

Hope and Healing

Newsletter of the Perinatal Bereavement Group of Good Samaritan Hospital

Volume 8, Issue 1

Spring 2002

We Are On The Web!!!

www.goodsamhosp.org

Click on Health and Wellness Programs and then Bereavement.

You can easily download copies of Hope and Healing.

Donate

to the Perinatal Bereavement Group through The United Way
See announcements for details

Hope and Healing Newsletter

Published by:
The Perinatal Bereavement Group of Good Samaritan Hospital
255 Lafayette Avenue
Suffern, NY 10901
(914) 368-5297

Bereavement Coordinator
Pam Magi, R.N.

Editorial Staff
Joyce Altman
Gil Giannini
Carol Maxwell-Panny
Irene Walsh

Design & Layout
Gil Giannini

Photography
Gil Giannini

The editors reserve the right to edit and select from materials submitted. Views and opinions in this publication are not necessarily those of Good Samaritan Hospital or The Perinatal Bereavement Group of Good Samaritan Hospital, but those of the individual author.

Benjamin

by Karen Seymour

To my friends and co-workers,
I have tried to write to you all many times. I don't know what to say. My life has changed in so many ways. I don't know how to live the rest of it without Benjamin. He was my hope. I waited for him for so long, and he was taken from me before I had the chance to know him. My arms ache

for him. I can still feel him against my chest, holding me with his tiny hands. I can feel the warmth of him against me, and the ache in my heart from the loss of him is almost too great to bear. I know deep inside that if I did not have Zachary, I would not be able to live. The pain of losing my son is so great, I cannot feel anything else.

There is an emptiness in my soul that will never end. I

don't know if I can ever be happy again. I try for Zach's sake, but it is so hard and so painful that it exhausts me. I look at Zachary and I think that he will never know his brother, he will never remember

seeing him, touching him or kissing him. They will never play together, fight with each other or have that closeness that brothers have. I miss that for him. I

miss that for Benjamin. I miss nursing him, seeing him laugh so hard that milk runs down his chin, holding him close to my heart and watching Phil hold him and love him. I cannot watch Zach and Phil play together knowing that Benjamin is missing, that he will never be a real part of his brother's life. He will be a shadow to Zach, and there is nothing I can ever do to change that. I look at

(Continued on page 17)

Our Vacation

by Elena Sammut

It still seems so surreal. It's been one year and two days since our choice, and the past year has been like a blur.

But this is not about that; this is about our vacation. Instead of the month of May being the month when my seven-month-old son starts to see his first flowers or sit on the grass for the first time, the month of May is the month of Doom. So instead of being around people who "just don't get it," we decided to take a vacation where we would have the least chance of seeing a seven-month-old. We went to Las Vegas, a place with a lot of distractions, so just maybe we could forget all of the problems and stresses of the past year.

About two weeks before our trip we were feeling a little sad about leaving our son, Love, home. You see, after we made our choice we had Love cremated and placed in a beautiful urn, which sits on

(Continued on page 22)



In This Issue:

Letters From the Heart	5
Pam's Page	6
Announcements	20
Dedication	22

Dear Family

by Joe and Colleen Doyle

This past year has been a very difficult and trying one. On March 28 when we lost our two sons, Andrew Peter and John Michael, our world was turned upside down. These past eight months have proved to be the greatest struggle we have ever faced, and the emotional swings that we have gone through would be difficult to put into words.

The overwhelming joy of discovering that after six years of trying we were going to have a baby was a dream come true. Our joy was multiplied by two when we discovered that God had blessed us with twins. How could we ever suspect what the future held for us.

Every day we have imagined what it would be like to have Andrew and John here with us. But the reality is that they are not and we are in a place that we never could have expected. If not for the Perinatal Bereavement Support Group at Good Samaritan Hospital we can't even think about the condition we would be

in. This organization was started a number of years ago and has helped over 1,000 couples who have suffered the loss of their children.

Pam Magi is the facilitator, and with her help parents who have lost children have been able to somehow get through the day and learn to deal with the overwhelming feelings of despair. This organization relies heavily on donations from parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins to maintain its existence. About three years ago, due to financial constraints, they came perilously close to being shut down.

We hope you realize that this Christmas will be a very difficult time for us. This was to be our first Christmas with our babies. With this in mind, it is our request that you take whatever money you were going to spend on gifts for us and send a donation instead to the perinatal support group in the names of Andrew Peter Doyle and John Michael Doyle.

We are not asking you to spend extra money, as we all know times are tough, but in place of buying us gifts this gesture would be the greatest gift we could receive.

It would recognize our sons at a time of year when goodness abounds and it would do much to help an organization that has literally helped save lives.

God Bless You,
Joe and Colleen

"This organization was started a number of years ago and has helped over 1,000 couples who have suffered the loss of their children."

(Editor's Note: This is a copy of a letter written by Joe and Colleen, which they sent to all of their family members, with a suggestion of what would be helpful to them around the holidays. We reprint it with their permission. It is not meant as a solicitation of funds.)

Gone From My Sight

by Unknown Author

I am standing upon the seashore. A ship at my side spreads her white sails to the morning breeze and starts for the blue ocean. She is an object of beauty and strength. I stand and watch her until at length she hangs like a speck of white cloud just where the sea and sky come to mingle with each other.

Then someone at my side says:

"There, she is gone."
"Gone where?"

Gone from my sight. That is all. She is just as large in mast and hull and spar as she was when she left my side, and she is able to bear her load of living freight to her destined port. Her diminished size is in me, not in her. And just at the same moment when someone at my side says, "There, she is gone!" there are other eyes watching

her coming, and other voices ready to take up the glad shout: "Here she comes!"

And that is dying.

(Submitted by Kerry Laurito in memory of Biagio and Sean Laurito.)

My Angels Are Looking Out for Me

by Val Bitzer

March 24, 2001, was a happy but scary day for my husband and I. I took a pregnancy test and found out we were pregnant. I was happy about the result, but was scared fearing another bad outcome. After loosing our son Daniel in December 1999 and having to terminate another

very much wanted pregnancy in November 2000, we couldn't help but wonder what would go wrong this time around.

We went to the doctor the beginning of April. Everything seemed ok. I was put on progesterone and baby aspirin. I

remember going for the ultrasound fearing the worst, but everything looked good. A few weeks later, I started spotting. I went to the doctor and he put me on bed rest for two weeks. Once again we feared the worst.

After the two weeks had passed, we went back to the doctor and everything seemed fine. I was able to start enjoying my summer like most pregnant women.

On July 26 we went for our regular appointment not anticipating any problems. I mentioned to my doctor about some symptoms I was experiencing. He said that it was normal and to come back the week of August 12. Before we had a chance to leave his office, he decided to do an ultrasound to measure my fluid. The amount of fluid looked really good. Before the technician finished, she decided to measure my cervical length. Once she finished she said, "Let me show this to the doctor." Those were the exact words we didn't want to hear. She left the room and tears filled my eyes. Upon her return, she said, "You're going to meet with the doctor again." She left the room again and I lost it! We went back into his office only to find out that my cervix was very short. My doctor informed us that he was admitting me to the hospital right away and was going to be put-

ting in a circlaque later that afternoon. At 22 weeks pregnant, all I could do was put faith in my doctor and pray that everything would be alright.

Now, at almost 25 weeks, I'm still in the hospital on bed rest and will be here for at least seven more weeks if not longer. Yes, it is hard being in bed 24/7 but "a mom's gotta do what a mom's gotta do."

I truly believe that Daniel was the angel on my doctor's shoulder inspiring him to have the ultrasound technician look at my fluid level. I also believe that the pregnancy I had to terminate at 13 weeks was the angel on the technician's shoulder inspiring her to look at my cervical length. Thanks to my two angels and my doctor, we have managed, so far, to save our much wanted little girl, which otherwise would have resulted in another loss.

