



M.E.N.D.

Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death

Reflections on Mother's Day/Father's Day The Legacy of Ruby Joyce Bell

Ruby Joyce Bell is the 3rd child of my grandparents, Dan and Issoria Bell. Sadly, Ruby Joyce died just shy of 2 months of age due to pneumonia. As my grandmother deeply grieved the death of her baby girl, many people told her, "Issoria, you'll see her again in heaven one day."



Ruby Joyce Bell, daughter of Dan and Issoria Bell, died of pneumonia before reaching 2 months old

My grandmother was desperately curious how these people could be so sure of such a promising declaration. Wanting the same confidence as her comforters, she purchased a Bible, hoping it would give

her an understanding of their belief. She poured over the holy recorded words, spending hours and hours learning...and believing! She gave her life to Christ and made Him her personal Lord and Savior. She shared her new faith with my grandfather, and he became a Believer too.

Eventually they both became ordained Pentecostal preachers. A few years later my mom, Zodie Sue Bell, was born to them. She is what young moms today call, a "rainbow baby."

Every preacher needs a pulpit. My grandmother's dad, Jacob Money, built a custom pulpit just for her. That pulpit was inherited by my mother when my grandparents died, and it now resides at my church and is taught from on a regular basis. I speak from behind it at each M.E.N.D. Walk to Remember and Christmas Candlelight Ceremony.

At a little cemetery in Irving, Texas, the Bell family plot can be found. Little Ruby Joyce begins the string of old beautiful headstones. Next to Ruby Joyce, is my grandmother who was indeed

reunited with her baby girl in 1971. My grandfather is next in line, who joined them in 1974. Two spaces over is Jacob, the family carpenter. Nestled between Daniel and Jacob is my little Jonathan Daniel – my grandfather's namesake. I chose Jonathan's middle name months before he joined my relatives in heaven – never dreaming he'd be buried next to his great-grandfather.

How providential that my Christian heritage stems from the death of a baby girl in 1930. Even though Ruby Joyce only lived for a few weeks here on this earth, what amazing fruit she produced! Through

her death, my grandmother and grandfather found Christ, and are now spending every Mother's Day and Father's Day with their little girl in heaven. I'm so thankful for their legacy, to know without a doubt that even though I have spent so many

Mother's Days without Jonathan and Baby Mitchell, one day I will spend every single moment with them for all eternity. I long for the day I'll meet my own babies in heaven, and I can't wait to meet this special aunt of mine, whose brief life reaped much earthly good and eternal glory.

I know without a doubt one day I will spend every single moment with my babies for all eternity in heaven.

♥ *Rebekah Mitchell,*

Mommy to Jonathan Daniel and Baby Mitchell

M.E.N.D.—President/Founder



Nota Española: 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 15.

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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You Are a Mother

This will be my third Mother's Day since losing my first child. We lost Baby Cohea I in August of 2015, at 8 weeks, and then we lost the twins in April 2016, at 11 weeks. I don't even think I knew what day it was when Mother's Day rolled around that first year; I was so lost in the pain and grief. But last year, I knew. Boy, did I know.

People don't know what to do when you lose a child. They don't know what they're supposed to say or if they should talk about it at all. And when they do talk about it, they usually say exactly the wrong thing (though with the best of intention).

When you lose a baby early in pregnancy, this problem is compounded by the fact that many people don't consider your baby to be a real loss in the same way the death of a loved one is. No one could see them in your stomach. There was no baby shower or big family celebrations yet. They didn't even have a name. Some family and friends may not have even been aware you were pregnant until they learned of the loss. I think in a lot of ways, that has been the hardest thing to cope with, and the thing M.E.N.D. has helped me with most.

Mother's Day was the darkest, loneliest day of my life.

That second Mother's Day, no one asked me what I wanted. There were no phone calls or flowers, no cards. Everyone left me completely alone because they assumed I would want no reminders of what day it was. My own mother canceled our traditional Mother's Day lunch, saying it was too hard for her to celebrate when I could not. Even my husband never even mentioned the day. It was the darkest, loneliest day of my life. And I didn't speak up. I didn't ask for anything different because I thought they were right. I thought I was utterly silly for even wanting any acknowledgement of myself or my babies - whom I never met - on a day reserved for women who had children.

It wasn't until I attended a M.E.N.D. support group in June of 2016, that I learned it was okay for me to think of myself as a mother. My first meeting was small, only about 5 people. As we began introducing ourselves and telling about our loss, I clearly remember thinking "This group isn't for me. I shouldn't even be here. These women have all lost BABIES. They had names and nurseries; they gave birth. I've just lost pregnancies, I have no right to put my pain next to theirs and ask for support." And then

Lisa Daily, the M.E.N.D.—Tulsa Chapter Director, changed my life. She referred to me as a mom. No one had done that before. I hadn't even done that before. These strong, wonderful women who had been through so much were the first ones to affirm I had lost children, too. Real children, who really did exist and who are waiting for me with Jesus. I will never be able to thank them enough for that gift.

I know this Mother's Day will be hard. I suspect even if I go on to have earthly children someday, all Mother's Days will still be hard because I will still wish I could celebrate with my first three children, too. But this year, I'm not going to follow everyone else's lead. I'm not going to hole up in my room on May 14 and hide my tears. I'm going to celebrate my babies and celebrate myself. There will be tears, and there will be pain. But there will also be joy. Because I am a mother.

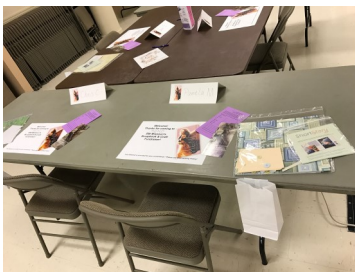
♥ Ashley Cohea

Mommy to Baby Cohea I, Baby Cohea II and Baby Cohea III

M.E.N.D.—Tulsa

M.E.N.D.-SW Missouri Craft Day

We had a fantastic time at our Craft Day fundraiser on the first of April. There were 22 in attendance and raised \$994! We made progress on our projects, and enjoyed fellowship along with the games and prizes. We are thankful for our sponsors for the event: Second Baptist Church, Twigger/Farrar ABF, Lynn ABF, Patricia Ervin, Jennifer Wassenaar, LaVaune Sitzes and Grove Salsa Company.



July/August Topic

Loss is Our Last

Deadline: May 31, 2017

September/October Topic

Residual Grief

Deadline: July 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.

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!

Birthay 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 4th Birthday, Gabriel Lee Butler!

