



M.E.N.D.

Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death

Commemorating 20 Years of Publishing Newsletters

We normally print a holiday issue this time of year, but due to our 20th anniversary, we decided to reminisce and acknowledge how the Lord has blessed our ministry and this publication over the past two decades.

As you may have read in our last issue, M.E.N.D. was formed in September of 1996. Two months later we hosted our first support group in Irving, Texas, as well as printed our first newsletter. This issue commemorates 20 years of reaching out to thousands of grieving families all over the world via this free publication.

At the beginning of M.E.N.D.'s formation, Lynne Boer, our first and former editor of this newsletter, suggested we make M.E.N.D. more than a support group for grieving parents in the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex. She had the idea of creating a publication that could be sent to anyone in the United States, and possibly even in other countries. We knew we did not want lack of finances to ever prohibit families from receiving our resource, so our first decision concerning the newsletter is that we would never charge a subscription fee. We knew printing would be expensive, so we chose to print them every other month, rather than monthly, and each issue would focus on a different topic pertaining to pregnancy and infant loss. Lynne was associated with a printer in the area, Kwik Kopy, who remains our printer today. The staff there were tremendous help as we quickly compiled our first edition. They guided Lynne on the format and gave suggestions on the layout, including the beautiful idea of printing our publications on purple paper, which we used until the supplier disappointingly discontinued several years ago.

For our inaugural issue, we felt there was no better way to introduce M.E.N.D. to the world than to begin by introducing ourselves, the founders and initial members, by telling our stories of loss. Laurie Ottinger, Lynne Boer, Stacey Lange, Katherine Middlebrook, and I sat at our computers and, for the first time in our grief journey, wrote about our babies. We wrote short paragraphs about how and when our babies died, and the blessed hope we have of seeing them again one day

in heaven. We wanted our readers to know that we understood what they were going through because we, too, had endured the death of our baby. We wanted to offer them comfort - the same comfort that we ourselves had received from God (2 Corinthians 1:4).

Today, with now 126 issues of this newsletter printed and distributed all over the world, we continue to achieve the dream the Lord birthed within us so many years ago. We have covered a multitude of topics such as Mother's Day/Father's Day, coping during the holidays, sibling grief, early loss, infertility and loss, the loss of multiples, healthcare providers and loss, and the list continues. I have no idea how many individual homes have received our newsletter over the years nor exactly how many countries throughout the world our "purple articles" have traveled, but God does. I'm humbly thankful for the opportunity to have been and continue to be His hand extended in reaching the hurting. I am grateful for our past editors, Lynne Boer, Sharlene Libby, Heather Fann, and to our current editor, Jennifer Harrison. Countless hours are lovingly spent creating each edition, and I know these women have burned the midnight oil more nights than they would ever say. I pray the Lord's abundant blessings on you ladies and your families for devoting your time to making sure every baby's name is spelled correctly, the heavenly birthdays are accurate, and no one's submission is accidentally omitted. For an organization that consists of all volunteers, I think our newsletter and our editors get an A+! Thank you, thank you to all our past and present editors and proofers!

At present, this newsletter is sent to 1,535 homes all over the world, and is read by countless on our website. We thank you, our subscribers, for allowing M.E.N.D. to come to your mailbox several times a year and be a part of your healing. We pray it has been and will continue to be a source of hope and comfort to your hurting heart.

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

Nota Español: El artículo de Rebekah Mitchell aparece en cada emisión de nuestro boletín para la audiencia latina.
Para ver el artículo de este mes en español, por favor vea la pagina numero 24.

M.E.N.D. is a Christian nonprofit corporation whose purpose is to reach out to those who have lost a child to miscarriage, stillbirth or infant death and offer a way to share experiences and information through monthly meetings, this newsletter, and our website at www.mend.org.

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

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Donations make the printing and distribution of this newsletter possible. Your tax-deductible contributions are greatly appreciated and should be sent to the address listed above. If your gift is made in memory of a baby, please include that baby's name (if named), date of birth and/or date of death, the parents' names, and the name of the benefactor. You may also include the cause of death (if known).

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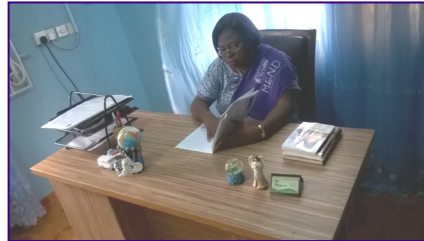
Rachel Dell, Sara Elliott and Stormy Mitchell

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

Did You Know....

As Rebekah shared in her article in the last issue, "M.E.N.D.—Commemorating 20 Years of Ministry," M.E.N.D. has a sister organization in Africa called FAMEND—Foundation of African Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death. This organization holds support group meetings for families enduring the loss of a child and also receives our bi-monthly newsletter as seen below.

Pregnancy and infant loss occurs all over the world, and while we are sad families are enduring this grief, we are thankful we can reach out to those outside our areas to provide comfort we were provided from Christ.



Spanish Translation

My first meeting was just two months after Erika was born to eternal life 19 years ago. That first year is still a blur. Today I am honored to be a part of M.E.N.D. Although my heart goes into every personalized ornament every year, I am also thankful to be able to contribute by translating Rebekah's article to Spanish eliminating the language barrier to further providing support to a vast community who might not otherwise be reached. As we commemorate this 20th Anniversary, we remember Jonathan always through all the support Rebekah and her family so loving established for us in his memory.

♥ Yvette Grau,
Mommy to Erika

M.E.N.D.—Spanish Translator

Stay Connected!



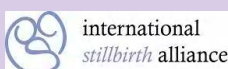
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Find us on Instagram at [m.e.n.d.1996](https://www.instagram.com/m.e.n.d.1996)



Book Review



I Have a Brother—My Brother is in Heaven

Written by Daphne S Petrey
Available through CarryThemForever.com

This is a great resource to help explain to children that their little brother or sister died. Told from big sister Ruthie's perspective, Ruthie describes her family in this beautifully written book. While her family may look like a family of five, her family actually consists of seven - her Mommy, Daddy, two little sisters, and her two little brothers in heaven. Her Mommy and Daddy were very sad when her brothers died, but they put their trust in the Lord. They know they will see them again one day in heaven. Ruthie also learned she is not the only one who has a baby brother or sister in heaven - sadly, not all babies are meant to live here on earth.

The back page contains an encouraging letter to fellow-grieving moms from the author, Daphne Petrey. This bright and colorful book can be ordered from www.carrythemforever.com.

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

*M.E.N.D. has a complete list of books, websites, organizations, and music
resources available online at www.mend.org.*

*If you would like to submit a review of books, music, websites or other resources dealing
with infant loss, please email them to our newsletter editor,
Jennifer Harrison at jennifer@mend.org.*

Notes from our Readers



“Thank you for all you all do for us mommas!!
You all are inspirations and you make the life of being an ‘angel mom’
easier to walk knowing we have other people walking along side us.”

♥ Amie, Mommy to Noah and Harper

What If Your Blessings Come Through Raindrops...

Through the raindrops and tears of sorrow, have you seen the blessings?
Found something positive you would not have expected?

In our M.E.N.D. Support Group Meetings, we end each meeting sharing something positive we have learned or seen as we travel the journey of our loss or losses. We are excited to start including these in our M.E.N.D. newsletters!

We would love to hear from YOU! If you would like to share something positive or a blessing to be included in the newsletter, please send it to jennifer@mend.org.

Thank you, and we look forward to hearing from you!

January/February Topic

Keeping Your Marriage Strong
Deadline: November 30, 2016

March/April Topic

Loss as a Single Parent
Deadline: January 31, 2017

Stories, poems, thoughts, and/or feelings regarding these topics are welcome. Submissions must be received by the deadline to be considered for publication in the newsletter. Unfortunately, there is not enough room to include all submissions. Choices will be left to the discretion of the editors. Please see page two of the newsletter for the appropriate address to send your submissions. Any submission printed in our newsletter will also be posted to our website indefinitely unless we receive notice in writing that you are only granting permission for your submission to appear in the printed version of the newsletter. Because our newsletters are posted online, please understand that your name will likely be attached to your submission when searched on the Internet.

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

Birthday Tributes: M.E.N.D. publishes heavenly birthday tributes in the corresponding newsletter. Tributes must be submitted via the online form at www.mend.org.

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



Birthday Tributes

Happy 38th Birthday, Elizabeth!

Happy birthday, baby girl! 38 years ago you were here, and then, within a few short months, you were gone. I always wanted to know why, but that was left up to God. Your Daddy went to live in heaven, too. I thought losing you was hard, but losing your daddy was harder. I believe God knows what He is doing. Please keep sending those butterfly kisses, beautiful signs in the sky, and the little touches and feelings I get. Take care of my other grandbabies. Their Mom and Dad miss them every day. Balloons will fill the sky on your special day.

Love,
Mom xoxo



Elizabeth Nicole Garcia
Miscarried October 18, 1978
Parents: Paul and Jeannie Garcia
Siblings: Monica, Sylvia, Christina and Stephanie

Happy 1st Birthday, Greyson!

Happy birthday in heaven, my sweet girl. I miss you every single day. I'll love you forever.

Greyson Cain
December 1, 2015
Meconium aspiration syndrome
Parents: Nick and Jessica Cain



Happy 1st Birthday, Emma Rose!

Happy 1st heavenly birthday to our sweet baby girl. Not a day goes by we don't think about you and wish you were here.

Love you always,
Mommy, Daddy and Big Brother

Emma Rose Gonzalez
December 13, 2015
Potter's syndrome
Parents: Rafael and Angel Gonzalez
Big brother: Noah



Happy 3rd Birthday, Elijah!

Happy 3rd birthday, baby boy! We miss you so very much. It seems like yesterday we were getting to hold you for the first and last time. It means so much that we got to spend those few short hours with you. You are thought of often by many. Sending you an infinite number of hugs and kisses. We love you now, forever and always, sweet boy! We will meet again one day!

Elijah Zane Bastian
Stillborn October 3, 2013
Parents: Mathew and Lacey Bastian
Brother: Elliott "Ellie"



Happy 1st Birthday, Baron!

Our little angel, we love you so much and miss you like crazy. We are so proud to be your family. Sissy talks about you daily, and we visit your resting place weekly. You are forever in our hearts. We will be celebrating your 1st birthday, releasing butterflies and blowing bubbles for you. We love you always and forever!

Mommy, Daddy and Emma

Baron Conrad Neelley III
September 9-November 14, 2015
SIDS
Parents: Bo and Allison Neelley
Big sister: Emma Grace



Happy 14th Birthday, Laiken!

Happy 14th heavenly birthday, sweet Laiken! Not a day goes by you are not thought of and missed. The years have passed so quickly since we last held you - trying to squeeze a lifetime of love into a few hours. It seems unreal you would be in high school now. You have had such a huge impact on our world. We are so proud to be your parents and siblings. Know you are loved beyond measure and missed fiercely.

