



# Hope and Healing

Newsletter of the Perinatal Bereavement Program of Good Samaritan Hospital

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## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**WALK TO REMEMBER 2006**

OCTOBER 22, 2006

**CANDLELIGHT MEMORIAL SERVICE**

DECEMBER 10, 2006

Hope and Healing Newsletter

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## Walk to Remember

by Lauren Galke

**W**hat a beautiful day! We ask that God bless this day, bless us and bless our babies.

Today we take special time out to hold our babies in our hearts and carry them up the hill to celebrate their lives and accomplishments. We don't get the usual celebrations—the first days of school, the little league games, the recitals, graduations. We get this walk.

We get today, once a year to come together and publicly celebrate and memorialize our babies. We need this day, and we thank those who work so hard for it. Thank you for this day to celebrate our children.

Today I celebrate my daughter Hayden Grace. I remember her inspirational four-and-a-half-month battle with can-



cer. I remember her grace, her beauty and her style. I am proud of her strength, her dignity and all of the lessons she taught me.

Forrest Gump taught us that life is like a box of chocolates. Well Hayden taught me that life is like eating a box of chocolates on a roller coaster.

On this roller coaster called life, there is no steering wheel, and you can't control the speed or the ups and downs of the track. You can't just get off when you're not enjoying the ride, even as you wonder to yourself what the point was of getting on in the first place.

Hayden taught me that you can't control what happens to you, but you can control how you are going to respond to it. She taught me that I have

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## The Other Side of Grief

by Deb Brennan

**W**hen Pam asked me if I considered speaking at the

Candle Lighting this year, I told her I thought it was probably better for newer members to speak because it would perhaps help them with their grief. I said that my family and I are doing well now and we can step to the side so others can gain from the magic of this wonderful program. Well bells and whistles went off in Pam's mind because she exclaimed, "What a perfect message to send to the new people... There Is Hope!"

For a very long time we didn't feel like we had hope or would ever have hope. My family and I started on this inconceivable journey almost five years ago. Little did we know how many mountains we would have to climb to get to the other side of our grief. We are doing well. Yes, we miss our babies and daughters tremendously. Yes, not a day

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## *A Mother of Two*

*by Kelly Lowery*

**I**t was two years on January 15—the anniversary of the death of our son Jacob Ryan Lowery. I have tried so many times to write our story. See we were one of the unfortunate people forced to make a Heart Breaking Choice, and I have been embarrassed to admit the truth of our story for a long time. I think the time has finally come to tell my family's story. The newsletter is a great thing for all of us grieving parents and grandparents, but few people in our situation have a voice.

It all started two months before his death. My husband and I couldn't wait to start a family. We married in May and were pregnant by August. We were beyond excited. I am an Ultrasound Tech, so I scanned myself every day. I saw each milestone just as it happened. At Thanksgiving I was on call and got called in. Jeremy, my husband, came with me. After my patient I scanned myself so he could see the baby too. I remember saying "his head doesn't look right." Immediately Jeremy began to panic and I calmed him down and told him not to worry, that it was probably because I was scanning myself sitting up and couldn't get the correct angle.

That Monday I went back to work and rescanned myself. There I was all alone in a dark room staring at my worst nightmare on a screen. I went back to work and spent the next two weeks dealing with the fact that our son was sick. I tried to cope with it alone first so I could be strong for my husband and our families. I didn't even tell my doctor.

Finally I called the doctor and asked for the AFP test. Of course it came back positive. I broke the news to my husband, and our life-long journey began. We went to

the doctor and were referred to specialists. Our son had spina bifida and hydrocephalus.

The day after Christmas, my mother came to the Level II ultrasound. She was so excited. She had never seen an ultrasound in real time before. I spoke to the Tech with my eyes and I knew the baby was getting worse. The fluid in his brain had doubled since I scanned myself two weeks earlier, and Jake had not grown since 17 weeks. It was a long ride home as I explained to my mother what was going on with her grandson. We went to the doctor to discuss our options. Unfortunately we knew what we had to do.

We were angry and I questioned myself and God every waking moment. I knew from a medical point of view that I had done nothing wrong, but I couldn't help question and ask Why? Why us? Why him? He didn't deserve this. We didn't deserve this. People have babies every day that they don't want. We wanted him more than anything else in the world, and now we had to give him back.

