

# Healthy Baby to Empty Arms

Volume 23, Issue 2

March/April 2018

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A simple child  
That lightly draws its breath  
And feels his life in every limb  
What should it know of death?  
-William Wordsworth



## Our disappointments may be God's appointments.

-President/Founder Rebekah Mitchell at 2018 M.E.N.D. Leadership Conference

M.E.N.D. leaders gathered at our headquarters in Dallas, Texas for our annual Leadership Conference. We had a wonderful time being encouraged of our mission for M.E.N.D., learning about technology updates, and our new online store, mind mapping for writing articles, and other updates on the organization. We closed with a time of worship at the Garden of Hope and team building before we all returned home to our families. It was a wonderful time to refresh our passion for M.E.N.D.



## A Note to our Readers

This issue covers the difficult topic of families who have the joy of welcoming a child to our world before death steps in, stealing the joy.

As you begin to open the newsletter, please be aware there are pictures of babies, before viruses, SIDS, and all the other knowns and unknowns that created a heartache we all have unfortunately faced, being a parent to a baby in heaven.

Many of us understand the difficulty of seeing babies, even pictures, while we are still fresh in our grief. Please give yourself grace, and even time to step away as you read through this issue and hear the stories of Healthy Babies to Empty Arms.

**May/June Topic**

Mother's Day/Father's Day  
 Deadline: March 30, 2018

**July/August Topic**

Surviving Twins  
 Deadline: May 31, 2018

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](mailto:jennifer@mend.org). All letters submitted to the editor are subject to be published in future issues, both in the print version and online, unless a letter's author expressly requests that it not be published.

**Birthdays 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](http://www.mend.org).

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



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

# Healthy Baby to Empty Arms

I heard a story about a horrible accident that happened in a dear woman's home while she was babysitting for a mom who had recently gone back to work after delivering her first child. The baby, who was a few months old, was put down for a nap in a playpen, underneath a window. Somehow, the baby managed to pull on the string attached to the miniblinds and was horrifically strangled to death.

A friend of mine knows a physician who was rocking her own baby to sleep, when suddenly the baby stopped breathing. The mom/doctor quickly performed CPR, to no avail.

My sister's college friend, also a physician, had a daughter with osteogenesis imperfecta. The sweet baby girl lived for a few months before she died.

These stories...these real-life, tragic events, all happened before I became a "loss mom" myself. As a young woman hearing these unthinkable incidents, I naively decided these types of things happen to "others," never to me. Although my story is different in that my son was stillborn, the outcome for all of us moms is the same, we are all moms to a baby in heaven.

As the President of M.E.N.D., which I founded more than 21 years ago, I've heard countless, terribly sad stories of how families lost their babies. At our monthly support groups, we sit in a circle and tell how and when our babies died. When a family attends who was able to take their baby home, but the baby died shortly thereafter from an illness, birth defect, or SIDS, there are always mixed emotions from all sides. Sadness and longing to have moments with their child from the moms who lost early in their pregnancy or like me, delivered a stillborn. The moms who went home with their babies sometimes feel bad they had time with their little ones, time to make memories. Maybe a bit comparable to survivor's guilt. The mom who lost early in pregnancy fights feeling silly for grieving the loss of a teeny tiny, when the mom next to her has the frantic call from a daycare, police officer, or hospital forever etched in her mind. Then there's us stillbirth moms – right in the middle.

If you experienced an earlier loss or stillbirth, as you read this heart-wrenching issue focused on babies who died weeks or months after they were born, don't compare your earlier loss with theirs. Yes, their story may be much different than yours, and yes, they may have had more time with their little ones and were able to hear a laugh and a cry, but they endured the unthinkable. And what we have all gone through is unthinkable, and as I mentioned before, the outcome is the same. We're all moms who have our own tragic story, and our experiences should never be compared as easier or worse than someone else's. We all share the common bond of loving and missing a child who is no longer with us. Therefore, we are to grieve together and encourage one another as we travel alongside each other down this long road of grief, all missing our babies.

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We're all moms who have  
our own tragic story, ...  
But we all share  
the common bond  
of loving and missing  
a child who is  
no longer with us.

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# Birthday Tributes

## Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Baby Boy!

Not a day goes by we don't miss you.  
Happy birthday, baby!  
Too beautiful for earth!

*Malakai Hospedales*  
*Miscarried March 16, 2017*  
*Parents: Kai Hospedales and Alexis Deleon*  
*Sibling: Nyjah*



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

Emilia Madeleine Rose Clough, there are no words that can begin to express our love for you and the amount of joy you have brought into our lives! I thank God each and every day for the gift that is you. Even though your time on earth was short, you have brightened our world with the sweet reminders of your beautiful existence. Our hearts broke saying "Hello" and "Goodbye" to you all in one day, but we would relive this pain a thousand times over just to have you as our daughter. We would have given you the world, but you got heaven instead. One day we will be reunited, and I will never let you go!

*Emilia Madeleine Rose Clough*  
*March 15, 2017*  
*Infarct in the umbilical cord*  
*Parents: Daniel and Charmel Clough*  
*Sister: Adelaide*



## Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> Birthday, Princess Aurora!

Our beautiful princess Aurora, you would have been 2. It's hard to imagine what your sweet little self would have been doing. But I know it can't compare to the wonderful things you are doing in heaven. We continue to share acts of kindness in your memory. Almost every day someone tells me how Aurora's Joy Facebook page is the highlight of their day. You are still making a difference in this world, little one. As long as my heart is beating, I will find ways to spread your heavenly joy with others. You are forever missed, and forever loved. Until we meet again, princess...

Love,  
Mommy and Daddy

*Aurora Rose Nix*  
*April 25, 2016*  
*Trisomy 18*  
*Parents: Shawn and Ashley Nix*  
*Sister: Aria*



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

No amount of words can express the sorrow associated with your passing on this end. However, you're much alive in Mommy's spirit every day. Know Mommy and Daddy love you very much. While you gained a pair of wings last April, we gained an angel, one who will be waiting on us when we have fulfilled our purpose on this earth as you have. Mommy is immensely proud of you for such an accomplishment. I didn't understand back then, but I understand that you were part of God's plan. I'm blessed and honored to be your mother. Out of the millions of women on earth, the Lord chose me. Love you!

*Grayson Amir Walker*  
*April 7, 2016*  
*Unknown cause*  
*Parents: Gary Walker and Dezarae Johnson*



## Happy 6<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Gabriel!

Our sweetest son, I can't believe today you are celebrating your 6<sup>th</sup> heavenly birthday! We miss you so much and continue to teach your little sister about you. We see you in her eyes and smile. We love you beyond words and wish more than anything you could be here with us. Instead, we will blow you kisses and remember the sweet 38 weeks we spent together. Happy birthday, little love. xoxoxoxo

Mommy, Daddy and Athena

*Gabriel David Gimlin*  
*Stillborn March 29, 2012*  
*Parents: Gary and Andrea Gimlin*  
*Little sisters: Athena and Ryleigh due in May*



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

Our little Angel Rosi, we are excited to celebrate your 4<sup>th</sup> birthday. We wish you were here with us. We all want you to know you are loved, missed and never forgotten. We are looking forward to meeting you in heaven. May you enjoy your time with your heavenly Father until then. Happy 4<sup>th</sup> birthday, little Angel.

*Rosilyn Angel Bob*  
*April 20-21, 2014*  
*Two Vessel Cord*  
*Parents: Manidhar and Willuna Bob*  
*Siblings: Romilyn, Raelyn and Rhealyn*



**Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Mason!**

Happy birthday to my beautiful little boy. There isn't a day goes by you are not in our thoughts. You are such a beautiful blessing and are loved by so many. We miss you and wish you could be with us celebrating your birthday. Sending our kisses with butterflies to you in heaven, happy birthday, Mason!

Love,  
Mommy, Daddy, Abi and Riley

*Mason Scott Baier*  
*March 8, 2017*  
*Pulmonary Hypoplasia and Hydrops*  
*Parents: Michael and Mackenzie Baier*  
*Sisters: Abigail and RileyAnn*

**Happy 7<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Gabriel!****Happy 4<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Baby Darragh!**

Happy birthday, our dear sweet babies. There isn't a day goes by we don't think of you. You were both born at peace which brought peace to us. Gabriel, Mommy often thinks of the little man you would have become. You made a lasting impression on our lives. Until we meet again!  
xoxoxox

"I carried you every second of your life.  
And I will love you for every second of mine."  
-unknown

*Gabriel Owen Darragh*  
*April 1, 2011*  
*Trisomy 18*  
*Also remembering*  
*Baby Darragh*  
*Miscarried April 2014*  
*Parents: Ray and Crystal Darragh*  
*Brothers: Peyton and Drew*

**Happy 7<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Lily!**

Lily darling, Mommy has thought often of you this past year as I've cared for your little sister and watched your brothers interact with her. I think you would have been such the little mother, helping me take care of her. I would have loved having you help me. Happy 7<sup>th</sup> birthday, dearest. We love you!

Love,  
Mom

*Lily Joy Moore*  
*March 2, 2011*  
*Early pregnancy loss*  
*Parents: Jeremy and Kathleen Moore*  
*Siblings: Isaac, Judah and Mercy*

**Happy 11<sup>th</sup> Birthday, AJ!**

We never imagined our hearts would still be beating 11 years after we said "Goodbye" to you. We all miss you every day and wish you were here to share all the special moments in life. We carry you in our hearts and share your life with anyone who will listen. We will hold you in heaven. Our love for you is endless! We love you more!  
Daddy, Mommy, Eli and Alex

*Adrian Joseph "AJ" Zuckerman*  
*March 30, 2007*  
*True knot cord accident*  
*Parents: Al and Amber Zuckerman*  
*Brothers: Eli and Alex*

**Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Israel!**

Always in our hearts, you are missed!

*Israel Angel Galindo*  
*April 23, 2017*  
*Heart defect*  
*Parents: Rick and Milca Galindo*  
*Siblings: Osaias, Alicia, Serenity and Milcalia*

**Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Fred and George!**

Oh my sweet baby boys, I can't believe it has been a year since we last heard your sweet heartbeats! The two of you were in sync from the start...together forever, even in the end. While it hurts to have you so far away, we find comfort in knowing you have each other in heaven. The stars shine brighter every night since you left, and someday we'll dance among the heavens with you. Happy birthday, my sweet, sweet boys!

