Sad, lonely, cheated, angry, betrayed, ashamed, embarrassed, afraid, anxious, panicked … This is just a short list of emotions we experience while grieving the death of our baby. I believe the one emotion we as moms fight the most is guilt. In our grief, we somehow manage to convince ourselves that the death of our baby was our fault. Most of the time no one makes us feel guilty. We’re told a hundred times, “It wasn’t your fault.” But we tell ourselves that we could have, and should have, done something differently.

In my losses, Jonathan was stillborn at 29 1/2 weeks, due to a cord accident while I was on bed rest in the hospital. Though I was given round-the-clock care by a very adequate nursing staff, I made myself believe that my being on bed rest was the very cause of Jonathan becoming entangled in his cord. I decided that because I was not up and around, he was able to wrap himself up in the cord. I thought that not being sedentary would have allowed him to move around enough to untangle himself. Additionally, I felt guilty that I had let everyone down—or so it seemed to me. I felt responsible for the immense sadness that loomed over our household and extended family for months. I felt (and honestly still have to fight at times) the guilty sorrow I feel for not being able to provide my husband with more living children and our now adult son with siblings.

Six years after Jonathan’s stillbirth, I became pregnant a third time. At my 10-week check-up, I sadly discovered our little baby had died. The sonogram revealed our tiny baby no longer had a heartbeat and indicated that perhaps the baby died at 8 weeks, 6 days (or possibly died a few days later but had deteriorated to the size of 8 weeks, 6 days). If the baby did indeed die on the day the sonogram indicated, that day coincidentally fell on the same day as our annual M.E.N.D. Christmas Candlelight Ceremony. The morning of the ceremony, I was at our storage unit helping unload our Christmas decorations and transporting them to the church to the awaiting committee. Our storage unit was not on the first floor, and the elevator happened to be broken that day. Although I did not carry heavy boxes up and down stairs, I did sit down and push one super heavy box with my feet across the floor. In my heart, do I think that’s what caused my little baby’s death? No, I really don’t. However, deep down, I’ve had to fight not feeling guilty that I did something no pregnant woman should do. And I had to deal with emotions of seemingly, once again, letting everyone down with yet another huge disappointment.

We can know in our hearts and in our heads that we were not the cause of our baby’s death, but, boy is that emotion of guilt hard to fight! And just when we think we’ve conquered that ugly feeling, it creeps back in during the most unsuspecting times. So how do we overcome it once and for all? I honestly don’t know that we ever overcome it 100%, but certainly over the years that feeling of guilt diminishes. Talking it out with fellow grieving parents at a support group or on one of our Facebook pages is a huge help. Even openly admitting feeling guilty to our husbands, family and close friends is beneficial. And finally, cry it out to the Lord. As a Christian, I know that guilt is not from Him. Conviction is, but that’s not what we’re talking about. Ugly, self-destructing guilt is definitely not something God puts on us. So, though it is a normal emotion while grieving, fight it. Overcome it, and just believe what everyone around you is saying: “It is not your fault.”

♥ Rebekah Mitchell,
Mommy to Jonathan Daniel and Baby Mitchell
M.E.N.D. President/Founder
M.E.N.D. is a Christian nonprofit corporation whose purpose is to reach out to those who have lost a child to miscarriage, stillbirth or infant death and offer a way to share experiences and information through monthly meetings, this newsletter, and our Web site at www.mend.org.

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

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

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M.E.N.D. is a member of
First Candle/SIDS Alliance
International Stillbirth Alliance

The Heart of the Leader

The day we found out we were pregnant with our second child was the first time I bought a pregnancy test from a grocery store. We announced our miracle pregnancy to our friends and family immediately. We were so excited that our son was going to have a sibling after all. Our first child had taken years to conceive. During that process of having surgeries, painful procedures and fertility treatments, two of Dallas’s “Top Docs” came up with six diagnoses of why I couldn’t get pregnant. And yet we did. We had the joy of knowing about little Morgan’s life from February 13-March 28, 2006.

Nobel and I attended our first meeting right after our miscarriage. Of course, like many couples say, he was resistant to attending the first meeting. I know it sounds funny now if you know him. He wears his M.E.N.D. shirt everywhere. He enjoys serving on the committees. He attended meetings with me for a full year. It doesn’t work out for everyone to do it that way, but the Lord knew we needed it after infertility and loss, and Nobel’s ministry was not giving us much time together back then. Now we get to serve together on the Walk and Christmas committees. The Lord has taken our sorrow, in His time, and turned it into joy.

It’s hard to say what would have been for our family, but something very special happened when Rebekah, Brandee and I were on the trip to Seattle, to help open up their chapter of M.E.N.D. We were on the ferry, and I was on the phone back home to Nobel and our son, Isaac. Nobel said they had been talking and Isaac was ready, when I got home, to ask Jesus into his heart. I made the decision right then that we could do it over the phone. Nobel led Isaac in the sinner’s prayer, asking for forgiveness for his sin and putting Jesus first in his life. I felt so blessed to be able to serve with these wonderful ladies in Seattle, but to think that my own family was going to receive such a blessing on top of that was truly amazing.

I am thankful for the opportunity to serve and pray for you all. The Lord always hears us. So often I listen to your testimonies of how the Lord has used your children to touch the lives of others. I am so blessed to be getting to know you on Facebook and at M.E.N.D. events!

♥ Paula Schear,
Mommy to Morgan
M.E.N.D.—Advisory Board
Thank you to Max!

A big Thank you to Max Friz for the redesign of our website. We have a beautiful new look that is adaptable to any web browsing device. The new look and feel of the website is very user-friendly, providing an easy place to find comfort during a time of frustration and hurt. To see Max’s wonderful new website, visit www.mend.org. Thank you, Max, for all your hard work!

M.E.N.D. selected for Charitable Campaigns!

M.E.N.D. will participate again this year in the State Employee Charitable Campaign (SECC) and the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). Employees in Texas enjoy the benefit of giving to many of their favorite charities through annual workplace giving campaigns, which feature the convenience of payroll deduction. To give through the SECC, our SECC number is 283524. To give through the CFC, our CFC number is 97896. Please contact your employer’s local campaign manager for questions on how to give.

Mary Kay Makeover Contest

And for all those who diligently voted in the Mary Kay Makeover Contest: “Hi Friends - Exciting news!!! We did it!! Thanks to all of those who voted for me, M.E.N.D. will receive $5,000 from Mary Kay. They surprised me a few weeks ago at work and caught my reaction and the excitement on camera. It was truly an unbelievable experience. THANK YOU FOR VOTING!!!! Yea M.E.N.D. !!!” - Amber Zuckerman, Board of Directors

Amber’s Story:
One Woman Can Be STRENGTHENED:

When our son was stillborn in 2007, my strength was destroyed. I searched everywhere for purpose and inspiration to live again. After attending an infant loss support group (my choice charity), my strength was slowly renewed. When people look at me, I want them to be inspired by my passion, faith, strength and the beauty that has come from our ashes.

Thank you to all those who voted for our M.E.N.D. participants in the Mary Kay Makeover Contest. Your outpouring of support was greatly appreciated.

November/December Topic
Holiday Joy
Deadline: September 30, 2013

January/February Topic
Going Back to Work
Deadline: November 30, 2013

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heavenly Birthday</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January/February</td>
<td>November 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March/April</td>
<td>January 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May/June</td>
<td>March 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July/August</td>
<td>May 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September/October</td>
<td>July 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November/December</td>
<td>September 31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Birthday Tributes

Happy 3rd Birthday, Michael and Jake!
Three years...WOW! Having your little brother Kyle here makes us think about you both so much! And he looks like a combo of both of you. Allie now understands so much more about your being in heaven, and she REALLY misses you and asks lots of questions! We love you little guys so much and miss you terribly! Your short lives here will always be a blessing to us!

