



M.E.N.D.

Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death

Loss as a Single Parent

In place of Rebekah Mitchell's article, the cover story for this issue was written by Norma Jordan, M.E.N.D. Advisory Board.

Like practically each one of us, I had a plan. I was going to become established in my high-powered career, get married, and my husband and I were going to have four daughters. I even had their names chosen. I told God my plan. Then God gently whispered His purpose to me...

I understand it's extremely difficult being a single parent to beautiful, blessed living children while trying to fulfill needs that are ideally provided by two parents. I remember when Father passed away, and Mother not only became an instant widow, but a single parent. As if that was not trying enough, my 18-year old sister was murdered while at school, two years later. The excruciating agony Mother must have endured while making sure all was well with our household, meeting our needs, providing for each of us while grieving, simultaneously, for the loss of her husband, our Father, and daughter, our sister. What amazing strength! Her ability to continue in life with her head held high, her heart wide open, a smile on her face and an unmatched belief in God, showcased for me that no matter what comes my way, Mother has already set the example.

I remember going to my father's and my sister's gravesites on a weekly basis with Mother for years. We would spend hours at a time at the cemetery. It was part of our lives – it was normal. After church and lunch on Sundays, we would pack up flowers and head to the cemetery. This was our ritual for years. And, as I later realized, doesn't include the numerous times Mother visited their gravesites privately.

Fast forward to January 2007. I had practically nine months of the perfect pregnancy, and it was only five days until our scheduled C-section would bring forth the arrival of our beautiful baby son, Jordan. We excitedly went in for our final sonogram, all smiles, laughter and great expectations. Crushingly, this excitement was all short lived - the beat of my son's heart stopped right in the midst of my absolute greatest joy. Just like my mother, excruciating agony consumed me. I now fully understood her pain and suffering. Life would never be the same.

After my son Jordan's birth into heaven, I was blessed to connect with M.E.N.D., which became one of my saving graces. I was provided with a support system Mother's generation perhaps never had the opportunity to

experience. This was groundbreaking. I learned that normally, couples who share in a loss of this magnitude experience a deeper bond with one another. For me, it served as a truth serum. The relationship I shared with my son's Father ended, and I began this journey of loss as a single mother. My own mother's strength, resolve, guidance and survival skills kicked into full gear. Sadly, I had learned from watching the best.

As Jordan's Mother, I began representing both of his parents. My son is loved without measure. I proudly speak his name. Like all parents, I celebrate all my son is. I'm at his "grace-site" countless times throughout the year. I celebrate his birthdays, the holidays, the anniversaries, the milestones – all as a single mother, alongside our side-kick, Jazz (Jordan's puppy-dog). I encourage all who find themselves as single parents to represent your children. You are all they have. You are their voice. You are their legacy.

Although I strongly advocate for my beautiful son, Jordan, as a single parent, there are times when I think how nice it must be having both of your child's parents together as a unit to share in the perfect love of your child. Or both parents side-by-side who "get it" without either of you having to utter a single word. Or having that additional parent being able to share your deepest thoughts and dreams about the child you both share, love and miss. Sometimes I wonder about the special support that can only be shared for your child between the two people who are the parents.

Although I am surrounded by an abundance of support and unconditional love, as a single parent, I am my support in the middle of the night when I'm unable to sleep and tears fill my pillow. As a single parent, I am the one who plans the celebrations for the milestones experienced. As a single parent, I am the buffer and voice of reason when ignorance is spewed out of well-meaning mouths who don't begin to have a clue. But just as gracious and loving as my mother before me set the example, I, as a single parent to a child in heaven, am the only one who will forever, lovingly represent my beautiful son, Jordan, while on this earth.

♥ Norma Jordan,
Mommy to Jordan
M.E.N.D.—Advisory Board

Nota Español: El artículo de Norma Jordan aparece en cada emisión de nuestro boletín para la audiencia latina.
Para ver el artículo de este mes en español, por favor vea la página número 14.

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.

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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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Medical Moment



Miscarriages May Be Prevented With Progesterone

By Amanda MacMillan

Published on Time.com January 9, 2017

For women who have had multiple miscarriages, a safe and inexpensive progesterone treatment may increase their chances of completing a pregnancy. In a new study published in the journal *Fertility and Sterility*, two-thirds of women who used the hormonal supplement before pregnancy successfully delivered babies, despite having had at least two previous pregnancy losses.

Progesterone has been shown to help stabilize the inner lining of the uterus called the endometrium, an important factor for healthy embryo development. Progesterone supplements (also known as micronized progesterone) have been recommended for more than 50 years for women struggling with infertility, but there's been less research on how it might benefit women who get pregnant but then miscarry.

Researchers from the University of Illinois at Chicago and Yale University recruited 116 women who had lost at least two early pregnancies, and tested their levels of nCyclinE, a molecular marker for endometrial health. Those with abnormal levels were then prescribed progesterone supplementation, to be inserted vaginally, twice a day during the second half of their menstrual cycles.

The intervention seemed to help. In the progesterone group, 68% of the women had subsequent successful pregnancies, compared to 51% of those who did not receive the hormone.

The researchers believe that the progesterone caused the endometrium to secrete more nutrients, which serve as food for an embryo in its first weeks of development. (Women who became pregnant continued taking progesterone until the 10-week mark.)

Lead author Dr. Mary Stephenson, director of the recurrent pregnancy loss program at the University of Illinois Hospital and Health Sciences, says that women who have suffered multiple pregnancy losses should talk to their doctors about progesterone supplementation.

“We now know that, for some women, the use of progesterone in the second half of the menstrual cycle is associated with a higher likelihood of taking home a baby, and that is really good news,” says Dr. Stephenson. “We also know that progesterone is safe in early pregnancy, easy to use and inexpensive.”

Progesterone can be prescribed in several forms, including creams, capsules and pills that are inserted vaginally with an applicator. Women can self-administer these treatments, and they are usually covered by insurance, says Dr. Stephenson.

However, there are many possible causes of recurrent pregnancy loss, a condition that affects up to one in 20 women. Before deciding on a treatment option, she cautions, patients should undergo a thorough evaluation to determine what strategies might work for them.

In fact, the new research suggests that testing women for nCyclinE and other biomarkers may help doctors determine which patients would benefit from progesterone supplementation.

Co-author Dr. Harvey J. Kliman, director of the reproductive and placental research unit in the department of obstetrics, gynecology and reproductive sciences at Yale School of Medicine, invented the patented test for nCyclinE levels used in the study.

“We initially created the Endometrial Function Test to identify women with infertility,” Dr. Kliman said in a press release. “This study has shown that the EFT can also be an important tool for patients with recurrent pregnancy loss.”

The study was published today in the journal *Fertility and Sterility*. Dr. Stephenson says she is in the early stages of developing a randomized clinical trial,

which is needed to validate her early findings and influence any official recommendations for women who have had multiple miscarriages.