*Fred and George Cobler*  
*Miscarried March 3, 2017*  
*Also remembering*  
*Keiran David Cobler*  
*October 25—November 1, 2013*  
*NEC*  
*Parents: Brian and Kristina Cobler*

**Happy 4<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Scarlet!**

Happy 4<sup>th</sup> birthday, sweetheart! Mommy and Daddy are thinking about our angel as you grow into such a big girl in heaven. We can't wait to see you again. Feel our love for you as we celebrate you, baby girl. We love you, love you, love you!

*Scarlet Quinn Stark*  
*Stillborn April 3, 2014*  
*Parents: Michael and Laura Stark*



### Happy 6<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Everett!

Our sweet boy, we wish you the happiest of heavenly birthdays! You are 6 years old and would be in kindergarten this year. Such a big boy!

We miss you now more than ever. There is a void in our family and in our home where you should be—your smile, your laughter, your mischief, your everything... Someday we'll all be reunited, and we'll be able to celebrate birthdays together forever. We love you so very much, our Everett, firstborn son, big brother.

All our love always,  
Mommy, Daddy, Christian and Clara

*Everett Christopher Delmar*  
*Stillborn April 18, 2012, at 28 weeks*  
*Unknown cause*

*Also remembering*  
*Baby Delmar*

*Miscarried December 20, 2014, at 9 weeks*  
*Unknown cause*

*Parents: Christopher and Miranda Delmar*  
*Little siblings: Christian Matthew and Clara Evelyn*



### Happy 6<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Paislee!

We can't believe you have been gone 6 years! It doesn't matter how many years pass, you will always be remembered, because you are the missing piece of our family. As we see your little sister's personality coming out, we always wonder what your personality would have been like. We wish you were here to play with her and help her learn the things you would have already learned. We will continue to move forward, knowing that every day is one day closer to seeing you again. Enjoy your birthday party in heaven and know you are forever in our hearts! We love you so much, precious girl!

*Paislee Ann Frette*  
*April 4-5, 2012*  
*Wolf-Hirschhorn Syndrome*  
*Parents: Brent and Courtney Frette*  
*Little sister: Colbie*



### Happy 8<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Andrew!

Andrew, in your life you touched so many. In your death many lives were changed. You bring meaning in my life constantly. Happy 8<sup>th</sup> birthday, baby!

*Andrew Michael Pittman*  
*March 23, 2010*  
*Cord accident*  
*Parents: Kindale and Melody Pittman*  
*Siblings: Kaylee and Avery*



### Happy 6<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Jacob! Happy 3<sup>rd</sup> Birthday, Zac!

Sweet boys, our words fail at expressing our love for you both. We are so grateful for the time we had to hold and love you both and for the legacies you allow us to live in your memory. Thank you for being our boys and for bringing us to the hardest, most rewarding days of our lives. You'll always be our Moh and our Sunshine.

Until heaven, we will love you and miss you.

With our entire hearts,  
Mommy, Daddy, Caleb and Lilah

*Jacob Martin Wilhite*  
*April 25, 2012*

*Extreme prematurity - cervical incompetency*  
*Also remembering*

*Isaac Odell Wilhite*  
*April 1, 2015*

*Extreme prematurity - cervical incompetency*  
*Parents: David and Kessi Wilhite*  
*Siblings: Caleb and Lilah Joyce*



### Happy 8<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Elliot!

Each year that passes brings us closer to being reunited with you. There's an empty place in our home that's only meant for you to fill. Oh Elliot, there are no words to express our deep longing to be with you, our third child...to be complete as a family. We believe that Jesus will restore these "years that the locusts have eaten" (Joel 2:25). We've had a glimpse of that redemption in the comfort we've been able to give others with the comfort we ourselves have received. You were and are an immeasurable gift to us. Until we meet again...

*Elliot James Gerriets*  
*March 18, 2010, 6 hours*  
*HLHS*  
*Parents: Chris and Faith Gerriets*  
*Siblings: Evelyn, Ethan and Ezra*



### Happy 9<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Owen!

Happy 9<sup>th</sup> birthday to our firstborn son, Owen! Not a day goes by we don't think about you. We miss you terribly and await that joyful day when we are reunited.

*Owen Patrick Webb*  
*Stillborn April 30, 2009*  
*Unknown cause*  
*Parents: Brian and Melissa Webb*  
*Siblings: Sophia (Owen's twin sister), Natalie, Zachary and Samuel*



### Happy 4<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Lily boo!

Happy 4<sup>th</sup> birthday to our little princess. We can't believe you are already 4. We dream about what you would be like with all your uniqueness and special things that make you - YOU, about what we would do together and all the adventures we would have.

We are celebrating you this day and honoring your life. We are so glad you came to be and so glad you are ours. We long for the day to see your face again and kiss your lips once more.

Happy, happy birthday, our little dancer. Our little Lily. Our baby girl.

We will keep your ember burning bright... We love you so much and miss you. xoxo

*Lillian Ember Stewart*

*November 23, 2013*

*Parents: Derek and Bethany Stewart*

*Little siblings: Arrow and Baby Stewart*



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

I want to wish you a happy 1<sup>st</sup> birthday, Jaxson Ramon! We love you and miss you! Please keep watching over us and sending us the signs that you are near.

*Jaxson Ramon Hernandez*

*March 27—May 10, 2017*

*Pertussis*

*Parents: Juan and Tiffany Hernandez*

*Siblings: Makaela, Sofie and Mila*



### Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Angel baby!

My sweet Angel, not a day goes by where your family doesn't think of you. We all wanted you. We all dreamt about what life would be with you, and we still wish you were here. Our hearts are forever with yours and although yours stopped, know that ours continue to beat for you. We love you in heaven as we would on earth, so on this day we will celebrate you, son, my Angel boy, turning 1. May you laugh, smile, dance and sing. May you jump up and down and run with the wind. May your 1<sup>st</sup> birthday in heaven be a delight! Happy birthday, baby boy! We love you!

Love,  
Mommy, Daddy, Eli and Liam

*Angel Garcia*

*March 14, 2017*

*Fetal demise*

*Parents: Giovanni and Lisa Garcia*

*Siblings: Elijah Dean and Liam James*



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

Our sweet baby girl! One year already since you got your little angel wings. I can't believe how fast time has passed. We miss you so much, and there's not a day goes by without us thinking just how different life would be with you here. Daddy and I would give absolutely anything to have had more time to see you grow. But we are happy knowing you are in heaven with all the other angel babies celebrating your birthday. Momma and Daddy can't wait to see you, hold you, kiss you and never let go. Always and forever, you will be in our hearts, baby. Happy birthday, our beautiful Brianna.

*Brianna Grace Renteria*

*Stillborn March 23, 2017, at 36 Weeks*

*Parents: Bruce and Griselda Renteria*

*Brothers: Michael and Marvin*



### Happy 3<sup>rd</sup> Birthday, Evelyn!

Happy 3<sup>rd</sup> heavenly birthday, sweet Evelyn! I cannot believe it has been three years since we said both "Hello" and "Good-bye" to you. You have spent every day in the immeasurable love of Jesus! We love you so much, and I think of you every day. You are a blessing to us, and we thank God for you.

*Evelyn Faith Luedtke*

*Miscarried April 17, 2015, during 2<sup>nd</sup> trimester*

*Parents: Eric and Becky Luedtke*

*Siblings: Simon and Norah*



### Happy 8<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Sophia!

Eight years is a long time to live without you, yet you are here with us every day. We are blessed to have you in heaven waiting for us. Our lives are forever changed because of you, and, even though it hurts, we see purpose and goodness every day because of your short life. We will always wonder who you would be today. Happy 8<sup>th</sup> birthday to our baby girl. We love you!

*Sophia Rose McGhee*

*Stillborn March 29, 2010, at 33 weeks*

*Unknown cause*

*Also remembering*

*Baby McGhee #1*

*Miscarried 2002*

*Baby McGhee #3*

*Miscarried 2009*

*Baby McGhee #4*

*Miscarried 2009*

*Parents: Matt and Stacy McGhee*

*Siblings: Micah and Scarlett*



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

Five years ago you came into our lives and changed us forever. We are so thankful to call you our son, and we love you so much. I hope this birthday is extra special with your Great-Grandpa Wilkins in heaven now. I can imagine him telling you stories as you sit on his knee. How very sweet heaven must be! Longing for the day when we are together again. We will see you soon, Levi-boy. We love you. Happy 5<sup>th</sup> birthday!

Life is short. Heaven is forever.

Daddy, Mommy, Evie and Val

*Levi Samuel Bowmer*

*April 19, 2013*

*Trisomy 13*

*Parents: Sam and Jenae Bowmer*

*Little Sisters: Evelin and Valerie*



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

Happy 12<sup>th</sup> heavenly birthday, Morgan! It is hard to believe it has been 12 years since we said goodbye to you. We thank God for the time you were here, and we thank Him for the gifts we have now because you came. You were here such a short time, but our lives are so different because you came. Your empty chair is still here. We look forward to our heavenly reunion.

Love you so much,

Daddy, Mommy and big brother Isaac

*Morgan Schear*

*Miscarried March 28, 2006*

*Parents: Nobel and Paula Schear*

*Big brother: Isaac*



### Happy 8<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Brooke!

Our Darling Brooke, wow, you would be turning 8. We wonder what you would look like. Would you have dark hair, like your older sister? Would you have light hair, like your younger sister? We wonder what kind of activities you would be into by now...sports, arts, music. You would probably be super busy like the rest of us, but not a day goes by that we don't think/talk about you. We are so grateful for how your life has impacted more people than we could have ever imagined. We miss you and look forward to the day we meet you in heaven. We love you!

Love,

Mamma, Daddy, Sarah and Savannah

*Brooke Sophia Daily*

*March 11, 2010*

*Vasa Previa*

*Parents: Jeremy and Lisa Daily*

*Sisters: Sarah and Savannah*



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

Seven years? Wow. Sometimes it seems like it was a lifetime ago I held you and saw your beautiful face, but there are other times that bring me right back to that moment in an instant. Your second little sister was born in August, and she looked so much like you right after she was born. Every time I look at her, I see you and wonder about you. We miss you so much, sweet boy. What fun it would be to see you with your sisters - but I guess we'll have to wait for heaven. We are so thankful for your life and the continual blessings your life brings to us. Happy birthday, Chase. We love you!