Michael and Jake Klubnik  
September 7, 2010  
Infection and preterm labor  
Parents: Jon and Tiffany Klubnik  
Siblings: Allie, Keegan and Kyle

Happy 6th Birthday, Brandon Isaiah!
Missing you every day more than anyone will ever know. We love you, until we meet again…
Love you always,  
Mommy and Lil Brother Ethan Alfaro

Brandon Isaiah Alfaro  
October 19, 2007-February 7, 2008  
Spinal Muscular Atrophy  
Mommy: Jennifer Alfaro  
Little brother: Ethan

Happy 5th Birthday, Bethanni!
It has been five years without you in my arms. I can now say your name and smile through the pain of missing you with everything that I am. Your life here was short, but you live forever in my heart. I love you and long for the day I will be with you once more. Yet until that day I will feel you in every soft breeze, gentle rain and tear that slides down my cheek. Happy birthday, my sweet princess.

Bethanni Connor  
Miscarried October 25, 2008  
Mommy: Rebekah Connor

Happy 2nd Birthday, Raymond!
Happy birthday in heaven.  
You are loved and missed so greatly.

Raymond Warren Rich  
September 21-26, 2011  
Unknown cause  
Parents: Bob and Camillia Rich  
Siblings: Makayla, Oletha, Delaina and Christian

Happy 2nd Birthday, Baby Steelman!
Happy 2nd birthday in heaven, Baby Steelman!  
You gave us hope when we had none. We love you and miss you so much.

Until we are together again,  
Mama and Daddy

Baby Steelman  
Miscarried October 12, 2011, at 16 weeks  
Unknown cause  
Also remembering  
Rebel Boone Steelman  
Stillborn December 11, 2012  
Parents: Matt and Jenny Steelman

Happy 6th Birthday, Jayden!
Happy 6th birthday, sweetheart! Look who’s turning 6!  
This would have been your first year of school, and I would have been excited to have you all dressed up, matching from head to toe. Enjoy your heavenly birthday, sweetie! I still miss you so much.

Rest in love,  
Mommie and your little sister, Amiyah

Jayden Breonna Jenkins  
September 25, 2007  
Toxemia  
Mommie: Shanae Jenkins  
Little sister: Amiyah

Happy 4th Birthday, Sereana Joy!
When Mommy and Daddy’s hearts come together, the whole you is seen. Beautiful you! You are the present we celebrate. You are the gift! Sereana, you are wrapped up in the heart of both your parents forever. May the gift of you continue to be unwrapped in our lives here on earth. We celebrate wonderful, joyous you. All this … and all along … Abba knows the whole you, and the angels sing. Sereana—our girl! Sereana—joyfully dance, sing, laugh, twirl! I love you endlessly and forever, so very much, my first born baby girl!

Love,  
Na, Ta, Noela and Talei

Sereana Joy Ratulele  
Stillborn September 9, 2009  
Unknown cause  
Parents: Semi and Laura Ratulele  
Siblings: Noela Esiteri and Talei Jewel

Happy 2nd Birthday, Baby Steelman!
Happy 11th Birthday, Aiden!
Happy birthday, Aiden! We miss you so much!

Aiden Xavier Sohn
October 13, 2002
H.E.L.L.P syndrome
Also remembering
Baby Hope
Miscarried May 2003
Baby Whisper
Miscarried October 2003
Parents: Doug and Angelique Sohn
Siblings: Joshua, Sebastian and Benjamin

Happy 2nd Birthday, Avery!
It’s hard to believe it has already been two years, but we love and miss you more with each passing year. My love for you will never fade, sweet boy.
Love always,
Mommy and Daddy

Avery Alexander Napaluch
Stillborn October 24, 2011
Parents: Kenneth and Adrianna Napaluch

Happy 2nd Birthday, Liam!
My sweet baby boy Liam, Mommy and Daddy miss you every day, and we miss what could have been. You would be 2 years old now, and we would have a house full of three little boys. Your big brother Ethan knows who you are and kisses your picture. You are now a big brother yourself! We will always remember, honor, celebrate, miss and love you. We love you as if you had lived for years! Happy birthday, sweet baby Liam.

Liam Nathaniel Perez
Stillborn September 2, 2011
Parents: Brad and Rachel Names
Siblings: Jonathan and Noah

Happy 2nd Birthday, Mercy Elizabeth!
Oh, our sweet Mercy Elizabeth! Happy heavenly 2nd birthday! We love you more than words can describe. We are gathering a few friends to help celebrate you and your special day. The Mercy Run is on. May you hear all our feet pitter-patterring in honor of you!
Hugs and Kisses,
Mommy and Daddy, Bubba and Sissy

Mercy Elizabeth Whitfield
September 8-21, 2011
Trisomy 13
Parents: Rodney Whitfield and Allison D'Auteuil
Sisters: Grace and Justice

Happy 3rd Birthday, Nathaniel!
It’s been three years since God called you home. Seems so unreal that you have been gone for that long. The pain continues to feel fresh in my heart; not a day goes by that I don’t think of you or talk about you. You will forever live within me. Even if you’re not physically here, you continue to change our lives every day. Everything we do is for you; we want you to sit in heaven and tell your angel friends, “Look that’s my mom, daddy and my big brother.” I know you’re safe from all harm and happy, because you’re in God’s kingdom. Cannot wait to see you again. Happy third birthday!

Love,
Mom, Dad and Devin

Nathaniel Cervantes
October 30-November 16, 2010
NEC
Parents: Juan and Leydy Cervantes
Brother: Devin

Happy 3rd Birthday, Blessing!
Dear little Blessing, happy third heavenly birthday! Mommy and Daddy miss you, darling. We wonder about you still, and our hearts are sad because we wish you were here with us. But we know you are joyful with Jesus, the angels, Grandmother and Jeffy. Daddy put roses on your wee grave, so I know that you touch his heart still. Your baby brother was born healthy, and your big bro puts dandelions on your grave to make it pretty. We don’t forget you ever, precious baby. You are our Blessing, and we love you. Hugs and kisses.

Blessing Names
Miscarried September 10, 2010
Parents: Brad and Rachel Names
Siblings: Jonathan and Noah

Happy 1st Birthday, Gunnar!
It’s so hard to believe you have been gone a year. Not a day goes by that we don’t speak of you, think of you and miss you dearly. We remember sweet memories like the way you loved Jolly Ranchers and already sucked your thumb, just like your big sis. You are always in our hearts and minds. Although we wish you were here with us, it’s so comforting to know you are surrounded by the Lord and that His angels sing you lullabies, and that you are with loving family that has gone before you. Until we see you again, our sweet baby boy...

Gunnar Reid Campbell Kirk
October 23, 2012
HELLP Syndrome and severe maternal preeclampsia
Parents: Blake and Alizen Kirk
Siblings: Vanessa, Valerie and Gage
Happy 2nd Birthday, Adrian!
My beautiful angel, you’re 2 years old now. By now you should get your terrible 2s! You are always missed by your father and me. Your big brother misses you so much. Your baby sister will learn later on that she has her older brother in heaven looking down at her and watching her every move. You helped me get through this pregnancy without a problem and protected her until she arrived. I love you so much! Give kisses to Grandpa from all of us!