(In loving memory and with a lot of thanks and hugs and kisses to our sons, Daniel James Bitzer and Baby B. All our love, Mom and Dad.)

"Thanks to my two angels and my doctor, we have managed so far to save our much wanted little girl."

Scrapbooking Get-Together

In October a group met at Good Sam for a Creative Memories Scrapbook Fundraiser. Kerry Laurito, a representative for Creative Memories, explained the fundamentals of scrapbooking--cropping, layout, mounting and journaling.

We had a wonderful time sharing both our happy and bitter-sweet stories while working on

our first scrapbook pages, with materials supplied by Creative Memories. Each woman arrived with pictures and \$10 and left with both a completed scrapbook page and a newfound appreciation for what we can create with our photographs. After the class, albums and scrapbook supplies were available for purchase, with all proceeds going to benefit the Bereavement Program.

This was an excellent opportunity to get together and do something for ourselves and the Bereavement Program at the same time. If you are interested in attending a future scrap booking get-together, please contact Pam, or Kerry at (201) 372-0862 or krlcreativemem@aol.com.

Dear Doctor

In March, our daughter Moira was born still at 36 weeks. The experience has forever been etched in our hearts and minds.

We truly believe that we chose to try again so soon after losing Moira because of the "fortunate" experience we had with our doctor, nurses and the incredible Perinatal Bereavement Group at Good Samaritan Hospital. We were truly blessed with their special care and concern. From the moment I found out at an office appointment that our daughter died, I knew that physically and emotionally we would be taken care of.

As the months passed and we worked through our grief, we decided to become pregnant again. We considered ourselves "lucky" for the experience we had with our daughter Moira. We could not ask for more from our doctors and nurses. There are a lot of horror stories out there about perinatal loss and we thought ourselves blessed for not being forever marked by a negative experience. We truly felt we were prepared to try again. We thought that lightning could never strike us twice. We were sadly mistaken. We lost again in September 2001, at 16 weeks. Once again, we lost a beautiful daughter named Rebecca Rose.

After the experience with Moira, I felt I was prepared to lose again, but I learned that I was only fooling myself. Experiences such as these stay with us for a lifetime. Negative ones especially so.

I have so many wishes for that day. My first wish would have understandably been for my baby, Rebecca, to still be alive,

but reality allows me to understand that it can not be so.

I wish to convey a list of wishes of what could have been different that day:

1. I wish it was never stated that a heartbeat of 136 was registered on the Doppler.
2. I wish that when an examining room sonogram was performed that a "flicker" of a heartbeat was not "detected" and pointed out. You see, this happened to me only six months before and I knew by the way the baby was slumped that there could not possibly be a "flicker" of a heartbeat.
3. I wish that someone/anyone could have walked me upstairs for the official sonogram. I felt so utterly alone and abandoned.
4. I wish when I came back downstairs with the technician that a reassuring hand or word was offered.
5. I wish that clear condolences were extended. I know it must be difficult to perceive a loss of 16 weeks as a loss of a baby, but this child was loved from the moment that we conceived her.
6. I wish that my husband was immediately called by a staff member. When a woman is told she has lost again, she is basically in a state of shock.
7. I wish that when I was trying to talk out my choices and I stated that I didn't think that I could go through labor again that I wasn't told "You're kidding me, I wouldn't want to go through labor at all." All I want to do is have another "live"

birth, to hear my baby cry at birth.

8. I wish that someone at the office had me wait for my husband to come so I would not have driven home alone. Still to this day, I have no recollection of how I made it home.

9. Finally, I wish there was compassion for my consecutive losses and recognition of the pain and grief that I felt.

Women that lose babies are so fragile. We are looking for a thoughtful word or hug from our care provider. We know rationally that you can't make it all better. We only want recognition of our loss and to have a physician who can effectively empathize with the loss.

Editor's Note: This letter was written by a mom to her doctor in hopes of educating him or her on the needs of bereaved parents.

(In honor of Moira Marie, March 9, 2001, and Rebecca Rose, September 6, 2001.)

"I felt I was prepared to lose again, but I learned that I was only fooling myself. Experiences such as these stay with us for a lifetime."

Letters From the Heart



Dear Pam,

Enclosed you will find a check for the brick that you helped me arrange. I am comforted at the thought of having a special place to visit on the significant dates that are associated with our loss. Thank you so much for your help and for the security I find in knowing you are always there.

Fondly,
Nancy Agovino

|||

Dear Pam,

I have been meaning to write for some time now. Krista is almost 16 months old now and is walking.

She is a good girl, but feisty. She has to be a little tough having two older siblings. Ann Marie is seven now and a great big sister. Joseph is four and is sandwiched between two sisters.

June 15 marked 12 years since I had Richie and I can't believe it. You know, the grief is still there but just different. I grieve for the ballgames I'll miss and the phone calls from gigglish girls. I grieve for the boy who would almost be a teenager and wonder how tall he'd be. It's not the gut wrenching pain that it was, but more like a sadness and loss for what will never be. I kept hoping I would not feel this way every June and July (for Danielle), but it happens every year. I guess it will never go away. It is a sadness to read everything. One of these days, I will find the time to sit and

write something for the group and newsletter. Please take care, Pam.

Love,
Cindy Romaine

|||

Dear Pam,

Well, made it through Mother's Day. After church I went to the cemetery, put out a blanket and laid next to them. I found myself apologizing again for many things, then thought that's probably not the only way they want me to remember them. So I concentrated on sharing happy memories—what kind of foods they liked and didn't like while I was carrying them. How Evan would always point with his index finger in the hospital (we used to tease that he was like E.T.) and then how wild it was that E.T. ended up being his initials (first and middle names) by sheer accident. I shared with them how proud and happy I was when I was carrying them. I told them about their up-and-coming siblings, and how all of us will be together someday. Then I went to my mom's house and visited. When I got home, there was a vase of flowers that Mike had picked from garden, and he had done some house cleaning too. I was very thankful that he thought of doing something for me. Then we visited his mom.

The next day at work the secretary for the college president asked me how my Mother's Day was, pointing out that it must have been hard for me. She was the only one to ask. I was surprised that she remembered (I don't come in contact with her

often, she works in a different building), and appreciated that she was thoughtful enough to ask.

Love,
Kelly

|||

Dear Pam,

It has been a very long time since we have spoken, but you are in my thoughts often. So many developments have happened since we last saw each other. We were in the process of going through an adoption, and just two weeks ago we managed to get a baby girl. We are now so very thrilled to have her.

At birth, our baby girl weighed 7 pounds 15 ounces. We named her Seneca Murrell Jennings, and she is healthy and very sweet. She is a good baby, slowly getting into the routine of sleeping through the night.

I find that I think a lot about Skyler even though I have my other baby. I see that all the things that I believed could have explained the loss, like "I was not ready," or "I was not mature," or "the house was not ready," are all untrue, and I am still left with no explanation for what happened to us. In terms of grief work I think I will reflect on different ways to commemorate Skyler every year, so that the healing process is not so linear but more like a natural growth process.

Take care,
Tristi Nichols

|||

(Continued on page 18)

“You know, the grief is still there but just different. I grieve for the ballgames I’ll miss and the phone calls from gigglish girls.”

Pam's Page



Warmest wishes in this New Year, 2002.

What a joy to receive so many greetings during the holidays and throughout the year, for that matter. It means so much to be remembered by so many.

Trust me, I remember each and every one of you, your babies' names and your story. I love receiving the pictures of your safe arrivals and family pictures; they grace our "Wall of Hope."

"Thank goodness the holidays are over." "We survived the holidays." "Everyone was right, the anticipation was actually worse than the day itself." These are just a few of the phrases I heard on January 2, 2002.

