The holidays may seem difficult after the loss of a baby, but we have the honor of finding ways to include our babies in heaven in our family festivities, as shared in other articles in this issue. Below, Kristina shares with us how she created new traditions to include her babies in their family celebrations:

On November 21, 2019, our third little boy, Josiah David, was born into heaven. A week later, I struggled and barely made it through Thanksgiving. I knew I had to find a way to make that Christmas special for our two living sons.

I found a special stocking designed for pregnancy and infant loss, and I knew I had to order it. We hung that stocking on our fireplace with our stockings, and we let each of our living children buy a small toy to place in Josiah’s stocking. On Christmas day, we took the stocking to the cemetery, and our two boys placed the toys on Josiah’s headstone.

Since that Christmas, we have, unfortunately, given birth to more babies who were born straight into heaven, Bennett Matthew and Aubrianna "Aubri" Diane. We added a matching stocking for Bennett last Christmas (pictured above) and plan to add one for Aubrianna this Christmas.

This has become such a special tradition in our house. I love that all of my babies have stockings, and my two living sons love to bring gifts for their baby brothers and sister. Holidays can be such a difficult time and making sure all of my babies are remembered brings my heart peace to make it through the season.

Written by Kristina Witt, Mommy to Josiah, Bennett and Aubrianna
MEND-SW Missouri Assistant Director
January/February Topic
To Share or Not To Share
Deadline: November 30, 2021

March/April Topic
Giving Yourself Grace
Deadline: January 31, 2022

Stories, poems, thoughts, and/or feelings regarding these topics are welcome. Submissions must be received by the deadline to be considered for publication in the magazine. Unfortunately, there is not enough room to include all submissions. Choices will be left to the discretion of the editors. Please send any submissions to our Magazine Editor, Jennifer Harrison, at jennifer@mend.org. Any submission printed in our magazine will also be posted to our website indefinitely. Because our magazines are posted online, please understand your name will be attached to your submission when searched on the Internet.

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

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

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

IN THIS ISSUE

Articles

Feature Article ................................................................. 3
Dallas/Forth Worth Walk to Remember ..................... 7
What Grieving Parents Need at the Holidays............. 8
October M.E.N.D. Events .................................................. 9
Spanish Translation .......................................................... 11

Other Features

Birthday Tributes ............................................................. 4
Book Review ................................................................. 9
In Loving Memory .......................................................... 10
Chapter Updates ............................................................ 12
About M.E.N.D. ............................................................. 14
M.E.N.D. Chapters’ Information ..................................... 15

As a national organization, M.E.N.D. Leadership continues to monitor conditions in the United States relating to COVID-19. Since restrictions differ in each state, please follow your chapter on Facebook or connect with your Chapter Director for updates regarding support groups. For information on support groups, including the M.E.N.D. Nationwide Support Group that meets year-round, please see page 15.
As year after year passes since the loss of our baby(ies), people assume we no longer think of them during the holidays. How untrue that is. Our thoughts and sorrow may change a bit, but certainly we never forget. For example, I haven’t imagined Byron and me purchasing “Santa gifts” for our children in many years - thoughts and yearnings that, for a long time, were quite painful. Those emotions have now transitioned into wondering if Jonathan would be married and have children of his own that he’d be bringing home for the holidays, like our oldest son does. And Baby Mitchell would be in college, likely home for a month to the delight of his or her parents! So as a mom, on Christmas Eve my heart isn’t aching anymore for those long nights of putting toys together, but I sure think about how full my house would be and all the extra love and laughter that should be represented around our dinner table on Thanksgiving and around our tree on Christmas morning!

I have learned to focus on what and who I do have. I am beyond thankful for my family. My husband, our son, Byron, Jr., our daughter-in-law, Anna, and our sweet grandson, Elias Jonathan - truly they are my most cherished gifts from the Lord. I am blessed beyond measure for my extended families, on my side and the Mitchell side. We gather on holidays creating a lifetime of wonderful memories, yet remembering, sometimes openly and sometimes quietly, those beloved family members who are no longer with us. We’ve determined never to take a holiday for granted, for we never know when it is someone’s last time to be a part of family celebrations. We may pause for a quick moment to acknowledge our sadness, but then the day continues with love, laughter, and lots of food!

Juggling grief and gladness can be very challenging. Sad one minute, laughing the next, toss in some anger, right back to a slight smile... then we tend to wonder if it’s even appropriate to mix all these emotions, and we find ourselves feeling guilty. It’s exhausting!

So how do we survive the holidays with so many anticipated emotions? Just that - anticipate the emotions. Don’t be afraid to talk about your baby or anyone else who has died in your family. When I go to heaven, I sure don’t want to be the “forbidden topic of conversation”! I hope I’m greatly missed and remembered by my family. I hope I’m talked about. I hope they tell funny stories about me, and even cry a little! I think the same rule applies for our babies. Talk about them. Smile about them and cry for them. Create traditions for acknowledging them, such as sharing with one another some good things that have resulted from the loss, like maybe realizing you’re more compassionate to the hurts of others. Purchase gifts for underprivileged children who are the same age your child would be. Donate to a charity like M.E.N.D. in memory of your baby. Realize it’s okay to hang a stocking on your mantle that represents your baby, and so many other ideas that are included in this holiday issue.

