group meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday at 7:00 PM at the Veterans Resource and Outreach Center,  
4210 Industrial St, Rowlett, TX 75088.

Visit our Facebook group or email [terri@mend.org](mailto:terri@mend.org).

## M.E.N.D. Chapter Information

### M.E.N.D.–NW Washington

Meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday at 6:30 PM

GracePoint Church

8278 WA-303

Bremerton, Washington 98311

Chapter Director: Katherine Sandoval  
katherines@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

Chapter Director: Jennifer Harrison  
jennifer@mend.org, (417) 770-0600

### 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

Chapter 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. Paul Lutheran Church

545 S. Ardmore Ave.

Villa Park, IL 60181

Chapter Director: Becky Luedtke  
becky@mend.org, (630) 267-9134

### M.E.N.D.–Greater Houston Area

Kingwood Area, Texas:

Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday at 6:30 PM

Lone Star College Kingwood

Classroom Building A (CLA) Rm 113

20000 Kingwood Dr.

Kingwood, TX 77339.

Chapter Director: Nikisha Perry  
nikisha@mend.org, (346) 235-4714

### M.E.N.D.–Tulsa, Oklahoma

Meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday at 7:00 PM

The Office Tulsa

5401 S Harvard Ave

Tulsa, OK 74135

Chapter Director: Cat Markham  
cat@mend.org, (918) 694-4325 (HEAL)

### M.E.N.D.–MidMichigan

Meets the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday, at 7:00 PM

Christian Celebration Center

6100 Swede Ave

Midland, MI 48642

Chapter Director: Karen Kilbourn  
karen@mend.org, (989) 577-5755

### M.E.N.D.–East Valley, Arizona

Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday, at 6:30 PM

Queen Creek Library

Edward Abbey room

21802 S Ellsworth Rd

Queen Creek, Arizona 85142

Chapter Director: Danielle Radler  
danielle@mend.org, (602) 699-6228

## Online Support

### Subsequent pregnancy group

meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday

from 7:30 - 8:30 PM via Zoom.

Please visit [www.mend.org](http://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.–

#### Nationwide Online Support Group

Held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday at 8:00 PM (CST)

Please visit <https://www.mend.org/virtual-support-group-links>

Chapter Director: Mallory Gallagher  
mallory@mend.org

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

Held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday at 8:00 PM (CST)

to join, contact,

Chapter Director: Matt McGhee

Matt@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>.

The order deadline for 2024 installation is July 15, 2024. To ensure the bricks are ready for the 2024 Walk to Remember, brick orders will be closed from July 16 – October 4, 2024.



M.E.N.D. Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death  
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# M.E.N.D.ing Miles Virtual 5K

May 5-12



Registration opens  
 March 18th.  
 T-shirts available  
 in sizes S-3XL  
 while supplies last.



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

*Taking Steps For Those Who Never Did*