Happy, happy, 4th heavenly birthday, sweet Gabriel! We miss you so much each day, and we know you're celebrating with a huge party in heaven. We talk about you daily and can't wait to help Quinn learn all about her big brother. Kendall is amazing at always including her Gabriel "lion" in everything happening in our lives. So much love for our brave little soul! Happy birthday.

Love,
Mommy, Daddy, Kendall and Quinn



Gabriel Lee Butler

June 14-15, 2013

Anencephaly

Parents: Brandon and Angie Butler

Sisters: Kendall and Quinn

Happy 2nd Birthday, Blueberry!

It's hard to believe it was already two years ago you were in my womb. We were so excited for you to be our "Christmas baby." I miss you being here, and I miss what could have been. Your big sister loves babies, and I know she would have loved you and would have loved being able to hold you and see you grow. We miss you and love you.

Love,
Mommy, Daddy and Cora



Baby "Blueberry" Miller

Miscarried May 4, 2015

Also remembering

Chase Austin Miller

April 21, 2011

Incompetent cervix

Parents: Greg and Stefanie Miller

Sisters: Cora and Baby Hazel due September 2017

Happy 2nd Birthday, Aubriy!

My angel baby was taken from me at 11 weeks. She was due November 25, 2015. Aubriy would be 2 this year, and I can't help but think about what she'd be like.

Aubriy Caprice Funderburk

May 10, 2015

Detached placenta

Mommy: Victoria Matney



Happy 1st Birthday, Cooper!

Happy 1st birthday, sweet baby boy. We love you!

Cooper Allen Johnson

December 23, 2015—May 14, 2016

SIDS

Parents: Chris and Laura Johnson

Brother: Wyatt



Happy 3rd Birthday, Aiden!

Happy 3rd birthday, son! There isn't a day goes by we don't think of you. I wish you were here, but I know God needed another angel. I want you to know I would give anything to hear your voice or to see your eyes. You changed my life forever. Losing you taught me the true meaning of being grateful for what you do have. We love you. Until we meet again...

Love,
Mom and big brother Antonio



Aiden Bryce Belle

Stillborn June 10, 2014

Mommy: Yalondia Bond

Big brother: Antonio Russi

Happy 8th Birthday, Emma!

Happy 8th birthday, sweet Emma. It is hard to believe eight years have gone by. We miss you every single day. Time passes by, but it doesn't make us miss you less.

We always wonder how would you have been in school, sports, with your little sister, etc. Now that your sister is a little bit older, she does the same and thinks about you. We love you so very much and wish you a wonderful birthday in heaven.

We love you,
Mommy, Daddy and your sister Bella



Emma Krymkiewicz

May 5, 2009

Neonatal hemochromatosis

Parents: Hernan and Ana Krymkiewicz

Little sister: Bella

Happy 4th Birthday, Scarlette!

To my sweet Scarlette, happy birthday, my little love! Today you are turning 4! You are Mommy's big girl now. It still amazes me that it will be four years since I last held you in my arms. I miss you so much. Oh how I long to see your beautiful face. I can only imagine how wonderful it will be when I see you running toward me from heaven's gates. What great joy my heart will have on that day. Until then, my princess, keep singing praises to our Father and give Him many kisses and hugs from me. I know you will be having the most amazing birthday party ever in heaven! Mommy loves you!

Scarlette Faith Hite

June 13-14, 2013

Extreme prematurity

Also remembering

Destiny Hope Hite

Miscarried February 26, 2013

Mommy: Caroline Perez



Happy 9th Birthday, Avery!

Happy birthday in heaven to the baby who first made us parents. I know that you, Gideon and Joy are having the most amazing celebration with each other and Jesus. I bet the birthday cake there is the BEST! I look forward to the day I get to meet you and Joy and to see your brother, Gideon, again.

We love you all so much.

*Avery Mitchell
Miscarried May 2008
Unknown cause*

**Happy 6th Birthday, Gideon!**

Happy 6th birthday, Gideon! Your brother is playing tee-ball now. You should be playing too. However, that wasn't meant to be. Life was taken from you so soon after it was given. You never had the opportunity to get a hit or strike out. One day, we will run the bases in heaven together. We'll get the chance to finally all make it "home." Until then, we raise our ICEEs to toast the child who helped us understand the depths of love.

We love you beyond the moon and the stars.

Always,
Daddy, Mommy, Silas and Justus

*Gideon Zeller Mitchell
Stillborn May 17, 2011, at 33 weeks 4 days
Membranous cord insertion
Also remembering
Joy Mitchell
December 2014
Vanishing twin syndrome
Parents: Todd and Stormy Mitchell
Brothers: Silas and Justus*

**Happy 3rd Birthday, Zaedynn!**

Happy 3rd birthday, sweet Zaedynn!
We will love and miss you forever!

*Zaedynn Charles Xayphantho
Stillborn May 3, 2014
Unknown cause
Parents: Tina Xayphantho and Kristin Walerius
Sibling: Ezraeya Mae Xayphantho*

**Happy 1st Birthday, Mirandita**

We celebrate each and every moment we had with you here on earth. You are such a blessing in our lives, and you will stay in our hearts forever. Thank you for being so strong and brave, Mirandita. We love you and miss you so much! Sending you a lot of hugs and kisses.

Love,
Mommy, Daddy and Family

*Miranda Torres Everitt
May 5-20, 2016
Trisomy 18
Parents: Ricardo Torres Aguilar and Marcela Everitt*

**Happy 1st Birthday, Kynlee Jaide!**

I cannot believe my princess is 1! I hope you have the most wonderful Frozen birthday party in heaven. Kynlee, I can never thank you enough for letting me be your mommy. You have changed my life in so many ways. I can not wait until the day I get to see your beautiful face again; it's a face that can never be replaced. My heart aches for you every single day, baby girl, or should I say big girl. You are 1 now, which means Mommy hasn't held you in eight whole months. Keep giving Mommy signs you are always close by, and never forget how much you are loved. We love you so much, Kynlee Jaide!

*Kynlee Jaide Thornton
June 28-October 2, 2016
CHD*

Parents: Naaman Thornton and Crystal Croy

**Happy 28th Birthday, Richard!**

My 7-week-old baby nephew lost his precious, healthy life 28 years ago with his death ruled as SIDS. He was buried wearing a baby boy red velvet suit I got for him to wear for Easter. Today, almost three decades later, I am the only one who visits his grave often. He peacefully lays above his granny (my mother). We love and miss you, Richard, and wonder who you might have been if heaven hadn't called you. "If only heaven wasn't so far away!"

Love, Peace and Forever,
Auntie Kathi

*William Richard Beamon
March 28—May 7, 1989
SIDS
Daddy: Will Beamon*

**Happy 1st Birthday, Kinley Grace!**

You brought so much love into our lives. We cannot wait until we see you again. You are forever in our hearts.

