Without hesitation, he emphatically told us that absolutely Little Byron should see the baby because, "after all, it is his brother." It made perfect sense, and Byron and I knew it was the right thing to do. Allowing Byron, Jr., to look at, touch and have pictures taken with his little brother was very beneficial and therapeutic to us as a grieving family. It helped him understand that Jonathan was real and not an imaginary friend we had made up. Watching my little boy bravely and gently stroke his brother's tiny arm and kiss his cold head was surreal. We took several photographs of them together that are now mementos that I will forever cherish. Although the experience was heart wrenching, I know we made the right choice.

The weeks and months that followed the loss of Jonathan were very challenging. I was mentally in the pit of despair and needed to express my emotions, yet I was fearful of scarring and damaging my child as he saw me in daily sorrow. My private moments of grieving usually took place in the bathtub or in the car, but my solitude never lasted for long as it was often interrupted by my three-year-old demanding my full attention. I often prayed that the Lord would protect him from forever being ruined by seeing me cry all the time. His reaction to my crying was always, "Mommy, are you crying about Jonathan again?" I would affirm his suspicion then ask him if it was okay. Most of the time he would say yes, but from time to time would tell me no. When it was clear he did not feel comfortable with my grief, I would briefly go into another room to regain my composure then go back to him to show him I was okay.

I read that if parents are not open and honest with their children about a tragedy that has taken place in the family, the kids may begin to blame themselves for the heaviness they sense in the home. I did not realize until a couple weeks after Jonathan's death that Little Byron was feeling somewhat responsible for his brother's demise. Throughout my pregnancy he routinely put his mouth on my bulging tummy and blew as hard as he could, making a loud noise that would usually cause Jonathan to jump. It was exciting and funny to see his response, and I would thank him for "playing" with the baby. One evening my mother was helping Little Byron take a bath when I overheard him ask, "did I kill Jonathan when I 'blowed' on Mommy's tummy?" It was all I could do to not collapse to the floor in anguish as my mom fought back her own tears and assured him in no way was he the cause of Jonathan's death. From then on I made an effort to regularly remind him that Jonathan’s stillbirth was no one’s fault and it could not have been prevented.
The Grief of a Child

Children hit and run

If a child is playing with an onion they will pick at it for a little while and then run off, either leaving the onion on the floor or taking it with them for future play sessions. That is how they deal with grieving situations. Matter of fact, that is how they deal with any situation that requires the expression of feelings. They will sit on your lap in deep seriousness talking about the death and then suddenly say, "I want to go ride my bike now."

Children instinctively know how much they can handle. When that point is reached they are gone. They also are checking to see if play is still appropriate. Play is what they do for a living and they need to know it is still there for them.

We may think that nothing has been accomplished in these brief times of sharing and feel some sense of panic. There is no way to measure what is happening in the mind of a child. Nor can we measure how much good has been done in these simple times that are often so short you do not realize they were happening.

Children relate to the loss in their way

They will relate to the loss in terms of what they lost. "Grandpa promised to take me fishing and now he died." That sounds selfish, but that is what the child lost. When they express their loss in these terms we need to help them establish the significance of that loss. Our natural response will be to make the child feel better in some way, so we say, "Oh there will be many other people to take you fishing." It takes courage on our part, but we need to say, "Not going fishing with Grandpa is really going to hurt isn’t it." That says that you are taking the responsibility seriously and that it is all right to talk about it with you. These kind of responses allow the child to establish the significance of the loss. Significance really matters in grief.

Children grieve in their own time

A child will pick the times when they wish to bring up the subject. "We are going to get an ice cream cone and Suzy can’t go cause she died." What a time to bring that up! But the child will bring it up when they feel safe. Times like this are safe because they know there will not be much follow-up. You aren’t likely to have a deep discussion about the loss in an ice cream store. If we respond with calmness and say something like, "I miss Suzy the most at times like this," the child may feel free to say more during the ride to the store. Some times they bounce these statements off of us to see if we are ready to talk or if we will hush them and change the subject. Remember they don’t know there are any rules for when to talk. I wish we adults had the same freedom.

