



M.E.N.D.

Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death

Residual Grief

Early in my grief journey, I discovered that most people assumed we had packed up and moved on, so to speak, not long after our son, Jonathan, was stillborn. They thought our sorrow was behind us, not to be thought of much again just because months had passed, and we had managed to pick up some of the pieces of our brokenness and had begun to live a little again. And honestly, I may have naively assumed that to some degree as well. I thought once I got through most of the “firsts,” I’d be much better emotionally. Getting past my due date, enduring the holidays, and limping through his 1st birthday did patch a lot of the sorrow, but I did not expect triggers to continue to crop up years later.

We tend to think of a mourning period as a tidy length of time. Start to finish. Beginning to end. But, understand there is no specific end. There are messy, unexpected, spilled emotions that have yet to be dealt with – and can’t be dealt with until the proper time. For example, 14 months after Jonathan’s death, our living son started pre-school three days a week.

There are messy, unexpected, spilled emotions that have yet to be dealt with – and can’t be dealt with until the proper time.

While most stay-at-home moms are ready for this reprieve – with hours to themselves – I was devastated. Not only was I sad that my firstborn was growing up, I was sad because I should not have been alone those days. I should have had a 1-year-old at home with me. Those ugly, raw emotions hit again a few years later

when it would have been time for Jonathan to walk through those same pre-school doors, then the next year when he should have been in his little Kindergarten uniform, attending the same school as his big brother. And yet again when I knew he would have likely started playing organized sports. Then there was middle school, high school, his 16th birthday, prom, and horrifically, graduation! One of the most unexpected leftover grief episodes that hit me was when our living son got married, and his brother couldn’t be his best man. And again, when there have been a handful of deaths in my family and I’m reunited with that gut-wrenching, too familiar and hated, sorrow.

I’m now 22 years into my grief journey. Just as well-meaning people thought we were over our loss many years ago, I’m sure some would be shocked to know there are days, or seasons, when I become sorrowful again. My husband and I have a great, content life with a beautifully large extended family we’re extremely close to, but deep down, a sorrow remains. Our living son and daughter-in-law live in another state, which gives us a great place to visit, but sometimes on holidays, their absence, when it’s just Byron and me attending family events without kids, makes Jonathan’s and our miscarried baby’s losses magnified. Again, we’re reminded of who is missing and wonder what our life would be like if those two had lived and been a part of our family.

Thankfully, through the Lord, the vast majority of my days after so many years are full of happiness, love, and joy, and I feel very fulfilled and satisfied. But I’d be less than honest if I said I am 100% past the sadness of losing my baby 22 years ago. I often wonder what my grief journey would look like had I not founded M.E.N.D. one year after Jonathan’s stillbirth. Because of M.E.N.D., I have numerous friends just like me – they too understand the grief of losing a baby and know the sorrow never ends. Like me, they mourned when their babies should have started school or turned sweet 16, and many of them have gone through an academic year when their “baby” should have graduated and gone on to college. And some of us are now in that period when we wonder if we would be in the middle of planning a wedding. They get it, and we’re all in it together for a lifetime.

So, what do I do when I hit these remaining low points that will continue to come? I allow myself to be sad for a period of time. I feel it, I express it, I soak in it for a bit, and then I go on. I focus on the blessings God has given me. I thank Him for M.E.N.D., and how He turned my sorrow into unspeakable joy and goodness, and I remember that one day all my tears will be wiped away and eternal joy, with no more sadness, is just around the corner.

♥ *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 página número 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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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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M.E.N.D. is a member of

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International Stillbirth Alliance



What You Really Lose When You Lose a Baby

By Rachel Lewis

When you lose a baby in pregnancy,
some people act as though you've only lost potential for a baby.

You had a near-miss, an almost-kid, a chance to have a baby, but no more.

But you ... You know exactly what you lost:

You lost your daughter's first smile.

The first time your son rolled over.

You lost the look on your sweet girl's face when Mommy soothed her tears.

You missed the way your son nestles at your breast.

You missed her first steps ...

And then every step after that of her running to your arms.

You missed your son burying his eager fists into his first birthday cake,
then smearing chocolate frosting all over his cute little cheeks.

You missed the first day of preschool ... Kindergarten ... High school ... College.

You missed every one of his T-ball games.

You missed her honor roll report card.

You missed his first crush.

You missed her daddy-daughter dance.

You missed the excitement on his face when his dad took him for his first drive.

You missed wedding dress shopping.

You missed watching your son become a dad.

You missed your first, second and last grandchild being born.

A whole generation, a whole lifetime of memories, gone ...

The instant your baby's heart stopped beating.

People will tell you you were lucky you were early. But I know and you know ...

A baby in the womb is still a baby.

They are the same person, no matter how developed they are or not.

So when you grieve,

you not only grieve for the weeks you had your baby and then lost ...

You grieve for all the days and all the memories you'll never get to have.

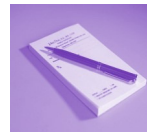
Rachel Lewis is an adoptive, foster and biological mom. She writes about her 5 pregnancy losses, as well as her fostering and adoptive journey, on her blog *The Lewis Note*. Her recent "I am 1 in 4" article was shared by the Today Show, and various news outlets. She believes that sharing our stories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

Memory Pillows by M.E.N.D.ing Mommies

Mommies in M.E.N.D.—Tulsa gathered to make pillows in memory of their babies. These M.E.N.D.ing Mommies were provided hearts already cut out by a local Girl Scout troop. The local Girl Scout troop met with Lisa Daily, the Chapter Director, to cut the hearts out of material as a community service project, and Lisa was also able to share with them about M.E.N.D. with this group of young girls.



Medical Moment



Some Antibiotics Linked to Miscarriage in Early Pregnancy, Study Says

By Mary Bowerman

Published on USAToday.com May 1, 2017

Taking certain types of antibiotics during early pregnancy may lead to an increased risk of miscarriage, according to a new study from Canada.

The study, published in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, found that certain types of antibiotics such as macrolides, quinolones, tetracyclines, sulfonamides and metronidazole, led to a “60% to two-fold” increase in the risk of miscarriage. The study did not find a link between other commonly used antibiotics like Penicillin, Erythromycin, or Nitrofurantoin, which is often used to treat urinary tract infections in pregnant women.

“Infections are prevalent during pregnancy,” according to researcher Anick Bérard, Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Montréal. “Although antibiotic use to treat infections has been linked to a decreased risk of prematurity and low birth weight in other studies, our investigation shows that certain types of antibiotics are increasing the risk of spontaneous abortion, with a 60% to two-fold increased risk.”