In the meantime, those women should talk with their doctors, says Dr. Stephenson. "We've been using vaginal progesterone for some time for recurrent pregnancy loss," she says. "We know that it's a reasonable strategy—one that should be discussed, risks and benefits, between patient and physician."

Retrieved from <http://time.com/4629589/miscarriage-progesterone-pregnancy/> on February 2, 2017.

Not What I Expected

Well, it's been tough. It's bad enough losing a child, but it makes it even worse doing it alone. I cry myself to sleep about 80% of the time. I feel so alone. Don't get me wrong; my family is supportive, well...as much as they can be, but it's not the same.

I wish things would have been better between my daughter's father and me, but I can't change what he decided was best for him. Not me or his child, but for him.

I find myself trying to reach out to others, but then I get so overwhelmed I can't get myself to talk to my family or my friends. For me, it's been easy opening up to strangers or a few of my friends, and even more to those who have suffered a similar loss.

I had no idea how my life was going to continue when my little girl's heart stopped beating. Holding her lifeless body in my arms did something inside of me. It changed me. She changed me, and as difficult as it's been, I know deep down inside my baby would not want me to be what I thought and how I felt my life would be like without her, a life of despair. I honestly had no idea I would be doing okay. That I would be able to smile and laugh. I had no idea how I would keep going. It's a terrible feeling, but I know she would want her mama to keep moving forward - to get up every morning and keep going.

I try not to look at the negative aspects of losing her. I can't change what has happened at this point. I can only look forward to seeing her again one day. I try my best to be a better person and make her proud.

Each morning I wake up, I think how lucky I am to be one day closer to seeing my baby girl again. How lucky I am I have my own personal angel. How lucky I am to have carried and held my very own angel. How lucky I am to be her mom. How lucky I am to have her waiting for me in God's garden, talking to Jesus and telling Him about her mama.

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♥ *Stephanie Gutierrez*
Mommy to Olivia Gutierrez
M.E.N.D.—Houston

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!

May/June Topic

Mother's Day/Father's Day
Deadline: March 30, 2017

July/August Topic

Loss is Our Last
Deadline: May 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 1st Birthday, Elijah!

To our precious little star, Elijah Thomas,
you are such a blessing to us.

We love you and miss you. Dream big, little one.

*Elijah Tomford
March 18, 2016*

Unknown cause

Parents: Travis and Katie Tomford

Sister: Olivia



Happy 1st Birthday, Braydon!

Happy birthday to you, Braydon. Mommy, Daddy, Michael and Jacob love you very much. We miss you and celebrate you every day. I have taken you many places with us. Happy birthday in heaven. Your 1st birthday. You are special and amazing. You have touched so many people's lives here on earth.

Braydon Michael Pitoniak

April 24, 2016

Heart stopped

Parents: Mike and Jill Pitoniak

Brothers: Michael and Jacob



Happy 2nd Birthday, Cancun Twins!

Happy 7th Birthday, Jojo!

Happy 10th Birthday, Joelittle!

Forever in our hearts, our guardian angels.

*Ethan and Joel Mendoza
Miscarried March 13, 2015*

Joey Ethan Hernandez

February 22-April 13, 2010

SIDS

Joel Mendoza

June 9, 2006-January 4, 2007

Hydrocephalus

Parents: Rey and Lynette Mendoza

Siblings: Emma Joy and Elijah



Happy 4th Birthday, Levi!

Happy 4th birthday in heaven, Levi. We will forever be grateful to call you ours. We miss your precious face every single day. We long to hold you in our arms again. Until that day, please know how much you are loved. We will see you soon, sweet boy. Life is short; heaven is forever.

Much love,

Daddy, Mommy, Evelin and Valerie

Levi Samuel Bowmer

April 19, 2013

Trisomy 13

Parents: Sam and Jenae Bowmer

Little sisters: Evelin and Valerie



Happy 5th Birthday, Everett!

Our little man, you are 5 years old! If you were here, you'd be starting kindergarten this year and probably would be teaching your brother and sister all sorts of fun and mischievous things. Without you here our family is not complete, and we long for the day we will all be together. We hope you are having a wonderful birthday party in heaven. We love you so very much!

Mommy, Daddy, Christian and Clara

Everett Christopher Delmar

Stillborn April 18, 2012

Unknown cause

Also remembering

Baby Delmar

Miscarried December 20, 2014

Unknown cause

Parents: Christopher and Miranda Delmar

Little siblings: Christian Matthew and Clara Evelyn



Happy 4th Birthday, Arianna!

Happy birthday, sweet baby girl! Mommy and Daddy miss you every day! We hope you are having the best birthday filled with cake and love. We love you with all our hearts, Arianna. Never forget that!

Love,

Mommy and Daddy

Arianna Trinity Price

January 30, 2013

Ectopic pregnancy

Also remembering

Daxton Carter Price

November 11, 2016

Ectopic pregnancy

Parents: Robert and Hailey Price



Happy 5th Birthday, Paislee!

Happy birthday, sweet Paislee! We can't believe it's been five years since we last held you. Watching your baby sister grow this year has been so bittersweet because it reminds us of all the things we missed with you. You made us a mommy and daddy, and for that, we are forever grateful. We still talk about you and think about you, and there isn't a day goes by we don't miss you. We know you are watching over all of us and can't wait until the day we can hold you again. We love you, precious girl!

Mommy, Daddy and Colbie

Paislee Ann Frette

April 4-5, 2012

Wolf-Hirschhorn Syndrome

Parents: Brent and Courtney Frette

Little sister: Colbie



Happy 1st Birthday, Avelina!

Happy birthday to our sweet baby girl! We were blessed with the time we had together, and we think of you every moment of every day. Thank you for making us your Mommy and Daddy and for being such a strong little girl. We planted a tree for you and are waiting for your first flowers to bloom this spring and every spring after for the rest of our lives.

Mommy and Daddy love you and miss you so much. Until we get to hold you and kiss you again...

Love,
Mommy and Daddy



Avelina Barbara Retamozo Lipnick

Stillborn March 11, 2016

PPROM

Parents: David and Kathy Lipnick

Happy 7th Birthday, Sophia!

7 years. Yet, it seems like yesterday, and 70 years all at the same time. I always wonder who you would be. What you would look like. As we watch your little sister grow, I wonder how much of her is like who you would have been. Seven years ago our lives changed forever. We talk about you every day, and are forever grateful of the many blessings God has shown us because of you. Your short life has touched our lives more than others we have known. Happy 7th birthday in heaven, our sweet Sophia.

Sophia Rose McGhee

Stillborn March 29, 2010, at 33 weeks

Unknown cause

Also remembering

Baby McGhee 1

Miscarried 2002, at 5 weeks

Baby McGhee 2

Miscarried 2009, at 5 weeks

Baby McGhee 3

Miscarried 2009, at 6 weeks

Parents: Matt and Stacy McGhee

Siblings: Micah and Scarlett

**Happy 7th Birthday, Brooke!**

Our darling Brooke, oh how we miss you every day! We can't believe it has been seven years since we last held you. We remember the details like it was yesterday, but by the grace of God, we are in a far different place than we were seven years ago. It is still neat to hear your sisters talk about you on a daily basis. Please continue to watch over all of us. We look forward to the day we meet you in heaven. We love you!