Children grieve slowly

Kids have a great ability to deny reality. They are good at it. Your child will deal with grief when, and only when, he or she is ready to do so. You can offer your support. You can let them know it is all right to talk about it, and it is all right to talk about it to you, but they will determine the time. Far too many parents panic and decide their children are not grieving properly when the child is just not ready yet. They will control the length. They will grieve when they are ready, and for as long as they are ready.

The grief of a child is a broken line

They will do the grief work they are capable of doing at the age they are. Quite often they will pick the grief up again a few years later and do what can be done with at that age. They may continue this process until they are adults.

Children use questions

Why? How?
Who will take care of me now?
Will it happen to me, or to someone I know?

These are the basic questions we all have and there are no real answers to any of them. You may find them very threatening and feel ill-equipped to answer. There are a couple of things to keep in mind.

First: The child is looking for reassurance more than answers. It is all right to say "I don’t know why things happen but I will always be here for you."

Continued on page 11
**M.E.N.D. Support Group Meetings**

Join us in a time of sharing experiences.

**Our daddies group**
- meets the 2nd Thursday of March, June, September, and December from 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.
- This is a special time for daddies to get together and discuss concerns unique 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 of each month from 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.
- For families who are considering becoming pregnant or are currently pregnant after a loss.

**Subsequent pregnancy birth class**
- For families who are near their due date with their subsequent pregnancy.
- This one-night childbirth refresher meets once every three months and is conducted by one of our M.E.N.D. moms, Allyson Smith, R.N. The group requires a minimum of three participants to meet. For more information contact Allyson at ssmit@yahoo.com or (972) 899-0405.

**All support group meetings are held at:**
1159 Cottonwood Lane, Suite 150
Irving, Texas (Las Colinas) 75038
(This is on the west side of MacArthur Boulevard, across the street from the Four Seasons Resort. There is a Holiday Inn Express at the entrance of Cottonwood Lane.)

For more information or directions, call (972) 459-2396.

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**You Can**

You can say your brother’s name out loud
Even if the people we’re with have never heard it spoken,
And you can tell your teacher that you have a brother in heaven.
It’s okay to tell the sales clerk that Joseph died
And that you wish he didn’t.

If you want to blow out candles on his birthday we will.
We’ll buy balloons and send them up to heaven
No matter who is watching
Or how many strangers at the park ask,
“Who has a birthday today?”

We’ll talk about how you wish he had a Spiderman lunchbox
For lunch in heaven
And how the backpacks up there must be better than the ones here,
And we’ll wonder together what he does for fun
And what kind of toys he has to play with.

You can say how much you wish he could go to Disneyland
And that you would have liked to ride with him on Space Mountain,
Even though it made you a little scared at first,
But that you would tell him there is nothing to be afraid of
Because that’s a big brother’s job.

You can do everything that you need to do,
Like your big brother did before you,
As you realize that you do have another brother you’ve never met,
A part of the family you long for,
Because you miss him as much as the rest of us.

By Sharlene Libby, in memory of Joseph, stillborn May 26, 1999, due to a cord accident.
For John, who learned to grieve the loss of a little brother
by observing the grief of a big brother.
Birthday Tributes to Our Special Babies

Jacob Charles Jensen
Our dearest little angel,
We miss you and think of you every day!
Happy 2nd Birthday!
Love,
Mom, Dad
and little sister Maegan

Jacob Charles Jensen
March 8, 2001
Trisomy 13
Parents:  Eric and Melanie Jensen
Little sister:  Meagan

Happy 3rd birthday to my precious babies: Kaylena my strong survivor, and Katlynn my sweet tiny angel! Mommy loves you!

Happy Birthday
Kaylena & Katlynn

Remembering Katlynn Lee Busbee
Stillborn March 3, 2000
Knots in Cord/Monoamotic Twins
Parents: Brandi and Nick Busbee
Twin sister: Kaylena

Chandler,
Happy Birthday Little Love Bug!
We can't believe that it has been four years since you were born. We look at four-year-olds and think about what you might be doing if you were still here on earth and what you are probably doing in Heaven right now. We miss you dearly and love you!
Until we meet again, keep catching our kisses to Heaven!!! Watch, also, for those balloons from your little brother, Christopher!

