



Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death

Miscarriage, Stillbirth and Infant Loss Support

Volume 24, Issue 1

January/February 2019

©Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death (M.E.N.D.)



No Other Children

It's frustrating to WATCH everyone else's DREAMS come TRUE while knowing your OWN are slipping farther and farther AWAY from becoming REALITY.

-Unknown

In this issue...

Why Not Me?

A mom shares part of her story and her questions of "Why not me?"

page 13

Mixed Emotions

A story of losses, and how some days this mom is okay with not having any living children, and other days she cries to have one.

page 14

If Tomorrow Never Comes

Our counselor shares some advice on how to work through broken dreams.

page 15

March/April Topic

Coping Mechanisms

Deadline: January 31, 2019

May/June Topic

Mother's Day/Father's Day

Deadline: March 31, 2019

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to be published in future issues, both in the print version and online, unless a letter's author expressly requests it not be published.

Reprint Policy: Articles printed in the M.E.N.D. newsletter are copyrighted by M.E.N.D. and/or by the individual authors of certain articles. Articles may not be reprinted without permission from the Newsletter Editor or President. The newsletter may be reproduced for the purpose of providing it to pregnancy loss support group members or other bereaved families so that they may also have access to the information. The material may not be reproduced in any way, shape or form for profit. Some authors of articles included in the newsletter may carry their own copyright and their articles may only be reprinted with permission from the author.

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



IN THIS ISSUE

Articles

Feature Article	3
What Makes a Mother	12
Why Not Me?.....	13
Mixed Emotions	14
If Tomorrow Never Comes.....	15
Pregnancy & Infant Loss Run/Walk	18
Kenneth, the Miracle Child	20
Escaping the Prison of Grief.....	22
Spanish Translation.....	24

Other Features

Tulsa Christmas Candlelight Ceremony.....	4
NW Washington Christmas Candlelight Ceremony	4
In Loving Memory	6
Birthday Tributes	8
Dallas/Fort Worth Walk to Remember	10
Bryan/College Station Craft Day	11
Run for Love.....	11
SW Missouri Christmas Candlelight Ceremony.....	12
Chapter Updates	16
Greater Houston Christmas Candlelight Ceremony	19
Chicagoland Tree Decorating	23
About M.E.N.D.	26
M.E.N.D. Chapters' Information.....	27

Feature Article



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

This past year of 2018 proved to be a year full of God's bountiful blessings on M.E.N.D. I often find it difficult to joyfully tell of our ministry's accomplishments because of the very sad and sacred focus of our organization. As I regularly say, no matter how far medical technology advances, babies will continue to die, so I am grateful M.E.N.D. is here for us. Therefore, I'd like to give you a glimpse of different ways we extended comfort and care to our grieving families, and new opportunities we explored and experienced in the area of sharing our ministry with others. I'd also like to let you know what our organization is planning for 2019. Most of this information pertains to our headquarter chapter in Dallas/Fort Worth. I know all of our Chapter Directors could write their own year-in-review article, but this is the re-cap of our main chapter where the day-to-day operations of M.E.N.D. occur.

DFW Pregnancy and Infant Loss Comfort Connection

Last year began with the continuation of a new side network I started at the end of 2017 - DFW Pregnancy and Infant Loss Comfort Connection. There are a number of pregnancy and infant loss organizations in North Texas that offer a variety of services to grieving parents, but I realized we were not intimately familiar with one another. Additionally, even though M.E.N.D. and other great organizations like us have been around for a number of years, too many healthcare providers were not aware of all the resources they could be offering their patients for continuation of care. So, I organized this network for us to gather quarterly to share our organizations with one another. This group has proven quite successful in that I have seen and recognized the expansion of providers who are now more familiar with M.E.N.D. and are referring to us, as well as inviting us to give training sessions to their employees. If you live in the North Texas area and are the director of an organization whose core mission is pregnancy and infant loss or if you are a healthcare provider whose

2018 Year in Review

focus is perinatal bereavement care, please let me know so I can give you more information on when and where we meet each quarter.

2018 Conferences

February began with our annual Leadership Conference. Each year all of the M.E.N.D. Chapter Directors, assistants, M.E.N.D. Board of Directors and Advisory Board members gather for a weekend of training, bonding and fellowship. This weekend is truly one of my favorite events of the year. I love spending time with these women who have heeded the call to turn the pain of their loss into something very beautiful by dedicating themselves to comfort others with the same comfort we have received from God.

The next weekend we were invited to attend a conference in San Marcos, Texas, where I was asked to give a presentation to school counselors from across the state on Teen Pregnancy Loss. Much training and education is given to counselors on teen pregnancy, but not on how to care for the emotional needs of a teen mom when her baby dies. This opportunity opened the door for a handful of additional invitations to various school districts in North Texas to give this same training to their school counselors and nurses district-wide.

Stormy Mitchell (M.E.N.D.-Houston Chapter Director), Jennie Drude (M.E.N.D.-Bryan/College Station Chapter Director) and I were invited to attend a summit in Florida to meet with a small group of women from across the country who, like us, direct pregnancy and infant loss organizations. Aside from the awesomeness of spending the day with ladies with a like-minded mission, we shared our organization's goals, struggles and the idea of hosting a nationwide conference in the future.

Loss in Leadership

March brought us to our knees as our M.E.N.D.-Chicagoland Assistant Director, Kirsten Fumagalli, fought colon cancer. Just six weeks after she attended our Leadership Conference in Dallas, we attended her funeral in Chicago. Her death shocked us and shook us to the core. I'm reminded of Deuteronomy 29:29, which

Continued on page 5.

Tulsa Christmas Candlelight Ceremony

A special thank you to Anthem Church, Merritt's Bakery, Sam's Club, Jeremy and Lisa Daily and Jesse and Cat Markham for sponsoring our beautiful ceremony.



A special thank you to Anthem Church, Merritt's Bakery, Sam's Club, Jeremy and Lisa Daily and Jesse and Cat Markham for sponsoring our beautiful ceremony.



NW Washington Christmas Candlelight Ceremony



"2018..." Continued from page 3.

states that the secret things belong to the Lord as we continue to ask "why," especially wondering why a young husband was left with two small sons to raise on his own. Our continued prayers are with that sweet family.

Update to the Newsletter

You may have noticed in the spring, we began printing this newsletter in color! We are very proud of this publication that is distributed all over the world, and is put together by a team of dedicated volunteers who work very hard to create a meaningful, comforting and helpful magazine. Many thanks to our tireless editor, Jennifer Harrison, who burns the midnight oil on more nights than we know creating this wonderful publication!

October Events

The summer started our planning for the annual Walk to Remember, which is held in October each year. The Walk to Remember in Dallas (Irving) welcomed more than 1,300 guests, remembering close to 400 babies who died too soon. M.E.N.D.–Houston hosted their annual Walk to Remember on the same day with more than 900 in attendance, remembering 300 babies. Most of our chapters of M.E.N.D. hosted balloon releases and various other remembrance ceremonies in October in observance of Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness month. As well, a number of our chapters partnered with other loss organizations on October 15 for Wave of Light Ceremonies.

New Chapters!

M.E.N.D. grew exponentially in 2018. In September, M.E.N.D. expanded to Michigan, under the direction of Karen Kilbourn. The next month we opened in Palm Beach, Florida, under the direction of Jessica Gaddie, and in November we opened our doors in Colorado, just outside of Denver, under the direction of Kimberly Adams.

Perinatal Bereavement Conference

Two of our Board members, Brandee Dill and Calli Stanley, and I traveled to St. Louis, Missouri, in October, to attend the International Perinatal Bereavement Conference. We spent four days exhibiting our



organization to hundreds of healthcare providers from around the world, introducing them to M.E.N.D. and letting them know what we have to offer their grieving patients. As well, we attended a number of training workshops, learning ways we can better reach out to fellow loss parents, and hear what our healthcare teams are being taught regarding caring for loss families. It was a wonderful several days of making new friends who share our passion of ministry.

Christmas Candlelight Ceremony

The year always ends with most of our chapters hosting beautiful Christmas Candlelight Ceremonies. This event is a time when families come forward to light a candle in memory of their baby. Unlike the Walk to Remember ceremonies when every baby's name is announced by us, the Christmas Ceremony allows the families to come forward and speak their own baby's name into the microphone to publicly acknowledge their little one(s).

Looking to the Future

So...what do we have to look forward to in 2019? This time last year, I had no idea what 2018 had in store for M.E.N.D.–the Lord just unfolded every event along the way. As always, we will host our annual October and December remembrance ceremonies, and continue to publish this newsletter. We have a handful of chapter applications in the balance, so we'll see where the Lord will open new doors for us this year. Our hope is to get our printed brochures in as many hospitals and doctor's office as we possibly can. We have literature that is applicable to every hospital – not just where we have established chapters that host monthly support groups.

We'd also love to expand our leadership and committee members. Every person in M.E.N.D. is a volunteer and together we make this ministry work. We'd love to add to our teams, so if you are interested in ways you can become involved, please reach out to us. We are also extremely grateful for every dime you donate to our ministry. Everything we offer is free of charge and no one involved within M.E.N.D. is paid, including me. You can be assured that 100% of your donation goes toward our mission of reaching out to families who have suffered the death of a baby. We are humbled beyond measure that God has called us to be part of your healing journey, and we ask for your continued prayers as we continue to be His hand extended.