Laiken Riley Madison Kale
September 15, 2002
HELLP syndrome, severe prematurity,
antiphospholipid syndrome
Parents: Rick and Alysha Kale
Siblings: Arianna, Jarod, Gavin and Alyvia



Happy 13th Birthday, Caleb!

It's official - a teenager! I can't believe so much time has passed. Soon we'd be thinking about high school and driving and dating! Impossible that the tiny baby I held should be a strong, tall young man following the path God set before him. We'll never understand why He chose a short path for you, but we trust in His plan. Heaven awaits us, and we'll be a family once again. Your legacy of love lives on each time someone asks Daddy and me to share our story, or to encourage a family fresh in their loss. We miss you more than words can express.

Love,
Mommy, Daddy and Maddie

Caleb Scott Fann
December 1, 2003
PPROM
Also remembering
Baby August Fann
Miscarried August 13, 2004, at 8 weeks
Parents: Jonathan and Heather Fann
Little sister: Madison Grace



Happy 2nd Birthday, Andrew!

It's hard to believe it's been two years since we held you in our arms and said "Goodbye." As time has passed, our grief has taken many forms, but our hearts still ache from losing you. Your little brother, Noah, was born in January, and we wish we could watch the two of you grow up together. Thank you for watching over us as we welcomed him into the world. We wish we could celebrate your birthday with you. We love you more than words can say, and we'll hold you in our hearts until we meet again.

All our love,
Mommy, Daddy, Leah, Hannah and Noah

Andrew Robert Bateman
October 7, 2014
Unknown cause

Parents: Tim and Laura Bateman
Siblings: Leah, Hannah and Noah



Happy 7th Birthday, Madilynn!

Happy 7th birthday, beautiful angel! 7?! Wow! In all these years, our love and desire for you to be with us has never waivered. Your baby sister is growing up fast. Watching her grow makes us realize how many things we missed getting to do with you. We wish her big sis was here to play with her. No matter what, you will always be the missing piece in our family. Have a great birthday in heaven with your great-grandparents! As always, we will send balloons up for you! We love you always and forever, sweet angel!

Love,
Mommy, Daddy and Alyson

Madilynn Isabell Kelley
December 3, 2009
Cord accident

Parents: Jeremiah and Cherish Kelley
Little sister: Alyson Hope



Happy 1st Birthday, Jase!

Forever in our hearts! Happy 1st birthday in heaven. We love and miss you dearly.

Jase Hoover
Stillborn November 17, 2015
Parents: Jonathan and Korey Hoover
Brother: Levi



Happy 2nd Birthday, Baby Delmar!

Sweet baby, we think of you each day and miss you so much. May Jesus keep you safe in His arms until we can hold you ourselves. We will never stop loving you.

Baby Delmar
Miscarried December 20, 2014
Also remembering
Everett Christopher Delmar
Stillborn April 18, 2012, at 28 weeks
Unknown cause
Parents: Christopher and Miranda Delmar
Siblings: Christian Matthew and Clara Evelyn



Happy 1st Birthday, Baby Clyde!

Happy 1st heavenly birthday, mi hijito lindo. I hope you are celebrating with the angels who left too soon. This year passed by in the blink of an eye. Words cannot describe the way I feel right now. Mommy loves you dearly and misses you deeply. You made me a better mother and a better person. My life has change so much since your departure to heaven, and I live for the moment until I hold you again. My sweet baby boy, I love you so much.

Baby Clyde Edwin Miller V
December 11, 2015
Sudden placenta abruption
Mommy: Paola A Calderon



Happy 3rd Birthday, Airrington!

Not a day goes by we do not think about you and miss you. Gable speaks of you often and knows he is a big brother because of you. Your life has changed us for the good; we are better people because of you. We love you so very much and look forward to the day we meet in heaven worshipping our Savior together.

Happy birthday, sweetheart! Save us a dance.
Love always and never not,
Dad, Mom and Big Brother Gable

Airrington Hope Fumagalli
Stillborn December 22, 2013
Also remembering
Jakoebi Michael Fumagalli
November 21, 2011
Ectopic pregnancy
Parents: Michael and Kirsten Fumagalli
Big brother: Gable



Happy 2nd Birthday, Luisito!

Soar high in the clouds and dance with the angels, but remember to save the last dance for me. We miss you, my baby.

Luis Micah Gonzalez
November 18, 2014
Unknown cause
Parents: Luis and Eloisa Gonzalez
Siblings: Sam, Angie, Andrew, Daisy, Priscila,
Monica and Mia



Happy 12th Birthday, Cece!

Happy birthday, Cece! We hope you have a beautiful birthday, sweet girl.

Hugs and kisses from Mommy, Daddy and Ally

Celeste Kimberly Reid
December 7-8, 2004
Neonatal hemochromatosis
Also remembering
Connor Boston Reid
April 27, 2005
Trisomy 13
Parents: Skip Reid and Andie Boston
Sister: Allyson Kate



Happy 5th Birthday, Riley!

Happy 5th birthday in heaven, sweet Riley. Mommy, Daddy and Carter miss you! Love you and think about you every day!

Love always and forever,
Mommy, Daddy and Carter

Riley Peyton Fugitt
Miscarried November 2011
Also remembering
Jordan Taylor Fugitt
Miscarried July 2011
Parents: Justin and Barbara Fugitt
Brother: Carter

**Happy 4th Birthday, Rylan!**

A piece of us is always missing. We try to keep the blessing of your life in the front of our minds as we raise your baby sister and prepare for a new sibling this spring. Wish we could have known you more, and can't wait to see your precious face.

Love you always,
Dad, Mom and Kinley

Rylan Doucette
November 27, 2012
Ectopic pregnancy
Parents: Aaron and Kristian Doucette
Little siblings: Kinley and Baby Doucette due May 5, 2017

**Happy 1st Birthday, Fat Boy!**

I will love you forever, love you for always, and as long as I am living my baby you will be.

Ryder Dean Leyva
October 8—December 2, 2015
Complications at birth
Parent: Freddy and Lynette Leyva
Brother: Xzavier J. Verdugo

**Happy 2nd Birthday, Noah!**

Noah, our sweet baby boy, we cannot believe it has been two years since we last kissed your sweet face! How is it you are turning 2 in heaven? We think about you every single day! Your little life has and will continue to make such an impact on this world, so it's no surprise you are deeply missed. We wish you were here more than we can say, but we know we will see you again! Our hope is in Christ and the future He has offered freely to all. We are sending a million hugs and kisses your way! You are "always our forever."

Love you more than you know!
John 3:16, Rev 21:4, 2 Cor 5:8

Noah Andrew Ziehm
December 21-31, 2014
Complications at birth
Also remembering
Harper August Ziehm
Miscarried September 29, 2015
Parents: Andy and Amie Ziehm

**Happy 3rd Birthday, Arie!**

Happy 3rd birthday, sweet boy. Not a single day has gone by I haven't thought about you and missed you. Oh how I wish you were here. I just want to hold you in my arms and never let you go. One day I will get to do just that. Until then I hope Jesus is holding you tight and giving you lots of big hugs for me. I hope you have the best birthday ever! We love you to the moon and back. And your sister says she loves and misses you very much.

XOXO

Arie Ronald Witt
November 5, 2013
Unknown cause
Also remembering
Baby Witt
June 27, 2014
Unknown cause
Parents: Mike and Candice Witt
Siblings: Brinley and Ryker

**Happy 11th Birthday, Hope!**

I can't believe it was 11 years ago I held you, my little pink bundle. You are deeply loved and missed. We talk about you frequently and wonder what you would be like as a big 5th grader. Precious girl, we look forward to being reunited with you in heaven one day.

Lots of love,
Mama

Hope Kirkpatrick
November 5-8, 2005
Amniotic band syndrome
Parents: Kirk and Aly Kirkpatrick
Siblings: Ian and Jane

**Happy 3rd Birthday, Kory!**

Mommy and daddy miss you. You're our little angel. We love you so much.

Kory Hellstrand-Toquinto
Miscarried December 14, 2013
Mommy: Katelyn Toquinto

**Happy 2nd Birthday, Logan!**

Happy Angelversary! We can't believe it has been two years already. We miss you every day and know you are watching over us! Until we see each other in heaven, know we love and miss you every day!

Mommy and Daddy!

Logan Smith
Miscarried November 4, 2014
Also remembering
Mercedes Kay Fisher
Stillborn July 4, 2001
Cord accident
Parents: Steven and Jennifer Smith
Brothers: Micheal and Matthew



Happy 5th Birthday, Charlotte!

Our sweet Charlotte Grace, I can't believe it's been five years since you blessed our lives with yours. Holding you is one of the sweetest memories of my life! Daddy and I think about you every day, and we wonder what you would be like. I love hearing your little brother say your name and show him your picture often. And now you have a little sister on the way! You continue to bless our lives and those we love. Happy birthday, sweet girl! Sending you hugs and kisses!

Love,
Mommy, Daddy, Evan and Audrey

Charlotte Grace Harrison
December 28, 2011—January 4, 2012

Complications at birth

Parents: Luke and Amanda Harrison

Siblings: Evan Charles and

Audrey Christine due February 2017



Happy 7th Birthday, Baby Acosta!

With every day that passes, I find myself missing you more and more. I try not to let the emptiness and the hurt my heart feels get to me, because I know I'll see you again someday. I find myself wondering what things you would've enjoyed doing and whose personality you would have had. Mommy and Daddy love you with all our hearts, and we miss you so much. Happy birthday up in heaven, sweet angel. One day Mommy and Daddy will be able to finally hold you in our arms.

You are always in our hearts, baby.
Love,
Mommy and Daddy

Baby Acosta

Miscarried November 1, 2009

Parents: Adrian and Nina Barajas

Siblings: Dominic, Kaley, Daniel, Angie and Nickolas



Happy 3rd Birthday, Enoch!

Happy birthday to our baby boy, Enoch!

“Thus saith the Lord that made thee and formed thee from the womb” (Isaiah 44:2a)

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain;

for the former things are passed away.” (Revelation 21:4)

Happy birthday, our son! There's not a day goes by I wish you were here. I'm very grateful to have carried you through 23 weeks. To us, you're still our miracle baby boy. I'm grateful to the Lord that He blessed us with you. You're resting now, and we all will see you again with no pain, no tears, no more death and no more grief. Bye for now, my son. You are forever missed!

Enoch Miracle Cobberti

December 3, 2013

Uterine fibroids and stage 2 chorioamnionitis

Parents: Mark and Shakira Cobberti



Happy 1st Birthday, Emma!