Love,
Mommy, Daddy,
Christopher, and Kyleigh

Happy 4th Birthday in heaven, sweet Chandler!
What a big boy you must be!! We love you and miss you! We think of you everyday!

Love,
Nana and Papaw

In memory of Chandler Allred
Stillborn 3-4-99, Fetal Acrania
Parents:  Mark and Amy Allred
Little brother:  Christopher
Little sister:  Kyleigh
Grandparents:  Bill and Doris Yancey

Chandler, we love you and miss you so very much. You are always in our thoughts and prayers.

Love, Mommy and Daddy

Happy Birthday to our little 'peanut.'
Jacob Theodore Oxendine
April 29, 2001
PROM
Parents: Christine and Chip Oxendine
Happy Birthday, Blake.
May all my love fly up to you on angels’ wings.
I love you endlessly,
Mommy
Blake Leland Allen
4/21/99
Sean and Jan Allen
brother Zachary
In memory of Lauren Grace
2/13/00

Happy First Birthday Rebekah!
You were gone before you came and yet you have made a lasting impression on our lives.
Your tiny footprints are in a frame, the clothes they dressed you in are safely tucked away. Your pictures lay in a frame where we will always look to know you were truly with us. Your daddy and I held you for a couple of hours and yet they weren't long enough. We look forward to the day where we can see you whole and enjoy one another.

With all our love,
Daddy, Mommy,
big brother Nino
and your brother on the way Isaiah
In loving memory of Rebekah Hope Rosario
Stillborn 03/03/02
Antiphospholipid Antibody Syndrome
Parents: Raymond and Melissa
Brothers: Nino and Isaiah

Happy 3rd Birthday Juliana!
Measured in miles you are far away,
but measured in thoughts, you are close each day!
Jules, I wish I could hold you, my precious baby girl. Daddy and I think about you all the time. Your baby sister, Nina looked just like you when she was born. Almost exactly nine months after your birthday, God blessed us with her. I have always felt your presence guiding her - thank you. It brings me great comfort to know that you are in good hands, to know that you can smile each day and look over us. I always tell Nina to be careful, so you be careful too! We love you so much our little angel!
Happy Birthday!!
Love always,
Mommy, Daddy, Nina & Daisy
Juliana Maria De Leon
March 6, 2000
Premature labor due to incompetent cervix & dehydration
Parents: Frank & Patty De Leon
Sister: Nina

Kayce Dolores Bramlett
Happy 4th Birthday Baby Girl!
Every bumblebee and butterfly we see reminds us of the wings we gave you and that your roots are so firmly planted in our hearts.
We love and need you,
Daddy, Mommy, and Jackson
Kayce Dolores Bramlett
March 14th - March 15th, 1999
Premature 24 weeks
Parents: Deidré and Kyle Bramlett
Little brother: Jackson

In loving memory of our dearest beloved daughter,
DESTINY ADAOBI OKEKE
It was a year exactly on 2/3/03 since we felt your kicking in Mom’s tummy. Mom and Dad sincerely miss you so much. However, we are comforted that you are resting well with the Lord. Sweetheart, we love you and will be with you one day.
Remembering Destiny
February 3, 2002
Chromosomal Abnormality/Anoxia
Parents: Sam and Olivia Okeke

Happy 2nd Birthday to Our Sweet Angel Lauren Elle
Today we celebrate your birthday, and everyday we celebrate your presence with us. We only wish you were here with us to celebrate and we could all be eating cake with our hands and laughing. We have no doubt you are laughing and giggling right now as we are. We think of you each and everyday, and we smile thinking of the happy, funny and beautiful little girl you would have been with us and your little brother. We touch our hearts and we know that you are with us always and watch over us.
We miss you so much our little peanut and sweet pea and we love you always and forever.
XO Daddy. Mommy, Kyle, Harley and Auski