In Loving Memory

Thank YOU for your support

Baby Adams 1

Miscarried August 30, 2005

Benjamin Daniel Adams

Stillborn February 14, 2006

Baby Adams 2

Miscarried July 20, 2006

Jonathan Daniel Adams

Stillborn September 8, 2011

Lane Daniel Adams

Stillborn January 22, 2018

Twins Adams

Miscarried July 12, 2018

Given by parents Jeffrey and Kimberly Adams
and siblings Caroline, Joshua, Weston,
Colton and Levi

Joseph David Atkins

December 5-22, 2017

Parents: Brandon Atkins and Magan Maxwell

Given by Carol Faulder

Noah Basinger

Miscarried May 8, 2018

Given by parents Scott and Sara Basinger
and siblings Andrew, Jordan and Ezra

Atlas James Cain

September 10-13, 2018

Given by parents Dustin and Anne Cain

Avery Grace Chavez

Given by Maureen Shannon

Hannah Crow

Stillborn February 11, 2015

Complications of HELLP Syndrome

Willow Crow

Stillborn January 28, 2016

Chorioamnionites

Given by parents Kristin and Joey Crow Jr
and sister to Skyler

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

Parker and Riley Davis

November 14, 2006

Premature

Given by parents Rob and Cheryl Davis

and little sister Annalise

Dharma Lucille Drude

March 31—April 1, 2008

Anencephaly

Liza Belle Drude

Stillborn February 23, 2015

Unknown cause

Stella Darling Drude

Stillborn January 23, 2014

Anencephaly

Gifts given by parents Jason and Jennie Drude

and siblings Maxwell, Mollie and Milo

Grandmother Marilyn Branson

Patricia Boger

Aunt Karen King

Caleb Scott Fann

December 1, 2003

PROM

Baby August Fann

Miscarried August 13, 2004

Gifts given by parents Jonathan and Heather Fann

and little sister Madison

Red Crow Marketing

Patty Marshall

Patricia Ervin

Baby Franklin

Miscarried October 2018

Parents: Andrew and Alexandra Franklin

Big brother: Gus

Given by Highland Park Presbyterian Church

Hadley Kay Freimuller

October 17, 2015

Given by mommy Kristin DeVille

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

Melissa Renee George

February 16, 1971

Parents: Ken and Patsy George

Given by sister Janis Kidder

C.J. Gold

Miscarried August 12, 2008

Marina Gold

Miscarried July 14, 2009

Gifts given by parents Kathryn and Greg Gold

and big sister Emily

Grandmother Nellie Gold

Rachel Goodloe

Given by Staci Mitchell

Baby Jordy

Given by Marisa Perry

Liam Kaiser

Stillborn October 11, 2017, at 35 weeks

Given by parents John and Stephanie Kaiser

and siblings Landon and Karlie

Baby Krawiec

Given by mommy Samantha Krawiec

Haylee Rae Lager

September 8, 2018

Cord accident

Parents Nicholas and Gabrielle Lager

Gifts given by

Given by Janet Toland

Given by James Zugelder

Baby L

Miscarried June 14, 2018

Given by parents

Corrine and Andrew Latham

Zachary Law

Given by Samir Patel

Sophia Rose McGhee

Stillborn March 29, 2010

Unknown cause

Baby McGhee

Miscarried July 2002

Baby McGhee II

Miscarried January 2009

Baby McGhee III

Miscarried April 2009

Gifts given by parents Matt and Stacy McGhee

and siblings Micah and Scarlett

Katheryn Johnson

Mary Wilson

Jonathan Daniel Mitchell

Stillborn June 24, 1995

Cord accident

Baby Mitchell

Miscarried December 2001

Given by parents Byron and Rebekah Mitchell

Emma Grace Myrow

Stillborn September 18, 2017

Parents: Hayley and Keenan Myrow

Little brother: Logan

Given by grandmother Sharon Sebesta

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.

Margot Lily Perry

Stillborn June 10, 2013

Cord accident

Parents: Brandon and Marisa Perry

Siblings: Adeline, Bennett and Noelle

Given by grandparents Mary and Norman Lorentz

Gifts of Support:

Christ Church Assembly of God, Fort

Worth, TX

Second Baptist Church, Springfield, MO

Mercy Hospital, Springfield, MO

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

Valerie Portanova

Miryam Villa

Katie Mayer

Ashley Hazlewood

Amber Wilfahrt

Lara Olson

Brayden Ryan

Stillborn December 28, 2012

Given by parents Steven and Heather

Thank you to all who participated and donated
at the Pregnancy and Infant Loss Run
in memory of Jacob Austin Ryan.

To read the full article, please see page 18.

Oliver Sauls

Given by Deanna Wills

Jacob Austin Ryan

Stillborn January 23, 2018

Unknown cause

Parents: Austin and Paige Ryan

Gifts given by

Baby Smith I

Miscarried November 1993

Michael Taylor Smith

SIDS

Aug 18, 1994—Feb 7, 1995

Baby Smith II

Miscarried December 1995

Given by Mommy Heidi Smith

Johnny and Sherry Baker
Weamco

Benham Design LLC

All Our Love Vinyl &

Design

LeFlore Bucking Bulls

Luke Davis & Family

Foster, LLC

Mike Bailey & Family

JoCo

St. Matthew's Episcopal

Church

Alex Kvach

Leta Willcox

Ariana Petrella

Hannah Bright

Beth Young

Kristina Crawford

Nick Ryan

Ken Crawford

Lisa Riggs

Lana Greenfield

Wanda Radke

Angela Wintle

Kat Fasano

Kelli Smith

Valerie Binkley

Kim Kuehler

Monica Castleman

Kyle Sinkbeil

Jean Kay

Elizabeth Kidney

Karen Hart-Davis

Kim Doering

Kasey Baldwin

Megan Cabe

Cindy Bowling

Risa McCuiston

Whitney Holland

Tyler Muse

Allyson Cox

Frank Hites

Jennifer Conway

Caitlin Todhunter

Pam Ashford

Chelsea Laney

Baby Smith

Miscarried July 30, 2018

Parents: Matthew and Cady Smith

Given by Grandmother Heidi Smith

Zoe Steele

Parents: Terrence and Kim Steele

Gifts given by

Texas Farm Bureau Insurance Co.

Mario Coscia

Mindy and Maggie Smith

Stillborn November 4, 1997

TTTS and Polyhydramnios

Gifts given by parents Scott and Karla Smith

and siblings Travis and Julia

AT&T HR Team

Baby Susany

Given by Stacy Winters

Eva Juliette Talavera

Stillborn May 7, 2015

Cord accident

Parents: Lexi and Miguel Talavera

Little sister: Mia

Gifts given by

Charles Mazac

Katherine Talavera

Genesis Marie Tolbert

Miscarried July 7, 2015

Mommy Madisen Tolbert

Given by Cecil and Shirley Tolbert

Malik Winery

Given by Katarina Winery

Adrian Joseph "AJ" Zuckerman

Stillborn March 30, 2007

Cord accident

Given by parents Al and Amber Zuckerman

and brothers Eli and Alex

Blessed

M.E.N.D. is blessed. So truly blessed.

Reflecting on these past few months, our focus has been on supporting our families, loving them, comforting them, remembering all of our babies with them, especially during the tough holiday season.

We could not have done of this without you. Whether it was through a donation, volunteering at a remembrance event or perhaps holding a 5k or other fundraiser in memory of a baby or just for M.E.N.D., or finding a way to help us remember our babies, such as the Pawpaw who ran with a purpose, and crossed the finish line in memory of his grandson, Benjamin, we appreciate all that you do for us and our babies.

Facebook launched the capability for people to create fundraisers benefiting their favorite charity. Gratefully, a number of you have initiated these fundraisers on our behalf, which has generated thousands of dollars for our ministry. However, the way the monies are distributed to us charities, we have no way of knowing who started the fundraisers or who donated. The donations are electronically deposited into our operating account or in the form of a check that we receive once a month in a lump sum with each donor listed as anonymous. For those of you who have started a fundraiser for M.E.N.D., please accept our deep appreciation and our sincere apology for not thanking you sooner – we just don't know who you are. If you choose to host a Facebook fundraiser benefitting M.E.N.D., please let us know once your fundraiser has closed so we can properly thank and acknowledge you.

Thank you for your beautiful support. Donating, volunteering, even simply remembering our babies. We are blessed to have your support in our ministry. While we are here for you, to support you, to comfort you, to love on you, we feel so much love and support from you with your acts of kindness.



Birthday Tributes

Happy 3rd Birthday, Willow!

Happy 3rd birthday to our princess! Dear Willow, it feels impossible that three years have passed since you have left this world to be with your sister. We are so very blessed to have you be part of our family. Though our time with you was far too brief, your larger than life personality continues to make us smile and leave a permanent impact on this world. You were hope in the darkness and taught your mom and dad we can do very hard things. The impossible is now possible because of you, those sweet days of grace and trusting in the journey. Now have a party with Hannah!

*Willow-Meredith Crow
Stillborn January 28, 2016
Chorioamnionites*



Happy 4th Birthday, Hannah!

Happy 4th birthday to our diva! Thank you for allowing us to carry you and grow with you. You are our light and love, pure innocence and joy. You taught us to be “Hannah Addelyn Strong” and to be brave. The 178 days we had with you will never be enough, but we look back on that season of our lives with a bittersweet fondness and a great appreciation of who you were and the difference you made. What an honor it was to know you, love you, be your parents (and sibling) and treasure you. Watch over Willow for us, until we can all meet again.

With brave wings, you fly!

*Hannah Addelyn Crow
Stillborn February 11, 2015
Complications of HELLP Syndrome*

*Parents: Kristin and Joey Crow, Jr
Brother: Skyler*



Happy 1st Birthday, Kyle!

Our tiny human who made such a huge impact on our lives, you are constantly on our minds. We know you are patiently waiting for the day we meet again. Until then, have fun with your uncles! We love you to the moon and back.

*Kyle Thanh Tiet
January 26, 2018
Unknown cause
Parents: Tony Tiet and Jennie Nguyen
Brother: Jaxon*



Happy 1st Birthday, Conchita!

Always in our hearts and never forgotten,
Love,
Your Dad

Penelope, what does heaven look like, baby girl? I know you are celebrating your 1st birthday in heaven. I cannot wait to hold you again. I have dreams about you often, and I know that’s you telling me you’re with me.

We just miss you, Penelope. We wish you were here so very much to have and to hold. We love you.

“An angel in the Book of Life wrote down my baby’s birth. And whispered as she closed the book, ‘Too beautiful for earth.’”

Happy 1st heavenly birthday, baby girl!
Love,
Mommy

*Penelope Angel Villegas
January 1, 2018
Preterm labor
Parents: Ruben and Priscilla Villegas
Siblings: Rebecca, Reese and Brandon*



Happy 1st Birthday, Kase!

