



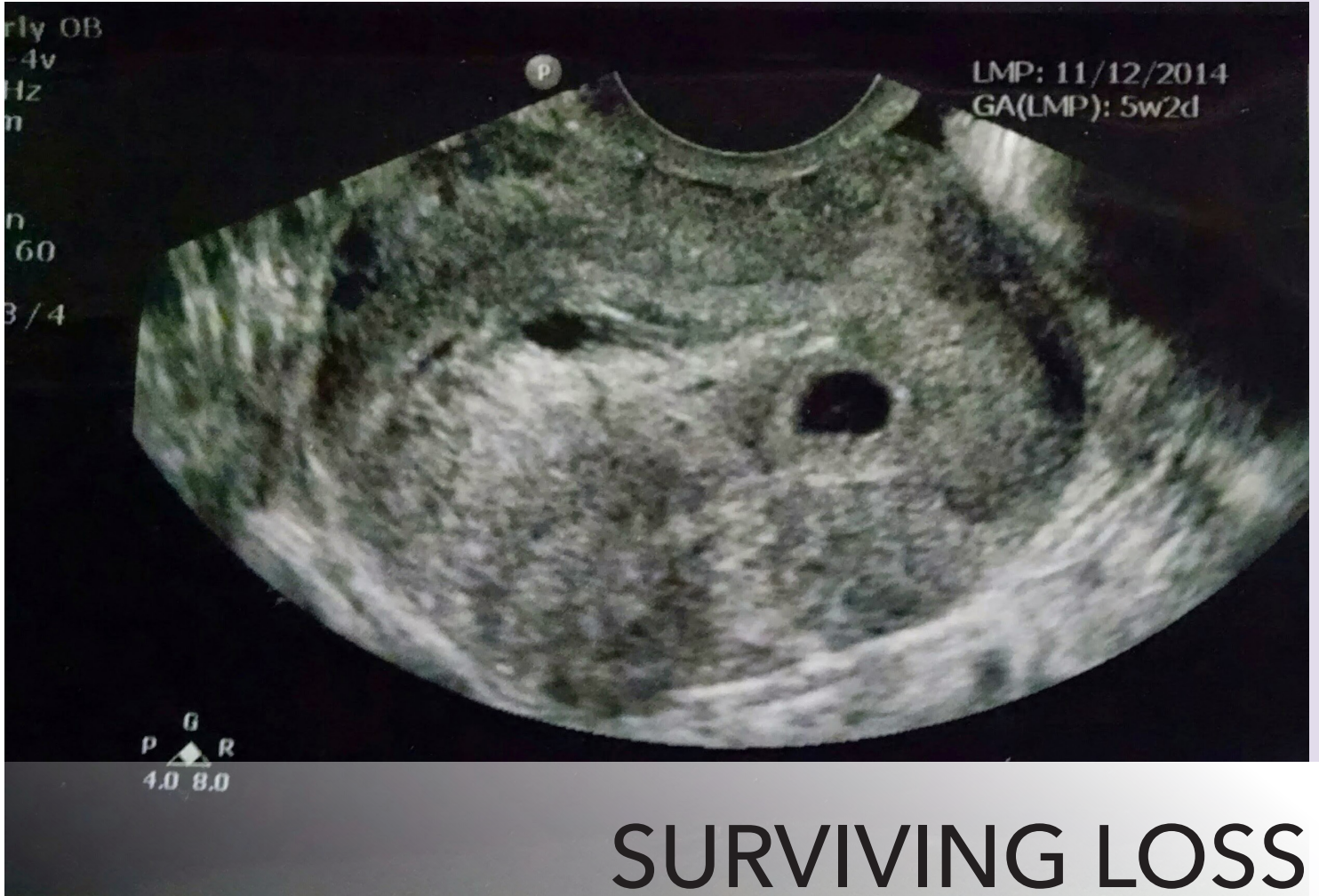
Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death

Miscarriage, Stillbirth and Infant Loss Support

Volume 23, Issue 4

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SURVIVING LOSS WITH A SURVIVING TWIN

Surviving Twin

From announcement to now in the high school years, Brandee shares her story of raising a twin without his twin.

page 3

Baby Aurelius

What had planned to be just a routine check-up on the twins, turned into a delivery, and then a "Hello" to one baby and "Goodbye" to the other.

page 4

Vanished

Captured briefly in an ultrasound, but forever in the hearts of her family, Stormy shares the story of Baby Joy, twin to their living son.

page 20

September/October Topic

*Moments and Dates Stamped
Forever in Our Hearts
Deadline: July 31, 2018*

November/December Topic

*Holidays
Deadline: September 30, 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 send any submissions to our Newsletter Editor, Jennifer Harrison, at jennifer@mend.org. Any submission printed in our newsletter will also be posted to our website indefinitely. Because our newsletters are posted online, please understand your name will be attached to your submission when searched on the Internet.

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to be published in future issues, both in the print version and online, unless a letter's author expressly requests it not be published.

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

<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 Article

Surviving Twin

Our children in heaven are what brought each of the leaders to M.E.N.D., but each of our stories are different. For this issue, I want to thank Brandee Dill of our Board of Directors for sharing her story as our feature article, the love of her twins, with one being in heaven, and the other still with her today.

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



Paxton celebrating his first earthly birthday, while Cooper was celebrating his first heavenly birthday.

Written by Brandee Dill

Mommy to Cooper and Baby Dill

M.E.N.D.—Board of Directors

Our world was forever changed...twice. In October 2002, we found out we were expecting babies #3 and #4. Twins were NEVER on our radar. This meant bigger car, bigger house, twice the diapers, twice the exhaustion but twice the love and cuddles. As big as an adjustment doubling our number of children was going to be, it was nothing compared to NOT having to get a bigger car, a bigger house and twice the diapers. On May 26, 2003, the unfathomable became a reality.

Early Delivery

I went to the hospital because I hadn't felt Twin B move quite as much as usual. I wasn't too worried though. I was 38 weeks pregnant with twins and at the very large and very uncomfortable part of my pregnancy. When I arrived at the hospital, staff connected me to the monitors and eventually found two heartbeats. Whew...crisis averted... or so we thought. One heartbeat was definitely fainter than the other, but it was there. They soon realized Twin B's heartbeat was actually the echo from Twin A. An emergency C-section was immediately scheduled. Paxton Ray Dill and Cooper Graham Dill were

both delivered into our hearts, but only Paxton was placed in my arms and Cooper was placed into Jesus's.

Paxton was released from the NICU so we could attend Cooper's funeral as a family. How could this really be happening? How could we survive this? The flood of emotions was almost too much to bear. One second I would be crying uncontrollably because I was so happy to have Paxton home with us. The next second I was crying uncontrollably because I wanted Cooper here with me. Instead of my arms aching from holding my baby boys for hours on end, they ached in a way I never even dreamed was possible. I wanted to have and hold both my boys in my arms. I wanted to see them sleeping side-by-side, wearing their matching outfits and growing up TOGETHER.

The Dreams

All of the dreams I had from the moment the doctor said "twins" would never fully come to be. It would always be that half of the dream was here and half was missing. My heart could be so full of joy all the while having a giant hole in it. And as much as I wanted Cooper here with me, I also wanted him here for Paxton. It wasn't right that this sweet baby boy should have to grow up without his sidekick... the one he could share any secret

with, his forever playmate, the one who knew him better than anyone. I wondered if he would always feel like something was missing in his life. We have always talked about Cooper, so there was never a time when we had to sit Paxton down to explain who Cooper was. Well, that's not entirely true. When Paxton was about three years old, he went through a period where he thought Cooper was a sheep. (There is a little lamb on Cooper's headstone.)

Paxton Growing Up

It has been both heartwarming and heart wrenching to watch Paxton deal with growing up without Cooper. When he was younger, Paxton would talk about him playing in heaven, wonder what his favorite toy was and what he was doing. He even mentioned a few times seeing Cooper playing in his room. As he started Kindergarten, things became a little harder. There were four Kindergarten classrooms, and each one of them had a set of identical twins except his. At first, I thought I was the only one who noticed, but shortly after school started, Paxton mentioned he wished his brother was in his class like the other twins so that he would always have someone to play with. It broke my heart all over again.

Continued on page 16.

Baby Aurelius

Written by Veronica Torres

Mommy to Aurelius

M.E.N.D.—Dallas

Just a routine check-up on the babies... just an ultrasound... just to make sure everything with the babies was okay. But it was at that check-up my world began to shift.

The First Signs

It was about 10:00 a.m., and the sonographer conducted her regular process for a check-up and took a look at the size of the babies. She noticed something different, though. Aurelius's heartbeat seemed off. She excused herself to advise Dr. Martin of the irregular heartbeat. Dr. Martin and the sonographer returned to the room and advised me they were sending me to see the specialist in the same building, Dr. Weiss, to take a better look at what was happening with Aurelius's heart.

I waited longer than usual to see this doctor, but I really didn't think anything was wrong, since they still didn't express urgency or concern. But as soon as Dr. Weiss came in to conduct the ultrasound, he told me I would be delivering the babies within the next hour or so. He said Aurelius's heart was having trouble, and I needed to have the babies today. He advised me to call my husband to notify him of what was happening. I called Ade to tell him he needed to come right away if he wanted to be here when the babies were born, and, ironically, he was already on his way.

Labor and Delivery

Dr. Weiss's nurse helped me into a wheelchair and wheeled me to the hospital labor and delivery to prepare for the delivery of the babies. By this point, my anxiety began to kick in, and I was worried about what was happening. It seemed like forever, but doctors began arriving and starting the procedures to prepare me for delivery. A few minutes later, Ade arrived just in time to see me receive my epidural.

Dr. Martin was nowhere to be found, but they wheeled me into the delivery room anyway. Ade was prepped and ready in his scrubs. The doctors began to move faster than expected. I remember hearing a doctor ask for Dr. Martin, and someone replied he was still on the way. The doctor said he was starting without him.

At this time, I began to panic. I felt them actually cutting my belly, I felt the most excruciating pain of my life. The epidural had not begun its work, and I

could feel the entire incision being cut. I screamed and told Ade to tell them to stop; I could feel everything. The doctor stopped and began to give me more medication. I was in a complete panic attack at this point. All I could remember is my leg shaking and feeling so overwhelmed with anxiety.

Another presence in the room

Within seconds, though, I saw my dad enter the room. He was in a white t-shirt and jeans. He came in and stood to my right shoulder. He didn't say anything; his face was stoic and calm. My grandmother entered right after him; she was surrounded by a pink light. She stood to my left shoulder near Ade. My grandfather (Welo) came right behind her. They all came in quiet and very observant of what was going on. I was a little confused to see them. You see, they had all passed away.

I looked at Ade and told him that they were there. Then, I really started to think of WHY they were there... I was thinking "They are here for me." I was calm and a little too cool to even be scared. I was ready, too. I thought, "This is it... I am on my way to cross over." I turned to Ade and told him... "I think they are here for me." Ade was in tears and just staring at me. I told Ade "Let me just ask my dad if they are here for me."

"Dad, are you here for me?"

He simply shook his head and said no, not audibly, but more telepathically.