We remember with love
Lauren Elle Williams
March 15, 2001
Knots in the cord
Mommy and Daddy: Todd and Jennifer
Little Brother: Kyle

Mommy and Daddy: Todd and Jennifer
Little Brother: Kyle

Happy Birthday!!
Love always,
Mommy, Daddy, Nina & Daisy
Juliana Maria De Leon
March 6, 2000
Premature labor due to incompetent cervix & dehydration
Parents: Frank & Patty De Leon
Sister: Nina
I wake up and look over at the clock, which reads 3:30 a.m. I've been asleep a whole four hours and instinctively know that sleep will not find me again tonight. I am living a continuation of the worst day of my life - the day I found out my daughter died. I can feel the tears starting to stream down my face before I'm even fully aware that I'm awake, as though my body is mourning her imminent loss as much as my heart. I yearn for the last 18 hours to be a horrible nightmare from which I can just wake up. All I can do is cry out in desperation for some answers to the only One who might be able to explain this all away. "Why, God, why? I thought You were supposed to be taking care of her! We prayed for her everyday... You were supposed to protect her for us," I cry out from a place deep within.

A quiet, still voice speaks to me in my heart, or is it my ears or my head?... I'm not sure how I'm hearing this voice, only that I know it to be God. "That's what I was doing, Erin. That's exactly what I was doing." How can this be? "But I don't understand. What were you protecting her from?" I cry out again, begging for a reason to this horrible mistake, because that's what it must be: a mistake.

"I wish I could tell you, but even if I could, you wouldn't understand right now. I'm so sorry." It doesn't strike me as absurd that I am conversing with the Creator of the Universe, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God who parted the Red Sea and led the Israelites out of Egypt. I am a daughter crying out to her father in desperation. "But I miss her. We are her parents... we want her here with us."

"I am her parent too. I'm her father too, and right now she needs to be with me. I want you to know though, that she's safe and protected." I can almost hear Him pause and then continue, as if trying to swallow a sob. "I am holding her in my arms tonight... and Erin, she is so beautiful." A vision is instantly in my head of God the Father. I can't see His face, it's more like a painting where the artist has faded out the edges until the details are blurry. He is holding a beautiful infant, wrapped in a fuzzy white blanket. I can't see her face either, and yet instinctively I know its Alexandra, the little girl whom I've carried and nurtured for the last nine months. A stab goes through my heart, a dagger of both pain and peace. I can almost hear His voice crack as He tells me how beautiful she is. God thinks my daughter is beautiful, I think to myself in awe.

I cry out again, wanting more. "But we miss her. We want her here with us..... God, this hurts so much." I pour out my pain to him as it overwhelms me. This is when I hear the God of the Universe, the One who makes the sun rise and set, the One who put the planets in place and causes the tides to rise and fall... He begins to cry.

"I know it hurts, Erin. But know that I am crying for you and I hurt for you. I am so sorry this has to happen. Please just know and remember that I am holding her in my arms tonight. She's safe and protected." Those last words will echo through my mind for weeks and months to come, giving me more comfort than I would ever think possible. I know this is the end of the conversation. I am left with such a feeling of peace and calm, yet all the while still drowning in my abyss of pain knowing that my first, my one and only daughter has died before she even had a chance to live. I'm not sure how peace and pain can co-exist, yet I feel filled with both simultaneously. There is such joy in knowing that God has her and is holding her in His arms. I'm quite sure there is no better place to be, although it doesn't stop my arms from aching to hold her myself.... But it does give a "peace that passes understanding."

I lie here and absorb the conversation I've just had. A conversation with God, Yahweh, the Almighty Himself. He assured me that He's holding her, she's safe, she's protected. All the while, I lie here and sob. I realize this when Philip rolls over and puts his arms around me to quiet my cries. I share with him all that just happened and his tears soon join harmony with mine. Did I not have the beautiful image permanently inscribed in my mind, I might doubt what just happened. Yet, I know with clarity that it did. I know that God just told me that He is crying with us. In the midst of my pain, I know that the "Great I Am" is crying for me, Erin Preiser, because my daughter has died. Regardless of what else happens in my life, regardless of the pain, frustration and anger I know I will feel, I know that my God is crying for me.