To our sweet boy, Kase, we love and miss you so much! This year has been a year of dreaming who you would be. We can’t wait to hold you in our arms again! Our hearts ache without you here! Please know we love you bunches and miss you more! Happy 1st birthday, Kase!

With love, kisses and hugs,
Mommy, Daddy and Kian

*Kase Michael Korbel
February 8, 2018
Bilateral Multicystic Dysplastic Kidney
Parents: Matt and Megan Korbel
Big brother: Kian*



Happy 2nd Birthday, Reece!

Happy birthday, Reece. Not a day goes by I don’t think of you! Continue to watch over us.

Love,
Mom, Dad, Taryn, Jerren and Brynlee

*Reece Tyler Vandiver
Miscarried February 6, 2017
Parents: Derek and Kaylee Vandiver
Siblings: Taryn, Jerren and Brynlee*



Happy 3rd Birthday, Masers!

Masers, on February 12, you turn 3! This is not how I pictured we would spend your 3rd birthday, but here we are. I am full of wonder... What toys would you be into? What theme your party would have been? So many wonderful wonders... I catch myself every day wondering about you.

I love and miss you beyond words. Son, if loving you alone could have saved you, you'd still be here! Mommy and Daddy love and miss you terribly, and we want to wish you a happy heavenly 3rd birthday!

Always loving you,
Mommy, Daddy, Ariel and Chumpy

*Mason Lane Monticue
February 12, 2016
Placental abruption
Parents: Nicole Powell and Glenner Monticue*

**Happy 3th Birthday, Ayedan Thomas Alcorn!**

Happy birthday, Baby Boy.
Mommy and Daddy miss you very much!

*Ayedon Thomas Alcorn
December 14, 2015
Cord accident
Parents: Aaron and Victoria Alcorn
Sister: Emerie Hope*

**Happy 1st Birthday, Matilda!**

We miss you every second of every day,
our sweet Matilda George.

*Matilda George Grant
January 9-16, 2018
Necrotising enterocolitis
Parents: Christopher and Ashleigh Grant
Siblings: Avah and Charlotte*

**Happy 4th Birthday, Rypepie!**

Happy birthday to the most beautiful girl in the world. Mommy loves you more than anything in this world. Until we meet again, my angel!

*Ryleigh Amoy Wiggins
February 25–March 15, 2015
Type II Lissencephaly
Mommy: Sanita Wiggins*

**Happy 2nd Birthday, Cora!**

Mommy and Daddy miss you every day. We can't believe you would be 2 years old. We can't wait until we get to hold you again. We love you, Baby Cora!

*Cora Anne Casarez
January 20, 2017
Cord accident
Parents: Andrew and Leslie Casarez*

**Happy 11th Birthday, Dharma Lucille!**

WOW! 11?! Time sure has flown. You would be a tween right now. Begging for a cell phone, telling me it's time to shave your legs and wanting to text boys. I wish you were here so we could do the mother/daughter things I imagine us doing together. Like getting our nails done, spending hours wandering Target (without your brothers) sipping on our lattes, and me introducing you to the movies of my childhood. Even though I have so many "would be's" and "should be's," I know God has used your life in ways beyond my own imagination. You changed my life for the better, and I promise to continue to serve others in memory of you and in line with His will. I am thankful God fulfilled His promise; He removed my sackcloth of mourning and clothed me with JOY.

*Dharma Lucille Drude
March 31–April 1, 2008
Anencephaly*

**Happy 5th Birthday, Stella Darling!**

FIVE! Five means kindergarten... riding the school bus... independence. I would give anything to hold you and see your sweet face one more time. You changed the way I parent your living siblings. You reminded me what is important. I wish you were here to play princess, dress up, and watch Power Rangers. Thank you for changing my heart and teaching me how to help other mommies who have the tiniest of babies, like you.

*Stella Darling Drude
January 23, 2014
Anencephaly*

**Happy 4th Birthday, Liza Belle!**

Oh, Liza...my littlest of my littles. How fun would it be to have you here with us. I imagine my daughters all lined up, my ducks, from oldest to youngest, and you on the end trying to keep up and be like the big girls. Something tells me you would have been my firecracker, keeping me on my toes but also being a snuggle bunny. Liza, you taught me to serve a different set of mommies... the mommies with less time. But the mommies who need the most support.

*Liza Belle Drude
February 23, 2015
Unknown cause*

*Parents: Jason and Jennie Drude
Siblings: Max, Molli and Milo*



Dallas/Fort Worth Christmas Candlelight Ceremony



On December 6, 2018, Dallas/Fort Worth held our 22nd annual Christmas Candlelight Ceremony, where 200 family members and friends gathered to remember our little babies who died too soon. M.E.N.D. moms, DaLana Barsanti, Liz Walker and Laura Bateman blessed us in song, and the inspirational message was given by M.E.N.D. Founder/President, Rebekah Mitchell. Each family was given the opportunity to come forward to light a candle in memory of their baby. Once all the candles were lit, together we sang Silent Night before extinguishing our candles. The evening concluded with a fun variety of Christmas desserts and visiting with one another.



Peace Sponsors

Rebekah and Byron Mitchell
In memory of Jonathan Daniel and Baby Mitchell

LuAnn and James Junkin
In memory of Paislee Ann Frette

Highland Park Presbyterian Church Women's Ministry
In memory of Baby Franklin

Love Sponsors

Amber and Al Zuckerman
In memory of Adrian Joseph "AJ" Zuckerman

Marissa and Brandon Perry
In memory of Margot Lily Perry

Brittney and David Fish
In memory of Logan David Fish

Aimee and Randy Shaw
In memory of Carson Mitchell Shaw

General Sponsors

Dentistry of Las Colinas, Byron L. Mitchell, D.D.S.
Melissa and Tim Oberlender
The Bailey Family
The Walker Family
Glamour and Guns by Ashley Bailey

Hoffbrau Steak House
Texas Rangers
Jena's Jems
Bob's Steak and Chop House
Eli Zuckerman
In-N-Out



Bryan/College Station Craft Day

M.E.N.D.–Bryan/College Station had a wonderful Christmas Craft Night! We want to thank Michaels Craft Store of College Station, Texas, for allowing us to use their classroom at no charge. We were able to personalize ornaments, candle holders, and reverse canvases in memory of our babies in heaven.



A Run for Love

In December 9, 2018, Pete Trujillo, the father of Jessica Trujillo, ran a half marathon in honor of Jessica's son, Benjamin Tyler Trujillo. Benjamin passed away June 23, 2018, from a fatal chromosome disorder, Trisomy 18 or Edward's Syndrome.



This inspiring Pawpaw ran for a purpose, warming the heart of Jessica, who teared up at the finish line knowing how much her father loves and remembers her son, Benjamin.

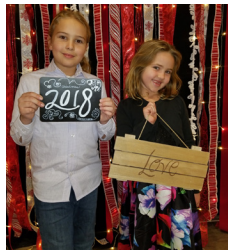


SW Missouri Christmas Candlelight Ceremony

More than 90 people attended our SW Missouri Christmas Candlelight Ceremony, remembering more than 60 babies no longer here with us.

While we long to take those Christmas photos with our baby, we hope the photobooth at the ceremony provided some memories to lovingly reflect back on for years to come.

We would like to say a special thank you to all of our sponsors: Red Crow Marketing, Patty Marshall, Patricia Ervin, Jonathan and Heather Fann, Mercy Hospital, Second Baptist Church, Greg and Kathryn Gold, Heidi Smith and Sara Basinger.



What Makes a Mother

By Jennifer Wasik

I thought of you and closed my eyes and prayed to God today. I asked, "What makes a Mother?" And I know I heard Him say, "A Mother has a baby; this we know is true." "But, God, can you be a Mother when your baby's not with you?"

"Yes, you can!" He replied with confidence in His voice, "I give many women babies; when they leave is not their choice. Some I send for a lifetime and other's for a day. And some I send to fill your womb, but there's no need to stay."

"I just don't understand this, God; I want my baby here."

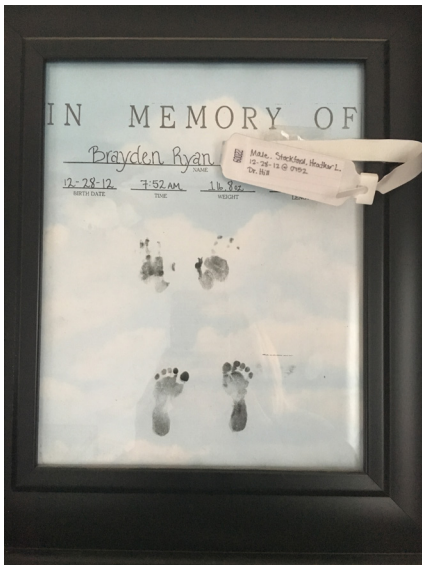
He took a breath, and cleared His throat, and then I saw a tear. "I wish I could show you what your child is doing here. If you could see your child smile with other children and say, 'We go to earth to learn our lessons of love and life and fear, but My Mommy loved me oh so much I got to come straight here! I feel so lucky to have a Mom who had so much love for me, I learned my lesson very quick. My Mommy set me free. I miss my Mommy oh so much, but I visit her each day. When she goes to sleep, on her pillow is where I lay. I stroke her hair and kiss her cheek and whisper in her ear, Mommy don't be sad today. I'm your baby and I'm here.'

"So you see, my dear sweet one, your children are okay. Your babies are here in My home, and this is where they'll stay. They'll wait for you with Me until your lesson is through. And on that day that you come home, they'll be at the gates for you.

So now you see what makes a Mother, it's the feeling in your heart; it's the love you had so much of right from the very start.

Though some on earth may not realize that you are a Mother until their time is done. They'll be up here with me one day and know you're the best one."

retrieved from irisremembers.com on December 27, 2018



Why Not Me?

Written by Heather

Mommy to Brayden Ryan

M.E.N.D.—SW Missouri

Recently I read a book about a physician who became a patient diagnosed with stage 4-cancer. He wrote about the struggles he went through as he became a patient, being on the “other side” of what you know, what you think, what you feel and what is familiar. One quote in that book really resonated with me; the author said: “Why NOT ME?”