Unfortunately, the holidays will never be exactly the same for us after such a heartbreaking loss, but that doesn’t mean they are forever ruined. We can turn them into still-special days of establishing new traditions and memories. It’s hard, I know, but let’s hone in on the true purpose of the holidays. Let’s be thankful for the blessings we do have, especially the gift of Jesus, who this season is supposed to be about anyway. Allow Him to give you the gifts of healing, comfort, and joy. He’ll give you peace that passes all understanding, and you’ll look back one day and realize with amazement that because of Him, you survived and made it through the holidays!
Birthday Tributes

Happy 2nd Birthday, PearBear!
Dedicated to Audrey, whom we affectionately call PearBear - our beautiful daughter with a gentle soul. Happy 2nd birthday, our love.

“The Grieving Love”
We grieve because you are our child.
We grieve because you are a part of us.
We grieve because you are no longer here, but dancing amongst the stars and the universe.

We grieve because we no longer carry you in our arms
but in our heart, mind and soul.
Oh, our child, behold!

This is our grieving love for you,
Be it told.

We shall grieve and grieve with all the fiber of our being, until our last breath when we are old.

With Love,
The Todd Family

Audrey Dinh Todd
November 20, 2019
Unknown cause
The Todd Family

Happy 5th Birthday, Arielle and Killian!
My sweet babies, this year you’re celebrating your 5th heavenly birthday. I can’t believe how time has flown by. We miss you both so much. Sissy loves telling baby brother about you both, but he’s too little to understand right now. We love you both with all our hearts. In our hearts forever, till we see you again.

Arielle Everly Dupuy
October 30, 2016
Killian Michael Dupuy
November 2, 2016
Preterm Labor
Parents: Ryan and Karla Dupuy
Siblings: Miabella and Bellamy

Happy 4th Birthday, Zachary!
We love you to heaven and back! We can’t believe we have been without you for four years. We wish you were with us, but at least we know you are safe with God. Lydia says one day she will run to you in heaven, and she has a secret to tell you. Scarlett says when she sees you she will say, “Hi, baby brother!” You will always be our baby. We love you!

Zachary James Law
October 1-17, 2017
Parents: Irwin and Carrie Law
Siblings: Scarlett and Lydia

Happy 7th Birthday, Baby Gamboa!
Happy 7th birthday, my angel. There is not a day goes by I don’t think about you. You have a piece of my heart with you. I know you are celebrating in heaven, and I will continue to celebrate you here on earth until we meet again. Hit the piñata hard and have the biggest piece of cake. I love you dearly. Forever my baby.

Love,
Mommy, Daddy, Olivia, Christian and Chiquitita

Baby Gamboa
Miscarried November 21, 2014
Parents: Denise Devora-Gamboa and Anthony F. Gamboa
Siblings: Olivia and Christian

Happy 1st Birthday, Daniel!
Happy 1st birthday, sweet baby boy! We love you and miss you so much. We are better people for having known and loved you. We are so thankful for the time we got to spend with you, and we are looking forward to seeing you again someday. We know you are celebrating in heaven with your sister and so many loved ones. Until we are together again, we will hold you in our hearts.

Love,
Mommy and Daddy

Daniel Len Schulz
December 29, 2020
Pre-eclampsia
Also remembering
Rori Mae Schulz
Miscarried October 6, 2020
Parents: Rebecca and Nathan Schulz
Happy 2nd Birthday, Amos!
Happy 2nd birthday, our sweet Amos. I look at little boys your age and wonder what mischief you would be getting into at this stage! I’m so grateful you are with Jesus until we are together again. I miss you every day, but the Lord continues to restore our joy. You are forever loved and “carried” in our hearts, precious one.

Amos Michael Heaton
November 18, 2019
Unknown cause
Parents: Richard and Stacy Heaton
Brothers: Noah, Zion and Joel

Happy 2nd Birthday, Barron!
Happy 2nd Birthday, Barron! I can’t believe two years have passed. It feels like this nightmare just happened yesterday, and I cannot escape it. I love you, your dad loves you, and your big brother loves you very much. I can’t wait to hold you in my arms again one day and kiss your sweet cheeks. I hope you have the happiest birthday with our Lord above. I will see you soon, son.

Barron Lehr
December 29, 2019
PROM
Parents: Morgan and Travis Lehr
Big brother: Bennett

Happy 2nd Birthday, Josiah!
Happy 2nd heavenly birthday, sweet boy! I’ll never forget the precious moments I was able to spend holding you in my hands and admiring you. It is hard to believe that was already two years ago. Despite how short your life was, you were truly a gift from God. I hope you enjoy your birthday in heaven with lots of balloons and cake with Josiah and Aubri, while we celebrate you here! You are forever loved and missed!