*Chase Austin Miller*

*April 21, 2011*

*Incompetent cervix*

*Also remembering*

*Baby Miller*

*Miscarried May 4, 2015*

*Parents: Greg and Stefanie Miller*

*Sisters: Cora and Hazel*



### Happy 3<sup>rd</sup> Birthday, Samantha!

Happy birthday to the one we loved and lost. You may be gone, but you will never be forgotten. The last three years have been a whirlwind without you, but we've managed to find our way through the darkness. Thank you for being our guardian angel and helping us navigate through the clouds. xoxo

*Samantha Abigail Palin*

*Stillborn April 9, 2015*

*Parents: Mark and Laura Palin*

*Siblings: Brianna, Kristina, Joshua, Hannah and Charlotte*



## Empty Arms

(in memory of my son, Zachary Adam)

By Stacy Parks

There is an emptiness within me  
And an emptiness within my arms.

I close my eyes and reach out  
and pull back in.

I can feel those quiet times again  
When I held you so close and caressed  
your tiny face.

I smell the air around me and you're there.  
The baby powder, your blanket, your brush, you're  
everywhere, but in my arms.

Published in

*SIDS and Infant Death Survival Guide,*

by Joani Nelson Horchler and Robin Rice, 2011, p. 47.



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# M.E.N.D. OUTREACH

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## FOR FAMILIES

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Jennie and Jason Drude have been providing handmade boxes to St. Luke's The Woodlands, Texas, for almost 10 years now. Families who have lost a baby whether in L&D or the outpatient unit receive these boxes to hold their most precious earthly possessions: lock of hair, feeding tube, clean diaper from package, measuring tape, hospital band, etc.




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## SHOP AND SUPPORT

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If you grocery shop at Tom Thumb, have someone in customer service link your reward card to M.E.N.D. (#6265). M.E.N.D. will receive a percentage of all your Tom Thumb purchases.




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## MUSIC TO COMFORT

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M.E.N.D. has a Spotify playlist of songs to provide comfort and hope for the grieving hearts of mommies and daddies. Follow our Spotify playlist, "Songs for a Grieving Heart." New songs will continually be added.




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## EDUCATING OTHERS

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Rebekah Mitchell, President and Founder of M.E.N.D., recently presented on the topic "Teenagers Who Experience the Loss of a Baby" to the Annual Texas Association Concerned with School-Age Parenthood in San Marcos, Texas.

# In Loving Memory

## Thank YOU for your support

### **Avery Jo Blackburn**

Stillborn December 25, 2016  
Mommy Megan Schwartz  
Given by Jenn Kraus

### **Keiran David Cobler**

October 25—November 1, 2013  
NEC

### **Fred and George Cobler**

Miscarried March 3, 2017  
Given by parents Brian and Kristina Cobler

### **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  
Given by  
Parents Jeremy and Lisa Daily  
and sisters Sarah and Savannah  
Grammy and Papaw Eck

### **Cherry Blossom Davis**

Miscarried July 24, 2013  
Given by parents Shawn and Kathi Davis

### **Nikson Drew Camargo**

Given by Andres Camargo

### **Avery Grace Chavez**

Given by Maureen Shannon

### **Riley and Parker Davis**

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

### **Marian Dickinson**

Given by Anonymous

### **Jana Ellis**

Given by Jacquie Ellis

### **Daisy Fike**

January 9, 2018  
Parents Ben and Laura Fike  
Given by Charleen and David Read

### **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

### **CJ Gold**

Miscarried August 12, 2008

### **Marina Gold**

Miscarried July 14, 2009  
Parents: Greg and Kathryn Gold  
Big sister: Emily  
Given by Bob and Bonnye Roberts

### **Ella Lynne Gonyea**

Stillborn August 24, 2015  
Preeclampsia, IUGR and no amniotic fluid  
Gifts given by  
Parents David and Sable Gonyea  
and little sister Laurel  
Joan and Thomas Drew

### **Dylan Gregory**

Given by mommy Shawn Muras

### **Lauren Paige Grimes**

Stillborn March 6, 1999

Unknown cause

### **Baby Angel Grimes**

Miscarried January 25, 2001  
Given by parents John and Paula Grimes and  
sister Rileigh (Angel's Twin)

### **Baby Hall**

September 11, 2017  
Given by parents Zach and Amber Hall

### **Ted Herzog**

April 12, 1952—January 11, 2017  
Given by wife Barb Herzog

### **Elizabeth Abigail Jackson**

Miscarried April 29, 2002

### **Isaac David Jackson**

Stillborn June 24, 2013  
Given by parents Jeromye and Angi Jackson  
and sister Emily

### **Jackson Glen and Tyler Ray Light**

February 23, 2009  
Placental abruption  
Given by parents Kirk and Diana Light and  
siblings Brayden and Lexi

### **Abby Elizabeth McDaniel**

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

### **Baby Girl**

Given by Sharmila McDonald

### **Jonathan Daniel Mitchell**

Stillborn June 24, 1995

Cord accident

### **Baby Mitchell**

Miscarried December 2001  
Parents: Byron and Rebekah Mitchell  
Given by grandmother Marnie Mitchell

### **Emma Grace Myrow**

Stillborn September 18, 2017

Cord accident

Parents: Keenan and Hayley Myrow

Given by grandmother Sharon Sebesta

### **Gavin Nichols**

Given by Erica Starks

### **Samuel James Nienhuis**

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

### **Kelton Lee Pelz**

December 15, 2016

Premature labor

Parents: Isaac and Stacey Pelz

Siblings: Coralee and Caleb

Given by grandparents Carl and Kim Pelz

### **Margot Lily Perry**

Stillborn June 10, 2013

Cord accident

Parents: Brandon and Marisa Perry

Siblings: Adeline, Bennett and Noelle

Given by Grandparents Norman and Mary Lorentz

### **In Honor of Jill Pickett**

Given by Sarah Friedman

### **Andrew Michael Pittman**

Stillborn March 23, 2010

Cord accident

### **3 Little Pittmans**

Given by parents Kindale and Melody Pittman  
and sisters Avery and Kaylee

### **Lovely Pyle**

Given by Grandmother Susan Pittman

M.E.N.D. gratefully acknowledges these gifts of love given in memory of a baby, relative, friend, or given by someone just wanting to help.

These donations help us to continue M.E.N.D.'s mission by providing this newsletter and other services to bereaved parents free of charge. For more information on how you can support M.E.N.D., please see page 26.

**Emberlynn Marie Sandusky**

February 16-23, 2016  
Placenta insufficiency  
Given anonymously

**Mindy and Maggie Smith**

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

**Alexis Raine Sonnenberg**

January 24—February 3, 2009  
Diaphragmatic hernia  
Daddy: Alex Sonnenberg  
Given by grandparents  
Mark and Ruth Sonnenberg

**Hope and Faith Urda**

February 26, 2014

**Roasalie Grace Urda**

October 31, 2014  
Given by Janelle Myer

**Eva Juliette Talavera**

Given by Susan Tipton

**Genesis Marie**

Miscarried July 3, 2015  
Gifts given by  
Mommy Madisen Tolbert  
Grandparents Cecil and Shirley Tolbert

**Owen Patrick Webb**

Stillborn April 30, 2009  
Unknown cause  
Given by parents Brian and Melissa Webb  
and siblings Sophia (Owen's twin), Natalie,  
Zachary and Samuel

**Arie Ronald Witt**

November 5, 2013

Unknown cause

**Baby Witt**

Miscarried June 2014  
Parents: Mike and Candice Witt  
Sister: Brinley  
Given by Sheila Causley

**Katherine Wittman**

Given by Jordan Keller

**Breckin Austin Wubs**

Parents: Austin and Kristin Wubs  
Given by Laura Durfee

**Gifts of Support**

Second Baptist Church, Springfield, MO  
Christ Church Assembly of God, Fort Worth, TX  
Janis Kidder  
Amber Riley  
Jesus Roque  
IBM Employee Services Center  
John Armstrong  
Meredith McNeil  
Melanie Allen  
Jacob Hagen  
Dr Nina Jones  
Ryan Edwards – The Vintage Pearl  
Tim Phares

## Living in a Broken World

“Providing Guidance Through Life’s Storms”

Dr. Susan A. Adams, LPC, NCC

Many times after we lose a baby, we are awakened to a grim reality - that babies die. After the loss of a child, many parents face future pregnancies with trepidation because they are more aware of everything else that could go wrong during and after pregnancy, one of those being infant death. About 3,500 babies die each year in the United States during sleep because of SIDS. SIDS, known as Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, is when a baby under 12 months dies in their sleep, with no warning or reason. SIDS can be a mystery, and there is no cure. It is not a disease. It is a complex prognosis, sometimes with no specific answers of the cause of death, only SIDS or SUIDS (Sudden Unexplained Infant Death Syndrome).

Any adults and/or babysitter should take care to protect the sleeping baby. One of the ways is for the child to sleep on a safe, separate surface in the parents' room, which can lower the chances of SIDS by 50 percent, according to an article from First Candle. The same article also reported from the American Academy of Pediatrics that from 1999 through 2015, infant death rates from accidental suffocation and strangulation in bed surged 184 percent. Babies who sleep in bed with adults have a greater chance of suffocation, strangulation or entrapment from the bedding, and a large percentage of babies who die of SIDS are found with bedding covering their head. No bedding should be in a bed while a baby is in it.

While there are some products that claim to lessen the risk of SIDS, there is no scientific research to prove anything is 100% safe. Sleep positioning devices are not recommended because children still have the chance to roll and become trapped. The best way to avoid any products that claim to lessen the risk of SIDS is to not use them. Here are some other tips to prevent SIDS:

- Place the baby on their back on a firm sleep surface such as a crib or bassinet with a tight-fitting sheet as soon as they fall asleep.
- Avoid use of soft bedding, including crib bumpers, blankets, pillows and soft toys. The crib should be bare and meet safety standards.
- Place the baby to sleep in the same room where you sleep, but not in the same bed for at least 1 year of age. Room sharing decreases the risk of SIDS as much as 50%.
- Avoid exposing your baby to smoke, alcohol and illicit drugs.
- Don't let your baby get too hot. Keep the room where your baby sleeps at a comfortable temperature.
- Giving your baby “tummy time” will help strengthen neck muscles and help prevent flat spots on the head.

Getting your baby or toddler to sleep through the night can be one of the most difficult experiences of parenthood, but it is still important to practice caution to prevent accidents, and will hopefully create a safe, comfortable environment you and your baby, and ultimately your family, will be able to rest peacefully.