I knew in my head that our decision was the right one. I just couldn't convince my heart. Eventually we told the doctors we were ready to let him go. We went to the hospital on January 14 at 11 a.m., and by 2 p.m. they began the induction. It took 21 hours of excruciating pain, which I believed I deserved for what I was doing. Finally at 11:10 a.m. on January 15, Jacob Ryan was thrust into this world and placed on my chest. This tiny little baby (he only weighed 10 ounces and was 10 inches long) changed my life forever. He was beautiful, and talk about a bittersweet moment. It was the most amazing

thing I had ever seen. Jeremy and I created him and gave him back to God. It was beautiful and heart-breaking all at the same time. I will never be able to give words to that moment. I folded his little fingers around mine and wept. Jeremy sat beside me and together we told him everything we would never get the chance to say face to face again. I'm sorry and I love you we repeated again and again. It was the most beautiful moment of my life. I will never forget his smell, or the feeling of his cold damp skin, or that peach fuzz all over his cute little face. I realized that moment that the greatest, most unselfish love is that of a mother. Even though I couldn't bring him home I felt I had a lifetime, his lifetime, with him. I had gotten to know him for 22 1/2 weeks and no one could ever take that away from me.

As the days and months go by I know more and more each day that he is still with us. I see him in our nine-month-old daughter. I feel him in her touch and hear him in her voice. I have given up on trying to get answers for the Why questions. Instead I choose to live my life for him. I am a better ultrasound tech and I think a better mother and wife because of this experience. We made a Heart Breaking Choice; it was the hardest choice I have ever made. On good days I believe Jake decided to let his sister live with us on this Earth while he waits to spend eternity with us. On bad days I feel like a murderer. Luckily there are a lot less bad days now. My head knows the decision was right, I just don't know how to convince my heart.

***“Even though I couldn't bring him home, I felt I had a lifetime, his lifetime, with him.”***

## Sibling Memories

### Thulan Terese Nguyen

by Thulan's mom, Jane

*Thulan Terese Nguyen was born on October 14, 2004. During the few minutes that she lived, her sisters Maylan and Elan spent time with her and we have integrated her into our family. The following is an example of Thulan's presence in the Nguyen family.*

One morning I was making pancakes for Maylan and Elan—regular round pancakes. One pancake had more of an oval shape to it, and I started to think about making a monkey design for the last pancake. My girls know that I sometimes make unusual-looking pancakes, but this monkey was a first try.

Of course, we figured out that it was Thulan playing a trick on me. "Mommy, I want my special pancake," she must have muttered into my ears. And believe it or not, just the right amount of batter was left to make the whole monkey pancake.

After the girls and I put eyes, nose and lips on the monkey, we placed the dish in front of Thulan's little shrine. I asked Maylan and Elan to hold the plate for Thulan and took a picture. It was just an ordinary day for us, but we took comfort in feeling Thulan's presence that morning. Oh, by the way, Thulan was born in the year of the monkey.



Maylan and Elan hold the special monkey pancake made for their sister Thulan by her mom.

### Armon

by Bianca Albanese  
(Armon's younger sister)

Hello Armon  
your family are we  
we are putting this bow  
upon your tree.  
We love you so much  
why did you have to go?  
Our sunshine you'll be  
and you'll always glow.

*(Armon Albanese—born on October 19, 1993, died on January 26, 1994.)*

### Life Can Be Hard

by Shelby

*Have you ever lost someone very special to you? I have. I lost my baby brother Julian. It is heart-breaking when that happens. If it ever happens to you, I'd just like to tell you you're not alone. Here is a poem I made about Julian.*

I miss you dear brother  
And so does our mother  
You will always be my friend  
Until the very end.

Your soul is free, and still  
I know you'll never forget me  
You'll forever be in my heart  
Even though we're always apart.

I love you and I always will.

Your big sister Shelby (age 10)

*(In honor of Julian, who died in November 2001)*

## *Victoria*

*by Yelena Kulick*

The day when you were born, between your parents' birthdays,  
Colors of autumn just started touching leaves,  
Sunshine filled the room with light and magic beauty  
And angels gathered all around you on their knees.

The moment I held you in my arms and felt your warmth  
Our souls were at peace.  
Your eyes were closed but a tender smile curled your scarlet lips.  
I will always remember how beautiful you were, my Victoria.