Love,
Mamma, Daddy, Sarah and Savannah

Brooke Sophia Daily

March 11, 2010

Vasa Previa

Parents: Jeremy and Lisa Daily

Sisters: Sarah and Savannah

**Happy 4th Birthday, Anderson Maxwell!**

Dear Max, how can it be that it has been four years since we first saw your sweet face and held you in our arms? So much of life has happened since that day. Our love for you continues to grow each and every moment. You made us parents, and you are forever our baby boy. Your life and love have been a gift, have taught us so much and now are helping others to find their way through the organization, A Memory Grows. We miss you terribly and wish you were here to celebrate, play and have a party, but we know your love forever carries on. Happy 4th birthday, sweet Max!

Love,
Mommy, Daddy, Maezey and Maura

Anderson Maxwell Graham

March 12, 2013

Placental abruption

Parents: Aaron Graham and DeAndrea Dare

Siblings: Maezey and Maura

**Happy 7th Birthday, Elliot!**

Dear Elliot, as we approach the 7th anniversary of saying both "Hello" and "Goodbye" to you, we reflect on how you've impacted us, your family. You have helped us to become compassionate, grateful and generous: Compassionate toward others who experience loss, grateful for the days we do have together, and generous in extending ourselves to others in need. Your life is intricately woven into who we are today. Thank you, son. We look forward to our heavenly reunion with you.

Elliot Gerriets

March 18, 2010

HLHS

Parents: Chris and Faith Gerriets

Siblings: Evelyn and Ethan

**Happy 1st Birthday, V3!**

Today is your 1st birthday, and we want you to know even though you're in heaven, we still love you so! We are still dealing with our grief. However, knowing you are with Jesus is a relief. V3, right now we are apart, but you'll always be in our hearts.

Victor Olatunde Winston Johnson III

Stillborn April 22, 2016

Unknown cause

Parents: Victor Jr and Maya Jonson

**Happy 7th Birthday, Andrew!**

We love and miss you dearly. Your little sisters would have adored you! Until we meet again, our sweet baby boy.

Love,
Mommy, Daddy and your sisters

Andrew Michael Pittman

Stillborn March 23, 2010

Cord accident

Parents: Kindale and Melody Pittman

Little sisters: Kaylee Drew and Avery



Happy 6th Birthday, Lily Joy!

Dearest Lily,
Happy birthday to our
second child, our first daughter.
Love,
Mommy, Daddy, Isaac, Judah and Baby Girl

*Lily Joy Moore
March 2, 2011*

Early pregnancy loss

Parents: Jeremy and Kathleen Moore

Siblings: Isaac, Judah and Baby Girl

**Happy 7th Birthday, Ari!**

To our sweet, precious Arianna, Mommy and Daddy love and miss you so much. We think of you and your siblings every day. We imagine what you'd all look like and what you'd all be doing if you were here with us. We think of how close you'd be with your cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents and other relatives. The photos we'd take and all of the memories we'd have as a family. We will never have that beautiful family photo each year where we can see how much you've grown and changed. All we have is the memory of your perfect body sleeping in my arms. You now have your Papa and other relatives along with your siblings in heaven. We know you will celebrate your birthday there with so much love. We will send you balloons as we do each year hoping you know how much we still think of you. We miss you so much, sweet angel, but we know we will see you again. Happy 7th birthday, our sweet Arianna Elizabeth!

Lots of love from Mommy and Daddy

Happy 7th birthday, Arianna. I wish you were here so we all could celebrate this special day with you. I hope you and your Grandpa are having a great time getting to know each other. Your Aunt Elizabeth was taking good care of you until he got there. I am sure you are dancing on clouds. What a beautiful little girl you must be. Your Mommy and Daddy miss you very much and so do I. I think about you and your Aunt Elizabeth, and all the other babies who didn't get a chance to live here on earth. Let the clouds rumble with joy with all who are in heaven. Happy birthday, Arianna.

Love,
Grandma Jeannie XOXO

Arianna Elizabeth Wilkinson

Stillborn April 12, 2010

Tear in amniotic sac

Also remembering

Baby Boy Garcia

Miscarried August 2006

Baby Girl Wilkinson

Miscarried November 2008

Baby Boy Wilkinson

Miscarried August 2011

Parents: Leroy and Monica Wilkinson

Grandma: Jeannie Garcia

**Happy 15th Birthday, Elizabeth!**

Elizabeth, today you would be 15 years old! So much time has gone by, but your memory is always close by. It's hard to believe you would be in high school and getting your driver's permit this year. Momma, Daddy and Em are missing all of the "would have beens," yet looking forward to seeing you again soon. Hug Isaac for us! Happy birthday, Elizabeth.

Elizabeth Abigail Jackson

April 29, 2002

Trisomy 16

Also remembering

Isaac David Jackson

June 24, 2013

Trisomy 13

Parents: Jeromye and Angi Jackson

Sister: Emily Faith

**Happy 6th Birthday, Chase!**

It is always hard to believe another year has passed since we held you in our arms. We often wonder what you would be like, what kind of things you would be in to and what your personality would be like. We wonder if you would want to play soccer or baseball, and I'm sure you and your sister would be inseparable. We wish you were here running around with her, making even more messes and making it even louder! I miss having that special mother/son bond, and I know Daddy misses having that special father/son bond. We love you and miss you so much.

Love,
Mommy, Daddy and Cora

Chase Austin Miller

April 21, 2011

Incompetent cervix

Also remembering

Baby "Blueberry" Miller

Miscarried May 4, 2015

Parents: Greg and Stefanie Miller

Sister: Cora

**Happy 3rd Birthday, Rosi!**

We miss you and each day gets harder and harder. As you grow older with our heavenly Father, we just want to send our love and kisses your way, and let you know you are missed very much. Mommy would have enjoyed you the most at age 3. Come back soon, precious little angels. Bring healing to our broken hearts. Love you tons.

Rosilyn Angel Bob

April 20-21, 2014

Two vessel cord

Also remembering

Baby Bob

Miscarried July 31, 2016

Parents: Manidhar and Willuna Bob

Siblings: Romilyn, Raelyn and Rheelyn



Happy 1st Birthday, The Twins!

My dear sweet twins, I cannot believe you would be 1 year old already. Time moves both so quickly and so very slowly now. I often wonder what you would each look like now, what sort of personalities you would each have. I am so sad I never got to meet you, but I am grateful I got to be your mother, even for a short while. Know that I will love you forever and I am celebrating you here on earth today, as I know you are celebrating with our loved ones there in heaven with you.

Love you always,
Mom

Baby Cohea II and Baby Cohea III
April 25, 2016
Missed miscarriage, unknown cause
Also remembering
Baby "Peanut" Cohea I
August 18, 2015
Missed miscarriage, unknown cause
Parents: Kevin and Ashley Cohea



Happy 10th Birthday, A.J.!