This quote may just have been a calm in my own personal storm almost six years into my own loss. It took me four years to walk into a support group, or to talk about my son’s death to anyone outside of my “circle.” Even then, I was much better at stuffing it down, hiding the pain away, like I was protecting it. Some days I still struggle with my own answer to “do you have kids?” How I answer depends on the day.

I didn’t want to be part of “THAT club.” I still don’t. I wanted this to not be me. I wanted my baby. During pregnancy, we never discussed with our doctors the “worst case scenario” (at least, I didn’t). We don’t talk about that. If we read a book, we certainly don’t read “THOSE chapters,” because our pregnancies are going to be just like everyone else’s... You know, the ones that post their positive pregnancy test on Facebook from day one and then every week post that obligatory growing belly picture that we in “The Club” can’t stand to see?

The truth is, I still don’t know why my son was born “sleeping.” I’m not sure there will ever be an answer to why we lose our babies and others don’t. Why did my doctor tell me everything was going to be fine until one day it wasn’t? Why do any of us suffer loss and find ourselves reading this now?

If you are like me, you may be still going in and out of the grieving process. You may be stuck in one stage and feel like you are never going to move forward. Remember when I just said that it took me four years to walk into a support group? It’s going to be ok. It’s all normal. The “new normal” (a phrase I hate to hear, but know is true). You are always going to long for your baby. I am always going to long for mine. Some of your family may never understand. Other people’s words are going to hurt you. My days still aren’t perfect. I don’t think yours are either. I still don’t have it all figured out. I still grieve for Brayden every day, but I have no choice than to be thankful that he made me a mom. I have no living children, and I probably never will (writing that part really stings), but it’s my reality.

I spent half my life trying to get pregnant, taking every drug on the market. I sought a fertility specialist that told me I was wasting my time, another who told me I probably wasted a lot of money on birth control in my earlier years, and endured many stupid comments. But I did get pregnant. I did hear his heartbeat, and the stiffening sound of silence of no longer hearing it at the end. I remember the pain of contractions, and I know what’s it like to sign a birth and death certificate one right after the other.

My son is now in heaven, and approaching his 6th birthday there. He allowed me to experience something wonderful that some said I never would. I’m still a mom. I’m still his Mom, and I know I’m not alone in my loss. I held him in my arms (even for a short time). I am 1 in 4. You are 1 in 4. So, now you see?...Why NOT Me?

“The English language lacks the words to mourn an absence.
 For the loss of a parent, grandparent, spouse, child or friend,
 we have all manner of words and phrases, some helpful some not.
 Still we are conditioned to say something, even if it is only “I’m sorry for your loss.”
 But for an absence, for someone who was never there at all,
 we are wordless to capture that particular emptiness.
 For those who deeply want children and are denied them,
 those missing babies hover like silent ephemeral shadows over their lives.
 Who can describe the feel of a tiny hand that is never held?”



Mixed Emotions

Written by Sanita Wiggins

Mommy to Baby J, Baby JJ and Ryleigh

M.E.N.D.—Dallas/Fort Worth



For as long as I could remember, I had always wanted kids. I even worked at a child development center when I was in my twenties. People had always told me I was great with kids and would make a wonderful mother.

My ex-husband and I tried for years to get pregnant, but had no success. I got pregnant at age 41. I couldn't believe my ears when the doctor told me I was pregnant. Unfortunately, I suffered a miscarriage at 6 weeks. The baby had no heartbeat, and my heart was broken. I got pregnant again a few months later and suffered another miscarriage and yet another heartbreak. I wanted children so badly and now did not think it was ever going to happen.

Then we got pregnant with Ryleigh. Ryleigh was born on February 25, 2015. Before she was born, I was so excited and had made big plans for my baby's future. She would be spoiled and have the things I never had, but still be respectful and humble. Unfortunately, this dream was short-lived as Ryleigh was born with Type II Lissencephaly, a rare genetic disorder where the brain folds do not develop and the surface of the brain appears smooth. Ryleigh lived for 18 days and died on March 15, 2015.

Sometimes I am ok with not having a child. Other times I just want to cry.

Life has its ups and downs. There are times where I really want to try again, and other times I do not. I am now 46, and my fiancé is 54. Most of me feels like my time for having children has past, until I see people like Janet Jackson who had a child at age 50. I do not have a sunshine baby, and I do not have a rainbow baby. Sometimes I am ok with not having a child. Other times, I just want to cry. I

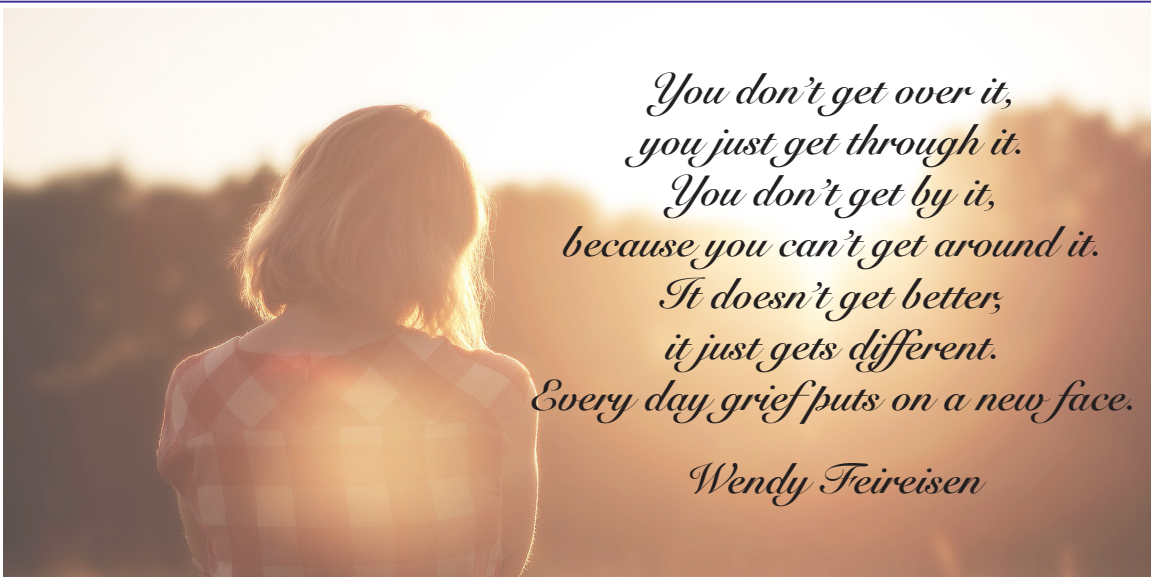
had always wanted to make memories, have someone call me "Mommy," bake cookies, go places and cuddle. My friends have children and some have grandchildren. I can't help but think that those are experiences I will never have. At times I do feel a little jealous. My fiancé has older children, but they live in other cities which makes it hard to see them and bond with them, I hope to eventually be able to build a bond with his boys in time.

Right now I am coping with not having my babies. I am also learning how to cope and be happy for those who do. I am thankful for the close friends who understand and consider how I feel at all times. I don't know what God has planned for the future. To those of us who do not have a sunshine or rainbow baby: hang in there, make no excuse for your feelings, and continue to be who you are now. Know that there are other women out here just like you.



*You don't get over it,
you just get through it.
You don't get by it,
because you can't get around it.
It doesn't get better,
it just gets different.
Every day grief puts on a new face.*

Wendy Feireisen



If Tomorrow Never Comes... accept the heartbreak of giving up on a dream at some point in your

"May Your Life Be Purposeful"

Todd Mitchell, M.A., LPC

Daddy to Gideon, Avery and Joy

Some people are surprised when I tell them I really love '90s country music. I've never been a guy who wears cowboy boots, drives a truck, goes hunting or any of the other things often associated with folks who listen to that kind of music. For me, the lyrics are often very simple, but they resonate with the human spirit (except for "Achy Breaky Heart," of course). And when I think of the greatest of the honkytonk poets, I immediately think of Garth Brooks. One of his best songs is "If Tomorrow Never Comes," a story of a man wondering if he's given his wife enough love if today is all he has on earth.

For many in the infant loss community, though, tomorrow is tied with hope. The thinking goes, "I may have lost one (or several) babies without having a living child. But there's always next time." Or you may have suffered with chronic infertility. Perhaps your message to yourself is "Just one more round of IVF... This time will be different." Maybe tomorrow will be less depressing than today. It seems impossible for us to believe people who genuinely want to produce children and have so much love to offer could be denied that chance repeatedly.

But what if that tomorrow you're banking on never comes? What if the empty nest is forever empty? You may think I'm being cynical and am here to rain on

What if the empty nest is forever empty?

your parade. The last thing I want to do is to squash your hopes. Hope is a powerful driving force and is sometimes the closest thing to happiness that we can muster on a given day. Oh, how I wish I

never had to ask that question. Unfortunately, that is something very common in counseling others. The term we therapists use to describe this process is "catastrophizing." We want people to play the "what if" game to visualize what the least desirable outcome is. The goal is to get the client to see that the worst case scenario is often either unrealistic or not as bad as they might have originally thought. Sometimes we have to be faced with that uncomfortableness in order to move forward. The harsh reality is that not everyone is granted the gift of a living child. Although I hope it's not the case for you, it's always possible that having a living child might not be in the cards for you.

This could come as a tough blow to you that tomorrow may never come. However, many of you have more tools in your toolbox to cope with this reality than you might realize. I'm sure you've had to

accept the heartbreak of giving up on a dream at some point in your life. Sometimes it helps to channel some of that previous experience with broken dreams in order to understand where to turn next.

There are two types of broken dreams: aimless and organized. Aimless is when the dream was all there was. Because the dream was unfulfilled, you have no idea what to do with yourself. You lack any sense of drive because nothing else matters anyway. You're simply surviving, aimlessly living without a purpose, almost lost. On the other hand, organized has a plan in place.