Holidays, anniversaries, special occasions and events are crushing reminders that your baby is not here. These occasions are a source of intense pressure, and frequently cause family conflicts. To celebrate seems to trivialize your grief; laughing and having a good time seem so out of place and wrong. Well-meaning family and friends want to "cheer you up" and have a difficult time not placing demands on you. They want to continue family traditions, and frequently feel that it is time for you to "get on with your life." One couple shared that their family told them, "We need you here this year more than ever." This couple knew they couldn't face the demands the family had

placed on them, and fortunately they had enough courage to withstand the pressure and give themselves permission to go away.

Permission: You need to give yourselves permission to feel what you feel and do what is right for you during this journey. If that means being home alone, then be home alone. If it means going away, then go away. If it means changing traditions, then change traditions. If it means not going to a christening or bris, then don't go. You should be able to be where you feel comfortable. You also need to be with people who bring you peace and comfort. Very often your family and closest friends will not be the ones you want to be with during this time. The day will come when family and friends will feel as comfortable as they once did. Until then, give yourself permission to be.

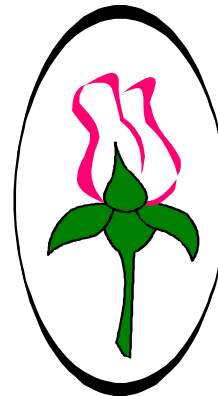
So much has happened since the last issue of Hope & Healing. Our country is immersed in shock, disbelief and grief; there are thousands of new grievors, stunned and devastated by their loss. We are inundated by all-too-familiar phrases like, "the nation has lost its innocence," "in order for the nation to move on we need to find ways to seek closure." Sound familiar? In view of the magnitude of this tragedy, I pray that family, friends and society will educate themselves on grief and ultimately we will become a more caring and benevolent nation and rid ourselves of these inane platitudes. I hope that we will realize that grief is a natural re-

sponse to loss!

The tragic and untimely death of your babies cannot be reversed or altered; the circumstances that have brought so much pain into your lives cannot be changed. What you can do is give yourself permission to honor, celebrate and remember your precious baby with dignity, honor and grace.

Warmly, Pam

"You need to give yourselves permission to feel what you feel and do what is right for you."



Book Review

Parenthood Lost: Healing the Pain After Miscarriage, Stillbirth and Infant Death
by Michael R. Berman, M.D.

Published by Bergin & Garvey Trade

Approximately one in four pregnancies in this country ends in miscarriage or stillbirth, and 28,000 infants die each year within the first year of life, many within hours of birth.

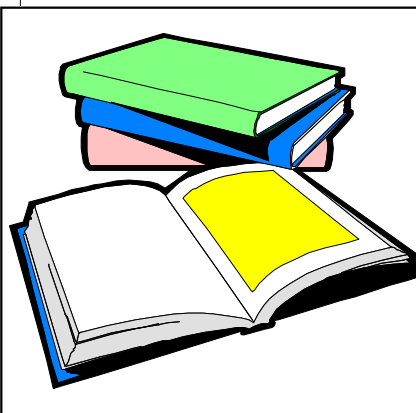
For the parents, and particularly the mother, the emotional toll can be devastating. Dr. Michael Berman, a professor of obstetrics and gynecology at Yale University School of Medicine, is the author of "Parenthood Lost: Healing the Pain After

Miscarriage, Stillbirth and Infant Death." In the following excerpt, he explains how he came to write this book.

Early in my obstetrical training during the 1970s, I was exposed to the trauma of fetal demise. I was taught by respected and caring mentors that if a baby was stillborn or born with a serious, "unsightly" birth defect, the physician should attempt to protect the parents from the shock of seeing their dead child by covering it with a blanket, quickly removing it from the delivery area, and sending the body to the morgue to be buried in an unmarked grave. It was thought that this was helping the parents. We were unaware of the necessity of allowing them to bond,

grieve and have closure.

Then, one delivery changed my views. A patient of mine delivered a preterm baby, stillborn, with anencephaly. Anencephaly is a condition where there is incomplete development of the fetal cranium. It is not compatible with life. I was familiar with this condition and felt it might be too devastating for the parents to see, much less hold, their child. However, as I spent time with them during the labor. I realized it was going to be very important for them to do just that: hold, kiss, hug and form



a bond with their son. When he was born, I covered the top of his head with a hat and placed him on his mother's abdomen. She held him as if he were alive, related how beautiful he was and how much she loved him. She did not see any birth defects; she saw only her child. This experience affected my management of the stillborn forever.

Recently a patient of mine lost twins at 24 weeks into her pregnancy. She had had difficulty conceiving, and this was her first pregnancy. Her twins

shared a common circulation and developed very early problems with what's called "twin to twin transfusion syndrome." She received high-tech, state-of-the-art care at our hospital's high-risk pregnancy unit, weekly ultrasound examinations and therapeutic amniocentesis. She phoned me following her last amniocentesis and said she had not felt the babies move. I met her at the hospital and confirmed the worst. Her sons had died. Immediately her reaction was, "Oh my God, this cannot be. My life will never be the same. How can I go on? Take these babies now. Don't make me go through the labor. Don't send me home." She wailed in despair. Her husband gave her much comfort. I cried with her. A nurse from the labor floor (who coincidentally was the codirector of our perinatal-bereavement program) and I spent hours counseling her and her husband. I explained what I felt was best for her medically and emotionally: for them to go home that night together, cry, gather strength, and plan for the induction of labor and delivery the next day. The patient and her husband agreed, and the next day she delivered her twin sons. She held them for hours. Afterward, although filled with sorrow, she and her husband seemed at peace. She talked about her sons, clutched the memento box with their pictures, and talked about their funeral and memorial-service plans. At the memorial service, prayers were said and

(Continued on page 19)

"Although filled with sorrow, my patient and her husband seemed at peace. She talked about her sons and clutched the memento box with their pictures."

Angels Times Two

by Joe Doyle

The joy that I felt was immeasurable
when we first received the news
My perspective on life changed immediately
as I began to see everything in twos

The road that we had traveled
was long with many bumps along the way
But all of that suddenly didn't matter
We had two babies growing each day

I never thought my heart could feel so much love
I thought I had given it all to my wife
And then we took our love to a higher level
For together we had created life

The dreams that we shared, the plans that we made
Would always put a smile on our face
How could we even know at the time
That our babies were meant for a greater place

It doesn't seem right and it doesn't seem fair
That Andrew and John are gone
How could this have happened to us
To lose them both after wanting them for so long

I wake up each and every day
And I struggle with how to start
But somehow I find a way to get through
Because those boys are in my heart

Wherever I may travel
Whatever I may do
Andrew and John will be with me always
Guiding and helping me through

For I am truly blessed
To have found a love I never knew
My angels in heaven are the proof
And you can say this . . . times two.

(In memory of my sons, Andrew Peter Doyle and John Michael Doyle, March 28, 2001.)

Dear Seth, Sara and Sydney

by Jacqueline Rosenthal

You were a miracle from the day you were conceived until you went "Home." We feel blessed to have had you. You have changed our lives forever in so many ways. I have always dreamed of being a mother, and for years that seemed impossible, and that was the worst feeling a woman could experience.

God showed me by conceiving all three of you that what seems impossible to man, is possible for God. Although

your time on Earth was brief, I want you to know that this time was the happiest time of our lives. You have taught me to be faithful, to be strong, and most of all you have shown me the true meaning of "Courage." We will never forget you as long as we live. We will always celebrate your life and death. We will always remember you not with sadness or bitterness, but with a smile and tears of joy!