Mama and Daddy love you always!

*Kinley Grace Sneed
May 19—June 21, 2016
Extreme prematurity/MRSA
Parent: Kenneth and LaShondra Sneed*

**Happy 3rd Birthday, Jason!**

As time goes on, I cannot help but think of the milestones we have missed with you. Like your first tooth, words, steps and many more. Daddy and I talk about you often and the beautiful chaos our lives would have with a little boy running around our house. We miss and love you so much. Sending hugs and kisses until we see you again.

Love,
Mommy, Daddy and Hailey

*Jason Hunter Thomas
June 30, 2014
PPROM
Parents: Steven and Melissa Thomas
Sister: Hailey*



Happy 16th Birthday, Kyron! Happy 11th Birthday, Kylan!

To both of my boys, with each passing year, I wonder what you would've been like present day. There is a hole in my heart that will never mend, and it hasn't become easier with time. I still mourn every April. Even though your time on this side of earth was short-lived, I will forever cherish the amazing bond we had while you were in the womb because I felt every part of you. That alone was a blessing for me. I consider you both my butterflies; beautiful beings who gained beautiful wings. You will forever live in our hearts. Happy birthday to both of our little guys!

Kyron D'Shaun Thomas
April 30, 2001, at 5 months
Organs undeveloped
Kylan D'Mor Thomas
April 4, 2006, at 8 months
Fluid on the brain and hole in the heart
Mommy: D'Lisha Franklin
Siblings: Kamil and Kynadi



Happy 3rd Birthday, Macklen!

Happy 3rd heavenly birthday, little man! We miss you every moment of every day! Mommy and Daddy love you so much! Your sisters will be sending you balloons and love on your birthday! Ireleigh asks us often if she can come and see you in heaven. Oh, how I wish we could! Until you're in our arms again, all our love, all our lives!

Macklen Joshua Ryan Lopp
May 7, 2014
Blood clot
Parents: Shawn and Courtney Lopp
Siblings: Ireleigh and Dossalyn



Happy 2nd Birthday, Eva!

Happy heavenly birthday, our sweet sunshine. There is not a single moment of any day that passes where our hearts don't ache for you. What we wouldn't give to have you in our arms and to know you this side of heaven. We are counting the days until we can hold you again. Until then, we blow you bubbles to catch while Jesus holds you safely. We love you endlessly, our precious baby girl.

Eva Juliette Talavera
May 7, 2015
Cord accident
Parents: Miguel and Lexie Talavera
Sister: Mia Annabelle



Happy 4th Birthday, Payton!

Happy 4th birthday to our beautiful little angel!
Wishing you were here with us and missing you always.

Payton Elise Carter
June 21, 2013
Born sleeping
Parents: Cody Carter and Paige Young
Brothers: Cameron and Easton



Happy 5th Birthday, Emily!

Our little angel, Emily, has long golden hair like Rapunzel and loves to spin and twirl in her favorite blue dress. She keeps all the balloons with our special messages written to her in her purple room. She is full of giggles, smiles and empathy. She welcomes new little ones to heaven with open arms and a loving heart. Together they dance, play heroes, play stuffed animals and look down on us from above.

Emily, we infinitely love you and we always remember and carry you close to our hearts.

Happy birthday, Angel. May you receive blessings from our Father in heaven.

With Love,
Mommy, Daddy, Tito, Zoey and Buddy

Emily Elizabeth Valladares
Miscarried May 7, 2012
Parents: Justin and Gabriela Valladares
Siblings: Tito, Zoey and Buddy



Happy 2nd Birthday, Caleb!

Happy 2nd birthday in heaven, sweet baby boy! We miss you so very much and wish we were chasing you around and listening to you giggle. Until we meet again, I will dream of the day I can wrap my arms around you once again and kiss those sweet little cheeks of yours. Caleb, you are forever loved, forever in our hearts, and forever our precious baby boy.

"I thank my God every time I remember you."
Philippians 1:3

Caleb Anthony Haynes
May 5, 2015
Cord accident
Parents: Anthony and Robyn Haynes
Brothers: Cody, Camryn and Connor



Happy 4th Birthday, Isaac!

Happy 4th birthday, son! There is so much we should be doing, planning a superhero birthday, enrolling you in PreK, rescuing you from the pranks of your big sisters... God had other plans, so we will still celebrate and remember you as you celebrate your big day with Jesus and family in heaven with you. You are precious, you are missed, and you are loved big!

We loved you all the way to heaven!
Love,
Daddy, Mommy and Emily

Isaac David Jackson
June 24, 2013
Trisomy 13
Also remembering
Elizabeth Abigail Jackson
April 29, 2002
Full Trisomy 16
Parents: Jeromye and Angi Jackson
Sister: Emily Faith



Happy 2nd Birthday, Ezzy!

Eden, another year has passed, and another birthday is here! We can't believe it has been two years since we were finally able to meet you, and two years since we lost you. We continue to miss you so much. A lot has happened in the last year, including the birth of your little sister, Anaya. She may never get to meet you down here, but she'll know everything there is to know about you! Until that day when our family can be made whole again, we'll continue to cherish the moments we had with you and keep your memory alive. We love you so much, Eden!

Love,
Mom, Dad and Anaya

Eden Ezinne Nwaokelemeh

May 1-6, 2015

Neonatal sepsis

Parents: Nonye and Angelita Nwaokelemeh

Little sister: Anaya Hope Chinyere

**Happy 14th Birthday, Matthew!**

Wow! You are now 14 years old! So grown up. I love you, Matthew. I will always love you, and there is nothing that can take that away. The day you were born to heaven breaks my heart. Even after all these years I miss you so much. But I do have Hope, and Jesus takes care of us just as He takes care of you. I look forward to our reunion day in heaven. So, my sweet son, happy birthday! Hugs and kisses and all my love to you.

Matthew Joel Mifflin

June 6, 2003

True knot in the umbilical cord

Parents: Dennis and Janet Mifflin

Siblings: Thomas and Michelle

**Happy 2nd Birthday, Rhett!**

Always an angel, always in our hearts.

Rhett Andrew Irwin

Stillborn June 23, 2015

Unknown cause

Mommy: Meghan Irwin

**Happy 2nd Birthday, Alexia!**

My gorgeous little angel, I think about you every single day. It's so hard to accept you would've been 2 already! But I want you to always know I love you. I love you more than words can ever say, and I am beyond proud to be your mother! Always remember you have an amazing family who misses you and loves you so very much! I hope you have an amazing day. As promised, I will send you your balloons, my sweetheart. Happy 2nd birthday, my love! Te amo tanto mi niña hermosa y siempre te amaré mi princesa preciosa, Alexia Raelynn Mayorga!