For those who have experienced loss from SIDS or other causes, at times it seems like you don't know how you are going to continue on, but prayer, close personal friends and family can be the support to find a way through the heartbreak. Tears may not heal, but they can give meaning to the baby's life. While every story is different, the baby's death reminds us we are not alone. It provides value to human life and helps us realize the precious moments of life.

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# M.E.N.D. CHAPTER UPDATES

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## Houston

M.E.N.D.—Houston has a lot of exciting things happening so far this year with the upcoming openings of two satellite support group locations in the greater Houston area. This way we will be closer to many more people, and more families will be able to attend our support groups. Keep an eye on our website and Facebook for more information.

In February, M.E.N.D. President Rebekah, and BCS Chapter Director Jennie, and I attended a conference with leaders of many other pregnancy and infant loss organizations. It was a great time of learning and planning for the future on ways to help families and ways to train hospitals on how to care for families who have a baby die.

We are also starting a bear ministry to give hospitals bears for the moms who lose their baby. Please be praying for the funds for that!

And as always, we are praying for you and your families as you walk along this journey of grief.

*Stormy Mitchell*



## SW Missouri

Our leadership enjoyed attending the annual Leadership Conference in Dallas. We had fun, learned a lot and were encouraged by the other attendees. We are also excited to welcome Catey Nelson to our leadership team as a new assistant.

Our chapter is also looking forward to our 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Craft Fundraiser Day, to be held on Friday, April 21, from 6:00-9:00 PM and continuing on Saturday, April 22, from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM, at Hillside Baptist Church, at 8366 W State Highway 266, Springfield, Missouri. For more information, watch our Facebook page or contact me at [kathryn@mend.org](mailto:kathryn@mend.org).

*Kathryn Gold*



## NW Washington

Our leadership team had a great time traveling to Texas for our annual Leadership Conference. We were able to enjoy fellowship and learn from all the M.E.N.D. Leaders and Chapter Directors. We brought home valuable information to continue to help our families here in Washington.

*Stacy McGhee*



## Chicagoland

M.E.N.D.—Chicagoland is thankful for the time spent at our annual M.E.N.D. Leadership Conference. We appreciate the training and learning, and we came home better equipped to serve hurting families in the Chicagoland area.

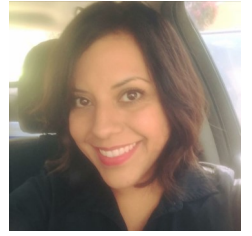
*Sara Hintz*



## Austin

M.E.N.D.—Austin is still in search of a location for our monthly support groups, and also exploring opportunities to raise funds for our chapter. If you know of a location to hold our support groups, or would like to help our chapter with a donation, please contact me at [julie@mend.org](mailto:julie@mend.org).

Our chapter has welcomed Christina Thomas as an assistant. Christina was able to attend the Leadership Conference to learn more about M.E.N.D. and other chapters.



*Julie Villa*

## Tulsa

M.E.N.D.—Tulsa had a great time at the M.E.N.D. Leadership Conference. It is always great to learn from and visit with other chapters. Thank you to the Dallas chapter for being such wonderful hosts.

I would like to thank Marcie Nienhuis and Angi Jackson for their willingness to serve M.E.N.D. alongside me these past several years. As we transition to this year, I'd like to welcome two new assistants, Kristina Cobler and Cat Markham. We are excited to have them on board.



*Lisa Daily*

## Bryan/College Station



M.E.N.D.—Bryan/College Station had a wonderful time in Dallas at our annual Leadership Conference! We returned with new ways to reach the hurting moms of Brazos County. We will be looking for more volunteers to help us with this goal. If you are interested in helping in any capacity please email [jennie@mend.org](mailto:jennie@mend.org).

I want to send a big thank you to JaeCee Crawford who has done all of our graphic design for the past two years for our chapter! She has done beautiful work, and we greatly appreciate her.

*Jennie Drude*

**Have you visited The M.E.N.D. Shop?**

**“Design of the Month”**

Each month The M.E.N.D. Shop will feature a unique product available for one month only.

The “Design of the Month” will be available for order at [shop.mend.org](http://shop.mend.org) for one month (i.e.: March 1<sup>st</sup>-31<sup>st</sup>).

All “Design of the Month” items will be processed and shipped by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the following month (i.e.: April 15<sup>th</sup>).



Shop Now @  
[shop.mend.org](http://shop.mend.org)

Great items are always available!



**Do you have a great idea for a “Design of the Month”?**  
M.E.N.D. would love your design submission!

- 1) Create a graphic or quote
- 2) Choose a product (shirt, blanket, cup, hat, etc.)
- 3) Submit your design

If you have an idea but need help with execution, don't worry! We're here to help!  
If your design is chosen as a “Design of the Month” you will be spotlighted and receive the item for free.

For more information and design parameters visit [www.mend.org/shop](http://www.mend.org/shop)

# SIDS

By Désirée Spencer Stamps

**Shock**  
*Unnerved*  
**Death**  
*Denial*  
**Extreme**  
*Numb*

**Impossible**  
*Needless*  
**Fault**  
*Anger*  
**Neglect**  
*Throb*

**Despair**  
*Empty*  
**Accept**  
*Tearful*  
**Hope**

**Search**  
*Yearn*  
**Nightmare**  
*Desire*  
**Remember**  
*Outrage*  
**Misery**  
*Endure*

Published in  
*SIDS and Infant Death*  
*Survival Guide,*  
 by Joani Nelson Horchler  
 and Robin Rice, 2011, p. 92.

# The Day SIDS Hit Our Home

By Heidi Smith  
 Mommy to Michael  
 M.E.N.D.—SW Missouri

August 18, 1994, our first child was born, a beautiful healthy baby boy. Michael Taylor Smith had dark brown hair, blue eyes, and a beautiful crooked little smile. My life was changed forever that day. I loved everything about being a mom: the way he smiled, the way his eyes lit up when I walked in the room, the way he cried when he only wanted me, and his laugh.

February 7, 1995, was a typical Tuesday morning. I dropped Michael by the babysitter's and off to work I went, not realizing when I kissed him goodbye that day, it really would be goodbye.

The first time you get a call from the babysitter, you expect a fever, fussy baby, something a mom could fix. Never did I expect to hear, "They think they found a heartbeat."

My heart was beating out of my chest as I ran up to the emergency room doors. Praying all the way he would be ok. "Please, Lord, don't take my baby." As the doors opened there stood my husband, pastor and best friend - each of them with tears running down their faces. At that moment I knew it - my baby was gone. I heard someone say, "His mother is here," and I was ushered back to a small room where his quiet lifeless body was laying. I held my baby boy for the last time. Broken, and with empty arms, we finally went home. Our lives AGAIN were changed forever by that precious baby boy.

The next few days were a blur of busyness - friends calling and stopping by,

family arriving  
 in town, and



funeral arrangements. The distractions were good as they kept me going. But then the funeral was over, family went back home, friends went back to their lives, and I was a mom with empty arms and a huge hole in my heart. My life would not go back to normal. It was changed forever.

June 5, 1996, a year and a half later, another beautiful blonde baby boy was born. Matthew Allen Smith had severe apnea and stopped breathing several times a day for the first year of his life. That was a stressful time, but worth every bit of it.

On October 9, 2000, our third son was born, Timothy James Smith, with dark hair, blue eyes and a beautiful smile. Timmy didn't have apnea so we relaxed more with him and got to enjoy being mom to a baby.

Jumping ahead to 2018, to a place I never saw myself in those dark quiet days after Michael's death, Matthew just graduated from college and got married to his high school sweetheart, and Timmy is a junior in high school. They are the light of my life and I absolutely love being a mom again!

We survived those rough years and somehow learned to laugh again. We opened our hearts and learned to love again. We live life again. Life does go on, and it's good. God is good even through the darkest times of our lives. Even though we can't see it in the midst of the darkness, the sun does shine again one day... ♥

# Healthy Baby to Empty Arms

By Melissa Hulings  
Mommy to Arlo  
M.E.N.D.—Dallas/Fort Worth



My pregnancy was going along fine until my amniotic fluid started to decrease, and my OB noticed baby boy was taking longer to do his practice breathing during an ultrasound. I was about 33 weeks along when my OB referred me to an at-risk pregnancy specialist to get a second opinion on things. At about 35 weeks, I began having two appointments each week, one with my regular OB and one with the at-risk specialist. My amniotic fluid was staying steady, but still on the low end, and baby boy was showing great growth.

I went for my check-up with the at-risk specialist when I was midway through week 38. We learned that my amniotic fluid had dropped to an extremely low level, and I was sent directly to the hospital.

## Healthy Baby

I was induced around noon that day and, five hours later, at 5:15 PM on Wednesday, October 25, 2017, we welcomed Arlo into our world. He was a little smaller than our older son, but was perfectly beautiful in every way.

Our stay in the hospital was relatively uneventful, except for Arlo spending time under the lights to treat the high bilirubin count he had. We were able to go home together on Friday evening.

## New Concerns

Saturday was spent getting our routine together as a family of four and visiting with my mother, sister and nephews. We began to notice that Arlo would clench his fists and purse his lips, as if he were mad at something. Occasionally, he would hold his breath while doing this and then cry an odd little hawk-like scream. We didn't think much of it at the time because they were so short in duration. We all thought it was just Arlo being Arlo.

Then Sunday morning our world came to a crashing halt. I was attempting to nurse Arlo when he quit breathing. Instead of doing his odd scream, he began to turn blue. My husband spent the next 20 minutes administering CPR until the paramedics arrived at our house, and we were sent by ambulance to the ER. The ER staff was able to revive Arlo,

but determined he needed to be life-flighted to Cook Children's in Ft. Worth. It was an incredibly difficult drive to that hospital without our baby in our presence.

When we made it to Cook Children's, Arlo was already hooked up to the ventilator, and we met the doctor who would oversee his care. The doctor ordered several tests to determine why Arlo quit breathing and any possible side effects there may be from going without oxygen for over 30 minutes. The first MRI showed damage to the back part of Arlo's brain where vision is located. We were optimistic that all we would have to live with were possible vision problems. We slipped into a routine while Arlo was in the NICU, and he continued to undergo multiple tests, including being hooked up to an EEG machine with leads all over his tiny head.