You have made such a difference in my life. The "feeling of despair" no longer lingers in

my heart. Because of you my eyes have been opened wide to new dreams and new hopes. I thank God for taking me down this path and giving me the strength to complete it.

I love you Seth, Sara and Sydney.

Love Always,
Your Mother

(Written by Jacqueline Rosenthal in memory of Seth Maxwell, Sara Ester and Sydney Grace who died on 11/22/01.)

Report on Stillbirth Workshop

by National Institute of Health

The National Institutes of Health convened a workshop on March 26, 2001, with professional experts in the field setting a national agenda for stillbirth research. In the United States in 1998, stillbirths of babies 20 weeks gestation or more occurred at a rate of at least 7 deaths per every 1,000 live births, for a total of more than 26,500 stillbirths. Typically, 50 percent of these stillbirths have an undetermined cause of death. Currently there is no significant funding ongoing for research into the etiology and/or pathogenesis of stillbirth. In addition, every year about 900,000 pregnancies that do not reach 20 weeks of gestation, end in miscarriage or fetal death.

Nationally, no data are collected on cause of death, prior to delivery, although 40 states do use a code for age and cause

of death. Fetal mortality rates vary by race, ethnic origin, marital status and age of the mother, with the youngest and oldest mothers experiencing the greatest risk of fetal mortality. The overall fetal mortality rate was 16.5 losses per 1,000 women in their childbearing years in the 1998 data.

- The agenda formulated by this workshop include the following: Improvement of record keeping and reporting in each state.
- Adoption of a standard post-mortem protocol for stillbirths.

The committee devised a protocol that will be given to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG):

- Improved education of medical students/professionals on the sensitive ways to present the choice of autopsy.

- Better education of medical providers and families experiencing stillbirth losses about the benefits of autopsy.
- Research into the actual causes in the deaths of stillborn babies and causal factors to decrease the risk of future stillbirths.

Areas that were explored at the meeting were: medical conditions, placental and fetal pathology, umbilical-cord accidents, genetic/metabolic causes, infectious causes, blood-clotting disorders, unexplained stillbirths, relationship of stillbirths to deaths in the early newborn period, increased awareness of the stillbirth problem for the general public. Ways to collaborate with bereaved parents and all the perinatal loss groups were also addressed.

Note: Continuous updates of information can be found on the website of SHARE:
www.nationalshareoffice.com

To Ethan

by Hillary Dettwyler

Early summer was warm with hope eternal and clear.
After months of bed rest, our son's arrival was finally here.
Our hopes and dreams washed away as we stood there.
Panic, panic, fear, distress, yes it's your worst nightmare.

Dreams vanished and crumbled like leaves in the fall.
Our hearts melted and ached and sometimes felt nothing at all.
Autumn's a blur as we struggled to walk one foot at a time.
Our tears, our screams, our loss had no reason or rhyme.

As the cold air of the winter came blowing into our lives,
We tried to put the pieces together, making sense of the whys.
Ethan, our Ethan, God picks the most beautiful flower they say,
But why, oh why, take our precious baby boy away.

Spring--the flowers, the sun and the days without end.
Does the pain get dimmer? No, it becomes an old friend.
With faith we've always felt you, your spirit is so strong.
You came to our rescue, we wish this is where you belong.

Your soul is as beautiful as that face we remember.
You are always in our hearts, dear Ethan, and that is forever.

August 2, 2001

*(In honor of Ethan Reid Dettwyler on the first anniversary of his death, August 2, 2001, with love from his parents,
Rick and Hillary Dettwyler.)*

We've Never Met

By Maureen Horrego

We've never met
or even spoken,
But, for you, my heart is broken.

I know your pain,
I know your grief,
I know your shock and disbelief.

Our bond is strong,
though shared in loss,
Why were we chosen to carry this cross?

My heart is heavy,
I've shed many tears,
This pain I've carried through the years.

Now I see new faces
but the sadness the same,
There is no difference in the pain.

I wish there were a way
to ease your pain,
But, I know, it's all in vain.

I look at you
and feel your sorrow,
I wish for you a peaceful tomorrow.

(Written in memory of Morgan Nicole, 9/1/96-9/10/96.)

Dad's Version

by Anonymous

No one has ever met him except his Mom and Dad
But if you only had the chance you'd sure be glad you had.
Now it's just a bit too late and that is just too sad
That you have missed out on the life of our tiny little lad.

A father forms a special bond with his only son
And looks forward to the days to spend, just playing one on one.
How sad it is to know right now we'll never have this fun
And my precious tiny little man will never even run.

He is his mother's special gift, no one can take his place
And in her heart will always be an empty, empty space.
It breaks her heart to realize she can't always kiss his face
A need that every mother has and it can't be replaced.

He wasn't with us long at all, but what a mark he made
It just breaks our hearts to say good-bye at his tiny little grave.
So with a kiss and love in mind, we leave you here to rest
And always to remember, you did your very best.

We've left you with some pictures and also with some toys
We hope you have lots of fun here, playing with the boys.
Always to remember your dad and mom and sister
And when you need us anytime, we'll hear your tiny whisper.

I just wanted to say:

You are my little man and we'll remember you always.
Look over your family and be sure to watch your tree of life grow.
You were a fighter all along.
We'll miss you.
I love you.
Daddy will always be here if you need me.

(In memory of Anthony Joseph, born July 28, 2001.)

Mom's Version

by Anonymous

As hard as it is to speak aloud at this time, I feel I would later regret that I didn't take this opportunity to honor my son. From the very moment we knew he'd be joining our family, his father and I couldn't believe we were blessed with yet a second miracle. Our lives were truly coming together and our little family was finally formed. We couldn't have asked for anything more: Our beautiful and precious girl and now, our beautiful and precious boy.

Nothing prepared us for what lay ahead. This tragedy has left us heartbroken and lost and we still can't begin to find a way to cope. However, we need you to know what an angel he was. He was a fighter and champ all the way till the end and words cannot describe how difficult that memory is. When we finally met--his father and I were overwhelmed. To feel such love and to see this

handsome, handsome boy--our son--and to know at that moment it was the beginning of the end. That is just indescribable.

With tiny fingers and tiny toes, we held him and loved him and became so attached--that those moments will change our lives forever.

So, we ask you to please let him stay in your hearts and in your minds--not only now but forever. And pray for our family, and always remember there will be our special angel watching over all of us. Our children are the lights in our lives and it is just so bittersweet to go on with one and not the other.

So we hope and pray that maybe one day we may smile instead of cry when we remember our sweet baby boy.

(In memory of Anthony Joseph, born July 28, 2001.)

Grandma's Version

by Anonymous

An angel came on earth today
A precious baby boy.
He seemed in such a hurry to be about his way
Stay with us longer, we all wanted to say.
Let us show you our love and joy,
You're our precious baby boy

We've chosen your name and made such wonderful plans
Why did you have to rush to be safe in Jesus' hands.
That you are safe in heaven is something we believe,
But we need some time for our aching hearts to grieve.
You're our precious baby boy.

We all gather here together to tell you, although we are apart
You'll always be AJ, an angel in our heart.
You're our precious baby boy.

(In memory of Anthony Joseph, born July 28, 2001.)

Daniel
Such a Sweet Name for a Sweet Boy
by Val Bitzer

D Daniel. Darling little baby boy. So desired. So delicate. So dear.

A Angelic. When we first saw you we should have known you would only be here for a short visit.

N November 7. The day you entered our lives. A day we will never forget.

I Innocent. A precious gift sent from up above.

E Enjoyment. What you brought to your parents and family while you were with us. We cherish every moment we had with you.

L Love. Love, love and more love. I knew we would love you a lot, but words cannot describe how much love we have for you.

(In loving memory of our son Daniel James Bitzer.)