The big double-digit birthday! We think about you every day, and our minds wonder what you would be like if you were here. We are so very proud to be your family and do all we can to honor you. We miss you daily. We will hold you in heaven. Our love for you is endless!

We love you more!
Daddy, Mommy, Eli and Alex

Adrian Joseph "AJ" Zuckerman
March 30, 2007
True Knot Cord Accident
Parents: Al and Amber Zuckerman
Brothers: Eli and Alex



Happy 11th Birthday, Morgan!

Happy birthday, our Morgan. We love you! We thank Jesus for all He has given us, because you came into our lives. We wish we were all together, but we trust His perfect plan.

Morgan Schear
Miscarriage March 28, 2006
Parents: Nobel and Paula Schear
Brother: Isaac Wesley



Happy 1st Birthday, Baby Lovett!

Although we never got to meet you, we carried you in our hearts, and you will never be forgotten. We love you always until we meet again. You're forever our angel baby.

Love,
Your Mama and Meemaw
And the rest of your family

Baby Lovett
Miscarried April 23, 2016
Mommy: Sabra Lovett



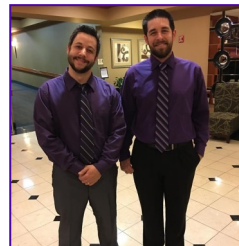
M.E.N.D. Leadership Conference

The leadership of M.E.N.D. gathered for the annual Leadership Conference for a time of training, sharing ideas and relationship building. Friday consisted of Chapter Directors meeting individually with Rebekah and then with tech support. There were also stations to crochet small blankets, sew heart pillows, create memory boxes for hospitals, and a Bible study. Friday afternoon we kicked off our first session with social media training, then enjoyed a wonderful dinner that evening.



We began our day early on Saturday to cover topics such as finances, the newsletter, fundraising and events, plus others. In the afternoon we visited the grave of Ruby Joyce Bell, the third child of Rebekah's grandparents and who died of pneumonia just shy of being 2 months old, and the grave of Jonathan, Rebekah's son, and heard from a pastor some truth's about heaven. We then traveled to the Garden of Hope, where we had an impromptu session of prayer and lifting our voices in praise to God in song.

Saturday evening we spent time fellowshiping and relationship building with a dinner and playing an Escape Room. It was a wonderful conference providing wonderful training, fellowship, and worshipping God.



Being Strong by Force, Not Choice

Definition of strong

1. having the power to move heavy weights or perform other physically demanding tasks
2. able to withstand great force or pressure
3. (of light) very intense

Strong - these are the definitions according to Google. But this is totally different than what I thought strong meant. This is all about being strong physically, but what about emotionally?

Losing Baby Clyde has been the most painful experience I had to endure in my entire life, and still continue to endure. I don't know if this happens to other parents, but my relationship with his father fell apart. We became complete strangers toward each other. We were living together, yet we were living separate lives. We both grieved our son, but in different ways. Instead of things getting better, we seemed to fall in depths of failure and grief. No one in this world will understand the depth of our pain but each other, yet this broke us. While I know I'm not the only one grieving because he also hurts for our son, but I'm now a single parent of an angel, so I grieve as a single parent.

Being single has never been hard, but now it's so different. I had to come to terms with the fact that my future children will never resemble Baby Clyde since they will have a different father. They will not have his same last name. And I will never have his last name. That every M.E.N.D. event, I will stand without his father. Every milestone on this grieving roller coaster, his father will not be there. When I wake up crying in the middle of the night for our son, the person who shares this physical connection of our child will not be here to hold me. We are no longer a family. If I ever decide to marry another man, he will have to understand the fact I will always grieve my child, and I live to honor his memory.

I have been told I have no attachments toward my baby's father. This makes me so irate. Even though Baby Clyde is not here, his father and I will always share him as our firstborn son. No matter what, a child is a blessing, and I will never regret having this bond with his father no matter how things ended.

No one understands child loss fully unless they go through it. And no one understands child loss as a single parent unless they go through it. When I tell people I'm not with his father, I see how people treat me different, and I feel like they see me as wounded or broken. I've been told I'm so strong, and they couldn't have done it alone. But I had no

choice. I had to keep going and striving forward. I had to live without Baby Clyde, and I was forced to do this alone. And I'm still here, standing, after all this pain.

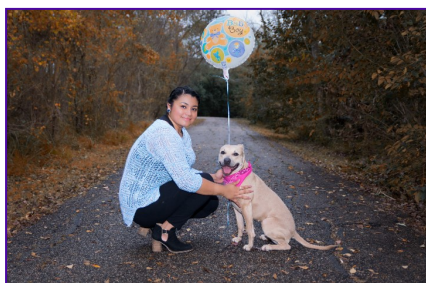
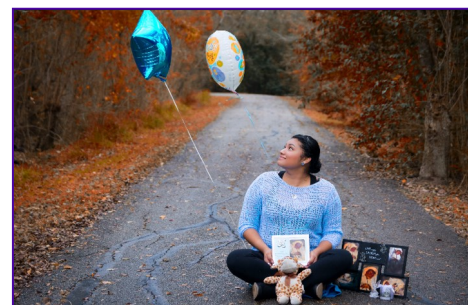
I say I am still here, but I didn't make it this far easily. In fact, after Baby Clyde's heavenly departure, I lost everything. Everything that could possibly go wrong, went wrong, and I made the worst choices of my life. I started to drink heavily, and I had to be drunk on a daily basis. Getting drunk was the only way I felt better. When I was drunk, I was able to have some emotions. When I was sober, I felt dead inside. I isolated myself from my friends and family.

At this point of my life, a bottle of wine or beer was the only companion I wanted. I stopped eating regularly and would only eat once a day. I stopped caring for myself to the point my health started to deteriorate. I was in another state of mind where I wanted to end this devastating torture, but I didn't want to kill myself. There were days taking a shower was my biggest accomplishment. Some days I would even go without showering or brushing my hair. I was so mad at everyone and felt like no one understood my agony. I said things and did things to Big Clyde (Baby Clyde's father) that are unforgettable. I stopped caring for him as my partner and as a father who just lost his firstborn son. I stopped seeing him as a man, but instead as my enemy and pushed him away. One day I exploded and kicked him out.

I was so wrathful. I was mad at God for taking my sweet angel and leaving me here with empty arms to mourn his death. I pushed myself from going to church and even being close to God. I had so much rancor in my heart. I questioned God's Will. Why?! Why?! I have suffered my entire life, but this was more than I could manage. The only thing I felt I would've been good at, being a mother, and it was gone, my baby was gone. My hope, my happiness, my humanity, my dreams, my motherhood, the milestones, the girl I was, the love I felt for his father, the love I felt for myself, were all robbed from me. And God allowed this to happen to me. This was the lowest point of life.

The year went by so fast yet so slow. It felt like everyone was able to love, have kids, get married, get engaged, celebrate 1st birthday parties, celebrate anniversaries, take trips, etc., and I was stuck on this grieving cloud where some days were dark and some were shining.