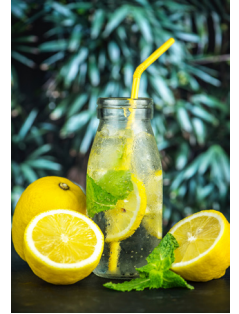
Although the dream was what you wanted desperately, you're going to make some delicious lemonade out of those lemons life gave you.

Plan A was what you were shooting for, but hey, maybe plan B will be alright too.

What would an organized broken dream look like in the context of never being able to have a baby? What you're about to read is not the only plan. Your plan will

need to be tailored to your family's specific needs and goals. However, here are a few things that have been helpful to others. This is not a comprehensive list but just a starting point for ideas. Even though you might not be able to have a biological child, adoption is an option for some people. There are many children who need a loving home. It doesn't always require you having a lot of money if you adopt through your state. For some people, there are too many hurdles to adoption for it to be feasible. If you're in that boat, then perhaps you can find ways to be around children. Teaching, volunteering or mentoring are all avenues you can explore. I've gone to many different churches and never once have heard "We have too many people working in the children's department." There is a way to touch the heart of a child, even if you don't share the same DNA.

It is important when developing a plan that you and people around you agree that you're mentally and emotionally ready to engage in the plan. If you're not actually ready, you could exacerbate your grief, become highly anxious, and even depressed. But I encourage you to have a plan when you are ready, because none of us knows if tomorrow will come.



Although the dream was what you wanted desperately, you're going to make some delicious lemonade out of those lemons life gave you.

M.E.N.D. CHAPTER UPDATES

Denver



M.E.N.D.–Denver has held our first two support groups in November and December and welcomed several new families. This spring we are looking forward to partnering with more local hospitals to offer support to their patients. The one thing we hear repeatedly is how great the need is here for support for families experiencing a loss. We are blessed to see the beginnings of M.E.N.D.–Denver meeting that need.

Kimberly

Greater Houston Area



M.E.N.D.–Greater Houston Area had a blessed 2018, and are looking forward to see what the Lord does in the Houston area in 2019. We are already planning our 2nd Annual Bears for M.E.N.D. fundraiser so we can provide bears to local hospitals to give to families when they lose a baby. If you are interested in sponsoring bears, keep an eye out on our Facebook page. And as always, you are all in our prayers and we are praying for the many families who will join M.E.N.D. this year.

Stormy

Palm Beach, Florida



M.E.N.D.–Palm Beach, Florida has been keeping busy. In October we launched and attended several remembrance ceremonies and connected with some awesome people in our community. In November we were invited to promote our chapter at a 5k in honor of babies gone too soon. Then in December we had the great honor of attending the beautiful Candlelight Ceremony in Dallas, which prepares us to have our own in the future. Now we are getting ready to return to Texas for our annual Leadership Conference in February!

Our support group is growing with new wonderful families, and all we need now are a few amazing assistants to help us with our chapter in the New Year! We can't wait to see what God has in store for M.E.N.D.–Palm Beach, Florida, in 2019!

Jessica

NW Washington



M.E.N.D.–NW Washington had a beautiful Christmas Candlelight Ceremony in December. We had 36 families in attendance, and we remembered 55 babies. Thank you to all who volunteered and donated to help make this night possible for our families.

Please pray for our leadership team, as we prepare to travel to Texas for our annual leadership conference in February. We look forward to fellowship, learning and growing as a team and as an organization.

Stacy

Chicagoland



M.E.N.D.–Chicagoland was blessed with a beautiful, snowy and emotional day as we decorated our M.E.N.D. tree at the Brookfield Zoo Lights display, which in years past was always spearheaded by M.E.N.D.–Chicagoland's assistant director, Kirsten Fumagalli, who joined her babies in heaven on March 14, 2018. As always, it was a very special way to remember and honor each and every M.E.N.D.–Chicagoland baby. M.E.N.D. families continued to share all season long, how they visit the tree at the zoo and look for their baby's ornament. A big thank you goes out to everyone who had a hand in making it another day to remember!

Sara

Bryan/College Station, Texas



M.E.N.D.–Bryan/College Station ended 2018 with great reflection of how God has worked through M.E.N.D.–Bryan/College Station. We were able to serve many new families this year. We are so thankful God has used M.E.N.D. and our babies in a mighty way. I want to thank our leadership team of 2018 for having a servant's heart: LaRhessa Johnson, Melody Pittman, Kristen Rabe, and JaeCee Crawford. These ladies are a blessing to me and M.E.N.D.–Bryan/College Station. We are looking forward to continuing to serve the families of Brazos County.

Jennie

Southwest Missouri

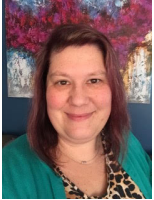


M.E.N.D.–SW Missouri continues to minister to the hurting families in the SW Missouri area. Our Christmas Candlelight Ceremony was once again a beautiful and meaningful event with 90 in attendance, remembering 63 babies in heaven.

Our next event is our Craft Day fundraiser. It will be February 15-16 at The Springs Church.

Kathryn

MidMichigan



It's a New Year full of hope for M.E.N.D.–MidMichigan! We look forward to growing our group in the coming year by reaching more families on their grief journey in MidMichigan. We appreciate the love and support from our community and are thankful to those

who share our information with others who need a safe place to talk and grieve their losses. We are looking forward to meeting new families on the first Tuesday of every month at Ashman Plaza at 7:00 PM.

Karen

Tulsa, Oklahoma

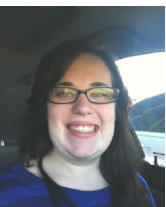


M.E.N.D.–Tulsa ended 2018 with our 7th Annual Christmas Candlelight Ceremony. It was a beautiful time of remembrance during the busy holiday season. Thank you to Kristina Cobler, Cat Markam, David Graves and Mary Clare Mansfield for all of their help. Thank you to Kathryn Johnson for the inspirational message of hope.

Thank you to Tracy Crone for the beautiful music. Additionally, thank you to our sponsors Anthem Church, Merritt's Bakery, Sam's Club, Jeremy and Lisa Daily, and Jesse and Cat Markham. We are excited to see what God has in store in 2019, as we continue to minister to grieving families.

Lisa

Online Support Group



M.E.N.D. offers an online support group the 3rd Thursday of each month at 9:00 CST. I am very grateful for my recent appointment as the new director of this aspect of our ministry.

To share with you a little bit of my story, we recently celebrated my son's 3rd heavenly birthday. On December

14, 2015, at 12:20 AM, the contractions started so we thought our baby boy was finally ready to make his

appearance. We were so excited! After the hospital checked us into a room, the nurses started hooking me up to monitors, but after three different sono machines, they discovered our baby boy didn't have a heartbeat anymore.

We were devastated. The doctor said I would be induced and have my baby before I could leave the hospital. I couldn't even think about having to do this, but I knew I didn't have a choice.

At 4:00 AM, the labor started and lasted into the evening. Throughout the day, questions filled my mind: "Did I do something wrong?" "Could I have prevented this?" "Why did this happen to me?" "Will Aaron still love me, even though I lost his son?" I couldn't think about anything else. I felt horrible.

Around 10:00 PM, the nurse told me I was fully dilated. It was almost time for our baby to be born. At that point, I felt I couldn't do it and didn't want to deliver him. I was scared. I didn't think I could deliver our baby if he wasn't breathing.

At 10:26 PM, I started pushing. I had no idea what I was going to do when it was all over. All I knew was I had a job to do, and I was going to give it everything I had. It was my job as a mom.

At 10:42 PM, after 16 minutes of pushing, our baby boy was born sleeping. Measuring 7 pounds, 7 ounces, and was 19.5 inches long, he was perfect! I will always remember the feeling when I became a Mommy and Aaron became a Daddy, even though he was born sleeping. That moment I became a Mommy... nothing will ever change what I felt in that moment.

We spent the next three hours holding him and crying, seeing how perfect he was and knowing he was ours, no matter what. My parents and Aaron's parents all met him and held him. Those are precious moments and memories we cherish!

I will never forget my firstborn son, Ayedan Thomas, and how much I love him. It hurt so much seeing my husband's face as he realized his son was beautiful, yet he would never see him breathe or cry. We had wished so much the doctors were wrong, and he would just open his eyes and cry. How much I wish he were still here and would be crying.

We have been through so much already together and apart. However, this experience has brought us closer together. We love our son, and we know he is in heaven with our other family who have gone before us, and we will see him again.

For information to join our online support group, watch our facebook page or email me at victoria@mend.org.

Victoria

Pregnancy & Infant Loss Run/Walk

Early 2018, we were expecting to have our first child. We had a very routine pregnancy, but discovered during our last appointment, just one week before his scheduled delivery date, our son had no heartbeat. Jacob Austin Ryan was stillborn on January 23, 2018, at 38 weeks.

We were devastated and confused, and even now, a year later, we still have no clear medical explanation of what happened to our son. The pregnancy was very normal, save for Mom's complaints of heartburn and moderate discomfort. Jacob was breech, which was the reason for our scheduled external version (to flip him over, basically) at 39 weeks. Our doctor's plan was to attempt the version and induce labor, or be ready to perform a C-section if Jacob showed any signs of stress during the attempt.

One week before we planned to meet our son, we learned he was already gone, and he was delivered via C-section that afternoon. He came out with a perfect appearance, and a lot of hair, which Mom had expected after all of the heartburn. As soon as we found out we were having a boy, we just assumed he'd come out looking exactly like his Dad. His hair was dark like his Dad's, but most everyone thought he looked more like Mom. You could tell he had big eyes like his Mom, and unattached earlobes like his Dad. We're not sure whose nose, but it was adorable.

After Jacob was delivered, our doctor told us she was surprised she didn't see any obvious evidence of what might have happened to him. The doctor saw meconium in the womb, which she told us could have been the result of some type of stress that came over him. Meconium is a common occurrence prior to birth.

Tests were later conducted on Mom, Jacob and the placenta. Unfortunately, no concrete answers came from any of it. Lab tests revealed Villitis of unknown etiology (VUE), which was described to us as essentially a symptom without a clear cause. The doctor told us a few things that have been known to cause VUE and ordered testing on anything that could possibly lend an answer. Mom passed all the tests, we were told that "these

things sometimes happen," and that we should try to heal and try again down the road.