In Honor of Hope

by Robin Miller

My husband and I have one healthy boy. He is truly our miracle baby and an incredible gift from God. We endured so much over the years and waited such a long time to have a child, and we are truly blessed with our baby. He makes our desires for more children all the more real, all the more powerful.

My husband and I have also experienced six pregnancy losses. With each loss my dreams were shattered and pieces of my heart were forever chipped away. This is about our daughter, Hope, who was stillborn on July 19, 2001.

When I was 18 weeks pregnant with Hope, our doctor called to alert us that the results of the blood tests he'd taken were alarmingly out of range. I went in for an amniocentesis and ultrasound, and my husband and I immediately noticed that the baby wasn't moving. The doctor entered the room and told us what we already knew: Our baby had died.

We arrived at the hospital, where my doctor was expecting us. I remember walking around in a daze feeling completely numb. I was not ready to be in labor and delivery. My emotions were becoming quite uncontrollable. I found it increasingly more difficult to take in the information that the doctor was telling me. I was told that labor induction is typi-

cally between 24 to 36 hours. I couldn't understand why the doctors were going to induce labor and make me deliver this baby. I couldn't deliver this baby; I wasn't ready.

I was really frightened to see my baby and even more scared to never see her again. I did not want my first hello to be my last goodbye to her. The discomfort from the IV's, laminaria and prostin induction seemed like nothing compared to the anxiety that I was feeling. I obsessed with what the final moments of the delivery were going to be like. Would I have the strength to see her, to hold her, or most importantly to give my baby back to the nurses?

Several hours into labor, my contractions were getting stronger. I felt helpless and very depressed that the end was getting nearer. My labor and delivery room nurse encouraged my husband and I to see and to spend some private time with our baby.

On Thursday, July 19, 2001, at 6:17 a.m., our daughter, Hope, was born still. I can remember seeing Hope for the first time, seconds after she was born. She looked small but perfect to me. I am at peace in my decision to say goodbye to Hope. It did provide the comfort that I needed and special memories that I always cherish.

A few hours later, my initial phases of disbelief and depression were surpassed by jealousy and anger. All of that pain and labor for absolutely nothing. I was jealous of every other mother in labor and delivery. Our original nurse came in to

visit, and presented my husband with a memory box containing a few precious items of our baby. I had the vision of Hope's little face engraved into my mind forever. As I was wheeled out from the hospital, I saw a mother with her newborn baby girl. She had flowers, pink balloons and a beautiful newborn. I had no balloons, no flowers and no baby to bring home.

The decision to make a funeral was very emotional. Just mentioning Hope's name was enough to bring me to tears. I was not ready to make important funeral arrangements or decisions. It was all too surreal for me. Fortunately my husband was able to coordinate the arrangements.

Hope's funeral provided the closure that we really needed and the service was really quite beautiful. I remember being touched by those who provided a listening ear when needed and by those who purchased donations in Hope's honor. We thank and appreciate the family and friends who planted trees in Hope's memory and those who have sent cards of heartfelt sympathy. To the family and friends that have attended her funeral and to the friends who leave notes at Hope's gravesite, you have all provided us with great comfort during these difficult days.

We were quite saddened by the friends and family members that never expressed any sympathy or did not attend Hope's funeral. I think that society has a way of expecting the grieving parents to be healed

(Continued on page 16)

"I was really frightened to see my baby and even more scared to never see her again. I did not want my first hello to be my last goodbye."

In Heaven

by Debbie Brennan

We lost our daughter Moira Marie on March 9, 2001
Who could have imagined?
What could have been done?

After working through our grief,
Focusing on our pain,
With a source of relief,
We sought to try again.

To our overwhelming surprise,
Pregnant we became.
New hopes began to arise,
Our attitudes and beliefs on a whole new plane.

We survived and had hope at 12 weeks,
Our world now sensing a positive tone.
But four weeks later our world became bleak.
Rebecca Rose, our daughter would not be alone ... in Heaven.

Moria and Rebecca take care of each other. Know we love and cherish you.

(In memory and love of Moira Marie 3-9-01 and Rebecca Rose 9-6-01)

In Honor of Hope

(Continued from page 15)

quickly, and the support that is needed is often lacking. I have had six losses. How come after so much, I am still able to accept and celebrate in other people's happiness, yet some people cannot even acknowledge my sadness? It hurts me when well wishers suggest that I "get over it" or say "at least the decision was taken out of your hands." Yet others have even said "my loss was harder than yours."

Please know that I may often say that I am ok, but know that I will never really be ok again. Don't tell me to put this event behind me, to forget it and to go on with my life as nothing happened. You were not the one in labor. You were not the one in pain. You were not there to cry

or to see this tiny baby. This was our daughter.

I need to grieve. I need to talk about Hope. I need to feel human. I don't want to erase this sadness but I do need to find a way to remember her in peace. Please don't be afraid to remind me of her name or my other five losses. I have not forgotten them. Every once in a while, letting me know that you do care is comforting. Bear with me during this uncharted territory that is my grief and that is my life. Pain is pain and mine is real. Don't ever try to compare worse losses. I do not expect you to make me feel better, to take away my tears. No one can. I need your acceptance of my right as a parent to grieve.

Please accept me in my sadness,

and I will always remember the love that you have offered to us. I am a mother and my husband a father, we have each other and we have our one true miracle, our son. As long as there is still love, there will also be Hope.

(Written in loving memory of our baby girl Hope Miller, stillborn on July 19, 2001. Also, dedicated to Hope's twin lost to a miscarriage on May 16, 2001; a six-week miscarriage on March 19, 2001; a ten-week miscarriage of twins on January 14, 1999 and a thirteen-week miscarriage on May 26, 1998. All of our six babies will be forever loved, honored and missed.)

Benjamin

(Continued from page 1)

other brothers playing together, and I cannot watch.

A part of me died with Benjamin. I will never be the same person that I was. I can never live peacefully. I feel that at any second, either Phil or Zachary can be taken from me like Benjamin was. I am no longer safe. The thought of losing Zachary terrifies me. I know that if that were to happen, my life would end. I live now only to care for Zachary as much as I am able. I am terrified to ever try to have another baby. I don't know if I could live through losing another child. I don't know why I was given Benjamin after so long trying to have him, only to watch him suffer and die. Watching him suffering in the NICU was so hard. I wish it had been me. If I had known I was going to lose him, I would have never cried in the hospital. I would have talked to him more, touched my belly more, and never wanted to go home. I did not know that this would be the only time I could ever spend with him. My body failed me. How could such a tiny baby have so many awful things wrong with such a little heart. We thought we had it made; we made it so far with ruptured membranes and through an emergency section. He came out so well at first. How were we to know that it was all for nothing . . . that we would have to watch him suffer and fight to allow him to die peacefully. Holding him in my arms as he was slipping away was the most (and last) peaceful moment that I have ever known. I know things will never be the same in our lives. I just hope that we find peace someday.

I wanted to thank you all indi-

vidually for all that you have done, but I am finding it very difficult to write each letter. You will all eventually get one, but to write them I need to relive a lot of things, and I cannot do them all so soon. I am writing this to let you all know where I am. I know that many of you want to speak to me, but don't know what to say. You are afraid to "remind" me of painful memories. Don't be. I live with this pain every day. Speaking to me about it does not make it any worse. If it makes you feel better to talk, please do. If not, don't feel guilty. Please don't feel bad if I cry. I cry every day. It is ok to cry with me. It is ok not to. My greatest wish is that you should never feel this pain. To lose a child, you lose your hope, your dreams, and your future. All the plans made during pregnancy are dashed . . . gone, like the life of my child. I was part of a pair, my son and I went through the worst that life has to give and I came out alone. I have Phil and Zach, but I will always be alone. Phil can never understand what it was like to carry our son beneath my heart and have no control over his life and loss.