Alexandra’s little brother, Christian Blake Presier, was born screaming and healthy on October 9, 2002. 

God Cries
By Erin Preiser
To help children understand pregnancy loss, it may be beneficial to show them how big their sibling was and what he or she may have looked like, especially if the loss occurred early in pregnancy or if children didn’t get to see their brother or sister’s body. Here are some resources that can help:

God’s Little Ones (www.homestead.com/godslittleones/index.html) offers life-sized models of babies at various stages of prenatal development.


Books for Grieving Children

The Cherry Blossom Tree – A Grandfather Talks About Life & Death
by Jan Godfrey.
Augsburg Fortress, 426 S. Fifth St., Box 1209
Minneapolis, MN  55440, 1996

Let’s Talk About Heaven
by Debby Anderson.

Molly’s Rosebush
by Janice Cohn, D.S.W.
Albert Whitman & Company, Morton Grove, IL  1994

Mommy, Please Don’t Cry – Tender Words for Broken Hearts
by Linda DeYmaz.
Multnomah Publisher, Bend, OR
Contact www.multnomahbooks.com

Someone I Love Died
by Christine Harder Tangvald.
Benjamin Earl Mobley
May 30, 2001
Given by parents,
Grant and Angela Mobley

Zachary Neal Matthews
Stillborn February 24, 2002
Triploidy
Given by parents,
Nick and Marsha Matthews

Katlynn Lee Busbee
Stillborn March 3, 2000
Knots in Cord/
Monoamotic Twins
Given by parents,
Brandi and Nick Busbee
and twin sister Kaylena

James Jackson “Jack” Henvey
July 4, 2001
Tetralogy of Fallot
Parents, Renee and Chris Henvey
Given by grandparents,
Glenda and Larry McLeskey

Angel Connolly
Stillborn November 11, 1999
Trisomy 21
Parents, Chuck and Katie Connolly
Little brother, Trenton
Given by PepsiCo Foundation

Jake William Livingston
December 14, 2002
PROM
Given by parents,
Shannon and David Livingston

Bay William Miltenberger, Jr.
Stillborn December 9, 1998
Preterm Labor
Parents, Bay and Paula Miltenberger
Little brother, Bryce
Given by grandparents,
James and Dianne Bosler

Lauren Paige Grimes
March 6, 1999
Unknown Cause
Baby Angel Grimes
Miscarried January 25, 2001
Parents, John and Paula Grimes
Sister Rileigh
Given by grandparents,
Joseph and Lanelle Grimes

Catherine Mary Martin
Stillborn December 15, 2001
Trisomy 18
Baby Martin I
Miscarried June 14, 2002
Baby Martin II
Miscarried September, 2002
Blighted Ovum
Parents, Glenn and Nancy Martin
Given by The Buffalo News,
designated by grandparents,
Robert Lee and Mary Ann Meuret

Catherine Mary Martin
Stillborn December 15, 2001
Trisomy 18
Baby Martin I
Miscarried June 14, 2002
Baby Martin II
Miscarried September, 2002
Blighted Ovum
Given by parents, Glenn and Nancy Martin

Christopher Thomas Stuckey
Stillborn September 19, 2001
Unknown Cause
Given by parents,
Brandon and Michelle Stuckey

Jonathan Daniel Mitchell
Stillborn June 24, 1995
Cord Accident
Baby Mitchell
MISCARIED December, 2001
Parents, Byron and Rebekah Mitchell
Big brother, Byron, Jr.
Given by grandparents, Dennis and Sue Brewer

Joseph Charles Libby
May 26, 1999
Cord Accident
Given by parents, Wim and Sharlene Libby
and siblings Will, John, and Mary Grace