Baby Clyde's 1st birthday was on December 11, and I chose to take pictures to honor his 1st heavenly birthday. I sat in the car with my dog, Luna, and I felt so overwhelmed



Finding New Wholeness

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

There is nothing as lonely as going through life’s storms as a single person in a world that suggests there should be two sharing this life experience. So it is when a baby is due. This should be a happy occasion; yet for many it ends in heartache and despair because of unexpected loss. The death of an infant changes the structure of any family, but the loss of a child changes life in ways that could not be foreseen or understood.

The birth of a child should be a happy time filled with happy faces and lots of laughter, but for the single parent, it can be an empty echo in the darkness of night. For many, there are no memories, and no one to share their deep pain. There is little connection with the baby because this precious baby’s life was brief. Darkness seems to shroud the painful gut-wrenching mourning to the point of almost physical drowning since, at times, our sorrow seems to cut off even our breathing. This sorrow can be an individual’s pain especially for the single parent.

However, rather than grieve alone, an organization like M.E.N.D. provides women who have experienced the same empty pain a chance to let their voice be heard. For those who are part of a faith-based organization, there may be others among the congregation who can share their grief through their own individual journey’s pathway.

Rituals, whether solitary or collective, can be comforting. Let me provide an example: As you reach out to others who have lost a baby or child, a small gathering of remembrance can be helpful. Put a large square sheet on the floor to indicate a sacred space. Adorn it with ritual objects to reflect a type of altar. Play soft music, and allow your thoughts to take a journey of remembrance - remembering dreams hoped for and a future that will not include this precious little one. Light a candle and place it beside the “power objects.” This type of ritual can provide strength available to help you with your grief journey.

One final suggestion is to seek trained counseling. Do not be afraid to ask the counselor about her training and/or experience. These sessions can provide individual personal time that can change pain and grief into a strength-based experience. Feelings of fear and sadness can change to those of hope and pride through the process of creative expression when working with a trained counselor. The more we create or re-create a sense of connection to our pain, the more we experience healing.

We can focus on the concept of complimentary or opposing opposites that are represented by an inner connectedness. As one reaches fullness and threatens to disintegrate, the seed of something new (sort of a new birth) emerges. By finding a meaningful way of expression, alignment of self through M.E.N.D. or individual counseling provides a powerful natural process that leads to a new wholeness.

because his father was not there. I have never felt so alone. There in my car, I picked up all the pieces of my broken heart. The pain I felt cannot be compared or measured. There I wondered how it is possible to continue with all this pain, rage and despair I felt. I was forced to be strong, but I didn’t want to be.

I made myself get out of the car, alone. I made myself carry the bag with the cupcakes, his urn and balloons, plus hang on to my dog, Luna, alone. But everything was falling apart. I dropped the cupcakes. Luna wanted to run and kept pulling her leash so hard she nearly knocked me down. I felt so alone.

I was getting ready to cry when the photographer approached me. For one second I held it together and walked towards her. We started the photo shoot and, for some reason, I bonded with a complete stranger. I had never met Angie until the photo shoot, but she was so kind and understanding.

The photo shoot brought me so much. It was like my Baby Clyde was there to remind me that no matter what happens, my love for him goes beyond the depths of my pain, and I will never be alone. During the photo shoot, while most of the day was rainy, a little bit of sunshine shone down on us. I was able to have some closure. I felt it was okay to finally let go and move forward. I felt a weight lift from my shoulders, and when I saw the photo the photographer sent me, I saw how I felt in the photo shoot. No matter what, I will always be his mother, and he will be my son, and I will be strong for him. After all this agony and sorrow, my heart manages to love Baby Clyde. I’m no longer afraid of being the single mom holding the balloon. And I will continue to be strong, even during the times I don’t want to be.



♥ Paola Calderon
Mommy to Baby Clyde Edwin Miller V
M.E.N.D.—Houston

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: Chelsea Stroud
chelsea@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***

M.E.N.D.—Wichita Falls continues to meet monthly as well as enjoy fellowship meetings at the end of the month. Details can be found on the Wichita Falls Facebook page. We are also welcoming current members into leadership positions. We continue to pray for our grieving families, and welcome those who need support.

Sarah Fukasawa

Houston

M.E.N.D.—Houston hosted our first support group for Spanish speaking mommies and daddies. We are excited to be able to reach more families in the Houston area through this new group!

This year our goal is to spread M.E.N.D.'s information to all major and smaller media outlets in the Houston area. If you have any connections with newspapers, radio stations, or news stations, please email me at stormym@mend.org. We want to spread our name to the public more so any family who loses a baby will know where to go for help.

Stormy Mitchell

Bryan/College Station

The leadership team of M.E.N.D.—Bryan/College Station had a wonderful time in Dallas at our annual Leadership Conference! We loved getting together and discussing ways to reach more hurting families in our area. Thank you to Rebekah, the Board and Advisory Board for hosting us.

Be sure you are following us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for up-to-date information about future events, meetings and fundraising opportunities.

Jennie Drude

Chicagoland

M.E.N.D.—Chicagoland is looking forward to another successful year of ministering to and walking alongside hurting families in the Chicago area when they lose a baby. While we never want anyone new to join us, we are so thankful when they find us for support in their grief journey. We are planning a painting fundraiser for later this spring, so please watch our Facebook page for more information. We also are working toward connecting with more doctors and hospitals in the Chicagoland area.

Sara Hintz

NW Washington

M.E.N.D.—NW Washington continues pray for and connect with the grieving families in our community. Our leadership team was blessed to spend time in Texas for the annual Leadership Conference, and are grateful to spend time with all the women whom the Lord has led to be part of M.E.N.D.

Stacy McGhee

SW Missouri

M.E.N.D.—SW Missouri continues to be very active! We had a great time at the annual M.E.N.D. Leadership Conference in Dallas. We were encouraged and challenged as we met with the President and Founder of M.E.N.D., Rebekah Mitchell, and many of the other members of leadership. We also enjoyed participating in the World Missions Conference at Second Baptist Church. Their partnership continues to be a blessing to our chapter.

We will host our Craft Day fundraiser at Second Baptist on Saturday, April 1 (no fooling!), from 9:00 AM - 2:30 PM. The cost will be \$30 a ticket, which covers table space, breakfast, lunch, snack, drinks and make-n-takes. There will be a silent auction to participate in as well. Bring your favorite craft project, and enjoy a fun and relaxing time. Contact Kathryn for tickets at kathryn@mend.org.

Kathryn Gold

Tulsa

My assistant, Marcie Nienhuis, and I recently traveled to the annual M.E.N.D. Leadership Conference. It is always such an insightful learning experience. We were able to learn many new ideas to help grieving families. Thank you to the M.E.N.D. leadership for all the work to make it a wonderful weekend. I am blessed to be able to do God's work through this ministry.

Lisa Daily

Texarkana

After Monica Davis decided to step down as Chapter Director of M.E.N.D.—Texarkana, I find myself blessed to transition into my new role of Chapter Director.