Every day I work on the unit is difficult. Many people have asked me if I want to transfer. How can I do that knowing what I know now? I know what it feels like to be trapped in the hospital losing control over my life. I know how it feels to be so desperate to go home you become irrational. I know about the depression that threatens to control your life. I know about the longing to be with my other child, the loneliness and boredom. I know that life is going on around me every day. People are happy going home to their lives, and my life is on hold. If I can

give one patient understanding, help to make one patient's stay easier, then the pain I am enduring is worth it. The pain will be there no matter what I do, so I feel I am meant to suffer it for a reason.

Benjamin can never feel anything, forever. He will never know joy, love, sorrow or any other feeling. He will never know the happiness of playing with his brother, the love of a wife, or the perfect joy of holding his own newborn son. I grieve for the children Benjamin will never have. If pain is the only way I will ever feel him in my life, I will gladly endure it. If that pain can ease someone else's, so be it.

I hope someday my family will be happy again; I will try to make it so for Zachary's sake. If you see me in a fog, please understand. It's not your fault, and I can't be cheered up. Again, I thank all of you for all that you have done for me. I could never have done it without your help. You did manage to make eight long weeks pass quickly. You gave my precious son safe passage into this world, and helped me to ease him into the next. There is nothing more special that you could ever do as nurses, co-workers and friends. You supported me through the most terrible ordeal of my life, and I thank you for it. Please cherish your children, kiss them all, and kiss them again. They are your blessings.

All my love,
Karen

(In loving memory of Benjamin Michael Seymour, April 5, 2000 to April 14, 2000.)

Letters From the Heart

(Continued from page 5)

Dear Pam,

Life in Connecticut is good, though a big adjustment for me. I like it so far. I guess that's a good sign. Brian is enjoying his new job, so that makes the move much easier.

The boys are getting too big. Timmy is starting first grade and Michael is in kindergarten. William is three, so he will go to preschool. It seems like yesterday I sat crying thinking I was never going to be a mom. Time flies!

Not a week goes by that I don't think of you and all you did for us. Any time I run into someone that speaks of a loss I share my experience and all you did for us.

All our love,
Bernadette, Brian and Boys

|||

Dear Pam,

I am so glad I went to the candle lighting memorial; it was very moving for me. As you know, last year I didn't make it because I had just given birth to Jimmy. I ended up crying myself to sleep Friday night and I have to say it felt good! It really is true that sometimes you need to go back and feel the pain again. It really does "ground" you. Being able to say my baby's name in front of dozens of people who don't even know me showed that I'm ok and that life has gone on for Chris and me. Emily will be gone two years this New Year's Eve, and I think maybe we will celebrate her life this year

with a bottle of champagne (and a few tears)!

With love,
Jill

|||

Dear Pam,

This New Year's was better than last. We stayed up to watch the ball and made a night of it-- just me, Jill and Jimmy. It was as they say "easier," and it helps to have Jimmy to ease the pain. I watched the clock all night and this morning, and spent much of the past two days re-thinking/reliving a lot of what happened two years ago. I had a few good cries yesterday. At 10:56 a.m. today we both had a good cry. Thanks so much for thinking of us. It means a lot!

I can't tell you how much it hurts/bothers me how people just forget what happened to us. I mean I can count on one hand the number of people that called and said they "are thinking of us and Emily." Some of my family and most of my friends disappoint me, but maybe I just expect too much.

Happy New Year,
Chris

|||

Dear Pam,

I was glad that you left a message for us yesterday. Surprisingly, I managed to get through yesterday without any difficulty. Bob, on the other hand, is feeling sad this week. Neither of us were able to take the day off. What I did do was go to Central Park during lunchtime yesterday. I bought a helium balloon that had "Happy Birth-

day" and teddy bears on it, then walked through the park and found a peaceful area with a bench. I sat down and after a moment I released the balloon and watched it float off. Being that we have no other physical "reminder" (a gravesite or ashes in an urn), something symbolic works for us. I met a friend for dinner as well; she remembered that our due date was happening this week. So did our respective parents. People have been a bit afraid to bring the subject up with us, as they're worried about hurting our feelings. I'm actually happy when they do remember. Anyway, we hope to see you next month at our support group meeting.

Barbara

|||

Dear Pam,

The Candlelighting was very touching but also very hard. I feel a sense of warmth and understanding whenever I am with people who have experienced losing their child or children. So in that sense there was some comfort on Friday night. The reason for having to be there stinks, but both Colleen and I needed to be there, if that makes any sense. Thank you for giving all of us parents a place and a forum to remember our children.

My best always,
Joe



Book Review

(Continued from page 7)

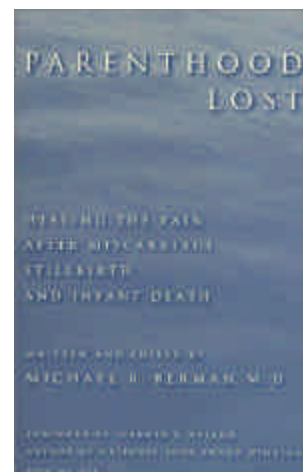
poems were read. She planted morning-glory seeds at the graveside. Closure was accomplished.

I do not think I have ever seen a patient demonstrate such extremes in attitudes and emotions as the reality and circumstances of the day evolved, and I attribute this to the counseling she received and the way her children's deaths were approached. In the last few years, awareness, compassion, intervention and counseling have become the paradigm for the management of perinatal demise, yet even in the 1990s concern lingers that such mourning for a

pregnancy loss is not fully accepted.

It is my hope that this book, rich with the poems, stories and insights into the impact of lost parenthood, will increase the awareness of, and sensitivity to, those who desperately need to assuage their profound sorrow. My professional career has involved a striving to bring comfort and healing to children, born and yet to be born, and to mothers through their years of childbearing and beyond. It has been the cause in my life. I have been uplifted by the triumphs of birth and healing, and depressed by the failures. Yet I have always tried to look beyond the failures in search of the triumphs.

For more information on "Parenthood Lost," you can visit Dr. Berman's website at www.hygeia.org.

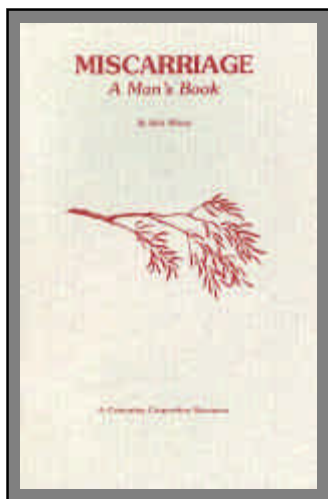


Book Review

Miscarriage: A Man's Book

by Rick Wheat

Miscarriage: A Man's Book" is written by Rick Wheat, a marriage and family therapist who has experienced the dif-



ficulties of miscarriage firsthand. The 24-page booklet opens with "an emergency page" that includes nine things a man should know when his wife has just had a miscarriage, especially acknowledging the importance of the event. This may well be the worst thing that has ever happened to your wife and maybe to you, too, says the author. He talks about things that will be difficult and recognizing what has been lost, and he explains the stages of grief and some of the responses that may result (guilt, depression, withdrawal). He also gives some practical tips on how to keep the marital relationship

strong after such a devastating event. (Available from: Centering Corporation, P.O. Box 4600, 1531 North Saddle Creek Rd., Omaha, Neb. 68104; 402-553-1200; www.centering.org.)

Happy Birthday
Christopher
April 4, 1989 - April 6, 1989
We miss you.



Announcements



Walkway Bricks

Commemorative bricks are available for \$50. Please make checks payable to: GSH Perinatal Bereavement Program. Each brick has space for a maximum of three lines (13 to 15 characters per line, including punctuation and spaces). You may use the & symbol and a heart symbol. Bricks may be ordered throughout the year, but will be laid only twice a year. Call Pam at 914-368-5297 with the information or questions.