The researchers used data on women in the Quebec Pregnancy Cohort between 1998 and 2009. The team identified 8,702 cases of spontaneous abortions, which occurred on average around 14 weeks of pregnancy, and compared them to 87,000 pregnancies where miscarriage did not occur.

The women in the study ranged from 15 to 45 years of age.

According to the study, women who were older, lived alone and had multiple health issues were more likely to miscarry, which was taken into account in the study.

Bérard told *Global News* that infections should be treated with antibiotics, but the study highlights the importance of having treatment options.

“The bottom line is to treat infections, but our study has shown that some of the most used antibiotics like Erythromycin and Nitrofurantoin are not associated with miscarriage,” she told *Global News*. “So, yes treat the infection, and we are giving treatment options.”

Retrieved from <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2017/05/01/some-antibiotics-linked-miscarriage-early-pregnancy-study-says/308214001/> on June 5, 2017.

September/October Topic

Loss is Our Last

Deadline: July 31, 2017

November/December Topic

Holidays

Deadline: September 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, Fran / Frank!

I love you so much, sweet baby. I will miss you every day until I can hold you again in heaven.

Love,
Mom



Francis Morehouse
Miscarried August 8, 2016
Parents: Blake and Christina Morehouse
Sisters: Opal and Dorothy

Happy 4th Birthday, Brandon!

My precious grandson, we all love and miss you. I think of you every day. I know you are safe in God's arms. One day I will spend eternity with you, loving you always.

All my love,
Grandma



Brandon Lee Meton
Stillborn August 23, 2013
Parents: Carson Lee and SaraJo Meton
Brother: Daniel Lee
Grandma: Angela Brasington

Happy 2nd Birthday, Jordan!

If my baby were here, January 28, 2017, would have been his 1st earthly birthday. I did not have time to prepare for what was happening to Jordan and me. I had to have an emergency D&C because my life was at stake. My 7-year-old daughter had no idea what was happening to her Mommy. Jordan was not receiving enough nutrients due to a blockage in my placenta, and I was at high risk.

I think of Jordan every day and wish he could be here with us. I'm glad he is our guardian angel; a mother can just sense these things.

Jordan, you will never leave my heart. I love you forever. Happy birthday, baby angel.



Jordan Casey Scofield
July 25, 2015
Emergency D&C/Placenta blockage
Mommy: Ashley Scofield
Big sister: Haley

Happy 1st Birthday, Aurelio!

You were born silent, perfect and beautiful. You are still loved and still remembered every day. You make us stronger, closer, united as one. Happy angel birthday, baby boy! We love you.

Aurelio Canales Garcia
Stillborn August 22, 2016
Parents: Julian Canales and Samantha Garcia
Brother: Roman



Happy 4th Birthday, Seth!

Not a day goes by we don't think about both of you, and wish more than anything you were here with us. We love you, Emma and Seth, and can't wait to hold you in our arms again. Your little brother, Ian, kisses your picture all the time, and I know you both would absolutely adore him. Until we see you again, take care of each other, and know Mommy, Daddy and Ian love you so very much.

Seth Owens
Stillborn August 2, 2013

Emma Owens
August 12, 2013

Premature
Parents: Ryan and Rani Owens
Little brother: Ian



Happy 3rd Birthday, Bryson!

Wow! Birthday #3 in heaven! I bet you're a sweet loving little handsome toddler running around asking all the "Why" questions. There isn't a day goes by we do not think about you, and all the love we have to give to you the day we meet. Our lives have not been the same since the day we lost you, but I will forever cherish the bond we had while you were in my womb, as I am the only one to have felt every part of you in me. Your dad and I miss you tremendously, but know you are having the time of your life with our loved ones joining you. Baby boy, we love you always and beyond words.

Bryson Gage Hawkins
July 21, 2014
Triploidy 69 Syndrome
Parents: Patrick and Jennifer Hawkins
Siblings: Money and Mackenzie



Happy 1st Birthday, Jude!

To our sweet baby Jude, we miss you and think about you every day. Your big brother, Joey, still sleeps with your bear "Brownie" every single night. Joey asks about you almost weekly, and he truly loves his baby brother in heaven.

We are so excited to be welcoming your baby sister this fall, and know you'll continue to watch over us. We love you so much and know we'll meet you in heaven one day.

Love,
Mom, Dad, Joey and your baby sister

Jude William Henrich
August 19, 2016
Genetic disorder
Parents: Joe and Jane Henrich
Siblings: Joey and Baby Sister Henrich due in October



Happy 1st Birthday, Greyson!

My precious baby, I think of you every day, and I will always wonder what could've been. My heart aches every time I'm reminded you're not here with me, but I'm so glad you're looking down on me. My sweet angel, Mommy loves you until infinity and beyond. Happy birthday, bumblebee.

Love,
Mommy and Daddy



Greyson Omari Garza
July 20, 2016

Unknown cause

Parents: Gilbert Garza and Tehrie Tryon

Happy 1st Birthday, Faith Nellie!

Happy 1st heavenly birthday, baby girl. Not a day goes by we don't think of you. Miss you always, love you more.

Faith Nellie Ulrich
Stillborn August 29, 2016
Hydrops

Parents: Bruce and Shannon Ulrich
Brothers: Ryley, Braydon and Ian

**Happy 1st Birthday, Sky!**

Happy 1st heavenly birthday, my love! Mommy and Daddy love and miss you so much. We hope you're taking care of your baby brother, Genesis! We love you guys and miss you both so much! Hu Guiaya Hao! Ofa Lahi Atu!

Sky Alexandra Ungounga
Miscarried June 15, 2016
Also remembering
Genesis Luke Toutai Ungounga
Stillborn March 13, 2017

Parents: Sililo T. and Ciera Ungounga

**Happy 3rd Birthday, Lil Man!**

Heaven is your playground; play until your wings hurt!
We love and miss you dearly!

Lil Man Baker
Miscarried August 17, 2014, at 18 weeks
Parents: Eric and Hallie Baker
Siblings: Ryan, Sophie and Eric

**Happy 5th Birthday, Kennedy Breann!**

Happy 5th birthday in heaven! I know you're looking over your sisters, and I cannot wait until you get to meet them! I miss you every day. My heart hurts today just like it did five years ago. I know you're in a better place. Keep looking over me. You are my guardian angel! I love you so much. Happy birthday, my love!