Feeling cool and reassured, I looked over at Ade and told him, "Oh no, they are not here for me."

I looked at my dad and couldn't help but tell him how much I loved him and how I missed him terribly. I told him I had so much to tell him, and I missed him so much (Ade later told me I was mumbling). I was so overwhelmed with my father being present and took advantage of the opportunity to talk to him that I totally forgot what was really happening.

But, then it did hit me, and I realized... if they were not here to take me... that meant they were here for my babies.

I immediately started having anxiety and felt like I couldn't breathe. I felt a heavy pain in my chest, so hard I was shaking and felt trapped in a muddy hole. I knew I couldn't move; the only thing I could think about was not having control over what was happening to me at that very moment. I felt helpless.

I looked up, and knew that this was the moment, the moment I spent 40 years trying to learn about... the surrendering we learn and hear about from our early teaching in church. It came so naturally, with fear of course, but I was ready to experience the power, so I did it. I just cried... "GOD, I SURRENDER!"

The minute I said that, I felt my body pop up and a ring come to my ear. I saw a white light beam and I felt

like I left my body for a second and came back down to my body on the table.

After this moment, I started to realize I didn't hear any babies crying when I knew I should be hearing them. I looked at Ade and saw him crying. I asked "Where are my babies?" The doctors brought Anais over to my head and showed me my little angel.

I then looked around and asked, "Where is my son?" The doctor replied, "He's over there in the corner..." When I looked over, he was being resuscitated. I could see the doctor with a balloon pushing air to him. I then knew...my dad and my welo and wela were coming for Aurelius. My heart sank.

I turned to my dad and asked him, "Are you taking my ONLY son?" He nodded and said yes.

I felt numb. I was lost for words.

At that very moment, I felt the feeling I could only read about...I thought of Jesus and the crucifixion. I thought if I got angry in that moment, and I didn't have a right. I started to feel the burn of love in my heart. My only thought was the sacrifice God had made, and even more the Virgin Mary, to each give their only Son. How could I possibly get upset? God just sent the most beautiful angels to cover me and comfort the miracle that was happening right before my eyes.

I already knew my son was no longer in his little body. I knew that moment was a transformation for my death and the new life I would step into. My son had crossed over, and my faith was expanded. In the matter of minutes, God moved in the biggest way imaginable. Time had stopped, and my spirit and soul transformed like a butterfly coming out of the dark cocoon. I had nothing more to think about that involved fear. I was in awe of the magic and the event that just took place.

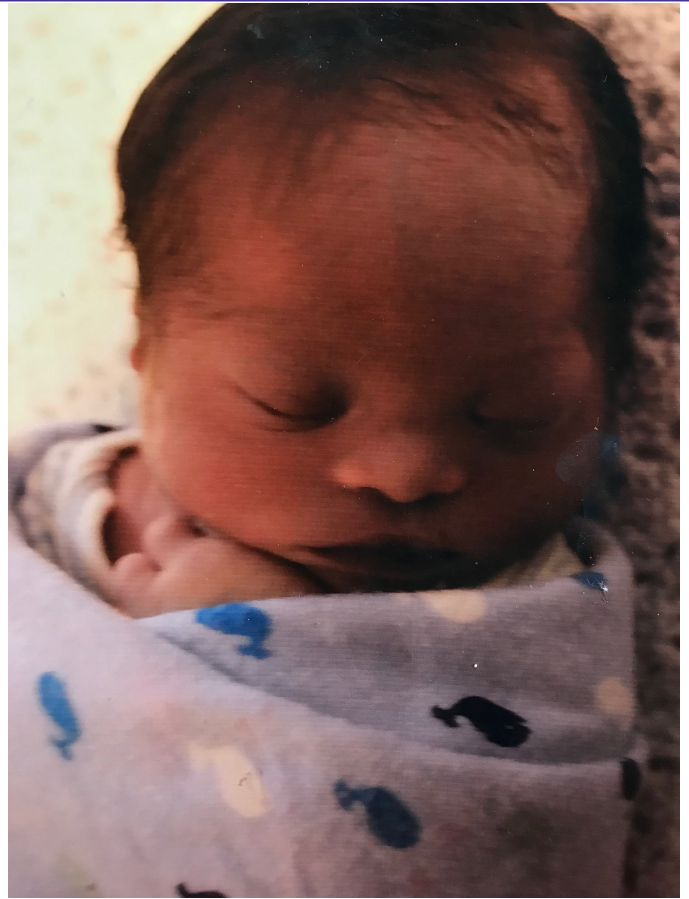
After Delivery

My dad stayed with me. They wheeled me into the recovery room with Ade and Anais.

I was still in shock and couldn't believe what was happening. I held Anais and felt like I was dreaming. I



Baby Anais, surviving twin of Aurelius



Baby Aurelius, brother to surviving twin Anais, who gave his mom the strength to surrender.

wasn't scared, I wasn't sad...I was numb. I was still wondering how my father was there and how my son was about to die. Ade was quiet as I. I couldn't even enjoy holding my Anais because I was in shock. The nurse came to see us and noticed Anais was breathing heavy. She took her to the NICU to be near Aurelius and to be monitored. They decided to put me in a private room. I think they thought at any minute I would lose myself. I vividly remember my nurse telling me the nurses were all talking about how calm I was. They were waiting for me to lose it. I remember thinking... "Is this happening? Really?"

I remember my nurse was named Amber Rose. I told her, "I just saw my deceased father and grandparents, and I think I am in shock of seeing them and having them come to take my son." I was simply in total shock. I couldn't really take what had just happened and easily "digest" it. I also told her I practice yoga, and yoga has saved my life and was saving me now. She just glanced at me in surprise.

We waited in the room while doctors continued to come in to tell us Aurelius was not breathing on his own and several tests were being done. They had yet to say what was really happening. They kept saying, "We are running tests." Deep in my heart and in my mind, I

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already knew where this was going. I still stayed numb. My father remained by my side.

I remained in my room in a state of shock. Ade would come and go between me and the kids, so while he was gone, I was in the room alone with my father. I prayed. I cried. I stared into space. I didn't know what to feel.

Why was this happening to me? Why was my father still here? What am I supposed to do? I couldn't move. I was stuck in that bed and couldn't see my babies. I felt so helpless.

Ade returned and stayed by my side, and we would just cry. I began to think about what the doctors were going to say. I began to think about the decisions I was going to have to make. I called my friends, my mom and my cousins. I asked for prayers. I texted my prayer warriors to start praying for our boy.

My friends started calling; people started to come in the room and visit. I still hadn't been able to see my son. It was nighttime, and my father stayed by my side. My friends came and left. It was Ade and me left.

I told Ade we needed to pray. I told him if the doctors came in and told us we need to make a decision I did not want to make it alone. I wanted it to be something we decided together. We prayed for a miracle and prayed for God's guidance and peace.

They allowed me to see my son and asked if I wanted to baptize him, which we did. I was wheeled into the NICU and still couldn't believe my son was there on life support. Helpless. He was so small and fragile. I didn't know if I could hold him, talk to him,

nothing. I was numbed. I think I knew it was just a body. No soul, no spirit. We prayed over him and went back to our room to rest for a big morning. My father remained with me.

The next morning, I woke to what I knew would be the worst day of my life. I knew in waking I had to decide if I would keep my son on life support or allow him to go where instinctively I knew he belonged.

As we opened the blinds in the hospital room, I heard a familiar song on the TV. It was my father's favorite song, "Holding Back the Years" by Simply Red. The one song I played at my wedding in remembrance of my father. My body was covered with chills. I knew it was my father showing his comfort and presence to help me get through this terrible moment of decision.

The Goodbye

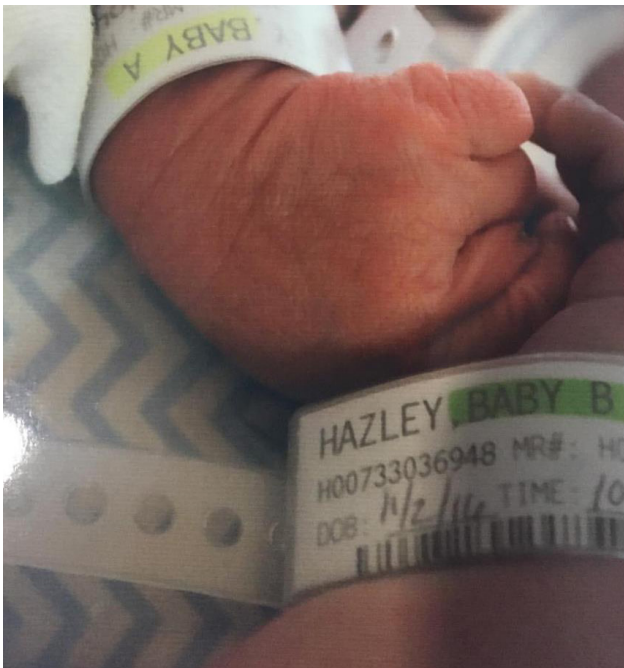
The doctors came in, and we headed downstairs to say our goodbyes to our only son. As I was wheeled out of the room, I was met by my cousins who had just arrived from Austin and were waiting to be with us (another of God's moment of grace - the only comfort and familiar faces of life that my family could give). We hugged and cried and took the dreaded elevator ride to the NICU. We passed my friends in the waiting room, shedding and sharing more tears.

There he was...small and fragile, sweet and angelic. Everything was moving in slow motion with intense piercing of pain and love. Pain, because of the fear, and love, because of the rites that just happened. I was still overwhelmed with the feeling that God loved me enough to send my father, grandparents, songs, signs and my closest cousins to be there with me at this very moment. I was not alone. I was loved and held.

As the Father came in the room, and my son was given to me to hold, I prayed. I smelled his head; I admired every little wrinkle, crease, hair and nails of this beautiful soul. I wept. Every little ounce of my being felt gone. I felt the heaviness of my body with the same feeling of light, like a feather. It was a transition of peace in pain. The SURRENDER.

We kissed... and his heart stopped.

A piece of me left that very moment, and I grew into another frequency that was not familiar, but again.. I just surrendered.



My Girls

By LaRhessa Johnson

Mommy to Kaiya

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

“Dear Lord, I know what you want me to do,
but Lord please don’t make me.
I am not strong enough to handle this.”



Pregnant with twin girls, in a hospital room because one was on her way, I prayed this prayer to God. I knew what he wanted me to do. I knew what was best for her because I am her mother. It will still be the hardest words I have ever spoken in my life. “No, I do not want the NICU to perform life saving measures after she is born.” With those words spoken, Kaiya Dawn was born weighing 1 pound, 1 ounce. She lived for 49 minutes and passed away peacefully in my arms, surrounded by family.

The Decision

On October 21, pregnant with twins, my water broke while I was lying down, watching television. What I remember most following the night my water broke, was the neonatal doctor coming and explaining all of the options that lay before me. Kaiya had been without amniotic fluid for two days at that point, and they were pretty certain she had some type of infection. The amniotic sac of her twin, Kaidyn Jamiel, however, was still intact.