I sang you songs just one last time, when there were just two of us,  
The same songs I sang for your sister every night  
And you inside me, you who couldn't wait  
to be born,  
Moved to the sound of my voice. Do you  
remember?

There are so many more songs I wanted  
to sing,  
So many times I wanted to be near you,  
But, my angel, you will not hear me, and  
you will never know the sweet warmth of  
the drink  
Your sister called banana-strawberry  
ice-crème.

When the telephone rang in the dark  
hospital room with double doors  
You were sleeping by my side.  
I grabbed it fast so it wouldn't wake you up  
But nothing, Victoria, could wake you  
from the eternal dream.  
I will never know the color of your eyes or  
the sound of your voice  
But I always will remember the power of your touch.

We brought you home for the last goodbye, put you in the crib.  
Your big sister smiled and didn't understand you will forever sleep.  
And the flames of the candles were shaking with sadness  
And the lilies were lowering their heads.  
We walked outside, holding you gently, the warm sun on your face.

A Christian blessing, a little white casket, white lilies, a last kiss.  
I close my eyes in the river of tears that a gentle warm breeze tries to dry.  
Our guardian angel, our special daughter!  
We thank you for making us wiser and stronger, more loving and thankful for life,  
Even as we try to imagine where you are now.

It must be a beautiful place, full of love and peace  
Because it is home for an angel like you.  
I feel Victoria is here and whispering to me,  
"Mommy, don't cry. I always will be here inside your heart."



## Letters From the Heart



Dear Pam and Eileen,

The ceremony was beautiful, and it was really helpful! Last year, because I was pregnant, I don't think I allowed myself to feel the pain of Christmas. I am feeling it more now.

Kelly

***“So please tell newly grieving parents that, in fact, it does get better. Tell them that the gut-wrenching pain does fade, even though it might appear now that it never will.”***



Dear Pam,

It was a beautiful Walk—very bittersweet. It's nice to remember them, but I wish I were somewhere else, oblivious to the walk.

Audrey Smith  
(son Kieran Keller)



Hi Pam,

The Walk to Remember was wonderful. I was able to sit back this year and reflect on Arianna with a sense of pride. This was my fifth walk, and every year I experience such different feelings. Arianna would have been four, and my life has changed so much since I first attended in 2001. I didn't know anyone at that first walk, but this year I saw many people that I have grown to love over the years. I don't have that gut-wrenching pain I had during the first two walks. I now have a sense of pride, peace and accomplishment because of what I have overcome with everyone's help.

I remember wishing at the first walk that I could jump ahead a few years so I wouldn't have to deal with all this heartache. I didn't think I was going to make it.

What stuck out in my mind the most at this year's walk was seeing the families drive in one by one. Some looked nervous, some hopeful, but most looked relieved. I think everyone realized they were among family and those who understood what they were feeling. The committee did a fantastic job—the banner, the T-shirts, and the bear mementos for the tree were all great.

Chantell



Dear Pam,

Oh, what a wonderful Walk to Remember. It was a wonderful, honorable day for our babies. Tears were flowing from my eyes, and I am so grateful that Kevin Paul was honored in such a beautiful way. Thanks to everyone at Good Samaritan!

Blessings,  
Kathy



Dear Pam,

I'm sorry I couldn't make it to the Walk this year, but I'm sure it was beautiful as always. I want to thank you for doing this every year. I know it means a lot to so many people, and I know you do it from your heart.

When my son Brian was stillborn in 1977 there was no support group. I had to get through it

alone. It wasn't easy, but I made it. I had a nurse in Nyack who encouraged me to see and hold my baby, and I'm so thankful that she did. I really look forward to the walks, and I'm sad when I can't make them.

I have a daughter who is older than Brian and a son who was born after; he will be 25 this year. I'm so thankful for both of them. I also have two beautiful grandchildren who bring me great joy. Thanks for listening. Have a good year and I hope to see you next year.

Thanks,  
Pat



Pam,

Kathy and I talked about going to the Walk after all these years, and decided to go. It was like closure for me. Seeing people in varying states of grief reminded me of where I was and how far I have come. I think of Kevin often and even wonder what it would be like to have a son in high school. Would he play football, seeing that both girls love cheerleading? Remember how I could only see him as a baby and Kevin, Sr., looked far past that? This is just one of the many changes I have gone through over these past 14 years. I miss him most when I think that I will never know the mother-son bond.