Our sweet Emma Rae, I can hardly believe it's been a year since you left us so unexpectedly. I wish there was a way you could know how you've blessed our family, even in your death. We love you and miss you. Your brother and sisters ask about you almost daily. What we wouldn't give to be able to hold you and love on you here. You will always be our fourth child. We will always love you and always talk about you. You will always be a piece of our family. Happy 1st birthday in heaven, our darling girl.

With so much love,
Momma and Daddy, Truett, Reese and Avery

Emma Rae Jenkins

December 8, 2015

Cord accident at 21 weeks, 3 days

Parents: Richard and Charla Jenkins

Siblings: Truett, Reese and Avery



Happy 2nd Birthday, Amelia!

It's hard to believe it's been two years since we held you. You live in our hearts and our thoughts daily. We miss you so much! To live in the hearts of those you love is to live! Happy 2nd heavenly birthday, baby girl! We are grateful you are our daughter and sister even if we only had a few hours together. We love you, Amelia!

Amelia Adaire Hadsell

November 3, 2014

Cord accident

Parents: Asa and Amy Hadsell

Siblings: Asa and Atlas



Happy 7th Birthday, Serenity!

Serenity, as I type each of these birthday tributes, I notice there are so many who joined you in heaven around the same time. I'm sure there are lots of crazy days in heaven with all of you running all over the streets of gold from mansion to mansion.

I still dream of you in my head. I can see you dancing in the meadow, chasing butterflies around the queen Anne's lace and daisies. You have a beautiful halo of baby's breath and lily of the valley upon your head, resting so gently on your dark brown, wavy hair. And you have the loveliest eyelet lace cream colored dress, capturing the color of the queen Anne's lace. Of course, no shoes. Your brown eyes twinkle in the sunlight, and become little slivers as your face lights up and the loveliest little tinkle of laughter escapes your joyful smile.

I will always rejoice in you, because you are my firstborn, my baby whom I will hold some day, as soon as my work here on earth is complete and God calls me home. Sometimes I wish it were sooner, rather than later, so I could be with you, but I also know I am needed to be with your siblings. So until the great Some Day...Just know I will always love you.

Serenity Harrison

Miscarried December 3, 2009

Parents: Curtis and Jennifer Harrison

Siblings: Leviticus Aaron, Zivala Rose and Evalina Pearl



Happy 20th Birthday, Jeromy and Joshua!

This last year has reinforced what I've tried not to believe... Life just doesn't make sense. I've tried to make sense of it since you've been gone, 20 years now. And I am just as perplexed as the day you left us.

I love you. I miss you. I'm lost without you...
Mom

Jeromy and Joshua Barsanti

November 21, 1996

Anencephaly

Parents: Randy and DaLana Barsanti

Brothers: Taylor Wesley, Collin, Harrison and Riley



Happy 9th Birthday, Kenny!

Happy heavenly birthday, my sweet angel Kenny! You would be 9 this year! I can't believe so much time has passed, especially when it feels like it was just yesterday. The heartache never leaves, but I am comforted by the memories of you and being able to hold you in my arms. The time we shared was brief, but it made the biggest impact in my life. Your pictures are the first image I see every morning and the last I see every night. You are never forgotten! You are always on my mind and will forever be in my heart. Mommy loves you to the moon and back times infinity!

Kenneth Bernard Weddington, Jr.

November 7, 2007

Unknown cause

Parents: Kenneth Weddington and Louisa Garza



Happy 5th Birthday, Elliot!

We are so thankful to have entrusted you to a perfect Heavenly Father, and we thank God every time we think of you. We miss you terribly, but we cannot totally fathom the ways you impacted our hearts and lives...further opening our minds toward heaven, giving us deeper compassion for hurting people in our world, and connecting us to our Lord as we had to rely on Him to a degree we had never before experienced. Thank you! We love you so much.

Love,
Mom, Dad, Reese and Hyun

Elliot Joseph Wood

Stillborn December 21, 2011

Unknown cause

Parents: Ron and Halee Wood

Siblings: Reese and Hyun



Happy 2nd Birthday, Baby Devora-Gamboa!

Happy 2nd birthday in heaven, my precious one. We will be thinking of you on your special day. Know that we love you and are missing you always! Pray for us...Until we meet again.

Love,
Mommy, Daddy and Livi

Baby Devora-Gamboa

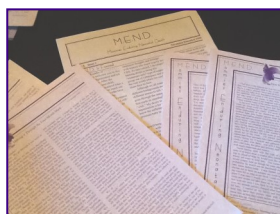
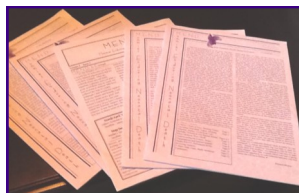
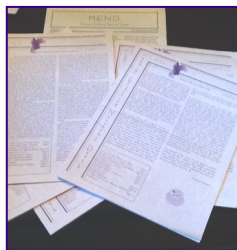
Miscarried November 21, 2014

Parents: Denise and Anthony Gamboa

Sisters: Olivia and Chiquitita



Thank you to Matt Paasch, Daddy to Angel, Davey and Rosebud, for creating new purple balloons!



Pictured above are original printings of the very first M.E.N.D. Newsletters. All are available for reading on our website at www.mend.org.

Life Giving

It is hard to believe it has been 20 years since the death of our son, Michael Joseph. Rebekah and Byron and the beginning of M.E.N.D. had such a positive impact on my journey through grief.

God generously graced me with a way to see something positive and "life giving" grow out of the depths of my sorrow by allowing me to be a part of M.E.N.D. – helping to bring comfort and support to other hurting families.

It was an honor to be the Editor of the M.E.N.D. newsletter. I felt it was a way to honor Michael's memory and allow some meaning and purpose to come from his brief life. It was a way to connect others to healing resources and the knowledge that they're not alone.

Attending the 20th Walk to Remember on October 1, in Dallas, gave me the opportunity to be grateful, once again, for Rebekah and Byron and for their continued commitment to helping hurting families. It is amazing to see what God has done through their love and commitment – and the love and commitment of so many others – who have taken their loss of a child and allowed God to bring something life giving and positive out of such a devastating situation in their lives.

May God continue to bless the work of M.E.N.D. and all those who work so diligently behind the scenes to help hurting families.

May God bless all of our babies in heaven and all their family members on earth who miss them.

♥ Lynne Boer,
Mommy to Michael Joseph
M.E.N.D.—Original Newsletter Editor

Changing Lives 20 Years Later

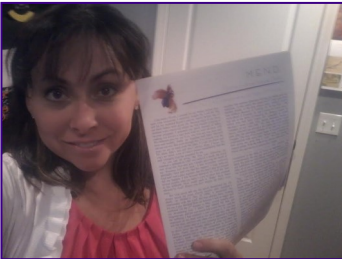
The memories don't fade. That can be a blessing or a curse, depending on your point of view. I'd never want to forget a single moment of my pregnancy, tumultuous as it was; or my delivery, traumatic as it was; or of Caleb's six short hours of life, temporary as it was. However, 13 years later, I wish I didn't remember so vividly the failures in my grief. The poor Walmart clerk who happened to not greet us properly in a long New Year's Eve line, and thus was chewed out by a grieving mother...yeah, I did that. Or those moments when I railed at God... "Why?! Why now? In the middle of seminary...in the center of Your Will...following Your calling completely...away from our friends and family. Why, Lord?! Why Dallas of all places?!"

And then I remember those moments of clarity. Those moments when I had the audacity to say, "Okay Lord, I guess You do know what You're doing." That moment when my husband and I were struggling to find our new normal...to not be overcome by grief...to find someone who just understood. That moment when we found M.E.N.D.

Thirteen years ago, M.E.N.D. looked very different. We still had a great newsletter. We still had a fabulous founder, Rebekah Mitchell, who along with her husband, Byron, and some of our fondly named "oldies" shared their grief journeys with us "newbies." What we didn't have was chapters all over the country. We had ONE...and the Lord orchestrated our loss of our precious babies in 2003 and 2004 to be only 35 minutes from the only chapter available. Back "home" in Missouri there was NO support for families of infant loss...at the time, not even in our famous children's hospitals in St. Louis or Kansas City.

M.E.N.D. walked Jonathan and me through that awful year of "firsts," through that "4 to 6 month mark," and through the subsequent loss of our Baby August. Several years later and states apart, M.E.N.D. and the prayers of our friends carried us through the stressful pregnancy and delivery of our miracle baby, Madison Grace.

Since we joined M.E.N.D. nearly 13 years ago, the organization has grown tremendously by opening chapters throughout the United States and by reaching thousands who aren't near a support group through social networking. I'm proud to say that over the years I've transitioned from being the one needing the support to serving in volunteer roles to carry new families fresh in their loss. I served as the Newsletter Editor for a few years and then was the founding Director for the Southwest Missouri chapter. I'm now an "oldie," and I've passed the torch to amazing women here in the Springfield area. Jennifer Harrison, who continues to produce an amazing quality newsletter, and Kathryn Gold, who has the drive to make my dreams a reality for our local chapter. It's rewarding to sit back and "consult" as needed. To see the work that Rebekah started in us, that we then started in Jenn and Kathryn, and that they are carrying the mission of M.E.N.D. forward. That's only my perspective over 13 years, I can't imagine all that Rebekah and those founding moms and dads are feeling 20 years later. I can only say that our lives—and the lives of so many—have been blessed by their service. Happy 20th anniversary, M.E.N.D., and thank you.



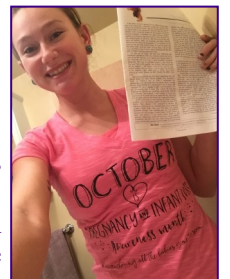
♥ *Heather Fann,*
Mommy to Caleb Scott and Baby August Fann
former M.E.N.D.—Newsletter Editor
and former M.E.N.D.—SW Missouri Chapter Director

October is...

October is Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month. One in four women have lost a baby. It's a traumatic event in our lives we never forget. While we may heal some and struggle less as time goes on, we never fully heal. I feel like in the past year I have been grieving all over again. Jordan would be in kindergarten this year. He would be 5, and I still to this day imagine and dream about what he would have looked like.

The day I had him was the saddest, hardest day of my life, yet I look back and find so much love, gratitude and strength. I have met the most amazing people through my loss and through my support group. I am wearing this shirt every day during October in hopes to spread awareness and make connections and start conversations. I currently fundraise to purchase and donate a cuddle cot for Harrison Hospital in Silverdale, Washington. I am also collecting for 10 care packages because they have on average 10 stillbirths a year. I hope through my work, other families will find some comfort and healing as I did.