Melba Smith
3/29/27 – 12/11/02
Grandmother to
Blake Leland Allen
April 21, 1999
Premature Labor/Incompetent Cervix
Lauren Grace Allen
February 13, 2000
Cord Accident
Blake and Lauren’s parents,
Jan and Sean Allen and brother Zachary
Given by J.B., Clebe, and Debbie Eaddy

Chandler Allred
Stillborn March 4, 1999
Fetal Acrania
Given by parents, Mark and Amy Allred
Siblings, Christopher and Kyleigh

Chandler Allred
Stillborn March 4, 1999
Fetal Acrania
Parents, Mark and Amy Allred
Siblings, Christopher and Kyleigh
Given by grandparents,
Bill and Doris Yancey

Mikela’s Miracles SIDS Connection
GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN
SCRAPBOOK RETREAT
Honey Creek Lodge, nestled in the scenic Arbuckle Mountains
Davis, Oklahoma
May 2-4
2 nights lodging  all meals provided  door prizes
scrapbook classes  use of our cropping tools
Bring your scrapbook, p.j.s, sleeping bag and get ready for some girl bonding.
A wonderful time to fellowship and memorialize your loved one.
Limited to 20 spots and filling up quickly!  RSVP 972-463-9243
$100 all-inclusive fee, $50 deposit by March 15, balance due April 15th.

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 our mission by providing this newsletter and other services to bereaved parents free of charge. Please refer to the back page of this newsletter for more information regarding where to send your donations and what information to include.
Thank you so much!
Mark your calendars now.

The 2003 Walk to Remember

is scheduled for
October 11
2:00 p.m.

When a Child Is Grieving ...

Traditionally, children have been ignored when a death occurs in the family. They are either sent away to stay with a relative during the funeral for their protection, or they are not given the attention they need to help express their grief. In the last decade, researchers, family therapists and child therapists have begun to understand that children do indeed have an identifiable response to loss.

Children as young as eighteen months can begin to show signs of grief if someone close to them is lost to death. As children grow, their grief responses become more varied. They have different grief responses at each developmental stage. By puberty, their grief response begins to resemble the dynamics of an adult grief process.

Children who are not given an environment in which to grieve are at risk for a number of potential psychological problems. Depression and anxiety are often associated with an insufficient grief response in children. Children are also likely to misbehave if not given the proper encouragement to express their grief. They may have physiological symptoms such as stomachaches, headaches, or vague physical complaints. These symptoms often mask the core problem.

When children are given the opportunity to express grief-related feelings in an age-appropriate manner, they are able to adapt to the changes in their lives with little disruptions or dysfunction.

When a Child Is Grieving ...
was taken from www.thewarmplace.org, the Web site of The Warm Place, a grief support center for children ages three to eighteen, and their families, who have experienced the death of a loved one. Based in Fort Worth, The Warm Place is supported through community donations and grants. There is never a fee for families to participate.

For more information, visit their Web site or call (817) 870-2272.
Call (215) 728-3777 for more information.

Has groups in Turnersville, Trenton, and at Princeton.

NEW JERSEY

♥ UNITE, Inc.

Has groups in Turnersville, Trenton, and at Princeton.

♥ MIDS (Miscarriage, Infant Death & Stillbirth Support Group, Inc.)

180 Jillian Blvd., Parsippany, NJ 07054
(973) 884-0061, mids1982@yahoo.com
Contact: Janet Tischler

♥ MISS

502 Montgomery Ave., Somers Point, NJ 08244
(609) 653-3046
www.geocities.com/Heartland/valley/1800/mis.html
MIBSofNJ@comcast.net, Contact: Kathy Evans

PA

♥ UNITE, Inc.

Has various groups across the state.

Call (215) 728-3777 for more information.

GREAT BEND

♥ Pace Centers for Infant Loss Support

1516 SW 2nd St., Great Bend, KS 67530
Meet 1st Monday of each month, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Phone: (785) 825-1663

Contact: Debra Judd

♥ Heifer Project

PO Box 208, Great Bend, KS 67530
Meet 1st Saturday at 1:30 p.m.