Kennedy Breann Neff
August 8, 2012
Unknown cause
Mommy: Allysia Neff
Sisters: Madison and Malia

**Happy 2nd Birthday, Ella!**

Happy 2nd heavenly birthday to our sweet Ella! We are celebrating your sweet little life here on earth until we can be reunited in heaven. We can't believe you are already 2! The blessings you have given us are immeasurable. We know you are looking down on us and your new little sister, Laurel, who should be here close to your 2nd birthday!

All of our love,
Mommy, Daddy, Laurel and your puppy brothers

"i carry your heart with me (i carry it in my heart) i am never without it (anywhere i go you go, my dear; and whatever is done by only me is your doing, my darling)"
-e.e. cummings

Ella Lynne Gonyea
August 24, 2015

Preeclampsia

Parents: David and Sable Gonyea
Little sister: Laurel

**Happy 12th Birthday, Ryland!**

Happy 12th birthday in heaven, Ryland!
We miss you every day. Until we see you again... xoxo

Ryland Dixon
Stillborn August 12, 2005

Infection

Parents: Bryan and Kelly Dixon
Siblings: Leighanne and Conor

**Happy 9th Birthday, Noah!**

Remembering our beloved Noah on this day and every day. We love and miss you more than words can describe, and I still remember whispering "Hello" and "Goodbye" like it was only yesterday.

Happy 9th birthday, dearest Noah.

With much love,

Mommy, Daddy, Julia and Sydney

"For he comes, the human child, to the waters and the wild.

With a faery, hand in hand, for the world's more full of weeping than you can understand."

"Stolen Child" by Loreena McKennitt

Noah Powell
Stillborn July 22, 2008

Parents: Nate and Barb Powell

Siblings: Julia (surviving twin) and Sydney

**Happy 13th Birthday, Jordyn!**

We miss you daily!
We know you are our angel and watching over us.

Love you!

Mommy, Daddy, Jada and Bruce Jr.

Jordyn Lynae Johnson
July 13-16, 2004

Cord accident

Parents: Bruce and Debra Johnson
Siblings: Jada and Bruce Jr.



Happy 7th Birthday, Jason!

My dear Jason, happy birthday! I can't believe you are going to be 7 this year. How the time has gone by. As our family grows, we miss you each day. I wonder how you would be and what you might look like as a little boy. One day, my sweet, we will see you again in heaven. One day all our questions will be no more, and we will be reunited again. I feel the time is flying by, yet it is taking so long all at once. Our family will never feel quite complete this side of heaven. We miss you and love you so much.

Love,
Mommy and Daddy

Jason Michael Murphy
July 29, 2010

Unknown cause

Parents: Michael and Diana Murphy

Brothers: Trevor and Evan

**Happy 1st Birthday, Saul!**

Having to write you for your 1st birthday instead of waking you up to hold and sing to you is very difficult, mijo. We miss you and love you very much, and it feels like we were just at your ultrasound. We want to wish you a beautiful 1st birthday. Play with your Great-Grandparents and your Uncle O; don't make him cry, though. We will celebrate for you here, mijo, while you celebrate in heaven. We know you will be spoiled with love, and it gives us peace. You're our true love, and we are thankful you came into our lives.

Happy 1st birthday, Mario Saul Montes. We love you!

Mario Saul Montes
August 30, 2016

Placental abruption

Parents: Mario and Alva Montes

Siblings: Bear, Lady and Elaine

**Happy 13th Birthday, Noah!**

Dearest Noah,

Birthdays are so special and fun

We would have waterslides, hotdogs, and sun
The whole family would come to celebrate this day

Your daddy and I would shout and say,
"Our boy Noah is 13 today!"

There would be laughter, fun, and so much love
But you can only see it from up above.

We miss you baby boy

But we know you are in a better place
So this year you will have to celebrate

I'm sure it will be a celebration no one has ever seen

I bet there will be lots of cake and jellybeans

The angels will gather around and trumpets will play
and God will say, "My boy Noah is 13 today!"

Noah Adam Barron
July 5-19, 2004

Hypoplastic Lung Syndrome

Parents: Lupe and Clem Barron

Siblings: AJ, Damien, Naomi and Nicholas

**Happy 5th Birthday, Catherine!**

5! It seems like it was just yesterday I was holding you, inhaling your scent and etching your tiny face into my heart. I often wonder who you'd be, what would make you smile or if you'd be shy or outspoken. I miss you so much. I know there will be a day we are together again, but, until then, I wait here with the countless blessings your life has given me. By the time this prints, your little brother will be here with us. I can't wait to tell him all about his big sister in heaven, but it'll always be you who made me a mom, sweet girl. All my love to hold you until I see you again.

Catherine Grace Wilkerson

August 10-12, 2012

Extreme prematurity due to H.E.L.L.P

Parents: Charlie and Kara Wilkerson

Little brother: Cannon

**Happy 7th Birthday, Little Man!**

Happy 7th heavenly birthday, Benjamin. We love and miss you so much. We think about you all the time. Give hugs and kisses to your Grandparents for us. We love you to the moon and back .

Benjamin Joseph Curtis

July 17, 2010

Unknown cause

Parents: Joseph and Jennifer Curtis

Sister: Rebecca

**Happy 1st Birthday, Connor!**

Happy birthday to our dear sweet baby boy. We love you so much and miss you each and every day. What we wouldn't give to hold you one more time. We hope you have a blast at your heavenly birthday party! We will be celebrating here on earth as well. We keep you in our hearts always. And we will see you again one day in heaven. We love you, son. Hugs and kisses, and "Happy Birthday" from your parents and grandparents and our whole family.

Connor Nathaniel Cash

August 31, 2016

Cord accident

Parents: Dustin and Jenna Cash

**Happy 3rd Birthday, Trinity Ann!**

Happy heavenly 3rd birthday, sweet girl. It is hard to believe you are going to be 3 years old. Your daddy and I always think about who you'd be today. We are waiting on the day we get to celebrate your birthday with you. We love you more than words can say and miss you every second of every day. Happy birthday, Trinity Ann.

Love,

Mommy, Daddy, Sissy and Bubba

Trinity Ann Faram

August 1, 2014

Placenta abruption

Parents: Brad and Elizabeth Faram

Siblings: Emma and Brentley



Happy 7th Birthday, Caelan!

We know you're having the most special of birthdays in heaven. There's not a day goes by we don't think about you. We love you so much--to the moon and back--and, even though we can't see you face-to-face, you're always in our hearts.

Love,
Mom, Dad and Finlea

Caelan Matthew Wallace
July 30—August 3, 2010
Extreme premature birth
Also remembering
Oakley Jaden Wallace
Miscarried February 22, 2016
Olivia Hope Wallace
Miscarried September 30, 2016
Parents: *Andy and Dana Wallace*
Sister: *Finlea*

**Happy 4th Birthday, Jellybean!**

Happy 4th birthday, Miss Brinlee Fallon, our precious Jellybean! You are loved, missed and treasured beyond expression and measure. We keep you close to our hearts always! Today we celebrate you and your beautiful life!