## Empty Arms

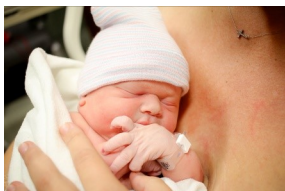
Then Wednesday, we were given another blow. Arlo's second MRI came back and this time the damage had spread to his entire brain, including the brain stem. His doctor said the damage wasn't survivable. In one week's time, we had been given this blessing and then told he wouldn't survive on his own. On Thursday, November 2, 2017, my husband and I said goodbye to our precious Arlo.

It has only been a few months since meeting and losing Arlo, so we are still grieving and healing. I don't think we will ever stop grieving or healing from this. We are accepting the fact that we may never know what caused Arlo to quit breathing. But through all of this, my husband and I have committed to not let this tear us apart. That would be my piece of advice to others going through an infant loss, to turn to your loved ones. They may not know fully how to help you grieve or heal, but they will gladly hold your hand as you cry. And also, if you are of faith, to turn to God. I am still trying to understand God's plan in all of this, but I cling to His Promise that He loves me and my son, and one day, I will get to hold my baby again. ♥

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Your loved ones ...  
may not know fully  
how to help you  
grieve or heal,  
but they will gladly  
hold your hand  
as you cry.

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# Just an Ordinary Virus...

An interview with Erin Johnson

Mommy to Quint

M.E.N.D.—Houston

Written by Jennifer Harrison

M.E.N.D.—Newsletter Editor

## Tell me about your family.



My husband, Rob, and I have 3 children: Quint, who died of a virus shortly after birth, Liv, who is 3 (13 months younger than Quint), and Rhett, who is 15 months. Quint's full name is Robert Livingston Johnson, V, but we call him Quint. Each of the children share part of his name. Liv's full name is Livingston, and Rhett has the same initials as Quint, RLJ.

## Can you share with me about Quint's birth?

He was early, 35 weeks, but everything was normal. He was just ready to be out in the world and meet us. The hospital even sent us home after a standard stay. We were all home together as a family for 10 days. We didn't go anywhere and didn't do anything...but he still got sick.



## Tell me about his sickness. What were your first thoughts?

At first, I wasn't sure if I was being paranoid, thinking these were just the "first time mom" concerns, but I had a bad feeling. He was breathing funny and not wanting to eat. I just felt something was wrong. My husband kept thinking he was okay, and I was being overly protective. But he wasn't really seeing what I was seeing, and I just felt it. After a conversation with our pediatrician in the pre-dawn hours

one morning, we were headed to the hospital. After a battery of tests, we were given a diagnosis of adenovirus;

a common virus most of us have had in our lifetime – typically as "pink eye." However, the virus is deadly to infants and generally manifests as a respiratory disorder.

We found ourselves in the NICU, surrounded by several RSV babies and I remember thinking, "I am so glad he doesn't have RSV." But I never felt relaxed. My intuition was that this was bad, but I always thought he would pull through after he had enough time to heal with the support he was receiving from the amazing group of very caring doctors and nurses. They overwhelmed the virus and helped him heal. Up until the end, we all thought he would pull through.

Most of the time a virus can't be treated, the patient is supported and the immune system is left to fight off the intruder. However, Quint's case was so severe our doctors decided an unorthodox and extremely aggressive treatment was warranted. While neonatal adenovirus cases are rare, the children generally do not survive for more than two to three days; the



virus simply overwhelms their undeveloped immune system. He had beaten the odds and survived longer than the couple of days, so we thought we would beat this thing.

We were escalated to the level 4 NICU. The treatment they administered was basically like chemo treatment, which caused a lot of damage to his other organs; and his heart was damaged from the medication. He was hooked up to ECMO, which is a heart and lung bypass. The machine does all the work of the heart and lungs, allowing them to rest. Quint was cured of the virus,

but the damage to his organs, especially his heart, was too extensive; and he died after being on the ECMO for 17 days. Our total time in the hospital was a month, and Quint was only 5.5 weeks old.

## Was there a certain point reality hit for you, that you were going to lose Quint?

I think for me, it was just immediate. He had been sick for so long [one month in the hospital], and...I held him as he died. I never left the hospital while Quint was fighting. My husband would go home to do laundry and then return, but I was always there. I held him in my arms for those last 6 hours after he passed, and then had to leave the hospital. I was there, and then I was not, so I immediately felt that loss. As we drove out of the parking garage, I turned to my husband and said, "We are leaving without our baby! How can this be happening?"



## What was the hardest part in all this?

Seeing him sick. I just felt like...healthy babies don't get sick. We didn't do any outings, didn't take him to the mall during those 10 days - we had him at home. It just seemed so unfair. I would think he should be smiling by now, but he's not because he was sick and medicated. After he died, I realized he's never going to get to ride a bike, play with other kids...all those things we think about with our babies. But I even had those types of thoughts while we were in the hospital, that he doesn't get to do tummy time, or to nurse; or he wants me to hold him, but I can't touch him because of the machine keeping him alive. Thinking about what he didn't get to experience was hard...and is hard to this day.

## How did your husband do in all this?

During it, he just thought Quint would get better; how could he not? And through it all and after Quint died, he was the strong supportive one. He has



# When the Unexpected Happens

By Brittany Sawyers

Mommy to Khloe

M.E.N.D.—Bryan/College Station



**D**erik and I found out we were having twins in March of 2017. I was 13 weeks. We were shocked and excited. They were Monochorionic-Diamniotic (MoDi) twins, which means they shared a placenta, but different amniotic sacs. We saw a high risk maternal fetal medicine doctor every other week and an obstetrician.



Khloe was always doing well, growing at normal rate. Kylie seemed to be having trouble. We always feared we would lose Kylie. We never thought we would lose Khloe. We scheduled a c-section at 34 weeks because Kylie wasn't growing enough, and the girls were born on September 5, 2017. Khloe weighed 4 pounds, 4 ounces, and Kylie weighed 3 pounds 4 ounces.

Khloe continued her growth and progressed well in the NICU. Kylie also did, but at a much slower pace. Khloe came home after 24 long days in NICU. She nursed well, gained weight perfectly, and she was overall a wonderful baby. Kylie joined us three days after Khloe. She didn't nurse well, or gain weight well. Comparing the two, Kylie was the one who struggled while it was so easy for Khloe. For two wonderful weeks, though, I got to snuggle and be at home with my baby girls. Unfortunately, our joy ended abruptly.

On Sunday, October 15, the date the girls were actually due, we woke up to find Khloe unresponsive. I screamed.

Derik performed CPR until the paramedics arrived. She was taken to the hospital and pronounced dead at 8:36 AM.

I never would have imagined I would lose Khloe...she was my healthy baby with no issues at all. We went to sleep having the world in our hands, and awoke to a hole in our hearts. Khloe Jean Lanicek will forever be 5 weeks and 5 days old. I do believe Kylie misses her sister as she always wants some one near her.

We struggle daily with the mix of emotions between joy in Kylie and grief for Khloe. It's a fine line for us. Kylie is a constant reminder of why we must carry on and live life to our best ability. I have learned in this I need help from other people who have been through this same tragedy. At first I wanted to compare how my loss was different, but after attending a M.E.N.D. support group

I learned loss is loss, and I needed the women in my life to help me.

I will never understand or be the same as I was, but I know one day I will have a new sense of normal. Derik and I attend grief counseling together, and it helps. I am taking medication for the depression, anxiety and PTSD I now have. I also attend M.E.N.D. support groups when I am able.

I will always miss my Khloe Jean. ❤️

I learned loss is loss, and I needed the women in my life to help me.

always been supportive, but he was extremely supportive after Quint died.



He would stay pretty put together, but would be there when I would fall apart. He's still pretty emotional about Quint. He was a superstar husband then, and continues to be to this day. He was so supportive and would talk about [Quint] all day.

In our support groups, we talk about how you can't compare the losses obviously, but the one thing about losing a baby after birth is he was able to build a connection with Quint, just

as I had while carrying him; so Rob was able to grieve the loss in a similar manner as me.

**How has this whole experience changed you?**

It has made me care less about things that aren't really important. My family is TOP priority, but definitely more so now.

I'm definitely more scared about the "What ifs" with my subsequent children. But I also think I appreciate them more.

**What are some ways you remember Quint?**

We talk about him all the time. We post pictures of him, and other people will stop and visit with me about him,

or others will just tell me they are thinking about him. We always tell people we have three children. Sometimes it gets awkward, but we feel it's more important to honor our son than to be concerned with the awkwardness that others feel.

We take a collection for the Ronald McDonald House for his birthday every year. It's a nice way for us to remember Quint and talk about him, and a way for others to show their support. When he was on ECMO, all we could do was stand in his room since the machines took up the space where chairs would normally be, so the Ronald McDonald House gave us a

*(Continued on page 19)*

# Every Child Counts: Stopping Infant Loss



Originally posted by Sheree Crute to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation "Culture of Health Blog" On November 13, 2014, [www.rwjf.org](http://www.rwjf.org)

"Matthew was born big and healthy, just under eight pounds," Carol Jordan says. That's why it was such a shock to her to lose him on an otherwise average Sunday afternoon.

"We had just gotten home from church. My daughter Taylor and my other son Jacob settled in with their video games," Carol recalls. "I breastfed Matthew and lay him down on his back in his bassinet. He was 3 and ½ months old. About 30 minutes later, I went to check on him. He was on his stomach and he was not breathing."

Despite being overwhelmed by grief, Carol remembers, "I had two kids to take care of and that got me out of bed each day." Matthew was a victim of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), a leading and little understood cause of infant mortality. With the love and support of family, friends, and First Candle, one of the largest SIDS support organizations in the country, the family slowly recovered.

A year after Matthew's death, Carol gave birth to a daughter, Rachel, in 2002, whom she calls "my little gift," but she continues to give back. In addition to holding an annual Matthew Jordan Golf Tournament near her Decatur, GA, home, to benefit the CJ Foundation for SIDS, she is working to open a camp for children who have lost a sibling to SIDS.

Carol is one of the many African American women who

disproportionately experience infant mortality—the loss of a child in the first year of life. When it comes to life-threatening pregnancy complications, infant mortality is one of three issues—including fetal mortality and low birth weight (LBW)—that are more likely to threaten the lives of African American, Hispanic, and Native American children than white babies.