Adrian Michael Guevara
October 11, 2011
Polycystic kidney disease
Parents: Miguel Guevara and Crystal Duran
Siblings: Aiden and Valeria

Happy 1st Birthday, Travis!
Happy 3rd Birthday, Sienna!

We love you, our little ones.
Mommy and Daddy

Travis Glen Gastineau
Miscarried October 2, 2012
Sienna Gastineau
Miscarried September 18, 2010
Parents: Brian Gastineau and Kelly Hinckley

Happy 2nd Birthday, Kelinda!
“Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage.” - Lao Tzu
My sweet angel girl, it’s been two years and the pain of losing you isn’t any easier. Though you may not be with me physically, you live in my heart forever. Not a day goes by that I don’t think of you and long for the life we were going to have. Happy second birthday, my love.

Loving you until I breathe no more.
Mommy

Kelinda Raye Wright
October 13, 2011
Unknown cause
Mommy: Kera Robinson

Happy 1st Birthday, Liza!
Sweet Liza, you are loved and missed so very much.
We hold you in our hearts.
Mommy, Daddy and big sister Posie

Liza Rose Schroeder
September 30—October 10, 2012
Suspected cord accident
Parents: Chad and Kara Schroeder
Big Sister: Posie June

Happy 11th Birthday, Laiken!
Our little Laiken, how can it be that it has been 11 whole years since you were here? You were such a beautiful gift. You had the sweetest lips, the tiniest fingers and toes, and the lightest bit of peach fuzz for hair. We kissed you dozens of times, but it will never be enough. We miss you and think of you always, baby girl.

We wish you a happy 11th heavenly birthday, sweet princess. We love you more and more each day. Until we can hold you again, we send you all our love,

Love,
Mommy, Daddy, Arianna, Jarod, Gavin and Alyvia

Laiken Riley Madison Kale
September 15, 2002
HELLP, severe prematurity,
Antiphospholipid Syndrome
Parents: Rick and Alysha Kale
Siblings: Arianna, Jarod, Gavin and Alyvia

Happy 3rd Birthday, Cambri Jade!
Cambri Jade, we love you, baby girl! We can’t believe it’s been three years without you; it seems like yesterday we held you in our arms. Not a day goes by that we don’t think about you. Have a happy heavenly birthday with all of the other baby angels and family. Until we hold you in our arms again, fly high, baby girl.

We love you with all our hearts,
Daddy, Mommy, Clara Paige and Chandler Grace

Cambri Jade Jenkins
September 8, 2010
Placental abruption
Parents: Jeff and April Jenkins
Sisters: Clara Paige and Chandler Grace

Happy 5th Birthday, Miranda!
Happy birthday, Miranda Panda! We love you and miss you very much. You are always in our thoughts and will be forever in our hearts. We can’t wait to hold you again.

Miranda Micaela Medrano
October 1, 2008
Preterm
Parents: Jose and Marvelia Medrano

Happy 1st Birthday, Zoe!
“Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced.” - George Baldwin
You will never be forgotten. We love you, our angel, now and always.

Zoe LaRose Storms
Stillborn October 27, 2012
Parents: Josh Storms and Madison Moore
Happy 7th Birthday, Samuel!

Dear Samuel, we can’t believe it’s been seven years since we held you in our arms. You were so precious, so perfectly formed. Our very first sweet boy. Now, you would probably be into snakes, Legos and superheroes. We wish we could play catch with you, go on bug hunts and have stick fights. Your brothers and sister miss you so much. We can’t wait to meet you again in heaven one day soon. We love you so much, our sweet little Samuel. Happy heavenly birthday!

Samuel James Nienhuis
October 14, 2006
Factor V Leiden, MTHFR
Parents: Seth and Marcie Nienhuis
Siblings: Landon, Olivia and James

Happy 3rd Birthday, Ginger!

I can’t believe it’s been three years since I held you in my arms. I imagine what you would look like now … wavy auburn hair with flecks of gold, dark chocolate brown eyes with eyelashes that could reach the moon, and a sprinkling of freckles across your nose and cheeks. You are loved and missed so much by your family. Happy birthday, sweet baby girl. You are always loved!

Love,
Mommy, Daddy, Kegan, Kastle and Kanon

Ginger Sandoval
September 25, 2010
Renal anomalies
Parents: Keith and Katherine Sandoval
Siblings: Kegan, Kastle and Kanon

Happy 5th Birthday, Isabella!

Happy 5th birthday and angelversary. We love you and miss you so very much. Until we meet again...

Love,
Mommy and Daddy

Isabella Alorah Baca-Lopez
July 11, 2008
Interuterine distress
Also remembering
Baby Baca-Lopez
Miscarried April 17, 2009
Parents: Jose E. Lopez, Jr. and Delores Baca

Happy 1st Birthday, Baby Finley!

Mommy, Daddy and your older sisters miss and love you!

Baby Finley
Miscarried October 10, 2012
Parents: Summer Browning and Jame Finley
Siblings: Victoria Finley and Mindy Burgett

Happy 5th Birthday, Catelyn!

Always in our heart, miss you every day.
You are our angel girl.
Love you,
Mommy, Daddy and sisters

Catelyn Ryan Cornell
October 5-12, 2008
Premature lungs born at 26 weeks (Twin B)
Parents: Dewayne and Alesia Cornell
Sisters: Brookelyn Marie (identical Twin A) and Madelyn Kay

Happy 1st Birthday, Neaveh!

To my little angel I never got to meet, you changed my life forever. For such a tiny little person, you’ve got the biggest part in my heart. Mommy loves you forever—Until we meet officially!

Love always,
Mommy

Neaveh Renee Allen
Miscarried September 8, 2012
Mommy: Brittany Allen

Happy 5th Birthday, Emma!

Happy birthday, Little One! How amazing to think that it has been five years since you entered our lives and quietly slipped away to rest in heaven. We miss you every day and wish we could be together to celebrate your birthday. Your little brother, Wyatt, talks about you often. He tells us he can see his angels and when we ask the names of his angels, he smiles big and says “Gracie and Emma.” Look for the balloons we will send you on your birthday and know we are thinking of our little angel.

We love you more than you know
With all our hearts
Forever and ever,
Daddy, Momma, and Wyatt

Emma Grace Dorr
October 16, 2008
Prematurity due to incompetent cervix
Parents: Dustin and Janine Dorr
Brother: Wyatt

Happy 14th Birthday, Ashley!

Happy birthday, sweet angel. We miss you here but know you are having the best of birthdays in heaven. Hugs and kisses on your 14th birthday!

Ashley Renee Dedear
October 29-November 1, 1999
Parents: Tim and Cindy Dedear
Sisters: Laura (Ashley’s twin) and Katherine
Happy 3rd Birthday, Londyn!
Happy birthday, our precious angel Londyn. It is hard to believe that you would be 3 years old. We miss you every day and tell your sister all about you and the short time we were able to spend with you. Please know that you will never be forgotten, and until we meet again, we love you!

Love,
Mommy, Daddy and Ashtyn

Londyn Schmitter
August 24, 2010
Unknown cause
Parents: Aric and Amber Schmitter
Sister: Ashtyn

Happy 2nd Birthday, Madelyn!
Happy 3rd Birthday, William!
Madelyn and William are deeply missed by their family. They are in heaven with our precious Lord and Savior! Maddie and William are keeping a close watch on their mommy!