In the following months we were showered with love from family and friends, and sought



*Written by Austin and Paige Ryan
Daddy and Mommy to Jacob
M.E.N.D.—Tulsa*



support from several nonprofit organizations that were set up to assist families who are dealing with heartbreaking losses similar to ours. After our experience, and much to our surprise, we had a great number of friends and acquaintances come forward to share their stories of loss and remind us we're not alone in our suffering. We were shocked by the sheer number of people who came forward who also had a stillborn child, a miscarriage, or an infant loss at some point in their lives or the lives of their loved ones. As we have grieved this year, we grew more compelled each day to contribute to the care of other families who were also grieving, and to those who would also benefit from loving support from the nonprofit organizations that helped us.

It was our desire to honor the memory of our son, and to raise funds for two amazing organizations that helped us so much this year. This led us to begin a Pregnancy & Infant Loss Run/Walk, which took place on October 13, 2018, in Sand Springs. It was our hope that participants would have a chance to honor the infant and pregnancy losses in their own lives, and to do so by making a charitable contribution to groups that benefit these families. We found this was an awesome way to honor all lives lost during or before infancy, and we believe it was a terrific fundraiser for our charities.

We selected two charities for 100% of our net profits from this event to be donated to: Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep (NILMDTS), and M.E.N.D. (Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death). These two organizations had a tremendous impact on us this year.

On the day of our loss, amidst the whirlwind of confusion and sadness, we were asked if we would like to have a photographer come in and take pictures of our son. Initially we were unsure, but our family encouraged us to have a few photos taken. NILMDTS sent an incredible local photographer who specializes in this type of photography to give us what would become our most cherished mementos of our son's life.

M.E.N.D. is the other organization that has helped us so much this year. M.E.N.D. guided us throughout our bereavement journey, and will continue to provide emotional support for years to come. The value of having fellowship with people who have gone through very similar losses cannot be overstated, and M.E.N.D. has already been a great help on our journey.

Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep and M.E.N.D. are both nonprofit entities run solely on donations. For this Pregnancy & Infant Loss Run/Walk event we donated

50% of profits to Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep and 50% to M.E.N.D.

With the help of our community, we raised \$6,002.04! We were able to make a difference in the lives of families who have suffered through this hardship and honored the memories of our babies. Even though we started this event with our son in mind, other participants were able to remember and reflect on the losses that have happened to them, and walked with us to honor their memories.

Thank you to our volunteers of this fundraiser:
 Susan Hart, Chris Hart, Natalie Crawford, Kurtis Crawford, Cyndi Donohew, Lorrie Bailey, Bill Doering, Lindsey Sinkbeil, Brett Sinkbeil, Allison Potts, Bentley Potts, Blake Hodges and Hollis Griffin.



Greater Houston Area Christmas Candlelight Ceremony

The M.E.N.D.–Greater Houston 13th Annual Christmas Candlelight Ceremony was the perfect way to remember our babies and include them in the Christmas holiday season. We remembered the lives of 85 babies with more than 150 families and friends. Thank you so much to everyone who helped make this event extra special for our families in M.E.N.D. Thank you to everyone who helped decorate and clean up, donated money and raffle items, and/or volunteered their talents and time. Without you all, this event would not happen.

Thank you to all our sponsors:

Noel Level Sponsor

Sharon Sebesta
 Remembering Emma Grace Myrow,
 September 18, 2017

Joy Level Sponsor

Monica & Jeff Bridge
 Remembering Zelda Amirah Bridge,
 January 17, 2017

Leslie & Andrew Casarez

Remembering Cora Anne Casarez,
 January 20, 2017

Emyllin Eguiarte

Remembering Ariel & Angel Wong-Eguiarte,
 June 26, 2013

Merry Level Sponsor

Carrie Law
 Remembering
 Zachary James Law,
 October 1-17, 2017
 and Jacob Emmanuel Lower,
 February 20, 2012

Love Level Sponsors

Jenny Brown
 Remembering Casey Jordan Brown,
 September 21–October 1, 2018

Jesika & Patrick Scott

Remembering Oliver Scott,
 September 29, 2017

Faith & John Story

Remembering Abigail Grace Story,
 July 9, 2015–July 13, 2015

General Sponsors

Panera Bread
 Chuy's
 Texas State Railroad
 Santa's Wonderland
 Stephen David Leonard
 Theresa Gabriel
 Roberta & John Causley
 Stormy & Todd Mitchell
 Little Happies Co.

April & John Palmarez
 Rosa Castillo
 Sugar Land Skeeters Baseball
 Angelica Reyes & Domingo Martinez
 Priscilla Ceballos
 Leslie & Ricky Roberts
 Samantha Ward
 Beach Bungalow Design
 Dandelion Wishes





Kenneth, the Miracle Child

An interview with Louisa Garza

Mommy to Kenneth

Written by Jennifer Harrison

M.E.N.D.—Newsletter Editor

There are so many people who are instrumental in preparing each newsletter... many who work behind the scenes, taking such loving care in their work. Louisa Garza is one of those loving souls. After we finish preparing the newsletter, it is sent to Louisa at Kwik Kopy printing in Dallas, Texas, where she watches over it and helps ensure what comes from a screen turns into a beautiful magazine to provide you comfort.

Louisa has lovingly watched over our newsletter for a long time, and she does so because she is also walking down the road with us... the road after loss.

Let's start with your story of Kenneth. Could you share with us the story of your pregnancy and his birth?

My son, Kenneth, was a complete surprise! I had no idea I was pregnant. My weight always fluctuated, I always had irregular menstrual cycles, and I had already been told I would never be able to get pregnant naturally. I had a tubal pregnancy about 12 years earlier, and my tube ruptured. They discovered I had severe scarring in both tubes, and my only option to conceive would be In Vitro. I was married at the time, but we were not in a place in our lives to even consider In Vitro and all that was involved, including the cost.

Fast forward 12 years later... I had been divorced for 10 years and was in a relationship. I woke up one morning and didn't feel well. Things were really hard for me at that time, and I thought I was making myself sick due to all the stress. Even though I knew what the doctors told me, I did wonder if I was pregnant because this was something I hadn't felt before. I took three different pregnancy tests, and they all came out negative. How could I ever be pregnant? This is why I didn't recognize it was actually morning sickness and not stress until later.

I was feeling worse as the day continued. When I went to bed that night I started cramping, but thought it was my cycle finally starting. Later that night I woke up cramping so badly my boyfriend got out of bed to go buy me something for pain. I took a couple of pills and tried to sleep, but the pain

wouldn't let me. The pain was making me feel like I needed to use the bathroom. I went to the bathroom, but nothing.

I went back to bed and had fallen asleep, but was woken up because my water broke. That's not what I thought it was at the time. I got up to clean the bed and take a shower. The pain was getting worse while I was in the shower and felt like I had to use the bathroom again, so I sat down. Within a minute the cramping and pain had become very bad and then, suddenly, here he came.

I had no idea I had given birth. I tried to stand up, and then realized I was attached to something. I looked down, and there he was. There are no words to describe what I felt. I was in shock. I was bleeding heavily because I ripped the umbilical cord, as I was stumbling down. 911 was called, and we were taken to the hospital. My son did not survive. He was not developed enough to be able to live outside the womb, and I later learned I was only 22 weeks along with him. His precious soul was gone before they arrived.

This was the most traumatic event in my life. I gave birth! I had a son. I lost a son.

My mom told me when I lost my first pregnancy to have faith in God and not believe the doctors, because God was grand and anything is possible through Him. After my divorce she also told me I would find someone who understood and felt about children the same way I did. My boyfriend, Kenneth, had an injury as a young child which would make conceiving almost impossible. So if I couldn't conceive without invitro, and he wasn't able to impregnate me, how was our son, Kenneth Jr., conceived? My mom, the wise woman she is, told me again how grand God is and how I was blessed with a child against all kinds of odds. My son IS A MIRACLE. There is no other way to explain it. What I couldn't understand was why God blessed me and took it all away at the same time. This is something I fought with for a long time but finally came to peace with it. My son, Kenneth Bernard Weddington, Jr., was born on November 2, 2007.

**This was the
most traumatic
event in my life.**

I gave birth!

I had a son.

I lost a son.



Do people try to give you advice a lot, like about adoption or other options? How does that make you feel?

The response from people has changed over the years. When it first happened and

I was younger, they felt more free to give advice... sometimes unsolicited. I am a very private person and there were not many people who knew what happened and/or knew my story so it made things harder. I was conflicted...do I tell them about my deepest, most personal parts of my life so they will back off or do I just grin and bear it? It all depended on who the person was. It's not as hard anymore because I'm older and not expected to have children at my age.

Parenting a baby in heaven looks different for everyone. What are ways you remember and celebrate your little one?

There isn't a day goes by I don't think about my son, Kenneth. I have his pictures out and see his precious little face every day. I visit the cemetery quite often and always decorate his resting place for the different holidays. My family celebrates his birthday every year with me. My mom goes to visit him on her own and leaves him goodies. It makes my heart happy and makes me smile when I show up and see what flowers or trinkets she has left him.

Has printing the M.E.N.D. newsletter helped you in your grief? If so, how?

I knew Rebekah Mitchell, Founder of M.E.N.D. before I lost my baby. I have had the privilege to work with her as a customer for about 14 years. M.E.N.D. quickly became my FAVORITE customer because of who she was and what this organization was about. It broke my heart to read all of these stories of families losing their babies. When I lost my baby, I received a call from Rebekah asking if I was the same person she knew and was it me who had lost a child. That's when I learned how deeply involved she was and how far her reach was. She counseled me and helped me, but since I had already known about M.E.N.D. and their services before this tragic event, I had somewhat of an advantage over other

parents since I already knew about them. I had read so many newsletters and knew about what to expect, and that it was OK to feel what I was feeling.

I think this was the most important point I learned. There is no time frame on grief! The newsletter provided information on coping methods and tips, resources were available, therapy, sources for memorial and related items, plus lots more!