♥ *Alexsys Chestnut,*
Mommy to Jordan
M.E.N.D.—NW Washington





Dallas/Fort Worth Walk to Remember

The M.E.N.D. Walk to Remember was truly a beautiful day to dedicate the Garden of Hope and remember and honor our babies on this 20th anniversary. More than 1,200 people came to acknowledge and remember more than 400 babies. It was such a blessing to have with us the Board of Directors, Advisory Board, Chapter Directors, Newsletter Editor and Online Support Group Director help dedicate our Garden of Hope. We were honored when the Mayor Pro-tem, Brad LaMorgese, of the City of Irving, declared October 1 as the Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death Day of Hope.

Following the dedication, we were blessed through the rest of the ceremony with music by Meg Ammons, and heard a message of trusting in God from our speaker, Pastor J Don George, Founding Pastor of Calvary Church in Irving, Texas, where the event was held and Garden of Hope resides. Pastor George shared of the loss of his daughter Vanessa, and being at the grave with Byron and Rebekah as little Jonathan's casket was lowered into the ground. He also shared with us how pain and problems don't change the plans God has for our lives and how He will use them as stepping points. The balloon release was absolutely emotionally spectacular as balloons floated to the sky, symbolizing our babies going to heaven. We were blessed by the City of Irving to create a video of our special day, so please visit www.mend.org to view the video of the Dallas/Fort Worth Walk to Remember.



Commemorative Sponsors

LuAnn and James Junkin
Remembering Paislee Ann Frette

Tribute Sponsors

Kwik Kopy Printing Dallas

Paula and Bay Miltenberger
Remembering
Bay William Miltenberger, Jr.

Faith Sponsors

Marie and David Crowe
Remembering
Jackson David Crowe

Dentistry of Las Colinas /
Byron L. Mitchell, D.D.S.
Remembering
Jonathan Daniel Mitchell
and Baby Mitchell

Highland Park Presbyterian
Church - Women's Ministries

Omni Hotels & Resorts
SeaWorld, San Antonio
Sprinkles Cupcakes
Outerwall (Redbox)
Fort Worth Zoological
Precious Moments
Sympathy Solutions
Market Street, Plano
Billy Bob's Texas
Dallas Zoo
Tiff's Treats
NRH20
Stampin' Up

Painting with a Twist Grapevine
Lindsay Longval, Lularoe Independent Consultant
Johanna Alvar, Scentsy Independent Consultant
Omni Hotels and Resorts - Dallas
Gene and Jerry Jones Family Foundation
Sarah Fukasawa, Independent CAbi Stylist

Dr Delphinium
Designs & Events
Remembering
Samuel Adan Contreras

Hope Sponsors

Richard Dickerman, M.D.

Calli and Joel Stanley
Remembering
Savannah Kate and Baby Stanley

Jennifer Nizzi and Jason Aguilar
Remembering
Grace Selena Aguilar

Love Sponsors

Renee and Chris Henvey
Remembering
James Jackson "Jack" Henvey
and Baby Henvey

Helen and Danny Lynch
Remembering
Sophie Jane Darnell

Fort Worth Zoological
The Comfort Cub
Allison Butchbaker
Brittney and David Fish
Paul Garcia
Monica & Leroy Wilkinson
Melissa Autry Photography
Liz & Robert Walker
Bob's Steak & Chop House
CrossFit in Mesquite
Stephanie Brady
Notecards by Nataly Grau
Inspired Creations by CEO

Tara Allen
Remembering
Jason Paul Allen, Jr.

Brea and Tommy Darnell
Remembering
Sophie Jane Darnell

Jenae and Sam Bowmer
Remembering
Levi Samuel Bowmer

Sable and David Gonyea
Remembering
Ella Lynne Gonyea

Ana Maria and Ross Broussard
Remembering
Andre Gabriel Broussard

Becky and Steve Carter
Remembering Parker Logan
and Riley Carter Davis

The Pistana Group,
DFW Real Estate

Rachel Tidman
Rack Room Shoes
Kali Kundomal
Laura and Jim Shanahan
Joan and Mike Farrell
Patty and John Lee
Lisa and Jeremy Daily
Annette Austin
Lesia and Bryan Lynch
The Skrasek Family
Amber and Al Zuckerman
Brandee and Jim Dill
Lauren and Jeremy Hargrave

Mary Kay Independent Distributor, Laura Bateman
Dentistry of Las Colinas, Byron L. Mitchell, D.D.S.
Fort Worth Museum of Science & History
Perot Museum of Nature and Science
Sterling Images by Brittney Fish
Gene and Jerry Jones Foundation

Angelita and Nonye
Nwaokelemeh
Remembering
Eden Ezzine Nwaokelemeh

Kirsten and Michael Fumagalli
Remembering Airington Hope
and Jakoebi Michael Fumagalli

Melissa and Chad Bailey
Remembering Emma, Brooklyn,
Jillian, Sydney and Baby Bailey

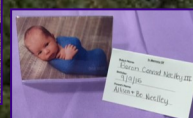
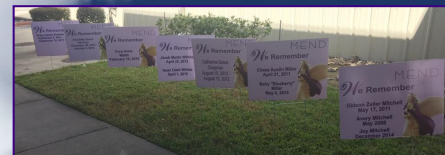
Lenna Ly and Dustin Helt
Remembering Ava Yeh Helt

Monica and Chris Gregory
Remembering
Gabriela Faith Gregory

Sarah and Yoshi Fukasawa
Remembering
Jacob Yoshiaki Fukasawa

Debora Morin
Dallas Stars
The Cono-Meyer Family
Jackie and Fito Hernandez
Embroidery by Marilyn
Jena's Jems
Blanca Chavez
Pics by Azul
Rachael McClelland
Tina & Michael Rusert
Frisco RoughRiders Baseball





M.E.N.D.-Houston Walk to Remember

Our 11th annual Walk to Remember was held on Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day, October 15. This year more than 1,000 people remembered and honored 254 babies. This is our highest attended year in the history of M.E.N.D.—Houston. The circumstances that caused each of us to attend are truly heartbreaking, but we are thankful the Houston area families have a place to honor and remember their babies in heaven.

I would like to offer a special thanks to our Walk team. Without them this ceremony would not have been possible. I also want to thank Katrina Bennett for her words of hope, and Bonnie Atzenhoffer for sharing her musical talent with us. We released 1,500 balloons into the sky, each representing the love of a little life who changed us forever.

Faith Sponsors

Stefanie and Greg Miller
Remembering
Chase Austin Miller
Baby "Blueberry" Miller

Hope Sponsors

Faith and John Story
Remembering
Abigail Grace Story

The Outhouse Boys
Remembering
Ava Faith Jacobs

Amanda and Luke Harrison
Remembering
Charlotte Grace Harrison

Mirna and Jorge Rodriguez
Remembering
Julian Rodriguez



Love Sponsors

Michael and Beckie Martin
Remembering
Brayden Lane Martin,
Everett Christopher Delmar
Baby Delmar

Kenzie and Alan Watts
Remembering
Cora Anne Watts

Melissa and Steven Thomas
Remembering
Jason Hunter Thomas

Miranda and Chris Delmar
Remembering
Everett Christopher Delmar
and Baby Delmar

Kim Curless
Remembering
Adelaide Elizabeth Curless

Emily and Kevin Bates
Remembering
Kelsey Dawn Bates

Chris and Madison Crowell
Remembering
Mackinzie Brooks Crowell

Duane and Jen Watson
Remembering
Emily June Watson,
Hope Amethyst Watson and
Annabeth Lula Watson

Ashley Walsh
Remembering
Aiden Patrick Walsh, Bentley Patrick Walsh
and Corbin Patrick Walsh

Tenya Thomas
Remembering
Jayden Lamar Thomas and
Brandon Prescott Thomas, Jr.

Kim and Vernon Willie
Remembering Marcus John Willie



Sponsors

Tara-Mar Productions
Allison Neelley
I Saw The Sign
Tracey Simoneau
Santikos Entertainment
Juana Medina
Stefanie Bennett
Hilton Hotel-Post Oak
Delila Bryer
Blessing and Light
Lexie & Miguel Talavera
Houston Zoo
Amanda Hoyt
Leslie & Ricky Roberts
Inspire Rock
Merle & James Johnson
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Jamila Eaglin
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April Palmares
Jeanelle League
The Midnight Orange
Denita Luttrell

Maria & Jermaine Griffin
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Maria Rojas
Top Golf
Amanda & Elio Calles
Yesenia Torres
Niesha Fuentes
Hyatt Centric
Silverbox Secrets
Cookie Express
Todd & Stormy Mitchell
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AAPEX Community Pharmacy
Christy Watkins
Alley Theatre
Kimberly Roman
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Emyllin Wong
Melo and Me Photography
7 Acre Wood
Liza Martinez
Gringo's Tex-Mex Restaurant
Leah Miller

Precious Moments
Lydia Kolek
Silverbox Secrets
Paul & Racheal Emig
Landon & Alisha Estay
Candi Witt
Golden Shears Salon
Crystal Ortiz & Joel DeLaGarza
Cinemark Theaters
Ana Ibarra
Marianna & Benny Horowitz
Shane Meyer
Blue Room Gems
George & Carolyn Delmar
Charly Yzaguirre
Ruby Herrera
Houston Astros
Kara Skivington
Jasmine Burton
Tiff's Treats
k3 Academy
Marilu Garza
Rosie Castillo

A Walk to Remember

“Providing Guidance Through Life’s Storms”
Written by Susan A. Adams, PhD, LPC-S, NCC
www.drSusanAdams.com

As we approach a joyous season of celebration for some, we must remember it is a time of sadness and sorrow for others. This reality was very apparent as I sat with two of my friends at the recent M.E.N.D. Walk to Remember. I was thinking of the stillborn grandchild I never met. If the baby had lived, our family would not have our 12-year-old granddaughter, and I can’t imagine life without her. She is such a precious gift to our family.

I also thought of the two friends who had come to the Walk to Remember with me and were sharing my grief with me that day. One of the two had a baby boy, Thomas Dwayne, who died shortly after his delivery 43 years ago. This was the first time she had an opportunity to remember and honor this little boy’s brief life. How special it was to see her blue balloon float away during the balloon release. Times were very different when he died. She was left with empty arms and never had the opportunity to hold him or have a picture of her precious Thomas. In fact, she had not even been able to attend his funeral, because she was still in the hospital. Therefore, she was left to grieve in silence and struggle to find a path through her grief without the solace of a support group like M.E.N.D.

As my eyes scanned the horizon of the newly dedicated Garden of Hope, I saw those who were struggling with raw fresh grief, but I also overheard fragments of conversation and realized many were attending their fifth or twentieth M.E.N.D. Walk. Some have developed friendships as they gather year after year to honor the memories of their precious babies.

So whether the coming months are filled with fresh grief or they find you struggling with grief you are trying to incorporate into your current life, remember to look for memories you can use as building blocks for a future. These building blocks can create opportunities to embrace life and find the joy and peace that the Lord would like to give you this holiday season as His special gift to you. Use your grief journey to honor what you had and what you have, but most of all, use your experience to choose to walk beside those are also traveling this same difficult road of life.