All my love, always your Mommy

"I'll love you forever,
I'll like you for always,
As long as I'm living,
my baby you'll be."
-Love You Forever,
by Robert Munsch

Brinlee Fallon Williams
August 27, 2013
Cord accident
Parents: *Blake and Ashlee Williams*
Siblings: *Addalyn and Samuel*

*In Loving Memory*

Maya Denise Ates
Stillborn January 6, 1998
Cord accident
Given by parents Horace and Tammie Ates
and siblings Erin and Brandon

Lauren Isabelle Autry
June 17—July 2, 2011
Campomelic Dysplasia
Given by parents Brandon and Melissa Autry
and sister Halley

Andrew Robert Bateman
Stillborn October 7, 2014
Unknown cause
Given by parents Tim and Laura Bateman
and siblings Leah, Hannah and Noah

Oliver Brueck
March 10, 2016
Parents: Aaron and Lauren Brueck
Given by Patricia Mallozzi

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 John and Carolyn Daily
Charles Craig

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

Laura Duffly
Given by Stanley Mitchell

Paislee Ann Frette
April 4-5, 2012
Wolf-Hirschhorn Syndrome
Parents: Brent and Courtney Frette
Little sister: Colbie
Gifts given by
Grandparents James and LuAnn Junkin
Anonymous

Ted Herzog
April 12, 1952—January 11, 2017
Gifts given by
Dan and Teri German
Linda Shea

Jackson Glen and Tyler Ray Light
February 23, 2009
Placental abruption
Given by parents Kirk and Diana Light
and siblings Brayden and Alexis

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
Parents: Todd and Stormy Mitchell
Brothers: Silas and Justus
Given by grandparents Earl and Karen Zeller

Jacob Theodore Oxendine
April 29, 2001
PROM
Given by parents
Chip and Christine Oxendine
and siblings Emily and Eric

Margot Lily Perry
Stillborn June 10, 2013
Parents: Marisa and Brandon Perry
Siblings: Adeline, Bennett and Noelle
Given by grandparents Norman and Mary Lorentz

Alexander Seely
August 30, 2010
Cord accident
Given by parents Ron and Raquel Seely
and siblings Abraham and Leah

Baby Shin
Given by Becky Reese

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

Jax Edward Yerg
Stillborn June 28, 2013
Unknown cause
Parents: Stephanie and Bryan Yerg
Given by Hallie Caldwell

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
Judy Schroeder
Dr. Ronald and Patricia Jones
Mercy Hospital, Springfield, MO
Matthew Dahlquist

Letter to Tela

To My Beautiful Daughter, Tela,

I became pregnant with you mid-October, learned you were a girl when you were 16 weeks old, and we named you Tela.

Shortly after that, I spent most of my pregnancy very nauseous and in and out of the hospital. We listened to your heartbeat every single day (sometimes twice a day) my entire pregnancy. I got an infection and was told if I didn't deliver you soon, my condition could decline rapidly, and I would go to the ICU.

You were born on Sunday, March 5, in Texas, weighing 2 ounces shy of a pound, and measuring 10 inches. You lived for a half-hour and died peacefully in my arms. We spent three days with you by our bedside. We sang to you, bathed you and held you until we were forced to say "Goodbye." On Thursday, March 23, we buried you in New York in a casket your daddy built for you. These are the facts. These are the things people are most comfortable talking about. This is what happened. But the facts can't possibly represent who you are and what you mean to me. Neither can any combination of words in any language, but I will try.

When I found out I was pregnant with you I was terrified. Terrified to become attached to you, terrified to lose you. Having lost babies before, I knew it would be extremely difficult. It would be physically difficult, but mostly emotionally difficult. Slowly, as time went by, there was no denying it any longer; I was in love. The best parts of my days were when we used the Doppler to listen to your heart beating. It was my new favorite song, and it was always loud and clear. It was so strong and always very easy to find. When I began to feel you moving and kicking inside me, I began to relax. I knew you were safe, growing and alive. My favorite memories were when your daddy could feel you moving, too. I didn't know then that those were the only times the three of us would be able to play together, but I am so grateful we have those memories. My belly, your daddy's hands and your perfect feet. The three of us together is all I ever wanted, and, for a while, everything was perfect.

When I was sick in the hospital during those early months just trying to keep water down, you were right there with me. While I grew weaker, you kept on growing stronger each and every day. We were in it together. Always, every day, it was the two of us. I knew if we could get through those painful few months together, we could do anything together.

I was openly hoping you would be a boy throughout the pregnancy. When I learned you were a girl, I was excited for your daddy because he wanted a girl, but nervous for myself. Will she hate me? Will she be a bad teenager? All of these thoughts melted away the second I saw you. You were instantly my best friend. I knew who you were, and I knew

that you knew who I was. You were perfect and sweet and good. I could feel your personality and your soul filling the room. I felt silly about ever thinking I wanted a boy more because I felt so close to you. Nothing could ever damage the bond we share. Not an argument, not the teenage years, not even death.

So many thoughts were going through my head when I took the pills to induce labor. Will you live? Will you be scared? Will you look like a baby? Will I be allowed to hold you? Will I be afraid to hold you? Will this all be too much for me to handle?

The labor was painful and lasted about five hours. I knew you were coming, and the mood of the room became somber. I remember not wanting you to come so quickly. This was the last thing we would do as a team, and the last intimate moments where only I could feel you, where only I knew you. After a couple of pushes you came out and the nurse took you to the side to weigh you and wrap you. That moment was the best moment of my life. I was so proud that I just gave birth to you. I was so proud of you for being so brave. All I wanted to do was to see you and hold you. As they brought you over to me, I could see you looked just like your daddy looks when he's sleeping. They put you in my arms and told me you still had a heartbeat. The feeling I felt at that moment is indescribable. It is a feeling I still feel today, and I will probably feel for the rest of my life. "This is my baby; I made this beautiful creature with the love of my life. She comes from love. She is love. She is everything. She is perfect. This is my baby. Look at this pure angel. Look at my baby."