## A Quiet Crisis—Uncounted Losses

America's infant mortality rate is in fact high for all women; the US ranks 56<sup>th</sup> in the world, and the lowest of any wealthy nations. The rate among white women is 5.33 per 1,000 births. For African Americans, the rate is more than double that number at 12.40 per 1,000 births. Among Hispanics and Native Americans it is 8.41 and 7.18 per 1,000, respectively.

Yet these statistics tell only part of the story. The rates for fetal mortality (the loss of a child after 20 weeks of pregnancy) are nearly as high for children from these communities of color, with 23 percent of the babies lost after the seventh month. Again, the rate among African American women is more than double that of white women; likewise, the rates are disproportionately high among Hispanic and Native American women.

Low birth weight (under 5.5 pounds) and very-low birth weight (under 3.4 pounds) is also disproportionately high among African American infants (13.4 percent and 2.9 percent) compared with 7.2 percent and 1.2 percent for white women.

If a child does survive being born underweight, he or she may face a lifetime of heightened health risks—including increased odds of respiratory, cardiac, and developmental problems in childhood, and possibly higher rates of hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, and joint disease in the knees and hips in adulthood.

## My Baby Matters

As part of a national movement to find solutions for this persistent crisis in infant health, the documentary *Surviving One Year* focuses on the epicenter of America's infant mortality crisis—Rochester, N.Y., the fifth poorest city in the country. In this community, children of color are three times more likely to die than white infants. The film, which [aired] on PBS, is part of the series *America by the Numbers*.

Poverty is at the root of the problem in Rochester, but when it comes to pregnancy complications in Black women, other issues are in play. College-educated African American women still have higher rates of preterm birth and LBW, for example.

Another important contributor to the infant mortality puzzle, says Joanne Cacciatore, PhD, and founder

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"Fetal mortality is still a great mystery. We don't exactly know the statistics because each state defines it differently," Dr. Cacciatore says.

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of the MISS Foundation, is the confusion surrounding fetal mortality.

“Fetal mortality is still a great mystery. We don’t exactly know the statistics because each state defines it differently,” she says.

Cacciatore and her colleagues explored issues such as the lack of attention to fetal mortality prevention in the *Lancet* series “Stillbirths: Why They Matter.” In some instances, she notes, “uninsured women, or women with poor coverage, for example, are allowed to go post-term because of the cost of caesarean delivery, but every day a woman carries past 41 weeks increases her chance of a stillbirth. There is also a tremendous lack of support for mothers who experience fetal loss at any point in a pregnancy.”

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**“But I am always going to be the mother of twin girls.”**

**She was finally able to heal with support from M.E.N.D.**

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Myra Gamez knows the issue well. “One of my twins, Angela, passed away at 23 weeks. In order to protect Alessandra, her sister, I carried them both for 34 weeks. I delivered my sleeping baby and my survivor.”

Yet, says Gamez, who is Mexican and lives in Dallas, “We have a tradition, *novenario*, you mourn the dead for nine days, but for my baby, the period of mourning was only one day. People kept saying, ‘At least you

had one twin,’” Gamez recalls. “But I am always going to be the mother of twin girls.” She was finally able to heal with support from M.E.N.D. (Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death).

Tia Jenkins was astonished by the reactions she encountered when she lost her first child after a full-term (38 week) pregnancy. “People around me kept saying ‘God does not make mistakes,’” Jenkins says, the anger still fresh in her voice after six years. “Tell me that when you have to buy a coffin the size of an ice cooler and put in the toys you bought for your newborn.”

Jenkins was also furious about the care she received. An African American woman who was 28 at the time, she was still at risk for preeclampsia. Yet when she started bleeding during her pregnancy and bloating from excessive fluid, her doctor said nothing was wrong. In fact, she gained only 11 pounds during her pregnancy and her son Adan was only four pounds at full-term delivery. She was determined not to try again.

“Instead, I got pregnant four months later, but this time I secured an appointment with a highly recommended African American woman obstetrician near my Atlanta home. It was a completely different experience.”

When Jenkins began experiencing complications during her second pregnancy, she was monitored bi-weekly instead of monthly, she received nutrition counseling, and was tested and found to have

preeclampsia. She spent the last month of her pregnancy in the hospital. Her son Joshua was born healthy at full term, but also at a low birth weight—4.4 pounds.

“He spent 10 days in the neonatal intensive care unit, but today he’s a healthy 6-year-old.” Jenkins says, “I am grateful. I believe the second doctor’s care decisions saved my baby’s life.”

### Working Toward Solutions

Improving quality of care may be one answer to helping at-risk infants, according to new research by Eileen Lake, PhD, RN, FAAN a professor of nursing at the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing. Her work, supported by RWJF’s *Interdisciplinary Nursing Research Initiative*, revealed that the health of seven out of 10 very-low birth weight African American babies could be improved through nursing care.

Lake’s study adds to the growing knowledge that complex factors, including racism, stress, and inadequate social support, may contribute to the persistently high rates of infant mortality, LBW, and fetal mortality among African American, Hispanic and Native American children.

Sadly, there will always be a need for the work of such advocates as Jordan and organizations such as First Candle and M.E.N.D., but there is hope that through increased awareness and improved research, they will have far less work to do. ♥

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“Just an Ordinary Virus...” continued from page 17

room just down the hallway, like a 30 second walk, from Quint’s bedside. So they gave us the opportunity to stay there with him through it all.

For his birthday we also get cupcakes to celebrate. When we see monarch butterflies, we always say it’s a “Quint butterfly” coming to spend time with us. When we recently went on vacation there was a monarch butterfly flying on the beach and playing around my daughter, so we said it was like Quint came on our family vacation. He’s definitely a part of our lives.

### What is special about him that you remember and treasure?

He was just so sweet and cuddly. I picture him being a Mama’s boy, just like my second son. Just cuddly and calm.

### If you could ask God to tell you one thing about Quint, what would you want to know?

There are so many things. I think is he happy, but of course he is happy; he is in heaven.



# Suddenly Gone

It's one of our worst nightmares, to lay a child down to let them rest, only to find they will never wake again. This interview shares the story from a mom and dad, Kristen and Kyle Rabe, who has suffered this tragedy.

## Tell me a little bit about your family.

**Kristen Rabe:** Kyle and I met at Texas Avenue Baptist Church in 2010. We were married October 29, 2011. We welcomed Kyleigh into our family just weeks before our first anniversary (10.1.12). Since Kyleigh's death we have welcomed 5 more children. Karson (12.13.13), Kayleigh (6.3.15), Kyler (6.30.16) and twins Karter and Kole (11.7.17).

## Tell me a little bit about Kyleigh.

**Kristen:** Kyleigh was born with lots of personality. From the time she was born, she was looking around and taking it all in. She was awake more than most newborns. A pain at the time, but now I am thankful for all the hours I was able to spend with her.

In the month before her death, she had become a Mommy's girl. I would be called into our church nursery because she would be screaming, and they could not get her to stop. I would walk in, and she would look at me and start to smile.

None of my other kids have become that attached (that early on).

## What was her birth like?

**Kyle Rabe:** Her birth was a little scary, but amazing. Kristen went into labor

on one of (if not the) busiest days in our hospital's history.

**Kristen:** I believe we arrived at the hospital around 1:00 AM, still laughing and making jokes, after dealing with contractions since 6:00 PM. When [the nurse] checked me, I was informed I was 4 centimeters, and we would be having a baby today.

**Kyle:** During labor Kyleigh was showing some signs of mild distress. The nurses weren't too concerned, but did have Kristen roll from side-to-side and put her on oxygen. When Kyleigh dropped, and it was time to push, her heart rate plummeted a few times. The nurses weren't sure they were getting accurate readings from the monitors so they put an internal monitor on Kyleigh, but it showed the same things.

**Kristen:** Labor was fairly easy, but when it came time to push I suddenly felt intense pain and told Kyle something was wrong. The nurses began rushing because the baby's heart rate dropped dangerously low. We also learned Kyleigh was tangled in her umbilical cord.

**Kyle:** They prepped Kristen for a c-section, but unfortunately there were no doctors available, so the nurses did their best to buy time. One of them literally held the cord off of Kyleigh's neck until our OB could get there. Somehow, by the grace of God, our OB was able to deliver her within a couple of minutes of arriving, and Kyleigh immediately started crying. It was a wonderful sound (at least for the moment).

**Kristen:** Knowing all I know now about infant death, it is amazing with how badly her cord was wrapped we did not lose her that day during delivery.

## Can you share with me about her death?

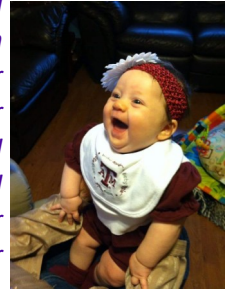
**Kristen:** January 26, 2013, Kyleigh and I had gone to visit Kyle's cousin. It was a Saturday morning, and Kyle's mom and dad were to meet us for breakfast before Kyleigh and I headed home. I remember waking up that morning

feeling well rested thinking Kyleigh had slept in later than normal, never dreaming what I would find. When I went in to get her up, I turned her over and screamed, "She's dead!" I feel it was God's grace allowing me to know from the moment I saw her there was no longer life in that sweet body. I had no false hope from that

point forward. I began then and there to process the death of my baby even though CPR was being performed, and an ambulance was on its way. From another room, I made the phone call to Kyle to tell him our only child was dead. I wish I could go back and say it another way, but I didn't, I used those words exactly.

**Kyle:** I had been home alone for about 3 days living the "bachelor life" again (eating frozen pizza and fried chicken, doing absolutely 0 chores, etc.), so I had planned to wake up, have a nice breakfast, and then work as fast as I could to get the house spotless before Kristen got home. Instead, I was awakened by a phone call. I saw it was from Kristen, so I answered a very sweet "Good morning, babe." The response I got shocked me so much it didn't really even register. I asked "What?" and she

repeated clear as day. "Kyleigh is dead. She's dead, Kyle." I don't remember any more of the phone call or even



I feel it was God's grace allowing me to know from the moment I saw her there was no longer life in that sweet body. I had no false hope from that point forward.

getting dressed. I just remember my whole body shaking and repeating “no,” not knowing if this was real.

Kristen: Later I sat in an ER, holding my sweet baby, waiting for Kyle to arrive. Again, by God’s grace, our nurse, who was not a regular on the ER floor, did not know it was against the rules for us to hold her. So I held her until later when a supervisor came in and told us we could not hold her anymore.