Alexia Raelynn Mayorga

Stillborn May 14, 2015

Parents: Timothy Mayorga and Alejandra Rosales

**Happy 2nd Birthday, Dakota!**

To our darling Dakota,
we would have loved to see your terrible twos.

Love,
Mommy and Daddy

Dakota Lane Smythe

June 5, 2015

Unknown cause

Parents: Timothy and Barbara Smythe

**Happy Heavenly 17th Birthday, Sydney!
Happy Heavenly Sweet 16th Birthday, Ashley!**

There is not a day goes by we don't think of both of you.
Forever in our hearts and always on our minds.

We love and miss you very much.
May all your tea parties be together.
Until We Meet Again...

Sydney Lynne Brown

May 18, 2000

Unknown cause

Ashley Mackenzie Brown

May 18, 2001

Premature due to Antiphospholipid Antibody Syndrome

Parents: Brian and Marilyn Brown

Brother: Samuel

**Happy 3rd Birthday, Bryson!**

Happy birthday to our little man in heaven. It is hard to believe three years have gone by. There is not a day goes by we don't think of you and wonder what type of person you would be. Even though we never got to meet you, we love you dearly, and you will always be in our hearts.

Love,
Mommy, Daddy, Mackenzie and Brayden

Bryson Glenn Middleton

Stillborn June 19, 2014

Placental abruption

Also remembering

Baby Middleton

Miscarried April 2007

Parents: Brandon and Jennie Middleton

Siblings: Mackenzie and Brayden

**Happy 6th Birthday, Skyla!**

Skyla, it's hard to believe it has been six years since you were granted your wings. My beautiful baby girl, how quietly you tiptoed into my life, emerged silently, stayed only for a moment, but what an imprint your footprints have made on my life...my heart. I tell a lot of lies now like "I'm alright, I'm good," but it's not true. The truth is my life has not been the same since the day I lost you.

Mommie

Skyla Olivia Burns Ennis

Stillborn May 21, 2011

Mommie: Tarsha Ennis



Happy 2nd Birthday, Alexander!

Happy 2nd birthday to our beautiful baby boy. There isn't a day that goes by we don't think of you. We know you are smiling down on us. We love and miss you to the moon and back. Thank you for watching over us, and especially your dad as he is currently deployed. We will celebrate with you as we know you are celebrating with God in heaven and your papas. Until we meet again, my beautiful baby boy.

Alexander Merrill Seyl

May 21-22, 2015

Trisomy 18

Parents: Eric and Michelle Seyl

Siblings: Michael, Dustin, Nathan and Austin



Happy 7th Birthday, Alexander!

Hi sweetie, 2016-17 has been great! We have helped so many families by telling our story and offering the support they need. Thank you for making us stronger as parents and as a family. Have a wonderful party in heaven. Miss you tons!

Te amamos,
Daddy, Mamá and Leah
Happy 7th birthday!

Alexander Seely

April 30, 2010

Cord accident

Parents: Ron and Raquel Seely

Sister: Leah



Anticipating Father's Day

Written by Mike Borsei on May 17, 2016

My wife and I lost Corynn on May 1, 2007, six days prior to her due date. She was born into heaven the following day. We checked into the hospital, giddy with anticipation just hours after my wife heard Corynn's heartbeat at the doctor's office. Our world was turned upside down as we were informed that our first child had no heartbeat. That moment, and the following 24 hours, will haunt me for my remaining days.

I thought I knew what jealousy felt like before losing Corynn, but my understanding of the full potential of that word didn't culminate until the week following her stillbirth. I had taken our dog for a walk, as I did every afternoon, and happened across three fathers coaching their girls' softball team just a few blocks from our house. Tears immediately flowed, and I had to sit down because of the sorrow I felt in that moment. I couldn't look away as I watched from a distance with a heavy heart and repeatedly told Corynn how much I loved and missed her. This proved to be one of the key moments of my healing process.

Mother's Day was on May 13, a mere 12 days after we lost Corynn. I wish I could have taken away all the pain my wife was enduring that day. I'll never forget her asking me to wish her a "Happy Mother's Day" because she wanted me to acknowledge that she was in fact a mother. I was purposely avoiding those three words because I dreaded the prospect of anyone wishing me a Happy Father's Day in just one month's time. "Happy" was the last word I would have chosen to describe my anticipation of the holiday. Although I understood her motive and desire, it caught me by surprise. That is when I first realized how differently people grieve.

Father's Day arrived and attending my in-law's family gathering was the best thing for me at the time, especially when I thought back to watching those three fathers coaching their girls' softball team. Not attending would have meant I was avoiding my feelings for Corynn, and that would have tortured me throughout the entire day. Some bereaved fathers may need time alone, but I needed to continue to confront my emotions, no matter how raw. Even though I understood I was a father, I didn't feel like one on that day. A part of me was missing, while everyone else had their children present and accounted for. It was the only day of the year I felt resentful and questioned God. In hindsight, I don't know how I managed that Father's Day as I did.

Every Father's Day or Mother's Day for a parent after losing their child will be different, but none will be easy. We're not all in the same place, emotionally or spiritually. Some of our wounds are new and gaping, while others have had time to form a scar. Some of us have come to terms with our loss, while others are not on speaking terms with God. Some of us have only our Angel Babies, while others are blessed to have living children.

One of the many things I learned from my Share meetings is that we all grieve differently and heal at various rates. Many experiences are similar, but none are identical. The same rings true for Father's Day. So, my advice is to do what feels right for you as the holiday approaches. If you need seclusion, to be alone with your thoughts, schedule some time for it. If you need the comfort of your family or friends, make sure to spend time with them. If you need an activity to serve as a distraction, plan for it. It's your day, so do what you feel is right for your grieving and healing process.

Mother's Day/Father's Day

“Providing Guidance Through Life’s Storms”

Written by Susan A. Adams, PhD, LPC-S, NCC

www.drSusanAdams.com

Knock... knock... knock... When death invades your life creating a hole in your heart, your world is no longer safe or “normal.” Perhaps the concept of “Happy Mother’s Day” and “Happy Father’s Day” are not part of your vocabulary and only emphasize the painful brokenness of your grieving heart.

Although it is hard to get an accurate number, the professional literature indicates about 50-75% of marriages end in divorce after the death of a child, and a greater percentage experience discord and separation - either physical or mental or both. Why? The answer is not an easy, simplistic one.

In a time when the couple should be drawing closer and gaining strength from mutual grief, the uniqueness of each individual surfaces, and the relationship is seriously jeopardized. Not only is there a gender difference, the loss means different things to each of them. It is impossible to understand the other’s position fully. Your needs and emotions are not the same.