M.E.N.D.-SW Missouri Memorial Bench Dedication

M.E.N.D.—SW Missouri dedicated their memorial bench on October 15. It was a beautiful ceremony with 97 people in attendance. The ceremony was composed of a remembrance walk which included five stations with bubble machines, a gift bag with tissues from M.E.N.D., tiny feet and hand pins from Pregnancy Care Center, a picture frame to sign their name to later hold a picture of the bench, ribbons to write our babies’ names and attach to a wreath, and refreshments and information tables. Once we all reached the bench, the dedication was started by the Community Outreach Coordinator for Klingner-Cope, Jenene Dean, followed by a message from Chapter Director Kathryn Gold, a word from our Founder and President Rebekah Mitchell, and prayer from Liz Walker of the Advisory Board. The ribbon cutting dedicated our bench to families. It was truly a beautiful event.



M.E.N.D.-Bryan/College Station Balloon Release

M.E.N.D.—Bryan/College Station had a wonderful 6th Annual Balloon Release! The weather was perfect. I am so thankful for the interview of LaRhessa Johnson and me by news anchor Rusty Surette of KBTX about our release. We had many new faces attend because they saw our interview on social media. Kohls #1071 in Conroe, Texas, also participated and helped in our event, as well as providing M.E.N.D. a \$1,500 grant. It was definitely a beautifully blessed day.



Thank you to M.E.N.D. Mommy, JaeCee Crawford, for taking family photos at our Balloon Release.

M.E.N.D.-Tulsa Balloon Release

M.E.N.D.—Tulsa held its 6th Annual Balloon Release to commemorate our babies in heaven. It was a beautiful time of remembrance. Thank you to our generous sponsors Absolutely Balloons and Sam's Club.



M.E.N.D.

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

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

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

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

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

Subsequent pregnancy group meets
every other month
on the 3rd Thursday at 7:30 p.m.,
led by Stormy Mitchell (stormym@mend.org)

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

M.E.N.D.—Texarkana

Meets the 3rd Thursday at 7:00 p.m.
CHRISTUS St. Michael Rehab Hospital
2400 St. Michael Drive
Texarkana, Texas 75503
Director: Monica Davis
monica@mend.org, (903) 490-1210

M.E.N.D.—NW Washington

Meets the 2nd Monday at 6:30 p.m.
Harrison Medical Center/Iris Room
1800 Myhre Rd.
Silverdale, Washington 98383
Gig Harbor Meeting
Meets the 4th Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.
St. Anthony Hospital/Greenpoint Dining Room
11567 Canterwood Blvd NW,
Gig Harbor, Washington 98332
Director: Stacy McGhee
stacym@mend.org, (360) 662-6161

M.E.N.D.—SW Missouri

Meets the 1st Thursday at 7:00 p.m.
Project H.O.P.E.
1419 S. Enterprise
Springfield, Missouri 65804
Director: Kathryn Gold
kathryn@mend.org, (417) 770-0600

M.E.N.D. Chapter Updates***Wichita Falls***

Several of our M.E.N.D.—Wichita Falls members were able to attend the Walk to Remember and Garden of Hope ribbon-cutting in Dallas. We continue to meet monthly and welcome new families. Our Food & Fellowship meeting has been enjoyable, and we are looking forward to seeing everyone on the last Monday of the month; details can be found on our Facebook page. Our monthly support meeting is as always on the second Thursday of the month. We are praying for all of our families.

*Sarah Fukasawa****Houston***

M.E.N.D.—Houston is excited about our Christmas Candlelight Ceremony the first weekend in December. Please know we are praying for all our families as we walk through the holidays without our babies. We pray the Prince of Peace gives joy in the midst of grief, as we focus on the True Reason for this holiday.

M.E.N.D.—Houston is also looking forward to next year to continue serving the families in Houston. We are expecting to open an in-person Support Group for Spanish speaking families sometime in the beginning of the year.

*Stormy Mitchell****Texarkana***

M.E.N.D.—Texarkana continues to minister to hurting families in our area through meetings, our Facebook page, and phone calls. For more information about M.E.N.D.—Texarkana, please contact me at monica@mend.org or 903-490-1210.

*Monica Davis****Chicagoland***

M.E.N.D.—Chicagoland had a very special time in Dallas celebrating the dedication of the Garden of Hope and being part of the Walk to Remember. What a beautiful weekend it was.

We are looking forward to the annual decorating of our M.E.N.D. Christmas tree at the zoo lights display. We are thankful to continue to have the opportunity to show love, compassion and care to hurting families in Chicago.

*Sara Hintz****Tulsa***

M.E.N.D.—Tulsa is hosting our 5th Annual Christmas Candlelight Ceremony to commemorate our babies during the busy holiday season. The ceremony will be held on Tuesday, December 6, 2016, at 7:00 p.m. at Anthem Church (formerly known as Liberty Church). For additional information, please contact me at lisa@mend.org or (918) 694-4325 (HEAL).

*Lisa Daily****SW Missouri***

Along with our bench dedication we shared about on page 14, we continue to work in other areas. Our Paddle Party, organized by Ashley Sudheimer, was a success. This fundraiser included a silent auction as well as the raffle/auction of items donated by 12 different vendors who attended and donated items. We are now planning our Christmas Candlelight Ceremony for Monday, December 12, 2016, at 7:00 p.m. at Second Baptist Church. For more information, watch our Facebook page or contact Kathryn@mend.org.

Kathryn Gold

Bryan/College Station

As seen in the pictures on page 15, the M.E.N.D.—Bryan/College Station 6th Annual Balloon Release was beautiful! Once again we are so thankful for the interview which led many families to joining us on that day. I am also thankful staff from Kohl's #1071 in Conroe, Texas pictured here. Because of them, Kohl's is giving our chapter a \$1,500 grant! Thank you to Meredith McNeil and Valerie Market for doing a profit sharing fundraiser for our chapter to fund our Balloon Release.



Be sure to join our Facebook group for all our latest events and meeting information. Our chapter could not run without the guidance of our Lord and Him using LaRhessa Johnson, Melody Pittman, Kristen and Kyle Rabe, and Jason Drude to do the work. They are the hands and feet of God, and I am so thankful for their help.

Jennie Drude

NW Washington

M.E.N.D.—NW Washington would like to give a big “Thank You” to Kitsap Kids Dentistry for its donation to our chapter. What a wonderful program they offer to help local non-profit organizations, and we are honored to be one of them.

I had the privilege of attending the Dallas/Fort Worth chapter's 20th Walk to Remember. What a beautiful ceremony it was, and such a helping experience for all who attended. It was a beautiful ceremony with more than 1,200 people in attendance. Thank you all for coming and remembering your baby with us.



Stacy McGhee

M.E.N.D.—Bryan/College Station

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

M.E.N.D.—Tulsa

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

M.E.N.D.—Wichita Falls, Texas

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

M.E.N.D.—Chicagoland, Illinois

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

M.E.N.D. Support Group Meetings in the Dallas Metroplex

Join us for a time of sharing experiences.

M.E.N.D. main chapter meetings

are held the 2nd Thursday of every month from 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.

Daddies group

meets the 2nd Thursday of March, June, Sept., and Dec., from 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.

A time for dads to meet together and discuss topics relevant to them as fathers. Our moms and dads meet together for introductions before dividing into two groups for discussion.

Subsequent pregnancy group

meets the 4th Tuesday from 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.

Led by Liz Walker: liz@mend.org
For families who are considering becoming pregnant or are currently pregnant after a loss.

Food and Fellowship

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

A time to relax and meet with other M.E.N.D. parents in a social setting.

Contact Brittney Fish:
brittney@mend.org

Infertility group

meets the 3rd Monday at 7:30 p.m.

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

Parenting After Loss Playgroup

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

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

Mommies AND daddies are both welcome at all M.E.N.D. meetings. Unless otherwise noted, all support group meetings are held at:

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

(Located in the Crystals Pizza parking lot, between MacArthur and O'Connor) Meetings will be in the bank board room, located on the first floor.

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

In Loving Memory**Grace Selena Aguilar**

Stillborn November 15, 2013
Given by parents Jason Aguilar
and Jennifer Nizzi

Jason Paul Allen, Jr

July 1, 2013
Given by mommy Tara Allen

Lauren Isabelle Autry

June 17—July 2, 2011
Given by parents Brandon and Melissa Autry
and sister Haley

Levi Samuel Bowmer

April 19, 2013
Trisomy 13 and Tetralogy of fallow
with absent pulmonary valve
Given by parents Sam and Janae Bowmer
and sister Evelin Jean

Andre Gabriel Broussard

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

Jackson Dean Cochran

April 24—May 19, 2004
Premature
Given by parents Stacey and DeAnna Cochran
and brother Christian

Baby Cohea I

Miscarried August 2015

Baby Cohea II and Baby Cohea III

Miscarried April 2016
Given by parents Kevin and Ashley Cohea

Samuel Adan Contreras

Stillborn November 11, 2010
Cord accident
Parents: Mercedes and Alfredo Contreras
Given by Dr Delphinium Designs & Events

Abigail Grace Crump

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

Brooke Sophia Daily

Stillborn March 11, 2010
Vasa previa
Gifts given by parents Jeremy and Lisa Daily
and sisters Sarah and Savannah

Sophie Jane Darnell

Stillborn May 28, 2013
Unknown cause
Gifts given by
Parents Tommy and Brea Darnell
and siblings Luke and Piper
Grandparents Danny and Helen Lynch
Uncle Bryan and Aunt Lesa Lynch
The Skrasek Family

Riley and Parker Davis

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

Everett Christopher Delmar

Stillborn April 18, 2012, at 28 weeks
Unknown cause
Baby Delmar
Miscarried December 20, 2014, at 9 weeks
Unknown cause
Parents: Chris and Miranda Delmar
Siblings: Christian Matthew and Clara Evelyn
Given by grandmother Danita Luttrell

Dharma Lucille Drude

March 31—April 1, 2008
Anencephaly
Liza Belle Drude
Stillborn February 23, 2015
Unknown cause
Stella Darling Drude
Stillborn January 23, 2014
Anencephaly
Parents: Jason and Jennie Drude
Siblings: Maxwell, Molli and Milo
Gifts given by
Kevin and Abigail Potter
Sally Hicks

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

Ella Lynne Gonyea

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

CJ Gold

Miscarried August 12, 2008
Marina Gold
Miscarried July 14, 2009
Given by parents Greg and Kathryn Gold
and big sister Emily

Serenity Harrison

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

Jayden Noah Kaye

Stillborn October 10, 2006
Unknown cause
Tucker Steven Kaye
Stillborn February 8, 2010
Genetic disorder
Baby Kaye
Miscarried December 2007
Parents: JD and Magen Kaye
Siblings: Noah, Mia and Marlie
Given by grandparents
Marty and Cindy Testerman

Elliana Grace Kundomal

Miscarried July 2010
Given by mommy Kali Kundomal

Bay William Miltenberger, Jr.