Kyle: I remember driving like a mad man, squealing my tires at every turn, and then hitting the brake every time my eyes saw the speedometer thinking it would only slow me down if I got pulled over. Thankfully I was only a few minutes down the road when someone called and told me to head to Kristen’s parents, and they would give me a ride. That call may have saved my life because I wasn’t fit for driving 3-4 hours, but not knowing what else I could do. The rest of that day (or the next week for that matter) was all kind of surreal.

Kristen: Finally Kyle and my parents arrived. As we were sitting in Kyleigh’s room crying, that same sweet nurse started pulling curtains closed and said, “Forget the rules, I’m a mother first. Dad, pick up your baby.” After Kyle got a chance to hold Kyleigh, there was nothing left to do in that ER. It was time to leave. That was the hardest thing I have ever had to do, leave without my baby. I have never felt so empty as I did that day leaving the hospital.

**Sometimes it seems so surreal, and then we have a moment when reality hits. Was there a moment like this for you?**

Kristen: I remember dreading her burial. Knowing after that, my grief would be my own. Until then, society had given me a checklist to follow. Once those things were over, I didn’t know

what to do. As far as one [specific] moment, every morning was extremely painful. Waking up and remembering each morning she wasn’t there, and it wasn’t just because she spent the night with someone.

Kyle: It hit me right away to some degree, but yes, from the hour after the phone call to a week or so later all seemed a little distant/hazy...almost robotic. One of the best, most therapeutic things for me personally was a few months later when Kristen and I designed our own custom laser-etched headstone for Kyleigh. Instead of going through the catalog for the stone, another for the pictures and another for the phrases, we learned we could design one of our own. I pulled up Photoshop, scanned in our favorite pictures of Kyleigh, her footprints, even Kristen’s and my handwriting so we could have handwritten messages on her headstone. I think it took me a month or so to complete, but Kristen and I couldn’t be happier with the outcome, and even still today when we visit the cemetery I am reminded of how therapeutic and helpful it was for me to design that for her memory.

**I know losing your baby is difficult enough, but besides that, what was the hardest part of this for you?**

Kristen: 2 things: Returning to church and no longer needing to drop off or pick up at the nursery. Secondly, I was a stay-at-home mom of one child. Her death stared me in the face all day every day. I’m not saying working moms have it easy; I’m just saying I had nothing to distract me from 8-to-5 Monday through Friday. She was my whole life...feeling like I had no purpose and was a failure as a mom because my baby died was really hard.

Kyle: Marriage. I can’t imagine much of anything harder on a marriage than the loss of a child. It is a time when you

both are hurting deeply and grieving but not always in the same way and/or at the same time. You both are in need, but likely in need of different things. I was the person Kristen was used to relying on for support, and I was used to relying on her to be there whenever I needed her. In the weeks and months following Kyleigh’s death, there were many times where Kristen and I would both be in need, but neither one of us had enough to give, or be in the right place to give what the other was needing.



**How did you try to help each other grieve?**

Kristen: I dragged Kyle to M.E.N.D. support groups before he was ready. I really don’t think I helped him much, but he helped me by going along with what I needed when I needed it. There is no question, though, that Kyleigh’s death was hard on our marriage. It is hard to grieve together when you both need different things.

Kyle: Losing Kyleigh was definitely hard on our marriage. I wasn’t sure there was anything I could do to help Kristen grieve. I just really tried to do my best at staying “out of the way” of her grieving process. Not in a way where I was absent at all, but more so of just being supportive of going with the flow and not standing in the way of her doing whatever she needed/wanted at the time.

**How do you feel you handled your own grief?**

Kristen: In the beginning I feel like I handled my grief well. I allowed myself to be sad and miss her and act on any impulse I had regarding remembering her or grieving her loss by buying things that reminded me of her, visiting the cemetery frequently, and talking about her a lot. As life has gone on, I find it harder to deal with my grief, because life is so busy. I now

(Continued on page 22)



(Continued from page 21)

have five living children, and I don't ever want their needs to suffer because Mommy is having a bad day. Putting their needs first makes me suppress my grief from time to time. For example, I really wanted to visit the cemetery the other day, but on the way one of my kids started crying he had a tummy ache. We turned the car around to come home instead of going to see Kyleigh. Although in that moment I needed to go cry at my daughter's grave, my son needed me to tend to his needs. I haven't had the time to visit the cemetery since then. Most of the time if I have some impulse of wanting to do something for Kyleigh or visiting Kyleigh, I will tell myself I don't have time to do things I used to do and that it really doesn't matter, because Kyleigh doesn't know the difference. But pushing those feelings back too long eventually catches up with me. I am trying to learn how to balance my need to remember her and my family's needs.

Kyle: *I'm not sure. Grief is really weird in that while most everyone shares similar experiences, you can't compare one person's grief to another. Everyone processes it differently: in different order, at different times, with different triggers. I think I could have done better in the beginning about talking to Kristen about everything I was thinking and feeling, but I don't know of a guy who wouldn't say that. Looking back now, five years down the road, I think I must have done a decent job as I could continually see progression to less and less raw pain, and more happy memories and being able to help and comfort others in their own grief. I still wonder sometimes, though, if grief ever has an end.*

#### **How has Kyleigh's death changed you?**

Kristen: *I am a much more patient mom, and take my job as a mom much more seriously. I am very cautious with my children's lives. Before Kyleigh's death I feel I was a very laid back*

*parent. I now am the parent who doesn't want my kid on a 4-wheeler without a helmet. The biggest change, though, was my walk with the Lord. Losing Kyleigh made me realize just how much I needed to rely on God for everything. When I was staying at home by myself, I poured myself into the Bible just to get through the day. During that time I developed a love for His Word I did not have previously. That is probably the biggest change that has impacted me the most.*

Kyle: *In many ways, I think all for the better. I know it helped me draw closer to God and truly realize my full dependence on Him. Not just dependent on Him for salvation or in eternity, but dependent on Him for my very next breath. I have learned what it means to feel a peace that passes understanding.*

#### **What are the special ways you remember Kyleigh?**

Kristen: *M.E.N.D. gives me a time to make sure I can remember her. I still talk about her with our children. We hang her little shoes on our Christmas tree every year and still buy her an ornament for the tree. I love arranging her flowers myself and visiting the cemetery to take pictures with the other kids. I did get a tattoo of her name; it's the same font as is on her headstone. And I love just connecting with any mom who has lost a child no matter the age.*



#### **What advice would you give moms and dads who have also gone from a healthy baby to empty arms?**

Kristen: *There are no words. I know now nothing seems to be able to dull the pain, but with time, things will get easier. Don't be afraid to love again. If you choose and God blesses you with another child, you can and will love that child just as much as you love the child you lost. I know it doesn't feel possible, but it is.*

Kyle: *It's really no different than the advice you would give to anyone grieving the loss of a child. Let yourself grieve. You're not crazy. Hold tight to your spouse, and even tighter to God. Work on both of those relationships because they aren't always going to come easily throughout the process. There are too many "Whys" and "What ifs" that will never be answered. It's best not to focus on or worry on them, but rather to just trust and love.*



#### **If you could ask God to tell you one thing about Kyleigh, what would it be?**

Kristen: *I don't really have a question, but I do have a thought I shared at our last M.E.N.D. support group. It may be hard for some moms to hear (the ones who are really fresh), but this is where I am now, five years later. I would tell [God] "Thank you. Thank you for loving Kyleigh, Kyle and me enough to do what was best for us and not what was easiest." Kyleigh's death got my attention about how I was just passing through life. I went to church and didn't do anything too bad, but I wasn't concerned with walking closely with the Lord and growing as a Christian. Kyleigh's death was painful, but I know she is in heaven, and Kyle and I are better parents for our five living children. I thank God He loves me enough to allow this trial that was for mine and my children's good. This is the verse that says how I feel about Kyleigh's death:*

*But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.*

*Genesis 50:20*

*I believe Satan meant to destroy Kyle and me and our marriage on January 26, 2013, but God allowed it to pass through His sovereign hands to bring Himself glory and for our good. ♥*



# 12 Perfect Hours

By Faith Story  
Mommy to Abby  
M.E.N.D.—Houston



After a pregnancy that consisted of low progesterone levels, severe migraines, multiple UTIs, carpal tunnel on both wrists, gestational diabetes, high blood pressure, and three months of bedrest, my beautiful daughter, Abigail Grace, was born on July 9,

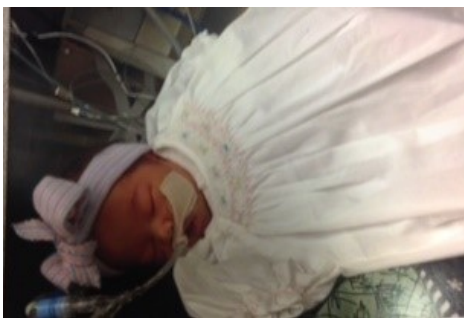
I had my beautiful daughter to make our family complete along with my 5-year-old son.

2015. She was perfect, and she scored a 9 on the Apgar scale. I had my beautiful daughter to make our family complete along with my 5-year-old son.

I had planned everything she would wear home from the hospital, as soon as she got home and was even working on a theme for her 1<sup>st</sup> birthday. It was going to be owls. After meeting her two sets of grandparents and two of her uncles, the nurse took her for her first bath. She came back smelling fresh and sweet, and then I breastfed her.

After breastfeeding, though, things took a devastating turn. My husband took her to burp her, and she was not breathing. We called the nurse and after one look at her gray face, the nurse took off running with her and a code blue was called. Nurses and doctors rushed from out of nowhere, and my husband ran off with them. I was still disoriented from the anesthesia and my blood pressure was sky high, so I could not do anything but remain in my room, cry and pray. The kindest nurse held my hand and prayed with me.

The NICU doctor came to my room and told us they were able to resuscitate her, but they wouldn't know how



she was doing until the next morning. We were told "If you don't see us in the morning, that is good news." She was exactly 12 hours old when she stopped breathing.

The next morning, the doctor was in our room at 7:00 AM, and told us it did not look good. Her brain was not responding. She was put on a ventilator and multiple tests were done, but after two days, she was declared braindead. We made the decision to have her baptized and to donate her organs. At

4 days old, she was taken off the ventilator, and I held her skin-to-skin, and her dad and I sang to her as her soul left her body.