Any decision I made could possibly affect both of the babies I was carrying. So I had to decide, did I want the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit to intervene upon delivery? At this time, I was 23 weeks pregnant; past the point of viability, but had not received all of the steroid shots necessary to make my babies’ lungs strong enough to survive outside of the womb. It was in this moment I had to make the hardest decision I have ever made

in my entire life. I asked everyone to leave the room while I prayed and asked God for guidance and strength.

The Uncertainties

The doctors said there was a possibility that once I delivered Kaiya, my labor would stop, but I needed to be prepared. The doctors said Kaidyn would most likely come within 24 hours after Kaiya was born, and that may not be enough time for the steroids to work and make her lungs strong enough to breathe on her own. The doctors told us to be prepared for the worst being that Kaidyn most likely would not survive.

The Births

Through tears, Kaiya Dawn was born and by the grace of God my labor stopped after her delivery. Six days later, to the amazement of my doctors, I delivered her twin, Kaidyn Jamiel, breach and with her sac still intact.

The Futures

So here we are eight years later... What is it like being the mother of twins, but one is in heaven? It’s hard, but such a blessing. The most difficult part has been conversations with Kaidyn. She misses her twin daily. She does not miss a moment to proudly say “I have a sister that is in heaven!” But when it’s just her and I, she always asks the hard questions. “Why did Kaiya have to die?” “Can I go to heaven to see her?”

I have found that healing for both of us has come from talking

about Kaiya. While some days it is so hard, and I am often fighting tears, I never shy away from telling her all about her sister. We talk about what we think she is doing in heaven and about making good choices so that we will one day be together again in heaven. We remember Kaiya in everything we do. For any family photos we include her Molly Bear or a hand-drawn picture I had commissioned of Kaiya. Kaidyn always draws Kaiya in her pictures. She wanted butterflies on her wall to remind her of her sister; of course, Kaiya is the butterfly in front. My family also has been wonderful in remembering Kaiya. They talk about her as well and still gather with me to remember her birthday and to support any events I do in memory of her.

Kaiya and Kaidyn’s story was not one I was prepared for, but it has been one that has brought such joy to my life to share. I proudly say I am a twin mom and will talk about my twins every chance I get.





Birthday Tributes

Happy 30th Birthday, Wesley!
We miss you more than anything!

Wesley Scott Turner
August 12, 1988
Potter's Syndrome
Parents: Charlie and Amber Turner
Siblings: Drew and Chris



Happy 5th Birthday, Baby Davis!

While we may never know
Whether you were a girl or boy
Sweet baby, today you would be four
In Heaven, someday, we will enjoy
Forever your presence on a cloudy shore
In Memoriam of Cherry Blossom

Baby Davis
Miscarried July 24, 2013
Unknown cause
Parents: Shawn and Kathi Davis



Happy 2nd Birthday, Saul!

God blessed us with your beautiful soul, Mijo!
We never knew being parents would even be a possibility, so when God took you back as one of His little angels, we felt the worst pain of our lives. Shortly after, we were overwhelmed with peace as we knew that your life had a bigger purpose. You are the reason we will continue to make every moment count, and follow our journey to parenthood. Thank you for always sending us signs that you are near. Enjoy your birthday with all of our family in heaven! We miss you every day!

Happy 2nd birthday, Mario Saul Montes. We love you so much!

Mario Saul Montes
August 30, 2016
Placental abruption
Parents: Mario and Alva Montes
Siblings: Bear, Lady and Elaine



Happy 2nd Birthday, Greyson!

Happy 2nd birthday, baby boy! Mommy loves you! I know you see me with your sister; thank you for sending me her. I know you're having lots of cake and ice cream in baby heaven! Don't eat too much sweets! You're always in my heart. We love you forever, Greyson!

Mommy and Daddy

Greyson Garza
July 20, 2016
Unknown cause
Parents: Gilbert Garza and Tehrie Tryon
Little sister: Giannah



Happy 2nd Birthday, Jude!

Happy 2nd birthday to our angel! We still miss you and wish you were here with us every day, but I know God has bigger plans for you. You are a very important part of our family and I know you are watching over us from heaven. We love you so much.

Love,
Mom, Dad, Joey and June

Jude William Henrich
August 19, 2016
Genetic disorder
Parents: Joe and Jane Henrich
Siblings: Joey and June



Happy 11th Birthday, Jaylen!

Happy heavenly birthday, Jaylen! It has been 11 years since I held your lifeless body in my arms, and I miss you so much. I wish you were here with me every single day. I love you with all of my heart and everything inside of me.

Love you forever and always,
Mommy!

Jaylen Montrell Matlock
Stillborn July 15, 2007
Mommy: Torie Myers



Happy 14th Birthday, Noah!

I knew you, before I knew your name
I loved you, before I saw your face
I longed for you for all of that time
and I held your heart in mine

I kissed you a hundred million times
I tasted the tears that I cried
I held you my beautiful child
and I'll keep your heart in mine

I never knew a love like this
could ever possibly exist,
I love you to the moon and back
as long as I live
lyrics by: Coby Grant

Happy 14th birthday to our angel in the sky, Noah
Adam Barron.

Mommy, Daddy, your bubbas and sissy miss and
love you so much! Till we meet again, baby boy... we
will carry your heart in ours!

Noah Adam Barron

July 5-19, 2004

Hypoplasia Lung Syndrome

Parents: Clem and Lupe Barron

Siblings: AJ, Damien, Naomi and Nicholas

**Happy 13th Birthday, Ryland!**

Happy 13th birthday in heaven!
Until we see you again... XOXO
We love and miss you,
Mommy, Daddy, Sissy and Conor

Ryland Michael Dixon

Stillborn August 12, 2005

Parents: Bryan and Kelly Dixon

Siblings: Leighanne and Conor

**Happy 1st Birthday, Addilyn!**

Happy 1st birthday our sweet Addilyn. Mommy
and Daddy miss and love you so much. We wish you
were here to meet your new baby sister. It's been a
rough year without you, but one day we will all meet
again.

Addilyn Claire Ernest

Stillborn July 12, 2017

Parents: Ellyce and Ronnie Ernest

Sister: Genevieve

**Happy 4th Birthday, Trinity Ann!**

Happy heavenly 4th birthday to our sweet Trinity
Ann. How in the world are you turning 4, sweet girl?
Time flies so fast but our love for you is still the
same. If only we could celebrate with you; what a
day that would be. Until then we will hold you in our
hearts and celebrate here. We love you to heaven
and back, baby girl. Happy birthday!

Love,

Mommy, Daddy, Sissy and Bubba

Trinity Ann Faram

August 1, 2014

Placental abruption

Parents: Brad and Elizabeth Faram

Siblings: Emma and Brentley

**Happy 14th Birthday, Jordyn!**

Sis, this was going to be our year starting high
school together. I know you will always be by my
side. Twin power. You are forever and always in our
hearts.

Happy birthday! We love you!

Mommy, Daddy, Jada and Bruce Jr

Jordyn Lynae Johnson

July 13-16, 2004

Cord problems

Parents: Bruce and Debra Johnson Sr.

Siblings: Jada (her twin) and Bruce Jr

**Happy 7th Birthday, Aubree Faith!**

My sweet love bug, you are 7 years old this year.
More than 2500 days have passed since you left me
to join God in heaven. Some days it feels like mere
moments have passed since you left, while other days
it feels like a lifetime. I miss you more than words
could ever express and love you even more than
that. We are going to the beach this summer. I can
almost imagine you smiling and laughing in the waves
with your big sissy. Your big brother is turning 16 this
summer. Can you imagine him picking you up from
school and taking you for ice cream? Oh what fun you
would be having with them! Love you!

Aubree Faith Carmichall

August 8, 2011

Uterine rupture

Mommy: Kelly Carmichall

Siblings: Ryan and Breean



Happy 12th Birthday, Livi!

Sweet girl it has been 12 years since we held you and looked at every inch of you. Staring so hard so we would not forget. It no longer feels like it was yesterday, but we know we will see you again one day and, oh, what a joyous day that will be. Your grandmother joined you recently, and I know she is in awe and taking good care of you. We love and miss you every day. Happy 12th birthday!

Love,
Mommy, Daddy, Jaxson and Lauryn

Alivia Elizabeth-Grace Walker
July 24, 2006
Incompetent cervix
Parents: Robert and Liz Walker
Siblings: Jaxson and Lauryn

**Happy 1st Birthday, Jonathan!**

Jonathan, happy 1st birthday! Hopefully you are celebrating in heaven with Mimi. We love and miss you so much!

Jonathan Reed McGeever
August 12, 2017
Extreme prematurity
Parents: BJ and Allison McGeever

**Happy 6th Birthday, Catherine!**

You are so missed and loved. Having your brother here this year has been so great, but it has made me miss you terribly. I wonder about so much...who you'd be, what you'd love and what facial expressions you'd inherit. I wish I could just sit with you for a day or just see your smile. I know someday I will. Until we meet again, my sweet girl, thank you for making me a mother. All our love to you in heaven!

Catherine Grace Wilkerson
August 10, 2012
Extreme prematurity caused by H.E.L.L.P
Parents: Charles and Kara Wilkerson
Brother: Cannon

**Happy 8th Birthday, Jason!**

Happy birthday, Jason! My how the years have gone by. It is so hard to believe you would be 8 years old this year. How would our family life be different? Who would your friends be? So many questions in our hearts left unanswered. We miss you so much each and every day. We love you and can't wait until one day when we are all together as a complete family in heaven.

Love,
Mommy and Daddy

Happy birthday, Jason! I wonder what kind of cake you would want?! We really love you and we really like that you believe in Jesus and are in heaven,

Love,
Trevor and Evan

Jason Michael Murphy
July 29, 2010
Unknown cause
Parents: Michael and Diana Murphy
Brothers: Trevor and Evan

**Happy 1st Birthday, Yuliette!**

Happy birthday, princess! Not a day goes by we don't think about you. A year since my heart kept beating but yours stopped. A year since I got to hold you in my arms. A year since my life has never been the same without you. We miss you so much. I just imagine how it would be like celebrating you're 1st birthday here with us, but I know you're having a beautiful birthday party in heaven. Have fun on your birthday, my little princess! We are so grateful you chose us to be your parents.

We love you so much,
Daddy, Mommy and big brother Abraham

Yuliette Ayleen Bustamante
August 31, 2017
Cord accident
Parents: Angel and Yesenia Bustamante
Big brother: Abraham



Happy 8th Birthday, Caelan!

Caelan, we miss you so much and can't believe how fast time has gone. We wish you could be here to play with all of us. We think of you always. Until we can hold you again in heaven, the hope we have of eternity is our anchor. We love you with all of our hearts and miss you. Happiest of birthdays! Wish we were all together.

Love,
Mom, Dad, Finlea, Kallie (the dog)

Caelan Matthew Wallace

July 31–August 3, 2010

Premature birth

Also Remembering

Oakley Jaden Wallace

Olivia Hope Wallace

Lincoln Avritt Wallace

Parents: Andy and Dana Wallace

Sister: Finlea Rose



Happy 1st Birthday, Aaron!