Well, anyway, I can think of my son and tell people about him without crying. So please tell newly grieving parents that, in fact, it does get better. Tell them that the gut-wrenching pain does fade, even though it might appear

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## Pam's Page



**I**t is the beginning of January 2006 and I find myself at a loss for words! (I know that is pretty funny.) Let me try and explain. Since I began this "work," I have become very mindful of the significance of words, phrases and clichés. To say Merry Christmas, Happy Chanukah or Happy New Year seems imprudent and thoughtless. On the other hand so many of you expressed at recent meetings that you couldn't wait for the year 2006! I wonder, did you exclaim Happy New Year on New Year's Eve???

On the flip side, I can't help but remember one of our families, Jill and Chris Giorgio, whose daughter Emily was stillborn on New Year's Eve 2000. I

wonder if they will ever be able to say Happy New Year and mean it. My guess is that is not possible, even though they have had two healthy, beautiful sons subsequently. (See the Dear Pam letter from Chris.)

For most people, thinking about the holidays brings thoughts of joyous celebrations with family and friends. But for someone who has had a child die, thinking about the holidays brings on feelings of dread and anxiety. This year I observed many of "our" parents determined to let their feelings guide them as they made choices that were easier on them by limiting family get togethers, choosing to spend time either away from home or at home with each other.

Now that the holidays are over and you have "survived," my HOPE is that in years to come the traditions you start now—attending the Candle Light service, buying or making a

special ornament every year for the child who died, donating an age-appropriate gift in honor of your baby, planting a tree, lighting a candle, mentoring others who have had a child die, doing something for someone who has been kind to you—will become some of your family's most treasured holiday memories.

Whatever you choose to do, follow your instincts, follow your heart and make it special for you and your family. Spend time reflecting on the little things that you are thankful for.

Warmly,

Pam

***“Whatever you choose to do, follow your instincts, follow your heart and make it special for you and your family.”***

## *I Am the Stillness of the Ocean*

*by Marianne Kaszner*

Do not mourn for me—do not grieve, God has special plans for me.  
Although you cannot hold me—I know your heart it tears—  
Please do not doubt for a moment that I am always there.  
I am the stillness of the ocean and the wind as it gently blows—  
The slow bloom of a flower and the glistening of the snow.  
I am an angel up in heaven with those who have gone before  
To watch over and protect you—to keep you safe forever more.  
I have found my paradise, and will help you find your way—  
Remember me with love until we meet again someday.

*(Written in honor of my nephew Austin Bernard Calvello.)*

## *I Miss My Kids*

**M**any tears have fallen for days now. Are all of our Angels trying to tell us something? Great sadness fills my heart these days. I don't know why. Have we all lost a little connection? Have we all moved on in our lives? It may not be the worst thing to move forward, but I think we all need

to remind ourselves of one thing.

I miss my kids every day. I open my eyes and they are not there. Early in the morning every day of my life, I hold my breathe for a second and think about that.

I miss my kids every time I leave for work and they are not there for me to kiss good-bye and rub their little heads goodbye while they are asleep and dreaming.

I miss my kids every time I drive home and they're not at the front door to greet me with little open arms, warm hugs and sloppy kisses. But I can picture them there.

I miss my kids at night, when they are not in our home and I

can't say a small prayer standing over them while they sleep safely in a warm, cozy bed.

I miss my kids at dinner when we thank God for our family and hold hands in a circle around the table. There's always an empty space in my heart.

I miss my kids when my wife says she's going to take our other children to the playground and I know they are not there to play with their brothers and sister.

I miss my kids at Church when we hold hands with the rest of our family and pray the Our Father. So many tiny fingers and little hands are missing.

I miss my kids when we all gather around their grave, hold hands and pray for them, and I know they are lying there below our tears. And I miss them when my living children kiss their own little hands and place them over the engraved stone where the names of their brothers and sisters are written.

I miss my kids on their birthdays, on holidays and on family vacations, and I celebrate with sadness on the day they died.

I miss them when I look into my wife's eyes, and without

saying a word I know she's missing them to.

I miss the love that our hearts waited to share.

I miss the laughter we waited to hear.

I miss the joy a young child brings with that high-pitched voice when they try to sing out loud.

I miss my kids all the time.