Josiah David Witt
November 21, 2019
Late Miscarriage due to blood clotting disorders
Also remembering
Bennett Matthew Witt
Stillborn September 28, 2020
Blood clotting disorders
Aubrianna Diane Witt
June 14, 2021
Late miscarriage due to blood clotting disorders
Parents: Jacob and Kristina Witt
Big brothers: Jayden and Kasen

Happy 9th Birthday, Brayden!
My dearest Brayden, happy 9th birthday in heaven, beautiful boy. I picture you often running and laughing with our family gone before us within the fields of heaven. I see you in every sunset here on earth, and ache in the immense absence you left in our lives. I can’t imagine what 4th grade would look like for you, but I’m certain you would be actively running about the farm with the dogs. What I wouldn’t give for just one hug!

Until we meet again my love,
xoxo Mom

Brayden Ryan Sade
Born sleeping December 28, 2012
Parents: Heather and Steven Sade

Happy 1st Birthday, Sloane!
Happy 1st birthday, our sweet and lovely Sloane Margaret! You are always on our thoughts and in our hearts, baby girl. You will forever be the light of our lives. We love you, Sloane!

Love,
Mommy and Daddy

Sloane Margaret Harris
November 17-18, 2020
Fetal Hydrops
Parents: Russell and Amy Harris

Happy 9th Birthday, Rylan!
Our hope is full of somedays. Someday we will see you, know you, hug you and kiss your sweet face. All we can do this side of heaven is love you. Happy birthday, Rylan.

Rylan Doucette
November 27, 2012
Ectopic pregnancy
Parents: Aaron and Kristian Doucette
Siblings: Kinley and Alexyn

Happy 22nd Birthday, Ashley!
Happy 22nd birthday.
We miss you every day. Til we meet again.

Ashley Renee Dedear
October 29 - November 1, 1999
Premature
Parents: Tim and Cindy Dedear
Siblings: Laura and Katherine
Happy 6th Birthday, Ashton!
Turning 6 today. You would be such a big boy, learning to read and going to school with your older sisters. We miss you so much! We can't wait to see you again. We think of you daily. We wonder what and who you would become. Mommy and Daddy and your sisters love you very much! Happy birthday, sweet boy!

Ashton Robert Oetting
Stillborn November 30, 2015
Unknown cause
Parents: Jason and Elizabeth Oetting
Sisters: Chloe, Gracie and Ashlyn

Happy 10th Birthday, Charlotte!
Ten years. How has it already been a decade since we held you in our arms? Hearing your siblings say your name is so bittersweet. They have joined us in honoring your memory and ask questions about you often. We miss and love you so much, sweet girl. Ten years down and however many more to go until we see you again.
P.S. Audrey says she wants to hug you and loves you.

Love,
Mommy, Daddy, Evan, Audrey and Christopher

Charlotte Grace Harrison
Complications at birth
Parents: Amanda and Luke Harrison
Siblings: Evan, Audrey and Christopher

Happy 4th Birthday, Olivia!
Our sweet, feisty girl, 4 feels so old! You should be in preschool and have a best friend. You should have a favorite outfit and favorite food. You should be running around with your brothers and loving on your new baby sister. You should be around to yell excitedly when Dad gets home and help Mom make treats. Most of all, you should be here. We so wish you were! Happy birthday, Olivia! We love you and miss you more every day.

Olivia Lorraine Horrocks
November 14 — December 13, 2017
Extreme Prematurity and Gram Negative Sepsis
Parents: Shawn and Megan Horrocks
Siblings: Sam, Ben and Claire

Happy Sweet 16th Birthday, Hopie!
I can hardly believe that it’s been 16 years since I held you in my arms. It feels like both yesterday and a lifetime ago. We talk of you often and celebrate the precious time we had with you on earth. Until we can hold you in our arms in heaven, we will hold you in our hearts.

Love,
Mom

"I will carry you
While your heart beats here
Long beyond the empty cradle
Through the coming years
I will carry you
All my life
And I will praise the One Who's chosen me
To carry you"
-Selah

Hope Kirkpatrick
November 5-8, 2005
Amniotic band syndrome
Parents: Kirk and Aly Kirkpatrick
Siblings: Ian and Jane

Happy 1st Birthday, Cruz!
Happy 1st birthday, sweet baby Cruz. Mommy and Daddy miss you every single day. We often wonder who you’d be and what kind of attitude you would be giving your fur-sisters! There is no doubt your pups miss you too. You are our greatest gift, our sweetest joy. Enjoy your heavenly birthday among the angels as we celebrate you here on earth. Sending you hugs and all our love, sweet baby. We love you so much it hurts.

Mommy and Daddy

Cruz Kenneth Ponce
Stillborn November 10, 2020, at 37 weeks
Parents: Ryan and Kristie Ponce
Dallas/Fort Worth
Walk to Remember

The 25th Annual Walk to Remember (WTR) was held on Saturday, October 2 at the M.E.N.D. Garden of Hope, on the grounds of Calvary Church in Irving, TX. It was so wonderful to be able to host an in-person ceremony again! More than 700 people were in attendance, and even though the clouds opened and pouring rain sent everyone scrambling into the church, we were able to finish the ceremony inside, then go back out for what was perhaps our most beautiful balloon release ever. We were blessed by Christian worship leader and author, Becky Nordquist, as our guest speaker and singer. She is the author of the book, Before We Said Hello, and she has recorded the heartfelt song with the same name.