Madelyn Stacey
Miscarried September 2011
William Stacey
Miscarried October 2010
Parents: Shawn and Kristina Stacey
Half-Sister: Brylenn

Happy 2nd Birthday, Genevieve!
You blessed us in every way possible that we could never be able to thank you enough. “God touched you and you slept.” Your love of 43 days is enough to suffice a lifetime. Happy second birthday, Pumpkinlator. We love and miss you dearly.

Love,
Your Family

Genevieve Jane Weaver
October 24—December 5, 2011
Undetermined/SIDS
Parents: James Weaver and Maria Reyes

Happy 2nd Birthday, Micah!
Micah, Mommy and Daddy love you and miss you so much. We think about you every day and wait for the day that we get to hold you in our arms. Until that day you will remain in our hearts.

Love you always,
Mommy and Daddy

Micah Rashad Walker
October 15, 2011
Ectopic pregnancy
Parents: Eric Walker and Denise Steels

Happy 2nd Birthday, Jackson, Lindsay and Brooklyn!
There’s not a day that goes by that we don’t think of you or wish you were here. We look forward to the days we’re all together again as a family. Until then we’ll carry you in our hearts! We love you and miss you!

Love always,
Mommy, Daddy and Brenna

Jackson, Lindsay and Brooklyn Thompkinson
September 10, 2011
Molar pregnancy/premature birth
Parents: Bryan and Nikki Thompkinson
Sister: Brenna

Happy 3rd Birthday, William!
It has been a long road we have walked in the three years since you left us. You are missed with every breath we take. You are a big brother now; your little brother is named after you. You will always be our beautiful angel. I know you watch over us each passing day. I’m sure your party in heaven is wonderful and greater than any party here on earth. I love you to heaven and back, my sweet boy. Mommy and Daddy wish you a happy heavenly birthday! Krystal and Charles say “Happy birthday, brother, we miss you.” Until we meet again, hugs and kisses to my angel.

William Charles Dillard
October 19, 2010
Micro preemie
Parents: Chris and Amanda Dillard
Siblings: Krystal and Charles

Happy 6th Birthday, Ethan!
We love you so much and miss you every day.

Love,
Mom, Dad, Thomas and Jakob

Ethan Kane Spurrier
September 5, 2007
Umbilical cord accident
Parents: Bruce and Sandra Spurrier
Brother: Thomas and Jakob

Happy 1st Birthday, Cremsyn!
My Dearest Calla Lily Ladybug,
Your life forever changed mine.
You will never be forgotten.

Love,
Mommie

Cremsyn Cross Castille
September 2, 2012
Parents: Chavalin Cross and Rodney Castille
I woke up one morning feeling like there was a third person in the room, though only my husband and I were there. I felt another presence. Present. Before Mike could wake up, I’d already run to the grocery and back … and had received a positive result on a pregnancy test. I woke him up waving the strange thing in front of his face! We were scared, overjoyed and scared some more. I made an appointment for the Friday of my ninth week.

At 10:00 a.m., July 1, 2010, the midwife did the ultrasound, and she couldn’t find the heartbeat. She measured the sweet body, and we learned the baby stopped growing at seven weeks. I felt like the room collapsed on us. We spent the weekend in utter shock.

I never really considered pregnancy loss as an option. What I couldn’t get over the most was that I had no idea the baby wasn’t alive those two weeks between when the heart stopped and we learned that it had stopped. I felt like my body tricked me, and that I no longer knew myself. Or my body. Or my husband. Or my faith. Was it all just some cruel joke?!

I spent the next several months being told that “it was probably for the best,” that “God is in control” and that “you’ll have another one!” I nodded in agreement on the outside. But in my heart, I was in a dark, cold, shameful closet. I was angry, hurt. I didn’t know how to cry out to God, other than scream, “Why?!?!”

At exactly one year later, we became pregnant again. This time I was serious. I planned to do everything in my power to keep THIS baby. Mike and I would have this child. At five weeks I started spotting. I went back to the same group of midwives every week because I was bleeding off and on, and each time we wanted to make sure I wasn’t losing the baby. The way it was explained to me, when this baby implanted into my uterus he went a little too far into the lining, which created a wound that never healed. So with every move he or I made, more blood came out of the wound. Basically, each time I went in, they would measure the baby and the bleed. And each time, BOTH were growing.

At 19 weeks, I was scheduled to see a high risk specialist to find out the gender. As Mike and I watched the ultrasound tech fidget, tell us the doctor would be in any moment, and try to make awkward small talk with us, I knew something was wrong. I remember bursting into tears as Mike tried to console me. The doctor came in, and she confirmed that I had no amniotic fluid in my womb. There were no life-giving nutrients for our child to grow and flourish. Once again my body had betrayed me. As I had been bleeding, the amniotic fluid leaked, and I had no idea.

The ride home from that appointment was devastating. I think we had been in a state of shock for the 19 weeks leading up to that moment, and now the devastating rains came pouring down.

The hardest part of this particular circumstance was that our child still had a heart beat. He was alive. But he could not live outside the womb. And he could not live inside the womb. I had no amniotic fluid to sustain him. We prayed for miracle of miracles, that the Lord would provide that fluid before our next appointment. It didn’t happen.

I delivered the most handsome, beautiful son on September 1, 2011. Our parents, siblings, friends and two pastors from our church came to the hospital that evening. They held our son, gazing at him, this warrior prince who was loved and adored. We had a memorial service for him that night, and my sister took a million pictures because I never wanted to forget my son.

For 30 days straight, each time I took a shower, I played a CD by the band Selah, and the first song that came on was the prayer I sang through my tears, “Into my heart, into my heart. Come into my heart, Lord Jesus. Come in today, come in to stay. Come into my heart, Lord Jesus.”

In the month following that evening, I read more than 15 books, wrote email updates to our biggest cheerleaders, I cried, we invited everyone to our home so they could see the photos of him and be with us in our loss. Our son. Ah… He was beautiful.

We cried a lot. We experienced such pain in the depths of our souls that it physically hurt. We visited a life group on the week before Thanksgiving and started attending it. I remember that the two pastors who supported us at the hospital were and are still members of our life group. We shared our story with them, and through my reading, praying, crying, sharing and just letting myself feel this way, one day I heard the birds chirping again.

It just happened. The birds chirped, they flew from tree to tree, and I started taking notice of all the birds in the air.

And I recalled the truth, that our God cares for the birds in the air. And that if he cares for and tends to all of their needs, that He will do the same for me.

Continued on page 12
The Cast of Return to Zero

M.E.N.D. is a proud sponsor of the new movie, Return to Zero. This movie captures the lives of a successful couple preparing for the arrival of their new baby, only to find out weeks before the due date that the baby has died in the womb and will be stillborn. The film focuses on the heartache and many issues that follow after the loss of a child.

This film will be released in March 2014. M.E.N.D. is encouraging our members, family and friends to support this movie when it comes to theaters, and to draw as many as possible to a showing of this film.

To learn more about this film, please visit www.returntozerothemovie.com. Many states have also created Facebook pages in anticipation of the release of this film, and links can be found at the Return to Zero website.