Happy heavenly 1st birthday, Aaron! Mommy, Daddy and your big sister miss you so very much. We made a promise to honor you every day here on earth and to keep our faith in God to get us through the storms. Thank you, Papa, for giving us more love in our hearts. There are no words to describe this pain every day without you here, but Mommy is getting through this with her strength through God in faith. Our family will all be together again one day, until then, I will be strong for you always, Aaron. You will always be our anchor! #Aaronisouranchor

Aaron Gabriel Labiosa

Stillborn July 10, 2017

Preeclampsia

Parents: Carlos Gabriel and Cynthia Labiosa

Sister: Nicolette (Nikki)



Happy 10th Birthday, CJ! Happy 9th Birthday, Marina!

Even though there are fewer tears, we still miss you and wish you were here. Your older sister, Emily, received her first degree blackbelt this March. I so badly wanted you to be there to cheer her on and celebrate her accomplishment. It also made me wonder how we would be celebrating you.

Even though there are many things we cannot do together right now, I take comfort in knowing when I praise the Father, you two are also praising Him, and therefore that is the one thing we can do together.

Love, Mommy, Daddy and Emily

CJ Gold

Miscarried August 12, 2008

Marina Gold

Miscarried July 14, 2009

Parents: Greg and Kathryn Gold

Big sister: Emily



Happy 1st Birthday, Zoey!

Happy birthday, sweetness! We love and miss you so much! Our Cuddle Bug, the 4 months you were here, you impacted our lives. The accomplishments your sisters have made are all because of you. We know you are guiding them to do better! Peyton talks about you every day. She loves her baby sister! Zoey, you will forever be our guardian angel until we are together again. You will never be forgotten. You will always be forever loved and missed! We thank God for blessing us with such a beautiful angel!

In your life you touched so many.

In your death many lives were changed.

Melinda Jones

Zoey Von Martinez

August 16–December 16, 2017

Respiratory failure

Parents: Eli and Vanessa Martinez

Sisters: Cecilia, Deja and Peyton



Not What We Envisioned

By Brittany Sawyers

Mommy to Khloe

M.E.N.D.—Bryan/College Station

As soon as we learned we were expecting twins, we started planning for two of everything. I had this vision of always having these matching babies with matching things.

Of course there was a lot of risk in the pregnancy, and I was always scared when I went to appointments. I had this overwhelming fear I would only bring one baby home. However, by the grace of God, we delivered two premature baby girls. I remember the overwhelming sense of joy and gratitude for my life and our new additions. Derik and I were the first in either of our families to have twins. This was an exciting and joyous time for our families. All our family and friends had celebrated with us with a huge baby shower, so I had all the matching outfits and baby items.

Our kids were excited too. During the twins' NICU stay, our older kids were able to visit the twins. They were so excited to have two babies. Our 14-month-old just could not stop kissing the twins when they finally made it home. Our marriage was perfect, and we each pulled our weight in caring for all the kids. I cannot remember a happier time in our lives.



One-month pictures of Khloe and Kylie together.



But when we unexpectedly lost Khloe, it cracked our foundation (to read more of the story of Khloe, please see the article "When the Unexpected Happens" on page 17 of our May/June 2018 Mother's Day/Father's Day issue, which is available at www.mend.org/newsletters-recent/). The kids struggled understanding loss, and it was so depressing to our families as most had not had the chance to meet them yet. The family who did meet them regretted not holding her more.

Kylie started needing someone with her at all times. The night before we lost Khloe was one of my fondest memories. They were both fussing, so I laid Kylie on Khloe, and they both stopped crying. When we lost Khloe, Kylie always needed someone holding her. She needed the comfort of another heartbeat near her. We struggled for six months helping her adjust to being put down to play or sleep.

The loss created many issues throughout our marriage and changed our parenting abilities. We were always at different areas of our

grief, which made it really difficult to hold things together. Somehow, we found middle ground and held each other's weight when needed.

The hardest part for me was allowing myself grace. I always want to take the kids here or there and make plans to attend parties or gatherings. I had to learn to



allow myself grace and give myself permission to not attend all these extra things. I found when I did things out of our routine, I was miserable.

The kids still mention Khloe frequently, and we take her urn out randomly and hold her. We still take monthly pictures with Kylie and Khloe. It's just not the way we envisioned it.

I think the hardest part for us is seeing other healthy twins, because that should have been us. It's bittersweet for us because we can look at Kylie and know exactly what she would look like, but not what her personality would be like.



Monthly picture with Kylie, not the same without Khloe.

Life With and Without Riley

By Katie Rohruff

Mommy to Riley



Payton holding a photo of herself and Riley

Early News

My husband and I were thrilled to learn we were pregnant in May of 2009.

We had an early ultrasound due to spotting, and this ultrasound revealed we were having twins.

I was shocked and scared. The doctor said the twins may be monoamniotic, which means one placenta and only one amniotic sac for both the babies. Unfortunately, I

had to wait until I was 10 weeks along to see a specialist to rule this out. During this waiting period, we kept our pregnancy a secret.

10 Weeks

Finally, at 10 weeks I saw the fetal maternal medicine specialist who was able to tell us the twins were not monoamniotic but were identical. They discussed all the potential dangers and complications of an identical twin pregnancy.

We soon after told our family about the babies. I was constantly nauseous and puking daily but trying to enjoy the pregnancy.

20 Weeks

At 20 weeks we went in for the anatomy ultrasound and learned the twins were girls. As with the other ultrasound, this one revealed something more. It showed two problems with baby A's umbilical cord. We were nervous but told we'd be closely monitored due to these problems.

25 Weeks

I was placed on bed rest at 25 weeks due to growth restriction of baby A. I enjoyed getting to leave the house for weekly appointments with the specialist and also seeing my regular OB/GYN.

30 Weeks

On November 3, 2009, at 30 weeks, I had a scheduled appointment. We saw on the ultrasound Twin A's heart was barely beating. They quickly checked Twin B, which was good, but the concern was for Twin A. I was rushed to the birthing center and had an emergency c-section at 30 weeks.

Since there wasn't much time, I had to go under general anesthesia. I woke up asking a dreaded question: did we have one or two girls survive?

At 3:43 p.m., Riley Katheryn was stillborn. At 3:44 p.m., her identical twin sister, Payton Grace, was born and was rushed to the neonatal intensive care unit. We struggled with the joy of delivering our girls but losing one and the other in NICU.

Family came to the hospital to help... to help during the waiting time to meet and hold Payton as she was on a ventilator, and to help plan a burial for Riley. Three days after delivery, we were finally able to hold Payton, but I was also discharged and we left the hospital empty-handed. Three days after that, surrounded by family and friends, we laid Riley to rest with a small burial service.

Life Without Riley

We tried to find a balance after all this, grieving a loss and visiting the hospital multiple times each day to see our surviving daughter. Thirty-eight days after her birth, Payton finally came home from the hospital. We cherished every moment with her but always wondered what it would have been like to have both girls at home.

After some time, I felt a desperate need to have another child (I felt I was supposed to have 2 babies at home). We learned we were pregnant nine months after having the twins and were terrified and excited. My OB/GYN did an early ultrasound to confirm the pregnancy and check if it was only one baby, which it was. It was very emotional pregnancy and very different from the first one. I had a very supportive OB/GYN who helped to frequently monitor for my sanity. We chose to not find out gender of this baby. We didn't prepare with excitement like our first pregnancy, the pregnancy of the twins, because we were scared of losing another baby. We welcomed with joy our rainbow baby, Morgan Rose, born on May 21, 2011.

We are blessed to have three children, two at home and one in our hearts.

Payton and Morgan both talk of their sister Riley often, which brings me joy. I feel a connection to Riley in both her twin and the child we had after our loss.

We now run a non-profit organization in Riley's memory to help families in Michigan with funeral and burial expenses for the loss of a baby, which is called the Riley Katheryn Foundation, which you can learn more about at www.rileykatherynfoundation.org.



Katie, mom, and Payton, surviving twin, at Riley's grave.

M.E.N.D. CHAPTER UPDATES

Greater Houston Area

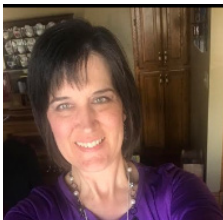
M.E.N.D.–Greater Houston Area delivered 172 bears to local hospitals as part of our new bear ministry! We are so blessed by the donations that made this possible. If you want to sponsor bears in memory of your baby for local mommies in the hospital when they lose a baby, please contact stormym@mend.org.

We are also saddened to announce that we have closed the Bellaire location meeting. We will still have our meetings in the Woodlands and Katy every month, as well as Kingwood opening this Fall. If you feel like the Lord is leading you to serve the families in the Central or South Houston area, please email rebekah@mend.org for more information on how to start a satellite chapter of M.E.N.D.–Greater Houston Area. As always, we are praying for all of you and for each family who will join us in the coming months.



Stormy

SW Missouri



M.E.N.D.–SW Missouri continues to meet the needs of our families through our meetings, Facebook group and advocating on their behalf. Please save the dates for our recognition ceremonies coming up.

Balloon Release: October 13, at 10:00 a.m., Hillside Baptist Church-please bring a breakfast item to share.

Christmas Candlelight Ceremony: December 10, at 7:00 p.m., Second Baptist Church.

Kathryn

NW Washington

M.E.N.D.–NW Washington was honored to sponsor and provide refreshments for a grief seminar, hosted by Rachel Lewis, for four weeks in June. What a blessing her seminar was to those who attended. Also, in June, I was honored to speak at Crossroads Neighborhood Church at the end of a 12-week class, the last three focusing on grief. I was able to share "What to say/what not to say" to a grieving parent after the loss of a baby. Our hope is that by sharing we can continue to break the silence surrounding the loss of a baby, and teach others how to support families during their grief.



Stacy



Chicagoland

M.E.N.D.–Chicagoland continues to minister to grieving families in the Chicagoland area. We want to be intentional this summer in continuing to get the word out about M.E.N.D. to more hospitals in the Chicagoland Metroplex area about the resources we can offer to their families when they lose a baby.

Sara

Tulsa

M.E.N.D.–Tulsa continues to minister to grieving families in the Tulsa and surrounding areas. If you know someone who could use our support, please have them contact me at lisa@mend.org or 918-694-4325 (HEAL).



Lisa

Bryan/College Station

M.E.N.D.–Bryan/College Station is growing and continuing to reach the families of Brazos County. Stormy, M.E.N.D.–Greater Houston Area Chapter Director, and I were able to represent M.E.N.D. at a lecture on Palliative and Hospice Care for babies who have received a life limiting diagnosis. One of my favorite things M.E.N.D. provides is resources and trainings to medical professionals on caring for families like ours.



We also had a wonderful Ladies Night Out of fun and fellowship, while supporting another non-profit called Angel Gowns by Diane. We collected formal wear and wedding gowns which this nonprofit group will use to turn into burial gowns and tuxedos for babies who pass away.

Be sure to join our Facebook page for upcoming events and meeting information.

Jennie

MidMichigan



M.E.N.D.–MidMichigan is pleased to announce we have completed our funding for M.E.N.D.–MidMichigan and our launch date will be Tuesday, September 4! We will meet the first Tuesday of every month from 7-9 p.m. at Ashman Plaza, home of Live Oak Coffeehouse and Captured Photography. We're looking forward to sharing hope and comfort to those who have experienced neonatal death and infant loss in the Tri-Cities. Please help us spread the word if you have family or friends in the MidMichigan area.