The Walk to Remember is our biggest event of the year, and we’re already looking forward to our 26th WTR, scheduled for October 1, 2022. We hope to see many of you there!

Thank you to our sponsors of the 2021 Dallas/Forth Worth Walk to Remember.

Mercy Sponsors

LuAnn and James Junkin
Remembering Paislee Ann Frette

Grace Sponsors

Rebekah and Byron Mitchell
Remembering Jonathan Daniel and Baby Mitchell

Hope Sponsors

Rebecca and Rick Bartmas
Remembering Baby Bartmas #1, Baby Bartmas #2, Mihaela Constance Bartmas

Love Sponsors

Tina Kurishingal
Remembering Kayya Marie Kurishingal

Children’s Bereavement Center of South Texas
Remembering All Babies

The Vo Family
Remembering Morgan Vo

Brea and Tommy Darnell
Helen and Danny Lynch
Remembering Sophie Jane Darnell

Helen and Danny Lynch
Remembering Sophie Jane Darnell

Ana Maria and Ross Broussard
Remembering Andre Gabriel Broussard

Blessing Sponsors

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Lisa and Jeremy Daily
Martha Valades
Mariam and Sameer Jaffri
Sara Delira
Richardson Piano Lessons, Paula Schear
Lesa and Bryan Lynch
Paula Schear’s Senegence Pretty Party

Terri and Jonathan Nymeyer
Remembering Rebekah Tikvah and Amesiah Nymeyer

Alva and Mario Montes
Remembering Mario Saul, Emilia Lucia and Baby Bear Montes

DaVeida Pierson
Remembering Davin Shad Andre Pierson

I Am The Promise Ministries and Tiffany & Johnny Clark
Remembering Jaylen (Nugget) and Baby Clark

Attuned Doula Services
Remembering Helen Jeannette Fisher-Hattey

Jenae and Sam Bowmer
Remembering Levi Samuel Bowmer
What Grieving Parents Need at the Holidays

Remember Our Children and Make Them a Part of this Difficult Time of Year

Written by Mandy Hitchcock
Posted on Seleni.com

Christmas has always been one of my favorite holidays. The songs, the twinkle lights, the spirit of kindness that seemed to flow so easily – I loved it all. And when my first child, my daughter Hudson, was born just a few weeks before Christmas, it only added more enchantment to an already magical time. But we enjoyed the magic of that holiday with her only twice.

In the spring of 2010, when she was just 17 months old, Hudson died of a sudden, severe infection. Our first Christmas without her was one of the darkest times of my life. For the first time in my life, I did not spend it with my family. I could not bear the thought of sitting through our family’s ritual of opening gifts one at a time, in order from oldest to youngest, only to face a glaring absence each time it would have been Hudson’s turn as the youngest of all her cousins. My husband and I fled to Paris on Christmas Eve, hoping to outrun our terrible grief, even if only for a few days.

It didn’t work. Grief followed us to Paris, just as it follows us today, five and a half years later. We could fly to the moon, and still we’d never outrun our grief. For parents who have lost a child, the holidays are one of the hardest times of every year. Beginning with Halloween and continuing through New Year’s, we face an onslaught of family togetherness and joy, much of it centered around children. From the merchandising in stores and the advertising in magazines and online to the photos on friends’ Facebook pages and holiday cards, we constantly see images of that most precious thing we will never have again: a family that is complete and whole.

In the beginning, I found that dreading the special days during the year – the holidays, Hudson’s birthday, the anniversary of her death – was much worse than the actual days. Her looming absence filled every day, so the special days were no different than any other day. They might have even been a little easier because friends and family would often remember her with us on those days.

But now, as our lives and family have continued to grow around the hole that Hudson’s death left, I find that these special days are often far worse than I expect them to be.

Each year, when I design our holiday cards, I stare at the photos from the past year, longing to find her face in them. And then I resign myself to placing the same photo of her on the back of the card that I did the year before – the one of her at a year old, giggling and pointing at the camera and wearing a red Christmas dress with black Scotties embroidered on it.

When we decorate the tree together, we must settle for hanging small, framed photos of Hudson on several branches, instead of enjoying a living, breathing little girl fighting with her younger siblings over who will get to hang which ornaments where.

We take those younger siblings to sit on Santa’s lap, and I try hard to enjoy the moment, holding in my grief until I am alone and can allow myself to imagine a gangly young girl who just turned 7, trying hard to get her little sister to smile for the camera. And of course, when opening gifts on Christmas morning, we face that vast gulf each time we reach the spot where she should take her turn unwrapping a gift, after me and before her younger brother.

But what I have also come to understand is that if I cannot have her back – and even now, in some moments, it is hard to believe that I can’t – I’m grateful for these holiday moments when my rawest grief is exposed again. As the years pass, my grief is my most powerful link to her because it is also a reflection of my bottomless love. I welcome the pain because it is an echo of the joy I experienced as her mother for seventeen months and twelve days.