Minnie Driver—Lead role as Maggie Royal
Best known for her Oscar-nominated performance as Skylar in Good Will Hunting and also nominated for an Emmy and Golden Globe for her work as Dahlia Malloy/Cherien Rich in the television series The Riches

Paul Adelstein—Starring role as Aaron Royal
Best known for his role as Dr. Cooper (Coop) in Private Practice and Paul Kellerman in Prison Break. Also played supporting roles in Intolerable Cruelty and Memoirs of a Geisha.
Also the lead singer of Doris and just released their second album called All the Details

Alfred Molina—Robert Royal, father of Aaron Royal
Nominated over 30 times for performances both on stage and screen, including on screen as “Doc Oc“ in Spiderman 2, “Diego Rivera“ in Frida and on stage in Art and Fiddler on the Roof.
His comment on the script of Return to Zero: “Loved the script, Sean! Really moving and powerful. It’s an amazing story, deeply touching and truly universal“

Connie Nielson—Dr Claire Holden
Famous for her role opposite Russell Crowe in Gladiator

Kathy Baker—Kathleen, mother to Maggie Royal
Best known for her role as the small-town doctor on Picket Fences

Andrea Anders—Maggie’s friend Trish
Famous for roles in Joey, Better Off Ted and The Class

Sarah Jones—Aaron’s coworker, Dana
Best known for roles in Vegas, Sons of Anarchy, Ugly Betty and House
In 1988, President Ronald Reagan declared October as Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness month. M.E.N.D. hosts a Walk to Remember to provide a special time for family and friends to remember their little ones and to publicly acknowledge their child. Dallas and Houston Walk to Remember ceremonies will be held on Saturday, October 5, 2013. Visit www.mend.org for more information, FAQ, to order Walk t-shirts, memory signs (Dallas Walk only) and to register your family to attend. Online registration will be available until midnight, October 2, 2013.

**M.E.N.D. — Dallas**

**17th Annual Walk to Remember**

**October 5, 2013 - 1:00 PM**

Calvary Church
4401 N. Highway 161
(at Walnut Hill) in Irving

Place orders, register or read FAQ at www.mend.org

**Deadlines:**
- T-shirts: September 9, 2013
- Memory Signs: September 21, 2013
- Registration: October 2, 2013

**M.E.N.D. — Houston**

**8th Annual Walk to Remember**

**October 5, 2013 - 2:00 PM**

Bammel Road Church of Christ
2700 FM 1960 West
Houston, Texas 77068

register, order t-shirts or read FAQ at www.mend.org by midnight, October 2, 2013

For other Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness month activities for other chapters, please see page 16 for dates and details.

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**theMERCYrun5K and 1 Mile Fun Run**

**When:** Saturday, September 21, 2013

**Where:** Andy Brown East Park
280 East Parkway Blvd. Coppell, TX 75019

**Event Schedule:**
- 6:45 am - 5K and 1 Mile Fun Run registration/packet pickup Opens
- 7:30 am - Pack Pick Up Closes
- 7:30 am - Pre Race Announcement/ Pep Talk
- 7:45 am - 1 Mile Fun Run starts
- 8:10 am - 5K run starts
- 8:45 am - Post Race Cupcake Celebration

Like us on Facebook
To register go to: teammercy.org
For more info contact: Mercy5Kinfo@gmail.com
Guilt in grief – I was not prepared for the amount of guilt I would struggle with after the stillbirth of my son, James. First it was the guilt that I did something wrong during pregnancy – maybe eating something wrong or rolling out of bed in the same direction every morning had caused him to die. This particular guilt didn’t last very long; it moved on quickly. As my grief began to include anger toward anyone who was pregnant or had their baby born alive, there was extreme guilt in those feelings. How could I have so much anger toward people who got to have their happiness while I got pain and despair? Shouldn’t I feel happy for them instead? This was the guilt that I struggled with for years. As I healed, I realized that it was never about hating them for being happy; it was just easier to feel anger instead of sadness – I was carrying around enough sadness and just couldn’t take anymore.

Then along came the intense guilt that I was a horrible person and was being punished for something I had done in life, but I had no idea what that awful thing was I had done. Oh, this guilt haunted me for years. A friend I recently met told me that my life reminded her of the Bible story about the two men who built their homes, one on the sand and one on the rocks. Both houses were subjected to the same storms. The foundations of the homes did not stop the rain from falling – just in the same way that my foundation in faith would not protect me from painful things happening to me in this life – but the foundation of both the house on the rocks and my own faith allowed them to survive. This discussion happened about seven and a half years after my son was stillborn, and at this moment, the guilt of having “done“ something to cause this pain finally drained out of me.

Another layer of guilt was feeling that it was my fault that my husband couldn’t have a baby at home. This struck me to my soul. Here was my match in life, the person who was my best friend, the love of my heart, the father of my child. He was grieving this intense loss of our son, and it was my fault. I felt as if I had caused this. He might never have living children because of me – because of my poor egg quality – it felt like this was all my fault. I told my husband he could leave and go have a family with someone else, that I wasn’t sure it would happen for us and that I wanted at least one of us to find happiness that included a baby at home. He told me that leaving was not at option; this was our loss and our life and our future – together. That guilt left me quickly after we talked.

I never expected any of this painful grief journey to include guilt. In fact, most of this grief journey has not been anything I anticipated. Seven and a half years after our son was stillborn, I did not imagine still having tough moments or for happy pregnant women to tug at my heart. But I am here, still surviving, still making it through – only now nearly all of the guilt has gone away. It has only been through repairing my relationship with God and listening to his Word that my heart has been able to let the guilt go and allow myself to continue to heal.

♥ Jennifer Forner,
Mommy to James
M.E.N.D. — Dallas/Fort Worth

Continuation from “My Story,” page 9

Looking back, if I were to compare our two losses, I think the first one was the hardest for me personally. And this is for a number of reasons, but mostly because I never saw him or her, I was afraid others didn’t think it was that big of a deal because it happened in the first trimester, and I didn’t invite or allow others to be a part of my healing process.

With our son, I invited people in from the beginning. I had a weekly email, people prayed for and with me, I openly and actively mourned our loss, and I felt like I needed to honor his life by sharing about him when I was compelled. I also had the image of God offering his son to die on the cross … and in a way, I had to continually offer my son back to God. Every day, every minute. Every second.

Last September, after 10 weeks of bed rest, I delivered our daughter, Grace. We named her Grace, our gift, and you better believe that when I sing lullabies to her, in my heart, I am singing them to her two heavenly siblings.

I now have this vision of my kids giggling and playing pranks on Jesus and our family members in heaven. And it brings me comfort.

Thank you for reading my story. I hope you will share your story with the Lord, and with others one day too.

♥ Kim Akel,
Mommy to Angel Baby and Gene Michael
M.E.N.D. — Houston
A week after saying a heart-wrenching goodbye to my baby boy, I left a few stones in the shape of a heart at Bug’s plot. I didn’t want his plot to be bare, but we couldn’t get flowers. I wanted to retrieve it the next time we came, and replace it with something else special so I could use it to make a mosaic stepping stone, but it was gone. Jeff says Bug probably knew they were for him so he took them. I knew he was trying to make me stop crying because I couldn’t keep them like I wanted, and it worked. I burst out laughing until I cried again, but it was at that moment that I understood the difference between happiness and joy.

I may have been in the depths of sorrow and grief, unhappy with my circumstances, and angry at God, but I still felt uncontrollable and overwhelming joy at its most raw and elemental form. I now comprehend that joy is not an attitude that can be bitterly peeled off and discarded when life’s storms saturate your soul with unending sorrows. Joy is a subtle but steadfast promise, welling up from inside the innermost parts of your very soul to remind you that although devastations and heartaches of this life may leave you discouraged and brokenhearted, the hope that is found in the darkest hours echoes God’s promise: every sorrow has an ending, every injustice has its day in a “heavenly court” and every grieving heart will find its missing pieces. This promise is for real.