Karen

Palm Beach, Florida



M.E.N.D.–Palm Beach, Florida is continuing to work on our new chapter in Palm Beach, Florida. Continue to watch for details!

Jessica

**New Chapter Opening Soon:
COLORADO!**



M.E.N.D.ing Miles Virtual 5k

To commemorate Bereaved Mother's Day in May, we hosted our first virtual 5k fundraiser. Not only did this event raise money for our individual chapters of M.E.N.D., it allowed the leadership from each chapter to collaborate on ideas and strategy - which was a great and unifying experience for us. Mainly though, this unique fundraiser gave families from all over the United States the opportunity to do something fun, different, and worthwhile in memory of their baby. Each participant who registered at the \$35 level received a medal that was custom-made just for M.E.N.D.ing Miles. And everyone who

registered was emailed a personalized bib they could print and wear when they completed their miles.

We're planning to make this an annual event, so be looking for detailed information in the spring on how you can participate in 2019.



Surviving the Loss of a Twin Sister and a Daughter

Written by Debra and Jada Johnson

Family to Jordyn

M.E.N.D.—Dallas

My Twin Sister

This topic is really hard to talk about. I am a twin, but my sister only lived three days due to cord problems. I just know that we would have been a power duo. I think about all our life moments we could have shared together. We were identical. It would have been fun because we could have tricked teachers and our friends. I miss her so much, but I know she is always by my side. Twin Power forever!

Jada



My daughter

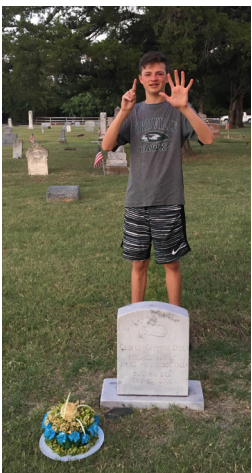
It was the most difficult time a mother could ever experience in life. I listened to their hearts beat every night before bed. Our nursery room was set for my beautiful identical twin girls. I had a healthy pregnancy until the day of the C-section when both my babies came out not breathing due to cord problems. Jada Lynn and Jordyn Lynae both were rushed to NICU. Jada began to breathe on her own, but Jordyn was placed on a ventilator.

My beautiful baby girl never opened her eyes. We kept her on life support for three days, but due to loss of oxygen, she had no brain activity and her organs were shutting down. On July 16, 2004, at 5:00 p.m., I held my baby girl in my arms. We took her off life support and at 5:30, my angel received her wings in heaven.

During our difficult time we were introduced to M.E.N.D. which helped us with the healing process. Each year we attend A Walk to Remember to acknowledge our baby girl. It's going on 14 years, and it never gets easy knowing you had two beautiful identical twins and only one came home. I thank the Lord for blessing me with Jada, and we know Jordyn is in heaven watching over us. She will always be part of us and forever loved.

Debra

"Surviving Twin" continued from page 3.



Celebrating another birthday together, yet so far apart.

As Paxton's older brother entered middle school and became more involved with school activities and friends, the harsh reality of Cooper not being here became very evident again. Tate and Paxton had always been very close and did almost everything together, but big brothers grow up and start to spread their wings. It was a difficult time for Paxton because he felt not only was he "losing" Tate, but the emptiness of not having his twin with him was hard. He would often talk about that if Cooper were here, he would still have someone to throw the ball with or play video games. He was never angry about it. There was just a sadness in his eyes - sometimes with tears and sometimes not.

As Paxton enters high school in the fall, the journey of life without Cooper continues. He is never far from our hearts or our minds. Paxton has a picture of his headstone as his home screen on his phone. He also always picks to be number 7 on his team because Cooper is the 7th member of our family (I miscarried between Tate and the twins). These are things he came up with all on his own to feel a daily connection to his brother. These reminders do not make him feel sad. They make him feel proud he is carrying his twin brother along with him throughout the day. There are times when the tears flow even 15 years later, and we love on each other and talk about our feelings and how much we love and miss him. We wish he were here in our lives every day, but the truth of it is: would we really want to pull him away from the glory of the presence of Jesus? Selfishly: yes, but truthfully, no. Our hearts look forward to the day when we will all be reunited together...What a homecoming that will be!

The Emotional Whirlwind of Losing a Twin

"May Your Life Be Purposeful"

Todd Mitchell, M.A., LPC

Daddy to Gideon, Avery and Joy

One of the most interesting concepts in all of psychology to me is that of cognitive dissonance. Hopefully, you haven't tuned out or scanned to the next article in the newsletter when I dropped a "cognitive dissonance" on you. It is essentially when two competing thoughts are existing in your mind at the same time, creating anxiety. For example, you could feel that stealing is morally wrong but also have a shoplifting addiction. These two thoughts are at odds with one another and lead to confusion in the brain. Your head is basically trying to say "which of these two commands am I supposed to listen to?"

With losing a twin, the cognitive dissonance is even more layered and nuanced than that. One of your children is alive and the other one will either need funeral plans or at least must be mourned, depending on the baby's gestation when they died. How do we cope with that? On the one hand, you have a healthy baby. Society tells us this is a happy moment, where we are supposed to be consumed by baby showers, decorating a new room, and planning their college major (yes, I know how you moms are!). On the other hand, a death has occurred or you have been given a fatal diagnosis, making death almost certain. This is the exact opposite of a happy moment.

So here you are at an impasse, the unbelievably good news and the horrifyingly bad news colliding at 100 mph. Neither force can seem to push the other one back enough for you to have an emotion for a single minute that is not tainted by guilt. If you give in to the feelings of joy, you feel as though you've betrayed the twin who has passed away. If you give in to the feelings of grief, you cannot escape the guilt of ignoring what is happening with your living child. Anytime parents have twins, there is the challenge of split attention. There is one of you and two of them. But when one of the twins is in heaven, it makes for a more complex situation.

Let's discuss three things that you can do to work with the cognitive dissonance you may be facing at losing one of your twins.

First, allow yourself the opportunity to grieve the loss. This will involve a special effort on your part, because doctor appointments lead to delivery which leads to nursing which leads to the million other things a new mom must encounter. Find time in there somewhere for processing that something awful happened to you.

Second, realize that having these competing thoughts should not lead to guilt on your part. It is a normal part of the process. Even Jesus had cognitive dissonance. In the Garden of Gethsemane, in the last moments before the process of his crucifixion would be carried out, he was asking God to "take this cup from me." As badly as he wanted to redeem humanity, he hoped there could be another way besides the cross. That should ease your guilt in knowing that it is so natural to have feelings of dissonance when losing a twin.

Finally, give the living twin as much love, support, and joy as you can muster. With grief, that may not always be easy. But do the best that you can.

Book Review: *My Brother the Angel*

Written and illustrated by Jess Owen

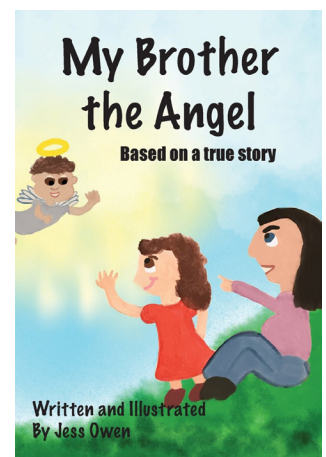
Reviewed by Rebekah Mitchell, Mommy to Jonathan Daniel and Baby Mitchell

M.E.N.D. President/Founder

This is a sweet little children's book that the author, Jess Owen, based on her own experience of losing her baby. It's the story of a little girl who is very excited about becoming a big sister to her baby brother, who is due to arrive in June. One day she noticed her mommy crying, and was told her baby brother went to heaven. Her mom explains, "this isn't a goodbye, but a see you later" - one day we'll all be together again.

The book is cutely illustrated by the author, wonderfully capturing the emotions of all the characters.

"My Brother the Angel" can be purchased on Amazon.



In Loving Memory

Thank YOU for your support

Maya Denise Ates

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

Lauren Autry

June 17—July 2, 2011
Parents: Brandon and Melissa Autry
Sister: Halley
Given by Best Buy Employee Giving

Mason Michael and Mathew Ryan Bass

April 10, 2008, at 22 weeks
Premature

Baby Bass

Miscarried November 2009
Given by parents Chad and Leah Robilotto-Bass

Levi Samuel Bowmer

April 19, 2013
Trisomy 13
Parents: Sam and Jenae Bowmer
Sisters: Evelin and Valerie

Gifts given by:

Michelle Wilkins and LeeAnn Utz
Misty Thompson
Stephanie Meyer
Christine Best
Susan Williams
Teresa Dillon
Karan Young
Katrina Pound
Abby Morse
Korey and Miriam Finch
Lisa Wilkins
Bev Mundt
Rita Ray
Kinzie Harvell
Amber Zuckerman
Gail Reamy
Scarlet Crawford
Denise Bostick
Krista Barnes
Kristin Lynch
Cindy Pitts
Dayna Stallons
Amy McMurdo
Crystal Rios
Tammy Hopper
Jade Wright
Benji Flores
Lori Yielding
Jen Kramer
Tracy Shipley
Krystal Brashear
Candice Moyer
Miranda Valera

Bowmer Donations Continued...

Alicia Luffey
Grace Finley
Leslie Rodriguez
Phyllis Ford

Oliver Brueck

Given by Patricia Mallozzi

Grayson Thomas Buscemi

Stillborn May 12, 2017
Unknown cause
Parents: Mark and Tracey Buscemi
Gifts given by
Maria Batory
Lanika Wilson
Jessica Eck-Elliott

Jackson David Crowe

August 22—September 9, 1998
Heart defect
Parents: David and Marie Crowe
Siblings: Hannah and Andrew
Given by Gail Bohdan and Rick Rudnicki

Abigail Grace Crump

July 1, 2003
Trisomy 18
Gifts given by
Parents Gerald and Jaimie Crump
and little sisters Cami and Karli

Brooke Sophia Daily

Stillborn March 11, 2010
Vasa Previa
Gifts given by
Parents Jeremy and Lisa Daily
and sisters Sarah and Savannah
Michelle Knobe
Lessia and David Dilley
Chas Craig

Parker and Riley Davis

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

Thank you to those who recently held a Facebook fundraising campaign or donated to M.E.N.D. through one of these. We are so thankful for our family and friends who show love and support during activities like these or other areas such as sharing about M.E.N.D., assisting at events, or simply and most importantly, praying for us.