Borrowed Books

PLEASE return borrowed books when you are finished. If anyone has bereavement-related books they would like to donate to our lending library, kindly send or give them to Pam.

Articles for the Newsletter

Keep them coming. Without your stories, poems, book reviews, thoughts and feelings, there would be no newsletter! Think about what you would like to read in the newsletter and then write something like that. If possible, please e-mail your article to Pam at: aommagi@aol.com. Articles will be forwarded for editing and proofreading.

Shrine to the Unborn

A shrine has been erected at St. Anthony's Church in Nanuet, New York, in the Shrine at the Church. Families who have had a baby die may have their child's name inscribed in the book of Life.

Remembrance Quilt

The quilt is hanging in the lobby of Good Samaritan Hospital. It looks "beautiful," and many people stop to admire it and look at each and every square. The quilt is an ongoing project; it is not too late to make a square. You don't have to have knowledge of quilting or sewing, and there is no limit to the amount of squares per family. Provide a 9" x 9" cotton square and leave a half-inch border on all four sides for seam allowance. Be creative: Use fabric paint, stamps, stencils, embroidery or cross-stitch; embellish with buttons, ribbon, lace or trims, applique, photo transfer. Perhaps your baby's name has a special meaning (for example, the name Melissa means honey bee); perhaps the baby's father is a firefighter (use firetruck material). Or maybe you might want a flower or a zodiac sign for the month your baby was born in. For questions, call Diane Rowan at 914-273-3648.

Miscarriage/Ectopic Pregnancy Support Group

Dr. Kathleen Keefe-Cooperman, (one of "our" moms) is facilitating the miscarriage/ectopic pregnancy support group, which meets the third Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m. Kathy can be contacted at: nandrew@aol.com.

Thank You

Pam would once again like to thank all of you for your holiday wishes. It is always so heartwarming to receive so many cards and pictures during the holidays and throughout the year. My "Wall of Hope" is filled with the most beautiful Safe Arrivals.

Third Annual Michael Vincent Toscano Memorial Golf Tournament

Date to be announced. The tournament has been a wonderful fundraiser as well as a day of good fellowship. Lou Toscano (one of "our" Dads) is an event planner, and he has planned this event in memory of his son, Michael, and all your babies. You and your families have the opportunity to sponsor a tee and green in memory of your child or children. A memorial sign with your baby's name will be placed at that green. If unable to attend or you don't play golf, come and have dinner with us. Also, perhaps your company would be willing to sponsor a tee or an event.

If anyone is interested in assisting with the golf tournament, please call Lou Toscano at 845-368-3556. Don't forget that this is a tax-deductible event, and you don't have to play golf to participate!

Donate Through the United Way

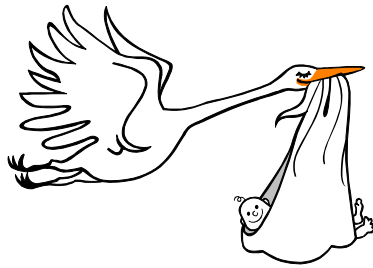
You may make a donation to the Good Samaritan Hospital Perinatal Bereavement Program via the United Way. GSH's code for the United Way direct donation is: **GSH Perinatal Bereavement Program 036001**. Several of our parents designate a certain amount each pay period; the donation is sent directly to our program.

Reunion Picnic

Date to be announced (May or September).

(Continued on page 23)

Safe Arrivals



Diana
Christine & Ron Arvanties

Christina Danielle
Valerie & Jeff Bitzer

Sienna Rain
Jeannine & Vinnie DePinto

Rose Hannah
Hillary & Rick Dettwyler

Colleen Grace
Carla & Dan Duffy

Sloane Elizabeth
Linda & Stuart Egles

Lauren Nicole
Denise & Ed Gaynor

Matthew John
Carol & John Gemignani

Paul Olivio
Rita & Joe Giradella

Brianna Rose
Linda & Tommy Gorgorian

Sophia Ann
Carol & Christoph Grieder-
Brandenberger

Seneca Murrell
Tristi & Al Jennings

Gunnar Henry
Marianna Vertullo &
Peter Marks

Connor James
Joan & Peter McConnell

Ashley Marie
Connie & Joe McDonald

**Katharine Lynne &
Liam Aydan**
Kelly Jonigan & Michael McGar

Ann Elizabeth
Debbie & Michael McManus

Riccardo
Caterina & Frank Romano

Molly Elizabeth
Mandy & Rob Villodas

Ella Josephine
Beth & Karl Whipple

Aidan Scott
Debbie & Ryan Wright

Patrick James
Barbara & Terry Youngman

Sonja Marie
Regina & Marc Zimmerman

*Please note that all of the above parents
have experienced a previous loss prior to
the birth of these new babies.*

In Loving Memory . . . From . . .

Blake Villodas.....Mandy & Rob Villodas
Rebecca Rose Brennan.....Haverstraw Middle School Sunshine Club
Rebecca Rose Brennan...Faculty & Staff of Haverstraw Middle School
Moira Marie & Rebecca Rose Brennan.....Olga & Ken Christianson
Andrew Peter & John Michael Doyle.....Rosanna & Joseph J. Doyle
Emily Lauren Giorgio.....Jill & Chris Giorgio
Emily Lauren Giorgio.....Elizabeth & Charles Craft
Andrew, Kyle & Chole Brocchini.....Michele & Larry Brocchini
Biagio & Sean Laurito.....Kerry & Tony Laurito
Angelica Jean-Louise Ferrante.....MaryAnn & Ron Ferrante
Lisa DeGroat HansenPam Magi
Alex Kunis.....Carolyn Keidel
Angela Anna Leva.....Kristy & Paul Leva
Angela Anna Leva.....Anna Maria & George Slicker
Angela Anna Leva.....Maria Castellaneta
Angela Anna Leva.....Jean & Ken Patrey
Eli Jacob Charkes.....Dr. & Nancy Charkes
Eli Jacob Charkes.....Juli & Evan Charkes
Eli Jacob Charkes.....Karen & Derek Newman
Andrew Peter & John Michael Doyle..Edmund McCue & John McCue
Angela Anna Leva.....Anthony Castellaneta
Andrew Michael.....Mary & Michael Lembo
Daniel John Radatovich.....his Buddy in Heaven - Patrick
Moria & Rebecca Brennan.....Lorraine and John Rossi

*A donation to: **The Good Samaritan Bereavement Group** has been made in the above
babies names. If you wish to make a donation, please contact Pam Magi for more
information.*

DEDICATION

This issue is dedicated to: Christina & Steve Aherne on the loss of *Baby Aherne* | Joel Ayala & David Almodovar on the loss of *Janelle Ashley* | Mary & John Blanke on the loss of *Baby Blanke* | Debbie & Peter Brennan on the loss of *Rebecca Rose* | Elise & Dennis Covert on the loss of *Taylor* | Nadesca & Carlos Duluc on the loss of *Natalie & Melanie* | Celeste & Ari Cohen on the loss of *Baby Girl Cohen* | Tanisha & Jim Dorvil on the loss of *James Christian* | Monette & Kelby Edwards on the loss of *Baby Girl Edwards* | Linda & Stuart Egles on the loss of *Amanda Jade* | Dena & Andy Falek on the loss of *Baby Falek* | Stephanie & Tom Field on the loss of *Aidan* | William Kathy & Jack Fisher on the loss of *Emily* | Joann & Thomas Fitzgibbon on the loss of *Thomas John* | Nancy & Jonathan Gates on the loss of *Daniel Owen* | Lenore & Billy Gunderson on the loss of *Stephanie Lynn* | Susan & Ron Hougui on the loss of *Julian* | Lauren &