The rain today reminded me how much I miss them, how much I love them, how much I wish they were here. Those little tears have been falling from heaven for so many days now. Take some time today and remember. Remember what we shared together on so many occasions. Can you remember the times you waited for; so preciously we treasured those moments. I just wanted to tell all of you that I haven't forgotten my kids, or you and yours, and that I miss sharing that time with all of you.

God Bless you and all of our Angels.

Love your friends,  
Angelo & Tania Narcise and family

*(In honor of Michael, Andrew, Christopher, Linda and Baby April Narcise.)*

***“I miss the love that our hearts waited to share. I miss the laughter we waited to hear. I miss my kids all the time.”***

***“Zachary, in my heart you live forever. Thank you for making me the person I am today. I love you and miss you dearly.”***

***—Mama***

## *Happy Mother's Day*

Happy Mother's Day to those of you who have only dreamed of a child you could never conceive.

Happy Mother's Day to those of you who never got to feel your child flutter in your womb for he was gone too soon.

Happy Mother's Day to those of you who went through labor to hold a still, silent yet perfect angel baby in your arms.

Happy Mother's Day to those of you who looked day by day at your healthy baby only to find her silent, cold and gone one day.

Happy Mother's Day to those of you who fought hard and whose child fought harder for a life too short.

Happy Mother's Day to those of you who knew the day was coming when you would no longer hold your child yet you gave him a full life.

Happy Mother's Day to those whose child was four or five and brought you crushed wildflowers last year but who has gone on since then.

Happy Mother's Day to those of you who could no longer pick up your baby because she was too big, but in the end you rocked back and forth invaded by grief.

Happy Mother's Day to those of you who raised your children well but had to bury them all too young, all too soon.

Happy Mother's Day to all who are mothers whether they cherish their children all on Earth or they spend Mother's Day enthralled by their grief for a brief moment in time.

Were we more mothers then than now? No!  
Be clear and let no one take away our right of motherhood!!

## **Who You'd Be Today**

*Sung by Kenny Chesney*

*Written by Bill Luther and Aimee Mayo*

Sunny days seem to hurt the most  
I wear the pain like a heavy coat  
I feel you everywhere I go  
I see your smile, I see your face  
I hear you laughin' in the rain  
Still can't believe you're gone

It ain't fair you died too young  
Like a story that had just begun  
But death tore the pages all away  
God knows how I miss you  
All the hell that I been through  
Just knowin' no one could take your place  
Sometimes I wonder  
Who you'd be today

Would you see the world, would you  
chase your dreams  
Settle down with a family  
I wonder what would you name your babies  
Somedays the sky's so blue  
I feel like I can talk to you  
And I know it might sound crazy

Sunny days seem to hurt the most  
I wear the pain like a heavy coat  
The only thing that gives me hope  
Is I know  
I'll see you again some day  
Someday, someday

*(Song lyrics submitted by Michelle Calvello in memory of Austin Bernard Calvello, August 17, 2005)*

## *Rest in Peace*

*by Tara Fishler*

**I**t has been 13 days since losing Collier Bradley. Last night Stephen and I chose his Hebrew name: Yalon Shalom. Yalon means, "He will rest." Shalom means, "Hello, goodbye and peace." Stephen chose from a list I created and that I'd looked at many times. Collier's name means, "Rest in Peace." I really like the sound and meaning of both his English and Hebrew names. I don't feel like he is Resting in Peace though.

Stephen and I planted the lilac bush that Mom gave us from her garden. We dug a hole together between the two decks and I moved the stones to make a "C." I took a picture yesterday.

There are times I feel like I am on the verge of tears. Other times I can put on a happy face, though usually I crash by the end of the day. Part of me thinks, "This shouldn't be so hard/painful." Steve and I both agree, "This sucks!"

I keep doing all those things that are supposed to help with closure—but they don't. I have painted a candlestick holder. We planted the bush. I e-mailed colleagues and friends. We donated to the National Down's Syndrome Society.

Shirley and Roger planted a tree in Israel in Collier's name. I had just said to Steve, "We have nothing with his name." A certificate came in the mail. It made me cry. I was sad and happy at the same time.

Lucy (my midwife) sent a card. Ratna and Dr. Inesta (the chiropractor I saw twice) sent flowers. People have called and e-mailed. I appreciate it, though sometimes I just don't want to discuss it. I don't want to hear people fight for right words that don't exist, and I don't want to hear wrong ones like, "You did the right thing." There is no right thing, as I think I've said before. Only two bad choices no one should have to make.