Dharma Lucille Drude

March 31—April 1, 2008
Anencephaly
Stella Darling Drude
January 23, 2014
Anencephaly and exencephaly
Liza Belle Drude
February 23, 2015
Unknown cause
Parents: Jason and Jennie Drude
Siblings: Max and Molli
Gifts given by
Nicole and Michael Mallette
Yessica Sotomayor

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

Hayden Gibbs

2010

Payton Gibbs

2011

Mason Gibbs

2013

Given by mommy Jessica Gibbs

Angelina Faith Gilliam

Given by aunt Tracey Brown / Not Just a Candle

CJ Gold

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

Ella Lynne Gonyea

Stillborn August 24, 2015
IUGR and no amniotic fluid
Parents: David and Sable Gonyea
Little sister: Laurel
Given by David and Donna Gerety

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)

Charlotte Grace Harrison

December 28, 2011—January 4, 2012
Complications at birth
Given by parents Luke and Amanda Harrison
and siblings Evan and Audrey

Samuel Hintz

Stillborn October 29, 2008
Cord accident
Given by parents Greg and Sara Hintz
and siblings Louis, Caleb, Anna,
Elijah, Hope, Levi, Isaiah,
Kaliyah and Oakley

Madeline Joy Horowitz

Miscarried February 18, 2011

Morgan Reese Horowitz

Miscarried June 9, 2014

Given by parents Benny and Marianna
Horowitz
and siblings Cassie, Clayton and Carissa

Noah Joel Hoyt

Miscarried March 26, 2008
Given by mommy Amanda Hoyt

Connor Hutchens

May 1, 2012
Cord accident
Given by mommy Stacie Hutchens

Robert "Quint" Livingston Johnson IV

January 11—February 17, 2014

Norovirus

Gifts given by
Parents Robert and Erin Johnson
and siblings Liv and Rhett
Carter Wimberly
Emily Tantillo

Andrew Mallette

March 21, 2008
CMV
Given by parents Michael and Nicole Mallette
and sister Bree

Matthew Joel Mifflin

Stillborn June 6, 2003
Cord accident
Parents: Dennis and Janet Mifflin
Siblings: Thomas and Michelle
Given by Fidelity Charitable

Chase Austin Miller

April 21, 2011
Baby "Blueberry" Miller
May 4, 2015
Given by parents Greg and Stefanie Miller
and sisters Cora and Hazel

Henry Michael Morgret

May 20—June 6, 2017
Placental abruption
Parents: Michael and Joanna Morgret
Given by Custom Ink, LLC

Archer Bryan Moses

Stillborn April 23, 2018
Parents: Preston and Jennifer Moses
Sister: Jaylynn
Given by Jim and Yvette Crumbliss

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 the "About M.E.N.D." section in the back of this newsletter.

Stella Leigh Palmarez

Miscarried June 13, 2014
Given by parents John and April Palmarez
and brothers John, Paul and Nathan

Frank Patranella

Gifts given by
Linda Rowan
Debra Patranella
Rainy Lake Medical Center

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

Kyleigh Elaine Rabe

October 1, 2012—January 26, 2013
SIDS
Parents: Kyle and Kristen Rabe
Siblings: Karson, Kayleigh, Kyler, Karter and Kole
Gifts given by
Wally and Jan Kyle
Matt and Janis Stewart

Pumpkin Seed Rodriguez

Miscarried February 24, 2016
Oliver "Olly" Rodriguez
June 28, 2017
Thanatophoric skeletal dysplasia
Given by parents Juan and Amanda Rodriguez
and siblings Gabby, David,
Steven and Ozais

Abigail Grace Story

July 9-13, 2015
Given by John and Faith Story

Hannah Joy Smith

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

David Allen Stein

Given by Kendal McMahon

Brand and Colt Whigham

August 4, 2011
Cord accident
Given by
Parents Chris and Beverlyann Whigham
and sisters Clara and Chloe

Lydia Whitehurst

Stillborn February 28, 2018
Cord accident
Parents: Philip and Emily Whitehurst
Given by Rockwell Collins

Jacob Martin Wilhite

April 25, 2012
Incompetent cervix
Isaac Odell Wilhite
April 1, 2015
Incompetent cervix
Wilhite babies named in heaven
Gifts given by
Parents David and Kessi Wilhite
and siblings Caleb and Lilah
Grandparents Randy and Libby Nitschke
Aunt Nicole Wilhite
Aunt Bebo Bogan

Catherine Grace Wilkerson

August 10-12, 2012
Premature
Given by parents Charles and Kara Wilkerson
and brother Cannon

Mateo Remigio Yee

Given by Kayla Thorn

Adrian Joseph "AJ" Zuckerman

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

Gifts of Support:

Christ Church Assembly of God, Fort Worth, TX
Janis Kidder
Angel Lebak
Kent Wieland
Ashley Hazlewood
Jennifer Thames
Vanessa Brown
Paula Kelly, Baby Gowns for Eternity
EE Owen / Elizabeth Owen
Nikki Boswell
National Christian Foundation
Second Baptist Church, Springfield, MO
Employees of Insurance Office of America

Vanished: Gone Without a Trace

By Stormy Mitchell

Mommy to Avery, Gideon and Joy

M.E.N.D.—Greater Houston Area

Vanishing Twin: Something most people have never heard of and something even less have experienced.

Early in my 4th pregnancy, I went to the doctor so he could do blood work to check my progesterone and HCG. I had low progesterone during my pregnancy with my first living son in the first trimester, so I wanted to make sure it was not a problem in this pregnancy too. My results came back with my progesterone as normal, but my HCG was very high and elevated past what is normal for a singleton pregnancy. My doctor had me come in for an early ultrasound. When the ultrasound tech scanned my uterus, that is when I saw it. 2 little sacs.

2 sacs.

Twins!

I asked the tech, "Is that what I think it is?" She said "Looks like twins." I instantly started laughing. I could not stop. We looked at the screen and saw something in both sacs. Those were my babies! There was the early development of a baby in each sac. It was too early to see anything clearly or a definite heartbeat. But there was no denying, there were two babies!

I thought "I am a twin mom!"

One of the sacs was round and the right size for the gestation and the other was smaller and flatter. The ultrasound tech labeled the smaller sac Baby A, and the bigger sac Baby B.

Unfortunately, I learned the size of the sacs could mean there was a problem. My doctor explained to me that in cases where one of the sacs isn't as developed, there is a 50% chance the baby won't survive. It is called a Vanishing Twin. He and his staff were hopeful for me and excited at the possibility I would be having twins that coming summer.

I started praying to keep both babies! I had church family, M.E.N.D. family, my biological family, and my friends all praying both babies would make it. We prayed Baby A would beat the odds. We prayed when I would return in two weeks for a follow-up ultrasound, there would be two babies with two beautiful, strong heartbeats.

However, I had a feeling things would not work out the way I hoped. I think God was preparing me for what He knew would happen. I just felt in my heart both babies would not make it. Despite the dread in my heart, I held onto hope and prayed constantly God would allow me to keep both of them. I allowed myself to get excited about the prospect of bringing home two babies, but my heart always knew I never would.

We went to our ultrasound appointment two weeks later to check on the twins.

Baby A went to heaven sometime in the week prior.

The ultrasound tech scanned my uterus, and I saw one baby. One baby with a heartbeat. One beautiful baby. But one baby and one heartbeat wasn't there. We all wanted both of these babies so much. It was extremely bittersweet. One baby gone. One baby healthy with a beautiful heartbeat of 160.

A twin had vanished. Without a trace.

There was life that was and yet never was in my arms. This life who deserves to be honored and remembered. This baby who I loved so much already. Gone. Just gone. No physical evidence of his/her existence except for an ultrasound picture. I had no bleeding. The baby literally vanished.

With my first miscarriage, I bled for two weeks. There was physical evidence of a baby. With Gideon, I felt him kick, my husband felt him kick. He was born, and we have pictures of him, a clipping of his hair, his footprints, my milk came in. Though he was stillborn, and he isn't here today, there was physical evidence there was a baby inside of me. But not with our precious twin. We have one beautiful ultrasound picture, but there was no physical evidence the baby was there. Nothing I could touch.

I always said as a kid I wanted five children. When we were not sure of the outcome for Baby A, my dad told me, "No matter what happens, you will now always have five children." And he is so right, I may have three children in heaven, but I am the mom of five kids! They are always mine and nothing can change that. I have two in my arms and three in my heart. My sweet Gideon who changed my life more than I can even say, our Avery who was lost before I got to see her at all, and our twin who I got to see but never got to know.

Part of me will always wonder.

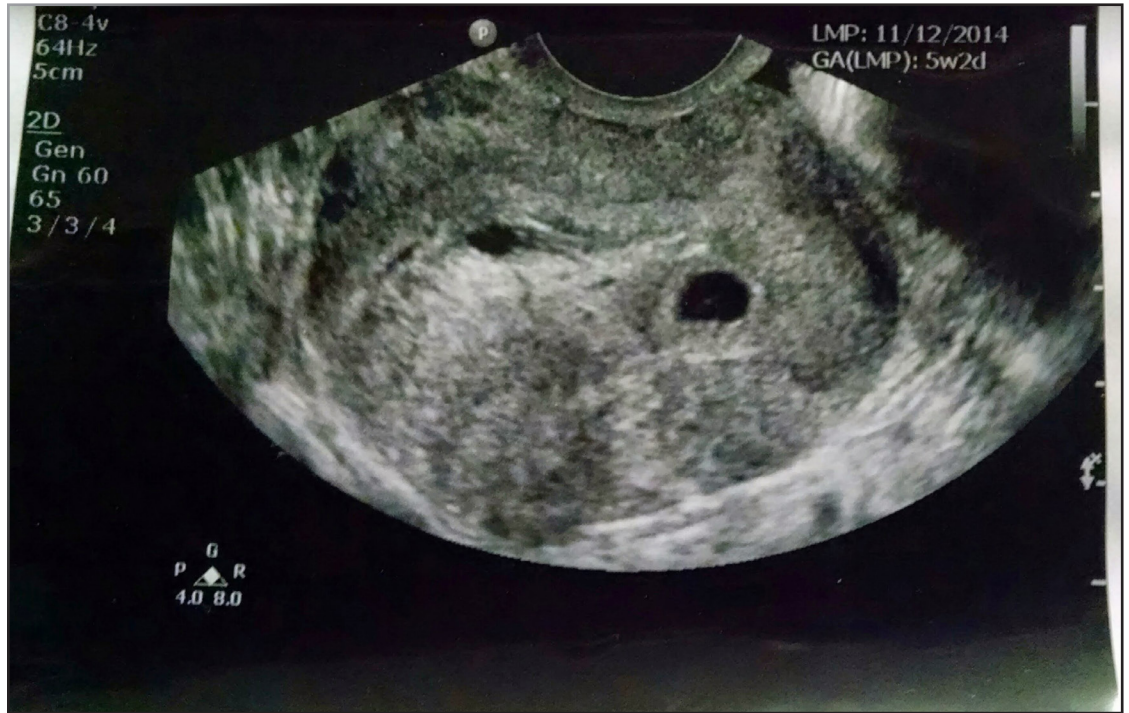
I miss what could have been. Instead of two car seats, we only had to buy one. Instead of buying bunk beds for my now 3-year-old twins, we bought one bed for our surviving twin. We do not have to buy two of everything. We won't worry about dealing with two kids driving at the same time. They won't graduate together. We won't ever see them in each other's weddings. I won't get to see my twins interact. I won't get to see them be best friends. I will never get to see the connection they would have had as twins.

We picked a name for our little Baby A. Both my husband and I believed in our hearts that Baby A and Baby B would be boy/girl twins. When we learned Baby B was a boy, we knew Baby A was a girl. As we were picking a name for our son, we were praying and thinking about a name for Baby A. We wanted a name that sounded like "twin names." And we gave her a name.