What I want others to understand is that no matter how many years pass, that beautiful face will always be missing from the family photo on our Christmas card. No matter how many children we have, I will never stop looking for her when it’s time to decorate the tree or open gifts. And as grateful as I am that my love of Christmas is still inside me, there are moments (sometimes whole days) during the holidays when I am just going through the motions for the sake of my younger kids.

I want my friends and family to remember Hudson. It’s the wish of all parents who have lost children. To bring them into the present the only way we can – in our memory and in our actions. So I ask friends that no matter how many Christmases pass, please acknowledge our loss each year. Say her name on Christmas Day. Write on your holiday card that you are still so sorry that she’s gone. Let me know that even though it’s been so long, and even though it’s the most wonderful time of the year, you understand that she is still missing and that we are still hurting.

This book was written from the perspective of 5-year-old Abel. It takes you through the thought process of a child, from the joy of hearing he’s getting a new baby brother, to the sadness of finding out he’s in heaven, and finally imagining heaven.

I do appreciate that it specifically stated "baby died" and not just "baby went to heaven," because often people shy away from the word "died" as it is so final.

The book is easy to read and understand for kids of all ages and would be good for any type of pregnancy and infant loss as it is not specific to gestation, just about loss in general. The artwork in this book is vivid and eye catching. A very heartwarming book about such a heavy and heartbreaking subject.

Reviewed by Ashley Sudheimer, M.E.N.D.-SW Missouri Assistant Director
In Loving Memory

Baby Bartmas 1
Miscarried February 2016
Baby Bartmas 2
Miscarried September 2016
Mikaela Constance Bartmas
Stillborn June 1, 2018
Given by parents Rick and Becca Bartmas and sisters Evelin and Valerie
Anonymous
Levi Samuel Bowmer
April 19, 2013
Trisomy 13 and Tetralogy of Fallot with absent pulmonary valve
Given by parents Jenae and Sam Bowmer and sisters Evelin and Valerie
Harper Von Brady
Miscarried November 22, 2013
Declan Abraham Brady
Stillborn August 26, 2014
Given by parents Stephanie and Kevin Brady
Andre Gabriel Broussard
Stillborn May 29, 2016
Trisomy 18
Given by parents Ana Maria and Ross Broussard
Cora Anne Casarez
January 20, 2017
Cord accident
Poppy Casarez
August 4, 2019
Early miscarriage
Baby C
Early miscarriage September 2020
Given by parents Andrew and Leslie Casarez and sister Agnes
Jaylen Clark
December 11, 2013
Baby Clark
Miscarried November 7, 2015
Mommy: Tiffany Clark
Given by I am the Promise Ministries
Abigail Grace Crump
July 1, 2003
Trisomy 18
Given by parents Gerald and Jaimie Crump and little sisters Cami and Karli
Brooke Sophia Daily
Stillborn March 11, 2010
Vasa Previa
Gifts given by parents Jeremy and Lisa Daily and sisters Sarah and Savannah
Sophie Jane Darnell
Stillborn May 28, 2013
Unknown cause
Given by parents Brea and Tommy Darnell and siblings Luke and Piper
Grandparents Helen and Danny Lynch
Aunt and Uncle Lesa and Bryan Lynch
Riley and Parker Davis
November 14, 2006
Premature
Given by parents Rob and Cheryl Davis and siblings Annalise and Owen
Roman Lorenzo Delira
September 4-5, 2017
Given by momy Sara Delira
Trinity Ann Faram
Stillborn August 1, 2014
Placental abruption
Given by parents Elizabeth and Brad Faram
Augustus James Feth
Parents: Josiah and Taylor Feth
Given by Sarah Yokel
Helen Jeannette Fisher-Hattey
Miscarried February 12, 2015
Turner Syndrome
Parents: Eric Hattey and Jessica Fisher-Hattey
Little Sister: Judy Lucille
Given by Attuned Doula Services
Beckett David Flint
Stillborn March 22, 2020
Darin Davis
Stillborn July 28, 2019
Given by mommy Sabrina Flint
Baby Franklin
Miscarried October 18, 2018
Parents: Andrew and Alexandra Franklin
Brothers: August and Arik
Given by
Grandparents Sueda and Dennis Brewer, Jr.
Paislee Ann Frette
April 4-5, 2012
Wolf-Hirschhorn Syndrome
Parents: Brent and Courtney Frette
Little sister: Colbie
Given by
Grandparents James and LuAnn Junkin
Adeline Gyurin Han
July 21, 2021
Parents: Gabriella Byun and Justin Han
Gifts given by
Ashley Robb
Abigail Jones
Jill Svoboda
Talia Fernandez
Kenzie Divel
Christy Clark
Gen Mobley
Simi Illedare
Linda Hoang
Rachel Pierson
Baby Amanda Harvey
Miscarried May 19, 2005
Baby B Harvey
Miscarried August 19, 2005
Baby C Harvey
Miscarried December 19, 2007
Baby D Harvey
Miscarried September 19, 2008
Given by mommy Catherine Harvey
Elliana Grace Kundomal
Miscarried July 2010
Given by mommy Kali Kundomal
Barron Lehr
December 29, 2019
Premature rupture of membranes
Given by parents Morgan and Travis Lehr and brother Bennett
Chase Austin Miller
April 21, 2011
Incompetent cervix
Baby “Blueberry” Miller
Miscarried May 4, 2015
Given by parents Greg and Stefanie Miller and sisters Cora, Hazel and Violet
Jonathan Daniel Mitchell
Stillborn June 24, 1995
Cord accident
Baby Mitchell
Miscarried December 2001
Gifts given by
Parents Byron and Rebekah Mitchell
Aunt and uncle Sueda and Dennis Brewer, Jr.
Grandmother Marnie Mitchell
Gideon Zeller Mitchell
Stillborn May 17, 2011
Velamentous cord insertion
Avery Mitchell
Miscarried May 2008
Joy Mitchell
December 2014
Vanishing twin syndrome
Given by parents Stormy and Todd Mitchell and little brothers Silas and Justus
Mario Saul Montes
Stillborn August 30, 2016
Placental abruption
Emilia Lucia Montes
May 26 - July 1, 2018
Congenital heart defect
Baby Bear Montes
Miscarried May 13, 2019
Given by parents Alva and Mario Montes
Emelyn Rose Munoz
2016
Baby Joel Munoz
2018
Given by parents Allison and Joel Munoz
Jonah Nymeyer
July 2012
Amesiah Nymeyer
October 2010
Rebekah Tikvah Nymeyer
July 16, 2015
Given by parents Terri and Jonathan Nymeyer and siblings Isaac, Abby, Esther and Tirzah
Carlos Alberto Olliva, Jr
Miscarried August 14, 2018
Given by mommy Amanda Dreher
A medida que pasa un año tras otro desde la pérdida de nuestro (s) bebé (s), la gente asume que ya no pensamos en ellos durante los días festivos. Qué falso es eso. Nuestros pensamientos y dolor pueden cambiar un poco, pero ciertamente nunca los olvidamos. Por ejemplo, no me había imaginado a Byron y yo comprando “regalos de Santal” para nuestros hijos en muchos años, pensamientos y anhelos que, durante mucho tiempo, fueron bastante dolorosos. Esas emociones ahora se han convertido en pensamientos de nuestros bebés. Hable de ellos. Sonríe por ellos y llora por ellos. Cree tradiciones para reconocerlos, como compartir alguna cosa buena que resultó de la pérdida, como quizás darse cuenta de que es más compasivo con las heridas de los demás. Compre regalos para niños desfavorecidos que tengan la misma edad que tendría su bebé. Tenga en cuenta que está bien colgar una media en su manto que represente a su bebé en memoria de su bebé. Tenga en cuenta que está bien colgar una media en su manto que represente a su bebé y tantas otras ideas que se incluyen en esta edición navideña.