Jordan, my three-year-old son, asks about the baby, which is hard. I told him yesterday, when he asked where I went, that I saw the doctor. He said, "For which baby?" I said, "Not for the baby, for me." He said, "For a check-up?" I said yes, and reminded him that the baby had boo boos and isn't in mommy's belly anymore. It is so hard not knowing what he understands of this.

I am on a plane, flying through the clouds on my way to the Association for Conflict Resolution (ACR) conference in Minneapolis. Am I closer to my baby's soul in heaven? Is that ridiculous?

As we took off, I was reading the ACR Family Section Journal and stopped when I saw the work loss. I thought of Yalon Shalom and when I looked out the window and saw the Israeli flag on the tail of an El Al flight. Then I saw the American flag on the tail of another plane. "Beshert," I thought. It was meant to be.

## *Happy First Birthday My Precious Son Kevin Paul*

Oh, how I love and miss my little baby boy,  
Kevin Paul.

Kevin Paul, I pray to God to do for you on this your  
first birthday, and always, all the things I yearn to do  
for you ... until we are together again.

Our Love Is Forever.

Forever Your Mommy xxxooo

P.S. Kevin Paul send your whispers to your sister,  
Cassandra. She loves and misses you too.

*(Kevin Paul Denuel, 7 lb. 3 oz., 21 inches, perfect. Stillborn on December 14, 2004 at 41 weeks, cord accident.)*

## *Hiding the Pain*

by Amy Gradley

I lost my son George on June 3, 2003, at 21 weeks as the result of a very heartbreaking choice. I was so consumed with what I now know was grief that my only desire was to become pregnant as quickly as possible. It never occurred to me that I should take time to deal with the loss. I did play by all of the rules: I had my beautiful son autopsied and went to genetic counseling. Once it was determined that my son's problems were a fluke, something that should not have happened and would likely not repeat, I set all my energies on getting pregnant. I even finished decorating the nursery. By September, a mere three months later, I was pregnant. That's when everything changed. I should have known something wasn't right when I started crying hysterically after seeing the positive pregnancy test. These were not tears of joy; they were tears of fear.

I contacted Pam in October, and in November I attended my first Moving On group at Good Sam. Immediately I felt at home. I could equate our group to soldiers heading back to the front line. Our pregnancies were all haunted by our previous losses. We all seemed to have the same secrets. For many months, I did not tell anyone except my husband and best friend that I was pregnant, almost until it was too hard to hide the fact. I did not want to disappoint them again. I was trying to protect myself by distancing myself from this pregnancy.

As I slowly began telling people I was pregnant, many of their reactions were of relief ...

finally she will have her baby! Family and friends filled me with great lines like, "See last time you just rushed into it, but this time it is meant to be." Or, "Now you can put the past behind you, it won't happen again." Or, my favorite, "Everything will be fine, I can feel it." I think these well-wishers started to annoy me even more. As the pregnancy progressed everyone else seemed to forget that not long ago everything wasn't so fine. They were not with me at the countless doctors' appointments as I lay silently on that table panicking when they couldn't find the baby's heartbeat right away or when the radiologist started to focus on something during my ultrasound. They can't comprehend how you drive yourself crazy trying to remember the last time you felt the baby kick, or how many times you just wished you could hit the fast forward button and have this all over with. They will not know how you want to die every time someone asks you, "Is this your first baby?"

It is extremely sad to know that I will never have an innocent pregnancy. I will never experience the pure joy and excitement associated with these blessed events. To me it will be nine months of waiting for the worst. I will not smile happily at pregnant women and ask them ridiculous questions about cravings or weight gain. I will never attend a Lamaze class and exchange pleasantries with the other first-time mothers. I will not have baby showers. I will sit in the doctor's waiting room and not talk about my loss because I would not want to burst someone's bubble.

A year after the safe arrival of my son Jake, I was shopping in Babies R Us when I noticed a couple from a support group that I'd attended right after the loss of my son. I remembered that they had lost twins and had suffered a couple of miscarriages, and they too were focusing on getting pregnant more than anything. In their cart was a son that couldn't have been more than a few months old. I noticed that the woman was crying as she stopped in front of the cribs. She was holding onto her husband and trying to hide her pain. She was crying for all of her babies that would never need a crib. That is when I contacted Pam about attending the Heartbreaking Choice group. I realized that I had not dealt with my loss. I had just postponed it.