Joy.

Our twins are named Justus and Joy. They have names that go together, both begin with a J. We chose Joy because of how much joy she gave us in such a short time. When they showed me twins, and I saw a little speck that was a baby, I began laughing! I was so elated! The woman who has trouble conceiving at all got pregnant with twins! And knowing that I will see her, our Gideon, and Avery again gives me joy. God gives me joy in the midst of every trial.

I have recently experienced an aspect of grief tied to my loss of Joy. My husband and I are at the end of our child-bearing journey. We have two boys at home and we will very likely not have any more children. After we had our first two losses, my dreams of having five children at home was gone. I adjusted my dream and thought maybe we would have three kids at home. So in my mind, that was what we would do. After we brought home our first living son, Silas, and then we were pregnant with twins, I thought that dream would come true. We could be done with all my high-risk pregnancies and I would have my three babies at home.



"No physical evidence of his/her existence except for an ultrasound picture. The baby literally vanished."

But that will never be. Once we lost Joy, I lost that dream. That dream vanished. Just like she did.

That is what physically happened. She vanished with just a little bit of a trace. But in my heart, not really vanished. Not gone without a trace. Gone without a trace in the physical world, but she is a part of our family. As much as her twin brother is a part of our family. As much as her other living big brother, and her other siblings in heaven. She may have vanished according to my medical records, but nothing could cause our love for her to vanish. My dreams haven't vanished either, just changed into something else. I dream of the day when all five of my children are in my arms, and I dream of the life the Lord has given me here on this earth. Nothing truly has vanished; it is simply gone from our sight. All will be given to us again one day when we are in eternity with the Lord.



Justus with the Molly Bear for his twin sister, Joy

Remembering Erika: Happy 21st Birthday!


By Yvette Grau

Mommy to Erika

M.E.N.D.—Spanish Translator

This article was originally written for Erika's 18th birthday. It has been updated and included in honor of her 21st birthday on August 3.

Milestones May, 2015



As I observe my children grow and reach various milestones, I embrace the reality of the fact that each milestone, birthday, anniversary or unexpected emotional moment is going to be felt and celebrated differently for each of my children including Erika. What will not ever be different is my deep love for each of them and that my love will never diminish for any of them no matter where they are. Like Jesus knows us, we know our children whether living on earth or living in heaven.

There are usually certain emotions attached with milestones that stir my heart in one way or another. Most times it's joy and excitement, but sometimes it's angst or sadness; sometimes it's just indescribable and yet sometimes there is simply nothing. For this time, for this season during May of 2015, it was much of everything.

It's Mother's Day, it's my father's one-year anniversary since passing, it's prom season, it's time for college acceptance letters, it's high school graduation just to mention a few that directly affect me.

My grief this Mother's Day was by far the most difficult that I recall in recent years. To be a mom of two living amazing kids, to be a mom of a would be graduate, to remember my own amazing faithful mom, and to be on the heels of the first-year anniversary of my father's passing was just a little too much for me this year. Still, when asked about Mother's Day or just in general, my response was the usual "Fine, thank you!" Deep down and mostly I am genuinely fine. I know I am blessed beyond what I deserve, but just for this period, just for this season in time, I'm not fine at all. I couldn't say any more though without the risk of tearing up or simply and completely falling apart,

and I would not be able to explain myself at all.

How could I possibly explain my resurfaced pain of losing my daughter 18 years ago, my mother six years ago and my father one year ago? I know losing parents is difficult yet natural, and I embrace that, but, for this year, it was something about the absence of all of them that weighs heavily on my heart. I've lost my parents and my child, loved ones from past and future generations. This thought was painful.

Admittedly, Dad's death sent me into an unexpected and immediate tail spin of grief almost as I was when I lost Erika. It took just a casual evening one month after he passed to open the doors of many years of memories. Mom's death was difficult, but acceptance of both parents now gone and now together with my daughter in heaven was a beautiful yet extremely difficult process for me. I was grieving both my parents, my daughter and the absence of the milestones of my sweet girl. A culmination of feelings, emotions and memories stir intensely in my mind. I miss them all so much! I could not expect others to know what I'm going through or even expect anyone to remember she would have been graduating this year. If I felt it was possibly safe to try to share, it was quickly obvious that it made for an uncomfortable moment, so I shut down. Almost daily and unbeknownst to all, I have either grieved silently or gone full out emotional when alone. Quite frankly I feel that where I'd become a great communicator, I've now become even better at remaining silent.

Mom's birthday is August 3 - the same date Erika died in my arms. The emotions of that date are unexplainable. Still, that was an orchestration of God's perfect timing and reflection of our unity of three generations together, Mom, Erika and myself, in that one day. Mom,

my Maid of Honor, gifted me a solid foundation of belief and faith. Dad, he was my teacher; he was my rock. He always said I was his right hand; little did he know how much I learned from him by always holding his hand. They remain an integral part in my life today, and I still seek wisdom and comfort from them even if through memories. I could not be the parent I am without their examples of parenting before me. As with my daughter Erika, I treasured all my days with my loving parents and when I think of one, I think of the three that complete this picture now.

Erika would have been a part of so much during this time but she's not. No prom or senior pictures, no announcements to be mailed, no ceremonies to attend, no graduation celebrations to speak of for her. These milestones never to be realized but in my very own thoughts, emotions and secret desires. Through my job I work with mostly Seniors and Juniors. As I see Seniors preparing and nearing their graduation during this season, Erika had been heavily on my mind. Although feeling somewhat confused and uneasy, I was for the most part okay until I quietly became unglued in my office after a brief conversation with a colleague during a passing period. As a soon to be retired professor, he simply said, "It feels awfully strange to be doing some things for the last time." Unbeknownst to him, his comment struck me boldly, but his words also unveiled why all my emotions peaked that May. In a similar yet different way, with Erika's upcoming would be graduation and 18th birthday celebrations, I realized I was feeling uneasy and anxious about nearing some of "the last" of Erika's would be milestones. The reality was her milestones were quietly dwindling.

I hear your silence speak loudly to me, much the same and just as

loud as it did for the 26 days of her life here with us. As grateful and honored as I am to have had her with me and in my arms for those 26 days, I cannot even begin to describe this profound silence and the emotions of holding my silent baby day in and day out; yearning to hear her voice, her cries, her coos, her yawns, her burps. Still, I could not imagine life without her.

As time moves forward, the end draws near for predetermined milestones left to reach. Our next milestone will be your 21st birthday celebration. Career, engagement, marriage, children - I know I'll think of these things for you as my living children reach these milestones but there are no designated time frames or predetermined dates for any of these events, not even for my living children, unlike the other milestones prior to this phase of life.

I will just never know these things for you. I do though trust immensely in God's purpose of this because 'all the days ordained for you were written before one of them came to be' (Psalm 139:16) and narrated by our creator who knit you in my womb' (Psalm 139:13). Every single second, minute and day of your life here with me before you were born into eternity was written by our Creator.

I believe that you are having celebrations of milestones in a place that is far beyond my imagination; just barely within my comprehension and wholeheartedly in belief of its existence; you are celebrating in heaven. Heaven, where you are united with so many I know. In the presence of my Lord and Savior and in company of your Nano and Ema, my beautiful mom and amazing dad who were not able to meet you while you were here on earth. I know God designed it this way especially because your meeting and reunion would be celebrated in a much better place together with Him.

This silent grief is my own. This silent grief is a reminder of this journey that God chose for me and, make no mistake, I accept and embrace. My times of heartache/sadness are sometimes mistakenly

interpreted as not being appreciative of my living children and all my blessings and sometimes makes some uncomfortable. This is not about my living children. It is about a child I still miss, a child I wonder about, a child that was formed in my womb by my creator, not to be forgotten but remembered. It's about processing grief that has fully resurfaced again 18 years later by the death of my mother and father. A journey of grief that includes new elements yet at a different phase. Although I say this silent grief is my own, truly it is not because my Lord carries me. He tells me it's okay to grieve and assures me with His comfort. There is no end to grief, it is a journey. Sometimes peaked by events and sometimes just dormant. Grief does not interfere with happiness, it embraces happiness just as much as it embraces tears.

Without Jesus I could not walk this journey. I know in Jesus there is Hope. Hope is not a casual four-letter word for me. Hope is my survival as I continue my own personal journey. Without hope there is no purpose or reason to live, and without my faith I cannot have hope. With this hope, I feel as though I am coming around and that God is once again leading me to clarity, strength and a lighter heart just as he did about 15 months after Erika's death.... As much as I try to put my own time on things, it is not my own time. It is always in His perfect time.

As I've written before, grief is a journey; far from a destination, not to be achieved and not a state of mind. Grief is something I walk through for the rest of my life and only God can provide me the strength to manage its waves. Whether knowingly or unexpected emotions are triggered, I welcome them for they confirm and solidify my foundation of faith that my mother so lovingly nurtured in me. Happy, tearful, joyful, or just neutral, I embrace them all.

Like most, I wake every day being thankful for yet another day. I praise His name, I praise Him for my emotional ups and downs this past year and thank Him for His blessings and mercies. He delivers me every single day.!



I share my journaling with you today not for sympathy or empathy, but to share His glory and what He does for me every day. He does amazing things even when we think it's too much. It is never too much for Him for he is never taken by surprise. His graces are abundant always!

Shoulders

by: For King & Country (Lyrics)

When confusion's my companion and despair holds me for ransom, I will feel no fear, I know that you are near, When I'm caught deep in the valley, With chaos for my company I'll find my comfort here, Cause I know that you are near, My help comes from you, You're right here, pulling me through, you carry my weakness, my sickness, my brokenness all on your shoulders My help comes from you, you are my rest, my rescue I don't have to see to believe that you are lifting me up on your shoulders You mend what once was shattered. And you turn my tears to laughter your forgiveness is my fortress... oh your mercy is relentless.....

The Final Milestone July, 2018

Unbelievable but yes, time has moved forward, and Erika will be 21 years old in July. The last milestone I wrote about just three years earlier. Along with the usual anticipation of her upcoming birth date, the obvious questions can't be ignored or

Continued on next page.

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avoided: How would we have been celebrating this important milestone birthday for you? What college did you elect to attend? Would we be preparing to attend your college graduation? What career or path would you be pursuing? No doubt, unrealized milestones of our loved ones passed prompt these kind of questions in our minds. Not because we are living in the past, but because we live in the present meanwhile embracing and remembering all that occurred in the past, both the overwhelming love and the overwhelming heartbreak.

Unlike three years ago for Erika's 18th birthday when I was writing about how the death of both my parents intensely affected my journey of grief, this year, this milestone, this season is different. Meanwhile still missing my parents actively in my life, I now proudly carry for my children the torch they once carried for me. In this midst, this milestone has intermittently brought some of the usual emotions though not so much because of a human death rather mostly because of pensive melancholy. Not only associated with Erika's memories and upcoming birthday but peaceful melancholy over the milestones my living children have achieved thus far. Uniquely and individually, all my children have reached milestones throughout this year. For my living children I'm gloating with pride and bursting with gratefulness. Some of these proud milestones have also resulted in sadly having to let go of practices and events that had become integrated into the fabric of our life's routine. So deeply and proudly integrated that to some degree they had become my identity as well. This process of readjusting is heartbreaking but real. As my living children flourish and adapt to adulthood, the joy of being included and a witness to this process with them is reminder of how blessed I am, even while my heart remembers Erika and aches for her final milestone. No matter where I am in my journey, time moves on

and forward and each year brings anew. The further along we go, the more I think about the cycle of life as it becomes more real.