Desafortunadamente, los días festivos nunca serán exactamente los mismos para nosotros después de una pérdida tan desgarradora, pero eso no significa que estén arruinadas para siempre. Podemos convertirlos en días aún especiales para establecer nuevas tradiciones y recuerdos. Es difícil, lo sé, pero vamos a centrarnos en el verdadero propósito de los días festivos. Seamos agradecidos por las bendiciones que tenemos, especialmente el regalo de Jesús, de quien se supone que se tratará esta temporada de todos modos. Permitele a Dios que le dé los dones de sanidad, consuelo y gozo. Él te dará una paz que sobrepasa todo entendimiento, y un día mirarás atrás y te darás cuenta con asombro de que gracias a Él, ¡sobreviviste y pasaste los días festivos!
M.E.N.D. CHAPTER UPDATES

MidMichigan

M.E.N.D. – MidMichigan has been meeting in person at Ashman Plaza, home of Live Oak Coffee House in Midland. We are in the planning stages of our annual Christmas Memorial Ornament party during our December meeting. If you’d like to create an ornament in honor of your baby, please RSVP at bit.ly/MENDornaments so we can plan accordingly.

Karen

NW Washington

Thank you to all that joined us on October 15, for our 1st Annual Wave of Light to honor all our babies on Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day. We look forward to commemorating this way each year with you.

We will hold our annual Christmas Candlelight Ceremony on December 11, at Crossroads Neighborhood Church (7555 Old Military Rd Bremerton, 98311) at 6:30 PM.

We hope you will join us for a special time of remembrance for our babies in heaven.

We continue to meet in person for our monthly support group on the 2nd Monday of each month, at The Oak Table Cafe in Silverdale. We pray this holiday season is a gentle one. We know that holidays are hard when you are grieving, so we pray for you as you navigate all the emotions this season brings. We remember your babies with you.

Stacy

San Antonio, Texas

M.E.N.D. – San Antonio is closing out the year with a humble candlelight ceremony and ornament making craft night. We are excited to join forces with other support networks to make an infant loss coalition and hopefully ensure families find the help they need. We are so pleased to offer in person support again and look forward to growth in the new year.