Stillborn December 9, 1998
Preterm Labor
Given by parents Bay and Paula Miltenberger
and siblings Bryce, Bo, Brady, and Brooks

Jonathan Daniel Mitchell

Stillborn June 24, 1995
Cord accident
Baby Mitchell
Miscarried December 2001
Parents: Byron and Rebekah Mitchell
Given by Dentistry of Las Colinas /
Byron L. Mitchell, DDS

Max Novik

May 9-10, 2011
Anencephaly
Given by parents Mark and Melinda Novik
and sisters Sam (Max's twin) and Jenna

Rebekah Tikvah Nymeyer

July 16, 2015
Premature
Parents: Jonathan and Terri Nymeyer
Siblings: Isaac, Abby, and Esther
Given by Morgan Jones

Carter Patrick Outen

Stillborn November 6, 2000
Unknown cause
Baby Outen I
Miscarried April 3, 2001
Baby Outen II
Miscarried October 5, 2001
Given by parents Chris and Shannon Outen
and sisters Erin and Charlie

Margot Lily Perry

Stillborn June 10, 2013
Cord accident
Given by parents Brandon and Marisa Perry
and siblings Adeline, Bennett and Noelle

Morgan Schear

Miscarried March 28, 2006
Given by parents Nobel and Paula Schear
and brother Isaac

Conor James Shanahan

Stillborn June 21, 2006
Given by parents Jim and Laura Shanahan

Mindy and Maggie Smith

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

M.E.N.D. gratefully acknowledges these gifts of love given in memory of a baby, relative, friend, or given by someone just wanting to help. These donations help us to continue M.E.N.D.'s mission by providing this newsletter and other services to bereaved parents free of charge. Please refer to page 2 of this newsletter for more information regarding where to send your donations and what information to include.
Thank you so much!

Mercedes Ruth Spigener

Stillborn September 21, 1995
Intramembranous insertion of umbilical cord

Twin Blossoms Spigener

Miscarried July and August, 1996

Baby Spigener

Miscarried February 2004
Parents: Grant and Jana Spigener
Siblings: Wyatt, Ford, Porter, Calvin and Sadie
Given by grandparents
Barry and Sheryl Spigener

James McKay "Jim" Suggs, Jr

March 17, 1952 - September 20, 2016
Given by Gary and Mary McClelland

Savannah Kate Stanley

Stillborn January 3, 2004
Premature/incompetent cervix

Baby Stanley

Miscarried November 10, 2004
Parents: Joel and Calli Stanley
Siblings: Colton, Danika and Sara
Given by The Chattertons

Marcus John Willie

Stillborn March 24, 2012
Given by parents Vernon and Kim Willie

Adrian Joseph "AJ" Zuckerman

Stillborn March 30, 2007
Cord accident
Gifts given by parents Al and Amber Zuckerman
and brothers Eli and Alex

Gifts of Support

Second Baptist Church, Springfield, MO
West Conroe Baptist Church, Conroe, TX
Kitsap Kids Dentistry
k3 Academy
Marilu Garza
Rosie Castillo
Tommy Pistana
Christ Church Assembly of God, Fort Worth, TX
Hillside Baptist Church, Springfield, MO
Janis Kidder



Because "They Got It"

At every M.E.N.D. meeting we have a "jumping off topic." At a recent M.E.N.D.—Houston meeting the topic was "How has your grief been different than you expected it to be?" My mind automatically started turning. What a great topic! Because I found out my first daughter had anencephaly at my 20-week doctor's appointment, I had 16 weeks to prepare to say "Goodbye."

I planned her funeral, I purchased and customized her casket, I arranged organ donation...but it never occurred to me that this thing I had already started going through, this "grief"....would NEVER go away! Yes, I knew I would miss her. I would always miss out on prom dress shopping with her, her wedding day, grandchildren. But this total emptiness, constant exhaustion, guiltiness and pain down to the depth of your soul....THAT, I was not prepared for.

Thank GOD for M.E.N.D.! After my first meeting I was hooked. These women understood me and every feeling I ever had. They did not tell me to "get over it," "just have more babies," or "you just need to pray more." THEY GOT IT!

It did not take long for me to realize that this is where God wants me. This is the ministry I have been called to, not the one I would have chosen, but I was indeed called to. I have been part of the M.E.N.D. leadership family for seven years now, and in that time I have lost two more daughters. I honestly don't think I could have made it through those losses without them. They helped me plan more funerals. They helped me arrange the things you have to do but just don't have the strength to do. When I was being induced with Stella, my "M.E.N.D. girls" came to my hospital room and sat with me. There was no advice, no "sad eyes," just love and support. They knew just what I needed because they knew me and my baby, and they have been there before. And when it came time to celebrate Stella Darling's life, M.E.N.D. moms from around Texas drove hours to her service to be with us. Most of my own family did not come...but my M.E.N.D. family did. A year later when Liza Belle died, they did it all again. They brought us meals and gift cards, they just sat with us, free of judgment and "sad eyes."

So how has my grief been different than expected? It brought me a new family. Before I thought of "family" as those people who you might see every five years but really don't know any better than a random Facebook friend. M.E.N.D. is my family. Our babies are family. I will be forever thankful to Rebekah for starting M.E.N.D. in 1996. I am not sure if this is what she expected it to be like after 20 years....but I can't wait to see what God does through her, M.E.N.D., and the life of her son, Jonathan, and Baby Mitchell in these next 20 years.

♥ Jennie Drude,

Mommy to Dharma, Stella and Liza

M.E.N.D.—Bryan/College Station Chapter Director



What is Normal?

What is “Normal”?

Normal is having tears waiting behind every smile when you realize someone important is missing from all the important events in your family’s life.

Normal for me is trying to decide what to take to the cemetery for birthdays, Christmas, Thanksgiving, New Years, Valentine’s Day, July 4th and Easter.

Normal is feeling like you know how to act and are more comfortable with a funeral than a wedding or birthday party...yet feeling a stab of pain in your heart when you smell the flowers and see the casket.

Normal is feeling like you can’t sit another minute without getting up and screaming, because you just don’t like to sit through anything.

Normal is not sleeping very well because a thousand “what if’s” and “why didn’t I’s” go through your head constantly.

Normal is reliving that day continuously through your eyes and mind, holding your head to make it go away.

Normal is having the TV on the minute I walk into the house to have noise, because the silence is deafening.

Normal is staring at every baby who looks like he is my baby’s age. And then thinking of the age she would be now and not being able to imagine it. Then wondering why it is even important to imagine it, because it will never happen.

Normal is every happy event in my life always being backed up with sadness lurking close behind, because of the hole in my heart.

Normal is telling the story of your child’s death as if it were an everyday, commonplace activity, and then seeing the horror in someone’s eyes at how awful it sounds. And yet realizing it has become a part of my “normal.”

Normal is each year coming up with the difficult task of how to honor your child’s memory and her birthday and survive these days. And trying to find the balloon or flag that fits the occasion. Happy Birthday? Not really.

Normal is my heart warming and yet sinking at the sight of something special my baby loved. Thinking how she would love it, but how she is not here to enjoy it.

Normal is having some people afraid to mention my baby.

Normal is making sure that others remember her.

Normal is after the funeral is over everyone else goes on with their lives, but we continue to grieve our loss forever.

Normal is weeks, months, and years after the initial shock, the grieving gets worse sometimes, not better.

Normal is not listening to people compare anything in their life to this loss, unless they too have lost a child. NOTHING. Even if your child is in the remotest part of the earth away from you - it doesn’t compare. Losing a parent is horrible, but having to bury your own child is unnatural.

Normal is taking pills, and trying not to cry all day, because I know my mental health depends on it.

Normal is realizing I do cry every day.

Normal is disliking jokes about death or funerals, bodies being referred to as cadavers, when you know they were once someone’s loved one.

Normal is being impatient with everything and everyone, but someone stricken with grief over the loss of your child.

Continued on page 22.

M.E.N.D. Ministry from a Distance

I surfed around and found M.E.N.D. online the summer of 1999, shortly after my son Joseph was stillborn. Though not in its infancy, the organization was still young when I happened upon it. Back then, M.E.N.D. had only one chapter, and it was three hours from me. I made the drive from Abilene, Texas, to a M.E.N.D. meeting during one of my darkest days of grieving in January 2000. By the summer of the same year, I was editing the M.E.N.D. newsletter.

As I look back now, I can see that it all happened pretty fast, but at the time, the days seemed to crawl by. I was desperate for healing, for understanding, for all of the chaos of losing my baby to somehow make sense. And, of course, I wanted all this to happen immediately. I longed for Romans 8:28, which people quoted to me incessantly, to prove true in my life. I needed to see good happen through this very bad thing. Thankfully, there was M.E.N.D., offering me a way to use my grief to help others, which is how so much of helpful, honest ministry is born.

At first, I was sure I was supposed to start a new chapter of M.E.N.D. in my area. I had been to a local Compassionate Friends meeting where about 80 percent of that night's attendees were moms of deceased babies. Abilene seemed like it needed M.E.N.D. as much as I did. The timing seemed right, too. M.E.N.D. was just beginning to put guidelines in place so they could expand to different areas with new chapters. However, I learned one of the requirements for a new chapter leader was that your loss had to have happened more than a year before you could apply to start a new chapter. When I wanted to start a M.E.N.D. chapter, I was still within the one-year window, and I was devastated.

However, I now know that was all part of God's plan. At about the time I realized I couldn't start a M.E.N.D. chapter, I learned M.E.N.D. needed a new Newsletter Editor. A few short months later, I gave birth to a new baby girl and moved with my Air Force husband and our older sons to California. If I had begun work on building a M.E.N.D. chapter in Abilene, I would have left it behind before it even started. However, as Newsletter Editor, I could work from my minivan as we drove from Texas to our new home in California, and then from our subsequent home in Kansas, where my new neighbor recognized my name from the M.E.N.D. Newsletter and confided her unborn baby had a terminal diagnosis. I was able to be with her at the hospital and take photos of her whole family with their sweet baby as they told him "Goodbye." Then, I could continue my service as Editor in Virginia, and then New Mexico, until finally in 2007, I stepped down.

During my final newsletter, I got in a rush and missed including some precious babies' birthday tributes in the newsletter. I realized then that my focus had shifted. My heart was fully engaged in ministering to teenagers at the time, and I was giving M.E.N.D. whatever energy I had left over. My self-absorbed attempt to hold on to the Newsletter caused pain to other parents, and it was a wake-up call for me. It was time to let someone else experience the rich, immeasurable blessings of serving as M.E.N.D. Newsletter Editor.