To further complicate this life changing experience, there are family members, friends and co-workers who want to offer “good advice,” but often just add to the painful reality of a home with empty arms and an empty cradle. When there are unresolved issues in the relationship, they often surface and even escalate. Hostilities seem to crystallize and may even become frozen in time. This can cause isolation as insecurities escalate even to the point of bitter hatred.

One couple I worked with following the death of their 6-month-old son had created a rift in their marriage, and they were almost to the point of separation and/or divorce. After numerous couple and individual sessions, both admitted they secretly were harboring guilt that they might have caused the baby’s death. As we worked through the irrationalities of this guilt, they were able to begin to heal. It was not an easy journey, but it was a successful journey that eventually strengthened their marriage and love for one another.

However, not all couples are this fortunate. Another couple lost their daughter when they were eight months along in the pregnancy. They came to me because they had been arguing and cold toward each other for weeks. The husband came to the initial intake session, but insisted it was his wife who needed counseling. The wife broke down and admitted the deep sorrow she felt, and she excluded her husband’s support and love. She felt a tremendous amount of insecurity at losing control of her emotions and blamed herself for not being able to carry the baby to full-term. After several months of counseling, the wife recognized she was being unfair to her husband who wanted to be supportive of her. They cared for each other, but even with long-term counseling, they were not able to rebuild the damaged trust to the relationship, and they divorced.

When I work with a bereaved individual or couple, I encourage open conversations about their own thoughts and emotions related to the person who died. Grief is personal, but it can be shared. This releases a myriad of emotions (e.g., shame, anger, depression, etc.). Only in hearing ourselves voice these thoughts aloud can we finally begin to feel free from the dark grief we experience. The couple must begin to rebuild the trust in their marriage in order to survive the heartaches of life. No secrets. It takes courage and personal strength to let go of the pent-up emotions and accept them as a valid part of ourselves.

Holidays are always a topic of discussion in counseling, so following is a short list of suggestions for all of you who will face Mother’s Day and/or Father’s Day without your precious little bundle of joy:

- Don’t try to be perfect with your emotions. There is no perfect way to grieve. You have positive and negative emotions, and that is okay.
- Take some time for yourself. Alone time is valuable because it helps clear your mind and find balance in life again.
- Be kind to yourself. This is a painful experience in your life. Spend Mother’s Day or Father’s Day however you choose. Some clients tell me they don’t go to church that day because the focus is on mothers or fathers with living children. You get to decide what you want to do and what you can handle. You have nothing to explain or prove.
- Don’t feel guilty because you smile or laugh. It’s okay if the loss does not occupy the center of your every waking minute. It doesn’t mean the memory of the baby will be erased from your mind or your heart.
- If you find yourself dwelling on past memories or experiencing painful emotions after an extended period of time, you might consider finding a counselor with specialized training in grief to help you find a voice for your emotions. Too much strong emotion for too long has the effect of alienating others leaving you unsupported.
- Plan for the day! It will happen no matter what, but planning ahead will allow you to have some measure of control to get through the day. For example, think about how you are most comfortable answering the question, “How many children do you have?”

You decide how you will celebrate the day! Then you will empower yourself to meet your needs – whatever they are. If you have living children, recognize they are important and incorporate some time focusing on them. Perhaps you want to visit with your mom, your grandmother, or some special woman in your life. Consider asking them to be part of whatever you might decide to do to remember your baby or babies. Above all, choose a way to incorporate your child’s (or children’s) loss into the tapestry of your life’s story.

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***Bryan/College Station***

God is doing wonderful things for M.E.N.D.—Bryan/College Station! We were honored to be part of the Remembrance section of the March for Babies in College Station. We also want to thank the Kohl's stores in Conroe, North Tomball, and The Woodlands for each donating a grant for our chapter.

We will be having a Painting with a Purpose event on June 20. Be sure to join our Facebook group for more details, upcoming events and meetings.

Jennie Drude

Chicagoland

M.E.N.D.—Chicagoland is so grateful for all of the support for our Painting with a Purpose evening to benefit our chapter. Thrivent helped sponsor the event, and we were thankful for their volunteers as well as helpers from Kohl's. What a blessing to have all the help before, during and after the event. We are thankful for everyone's support as we continue to minister to hurting families in the Chicagoland area.

Sara Hintz

NW Washington

M.E.N.D.—NW Washington wants to wish all the moms and dads who have a baby in heaven a blessed and peaceful Mother's Day and Father's Day. We pray you find a special way to remember your baby, and that you remember you will always be a mom or dad because of your baby in heaven.

Stacy McGhee

S/O Missouri

M.E.N.D.—SW Missouri continues to minister to hurting families in our area, as well as make plans for our year as a chapter. Upcoming events include a picnic at the memorial bench this summer, Balloon Release on October 14, and Christmas Candlelight Ceremony on December 11. Watch our Facebook page or contact Kathryn at kathryn@mend.org for details.

Kathryn Gold

Tulsa

M.E.N.D.—Tulsa will be praying for all of our families as we approach the difficult holidays of Mother's Day and Father's Day. We remember each one of our babies in heaven and here on earth.

Lisa Daily

Wichita Falls

M.E.N.D.—Wichita Falls was thrilled to hold a fundraiser in April. A local artist led donors through a fun painting experience. We were so happy to share information about M.E.N.D. and our chapter with more people in Wichita Falls. We are in the planning stages of a special event this fall, as well, to coincide with Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness month. We continue to welcome grieving families at both our monthly support group meetings as well as our monthly fellowship gathering. Details for both can be found on our Facebook page.

Sarah Fukasawa

Houston

M.E.N.D.—Houston attended M.E.N.D. Day at the Capitol of Texas on April 13. Kessi Wilhite and Stormy Mitchell met with one state senator and three state representatives from the greater Houston area and spoke with them about what M.E.N.D. does for our families and to raise awareness for pregnancy and infant loss.

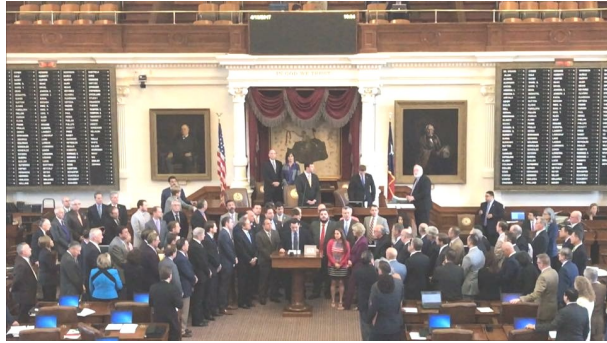
We are also hosting our yearly online fundraiser! Keep an eye on our Facebook page for more information.