To tell you a little bit about myself, after I lost my sweet baby boy, Caiman, at almost 39 weeks into my pregnancy, I felt broken, isolated and just completely lost. No one I personally knew had experienced the loss of a baby, or if they had, they just didn't talk about it. I found myself wanting to meet and talk with other families who had journeyed the footsteps of grief ahead of me. I feel so thankful and blessed to have found support and life-long friendships through M.E.N.D. I have received so much healing through hearing others' stories and feelings and knowing I am not alone in this.

Because I felt God's call on my heart to comfort and really connect to other grieving families who have suffered the loss of a baby, it is a pleasure to be the Director of M.E.N.D.—Texarkana. My prayer is that God will use this group to give comfort and hope to those who have suffered the loss of a baby.

Please join us for Painting With a Purpose to support M.E.N.D. This will be held on June 8, 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM, at Painting with a Twist-Texarkana.

For any questions, please contact me at (903) 490-1210 or Chelsea@mend.org.

Chelsea Stroud

**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



Emily Katherine Brooks

Stillborn August 19, 2011
Cord accident
Gifts given by parents Jesse and Katie Justus and brother Jonah

Justice Michael Burgett

Stillborn July 31, 2013
Cord accident
Given by parents Carl and Daisy Burgett

Liam and Sebastian Callaway

Stillborn August 5, 2011
Unknown cause
Parents: Zach and Rori Callaway
Siblings: Miles and Aurelia

Gayle Groce

(Liam and Sebastian's great-grandmother)
January 3, 1932—January 9, 2017

Gifts given by
J.F. and B.A. Digangi
Marian Buhr
Gwendolen Buhr
A. Patrick McEvoy Jr
Bradley Feldman

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
Grandparents Grammy and Papaw Eck
Kevin and Jennifer Harris

Dalton Robert Davis

Given by Nana and Ttaw Webb

Riley and Parker Davis

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

Legacy Giving

Losing a child has changed each of our lives forever. We appreciate all financial support of the services our organization gives to bereaved parents—no matter the size of the contribution. However, some of you may have the capacity and desire to give a lifelong gift to M.E.N.D.

If you're interested in creating a legacy gift or endowment in honor of your baby, M.E.N.D. would be happy to assist you in gathering the necessary information to remember our organization in your will or trust. For more information about legacy giving, please contact Rebekah Mitchell at rebekah@mend.org.

Westin Dobbins

August 8, 2010
Incompetent cervix
Given by parents Randy and Cortney Dobbins and siblings Cynlee and Colt

Dharma Lucille Drude

March 31-April 1, 2008
Anencephaly
Stella Darling Drude
Stillborn January 23, 2014
Anencephaly

Liza Belle Drude

Stillborn February 23, 2015
Unknown cause
David Drude
September 5, 1947—December 17, 2016
Grandfather to Dharma Lucille, Stella Darling and Liza Belle Drude
Given by Ricky and Karen King

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

Daniel Joseph Goodson

Miscarried July 4, 2005

Taylor Goodson

Miscarried April 6, 2010

Gracen Goodson

Miscarried July 4, 2010
Given by parents Phil and Katie Goodson and siblings Bennett, Paxen, Isaac, Libby and Asher

Sarah Catherine Harris

December 6, 1986
Parents: Don and Brenda Harris
Given by brother and sister-in-law David and Anna Harris

Ted Herzog

April 12, 1952—January 11, 2017
Gifts given by
Pam and Rick Detamore
Carol and John Eck
Ohio Loanco, Inc. – H.F. Blum
Robin Burry
Jean Weaver
Dudley and Betsy Humphrey
Bob and Teresa Strasser
Mike and Terri Gilroy
Jeremy and Lisa Daily

Samuel Hintz

Stillborn October 29, 2008
Cord accident

Joel Hintz

Stillborn July 3, 2009
Baby Taylor Hintz
Miscarried February 2010
Given by parents Greg and Sara Hintz and siblings Louis, Caleb, Anna, Elijah, Hope, Levi, Isaiah and Kaliyah Joy

Tatum Olivia Johnson

Stillborn February 21, 2009
Cord accident
Given by parents Bryan and Stephanie Johnson and brothers Tyler and Brody

Reed James Ledbetter

Stillborn September 3, 2013
Cord accident
Given by parents Mike and Sarah Ledbetter and sister Gracie

Avery Merae Longgood

August 2-3, 2007
Possible stroke
Parents: Neil and Jamie Longgood
Given by
Grandparents Don and Annette Longgood

Abby Elizabeth McDaniel

Stillborn August 10, 1997
Given by parents Rick and Paula McDaniel and brother Jake

Jonathan Daniel Mitchell

Stillborn June 24, 1995
Cord accident
Baby Mitchell
Miscarried December 2001
Parents: Byron and Rebekah Mitchell
Given by Dr. Jeff and Lana Montgomery

Mary Catherine Neece

Given by Melissa Neece

B3 Nelson

Miscarried January 1, 2013

July Baby Nelson

Miscarried July 21, 2013
MTHFR, PAI II
Given by parents Chris and Chelley Nelson and siblings Briana, Brenson, Brooklyn and Brecklyn

Samuel James Nienhuis

Stillborn October 14, 2006
MTHFR/Factor V Leiden
Given by parents Seth and Marcie Nienhuis and siblings Landon, Olivia, James, Sarah and Annie

Rebekah Tikvah Nymeyer

July 16, 2015
Premature
Parents: Jonathan and Terri Nymeyer
Siblings: Isaac, Abby, Esther and Tirzah
Given by Lisa Lumpkins

Margot Lily Perry

Stillborn June 10, 2013
Cord accident
Gifts given by
Parents Brandon and Marisa Perry and siblings Adeline, Bennett and Noelle
Grammie Marie Perry
Grandparents Mary and Norman Lorentz
Kayla Lorentz

Kyleigh Elaine Rabe

October 1, 2012—January 26, 2013
SIDS
Parents: Kyle and Kristen Rabe
Siblings: Karson, Kayleigh and Kyler
Given by grandparents Gary and Karen Rabe

Mindy and Maggie Smith

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

Alexis Raine Sonnenberg

January 24—February 3, 2009

Diaphragmatic hernia

Daddy: Alex Sonnenberg

Given by

Grandparents Mark and Ruth Sonnenberg

Caiman Joseph Stroud

June 4, 2015

Unknown cause

Parents: Joseph and Chelsea Stroud

Given by Jerry Rivers

Aaron Josiah Tran

August 14—December 16, 2016

Parents: Ly and Dana Tran

Gifts given by

Benson Chi

Mei Yatco

Manson Kan

Priscilla Chan

Sarah Lynn Tulley

Stillborn October 1, 2009

Anencephaly

Peter Gerard Tulley (Sarah's father)

February 22, 1957—May 31, 2013

Given by mommy Jeri Tulley

and big brothers, Caleb and Mason

Caelan Matthew Wallace

July 30—August 3, 2010

Preterm labor

Given by parents Andy and Dana Wallace

and sister Finlea Rose

Elliot Joseph Wood

Stillborn December 21, 2011

Unknown cause

Livvy Diane Wood

March 1993

Given by parents Ron and Halee Wood

and brothers Reese and Hyun

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

Christ Church Assembly of God, Fort Worth, TX

Kohl's Department Store Community Relations

Janis Kidder

Junior League of Texarkana, Texarkana, TX

Tray LaCaze

Charise Rogers

Nolan D. Brooks

Jonathan Bergman

IBM Employee Service Center

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!