There may be a tomorrow filled with regret, pain and loss, but one fine day there won’t BE a tomorrow! That day will be filled instead with the fulfillment of His promise. All that remains will be eternal joy—the same joy that sustains you now, that lets you appreciate little miracles, little moments and big memories. It makes you smile, laugh and sing in the midst of all the pain.

Most of us catch ourselves being joyful and then miserably stuff ourselves back into a bitter, self-loathing depression. We feel as though somehow our babies would be hurt or offended if we grow out of mourning their loss. What an absurd notion! Of course we will never stop missing and yearning for our babies. Yes, we will have cried oceans of tears before we’ll see them again. Joy is not happiness. Just as joy can emerge amidst sorrow, in the same manner, sorrow can exist alongside joy. Yearning for our children gone too soon is not the same as mourning.

With that in mind, we should embrace the joyous outbursts as they come, no matter how unexpected or startling they may be, knowing that our angels are full of joy, too! They rejoice every time we give in to a fit of uncontrollable giggles or slip on our dancing shoes again. They are more than just happy. They are full of joy. You are too; you just have to let yourself be joyful. Happiness is fickle and disappointing, but joy is a promise!

♥ Britta Kratzer
Mommy to Vladimir Nathaniel (“Bug”)
M.E.N.D.—Dallas/Fort Worth

Sitting silently beside a friend who is hurting may be the best gift we can give.
-Unknown
In Loving Memory

Jason Paul Allen, Jr
July 1, 2013
Placental abruption
Given by parents
Tara and Jason Allen

Malen Anderson
Stillborn February 4, 2008
Unknown cause
Given by parents Wes and Becky Anderson
and siblings Lenea and Nathan

Liam and Sebastian Callaway
Stillborn August 5, 2011
Unknown cause
Gifts given by
Parents Zach and Rori Callaway and
little brother Miles
The Harrington School
William and Norma Groce

Abigail Grace Crump
July 1, 2003
Trisomy 18
Given by parents Gerald and Jaimie Crump
and little sisters Cami and Karli

Sophie Jane Darnell
Stillborn May 28, 2012
Unknown cause
Given by parents Tommy and Brea Darnell
and big brother Luke

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

Kyler Paul English
Stillborn January 20, 2006
Cord accident
Parents: Laurie McPike and Bob English
Given by Jon and Laurie McPike and
brothers Kinser, Kelson and Kayden

Caleb Scott Fann
December 1, 2003
PROM

Baby August Fann
Miscarried August 13, 2004
Parents: Jonathan and Heather Fann
Little sister: Madison
Given by
Frank Rust
Fred and Beverly Schnieders
David and Allison Barshinger
Ty and Jessica Hickok
Jim and Bonnie Thomas
Gigi and Granddad Budge
Mimi and Papa Marshall

Gabriel David Gimlin
Stillborn March 29, 2012
Given by parents Gary and Andrea Gimlin

Anderson Maxwell Graham
In honor of his father, Aaron Graham
Given by Judy Graham

Kaitlyn
April 2 - May 5, 1996

Baby Gregoryk I
Miscarried 2002

Baby Gregoryk II
Miscarried 2006

Baby Gregoryk III
Miscarried 2011
Given by Mommy Amy Gregoryk

Serenity Harrison
Miscarried December 3, 2009
Gifts given by
Parents Curt and Jennifer Harrison
and little brother Leviticus Aaron
Don and Imogene Hendrickson

Denali Kaimana Howell
Stillborn May 13, 2013, at 37 weeks
Given by parents Tim and Kelly Howell

Alan John Huelsebusch
Stillborn March 9, 2006 at 24 weeks
Unknown cause
Parents: Don and Sandy Huelsebusch
Siblings: Ashlie, Courtnie and Cayden
Given by: Dean and Kim Niesner

Luke Noe Johnson
July 26, 2010
Preterm labor due to MTHFR

Jude Hope Johnson
Miscarried October 30, 2009
MTHFR

Faith Johnson
Miscarried September 2, 2011
MTHFR

Abril Johnson
Miscarried April 10, 2012
MTHFR
Given by parents James and Merle Johnson
and sister Emma

Alexandria Long
Miscarried August 2009

Baby December Long
Miscarried December 2011

Baby May Long
Miscarried May 2012

Baby October Long
Miscarried October 2012
Given by parents Brian and Melody Long
and siblings Clara and Carlos

Avery Mereae Longgood
August 2-3, 2007
Possible stroke
Parents: Neil and Jaime Longgood
Given by grandparents
Don and Annette Longgood

Elizabeth Luke Matthes
Stillborn July 25, 2012
Unknown cause
Given by parents
Marianne and Lance Matthes

Jayden Montrell Matlock
Stillborn July 15, 2007
PROM
Given by mommy Torie Myers

Jonathan Daniel Mitchell
Stillborn June 24, 1995
Cord accident

Baby Mitchell
Miscarried December 2001
Gifts given by
Parents Byron and Rebekah Mitchell
and big brother Byron, Jr.
Grandparents Dennis and Sue Brewer
Dentistry of Las Colinas/
Byron L. Mitchell, DDS

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.
Please refer to page 2 of this newsletter for more
information regarding where to send your
donations and what information to include.
Thank you so much!
After ruling out all other options, the doctor finally said, “It’s probably the pregnancy.” Eight hours after feeling the most horrible pain I have ever felt, and five hours of prodding and tests, this was the conclusion.

A few weeks before, I had been sitting in my bathroom anxiously looking at my watch, so sure that I was pregnant and that I would be bounding out into the living room with a smile on my face. Instead I came out confused. If these weren’t pregnancy symptoms, then what where they? A few days later I tried again. Nothing. A week after that, more nothing. I took five negative tests before deciding I would set an appointment anyway. By then, I was six weeks pregnant.

I don’t know why I waited. I don’t know why I thought that plastic stick meant so much. I knew that there was a baby in me. I knew my symptoms were real and not figments of my imagination.

Unfortunately, knowing I was pregnant and going to an appointment right away would not have changed the outcome of my story. An ectopic pregnancy can’t be prevented, can’t be predicted and, most devastatingly, can’t be saved. I finally had the confirmation that I wanted only to be told in the same breath that this child would probably never be in my arms.

I feel guilty about a lot of things. Why didn’t I realize sooner that something was wrong? Why did I wait so long for an arbitrary piece of plastic to tell me what I already knew in my heart? Would that have changed the only six weeks I had with my baby? For weeks after my surgery I felt guilty because I had let them take him out of me.

I consented for a surgeon to remove my baby from me. It didn’t really matter that Rylan was already gone. I felt like I should have treasured those early weeks instead of complaining about morning sickness. I felt like I should have insisted on seeing the doctor right away when I first felt pain instead of waiting because of course it can’t be the baby.

It is heartbreaking to know that I could have avoided the trauma of surgery and recovery had I just gone with my gut, but also to feel guilty, because that would mean I had less time with him than I already had. At least I was sensitive enough to my body to notice the changes quickly. At least I have been surrounded by amazing friends and family who have supported me, held my hand at times, endured my anger at others. At least I had the time I did. Even though “at least” will never truly be enough, I am so thankful he was here, and I don’t regret at all that his life existed.

♥ Kristian Doucette,
Mommy to Rylan
M.E.N.D. Chapter Updates

Houston

M.E.N.D.—Houston is looking forward to our eighth annual Walk to Remember on October 5. To R.S.V.P. please visit our website at www.mend.org. You will need to register in order to receive a personalized ornament. If you have any questions regarding the Walk, please email stormym@mend.org or call 281.374.8528.