We are praying for each of our members as Mother's Day and Father's Day approach. We know the pain these days can cause. We hope each of you in the midst of your grief experience peace from the Lord. As always, we remember.

Stormy Mitchell

M.E.N.D. Capitol Day

On Thursday, April 13, 2017, the Texas M.E.N.D. leadership was graciously invited to the Texas state Capitol by Representative Matt and Corley Rinaldi on the 1st heavenly birthday of their baby, Madison James Rinaldi. M.E.N.D. leaders met with various state senators and representatives, introducing them to M.E.N.D. They were also privileged to attend a Legislative Session, in which a memorial Resolution was passed in honor of Madison. Additionally, M.E.N.D. and its founders, Rebekah and Byron Mitchell, were



recognized and welcomed from the floor. Following the visit to the Capitol, they traveled to the Texas state cemetery, where baby Madison is buried, to share a special ceremony and balloon release with the Rinaldi family. M.E.N.D. is truly grateful and honored to have been a part of an incredibly memorable day.



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 fa-
thers. 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**Courtney Lea Abare**

December 15, 2008

Full term placental abruption/uterine rupture

Gifts given by

Parent Julie Abare and big brother Bailey
Bobby Herring
Bunny Gauntt
Laurie Leines

Lauren Isabelle Autry

June 17—July 2, 2011

Campomelic Dysplasia

Given by parents Brandon and Melissa Autry
and sister Haley

Yancel Laruelle Bridges-Baker

January 16—June 4, 2008

Unknown cause

Given by mommy Yanisha Bridges

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

Patsy Bell
Jackie Spragins

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

Riley and Parker Davis

November 14, 2006

Premature

Given by parents Rob and Cheryl Davis
and little sister Annalise

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

Airrrington Hope Fumagalli

Stillborn December 22, 2013

Unknown cause

Jakoebi Michael Fumagalli

Miscarried November 22, 2011

Ectopic pregnancy

Given by

Parents Michael and Kirsten Fumagalli
and siblings Gable
and Baby Fumagalli due June 2017

C.J. Gold

Miscarried August 12, 2008

Marina Gold

Miscarried July 14, 2009

Parents: Kathryn and Greg Gold

Sister: Emily

Given by Grandmother Nellie Gold

Charlotte Grace Harrison

December 28, 2011—January 4, 2012

Complications at birth

Parents: Luke and Amanda Harrison

Siblings: Evan and Audrey

Given Anonymously

Ted Herzog

April 12, 1952—January 11, 2017

Gifts given by

George and Tari Steberl
Weber Far Hills, Inc.
Steve and Debbie Ribbink
Sean and Anne Haines
Joan Garbo
Louie and Bonnie Huart
Greg and Gloria Hurwitz
Jason Stine
Karen and Mike Cashman
Rick and Arlene Parent
Thomas and Marty Carney
Fleet Feet
Emily Nelson
James Donovan
Michael Donovan
Dale and Penny Mitchell
Steve and Lisa Allen
George and Marcia Brand
David and Lessia Dilley
Kelsey Tucker
Jackie Phillips
Thomas and Melody Steuer
Terri Dawson
Rick and Melissa Bergman

Avery Mitchell

Miscarried May 2008

Unknown cause

Gideon Zeller Mitchell

Stillborn May 17, 2011, at 33 weeks 4 days

Membranous cord insertion

Joy Mitchell

December 2014

Vanishing twin syndrome

Given by parents Todd and Stormy Mitchell
and brothers Silas and Justus

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, D.D.S.

Lily Joy Moore

March 2, 2011

Early pregnancy loss

Parents: Jeremy and Kathleen Moore

Siblings Isaac, Judah and Mercy

Given by grandfather Ray Neely, Jr

Douglas James Poirier

February 8, 1996—April 3, 2010

Parents: John and Terisa Poirier

Given by grandparents Georgia and Richard Loy

Michael Taylor Smith

August 18, 1994—February 7, 1995

SIDS

Given by mommy Heidi Smith

and brothers Matthew and Timmy

Mindy and Maggie Smith

Stillborn November 4, 1997

TTTS and Polyhydramnios

Given by parents Scott and Karla Smith
and siblings Travis and Julia

Aaron Josiah Tran

August 14—December 16, 2016

SIDS

Parents: Ly and Dana Tran

Gifts given by

Pamela Ward
Daniel Lu
Kimberly Kho

Jacob Martin Wilhite

April 25, 2012

Incompetent cervix

Isaac Odell Wilhite

April 1, 2015

Incompetent cervix

Parents: David and Kessi Wilhite

Big brother: Caleb

Gifts given by

Ryan and Julie Craig
Cathy Sturm

Marcus John Willie

March 24, 2012

Cystic cord

Given by parents Vernon and Kim Willie
and sister Sheila

Adrian Joseph "AJ" Zuckerman

Stillborn March 30, 2007

Cord accident

Gifts given by

Parents Al and Amber Zuckerman
and brothers Eli and Alex
Brian Builta

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

Celeste Broyles

HEB Grocery

Enterprise Holdings Foundation

Jacob Hagen

Meaghann Wheelis

His Loss: My Husband's Take on Our Miscarriage

Written by Kyle and Eva Martino on February 15, 2017

This is a post I've been thinking about for a while now. Loss, and the grieving process, is so unique - so nonlinear, so unexpected. And it can be just as individual between partners experiencing the same event. I asked my husband, Kyle Martino, to write his most honest, most unapologetic account of losing our baby at nine and a half weeks pregnant. It was hard for me to read because it brought back the challenges of that time, both within myself, and between us. But it's real and beautiful. And helpful, I think. I hope it inspires some generosity of spirit, some empathy, some honesty in others. This is his story:

"I lost the baby..."

There's no way to prepare for those words. I was standing in line to check in to my hotel in Greenwich, Connecticut - the same mindless task I sleepwalk through every weekend - when my phone rang. When I heard those words out of Eva's mouth, I sprung awake from my traveler's daze. I was shocked. The first emotion I felt was Guilt. Of course this happened while I was away - every time Eva needs me most, I seem to be on a plane or in a different time zone.

Almost instantly after Guilt came Anger - her phrase kept repeating in my head over and over. I'm not sure if she kept saying it, or if I couldn't hear anything else she said over that phrase echoing in my ears and in my soul. Years of shielding myself from emotional discomfort has trained me to move immediately to logic. And so I began the calming method of systematically breaking down the sentence I kept hearing over and over. "Baby...The Baby...lost the baby...I lost the baby..." It was her fault. I was overcome with a quick wave of judgment and blame. Why did she let this happen? What did she do wrong? Why did she let me get on that plane? Anger - that hollow, pointless emotion was the shield I was holding so not to feel what I knew I couldn't handle.