***"It is extremely sad to know that I will never have an innocent pregnancy. I will never experience the pure joy and excitement associated with these blessed events."***

## *Losing Anna*

by Bari and Thomas Oswald

**H**ope ... My daughter, Anna Therese, would have been ten on December 6 if she had lived. For all of us who have lost a baby, the pain, anger and sorrow don't become any less sharp. Those feelings may take a back seat to the inevitable everyday tasks and duties that we must carry out, but I find the smallest reminder can easily bring them to the front again. For me, it is birthdays and holidays, a certain baby's cry, a little girl running around, a dress in a store or a little girl's eyes looking into mine.

I used to ask myself if it was wrong to feel the grief so

deeply all these years until I spoke with other women who had also lost a baby. They, too, had the same conflicts of emotion: the need to "get on with life" and "snap out of it" versus the need to keep their baby's memory alive. When we lost our baby, it was as if a part of us died too.

There is a strong connection with our babies that starts when a single seed is fertilized and becomes a living being. For mothers, there is no relationship more intimate than that of a woman with her unborn child during pregnancy. When our babies die, the loss of this connection can bring on the most terrible kind of grief. Because we feel that we must "move on," many of us keep this grief internally, afraid to admit that it doesn't get any better.

Having said that, there are ways

that I have managed the pain and grief so that it doesn't overwhelm me and I've been able to move on. Here are the things that I found helped me:

**Grieve.** I was unable to grieve properly for years, until I realized one day that it is okay to grieve and there need not be any time limit to your grief. Grieving is healthy and it helps you rationalize your feelings.

**Talk about it.** You may feel that you don't want to talk to people because you don't want them to feel uncomfortable. However, not talking about your baby may make you feel as if your baby never existed or is no longer a part of your life—and your baby is!

**One of my greatest achievements** was when I was asked by someone how many children I had, and I said three but one died. Previously I would have said two. Yes, there may be an awkward moment on the part of the listener, but to me I have acknowledged all of my children. Once it becomes apparent that I am not uncomfortable discussing it, the listener will relax too and the awkwardness will pass for both of you!

**If you keep your baby's spirit alive,** you will keep yourself alive and your emotions balanced. Talk about how your baby looked or may have looked, and what they might have been like now. You will find this uplifting and it will help you feel that your baby continues to be a part of your family. More important, you may find that the grieving process becomes easier. I am not saying that we should build a shrine for a lost baby, but by the

same token I personally believe that it is unhealthy to simply stop talking about them.

Take the good days with the bad. Even years following the death of your baby, you will have your good and bad days, as I do. This is normal—we are not super people, we are human. When I woke up on December 6, I said, "It's Anna's birthday. She would have been ten today," and I cried a deep, soul-wrenching cry. Then I talked about her. I thought about her. It helped a lot.

When you have a very bad day, keep busy. You may find that making something your baby would have liked might help. Be with people. It's okay to lean on others when you need to. If you have been so blessed, don't forget your other children. It is easy to become so overwhelmed with grief that your other children take a back seat to the baby that died. For me, I was consumed with fear that something might happen to my two sons as well. I was afraid to get too close to them sometimes for fear that they would die too, and I could not bear to go through that again. It is important to remember that our living children need us more than before. As adults we understand what has happened; it is not so easy for a child who might believe that it was their fault that a brother or sister died. Don't forget your spouse is grieving too!!! They are in pain.

Accept and be blameless. This is the hardest thing of all. You may not accept that your baby had to die, but learn to accept that they did. We will never know the answer to why it had to be our

*(Continued on page 19)*

***"Even years following the death of your baby, you will have your good and bad days. This is normal."***

## *Dear Baby Mark*

**T**oday is September 6, 2005, your due date. How my heart aches for you. I long to hold you in my arms—kissing and nuzzling your tiny face, fingers and toes—if only just once. However, I know that would never be enough. Letting you go was the hardest decision imaginable. How I wanted to keep you all for myself—just you and me, facing the world together. But I realized after talking with all the doctors that that would not be best for you. They told me this was the most courageous and compassionate decision. Nothing I could do would take away your suffering, the surgeries and quality of life ahead for you had you survived to term. Logically, I now realize that this was the best choice, but my heart is still having a hard time accepting all this and letting you go. I pray one day I will find peace.