Stormy Mitchell

Tulsa

M.E.N.D.—Tulsa continues to minister to grieving families. We are looking forward to commemorating our babies during our balloon release on October 15, at 7:00 p.m. For additional information, please email me at lisa@mend.org or call 918-694-4325.

Lisa Daily

Amarillo

BUNCO for BABIES fundraiser is Friday, September 6, 2013, at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are available now. For more information please call or email Becky at 806-570-4344 or becky@mend.org.

Becky Anderson

Texarkana

M.E.N.D.—Texarkana continues to grow and minister to families throughout the Texarkana area through email, phone calls, monthly meetings, and hospital visits to grieving families. We look forward to our annual Christmas Ceremony in December.

Monica Davis

SW Missouri

M.E.N.D.—SW Missouri wrapped up our summer by sending out another fundraising letter campaign to our past members and donors. We pray the Lord will move each individual to give as they can to help us continue this absolutely free ministry to hurting moms and dads. Fall also brings the preparations for our two recognition ceremonies! Mark your calendars for Saturday, October 12, at 10 a.m., for our third annual Breakfast & Balloon Release, and Monday, December 9, at 7 p.m., for our fourth annual Christmas Candlelight Ceremony. Many thanks to Second Baptist Church for hosting both events this year (3111 E. Battlefield, Springfield). If you’d like to make a corporate or individual sponsorship to either event, please contact heather@mend.org.

Heather Fann

Wichita Falls

M.E.N.D.—Wichita Falls has had a busy summer! We have welcomed new families every month. On August 15, we had our first M.E.N.D. benefit trunk show fundraiser. We continue to pray for those families who have sadly joined our group, and we are thankful for a successful fundraiser.

Sarah Fukasawa
**M.E.N.D. Support Group Meetings in the Dallas Metroplex**

Join us for a time of sharing experiences.

**M.E.N.D. main chapter meetings**

are held the 2\(^{nd}\) Thursday of every month
from 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.

**Daddies group**

meets the 2\(^{nd}\) 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.*

**Food and Fellowship**

are held the 4\(^{th}\) Thursday of every month at 8:00 p.m.
at the Corner Bakery in Southlake Town Center

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

Contact Brittney Fish: brittney@mend.org

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**Subsequent pregnancy group**

meets the 4\(^{th}\) 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.*

**MENDING Mommies**

Meets the 2\(^{nd}\) Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.

Contact Marilyn Brown: Marilyn@mend.org

**MENDING Mommies is a group of **M.E.N.D.** moms (and grandmothers) who create and sew tiny gowns, caps, and blankets that are donated to area hospitals for new heavenly babies.*

**Parenting After Loss Playgroup**

Meets monthly at various locations in the Dallas / Fort Worth metroplex.

Contact Magen Kaye: Magen@mend.org or call (214) 435-3870

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**Infertility group**

meets the 3\(^{rd}\) Monday at 7:30 p.m.

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

*For families experiencing infertility after a loss.*

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**M.E.N.D. Christmas Candlelight Ceremonies**

Please contact your chapter for more details on the events.

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**M.E.N.D.—Amarillo**

Meets the 2\(^{nd}\) Tuesday at 7:00 p.m.
First United Bank of the Colonies/ Lonestar Room
One First United Bank Parkway
45\(^{th}\) and Soncy
Amarillo, Texas
Director: Becky Anderson becky@mend.org, (806) 570-4344

**M.E.N.D.—NW Washington**

Meets the 2\(^{nd}\) Monday at 6:30 p.m.
Harrison Medical Center/Iris Room
1800 Myhre Rd.
Silverdale, Washington
Director: Stacy McGhee stacym@mend.org, (360) 621-7279

**M.E.N.D.—Hot Springs, Arkansas**

Meets the 2\(^{nd}\) Tuesday at 7:00 p.m.
National Park Medical Center/Maurice Room
1910 Malvern Avenue
Hot Springs, AR
Director: Amy Humphries amy@mend.org, (501) 620-9930

**M.E.N.D.—Wichita Falls, Texas**

Meets the 2\(^{nd}\) Thursday at 7:30 p.m.
Christ Home Place Ministries
1420 Twin Oaks Street
Wichita Falls, TX
Director: Sarah Fukasawa sarahf@mend.org, (940) 642-3284

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**Bryan/College Station**

**M.E.N.D.**—Bryan/College Station is preparing for our annual balloon release on October 13, at 3 p.m., for Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month. All are welcome to come! For more information email me at jennie@mend.org. You can also check our upcoming events and details on our Facebook page.

*Jennie Drude*

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**Hot Springs**

**M.E.N.D.**—Hot Springs continues to pray for and minister to our families who have suffered the loss of a baby. We are beginning to plan for our second annual Christmas Candlelight Memorial Service and pray it will be a blessing to our families who attend.

*Amy Humphries*

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**NW Washington**

**M.E.N.D.**—NW Washington is sad to say goodbye to one of our assistants, Bethany Wilson. She is moving back home to Ohio and will be dearly missed. Her involvement in **M.E.N.D.** the last year has been invaluable to us! We wish her the best of luck in her new adventures.

We walked in our local parade in July and had a good turnout and reception by parade goers. We distributed over 600 fliers, hoping this will help raise awareness that we are here to help those that may need us.

*Stacy McGhee*

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**M.E.N.D. Christmas Candlelight Ceremonies**

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**M.E.N.D. Support Group Meetings in the Dallas Metroplex**

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**Mommys AND daddies are both welcome at all M.E.N.D. meetings.**

**Unless otherwise noted, all support group meetings are held at:**

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

(Located in the Crystals Pizza parking lot, between MacArthur and O’Connor)
Meetings will be in the bank board room, located on the first floor.
For more information, call (972) 506-9000.
Edward and Mayra Gonzalez, of Dallas, Texas, along with big sisters, Abigail and Angeline, joyfully announce the arrival of Edward, Jr., born June 10, measuring 7 lb., 11 oz., and 18 inches long. The Gonzalez’s lovingly remember Cecilia, June 12-13, 2012, renal agenesis.


Anthony and Maria Galindo, of Grand Prairie, Texas, along with Christian, Jaeden and Nathan, joyfully announce the arrival of Jedi Jeremiah, born April 22, measuring 3 lb. The Galindos lovingly remember Precious, miscarried September 9, 2011.

Kim and Aaron Godsey, of Dallas, Texas, along with big brothers, Tahlak and Aaron, Jr., joyfully announce the arrival of Alexandra Grace, born July 31, measuring 1 lb., 13 oz., and 13 inches long. The Godsey’s lovingly remember Cameron Eddie, stillborn November 20, 2012, true knot in cord.

Daniel and Melissa Bufe, of Haslet, Texas, along with big sister, Briley joyfully announce the arrival of Delaney Hope, born July 15, measuring 8 lb., 1 oz., and 21.5 inches long. The Bufe family lovingly remembers Hadley D’Layne, February 28, 2011, PPROM.


James and Kristen Holland, of McKinney, Texas, along with big brother, Logan, joyfully announce the arrival of Chloe Kathleen, born December 16, 2012, measuring 7 lb., 7 oz., and 19.75 inches long. The Hollands lovingly remember Connor James, stillborn April 27, 2011.

Greg and Stefanie Miller, of Tomball, Texas, joyfully announce the arrival of Cora Ainsley, born June 17, measuring 6 lb., 15 oz., and 21.25 inches long. The Millers lovingly remember Chase Austin, April 21, 2011, incompetent cervix.