Holding on to that Anger distracted me from the actual emotion I was feeling. The sadness. I wasn't mad at Eva at all, I was mad that I wasn't there in the moment she needed me more than ever. I walked over to a couch in the lobby and let this sink in. I began to cry for the first time in my adult life. (Yeah, don't worry, my therapist is all over that one.) I cried because Eva said "I". "*I lost the baby.*" Of course *she* didn't lose the baby. This wasn't her fault. There was nothing she could do. In fact, she *couldn't have done more* to make sure her body was the healthiest it could have been to nurture life. It broke my heart that she felt responsible in that very first moment of grief - and I didn't understand why she couldn't see what I did: that having a healthy baby is a miracle, and we can't choose when and where that miracle happens.

These feelings continued in to the immediate aftermath of the miscarriage. While she re-wound the tape on her pregnancy and looked for errors, I appreciated her body for doing the right thing by closing the book on a miracle not meant to be. We were on totally different pages - which

drove a wedge between us. It's the same difference that existed when Eva was pregnant with our daughter, Marlowe. Eva made a connection with Marlowe well before I did. A tangible bond that only those two people can understand. Eva and Marlowe were Soul Mates the second she heard that heartbeat, and if you ask Eva, she would probably say even before that. If I'm being honest, I never really accepted that we were having a child until a third trimester ultrasound showed Marlowe waving at the camera. It hit me right there, in *that* moment, that I would be a Father - but Eva had long been a Mother already.

When she called me with the shattering news of this pregnancy, she already knew her baby and had been taking care of it. In Eva's mind she was *already* the Mother of two. That connection I was referring to, the bond, it was broken that day - and Eva was absolutely devastated. I know that losing our child was not Eva's fault, but I understand now why she felt it was. Miscarriage, to the unlucky ones who have been through that heartache, is a very isolating experience. Eva withdrew for a while after it happened. I tried to be there for her, but I wasn't able to relate to her specific pain. My heart was broken in a different way - and nothing I could do or say was helping. It was only when Eva decided to do something very brave in her saddest moment that the cloud over us was lifted. Eva decided she needed to talk about it...with everyone.

Eva told our story on her blog and put our heartache out there for all to read. When she first decided to share, I thought it was a bad idea. I thought miscarriage was a rare misfortune and that the few who experienced it suffered privately with curtains drawn. As far as I knew, miscarriage wasn't something you talked about. I mean, no one had ever mentioned to me that they had been through it. I had never read of someone's personal experience anywhere. Was it really safe and smart to tell so many people such intimate truths about your pain? I didn't voice my concerns with sharing because I had been so inept at providing support in those crucial moments so far - I knew I needed to support whatever desire she had. The decision had been made. She wrote it.

Eva's post went live, and we sat there silently. I could definitely sense that there was a weight lifted off her, but I feared the response could reverse the initially positive effects. Then, immediately, the support came pouring in. And I'm not talking about the "*I'm sorry for your loss, I can't imagine how hard that is*" support - (although that was also very much appreciated) I'm talking about the "*we've been there ourselves, we are here for you if you need us*" support. I was blown away by how many of her readers wrote back with their own deeply sad stories of pregnancy loss.

Then, the phone started ringing. Some of my closest friends began revealing to me, one by one, their own experiences with miscarriage. These were people I spoke to every day, and I hadn't had a clue. It felt so good to talk

(Continued on page 14)

Celebrating Through Grief

By: Ginny Limer

Celebrations are lighthearted, joy-filled, carefree occasions where smiles are shining, the energy is booming, rooms are full of contented people gathered together, hugging and laughing...but your heart is heavy. Your joy is gone. Your cares are not free. Your smile and energy have faded. Hugs and laughter bring you to tears because your celebration is missing a person. Your person. Your child.

Two of the most painful celebrations are looming. Mother's Day and Father's Day are just around the corner, stalking the bereaved parent like a thief in the night. But we will not be blindsided and completely broken. We will arm ourselves with healing strategies and have a plan in place for the joy-stealing thief that is grief.

- **Plan for the grief, plan for the joy.** When planning for Mother's and Father's Day, plan for sadness. Consider it to be on the menu for the day. Eat a small portion, or stuff yourself with grief. Please remember to nibble some organic, wholesome healing after gorging on the junk-filled grief. It is your choice. Keep in mind it's best to eat in moderation. It takes longer to recover when you stuff yourself.
- **Plan to protect your heart.** Protect your fragile heart by celebrating the love between you and your child in your own special way, and without expectations from others. If you don't receive the Hallmark words that you were hoping for, then go read some *Scribbles & Crumbs* or visit the *On Coming Alive* website after you finish finding hope within the articles of the latest *Still Standing* or *National Share* issues. Search for the heart-wrenching yet hopeful words that you long to hear. Read them aloud. Speak them to yourself. Ultimately, Mother's Day and Father's Day is about the intimate, forever bond between you and your child, souls linked by DNA, blood and heart. Your heart is even more sacred a space than the womb, for it is there that your child will be carried, not for nine months, but for an eternity.
- **Plan to pay it forward when your spirits are lagging behind.** Search for someone or some cause to help when you cannot even seem to help yourself. Think beyond your pain and bring someone else pleasure. *A Gift from Emma* has free random acts of kindness cards and encourages families to perform small acts of generosity daily. A mother at *The Love Elijah Project* and her kids are performing such acts of love daily and are raising money for an art therapy room in their local town. There are sure to be groups in your area that are in need of hearts like yours; full of pain, tears, love, and longing. Reach out to others. Extend your hand when your heart is heavy.
- **Plan to create meaning and memories in honor of your child.** Buy yourself or take a walk and pick some flowers. Create your child's name using the whole flower or just the petals. Take a photo, print and frame your child's floral name art. Use pine needles, acorns, blades of grass, or rocks if flowers are out of season. Connect with your child in nature when you feel a strong need to nurture.
- **Plan to be creative when you feel uninspired and dull.** Use photography as therapy, participate in creative healing projects such as *May We All Heal*. Find your heart in art and ask a few friends to color, paint, or create with you. Share your story with a group like *Kale's Kisses*, and type the tears away before the next Mother's Day, Father's Day, or Sibling's Day appears on the calendar. When those days arrive, plan to sit a while and cry a while. Then plan to regain your strength and keep celebrating, even through the grief.

Retrieved from Share Infant Loss and Support Group on April 12, 2017, from www.nationalshare.org.