I spoke with Rebekah one day about my ordeal and she asked me what is it that I missed and wished I had when I was in the hospital. My response was I wished there was a brochure that told me "what I needed to know." I received all kinds of info, but there wasn't anything that covered some of the basic things I needed to know. I was a first time mother who lost a child in such a traumatic way, so my mind and emotions were all over the place. She later came out with a brochure she calls "What I Need to Know Before Leaving the Hospital," which was fantastic!

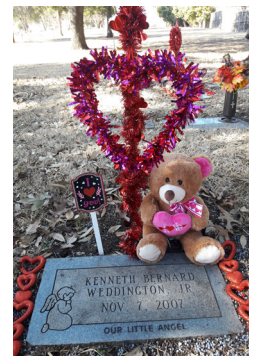
If you could ask God one thing about Kenneth, what would it be?

Why? Why did you make me a Mommy and then take him away from me?

What is your favorite memory from your pregnancy? A funny moment or food you craved? Just something that makes you smile thinking back to it....

I never knew I was pregnant, but I used to love these street tacos and suddenly I couldn't stand them! The smell alone would cause me to become ill QUICK! After I had my son there were a lot things that now made sense. He HATED these tacos. I have yet to eat any since then, lol!

I had read so many newsletters and knew what to expect, and that it was OK to feel what I was feeling. I think this was the most important point I learned. There is no time frame on grief!



Escaping the Prison of Grief

My children are dead, and while I apologize for my directness, it's a necessary disclosure, one that immediately cuts to the heart and allows for meaningful reflection. I could proceed with the specific details that most of us share, but instead here's a quick overview; we've dealt with primary infertility, secondary infertility, had four miscarriages, then a live birth who passed within 24 hours of delivery, and most recently another miscarriage. There is no known reason for any of their deaths. None.



This is my reality. This is our reality. And here we get to the heart of the matter: how do we pick up the pieces of our lives and go forward?

Below are six reflections I offer in honor of our six children.

Don't believe ignorance.

Like all of you, we've heard everything from well-intentioned but hurtful statements to unfounded and asinine proclamations. I believe people are genuinely trying to render comfort or advice. However, these wasteful comments begin to weigh on you. Don't give in to people's incorrect and oversimplified feedback. You are the most knowledgeable about your situation and you did the best you could in a time of difficulty.

Take your time.

Time does not heal all wounds. You have to actively seek healthy ways to heal and doing so may mean you work at your own pace, and possibly not with your closest friends and family, as they too are suffering. Give yourself time and space to adjust to your new reality. I've found that good friends are patient and kind; they don't take things personally. People who can't do that or be that for you aren't helpful in a time of crisis or recovering post-crisis. It's a time of recalibration and if you don't give yourself time to adjust, your healing is hindered.

Be honest about your loss, but only if it benefits you.

Many parents elect to tell about their deceased children as a way to acknowledge missing family members and to call awareness to infant loss. When you have no living children, however, this becomes more difficult. For example when asked do I have children, shall I say, "Yes, six, but they are all dead?" I've just blasted this nice person out of the water and then they struggle to reply. Many of the replies are ignorant causing me to be on defense. Other times I find it's me consoling them. Therefore we often elect to not tell the truth, if it's at the expense of our emotional health. We affirm our children, but I'm learning that I don't need to plunge the grief dagger into my chest every time I meet new people.

Get help.

Do what you need and listen to yourself. It may be a support group is helpful or an individual counselor. I found both, talking with those in similar situations and those with medical training, to be a godsend. It removed me from the onslaught of ignorance and placed me within a supportive environment. I started to heal when I began to talk with the right people for my situation. On a side note, I found I sometimes need breaks, times away from support, and that worked well too. No matter how helpful something is, it is possible to overdo it, in the same way that plants can't be watered continuously nor can they be in direct sunlight around the clock.

It's not your fault.

As parents we blame ourselves, especially when a child dies. We often allow torturous and untrue thoughts to linger. Many of mine dwell on being more proactive within the medical field. This is completely inaccurate as I'm beyond a good self-advocate, but that doesn't stop me from thinking what if... I should have...as the mother I'm the only one who... and other self-flagellating statements. All of these are incorrect, but with each loss these ugly statements seem to grow in power as if the more powerless I felt, the more I sought to

understand or perhaps even control the unknowable. It took me a long time to believe it's not my fault. I've learned that all the medical knowledge and resources can't stop most loss situations; miscarriages, genetic anomalies, SIDS, cord and other accidents, incompetent cervixes, and the very common unknown cause of death are still rampant in today's society. As smart as the medical field is, despite the incredible advances being made, we still don't know it all, nor can we solve it all.

Keep your memories and imagination in check.

Like all parents I had hopes and dreams for each child and I believe the world would be a better place had they lived. For me the difficulty of staying with these thoughts is that I allow my imagination too much leeway. I easily envision first steps, first words, going to school, weddings, and grandchildren. On other days my memories churn up other images. I'll recall each child's specific circumstances and how things went sideways. Those memories can then twist my imagination with future pregnancies as I now see two paths: hope for and fear of the future. It colors my past too, as I can no longer see each pregnancy as joyful but a journey toward death. I recently read that over-focusing on the past is a pathway to depression and over-focusing on the future is a pathway to anxiety. This is not a surprise for those who grieve for you, the survivor, are seemingly left with nothing but memories and imagination that can turn on you. For me staying focused on the here and now helps me to stay centered. With help, I stay away from false possible futures and inaccurate clouded memories.

Life is hard. It's a lesson all will learn, but my hope for you is that you find peace. People often tell me, "I'm praying you have a baby that lives." I abhor that intention. I have children who live; they just don't exist in the same time and space that we do. In response I always reply, "Please don't. Instead pray that I accept the past and embrace the future. Pray for acceptance."

©2018 by Jennifer Miller

All rights reserved. This article or any portion thereof may not be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever without the express written permission from the author.

Chicagoland Tree Decorating

What a privilege and honor to remember all of the M.E.N.D.-Chicagoland babies at our annual tree trimming at the Zoo, a tradition started by my dear friend and M.E.N.D. assistant, Kirsten, who passed away last year. Her absence was felt in a major and painful way as she was so good at tending to the details of organizing and

following through making our tree so beautiful and special each year! Just as Kirsten would have loved, we decorated with fresh snow falling. She is so missed... It was hard and beautiful! I am so thankful for each hand, big and small, who helped to hang each ornament today to remember each life of our M.E.N.D. babies.





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

Este año pasado de 2018 demostró ser un año lleno de bendiciones abundantes de Dios en M.E.N.D. Abecés se me hace difícil contar con alegría los logros de nuestro Ministerio debido al muy triste y sagrado enfoque de nuestra organización, pero como digo regularmente, no importa que tan lejos avanza la tecnología médica, bebés seguirán muriendo, así que estoy agradecida de que M.E.N.D. está aquí para nosotros. Por lo tanto, me gustaría darles una idea de las diferentes maneras en que hemos extendido la comodidad y el cuidado a nuestras familias mientras lamentan, y nuevas oportunidades que exploramos y hemos experimentado en el área de compartir nuestro ministerio con los demás. Además, me gustaría compartir lo que nuestra organización está planeando para 2019. La mayor parte de esta información pertenece a nuestro capítulo de la jefatura en Dallas/Fort Worth. Sé que todos nuestros directores de capítulos podrían escribir su propio artículo del año en revisión, pero este es la revisión de nuestro capítulo principal donde ocurren las operaciones diarias de M.E.N.D..

DFW Embarazo y Pérdida de la Infancia Conexión de Comodidad

El año pasado comenzó con la continuación de una nueva cadena lateral que empecé al final de 2017 - DFW Embarazo y Pérdida de la Infancia Conexión de Comodidad. Hay una serie de organizaciones de embarazo y pérdida de bebés en el norte de Texas que ofrecen una variedad de servicios a los padres lamentando, pero me di cuenta de que no estábamos íntimamente familiarizados entre sí. Además, a pesar de que M.E.N.D. y otras grandes organizaciones como nosotros han existido durante varios años, demasiados proveedores de atención médica no estaban conscientes de todos los recursos que podrían ofrecer a sus pacientes para la continuación de la atención. Por lo tanto, organicé esta cadena para que nos reuniéramos trimestralmente para compartir nuestras organizaciones entre sí. Este grupo ha demostrado tener bastante éxito en que he visto y reconocido la expansión de los proveedores que ahora están más familiarizados con M.E.N.D. y se refieren a nosotros, así como nos invitan a dar sesiones de información a sus empleados. Si usted vive en el área del norte de Texas y es director de una organización cuya

misión principal es el embarazo y la pérdida de bebés o si usted es un proveedor de atención médica cuyo enfoque es el cuidado del dolor de pérdidas perinatal, por favor hádmelo saber para que pueda darle más información sobre cuándo y dónde nos encontramos juntos cada trimestre.

2018 Conferencias

El mes de enero comenzó con nuestra conferencia anual de liderazgo. Todos los años, todos los directores de capítulos de M.E.N.D., asistentes, Junta Directiva de M.E.N.D. y miembros del Consejo Consultivo se reúnen para un fin de semana de formación, vinculación y compañerismo. Este fin de semana es verdaderamente uno de mis eventos favoritos del año. Me encanta pasar tiempo con estas mujeres que han escuchado el llamamiento de convertir el dolor de su pérdida en algo muy bello dedicándose a consolar a los demás con el mismo consuelo que hemos recibido de Dios. El próximo fin de semana nos invitaron a asistir a una conferencia en San Marcos, Texas, donde se me pidió que diera una presentación a los consejeros de la escuela de todo el estado sobre la pérdida de embarazo adolescente. Se da mucha capacitación y educación a los consejeros sobre el embarazo adolescente, pero no cómo cuidar las necesidades emocionales de una madre adolescente cuando su bebé muere. Esta oportunidad abrió la puerta para un puñado de invitaciones adicionales a varios distritos escolares en el norte de Texas para dar este mismo entrenamiento a sus consejeros y enfermeras de la escuela en todo el distrito. Stormy Mitchell (Director del capítulo de M.E.N.D.-Houston), Jennie Drude (Director del capítulo de M.E.N.D.-Bryan/College Station) y yo fuimos invitados a asistir a una cumbre en Florida para reunirnos con un pequeño grupo de mujeres de todo el país que, al igual que nosotros, dirigen el embarazo y organizaciones de pérdida infantil. Aparte de la genialidad de pasar el día con las damas con una misión de mentalidad similar, compartimos los objetivos de nuestra organización, las luchas y la idea de organizar una conferencia nacional en el futuro.