We bereaved parents know our plans and God's plans don't always align, and that lesson continued to be demonstrated during my time as Newsletter Editor. I saw God did indeed want me to use my gifts to serve Him through M.E.N.D., and He opened the door for this transient military spouse to make that happen. He also humbled me to realize that, when life changes, I have to change, too, and follow Him into new places of ministry, allowing others to come behind me to pick up and improve upon the work He started.

Thank you, thank you, thank you to all who entrusted your babies' birthday tributes and donation acknowledgements and subsequent birth announcements and stories and poems and book reviews into my very human hands for seven years. It was an honor to be entrusted with such precious things. I have prayed over hundreds of babies' names and look forward to being able to say, "Hey – I know you!" when I meet them in heaven one day.

May God bless you all, and may He continue to bless M.E.N.D.'s ministry into the next 20 years.

♥ *Sharlene Libby,*
Mommy to Joseph

M.E.N.D.—former Newsletter Editor

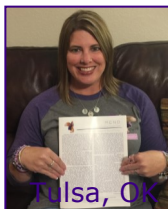


Seth and Marcie Nienhuis,
of Tulsa, Oklahoma,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Annie Rose,
born September 10, 2016,
measuring 8 lb., 7 oz.,
and 19.75 inches long.
The family lovingly remembers
Samuel James,
stillborn October 14, 2006
MTHFR, Factor V Leiden

Subsequent Births

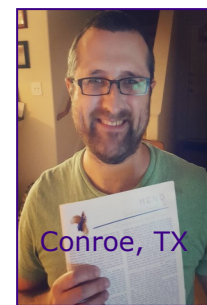


David and Michelle Spencer,
of Collinsville, Oklahoma,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Wyatt Morgan,
born September 15, 2016,
measuring 8 lb., 12 oz.,
and 20.5 inches long.
The family lovingly remembers
Dakota Lynn,
miscarried November 5, 2013

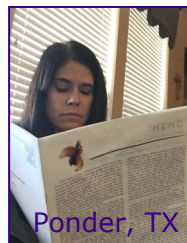


#MEND on Social Media

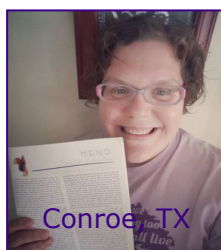
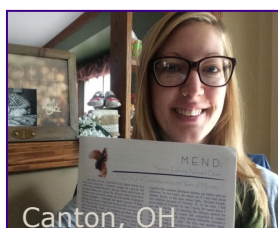
Connect with us on social media!
We share quotes, pictures, articles, advice
and other items about pregnancy and infant loss.



Like our Facebook page "Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death (MEND)"
Find us on Instagram at [m.e.n.d.1996](https://www.instagram.com/m.e.n.d.1996)
Follow us on Twitter at [@MENDinfantloss](https://twitter.com/MENDinfantloss)



We'd love to hear about your experiences with M.E.N.D.
Just use #MEND to connect with us.
Use #MENDNewsletter to share
your selfie with your newsletter, your location,
and how the #MENDNewsletter has impacted you in your grief journey.



"What is Normal?" continued from page 20.

Normal is sitting at the computer crying, sharing how you feel with chat buddies who have also lost a child.

Normal is feeling a common bond with friends on the computer in England, Australia, Canada, the Netherlands and all over the USA, but yet never having met any of them face to face.

Normal is a new friendship with another grieving mother, talking and crying together over our children and our new lives.

Normal is not listening to people make excuses for God. "God may have done this because..." I love God, I know that my baby is in heaven, but hearing people trying to think up excuses as to why healthy babies were taken from this earth is not appreciated and makes absolutely no sense to this grieving mother.

Normal is being too tired to care if you paid the bills, cleaned the house, did laundry or if there is any food.

Normal is wondering this time whether you are going to say you have three children or two, because you will never see this person again, and it is not worth explaining that my baby is in heaven. And yet when you say you have two children to avoid that problem, you feel horrible as if you have betrayed your baby.

Normal is avoiding McDonald's and Burger King playgrounds because of small, happy children that break your heart when you see them.

Normal is asking God why he took your child's life instead of yours and asking if there even is a God.

Normal is knowing I will never get over this loss, in a day or a million years.

And last of all, Normal is hiding all the things that have become "normal" for you to feel, so that everyone around you will think that you are "normal."

What I Once Only Saw in Words...

More than a thousand of us gathered on the warm day in October under the Dallas sun. At first, we wander between two buildings or out in front of the buildings. As we slowly make our way outside, I see us. I see friends visiting together. I see couples catching up on life with other couples. I see people trying to keep children in strollers happy and keep track of the siblings. I see older children hanging nearby their parents, playing a game or texting. I see grandparents visiting with other couples. I see all of us...continuing on our journey of life, but we are all together on that day because we have journeyed down a long road, the road of a parent of a baby in heaven. And we are gathered to walk a brief journey of it together...to remember...to not forget.



And as I see you, I notice many of you have shirts honoring your babies. Shirts in black announcing you are Malachai's Daddy and Mommy. Shirts to remind us Kathrynne and Samuel are "Safe in the Arms of Jesus." Remembering their little angel, the Landsell baby. The Rabes and Jennie Drude wearing pins in memory of their babies. A family in shirts showing their love for Paislee Ann, whom I've never met, but know her name well from all that her family does for M.E.N.D. I see the tables with pictures, soft blankets, and other items in memory of your children.



I see you. I see you as the bagpipes begin their solemn song...as we begin our solemn walk. I see you bow your head down, because the tears are already beginning to fall. I see you with your sunglasses hiding the tears in your eyes, but unable to hide the streams running down your cheeks. I see my own husband, trying to be strong, carrying our little rainbow



baby, but I hear the sniffles and I see the quick swipe of tears behind his sunglasses on the shirt sleeve. I see you all, in a way I have never seen you before. I see you together, the origin of the entire organization, walking to remember. Just as Rebekah Mitchell said, "Everyone wants to remember, and no one wants to forget."

We walked our solemn journey toward the Garden of Hope, and took our first moments to gaze upon the beauty of it, the majesty of it all. A sculpture of Jesus. We see him holding Malachai. We see Him holding Kathrynne. We see Him holding Samuel. We see Him holding Dharma, Stella and Liza.



I see Him holding my Serenity. I see myself sitting next to Jesus, as He holds my baby and reassures me she is safe in His arms.

For the past five years, I have served as the Newsletter Editor for you. I am behind the screen, usually late at night, reading your words. You were all the faces I saw in my mind, but never saw with my own eyes. I felt your tears through your loving words of heavenly birthday tributes to your babies. I felt the anguish in your articles as you shared the story of your baby. I felt your sorrow as I looked at the pictures you include with your articles. I felt the love as you shared how God carries you sometimes and other times simply walks beside you in your journey.

On that Saturday, though, I was able to see a glimpse of your sorrow with my own eyes. I saw your tears. I saw the tearful hugs between you and your spouses, family members, friends who were there during your loss, M.E.N.D. family who have been and continue to be by your side. I saw you lovingly hang your ornament on a tree. I saw you write beautiful notes to your babies in heaven. I sang, through my own tears, "Jesus Loves Me" with you. And I stood with you as we wistfully watched our love letters to our babies gently, gracefully float to heaven.

As I joined you that day, for a moment, I was able to see with my own eyes glimpses of you in your journey. I wasn't reading your words; I was seeing your heart through your shirts, your tears, your faces as you wrote your love letters as you remembered. As I sit behind my screen writing this, I remember...and for a little bit, I was able to walk with you...always remembering and never forgetting.



♥ Jennifer Harrison,
Mommy to Serenity
Current M.E.N.D.—Newsletter Editor



M.E.N.D. – Conmemorando 20 Años de la Publicación de los Boletines Informativos

Normalmente imprimimos un tema de los días festivos durante esta época del año, pero debido a nuestro 20 aniversario, hemos decidido recordar y reconocer cómo el Señor ha bendecido nuestro Ministerio y esta publicación en las últimas dos décadas.

Como usted puede haber leído en nuestra última edición, M.E.N.D. se formó en septiembre de 1996. Dos meses más tarde tuvimos nuestro primer grupo de apoyo en Irving, Texas, y nuestro primer boletín fue impreso. Este boletín conmemora 20 años de llegar a miles de familias afligidas en todo el mundo a través de esta publicación gratuita.

Al principio de la formación de M.E.N.D.' Lynne Boer, nuestra primera y ex editora de este boletín, sugirió hacer M.E.N.D. más que un grupo de apoyo de los padres lamentando en el metrópolis de Dallas/Fort Worth. Ella tenía la idea de crear una publicación que podría ser enviada a cualquier persona en los Estados Unidos y posiblemente en otros países. Sabíamos que no queríamos, a falta de las finanzas, nunca prohibir a las familias poder recibir nuestros recursos así que nuestra primera decisión sobre el boletín de noticias fue que nunca cobraríamos una cuota de suscripción. Sabíamos que la impresión sería costosa y optamos imprimir cada otro mes, en lugar de mensual, y cada tema se centraría en un tema diferente referente al embarazo y la pérdida del bebé. Lynne se asoció con una impresora en el área, Kwik Kopy, que sigue siendo nuestra impresora hoy. El personal de allí era una gran ayuda mientras rápidamente compilamos nuestra primera edición. Guiaron a Lynne en el formato y dieron sugerencias en el diseño, incluyendo la hermosa idea de imprimir nuestras publicaciones en papel púrpura, hasta que el proveedor lamentablemente lo descatalogado hace varios años.

Para nuestra edición inaugural, sentíamos que no había mejor forma para introducir M.E.N.D. al mundo para comenzar que con la introducción de nosotros mismos, las fundadoras y miembros iniciales, contando nuestras historias de nuestra pérdida. Laurie Ottinger, Lynne Boer, Stacey Lange, Katherine Middlebrook y por primera vez en nuestro camino de dolor, nos sentamos con nuestras computadoras para escribir acerca de nuestros bebés. Escribimos párrafos breves sobre cómo y cuándo nuestros bebés murieron, y la bendita esperanza de verlos otra vez un día en el cielo. Queríamos que nuestros lectores supieran que entendemos lo que estaban pasando porque nosotros, también, habíamos sufrido la muerte de nuestro bebé y ofrecerles comodidad -

las mismas comodidades que nosotros mismos habíamos recibido de Dios (2 Corintios 1:4).