Katie

Denver, Colorado

M.E.N.D. – Denver wishes you and your family a peaceful holiday season. Our support groups gather at a new location in Parker, so please join us the 2nd Tuesday of each month for support.

Kimberly

East Valley, Arizona

M.E.N.D. – East Valley Arizona continues to meet in person on the 2nd Thursday of the month. We wish each of our families a gentle holiday season!

Danielle

Columbus, Ohio

"Jesus said...In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world!" John 16:33 NIV

A huge "THANK YOU" to the Westerville MOPS for inviting me back to speak and share about M.E.N.D. and, for partnering with our chapter in outreach to the community in making 30 care bags to take to local hospitals for mothers experiencing loss of a baby!

Our monthly support group is continuing to grow, as we meet virtually to share our journeys. We’re praying for your comfort and strength.

Please join our private Facebook page where you can share your story and be encouraged... You’re NOT alone!

If you need M.E.N.D.-Columbus services, contact me at latrina@mend.org.

LaTrina
Men of M.E.N.D.

The holiday season is upon us as families are getting together. If you can’t come to a monthly Zoom support group, feel free to message me. Men of M.E.N.D. holds a monthly Zoom support group every 3rd Monday of the month at 8:00 PM CST.

Matt

Southwest Missouri

M.E.N.D.—Southwest Missouri would like to thank everyone who joined us for our Day of Remembrance Ceremony: Melody from Heaven. It was such a beautiful day and a sweet time of remembering our babies in heaven. A special thanks to my assistants, Brianne Mansfield, Heather Sade, Heidi Smith, Ashley Sudheimer, and Kristina Witt. I would also like to thank Jennifer Harrison, the Magazine Editor, for helping as well.

Keep an eye on our Facebook group as we will be providing FREE family photos for our M.E.N.D. families. Many of us don’t have photos as a family with our babies, so we wanted to give you an opportunity to have a family photo with an item that represents your baby(ies). Sign up information will be posted on Facebook.

Please also save the date for our Christmas Candlelight Ceremony on December 7, at 7:00 PM at Second Baptist Church.

Rachel

Greater Houston Area

M.E.N.D.—Greater Houston Area is looking forward to our Christmas Candlelight Ceremony in December. Keep an eye out in our Facebook group for details. The Christmas Candlelight Ceremony is a beautiful and perfect way to include your babies in heaven in your Christmas season festivities.

A part of our ministry, M.E.N.D.—Greater Houston Area is providing bears for our local hospitals for when a mom loses a baby. If you or someone you know works in L&D or the NICU and need bears, contact stormym@mend.org. As always, our M.E.N.D. moms are in our prayers this holiday season.

Stormy

Tulsa, Oklahoma

M.E.N.D.—

Tulsa held a time of candle lighting for our October support group, where we remembered the brief lives of more than 30 babies. Families were able to bring mementos and share our stories with each other.

We continue to welcome new families at our new meeting location and are grateful for the opportunity to be able to show families they are not alone in their grief or memories. As we look to the end of the calendar year we are finalizing our plans for the Christmas Candlelight service in December. Invitations will be mailed as well as posted on our social media pages.

Cat

Chicagoland

M.E.N.D.—Chicagoland had a beautiful October support group that included a time of remembering our babies with a small balloon release. Each family went home with a special candle to burn on October 15, Infant Loss Remembrance Day. We are looking forward to decorating our M.E.N.D. Chicagoland tree at the Brookfield Zoo lights display this November. Each Chicagoland baby will be represented on our tree with an angel ornament.

Sara

Nationwide Online Support

The Nationwide Online Support Group gathers on Zoom the 3rd Thursday of each month. Please complete the Online Group Info Sheet found on the M.E.N.D. website to receive the meeting link if you are new. We also welcome you to connect through our Facebook group to support each other between support groups.
About M.E.N.D.

M.E.N.D. is a Christian nonprofit corporation whose purpose is to reach out to those who have lost a child to miscarriage, stillbirth or infant death and offer a way to share experiences and information through monthly support groups, this magazine, and our website at www.mend.org. For inquiries, subscription requests, deletions, and submissions to the magazine, contact us at:

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P.O. Box 631566
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Phone and Fax: (972) 506-9000
(Please call before faxing)
E-Mail: rebekah@mend.org
jennifer@mend.org
www.mend.org

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

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

M.E.N.D. Leadership

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Co-Editors: Byron and Rebekah Mitchell

Magazine Volunteers
Rachel Dell, Sara Elliott
and Becky Johnston

New Support Group Location!

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

Mommies AND Daddies are welcome at all M.E.N.D. support groups. Unless otherwise noted, all support groups are held at:
Irving Archives Museum, 801 W Irving Blvd, Irving, TX 75060.
For more information, call (972) 506-9000.

M.E.N.D. chapter support groups meet the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7:30 PM
Daddies group meets the 2nd Thursday of March, June, Sept. and Dec., at 7:30 PM
Moms and dads meet together for introductions before dividing into two groups.