Pérdida en el Liderazgo

Marzo nos trajo a nuestras rodillas cuando nuestro M.E.N.D.-Chicagoland Subdirector, Kirsten Fumagalli, luchó contra el cáncer de colon. Sólo

seis semanas después de asistir a nuestra Conferencia de liderazgo en Dallas, asistimos a su funeral en Chicago. Su muerte nos sorprendió y nos sacudió hasta el centro. Me recuerda Deuteronomio 29:29, que dice que las cosas secretas pertenecen al Señor mientras seguimos preguntando "por qué", especialmente preguntándonos por qué un joven marido se quedó con dos hijos pequeños para criar por su cuenta. Nuestras oraciones continuas están con esa dulce familia.

Actualización a la Hoja Informativa

Podrán haber notado en la primavera que comenzamos a imprimir el boletín en color! Estamos muy orgullosos de nuestra pequeña publicación que se distribuye por todo el mundo, y es completado por un equipo de voluntarios dedicados que trabajan muy duro para crear una revista significativa, reconfortante y útil. Muchas gracias a nuestra incansable editora, Jennifer Harrison, que quema el aceite de medianoche en más noches de las que nos damos cuenta creando esta maravillosa publicación!

Eventos de octubre

El verano comenzó nuestra planificación para la caminata anual para recordar, que se celebra en octubre de cada año. El Walk to Remember en Dallas (Irving) dio la bienvenida a más de 1,300 invitados, recordando cerca de 400 bebés que murieron demasiado adelantado. M.E.N.D.-Houston organizó su caminata anual para recordar en el mismo día con más de 900 en la asistencia, recordando 300 bebés. La mayoría de nuestros capítulos de M.E.N.D. organizó lanzamientos de globos y varias otras ceremonias de conmemoración en octubre en la observancia del mes de concientización sobre el embarazo y la pérdida infantil. También, un número de nuestros capítulos se asoció con otras organizaciones de la pérdida el 15 de octubre para las ceremonias de la Onda de Luz.

¡Nuevos capítulos!

M.E.N.D. creció exponencialmente en 2018. En septiembre, M.E.N.D. se expandió a Michigan, bajo la dirección de Karen Kilbourn. El mes siguiente abrimos en Palm Beach, Florida, bajo la dirección de Jessica Gaddie, y en noviembre abrimos nuestras puertas en Colorado, justo a las afueras de Denver, bajo la dirección de Kimberly Adams.

Conferencia de la Aflicción Perinatal

En octubre, yo, junto con dos de nuestros miembros de la Junta, Brandee Dill y Calli Stanley, viajamos a St. Louis, Missouri, para asistir a la Conferencia Internacional de aflicción perinatal. Pasamos cuatro días exhibiendo nuestra

organización a cientos de proveedores de atención médica de todo el mundo, presentándolos a M.E.N.D. y haciéndoles saber lo que tenemos para ofrecer a sus pacientes en dolor. Además, asistimos a una serie de talleres de capacitación, aprendiendo maneras en las que podemos mejor alcanzar a los compañeros de la pérdida, y escuchar lo que se enseña a nuestros equipos de atención médica sobre el cuidado de las familias de pérdidas. Fueron maravillosos varios días de hacer nuevos amigos que comparten nuestra pasión por el Ministerio.

Ceremonia de Velas de Navidad

El año siempre termina con la mayoría de nuestros capítulos que albergan hermosas ceremonias navideñas de velas. Este acontecimiento es una época en que las familias se adelantan para encender una vela en memoria de su bebé. A diferencia de las ceremonias de Walk to Remember cuando el nombre de cada bebé es anunciado por nosotros, la ceremonia de Navidad permite que las familias se adelanten y hablen el nombre de su propio bebé en el micrófono para reconocer públicamente a su pequeño (s).

Mirando Hacia el Futuro

Así que.... ¿Qué tenemos que esperar en 2019? Esta temprada el año pasado, no tenía ni idea de lo que 2018 tenía para M.E.N.D. – el Señor solo desplego todos los eventos en el camino. Como siempre, acogeremos nuestras ceremonias anuales de conmemoración de octubre y diciembre, y seguiremos publicando este boletín informativo. Tenemos un puñado de aplicaciones de capítulos en el balance, así que veremos donde el Señor nos abrirá nuevas puertas este año. Nuestra esperanza es plantar nuestros folletos informativos en tantos hospitales y consultorios médicos como sea posible. Tenemos literatura que es aplicable a todos los hospitales, no sólo donde hemos establecido capítulos que albergan grupos de apoyo mensuales. También nos encantaría expandir nuestro liderazgo y miembros del Comité. Cada persona en M.E.N.D. es voluntaria y juntos hacemos que este Ministerio funcione. Nos encantaría añadir a nuestros equipos, así que si usted está interesado en las maneras en que puede involucrarse, por favor comuníquese con nosotros. También estamos muy agradecidos por cada centavo que dona a nuestro Ministerio. Todo lo que ofrecemos es gratuito y nadie involucrado en M.E.N.D. es pagado, incluyéndome a mí. Puede estar seguro de que el 100% de su donación va hacia nuestra misión de llegar a las familias que han sufrido la muerte de un bebé. Nos humillamos más allá de la medida que Dios nos ha llamado a ser parte de su viaje de sanación, y pedimos sus oraciones continuas mientras seguimos siendo la mano extendida de El.

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

Donations make the printing and distribution of this newsletter possible. Your tax-deductible contributions are greatly appreciated and should be sent to the address listed above. If your gift is made in memory of a baby, please include that baby's name (if named), date of birth and/or date of death, the parents' names, and the name of the benefactor. You may also include the cause of death (if known).

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



international
stillbirth alliance



M.E.N.D. Leadership

Board of Directors

Rebekah Mitchell
Byron Mitchell, D.D.S.
DaLana Barsanti
Brittney Fish
Brandee Dill
Marilyn Brown
Amber Zuckerman
Calli Stanley
Tina Rusert

Advisory Board

Paula Schear, Liz Walker,
Norma Jordan, Laura Bateman,
Sable Gonyea, Jenae Bowmer,
D'Anna Sims, Cheryl Davis

General Counsel

Dennis G. Brewer, Sr., Attorney at Law

Newsletter

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

Newsletter Volunteers

Rachel Dell, Sara Elliott
and Stormy Mitchell

Legacy Giving

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

If you 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 PM
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 PM
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 PM
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 PM
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 PM
St Peter Lutheran Church
202 E Schaumburg Road
Schaumburg, Illinois 60194
Director: Sara Hintz
saraann@mend.org, (630) 267-9134

M.E.N.D.–Palm Beach, Florida

Meets the 2nd Thursday (beginning
October 11) at 7:00 PM
Brookdale Lake Worth
3927 Hadjes Dr
Lake Worth, FL 33467
(close to Turnpike & Lake Worth Rd)
Director: Jessica Gaddie
Jessica@mend.org, (561) 843-3509

M.E.N.D.–MidMichigan

Meets the 1st Tuesday, at 7:00 PM
Ashman Plaza
713 Ashman Street,
Midland Michigan 48640
Director: Karen Kilburn
karen@mend.org, (989) 577 5755

M.E.N.D.–Denver

Meets the 2nd Tuesday at 7:00 PM
Journey Church
9009 Clydesdale Rd.
Castle Rock, Colorado 80108
Director: Kimberly Adams
kimberly@mend.org, (720) 593-0166

M.E.N.D.–Online Support Group

Held the 3rd Thursday at 9:00 PM (CST)
to join, contact
Director: Victoria Alcorn
victoria@mend.org (469) 412-2786

M.E.N.D.–Greater Houston Area

Greater Houston Area Main Chapter:

Meets the 3rd Thursday at 7:30 PM
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 PM
The Meeting Room at Serene Bean
1933 East Ave
Katy, Texas 77493

Katy Director:

Kessi Wilhite, kessi@mend.org

Kingwood Area, Texas:

Meets the 2nd Thursday at 6:30 PM
6450 Kings Parkway
Kingwood, Texas 77346
At Rosemont Assisted Living,
2nd Floor Community Room
Kingwood Director:

Nikisha Perry, nikisha@mend.org

Subsequent pregnancy group

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

Daddy's group

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

M.E.N.D. Support Groups in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex

Join us for a time of sharing experiences.

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. chapter support groups
are held the 2nd Thursday of
every month
from 7:30 - 9:00 PM

Daddies group
meets the 2nd Thursday of
March, June, Sept. and Dec.,
from 7:30 - 9:00 PM
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 PM
Led by Liz Walker: liz@mend.org
For families who are considering
becoming pregnant or are currently
pregnant after a loss.

Parenting After Loss group
meets the 1st Thursday at 7:30 PM
at Panera Bread
1900 Preston Rd.
Plano, Texas 75093
Contact:
Laura Bateman at laura@mend.org or
Tina Rusert at Tina@mend.org
for more information
For families who are raising living
children after a loss.

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

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

Make sure to support M.E.N.D. through Tom Thumb's Good Neighbor program!



Every time you shop at Tom Thumb and use your enrolled Rewards Card, Tom Thumb will donate a percentage of your eligible purchases to the Good Neighbor Program. To support M.E.N.D. through your purchases at Tom Thumb, you will need to link your Rewards Card to M.E.N.D. using the following steps:

Download the Tom Thumb Charity Form >
Visit <https://www.mend.org/tom-thumb/> to download.

Complete the form and write in our charity number (6265).

Turn it into the customer service desk.

After they have scanned your Rewards Card you will be enrolled for the current year of the Good Neighbor Program.

Tom Thumb[®]