Everyone around me was crying. And I knew in my heart how sad it was that I would never see you grow, hear you laugh or see who you become. But what I held in my arms was much more than that. It was much more than what you can see, smell or touch. You were born, and suddenly a bright light was shining from within you to the world, and permanently implanting into my soul. You were a gift to me from the universe. I wasn't unlucky because I missed sharing an entire life with you, I was LUCKY I held you in my belly for five months and held you in my arms for three days. I was BLESSED to be your mommy, and I will always be your mommy, wherever you are and wherever I am. You are more than a baby to me; you were more than a heartbeat. God decided to let me be your mommy even though He knew you would be taken away so soon. He let ME have YOU. What did I do to deserve such a wonderful miracle? What did I do to deserve such a perfect angel as my daughter? A little girl with ten fingers and ten toes, a little girl with beautiful eyelashes and nose. A little girl who never made any mistakes, never hurt anybody, never got hurt. You were a perfect soul given to me as a gift to treasure and someone to learn more from than I ever learned in life.



I have learned more from your short life than I have from anything else in my 29 years on this earth. I felt so much pain losing you, but the pain never compared to the love I felt. I have never known that this type of love existed. Sure, I knew people loved their children, and I knew I would love you. But I never imagined it would feel like this. You have shown me a whole new level to love. If you can even call it love. The way I feel for you needs its own word. It is its own feeling. One day, when I become Mommy to another little baby, I will be a better mommy than I could have ever been before I had you. You have taught me what it is like to have a beautiful life in my arms and to lose that life right before my eyes. Because of you, Tela, I will cherish every moment I have with your future brothers and sisters. I will not take anything for granted. I will love with a passion that could not have existed without you.

As soon as I found out you could hear me inside my belly, everything changed. Your daddy and I had to find a better way to communicate with each other. There was no way I was going to yell or curse around you. I didn't want you to be afraid; I didn't want you to know that side of the world. Because of you, Tela, we didn't have one fight or even a disagreement for months. We learned how to communicate better than ever, and fell even more in love and closer than ever before. You changed our marriage. Because of your life, I will always be a better wife. Because of your life, your daddy and I will be together forever.

Saying goodbye to you was the hardest thing I have ever done. Your daddy spent some alone time with you. I spent some alone time with you. Then we spent those final moments together as a family. During that alone time I had with you, I held you and cried and whispered things to you that will never be repeated, things just for us, things just for that moment. I soaked in every inch of you until I had everything memorized. I smelled you over and over again until I thought I would never forget. We took many pictures of you and tried to make as many memories as we could. Even with doing all of these things, it was still excruciating to leave you at the hospital and go home. I couldn't have done it without your daddy. Your daddy is so brave just like you. Even though his heart was breaking, he was still strong for me so that I had someone to lean on. As the days go on, I feel you more in my heart. When you were laid to rest, part of me died with you. But I also know you are still part of me, and with my life, a part of yours lives on. Part of your soul is in mine, and I promise I will live the kind of life that will honor who you were. You will look at me from heaven and proudly say to your friends, "That's my Mommy," and I will look at your photos, remember your sweet face, pure soul, and intoxicating smell, and proudly say, "That's my baby."

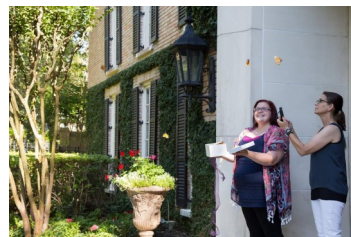


Go to sleep, my little baby.
 Go to sleep, my little baby.
 Your mama is here and your papa is here
 So go to sleep, my little baby.

♥ Roseanne Zimet,
 Mommy to Tela
 M.E.N.D.—Houston

M.E.N.D.—Houston Mother's Day Tea

On May 7, we celebrated our M.E.N.D. mommies by holding a special Mother's Day Tea. More than 40 moms, grandmothers, aunts and friends attended, remembering 52 babies. We celebrated each mommy to our babies in heaven through displaying our babies' pictures, doing a craft in memory of our babies, and having a gorgeous butterfly release. May 7 was also International Bereaved Mother's Day. A day set aside for moms like us. Because, indeed, we are mothers. This Mother's Day Tea was to honor all of our mommies, to give us a special place to be acknowledged, and a place for our babies to be remembered for Mother's Day. Because many of our M.E.N.D. moms are not seen or heard on Mother's Day, this event was a place for them to be seen as the beautiful, loving mothers that they truly are.



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***

After serving our community for 5 years, M.E.N.D.—Wichita Falls held its last support group meeting in May. Our chapter has been blessed to serve local families, and we are thankful to those who supported our group with their time and financial gifts. The decision to close our chapter was made after very thoughtful prayer and consideration. Our hearts and prayers go out to all the families we have served.

If you are a member of the Wichita Falls chapter, you will continue to receive the bimonthly newsletter, and we invite you to join the Dallas chapter Facebook group for support. Information about online support group meetings will continue to be posted on the Wichita Falls Facebook page for you to join these support group meetings.

Sarah Fukasawa

Bryan/College Station

M.E.N.D.—Bryan/College Station has been so busy this year! God has been opening doors for educational opportunities, using media and social media to share what we do, and we now have a more centralized meeting location every month provided at no cost to us! I want to say THANK YOU to a few places and people:

Hawthorn Suites of College Station:

Thank you for allowing us to meet in your conference room monthly.

KBTX and Rusty Surette:

Thank you for supporting M.E.N.D. with air time and repeatedly posting our information on social media.

Painting with a Twist:

Thank you for allowing us to have a Painting with a Purpose evening!
We are so thankful for your donation through this profit sharing night.

Kohl's of North Tomball:

Thank you for helping us assemble more than 900 flowers for us to place at all the baby graves in Bryan and College Station in honor of Mother's Day.

JaeCee Crawford:

Thank you for designing the Mother's Day card we attached to the flowers.

I look forward to seeing everyone in October at our Annual Balloon Release. Be sure to join our Facebook group for more updates!

Jennie Drude

Tulsa

M.E.N.D.—Tulsa continues to minister to grieving families in the Tulsa and surrounding areas. We recently did a project called "M.E.N.D.ing Mommies" and made pillows in loving memory of our precious babies in heaven. It was a special time of healing and remembrance.

Lisa Daily

Texarkana

M.E.N.D.—Texarkana continues to support families in our area as they grieve the loss of their babies.

Chelsea Stroud

Houston

M.E.N.D.—Houston is in full swing planning the 12th Annual Walk to Remember. Save the date October 14, at 1:00 pm. More information and registration will become available as the date gets closer. If you or your company would like to sponsor the Walk with a monetary donation or a donation for the Raffle, email stormym@mend.org.