("His Loss..." Continued from page 13)

about what we were going through - and the fact that others not only knew what we were going through, but had found a way through it was so uplifting. What had felt like an action that would add shame to our heartbreak turned out to be the most cathartic experience imaginable. I was able to be honest and talk with friends about the guilt I still carried for my earlier feelings of blame - the insecurity I felt about not hurting the same way as Eva did - the worry I still shoulder that it could happen to us again. A Community was started, a conduit through which Sadness, Regret, Hope, Gratitude and Love flowed freely. At our wedding, Eva's Mom said something that really struck me at the time. In her speech she told us, "We are your Tribe. Use us." In the aftermath of our loss, we established a new Community - a kind of reformulation of our relationships with those already a part of it, and the addition of people met through our shared experiences.

We used this Community to get through the hardest moment of our marriage. I was able to access a lot of understanding through my discussions with other dads, and Eva got a lot of strength from the strength of the women who came before her in their own grieving processes. The encouragement, compassion, and love we both received from some important people around us gave us the courage to turn back to each other for support and to heal the disconnect that was weakening our marriage. And as with many of our struggles, we came out the other side stronger together in our loss than we could ever be apart. I will never feel the same way as Eva about losing our baby. I have my experience, and she has hers. I have my process, and she has hers. I don't think about it often - but Eva does. She thinks about the baby we lost every day. And so we move forward, two broken hearts on the mend - with a beautiful miracle of a child by our side, and one other just out of our reach.

This story submitted by blogger Eva Martino and was originally posted on **Happily Eva After**.
Retrieved from Share Infant Loss and Support Group on April 12, 2017, from www.nationalshare.org.

Reflexiones sobre el día de día de la Madre/Padre
El Legado de Ruby Joyce Bell

Ruby Joyce Bell es el 3rd hijo de mis abuelos, Dan y Issoria Bell. Lamentablemente, Ruby Joyce murió un poco antes de 2 meses de edad por neumonía. Mientras mi abuela profundamente lamentaba la muerte de su niña, mucha gente le dijo: "Issoria, la vas a ver otra vez en el cielo un día."

Mi abuela estaba desesperadamente curiosa de que como podían ser tan seguros de esa prometedora declaración de estas personas. Deseando la misma confianza de sus consoladores, ella compró una Biblia, con la esperanza de que le daría una comprensión de su creencia. Se dedicó a las santas palabras grabadas, pasando horas y horas aprendiendo... y creyendo! Ella dio su vida a Cristo y lo hizo su Señor y Salvador personal. Compartió su nueva fe con mi abuelo, y se convirtió el en un creyente también.

Eventualmente, se convirtieron en predicadores pentecostales ordenados. Unos años más tarde mi mamá, Zodie Sue Bell, fue nacida a ellos. Ella es llamada lo que madres jóvenes hoy en día le dicen, un "bebé del arco iris".

Cada predicador necesita un púlpito. El papá de mi abuela, Jacob Money, construyó un púlpito personalizado solo para ella. Ese púlpito fue heredado por mi madre cuando mis abuelos murieron, y ahora reside en mi iglesia y se enseña sobre una base regular. Hablo por detrás de él en cada M.E.N.D. Camino de Recordar y la Ceremonia de Velas de Navidad.

En un pequeño cementerio en Irving, Texas, se puede encontrar la parcela de la familia Bell. Pequeña Ruby Joyce comienza la cadena de las hermosas lápidas viejas. Junto a Ruby Joyce, esta mi abuela que de hecho se reunió con su niña en 1971. Mi abuelo es el siguiente en línea, que se unió con ellos en 1974. Dos espacios después esta Jacob, el carpintero de la familia. Entre Daniel y Jacob esta mi pequeño Jonathan Daniel – el mismo nombre de mi abuelo. Escogí el segundo nombre de Jonathan meses antes de unirse a mis parientes en el cielo – nunca soñando que él sería enterrado junto a su abuelo.

Que providencial que mi herencia cristiana se deriva de la muerte de una niña en 1930. ¡A pesar de que Ruby Joyce vivió solamente para un par de semanas aquí en esta tierra, qué fruta asombrosa produjo! A través de su muerte, mi abuela y mi abuelo encontraron a Cristo y ahora están pasando cada día de la madre y día del padre con su niña en el cielo. Estoy tan agradecida por su legado, para saber a pesar de que he pasado muchos días de la madre sin Jonathan y bebé Mitchell, sé sin lugar a dudas, que un día pasare cada momento con ellos por toda la eternidad. Espero el día que me reúno con mis bebés en el cielo, y espero ansiosamente conocer esta tía mía especial, cuya breve vida cosechó mucho bueno en esta tierra y gloria eterna.

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

Subsequent Birth



Brandon and Angie Butler,
of Mount Vernon, Missouri,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Quinn Alora,
born March 10, 2017,
measuring 8 lbs., 1 oz.,
and 21 inches long.
The family lovingly remembers
Gabriel Lee Butler,
June 14-15, 2013,
anencephaly

MY DADDY'S GRIEF

If you ask my Dad how he feels?
He'll probably be as quiet as the midnight air
Because of this horrible pain he tries to bear.
And if you ask him and he just quietly sighs,
Look harder, you'll see the pain in his eyes.
Even if he does happen to tell you he's coping,
Then that just surely means..... He is hoping?
If he happens to mutter out, "I'm surviving today."
Oh then trust me, you know he is really not okay.
He has been so very quiet since that awful day.
It's just so hard for him to find the words to say.
He really thinks he has to be stronger than steel,
But he is just very fragile, suffering this ordeal.
He feels like he has to hide away all those tears,
Just suck it all in, and show no one of his fears.
I'm his child in heaven, and he's hurting oh so bad.
He gets up and goes every day, even though he's sad.
He watches my mommy cry and holds her oh so tight.
He always tears up, but holds back with all of his might.
If you ask, "How are you today?" and he says "Oh I'm just fine."
He's really not; he needs a hug, that's definitely a sure sign.
His heart is burdened with such terrible doubts often every day,
Please let him know, he didn't let me down or fail in any way.
I know he loves me very much and he thinks of me each day,
But his poor heart is so broken, so please help him find a way.
To find peace, comfort and a voice to shed his grief and pain,
For without it, he cannot start to heal and lighten grief's stain.
Also tell him it's ok to lose it, break down and shed those tears,
Cause it takes more strength to cry, then to hold back the fears.
I love you, Daddy, I'm always here with you, we're never far apart
So for me, could you begin to heal and open back up your heart?

-JP Vinson
Retrieved from Remember My Footprints on April 12, 2017.

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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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