"One bears what was lovely in the past not as a thorn but as a precious gift deep within, a hidden treasure of which one can always be certain."

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer

For me, this quote applies to the loss of a loved one and/or the absence of something that will no longer be. This year I have both. I've always felt that grief is not only for death but is felt for so many other reasons. There is without a doubt a constant factor in this journey and that is the complete unknown and surprise factor of when and how intense the emotions of grief will be during any time or season and no matter how many years have passed. This year is no different, but God continues to abundantly bless our family in ways I could have never imagined. He has entrusted and blessed us with two amazing living children and one who He called back home to Him. By nature, mostly everything relates back to that time in my life and it's okay. I wouldn't change it for the world.

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

Hebrews 11:1

Remembering you and my parents forever!

Subsequent Births

Celebrating our Rainbow Babies

Brian and Kristina Cobler,
of Choteau, Oklahoma,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Karsyn Dee,
born May 17, 2018,
measuring 7 lbs.,
and 18.5 inches long.
The family lovingly remembers
Keiran David Cobler,
October 25—November 1, 2013,
NEC
Fred and George Cobler,
miscarried March 3, 2017

Josey and Sergio Fleitas,
along with big sister Lidia Magdalena,
of Tulsa, Oklahoma,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Emma MaryLou,
born April 7, 2018,
measuring 9 lbs., 7 oz.,
and 21 inches long.
The family lovingly remembers
Lidia MaryLou,
neonatal death May 5, 2014

Mark and Kathryn Johnson,
along with big sister Norah,
of Tulsa, OK,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Pax Christian,
born January 7, 2018,
measuring 8 lbs., 6 oz.,
and 20 inches long.
The Johnson family lovingly remembers
Baby Johnson I,
miscarried April 8, 2013,
Baby Johnson II,
miscarried November 2, 2013,
Baby Johnson III,
Miscarried February 25, 2014

Gemelo Sobreviviente

Artículo de Brandee Dill

Mamá de Cooper y bebé Dill

M.E.N.D.—Board of Directors

Nuestro mundo fue cambiado para siempre... dos veces. En octubre de 2002, nos enteramos de que esperábamos bebés #3 y #4. Gemelos nunca estuvieron en nuestro radar. Esto significaba un coche más grande, una casa más grande, dos veces los pañales, el doble de agotamiento, pero el doble de amor y abrazos. Tan grande como un ajuste doblar nuestro número de niños iba a ser, no era nada comparado con NO tener que conseguir un coche más grande, una casa más grande y el doble de los pañales. El 26 de mayo de 2003, lo insondable se hizo realidad.

Me fui al hospital porque no había sentido gemelo B moverse tanto como siempre. Pero no estaba muy preocupada. Estaba embarazada de 38 semanas con gemelos mientras muy grande e incómoda de mi embarazo. Cuando llegue al hospital, me conectaron a los monitores y eventualmente encontraron dos latidos cardíacos. Uy... crisis anunciada... o eso pensamos. Un latido fue sin duda más débil que el otro, pero estaba allí. Pronto realizaron que el latido del corazón de gemelo B era en realidad el eco de gemelo A. Se programó inmediatamente una cesárea de emergencia. Paxton Ray Dill y Cooper Graham Dill fueron entregados en nuestros corazones, pero sólo Paxton fue colocado en mis brazos y Cooper fue colocado en los brazos de Jesús.

Paxton fue liberado del NICU para que podríamos asistir al funeral de Cooper como una familia. ¿Cómo realmente puede estar sucediendo esto? ¿Cómo podríamos sobrevivir esto? El diluvio de emociones era demasiado y casi insoportable. Un segundo estaba llorando incontrolablemente, porque estaba tan feliz de tener a Paxton en casa con nosotros. El siguiente segundo yo estaba llorando incontrolablemente, porque quería a Cooper aquí conmigo. En vez de mis brazos doloridos de sostener a mis niños por horas en extremo, dolían de una manera que nunca ni siquiera soñé era posible. Quería tener y mantener a mis dos

hijos en mis brazos. Quería verlos durmiendo de lado a lado usando sus trajes idénticos y crecer juntos.

Todos los sueños que tuve desde el momento en que el doctor dijo "gemelos" nunca serían completamente realizados. Siempre sería que la mitad del sueño estaba aquí y faltaba la otra mitad. Mi corazón podría estar tan lleno de alegría mientras tener un agujero gigante en él. Y tanto como yo quería Cooper aquí conmigo, yo también lo quería aquí para Paxton. No era correcto que este niño dulce debía tener que crecer sin su compañero... el que podía compartir cualquier secreto con, su compañero de siempre, el que lo conocía mejor que nadie. Me preguntaba si él siempre se sentiría como si algo hubiera desaparecido en su vida. Siempre hemos hablado de Cooper, así que nunca hubo un momento en el que tuvimos que sentarnos con Paxton para explicarle quién era Cooper. Bueno, eso no es totalmente cierto. Cuando Paxton tenía unos tres años, pasó por un período en el que pensaba que Cooper era un cordero. (Hay un pequeño cordero en la lápida de Cooper.)

Ha sido tanto reconfortante y al mismo tiempo un desgarrador del corazón de ver a Paxton lidiar con crecer sin Cooper. Cuando era más joven, Paxton hablaba sobre él jugando en el cielo, pensar en cuál era su juguete favorito y lo que estaba haciendo. Él incluso mencionó un par de veces que el vio Cooper jugando en su habitación. Al empezar el Kinder, las cosas se volvieron un poco más duras. Había cuatro aulas de kindergarten, y cada uno de ellos tenía un conjunto de gemelos idénticos excepto el del. Al principio, pensé que yo era la única quién se dio cuenta, pero poco después de que la escuela comenzó Paxton mencionó que deseaba que su hermano estaba en su clase como los otros gemelos para que siempre tuviera a alguien con quien jugar. Eso me rompió el corazón de nuevo.

Mientras, el hermano mayor de Paxton entró en la escuela intermedia

Nuestros hijos en el cielo son los que trajeron a cada uno de los líderes a M.E.N.D., pero cada una de nuestras historias son diferentes. Para este tema, quiero agradecerle a Brandee Dill de nuestra Junta Directiva por compartir su historia como nuestro artículo especial, el amor de sus gemelos, con un ser en el cielo, y el otro todavía con ella hoy.

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

y se involucró más con las actividades escolares y amigos, la cruda realidad de Cooper no estar aquí se hizo muy evidente otra vez. Tate y Paxton siempre habían sido muy cerca y hicieron casi todo junto, pero los hermanos mayores crecen y empiezan a difundirse sus alas. Fue un momento difícil para Paxton porque se sentía no sólo que estaba "perdiendo" Tate, pero el vacío de no tener su gemelo con él era difícil. Frecuentemente habla de que, si Cooper estuviera aquí, todavía tendría alguien con quien lanzar la pelota o jugar juegos de video. Nunca se enojó por eso. Sólo había una tristeza en sus ojos - a veces con lágrimas y a veces no.

Cuando Paxton entra en la escuela secundaria en el otoño, el viaje de la vida sin Cooper continúa. Él nunca está lejos de nuestros corazones o nuestras mentes. Paxton tiene una foto de su lápida como su pantalla de inicio en su teléfono. Él también siempre escoge ser el número 7 en su equipo porque Cooper es el 7o miembro de nuestra familia (tuve un aborto espontáneo entre Tate y los gemelos). Estas son las cosas que se le ocurrió a él todo por su cuenta para sentir una conexión diaria con su hermano. Estos recordatorios no lo hacen sentir triste. Lo hacen sentir orgulloso de que lleva a su hermano gemelo junto con él durante todo el día. Hay momentos en que las lágrimas fluyen incluso 15 años después, y nos amamos el uno al otro y hablamos de nuestros sentimientos y lo mucho que amamos y extrañamos. Deseamos que estuviera aquí en nuestras vidas todos los días, pero la verdad es: ¿realmente queremos sacarlo de la gloria de la presencia de Jesús? Egoístamente sí, pero verdaderamente no. Nuestros corazones aguardan con ansias el día en que nos reuniremos todos juntos; Qué reunión sería esta!

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. 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
jennifer@mend.org
www.mend.org

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M.E.N.D. is a member of
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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 are 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.

M.E.N.D. Chapter Information

M.E.N.D.–NW Washington

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

M.E.N.D.–SW Missouri

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

M.E.N.D.–Bryan/College Station

Meets the 2nd Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.
Hawthorne Suites
1010 University Drive East
College Station, Texas 77840
Director: Jennie Drude
jennie@mend.org, (402) 704-6363

M.E.N.D.–Tulsa, Oklahoma

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

M.E.N.D.–Chicagoland, Illinois

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

M.E.N.D.–MidMichigan

Will hold its 1st Support Group
on Tuesday, September 4, at 7:00 p.m.
Follow us on Facebook for more
updates!

M.E.N.D.–Palm Beach, Florida

MORE DETAILS COMING SOON!

M.E.N.D.–Colorado

MORE DETAILS COMING SOON!

M.E.N.D.–Greater Houston Area

Greater Houston Area Main Chapter:

Meets the 3rd Thursday at 7:30 p.m.
Lone Star College,
3200 College Park Dr, Room A228,
The Woodlands, Texas 77384
Greater Houston Area Director:
Stormy Mitchell
stormym@mend.org, (405) 529-6363

Satellites in Greater Houston Chapter:

Katy, Texas:

Meets the 2nd Thursday at 7:00 p.m.
The Meeting Room at Serene Bean
1933 East Ave
Katy, Texas 77493

Katy Director:

Kessi Wilhite, kessi@mend.org
Coming soon: Kingwood Area
Support Group on 4th Thursday

Kingwood Director:

Nikisha Perry, nikisha@mend.org

Subsequent pregnancy group

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

Daddy's group

Meets quarterly
on the 3rd Thursday at 7:30 p.m.,
led by Greg Miller
(stefaniem@mend.org)

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

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

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

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

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

Food and Fellowship

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

Held the 4th Thursday of
every month at
different locations and times
across the DFW metroplex.
Contact Brittney Fish
for the details each month:
brittney@mend.org

Infertility group
meets the 3rd 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
(building with black windows)
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
PO Box 631566, Irving, TX 75063
USA
(972) 506-9000
Return Service Requested

NONPROFIT ORG
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PAID
DALLAS, TEXAS
PERMIT NO. 57

How do you support M.E.N.D.?
We have a new option for you!

M.E.N.D. is now enrolled in the

PayPal Giving Fund

This allows you to donate through
PayPal, eBay and other online platforms

As you buy and sell things on



you can now donate to M.E.N.D.
using this program!

If you are a Humble Bumble user,
you can support
M.E.N.D. with your orders.



You can now create a



fundraising campaign
to support M.E.N.D.!