My Journey as a Single Parent

When I first heard about M.E.N.D. and the support group, I wanted to be a part of it. After reading about the monthly support groups and annual events, I made the decision to attend. Then it occurred to me, I don't want to walk in a room full of strangers by myself. I assumed everyone would have a partner there to comfort them. I imagined couples holding hands while they talked about their sweet babies. I could see myself feeling worse being around mothers who had the support I desperately craved. I felt like it would somehow magnify what I considered to be a failure. Not only was my daughter gone, but the relationship with her father was over also. For so long I fought for the relationship because in my mind it was something I could change, unlike Kelinda's death.

I took a chance and attended my first M.E.N.D. meeting with all my fears and reservations. It was intimidating and, as I expected, a bit heartbreaking to see parents supporting each other. The little things like a father comforting a mother while holding back his own tears, the subtle back rub or just the genuine concern I saw made me painfully aware of my single status. Initially I was jealous, but as the meeting continued, that fell by the wayside. By the end of it, all I could see and feel was a gathering of people who miss and love their babies as much as I did. But after the group ended, the familiar loneliness returned.

For me the loneliness of being a single parent added another layer of grief. In the early days of my grieving process, I could barely get out of bed because the weight of my sadness was too much for me. Most days I was glad I didn't have to worry about being strong for someone else. I just didn't have it in me. On the contrary, there were days when all I wanted was to have her father sit and cry with me. I wanted to talk about the way she woke me up at the crack of dawn every day kicking like she had a job. I wanted to laugh about the things only we knew.

During one of my many therapy sessions, I realized I was grieving the loss of two bonds, to my baby and to her father. Albeit different, the pain was still hard to process. Much like being a single parent of a living child, I had to learn to separate the two. I've been on this journey for more than five years now. To an extent the feelings of failure and loneliness have faded. Today I am a single parent dealing with a loss, and I am okay.



♥ Kera Robinson
Mommy to Kelinda
M.E.N.D.—Dallas

Pérdida de Vista Del Pariente Soltero

En lugar del artículo de Rebeca Mitchell, la portada de esta edición fue escrito por Norma Jordan, M.E.N.D. Comité Asesor.

Como prácticamente cada uno de nosotros, yo tenía un plan – iba ser establecida en mi carrera de alta potencia, casarme, y mi esposo y yo íbamos a tener cuatro hijas. Incluso tenía sus nombres elegidos. Le dije a Dios mi plan. Entonces Dios susurró suavemente su propósito para mí...

Entiendo que es muy difícil ser madre soltera a los bellos, benditos niños con vida mientras intentando satisfacer necesidades idealmente proporcionadas por dos parientes. Recuerdo cuando mi padre falleció, mi madre no sólo se convirtió en una viuda de inmediata, pero un pariente singular. Como si eso no fue lo suficiente, mi hermana de 18 años fue asesinada en la escuela, 2 años más tarde. La atroz agonía de que mi madre debe haber sufrido durante al hacer que todo fuera bien con nuestra familia, satisfacer nuestras necesidades, proporcionando para cada uno de nosotros mientras lamentando, simuladamente, por la pérdida de su esposo, nuestro padre e su hija, nuestra hermana. ¡Qué fuerza increíble! Su capacidad para continuar en la vida con su cabeza alta, su gran corazón abierto, una sonrisa en su rostro y una inigualable creencia en Dios, mostró para mí que no importa lo que venga mi camino, mi madre ya ha puesto el ejemplo.

Recuerdo ir a los sitios de las tumbas de mi padre y mi hermana semanalmente con mi madre durante años. Pasábamos horas en el cementerio. Fue parte de nuestras vidas, era normal. Después de la iglesia y el almuerzo los domingos empacábamos flores y íbamos al cementerio. Este fue nuestro ritual durante años. Y, más adelante me di cuenta que no incluye las varias veces que mi madre visitó sus tumbas en privado.

Un avance rápido a enero de 2007. Tenía casi nueve meses del embarazo perfecto, y fue sólo cinco días hasta la cesárea programada que acogería con beneplácito la llegada de nuestro hermoso hijo, Jordan. Con entusiasmo fuimos a nuestro último sonógrafo, todo sonrisas, risas y grandes expectativas. Contundente, este entusiasmo fue corto, ---el ritmo del corazón de mi hijo se paró justo en medio de mi mayor alegría absoluta. Igual que con mi madre, la atroz agonía me consumió. Ahora totalmente comprendí su dolor y sufrimiento. La vida nunca sería la misma.

Después del nacimiento de Jordan a los cielos, fui bendecida por poder conectar con M.E.N.D., que se convirtió para mí en uno de mis gracia alivianas. Me ofrecieron un sistema de apoyo que la generación de mi madre tal vez nunca tuvo la oportunidad de experimentar. Esto fue revolucionario. He aprendido que normalmente, las parejas que comparten en una pérdida de esta magnitud, experimentan un vínculo más profundo uno con el otro. Para mí, sirvió como un suero de la verdad. La relación que compartía con el padre de mi hijo, termino, y comencé este camino de lamentación como una madre soltera. Las habilidades de fuerza, resolución, orientación y supervivencia de mi propia madre comenzaron en completo. Lamentablemente, había aprendido de ver lo mejor.

Como madre de Jordan, comencé a representar como sus ambos padres. Mi hijo es amado sin medida. Hablo su nombre con orgullo. Como todos los padres, celebro todo lo que es mi hijo. Estoy en su “lugar de gracia” infinidad de veces durante todo el año. Celebro sus cumpleaños, las fiestas, los aniversarios, los hitos, todo como una madre soltera, junto con Jazz (el perrito de Jordan). Los animo a todos los que se encuentran como padres solteros, representar a sus hijos. Es usted todo lo que ellos tienen. Usted es la voz de ellos. Usted es el legado de ellos.

Aunque abogo firmemente por mi hermoso hijo, Jordan, como madre soltera, hay veces cuando pienso en lo bonito que sería tener ambos padres juntos como una unidad para compartir en el amor perfecto de su hijo. O ambos padres lado a lado que ‘entienden’ sin que cualesquiera de ustedes tengan que decir una sola palabra. O tener ese pariente adicional para poder compartir sus más profundos pensamientos y sueños sobre el niño que comparten, aman y extrañan. A veces me pongo a pensar sobre el apoyo especial para su hijo que sólo puede ser compartido entre las dos personas que son los padres.