Hoy en día, ahora 126 publicaciones de este boletín impresos y enviados a todo el mundo, hemos logrado el sueño que el Señor dio a luz dentro de nosotros hace tantos años. Hemos cubierto una multitud de temas como el día de la madre/padre, lidiando durante los días festivos, la aflicción de los hermanos/hermanas, la pérdida temprana, infertilidad y pérdida, la pérdida de múltiples, proveedores de atención médica y la pérdida, y la lista continúa. No tengo idea cuántos hogares individuales han recibido nuestro boletín de noticias sobre los años ni exactamente cuántos países en todo el mundo que han viajado nuestros artículos en "púrpura", pero Dios lo sabe, y estoy humildemente agradecida por la oportunidad de haber sido y continuo siendo su mano extendida para llegar a los que batallan con aflicción. Estoy agradecida por nuestros últimos editores, Lynne Boer, Sharlene Libby, Heather Fann y a nuestro editora corriente, Jennifer Harrison. Horas incontables amorosamente se dedican a crear cada edición y sé que estas mujeres han quemado el aceite de la medianoche más noches de lo que nunca dirán. Pido bendiciones abundantes del Señor sobre ustedes mujeres y a sus familias por dedicar su tiempo a los detalles de que el nombre de cada bebé está escrito correctamente, los cumpleaños celestiales son exactos y de que no se omite la presentación de nadie accidentalmente. Y cuando eso sucede (y lamentablemente a veces ocurre), sé que sienten la misma tristeza y decepción que siente la mamá que entrego la presentación. Para una organización que está conformada por solo voluntarios, creo que nuestro boletín de información y nuestros editores se merecen una A +! Rara vez hay errores tipográficos, errores gramaticales o diseños confundidos. Gracias, muchas gracias a todos nuestros editores pasados y presentes y armario de voluntarios que también revisan el boletín para evitar errores.

Al presente día, este boletín se envía a 1,527 hogares en todo el mundo y es leído por infinidad sobre nuestra página del web. Les agradecemos a nuestros suscriptores, por permitir que M.E.N.D. llegue a su buzón de correo varias veces al año y ser parte de su alivio. Oramos que ha sido y seguirá siendo una fuente de esperanza y consuelo a su corazón lastimado.

♥ *Rebekah Mitchell,*

Presidente y Fundadora

Mamá de Jonathan Daniel y bebé Mitchell

Traducción Española

Mi primera reunión de M.E.N.D. fue apenas dos meses después de que nació Erika a la vida eterna hace 19 años. Ese primer año sigue siendo un borrón. Hoy me siento honrada de ser parte de M.E.N.D. Aunque con todo corazón me encargo anualmente de personalizar cada ornamento, igual siento agradecimiento de poder contribuir en traducir el artículo de Rebekah al español eliminando la barrera del idioma para seguir apoyando a una comunidad amplia que de lo contrario no se podría alcanzar. Al conmemorar este 20th aniversario, recordamos a Jonathan siempre a través de todo el apoyo amorosamente que Rebeca y su familia han establecido para nosotros en su memoria.

♥ *Yvette Grau,*

Mamá de Erika

M.E.N.D.—Traductor de Español

To The Grieving Momma

Oh, sweet momma...

I am so, so sorry you are here.

I know this is your worst nightmare realized. I know this wasn't plan A, B, C, or Z. I know the weight of it all is suffocating, soul-crushing, devastating, and earth-shattering in every way possible. I know you would trade it all just for one more moment.

I know your heart is broken. How I wish I could make you feel at home again. How I wish I could take away the pain. How I wish I could place that baby back in your arms. You could watch them grow. All the giggles, skinned knees, and eskimo kisses. I know you would savor every moment. I know you would breathe that baby in till you no longer had any breath in you. I know you would give every ounce of you to save every ounce of them, one thousand times over.

I know you miss them. I know you wish you could just smell them one more time, see their face one more time, kiss that squishy cheek and then freeze that moment so it would last forever. There are things that pictures and videos can never replace, and having that baby in your arms is at the top of the list.

I know.

If I could “fix” this, I would move mountains. My gosh, I would in a heartbeat.

You, sweet momma, are so brave. You are strong. You are such a good momma.

You need to know this.

On the days when it's all you can do just to function, that's okay.

On the days when you try your hardest to pull yourself together, and somehow things just don't work out, give yourself grace. Give yourself room to breathe. You are so loved, sweet momma.

On the days when no one but you mentions their name, I am so, so sorry. Say their name bravely. Know that they are still real, they were still here, and you are still their momma.

On the days when you feel like you could burst from anger and pain, go somewhere alone, cry it out, curse at the sky—there's nothing worse than having to fake it. Just don't. Please, let yourself feel it. You've been through too much to put on a face, and healing doesn't come when we are living under a facade.

On the days when the world tells you to “heal” and “move on,” friend, healing from child loss doesn't look like healing from an injury. Our children were not a broken bone, they are a piece of our hearts, and now a piece of our hearts is gone. Friend, you will heal, just not in the way the world wants you. You will breathe easier. You will ache maybe a little less, but I've heard from mommas much, much further down the road than I, the longing will never, ever, ever leave. That's the beauty and the fierceness and the strength of a mother's love.

Momma, you are strong. You are so brave. You are doing such a good job.

You are irrevocably changed, in the sweetest, head-over-heels, all-in, never-stopping way. Your love is strong. That's the promise you made when you swore to love them every second of their life and every second of your own, no matter what the cost was on your heart. Nothing on this earth has shown me unconditional love better than the love of a grieving momma. I see your love. I see the power of it. It's stronger than any amount of pain, than a sea of tears, than even the grasp of death.

I know, because of that love, you would brave every ounce of pain one thousand times over just for them.

Even when you don't feel it... Look, momma. Here you are... You're still breathing. You're still standing. You are so brave.

Sweet momma friend, I am so sorry you are here. Know that you are so loved.

Know that where there is great pain, there is even greater love.

So much love to you,

A Momma Who Knows

Written by Lexi Behrnt on May 16, 2015. Retrieved on October 16, 2016 from www.scribblesandscrubs.com.

To view the video of this reading which included pictures and videos of babies gone too soon, please visit <http://www.today.com/video/to-parents-who-have-lost-a-child-we-see-you-783605827870>

I Am I in 4

I am your friend.

Your coworker.

Your barista.

Your accountant.

Your personal trainer.

You see me at the grocery store with my kids. My baby swaddled up to my chest, my two older kids hanging off the cart I push around. You comment on how full my arms are. I smile on the outside. On the inside, I cringe. The truth is, no matter how many kids I have in my arms, I know they will never be full enough.

You see me in my work. I'm the last one out of the office, and the first one in. I never leave early, or request time off to attend field trips. Sometimes you comment on how much easier my life must be without balancing work AND family. You think I'm childless. I know you are wrong. Living without my children in my arms is anything BUT easy.

I'm a sophomore in high school. My teachers say I'm one of their star students. The guidance counselors tell me I have a great chance to get into my colleges of choice. Few people knew about the baby. Those who did told me it was a blessing the baby didn't make it. That it was easier this way. Some days I believe them. Most days, I don't.

I'm a grandma. My hands are worn and thin, my face marked by decades of laughter and worries. During the holidays, my home bursts at the seams with my children, my grandchildren, and soon, my great-grandchildren. No matter how full the table, I know there is a place setting missing. The baby I lost. The one they wouldn't let me see after I gave birth. The one no one ever spoke about again. It's been 60 years. But every night before I sleep, I whisper my child's name. They might have taken my baby from me. But they'll never take away her memory. Or my love for her.

I am successful.

I am struggling.

I look like I have it all.

I radiate positivity.

I just secretly filled my prescription for anti-depressants.

You see me at my child's grave. I leave flowers, stuffed animals and small toys. Sometimes people take my child's gifts, and those days my tears are extra bitter. It's hard enough that death has snatched my child. Does someone need to take my meager offerings too? I lay on the ground and stroke the gravestone. There's only one date under his name. The day I said hello, and the day we said good-bye. It was the best day. It was the worst day. It was the only day we had.

You see me at my child's soccer game. I look smart, put together. The mascara stains that ran down my face earlier in the day have been neatly wiped away, and replaced with a fresh layer of foundation. I forgo the eyeliner and mascara this time. It's just easier that way. I cheer as my child scores a goal, and another cramp comes. A reminder that my body hasn't finished what it started. It's been weeks since our baby's heartbeat stopped. But my body, like my heart, is having a hard time making sense of the loss. I turn my attention back to the game, and hope you didn't notice my fleeting expression of pain, or the tear that slipped down my cheek unchecked.

You see me at my child's appointment. You think I'm overprotective. My child has the fever, but it's my brow that's covered in sweat. You try to reassure me, but your words never touch the anxiety wrapping its tendrils around my heart. I've seen the worst happen. I've watched my baby breathe in, and breathe out — for the very last time. I know nothing is safe, and my child's life is not so sacred that death cannot touch it. I am vulnerable. I am scared. You think you understand. But you don't.

I will always wonder "what if?"

I will always remember the anniversary. Even when my mind forgets, my body can't.

I will always struggle to number my children when asked by a stranger how many kids I have.

I will always wonder how I could love and want the child in my arms as much as I want and love the child in my heart.

I will always be grateful I won't have to choose between my children. I will always know I wanted them all.

I will always take special notice when I overhear someone use my child's name.

I will not grow weary remembering.

I will not stop wishing for just a little more time.

I will not apologize for not moving on.

I will not withhold my expression of love and grief just because others don't understand.

I will not stay silent.

I am the face of pregnancy and infant loss.

I am 1 in every 4 women who has experienced both the miracle of her child's life, and the horror of her child's death.

My loss is a part of me, but it's not all of me.

I'm still the mom, coach, friend, business owner, coworker, and professional you knew me to be.

But today, I'm choosing not to be silent. It's time you knew .

Rachel Lewis is an adoptive, foster and biological mom. She writes about her 5 pregnancy losses, as well as her fostering and adoptive journey, on her blog The Lewis Note. Her recent "I am 1 in 4" article was shared by the Today Show, and various news outlets. She believes that sharing our stories is a powerful way to reach other hurting women and let them know they are not alone.



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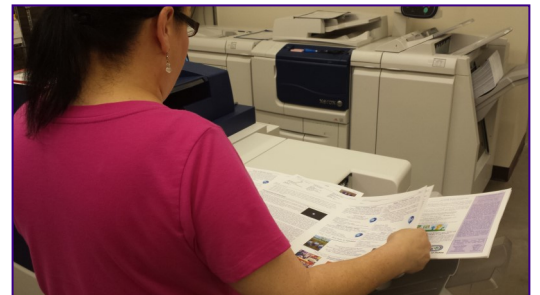
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“... that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.” (2 Corinthians 1:4)

M.E.N.D. would like to say a special “Thank You” to Kwik Kopy for 20 years of dedication. Kwik Kopy helped us when we first started our newsletter and continue to take care of our printing needs today.



Kwik Kopy Printing Dallas



*Louisa Garza of Kwik Kopy Printing Dallas,
Mommy to Kenneth Bernard Weddington, Jr.*