Rowlett Satellite Chapter
A satellite chapter in Rowlett holds support groups to serve families in the eastern area of the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex. Support groups are held the 1st Wednesday at 7:00 PM at the Veterans Resource & Outreach Center, 4210 Industrial St, Rowlett, TX 75088.
Visit our Facebook group or email terri@mend.org.

Subsequent pregnancy group meets the 4th Tuesday from 7:30 - 9:00 PM via Zoom. Please visit www.mend.org to join. Led by Marisa Perry: marisa@mend.org
For families who are considering becoming pregnant or are currently pregnant after a loss.
M.E.N.D. Chapter Information

Due to COVID gathering guidelines, please follow your chapter on Facebook or connect with your local Director for updates if your chapter will meet in person or virtually.

M.E.N.D. – NW Washington
Meets the 2nd Monday at 6:30 PM
The Oak Table Café’
3290 NW Mt. Vintage Way
Silverdale, Washington 98383
Director: Stacy McGhee
stacym@mend.org, (360) 662-6161

M.E.N.D. – SW Missouri
Meets the 1st Thursday at 7:00 PM
Project H.O.P.E.
1419 S. Enterprise Ave
Springfield, Missouri 65804
Director: Rachel Dell
rachel@mend.org, (417) 770-0600

M.E.N.D. – Tulsa, Oklahoma
Meets the 3rd Tuesday at 7:00 PM
(117 S 7th St.
Jenks, Oklahoma 74037
Director: Cat Markham
cat@mend.org, (918) 694-4325 (HEAL)

M.E.N.D. – Columbus, Ohio
Meets on the 2nd Monday, at 6:30 PM
Paul Mitchell-The School of Columbus
3000 Morse Road
(Upstairs Conference Room)
Columbus, Ohio 43231
Director: LaTrina Bray
latrina@mend.org, (614) 530-5128

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

M.E.N.D. – Mid Michigan
Meets the 1st Tuesday, at 7:00 PM
Ashman Plaza
713 Ashman Street
Midland, Michigan 48640
Director: Karen Kilbourn
karen@mend.org, (989) 577-5755

M.E.N.D. – Denver
Meets the 2nd Tuesday at 7:00 PM
Crossroads Community Church
9900 S. Twenty Mile Rd.
Parker, Colorado 80134
Director: Kimberly Adams
kimberly@mend.org, (720) 593-0166

M.E.N.D. – San Antonio, Texas
Meets the 4th Monday, at 7:00 PM
8620 N New Braunfels Ave
San Antonio, Texas 78217
Director: Katie McClelland
katie@mend.org

M.E.N.D. – East Valley, Arizona
Meets the 2nd Thursday, at 6:30 PM
Queen Creek Library
Edward Abbey room
21802 S Ellsworth Rd
Queen Creek, Arizona 85142
Director: Danielle Radler
danielle@mend.org, (602) 699-6228

M.E.N.D. – Greater Houston Area
Greater Houston Area Main Chapter:
Meets the 3rd Thursday at 7:30 PM
Lone Star College,
3200 College Park Dr, Room A228,
The Woodlands, Texas 77384
Greater Houston Area Director:
Stormy Mitchell
stormym@mend.org, (405) 529-6363

Satellites in Greater Houston Chapter:
Katy, Texas:
Meets the 2nd Thursday at 7:00 PM
Katy Community Fellowship
24102 Kingsland Blvd
Katy, Texas 77494
Katy Director:
Kessi Wilhite, kessi@mend.org

Kingwood Area, Texas:
Meets the 2nd Thursday at 6:30 PM
6450 Kings Parkway
Kingwood, Texas 77346
At Rosemont Assisted Living,
2nd Floor Community Room
Kingwood Director:
Nikisha Perry, nikisha@mend.org

M.E.N.D. – Greater Houston Area
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Meets the 3rd Thursday at 7:30 PM
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stormym@mend.org, (405) 529-6363

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Kessi Wilhite, kessi@mend.org

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6450 Kings Parkway
Kingwood, Texas 77346
At Rosemont Assisted Living,
2nd Floor Community Room
Kingwood Director:
Nikisha Perry, nikisha@mend.org

Online Support

M.E.N.D. – Online Support Group
Held the 3rd Monday at 8:00 PM (CST)
Please visit https://www.mend.org/virtual-support-group-links

Men of M.E.N.D.
Held the 3rd Monday at 8:00 PM (CST)
to join, contact,
Director: Matt McGee
Matt@mend.org
Facebook Group:
www.facebook.com/groups/MENofMEND

The Garden of Hope is a place of peace and solace where families can come for a quiet time of reflection, prayer, or even to celebrate the life of their loved one.

The Garden of Hope was established by M.E.N.D. in 2016, and is located on property of Calvary Church in Irving, Texas.

You can remember your loved one by purchasing a brick in the Garden of Hope. Brick purchases can be made at https://www.mend.org/garden-of-hope.
Bricks purchased by August 15, 2022, will be installed prior to the Walk to Remember in October 2022.
Did you know?

You can give to M.E.N.D. every time you shop on Amazon?
Go to smile.amazon.com and set Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death as your charity! It's so simple!

The AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price from your eligible smile.amazon.com purchases.

We appreciate your support!