Stormy Mitchell

Chicagoland

M.E.N.D.—Chicagoland continues to sadly welcome new families to our support group. We are so thankful this spring to have had the generous support of our friend, Renata, who donated teddy bears for our care bags, and Jason Eden with Thrivent Financial who sponsored our fundraising night Painting with a Purpose. We are grateful for all the help to allow us to continue ministering to hurting families in the Chicago area.

Sara Hintz

SW Missouri

M.E.N.D.—SW Missouri is excited to have a local church holding a car show with proceeds benefiting M.E.N.D.! Hillside Baptist Church will be having a Car Show on Saturday, September 16, from 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM.

The church is located on historic Route 66, 8366 W. State Hwy 266, Springfield, Missouri. Registration is available online or the day of from 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM and is free, with donations being accepted for M.E.N.D. We will also have a booth set up at the car show to share with families about our ministry. For more information on the car show, visit www.hillsidebc.com.

Don't forget to save the dates for our Balloon Ceremony on October 14, at 10:00 AM, and our Christmas Candlelight Ceremony on December 11, at 7:00 PM. Watch our Facebook page for more information or contact me at kathryn@mend.org.

Kathryn Gold

NW Washington

M.E.N.D.—NW Washington had a fun time at our M.E.N.D. Rocks Luncheon in May. We painted beautiful rocks to place in our communities to help spread the word about M.E.N.D. It was a great time of fellowship and crafting.

We want to thank everyone who donated to our rummage sale. Also, thank you to Crossroads Neighborhood Church for allowing us to use their facility. And a thank you to Lions Club of Port Orchard for their generous donation.

We continually pray for all those who need M.E.N.D. and for those who will need to find us this year.

Stacy McGhee

**M.E.N.D.—Bryan/College Station**

Meets the 2nd Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.

Texas Avenue Baptist Church

3400 State Highway 6 S,

College Station, Texas 77845

Director: Jennie Drude

jennie@mend.org, (979) 220-7851

M.E.N.D.—Tulsa

Meets the 3rd Tuesday at 7:00 p.m.

Canyon Crossing

1651 E Old North Rd.

Sand Springs, Oklahoma 74063

Director: Lisa Daily

lisa@mend.org, (918) 694-4325 (HEAL)

M.E.N.D.—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.

Thankful for the Storms of Life

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

Today, I am thankful for storms. We’ve had a lot of severe weather recently where I live in Texas. Storms remind us that life has a purpose – especially the thunderstorms. The thunder and lightning combine to shake things up, provide water to drink, and provide a brilliant display of God’s handiwork.

I grew up in south Louisiana where our primary type of storm was hurricanes. My dad worked for the Federal Government and managed all of the federal leases in south Louisiana. Many were opened to provide shelter and emergency supplies to the area residents, so my mom and I camped out at his office while he worked. Our supply box contained a lot of flashlights and batteries, hurricane lamps and candlestick holders to combat the certainty of power outages. As a teenager, I was safe and dry, but it was difficult to admire the beauty or blessing when looking at the damage clearly visible after the storm blew through.

Life brings many residual storms into our lives - physical, emotional and spiritual ones. No matter what kind of storm comes my way, the thought of a candle and the warmth it brings is the calm that gets me through. It is in the storms that each of us finds our strength, our inner light - a light we can share with others when they are going through a storm.

Although I work in my role as a counselor with adults dealing with a variety of issues, I often take on the role of “witness” to my clients’ grief. Grief can come from the loss of expectations that weren’t met, the death of a child (e.g., grandchildren, siblings) or the birth of children that will never attain their full physical, mental or emotional potential. It is my job to focus on the uniqueness of each individual, even within the same family, but not ignore the process. Often times the message from the church and the world is translated “it was meant to be,” and the grieving are encouraged to let it (grief, sadness, anger, frustration, fear) go because “it’s been enough time to get past the experience.”

However, trained grief counselors help clients find their natural grieving style by listening to them and supporting what they are saying or thinking or feeling. The key to working with grieving clients is to embrace the fact that different grieving styles exist, and clients can find a “safe place” in my office where “it is okay not to be okay for a little while.” Meaning-making provides a way of helping clients determine what the loss means to them in their life and their life story. Helping clients explore and tell their story of loss is important, as is helping them create a new story of who they are today because of their grief. Sometimes people get stuck with their old story, looking at the past as if time stops. They’re living physically in the present and the world is moving on, but they’re stuck.

There are times of denial, moments and days when it just doesn’t seem real. And then worse, it does start to feel real! There are whole moments and days when the pain is almost unbearable. I can tell you that grief almost always lasts longer than the people around you expect it to - or prefer it to. Counseling helps create a narrative that builds on the former story by taking into account the current losses. There’s sadness attached to the loss, but it is also inspiring to help my clients. It helps illuminate their strengths and support systems they might be overlooking. We learn to live with their absence; we learn to live our lives without them, as impossible as that can often seem in the beginning.

Grief counseling is about discovering the resilience of the human spirit. People find strength that they didn’t know they had, and that is inspiring. We’re survivors, and we are resilient. We grieve until we don’t anymore, but we love forever!

Painting with a Purpose

Thank you to Painting with a Twist—Texarkana, for a special time of Painting with a Purpose to raise funds for M.E.N.D.—Texarkana. This event raised \$190. Thank you to all who participated!



Thank You for Your Support!

M.E.N.D.—Houston mama hosted a Kona-Ice SnoCone truck to raise money for M.E.N.D. in memory of her sweet baby boy, Arie! They raised almost \$400 for

M.E.N.D. through sales from Kona-Ice and the generous donations of neighbors. What a blessing and a great way to raise awareness for M.E.N.D. and pregnancy and infant loss.

Thank you so much to each person who gave and for everyone who bought a SnoCone!



My Almost Life: The Dreams That Never Were

I have had to give up many things on my journey to motherhood. I had to grieve what should have been, what could have been, and what never was. One of the biggest things I had to grieve, in addition to the loss of my babies, is that my family will never look the way I dreamed it would.

I come from a family of five children. When I was a young child, I dreamed I would have 18 children, and my husband and I would make a nice even 20. And I wanted to name them all Rainbow. Now, as silly as that is, it shows how deep inside me I always wanted a large family. As I grew older, I imagined myself and my future husband having five kids like my parents, or six kids. I thought it would be fun to have one more than what I grew up with because if five is good, six is even better. As I grew into an adult, I would see smaller families, maybe with one or two children, and think, "Oh how sad. That must be lonely for those kids." I would see bigger families and think of how wonderful and blessed they were.

After I married the love of my life, I knew one day we would start a family, never even beginning to imagine the pain that might follow. I could almost hear the cacophony of laughter of our future children, all five or six of them. I could almost see our kids in my mind's eye, and I would imagine Christmases with seven or eight stockings, family vacations in our big van driving across country, and two or three kids sharing one room with bunk beds in each room. I could feel the love and the joy even before God placed any children in our home.