Semi and Laura Ratulele, of Fayetteville, Arkansas, along with big sister, Noela, joyfully announce the arrival of Talei Jewel, born May 23, measuring 12 lb., 3 oz., and 20 inches long. The Ratueles lovingly remember Sereana Joy, stillborn September 9, 2009, full-term, unknown cause.

JD and Magen Kaye, of Irving, Texas, along with big brother, Noah, joyfully announce the arrival of Mia Parker, born June 28, measuring 6 lb., 4 oz., and 19 inches long. The Kayes lovingly remember Jayden Noah, stillborn October 10, 2006, and Tucker Steven, stillborn February 8, 2010.

Ricky and Brandy Perez, of Cedar Hill, Texas, along with big brother Ethan, joyfully announce the arrival of Dylan Carter, born October 16, 2012, measuring 7 lb., 2 oz., and 19 inches long. The Perez family lovingly remember Liam Nathaniel, stillborn September 2, 2011, cord accident.
Culpabilidad en Dolor

Triste, solitaria, engañada, enojada, traicionada, con vergüenza, miedosa, ansiosa, con pánico... Esto es sólo una breve lista de las emociones que experimentamos mientras lamentamos la muerte de nuestro bebé. Creo que la principal emoción como madres, que más combatimos, es la culpa. En nuestro dolor, de alguna manera logramos convencernos de que la muerte de nuestro bebé fue culpa nuestra. A pesar de que la gente no nos hace sentir culpables. Nos han dicho miles de veces, “no fue tu culpa.” Pero nosotros mismos nos decimos... hubiéramos podido hacer algo diferente?

En mis pérdidas, Jonathan nació muerto a las 29 1/2 semanas, debido a un accidente del cordón mientras me encontraba en reposo en el hospital. Aunque fui cuidada por el adecuado personal de enfermeras las 24 horas, me hice creer que el hecho de estar en reposo había sido la causa de que Jonathan se enredara con su cordón. Decidí que porque yo no me mantenía en movimiento en los alrededores, esa había sido la razón. Pensé que por ser sedentaria le causo la incapacidad de moverse lo suficiente para desenredarse. Además, me sentí culpable que había defraudado todos – por lo menos así me parecía a mí. Me sentí responsable por la inmensa tristeza que se vislumbraba sobre nuestro hogar y familia extendida por meses. Me sentía (y honestamente todavía tengo que luchar a veces) culpable por el dolor que siento por no ser capaz de darle a mi marido más hijos y a nuestro hijo ahora adulto más hermanos.

Seis años después de la muerte de Jonathan, me embaracé una tercera vez. En mi chequeo de 10 semanas, descubrí tristemente que nuestro bebé había muerto. El ultrasonido reveló que nuestro pequeño bebé ya no tenía pulso e indicó que tal vez el bebé murió en 8 semanas, 6 días (o posiblemente murió unos días después pero se había deteriorado hasta el tamaño de 8 semanas, 6 días). Si el bebé murió efectivamente en el día que indicada el ultrasonido, coincidió con el mismo día de nuestra Ceremonia de Velas Navideñas de M.E.N.D. La mañana de la ceremonia, estaba en nuestra unidad de almacenamiento ayudando a descargar nuestras decoraciones de Navidad y transportarlas a la iglesia para el Comité que nos esperaba. Nuestra unidad de almacenamiento no estaba en el primer piso y el ascensor estaba fuera de servicio ese día. Aunque no llevaba cajas pesadas para arriba, sí me senté y empuje una caja super pesada con los pies en el suelo. ¿En mi corazón, creo que fue lo que causó la muerte de mi bebé? No, de verdad que no. Sin embargo, en el fondo de mi corazón, he tenido que luchar de no sentirme culpable de que hice algo que ninguna mujer embarazada debe hacer. Y he tenido que lidiar con las emociones aparentemente una vez más, decepcionando a todos con otra gran decepción.

Sabemos en nuestros corazones y en nuestras cabezas que no somos la causa de la muerte de nuestros bebés, pero aun, el sentimiento de culpa es bastante duro de luchar! Y justo cuando pensamos que hemos conquistado esa sensación fea, regresa el sentimiento cuando menos lo esperamos. ¿Así que cómo lo superamos una vez más y por siempre? Honestamente no estoy seguro que lo logremos a un 100%, pero sin duda con los años ese sentimiento de culpa disminuye. Hablando con compañeros y padres en el grupo de apoyo o en una de nuestras páginas de Facebook es de gran ayuda. Admitiendo abiertamente sentirse culpable a nuestro esposo, familiares y amigos cercanos es beneficioso. Y finalmente, clamar al señor. Como cristiano, sé que la culpa no es de él. Convicción si es, pero eso no es lo que estamos hablando. La Destructión de si mismo por sentimientos de culpa definitivamente no es algo que Dios pone sobre nosotros. Así que, aunque es una emoción normal mientras siente dolor, luche contra él. Supérelo y simplemente crea lo que todo el mundo está diciendo, “No es su culpa.”

♥
Rebekah Mitchell,
Presidente y Fundadora
Mamá de Jonathan Daniel y Mitchell bebé Mitchell
“... that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God” (2 Corinthians 1:4)

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

- **Kroger grocery stores** donate a percentage of all purchases of those shoppers in Texas and Louisiana who have their Kroger Plus Card linked to M.E.N.D. To link your card, go to www.krogercommunityrewards.com and set up an account if you do not already have one. Once you receive the email after setting up your account, click on “My Account,” then go to “Edit Kroger Community Rewards” and input your Kroger Plus card number. You’ll see a screen with your information in boxes, at the bottom right, there is a box that says Community Rewards. Click that, then enter the M.E.N.D. number, which is 80513. Once that’s entered, you’ll confirm that M.E.N.D. is your charity of choice. This link will be good until the 2013-2014 program expires. You must link your card each year to M.E.N.D.

- **Tom Thumb** also has a program in Texas that can benefit M.E.N.D. If you have a Tom Thumb Reward Card, please contact Rebekah (rebekah@mend.org) to obtain the Customer Letter. You must only present this letter one time to link your card to M.E.N.D. Reward cards can also be used at Randalls and Simon David stores.

- **Glenn Martin** is looking for families willing to grant space for small gumball machines in order to raise funds for M.E.N.D. If you have a retail business or connections to a high traffic location in the Grapevine, Southlake, or metroplex area, Glenn will place, stock, and service the equipment and give M.E.N.D. 35 percent of the proceeds. Glenn can be contacted at (817) 874-5366 or glmartin@attg.net.

- **i.think inc.** is an online marketing research firm. You can help by signing up as a survey panel member and designating us as the recipient of your fee. Just go to the Web site at http://www.ithink.inc.com and choose “Sign up to become an i.think inc. panel member.” Fill out the sign-up survey. Under the “Funds for Charity” section, select M.E.N.D. from the list of names.

- **IBM** employees may now make charitable donations to M.E.N.D. through automatic payroll deductions. Choose Charity Code 0M562 from the IBM Employee/Retiree Approved Charity List.

- **GoodSearch.com** is a search engine that donates half its revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. Powered by Yahoo!, it is used like any other search engine. To earn money for M.E.N.D. using Goodsearch.com, go to www.goodsearch.com and designate M.E.N.D. as your charity of choice.

- **Ebay** has a charitable giving program that can benefit M.E.N.D. If you sell items on Ebay and would like to designate a percentage of your revenue to M.E.N.D., visit www.missionfish.org to find out how.

- **Igivе.com** will donate a penny a search and a portion of each purchase made through their website to M.E.N.D. Sign up today! M.E.N.D.’s cause number is 52025.