The moment her heart stopped beating, a piece of me died. I lost the innocence I had lived in that everything was going to be okay. I had to accept that babies die. No longer was my world one that I recognized. After one-on-one therapy, group therapy, M.E.N.D., and time, I have come to a place where I can accept that grief and happiness can coexist. My happiest times will always have a shadow to them because Abby should be here.

The hole she left will never be healed, but it can be filled with love and compassion. I know God in a more intimate way, and I am so thankful I can come to Him with my broken heart.

I now shop for grave decorations instead of new dresses. I go to events for infant loss instead of ballet recitals, but I am forever Abby's mom and will continue to be so no matter how I get to be her parent. I am grateful to have held her in my womb, my arms, and now my heart forever. I thank God for the gift of Abby. ♥

I am forever Abby's mom and will continue to be so no matter how I get to be her parent.

SOMETIMES

you will never know

THE VALUE

of the

MOMENT,

until it becomes a

memory.

—Dr. Seuss



Artículo de *M.E.N.D.* Presidente y Fundadora,  
Rebekah Mitchell, Mamá de Jonathan Daniel y bebé Mitchell

# Bebé Sano a Brazos Vacíos

○í una historia acerca de un accidente horrible que ocurrió en casa de una mujer mientras que ella era niñera para una mamá que recientemente había vuelto a trabajar después del nacimiento de su primer hijo. El bebé, de pocos meses de edad, fue recostado para tomar una siesta en su cuna hacia abajo de una ventana. De alguna manera, el bebé logró estirar la cadena de la persiana y terroríficamente fue estrangulado a su muerte.

Un amigo mío conoce a una doctora que mientras mecería a su propio bebé, de repente el bebé dejó de respirar. La mamá/la doctora rápidamente realizó RCP, sin ningún resultado.

La amiga de mi hermana del colegio, también una doctora, tuvo una hija con osteogénesis imperfecta. La niña dulce vivió durante unos meses antes de morir.

Estas historias... estos acontecimientos de la vida real, eventos trágicos, todos sucedieron antes de ser una "mamá de pérdida" yo misma. De mujer joven escuchando estos hechos impensables, decidí ingenuamente que estas cosas les pasan a los "otros", nunca me sucederán a mí. Aunque mi historia es diferente ya que mi hijo nació sin vida, el resultado para todas nosotras las mamás es el mismo, somos todas mamás a un bebé en el cielo.

Como la Directora de *M.E.N.D.*, que fundé hacía más de 21 años, he escuchado innumerables historias terriblemente tristes de cómo familias perdieron a sus bebés. En nuestros grupos de apoyo mensuales, nos sentamos en un círculo y compartimos cómo y cuándo nuestros bebés murieron. Cuando una familia acude a quien fue capaz de llevar a su bebé a casa, pero el bebé murió poco después de una enfermedad, defecto de nacimiento o SIDS, siempre se mezclan las emociones de todos los lados. Tristeza y anhelo de poder tener esos momentos con sus hijos de las madres que perdieron su bebe temprano en el embarazo o como yo que entregue mi bebe sin vida. Las mamás que se fueron a casa con sus bebés a veces se sienten mal por tener tiempo con sus pequeños, el tiempo para hacer recuerdos. Tal vez un poco comparable a la culpa del sobreviviente. La madre que perdió su bebe a los principios del embarazo lucha con sentirse tonta por lamentar la pérdida de un pequeñito pequeño, cuando la mamá a su lado tiene la llamada

frenética de una guardería, policía o hospital siempre grabado en su mente. Y nosotras las mamás que dimos nacimiento a un bebe sin vida - justo en el medio.

Si usted experimento una pérdida temprano en su embarazo o un nacimiento de bebe sin vida, usted lee este tema desgarrador concentrada en los bebés que murieron semanas o meses después de que nacieron, no compare su pérdida a los de ellas. Sí, la historia de ellas puede ser muy diferente que la suya, sí, pudieron haber tenido más tiempo con sus pequeños y eran capaces de oír una risa y/o un grito y endurearon lo impensable. Pero lo que hemos todos endureado es impensable, y como mencioné antes, el resultado es el mismo. Somos todas mamás que tenemos nuestra propia historia trágica, y nuestras experiencias nunca deben compararse como mejor o peor que la de otra persona. Todos compartimos el lazo común de amor y la falta de un niño que ya no está con nosotros. Por lo tanto, estamos para llorar juntos y animarnos unos a los otros mientras viajamos juntos por este largo camino de dolor, todos faltando nuestros bebés. ♥

## Just Say, "I'm Sorry"

By Gail Fasolo

You don't know how I feel - please don't tell me that you do.

There's just one way to know - have you lost a child too?

"You'll have another child" - must I hear this each day?

Can I get another mother, too, if mine should pass away?

Don't say it was "God's will" - that's not the God I know.

Would God on purpose break my heart,  
then watch as my tears flow?

"You have an angel in heaven - a precious child above."

But, tell me, to whom here on earth shall I give this love?

"Aren't you better yet?" Is that what I heard you say?

No! A part of my heart aches - I'll always feel some pain.

You think that silence is kind, but it hurts me even more.

I want to talk about my child who has gone through death's door.

Don't say these things to me, although you do mean well.

They do not take my pain away; I must go through the hell.

I will get better slow but sure - and it helps to have you near,  
But a simple "I'm sorry you lost your child" is all I need to hear.

Published in

*SIDS and Infant Death Survival Guide,*

by Joani Nelson Horchler and Robin Rice, 2011, p. 165.



# 2018 Leadership Conference Newsletter Session

Led by Jennifer Harrison, M.E.N.D. Newsletter Editor



In February, M.E.N.D. Leadership from all over the country gathered for training, idea development, information sharing and team building. A few years ago we held a strategic planning session for our Newsletter Session, and out of that came the desire to update the look of our M.E.N.D. Newsletter. Last year we provided a mock-up, which was just released for the January/February issue. We are so excited that our printing company, Kwik Kopy, is now printing our Newsletter in full color, beginning with this issue.

This year we took time to think creatively by doing idea mapping as a way to develop articles. Do you desire to write an article but don't know where to start? Just google "Mind Map" or "Idea Map" to help get started. These pictures are M.E.N.D. Leadership performing some mind mapping to create newsletter articles. And if you are still stuck, feel free to reach out to me. We can work together to create an article or an interview to tell your story, share tips and other information to benefit our readers.

## Subsequent Births

### Celebrating Our Rainbow Babies

**Greg and Stefanie Miller,**  
of Tomball, Texas,  
along with big sister Cora,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Hazel Quinn,  
born August 31, 2017,  
measuring 4 lbs., 5 oz.,  
and 17.75 inches long.  
The family lovingly remembers  
Chase Austin,  
April 21, 2011,  
incompetent cervix,  
Baby "Blueberry,"  
miscarried May 4, 2015

**Scott Herzog and Erin Gattuccio-Ross,**  
of Silverdale, Washington,  
joyfully announce the arrival of  
Elivia Georgia Joann,  
born November 17, 2017,  
measuring 7 lbs., 3 oz.,  
and 20.25 inches long.  
The family lovingly remembers  
Henry Scott Herzong  
stillborn April 8, 2014, at 38 weeks,  
placenta issues



## About M.E.N.D.

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

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

M.E.N.D.  
P.O. Box 631566  
Irving, TX 75063  
Phone and Fax: (972) 506-9000  
*(Please call before faxing)*  
E-Mail: [rebekah@mend.org](mailto:rebekah@mend.org)  
[jennifer@mend.org](mailto:jennifer@mend.org)  
[www.mend.org](http://www.mend.org)

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).

M.E.N.D. is a member of  
First Candle/SIDS Alliance  
International Stillbirth Alliance  
Pregnancy Loss and Infant Death Alliance



## M.E.N.D. Leadership

### M.E.N.D. Board of Directors

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### Newsletter

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

### Newsletter Volunteers

Rachel Dell, Sara Elliott and Stormy Mitchell

## Legacy Giving

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

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

M.E.N.D.

## Chapter Information

### M.E.N.D.—Houston, Texas

Meets the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday at 7:00 p.m.  
4500 Bissonnet, Ste 337B,  
Houston, TX 77401

Meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday at 7:30 p.m.,  
led by Stormy Mitchell  
(stormym@mend.org)

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

M.E.N.D.—NW Washington  
Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday at 6:30 p.m.  
Harrison Medical Center/Iris Room  
1800 Myhre Rd.  
Silverdale, Washington 98383  
Director: Stacy McGhee  
stacym@mend.org, (360) 662-6161

M.E.N.D.—SW Missouri  
Meets the 1<sup>st</sup> 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.—Bryan/College Station  
Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.  
Hawthorne Suites  
1010 University Drive East  
College Station, Texas 77840  
Director: Jennie Drude  
jennie@mend.org, (979) 220-7851

M.E.N.D.—Tulsa, Oklahoma  
Meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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.—Austin, Texas  
**MORE DETAILS COMING SOON!**

## M.E.N.D. Support Groups in the Dallas Metroplex

Join us for a time of sharing experiences.

### M.E.N.D. chapter support groups

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

#### **Daddies group**

meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday  
at 7:30 p.m.

Contact Cheryl Davis for group  
location and information at  
Cheryl@mend.org

*For families experiencing  
infertility after a loss.*

**Mommies AND daddies are both  
welcome at all M.E.N.D. support groups.**

**Unless otherwise noted,  
all support groups are held at:**

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

(Located off 183,  
between MacArthur and O'Connor)

Support groups will be in  
the bank board room,  
located on the first floor.  
For more information,  
call (972) 506-9000.

M.E.N.D. Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death  
P.O. Box 631566, Irving, TX 75063  
USA  
(972) 506-9000  
*Return Service Requested*

NONPROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
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DALLAS, TEXAS  
PERMIT NO. 57

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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.*

M.E.N.D. would like to say a special  
“Thank You” to Derrick Kinney & Associates.  
Derrick Kinney recently had a Facebook contest  
to vote for his favorite charity, and  
we had a tremendous response from our supporters!  
So we also need to say a special  
“Thank YOU” to all of you who supported us in the contest  
and helped M.E.N.D. be the grand prize, \$1,000 winner!



**Derrick Kinney  
& Associates**



Derrick Kinney & Associates is a nationally recognized financial planning firm with offices conveniently located in Arlington, Richardson and McAllen, Texas. In practice for 22 years, the experienced and knowledgeable team helps clients understand the realities of creating and managing wealth. In addition to helping clients realize their financial goals, the team gives back to worthy organizations and schools that make our communities stronger.