My husband was an only child until he was 10, and then had a half-brother he lived with until he was 16. For him, he never worried about his family size, and he never felt like he missed that much, but in my mind he really had. He agreed he would want to have more than one child, so that our children could have at least one sibling, but he would be happy with whatever God would give.

After five years of marriage, we decided we wanted to start a family. Before we had kids, I felt like Todd and I were not a family yet. In my head, I felt you had to have children to be a family. After a year of trying to have a baby, I was diagnosed with infertility, and we knew that

having children would be challenging. My dreams of that huge family started to evaporate as the years went by. Since then, we've had to say goodbye to three babies, two in the first trimester and our son, Gideon, at 8 months pregnant. We now have two living children, and that is likely the only living children we will have.

It is a far cry from the six children of my dreams. If I were to judge my family the way I did other families, I would look at us and say, "Oh how sad. That must be lonely for those kids." And honestly, that is precisely what I would do. I looked at my family as less than others because I put more value on larger families. I would devalue my own family because, in my heart, we were less than big families.

It has been a knife in my heart to see my two children at home, when really there should be three boys and two other children. I should have five kids if all of them had survived. While my family will never be complete because we are missing children from our family, my little family still has value. I am the mom of five, even if I only get to raise two children. I have to let go of what I dreamed my life would be. I have to let go of the desire of my childhood and realize God has us here right now for a purpose. Proverbs 19:21 says "Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails."

I have found value in my little family. We matter. We are important. God sees us equal to families with 10 children. One is not greater than the other. I spent years looking down on my life because it wasn't how I planned. But not anymore.

When Todd and I were a couple, I didn't see us as a family. But we were! And God used us in that time. We had nine beautiful years of marriage before we brought home our first living child. And now, God has used us as a small family in ways He couldn't use a larger family. Just like He uses larger families in a way He doesn't use smaller families. Single people are valued and loved by Him, too. Single parents with children are seen by God and used in many ways, too! Those of you parents with just babies in heaven, your family matters and has a value greater than gold. One of them is not better than the other. We are all loved by the Creator. We are all in this time and place for a reason, and God will walk alongside us and use our lives for good and for His glory. We simply need to believe that He will! While I have given up my dreams of driving a big van and having numerous children in my home, I can continue to dream big and great dreams!

I see the value in my family, and I see the value in your family. No matter what kind of family you have, you are truly blessed.

♥ Stormy Mitchell

Mommy to Avery, Gideon and Joy
M.E.N.D.—Houston Chapter Director



Tree of Life

Looking back before the loss of our baby, I feel like I lived in a world of fairy tales and happy endings. I knew life was not always wonderful, but, for the most part, I lived in my own little world of happiness. My husband and I enjoyed quite a few years of just the two of us. I was able to finish my Master's Degree. We both had good jobs, and spent most weekends camping, fishing, off-roading, attending car shows, or just sleeping late, whatever we felt like doing. We lived in a small two-bedroom house, enjoying life and each other.

Then we made the decision to try to have children. In my fairy tale world, it should have been easy to become pregnant, but it took us more than a year of trying and even ovulation charting. Still, it was just a small hurdle, and we finally became pregnant. For 12 weeks. We waited until 12 weeks to tell everyone, and a few days later, we were telling people of our loss. My world of happy endings abruptly came to an end.

My loss shook my entire world, my happy little world, full of beautiful trees, strong and sturdy. My pregnancy was the new tree in my world. The loss, though, was the storm and tornado blasting through, attempting to destroy the tree, managing to break off a few branches, twist some branches around and testing the durability of other branches.

My baby represented the trunk of the tree. Such a strong part of the tree, and even though she is no longer with us, the tree continues to grow, because she is always part of me. The work God started of her growing within me never died,



even though her body was gone. God still uses her life within me, to share her life with others, and provide comfort for those enduring losses within my community and in my work as the

M.E.N.D. Newsletter Editor. Her life continues to thrive, and my tree continues to grow bigger and stronger as I continue to do His work.

While many branches were broken and lost, the base of the tree and some of the branches remained, withstanding the storm. After a tornado, we see many trees completely ripped from the ground, but others continue to stand. Why did this part hold fast during the storm? The roots. Roots run deep within me. Loyalty. Perseverance. Love. Endurance. Strength. Knowledge. Faith. While the storm raged, the tree itself did not move. It stood by the water, continuing to drink from the same life-giving water so I never thirst again. It held strong through it all, and once the winds and storms ceased to rage, the tree continued to stand and grow stronger because the roots were deep. Now there were and still are periods in my life where my roots feel like they are struggling to reach that water, or they look to another source for water. But the roots never died. Some roots such as Faith had to draw more water to help the tree remain strong, until the other roots of Trust, Worship and Hope returned to the Source of water that has always sustained them.

The branches of the tree, though... those suffered the most. Some branches were hardly touched by the storm. They endured the high winds and came through with nary a scratch. Those were the family and friends who stayed close, continued to be part of my life, and have grown even stronger after the storm. There were even some new branches, one being M.E.N.D. and all my M.E.N.D. family that grew after the storm, and have continued to grow stronger as I continue in this ministry.

Some branches didn't survive the storm very well. Some branches completely broke off, while others lost pieces off them. I had to let go of some friends who were not as supportive as I needed (or just said or did something painful). There were some branches broken off larger branches, which were parts of relationships with family and friends destroyed. The relationships were too important to tear off the entire branch, but we now know our loss is just an area we cannot discuss with these people, because it always leads to disappointments. Sometimes it is better to avoid the hurt than have to suffer through it.

There were smaller branches lost during the storm I never expected. I didn't think about baby showers, until I walked into my first one since my loss... and immediately turned around and walked away before the tears already brimming started to pour down my cheeks. I had a close friend expecting a baby and wanted to get her something, so I simply bought a gift card at a Walmart register and slipped it to her, totally avoiding the baby shower. Mother's Day/Father's Day at church... just can't do it. In fact, Mother's Day is a holiday I sometimes wish I could skip since I feel whatever we do just isn't right. So this past Mother's Day I did nothing, and still felt depressed the majority of the day. Little branches, like just being able to walk past the baby area in a store... who would have thought those areas could instantly spring tears. And of course thinking about all the firsts... smiles, teeth, steps, talking, school, date, graduation, grandchild... and the list goes on, with an entire bare spot in the tree for all those missed.