Aunque estoy rodeada de una gran cantidad de apoyo y amor incondicional, como una madre soltera, yo soy mi apoyo en la media noche cuando no puedo dormir y la lagrimas llenan mi almohada. Como madre soltera, yo soy la que planeo las celebraciones por los hitos completados. Como madre soltera, soy el tampón y la voz de la razón cuando la ignorancia se arroja de las bocas de un bien intencionado que no comienzan a tener ni idea. Pero como tan gentil y amorosamente que mi madre me enseno por el ejemplo, yo, como madre soltera de un niño en el cielo, soy la única que, para siempre, y con cariño representaría a mi hermoso hijo, Jordan mientras estoy en esta tierra.

Subsequent Births



Taylor and Thomas Lacy, of Fort Worth, Texas, joyfully announce the arrival on January 9, 2017, of triplets
William Archer, measuring 4 lbs., 4.8 oz., and 17 inches long,
Margaret Thomas, measuring 4 lbs., 0.6 oz., and 18 inches long,
and Louisa May, measuring 3 lbs., 12 oz., and 16.75 inches long.
The family lovingly remembers Thomas Leachman Lacy III, July 22, 2014, cord accident

Kevin and Kim Hays, of North Richland Hills, Texas, joyfully announce the arrival of Carson Luke Hays
Born December 31, 2016, measuring 8 lbs., and 20.5 inches long.
The family lovingly remembers twin brothers, Kevin Jake and Kade Noah, August 27, 2015, sepsis

Jesse and Katie Justus, of Sheboygan, Wisconsin, joyfully announce the arrival of Jonah Earl, born January 19, 2017, measuring 6 lbs., 5.1 oz., and 18 inches long.
The family lovingly remembers Emily Katherine, stillborn August 19, 2011, cord accident

♥ Norma Jordan,
Mamá de Jordan

M.E.N.D.—Advisory Board

The Life After Loss

I've been to more than 50 M.E.N.D. meetings since Catherine died, but I will never forget my first meeting. We all shared the same heartbreaking common bond, but it wasn't long after introductions started I realized I was missing something everyone else seemed to have: a husband. I cringed on the inside during my first

introduction, just waiting for everyone to notice, for their jaws to drop and the judgement to begin, but no one even seemed to notice or care that my ring finger was bare.

I found out I was pregnant March 22, 2012, and a couple of months into my pregnancy I chose to leave a very unhealthy relationship. I was raised by a single mother, and I'm an only child, so being alone or raising a child by myself wasn't foreign to me. It was regretful, but I knew I was choosing the best option for my daughter.

Twenty-four weeks to the day of my pregnancy, I was admitted to Texas Children's Hospital in Houston with H.E.L.L.P (Hemolysis. Elevated Liver enzymes. Low Platelet count.) syndrome. Five days later I delivered Catherine via c-section, and two days later she died due to extreme prematurity. Although her biological father was kept informed, he made the choice not to come to the hospital. There are times I'm angry I went through so much by myself, and he acted so little to not even come. But then I remember how it felt to be able to hold her, to feel her touch, to sing to her, to be her mother. He missed all of that, and there's really only pity left for him.

I was fortunate to have a very supportive family to help me financially and during recovery. About two months after Catherine died, I started grief therapy where I learned how to be a single mother to a child I would never get to raise. That was a new one for me to learn. The mothers of M.E.N.D. provided such great examples of how to parent our children who live in heaven. There were times I was jealous of not having a supportive husband or just someone to hold me while I drowned in my own grief, but I felt an overwhelming need for Catherine to be remembered and loved and not thought of as having broken me. Her death may have been crippling, but I hang on to keeping her memory alive and separating her life and the love that came from it instead of just the devastation of her death.

Around a year later, I felt like I was ready to start dating again. I had a good handle on my grief and had defined and carved Catherine's place in my life. What I didn't know was how weirdly most men would react to my experience. I don't think I was prepared for the questions, confusion or fear from so many.

Eventually in dating conversations, the topic of children comes up: "Do you want children? Do you have any children?"...etc. Except in my case it went like this: "Yes, I have a daughter, she died two days after her birth" (awkward silence)

"Him: Oh, uh, what happened?" Inevitably most guys were either concerned I wouldn't be able to provide them with children or any children who would live, or they didn't want any or any

more children to begin with, or, more often than not, they were so freaked out I never heard from them again. Dating in your mid-30s is difficult at best, but adding a story about how my body failed at something it was supposed to be able to do was incredibly hard and quickly dwindled an already small dating population.

At first I was bothered by the negative responses, but it allowed me to change my delivery. I noticed the more confident and shorter version I made Catherine's story in the beginning, the more it was accepted without much fear or surprise. I learned I could mention it casually in the beginning, then if the relationship progressed, the full story of Catherine's birth was better received at a later time. I also was able to determine if the relationship was worth pursuing by their responses concerning my daughter. A person's character is easy to judge in situations that require humanity and compassion, although I would have no idea just how Catherine's influence in my life would define my relationships.

I ended up being set up with my now husband through a friend (his sister) I met through a M.E.N.D friend. I'm extremely lucky he is proud to call Catherine his daughter, to donate his time in helping me with M.E.N.D., and that he understands the importance of keeping her memory, always.

I felt an overwhelming need for Catherine to be remembered and loved and not thought of as having broken me.

♥ Kara Chapman
Mommy to Catherine
M.E.N.D.—Houston

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- **Kroger grocery stores** donate a percentage of all purchases of those shoppers in Texas and Louisiana who have their Kroger Plus Card linked to M.E.N.D. To link your card, go to www.krogercommunityrewards.com and set up an account if you do not already have one. Once you receive the email after setting up your account, click on "My Account," then go to "Edit Kroger Community Rewards" and input your Kroger Plus card number. You'll see a screen with your information in boxes, at the bottom right, there is a box that says Community Rewards. Click that, then enter the M.E.N.D. number, which is 80513. Once that's entered, you'll confirm that M.E.N.D. is your charity of choice. This link will be good until the 2015-2016 program expires. You must link your card each year to M.E.N.D.
- **Tom Thumb** also has a program in Texas that can benefit M.E.N.D. If you have a Tom Thumb Reward Card, please contact Rebekah (rebekah@mend.org) to obtain the Customer Letter. You must only present this letter one time to link your card to M.E.N.D. Reward cards can also be used at Randalls and Simon David stores.
- **GoodSearch.com** is a search engine that donates half its revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. Powered by Yahoo!, it is used like any other search engine. To earn money for M.E.N.D. using Goodsearch.com, go to www.goodsearch.com and designate M.E.N.D. as your charity of choice.
- **Ebay** has a charitable giving program that can benefit M.E.N.D. If you sell items on Ebay and would like to designate a percentage of your revenue to M.E.N.D. visit www.missionfish.org to find out how.
- **Igive.com** will donate a penny a search and a portion of each purchase made through their website to M.E.N.D. Sign up today! M.E.N.D.'s cause number is 52025.

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