Mark Idsall on the loss of *Ashley Marie* | Sandi & Mark Jacobs on the loss of *Baby Jacobs* | Lorin & Andre Keel on the loss of *Lukas Cole* | Nipa & Nikhil Khimani on the loss of *Kajal and Baby Khimani* | Lee Shanley & Kevin Kiernan on the loss of *Nicholas Ci'an* | Christine & Ronald Kowalski on the loss of *Baby Kowalski* | Lauren & Steve Lacey on the loss of *Baby Girl Lacey & Babies Lacey* | Barbara & Bob Lackey on the loss of *Emily Hannah* | Fran & Frank Leva on the loss of *Angela Anna* | Sally & Roger Longfield on the loss of *Kaitlyn, Liam & Rory* | Karen & Tom Maniscalco on the loss of *J.R.* | Darcy & Peter Marino on the loss of *Peter Jr.* | Beatrice & Bruce Mattaway on the loss of *Megan* | Zchantell & James McDonnell on the loss of *Arianna* | Ann & Martin McKenna on the loss of *Baby McKenna* | Jennifer & Rob McNicholas on the loss of *Emily Faith* | Joyce Mena on the loss of *Genesis* | Robin & Gregory Miller on the loss of *Hope & Babies Miller* | Lisa & Michael

Neglia on the loss of *Marisa Teresa* | Patricia & John O'Boyle on the loss of *Babies O'Boyle* | Elizabeth & Neil Pittman on the loss of *Alexander Edward* | Donna & Mark Plescia on the loss of *Alexis Jordan (AJ)* | Lydia & Daniel Rivera on the loss of *Gabriel* | Jacqueline & Matthew Rosenthal on the loss of *Baby Rosenthal and triplets, Seth Maxwell, Sara Ester & Sydney Grace* | Rebecca Richter & Robert Zajuc on the loss of *Noah* | Jennifer & Joe Rykowski on the loss of *Michael Robert* | Elena & Al Sammut on the loss of *Baby Sammut* | Dinah & Ed Scheibling on the loss of *Denise* | Renee & Brian Sharkey on the loss of *Patrick* | Jennine & Brian Shull on the loss of *Samantha Jo* | Roberta Young & Rickie Smith on the loss of *Nyese Victoria Young* | Christine & Rick Strage on the loss of *Anthony Joseph* | Liz & Colin Sweeney on the loss of *William Louis & Andrew Colin* | Laura & Paul Vlacancich on the loss of *Hope*.

Hearts are broken. Dreams are shattered. Arms ache with emptiness when a precious child has died. Please accept our heartfelt expression of caring and sympathy at this time of sorrow.

Our Vacation

(Continued from page 1)

the mantel in our house. This may sound strange to some people but to us it was the right thing to do. We feel like he is always around us and we can see him anytime. It gives us a sense of peace. So we talked about how we were feeling, and decided to take our son with us. We put the urn in our carry-on and took him to Vegas. It was his birthday after all.

By now you might be thinking that we are a very strange couple, but who cares. We did not take him to the casinos only because

we we did not want to forget him anywhere. So he stayed in the room. But when we were in the room we lit a candle for him just like when we are home and on the 20th we had a piece of cake for our son.

I now know we will never leave the house for even a weekend vacation without him. We really felt him around us and we really connected with each other. The past year has been a strain on our marriage, but we have made it. Our relationship is much stronger, and this vacation made us feel like kids again. We sort of captured some of that innocence. Our sons'

energy is around us always, and bringing him with us on our vacation proved it. It was like he was letting us forget about things just for four days and de-stress.

When we got back, our problems were still there, but we had a greater sense of peace. I am sure there will be days that will be harder than others, and we will never forget the pain that we went through. But we know that our sons' spirit and energy is around us and protecting us, even in Las Vegas.

(Written by Elena Sammut—in memory of Love, 5/20/00.)

Announcements

(Continued from page 20)

March of Dimes Bereavement Kits

The MOD compiled a Bereavement Kit for parents who have experienced pregnancy or infant loss. The kit contains a booklet discussing the emotional issues of loss, advice for family and friends, considerations for a subsequent pregnancy and a list of resources. If interested call MOD at 888-MODIMES, then press option 1 for the Resource Center.

Walk to Remember

Tentative Date: October 6, 2002 (rain or shine)
Time: 1:00 p.m.
Place: Meet at Suffern's Municipal Parking Lot (Chestnut Street)

We Are On The Web!

You can now get information about the Perinatal Bereavement Group on the Web. Go to Good Samaritan Hospital's website: www.goodsamhosp.org. Click on Health and Wellness Programs and then Bereavement. You can also download copies of back issues of *Hope and Healing* newsletter. So, go take a look, and let us know what you think. FYI: the logo of mother/father/baby was designed by one of our dads, Ed Walsh, in memory of his daughter, Desiree.

Candlelight Memorial Program

Mark your calendar: Sunday, December 8, 2002, at 6 p.m.

Name a Star With Your Baby's Name

The International Star Registry helps people name one of approximately 18 million charted stars. The cost is \$57 (including shipping). If interested, call 800-282-3333 or visit them on the web at: www.starregistry.com.

Children and Grief

Grief is not a monster to hide from. That is the principle at Hearts & Crafts in Suffern, New York. Hearts & Crafts was founded in 1994 by Laura Hudson, a registered art therapist, and Charlie Lochner, a family counselor, to provide support to children and families of the community who have experienced loss through: death, divorce, abuse or catastrophic illness.

Hearts & Craft is located at:
House of Hope
3 Church Rd.
Suffern, NY
845-357-0023

Grandparents/ Family/ Friends Support

Let Pam know if there are grandparents, family and friends interested in a support meeting. This group has been very powerful and meaningful, and will meet when needed.

Thank You Ronnie

Ronnie Lutz facilitated the Miscarriage/Ectopic support group for many years and assisted many families through very difficult times. She will no longer facilitate the group but will remain an integral part of the Program.

Thank you, Ronnie, for your many years of love in honor of your babies.

Gratitude

The Newsletter committee--Joyce Altman, Carol Maxwell-Panny, Irene Walsh & Gil Giannini--is so deserving of all of our gratitude and heartfelt appreciation for all their hard work and dedication. The effort and time that goes into making this Newsletter so special cannot be put into words. Thank you Joyce, Carol, Irene and Gil from all of us for the love and dedication you demonstrate in memory of your babies.

In Memoriam Lisa DeGroat Hansen 8/22/63-12/17/01

Lisa DeGroat Hansen (one of "our" moms) passed away after a long illness. Family and friends will always remember Lisa for her generosity and the hard fought battle she waged against her illness. I and many of Lisa's family and friends will always remember Lisa's unremitting love and devotion to her daughter, Marissa Dorothy who died on 12/27/95 after a valiant struggle as well. I never saw Lisa without her beautiful gold necklace that said in bold letters, "Marissa Dorothy." She wore that necklace with such love and pride.

Lisa's parents Linda and Brooke DeGroat, her husband Paul and their wonderful family were always very supportive of Lisa and the loss of her Marissa; they attended several Walk to Remember and Candlelight Services. I would like to extend our deepest sympathy, love and support.



Good Samaritan Hospital
255 Lafayette Avenue
Suffern, New York 10901
Attn: Pam Magi - Labor & Delivery

Please let us know whether or not you want to continue to receive this newsletter.

- Yes, I want to continue to receive this newsletter.
- No, I do not want to receive this newsletter, but keep me informed of your special events.
- Please remove my name from **ALL** of your mailing lists.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Comments: _____

I have a relative/friend who should receive this newsletter. Please place the following name on your mailing list.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____