There are days where the winds blow and the storms rage, and sometimes I do lose another branch or two, which we tend to call "sucker punches" in our chapter support group, but this tree in my world continues to stand, continues to grow and continues to be strong, and the roots continue to run deep.

"Though all hell assail me, I shall not be moved
Jesus will not fail me, I shall not be moved

Though the tempest rages, I shall not be moved
On the rock of ages, I shall not be moved

Just like a tree, planted by the waters
I shall not be moved."

~hymn, "I Shall Not Be Moved"

♥ Jennifer Harrison,
Mommy to Serenity

M.E.N.D.—Newsletter Editor

Dólar Residual

Descubrí que mientras lamentábamos, la mayoría de la gente suponía que habíamos embalado adelante no mucho después de que nuestro hijo, Jonathan, nació muerto. Pensaban que nuestro dolor estaba en nuestro pasado, y que no pensábamos en nuestra tristeza sólo porque pasaron meses y habíamos logrado recoger algunas de las piezas de nuestro quebrantamiento y habíamos comenzado a vivir un poco otra vez. Y honestamente, ingenuamente asumí hasta cierto punto lo mismo. Pensé que después de lograr pasar la mayoría de los "primeros" estaría mucho mejor emocionalmente. Llegar más adelante de mi fecha dicha del nacimiento pronosticado, aguantar los días de festivos y cojeando a través de su primer cumpleaños si parcho mucho del dolor, pero no esperaba los disparadores que seguían años después.

Tendemos a pensar en un período de luto como una longitud ordenado del tiempo. Principio a fin. Empiezo a término. Pero comprendan que no es ningún fin específico. Hay episodios cuando se derraman emociones inesperadas que todavía faltan abordarse y no se pueden tratar hasta el momento adecuado. Por ejemplo, 14 meses después de la muerte de Jonathan, nuestro hijo vivo inicio su educación preescolar tres días a la semana. Mientras que la mayoría de las madres del hogar están listas por un descanso - con ciertas horas para sí mismo - yo estaba devastada. No sólo estaba triste que mi primogénito crecía, estaba triste porque yo no debería de haber sido sola durante esas horas. Debería tener un bebe de un 1 año de edad en casa conmigo. Esas emociones feas, crudas me golpearon otra vez después de unos años cuando habría sido tiempo para que Jonathan caminara por esas mismas puertas preescolares, luego al año siguiente cuando debería haber sido vestido en su pequeño uniforme del kínder asistiendo a la misma escuela que su hermano mayor. Y una vez más cuando sabía que probablemente habría comenzado a jugar los deportes organizados. Luego hubo la escuela primaria, la escuela secundaria, su celebración de 16 años cumplidos, el baile de gala estudiantil, y con horror, su graduación! Uno de los episodios más inesperados del dolor sobrante que me golpeo fue cuando nuestro hijo vivo se casó y su hermano no pudo ser su padrino de boda. Y otra vez, cuando ha habido un puñado de fallecimientos en mi familia y soy reunida con ese dolor desgarrador, muy familiar y odiado.

Estoy ahora 22 años en mi camino de aflicción. Así como hay personas bien intencionadas que pensaban que ya no lamentábamos la pérdida de nuestro bebe de hace muchos años, estoy segura que algunos se sorprenden al saber que hay días, o temporadas, cuando me siento super triste devuelta. Mi esposo y yo tenemos una gran vida contenta, con una maravillosa grande familia extendida con quien estamos muy cerca, pero en el fondo, sigue siendo un dolor. Nuestro hijo vivo y nuera viven en otro Estado, dándonos un gran lugar para visitar, pero a veces en días festivos, su ausencia, cuando es solo Byron y yo asistiendo a eventos familiares sin niños, magnifica las pérdidas de nuestro Jonathan y él bebe que perdimos a malparto. Devuelta, nos recordamos de quien falta y pensamos de cómo sería nuestra vida si los dos hubieran vivido y sido parte de nuestra familia.

Afortunadamente, por el Señor, la gran mayoría de mis días después de tantos años son llenos de felicidad, amor, y alegría y me siento muy satisfecha y contenta. Pero sería menos que honesta si dijera que soy 100% más allá de la tristeza de haber perdido a mi bebe hace 22 años. Abecés pienso como mi camino de aflicción sería si no había fundada M.E.N.D. un año después del nacimiento fatal de Jonathan. Por razón de M.E.N.D. , tengo numerosos amigos iguales como yo, que también entienden el dolor de perder a un bebé y saben que el dolor nunca termina. Como yo, lamentaron cuando sus bebés deberían haber comenzado la escuela o cumplieron su dulce 16 años, y muchos de ellos han pasado por un año académico cuando su "bebé" según se hubiera graduado e ido a la Universidad. Y algunos de nosotros estamos en ese período cuando nos preguntamos si estaremos en el centro de planificación de una boda. Lo entienden, y estamos todos juntos en nuestro camino para toda la vida.

Entonces, ¿qué hago cuando llegué a estos puntos bajos restantes que vienen? Me permito sentir la tristeza por un período de tiempo. Lo siento, lo expreso, lo absorbo por un poco y después sigo adelante. Me concentro en las bendiciones que Dios me ha dado, le doy las gracias por M.E.N.D. y cómo volvió mi tristeza indecible a alegría y bondad y recuerdo que un día serán enjugados mis lágrimas y gozo eterno, sin tristeza, está a la vuelta de la esquina.

Subsequent Births



Andrew and Tiffany Marshall
of Bixby, Oklahoma,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Anderson James,
born May 14, 2017,
measuring 7 lbs., 9 oz.,
and 21 inches long.
The family lovingly remembers
Jordan Marshall,
miscarried March 3, 2014,
Everleigh Grace, and
Annabelle Rose,
stillborn April 22, 2016,
Momo twins

Brad and Catey Nelson,
of Rogersville, Missouri,
along with siblings
Ty and Natalie,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Daenerys Hope,
born April 8, 2017,
measuring 7 lbs., 9 oz.,
and 21.5 inches long.
The family lovingly remembers
Nelly Nelson
miscarried June 4, 2016

Aaron and Kristian Doucette
of Battlefield, Missouri,
along with big sister Kinley ,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Alexyn,
born May 5, 2017,
measuring 7 lbs., 12 oz.,
and 21.25 inches long.
The family lovingly remembers
Rylan Doucette,
November 27, 2012,
ectopic pregnancy

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

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M.E.N.D. Fundraisers As a non-profit organization, M.E.N.D. is funded solely by private donations and fundraisers. Any assistance you can give us by participating in any or all of these fundraisers is greatly appreciated.

- **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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