Phone: (785) 825-1663

Contact: Debra Judd

♥ Bereaved Parents of North Texas, Inc.

3rd Monday of every month 7:15 p.m.
First United Methodist Church, 201 S. Locust, Denison, TX
Coe Chapel Lounge

♥ SHARE Of Fort Worth North Hills Hospital
Grapevine Hwy & Hwy 820
Meet 2nd Thursday, 7:00 p.m.
Contact: Lorin Koemel: (817) 595-0833
9077 Elbe Trail, Fort Worth, TX 76118
E-mail koemel@hotmail.com

♥ Journey of Hope Support Center

(children ages 3-18 and their caregivers)
2nd and 4th Tuesday of every month 6:30 p.m.
(972) 578-6634

♥ Bereaved Parents of North Texas, Inc.
3rd Monday of every month 7:15 p.m.
First United Methodist Church, 201 S. Locust, Denison, TX
Coe Chapel Lounge

♥ SHARE Of Fort Worth North Hills Hospital
Grapevine Hwy & Hwy 820
Meet 2nd Thursday, 7:00 p.m.
Contact: Lorin Koemel: (817) 595-0833
9077 Elbe Trail, Fort Worth, TX 76118
E-mail koemel@hotmail.com

♥ UNITE

Meetings held at the SIDS office in Bedford
3rd Thursday of every month
Contact: Sandi Wiggins, Exec. Director
e-mail: info@northtexassids.org
http://www.northtexassids.org
fax (817) 283-1526
toll free in Texas (800) 650-SIDS
fax (817) 283-1526
http://www.northtexassids.org
email: info@northtexassids.org
Contact: Sandi Wiggins, Exec. Director Meetings are held at the SIDS office in Bedford the 3rd Thursday of every month at 7:00 p.m.

♥ COPES

Contact: Amanda Little, (361) 857-6533
Meetings are held on the third Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m.
Meeting place is Driscoll Children’s Hospital, 3533 S. Alameda, in Corpus Christi, on the basement floor in the private dining room of the cafeteria.

♥ Empty Arms Support Group
Sentara Women’s Health Source
801 Volvo Pkwy, Ste. 120,
Sentara Women’s Health Source
801 Volvo Pkwy, Ste. 120,
Sentara Women’s Health Source
801 Volvo Pkwy, Ste. 120,
Sentara Women’s Health Source
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801 Volvo Pkwy, Ste. 120,
"Helping Children Deal With Loss," Continued from page 1

Because of his age, I was not sure Little B knew how to express his feelings and ask every question he had concerning the loss of Jonathan. So every few days I opened the door of conversation by questioning him about what he thought his brother was doing in Heaven. He commonly replied that he was sure Jonathan was playing baseball with Jesus and running on the golden streets. Occasionally he somberly let me know he did not think it was fair that God took his brother and wanted to know why. He sometimes asked if he could go to Heaven, too. They were tough questions to answer, but I was grateful I gave him the opportunity to search his thoughts and taught him how to express himself.

Most assuredly I would change the fate of my two babies if I could, but I am very thankful for the way their deaths have molded my living child into who he is today. During my early days of grief I often wondered what Little Byron would remember when he got older about the loss of Jonathan. I envisioned asking him as a teenager what he recalls most about his childhood and him responding, "you were always sad". Haunted by that image, I have gone to great measures to keep our home as normal as possible during the aftermath of our two losses. Thinking I could get some great ideas for writing this article, I asked Little Byron this afternoon if he had any tidbits of advice for parents to help their kids grieve. After thinking about it, he shrugged his shoulders, laughed and apologetically told me no. Although I hoped he would have something profound to say, I decided it was a good sign that he didn’t have a list of early childhood complaints that easily came to his mind and has obviously not been adversely affected by our sufferings. Instead, my 11-year-old has gained a maturity and deep wisdom that many adults have not attained. He knows that with life comes death. He realizes every day could be our last, and not one moment should be taken for granted. It used to crush me that his innocence was stripped at such an early age, but in retrospect I think it’s easier to learn about the realities of life when we’re young instead of being introduced to its harshness as a grown-up. I am confident that because of the grief my son has experienced as a child, some day he will empathetically use the skills and knowledge he has developed to reach out to others who are hurting.

Rebekah Mitchell

MEND Fundraisers

As a non-profit organization MEND 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 who have and use a Kroger Share Card. To obtain your Share Card, contact Rebekah via one of the ways listed on the last page of this newsletter and let her know how many you need. This program is valid in Texas, but residents of other states may need to check with store managers to see if they participate.

Tom Thumb also has a program in Texas that can benefit MEND. If you have a Tom Thumb Reward Card, please ask your Tom Thumb cashier to link your card with MEND. Our number is 6265. If you are already linked to another organization, they will split a donation of one percent of your purchases between the organizations. It only takes about five minutes to get a Reward Card, and it can also be used at Randalls and Simon David stores.

Kathryn Padilla, a MEND member, is an independent Mary Kay consultant who is donating 40 percent of all sales by MEND members. Members also get ten percent off their first online order. You can shop online at www.mymk.com/kpadilla1.

Kim Robinson, a Pampered Chef kitchen consultant and MEND family member, is donating 40 percent of sales to MEND members back to our organization. You can browse products at www.pamperedchef.com, then e-mail Kim at kimr@cheerful.com to place an order.

Stamps.com offers a $10-$20 referral program. If you would like to purchase stamps from home and receive a free postage scale, visit www.stamps.com, and use referral code C-4FTJ-TWR. Stamps.com will give the incentive money to MEND in the form of free postage.

Nikki Wynne, a MEND member and an AVON Independent Sales Rep, is donating 15% of all AVON Orders made by MEND members to MEND. Please contact Nikki whichever way is best for you, by phone 817-419-7508, by email at nikkietheavonlady@aol.com, or shop online at her website (use passcode: nikki) at http://www.youravon.com/nwynne/.

Cheryl Kilburg designs beautiful heart pendants as remembrances of loved ones who leave our hearts with a “missing link.” To see her work and order your own pendant, visit My Heart’s Missing Link at www.myheartsmissinglink.com. Cheryl will donate $10 for each gold item sold and $5 for each sterling silver item sold to MEND members back to MEND.

Dana and Tracy Davis are independent representatives for Vartec Telecom/Excel Communications, a company that offers telephone service at competitive rates. Dana is donating 5 percent of her profits from sales to MEND members back to MEND. You can call her at 214-360-1531, or call 1-877-EXCEL-4U and give global identification #9265706111.

Sandy Burnham, a Princess House Lifestyle consultant and MEND member, will donate 10 percent of profit earned on your order back to MEND. Call (313) 792-9699 or email her at sburnham@metroshores.net to request a catalog or place an order.

Heather Sanfacon is an educational consultant with Discovery Toys and will donate 15 percent of profits from sales to MEND friends and relatives back to MEND. For a catalogue or information, contact Heather at sanfacon75@netzero.com or 603-742-8123. Customers must mention MEND in order for donations to be made.

“Second: The questions are used to hide the real agenda. It is easier to say, "Why did this happen," than to say, "I am hurting." Most of the time when they question they are looking for a way to get into the subject and don’t know any other way. We can use this as an opening to say, "You know I think about Grandpa all the time and it hurts but feels good at the same time. I miss him, but I like to remember him, don’t you?" Hopefully that will open the door for one of those hit and run sessions kids are so good at.

In general we should answer the basic questions they ask and wait for them to respond. If they ask for more information or ask another question, then we should respond with honesty. The child will let you know when this session is over. Always try to leave the door open for further questions. It is always important for the child to know that these talks are welcomed.

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.

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M.E.N.D.
P.O. Box 1007
Coppell, TX 75019
(972) 459-2396
1-888-695-M.E.N.D.
Fax (972) 459-2396
E-Mail: Rebekah@mend.org
Sharlene@mend.org

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“... that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God” (2 Corinthians 1:4)