Sometimes when I look at your two older brothers, I imagine you with them. The other day, I was driving and when I glanced in my rearview mirror at the backseat, I pictured you in your car seat between them. How they would have loved you too! We talk about you all the time—their baby brother in heaven looking down on them. We talk about how Jesus has made your heart and head all better and you are no longer sick. We tease that your great grandparents are fighting over you up in heaven, and we picture you sitting on their laps, laughing and playing. I thank God for that little bit of peace Luke gave us. I pray that your great

grandparents and Judi will look after you for your Dad and me.

How my life has changed since you came into it. The innocence I felt before is no longer there. I have cried a river if not a valley of tears. I had suffered loss before but had never felt the pain of a broken heart. I now know what that is. You have made my relationship with your father stronger than ever, being there for each other through all this. I look at your brothers, Luke and Jack, in a different light and am grateful for their health and all of our blessings. I now realize how many we have. Our family and friends have come together for us all and I have never felt so loved. You have made me closer to my own mother and I appreciate her now. You have put everything into perspective for me, and the trivial things are no longer important. I am less judgmental. I now have more compassion for people, especially the handicapped and their caregivers. My rosary is no longer dusty.

When our friends and family hear your story, they tell me how sorry they are that we had to go through all this. I don't want them to feel sorry for us, as I now realize that without all the sadness and heartbreak I would never have felt the bond and love I feel for you today. Nothing can take that away. You have changed me forever.

I pray that someday in heaven we will be reunited,

and I will have the opportunity to be your mother again and hold you in my arms until we are both ready to let go. Until that day, you will remain forever a mark on my heart—my precious baby sweetheart.

I love you with all of my heart.

Love,  
Mommy XOXOX

*I pray that in heaven we will be reunited, and I will hold you in my arms until we are both ready to let go."*

## Dear Rio

by Cara Sue Doriguzzi

I went on my vacation this past July 4 with my friend Jen and her three children, Brit-tany, Ryan and Sean. We all had a wonderful time, but you know that don't you? We got to Long Beach Island on July 3, late after-noon. It was a beautiful sunny day and I thought of

you. I unpacked the car and put my things away, and I thought of you. Then I sat on the porch and thought, "You should be here with me." As the evening ap-proached and Jen was getting Ryan and Sean to bed, I thought "I would be putting you to

bed too."

The 4th of July dawned and I sat on the porch drinking coffee and reading. I thought of you, and knew I wouldn't have you to chase after.

When everyone was up and ready, we walked to the beach. I thought of how I would be holding your hand. The sand was warm on my feet, the sun hot on my head. I thought of how this would have been your first time on a beach. When we were on the beach looking out into the endless blue ocean I thought this would have been the first time you would have seen the ocean, and I wished you were there. Ryan wanted to play by the water, so I walked with him to the water's edge. At first he was frightened of the waves. But holding my hand

he let the water run over his feet, and a big smile lit his little face. I thought of you and how I would be playing with you in the water.

Rio, you would really like Ryan; he is six weeks older than you. Ryan is a sweet boy with golden brown hair and big brown eyes. He smiles and laughs a lot and is kind beyond words for a child his age. I thought of how the two of you would have been the best of friends. In my heart I believe you would have grown to be a lot like him—friendly, funny, loving and kind.

After a day in the sun, we went home to cook dinner. My friends Kristine and Mi-chael and their two children came for dinner. We all had fun as we talked and laughed and watched the children play. I thought of you—how you would be there playing and running around and get-ting into mischief, because that's what children are meant to do. As the sun went down we got ready to see the fire-works. Sean was sleeping so I offered to stay behind. I thought of you. I didn't have you with me all excited to see the big show of lights. I know Jen felt bad. She felt that I was missing out on some-thing, but I wasn't. I thought to myself that I would have gone if you were there for me to take. But somehow without you it's not the same. The childlike things I once took such joy in no longer have the same meaning. So I stayed behind and read some more.

The rest of my vacation went pretty much like that, I thought of you often and wished things could be differ-ent. But it's not meant to be and I have come to terms with this. So I'll share my vacation with you in this letter of love.

Love always,  
Mommy

*(Written by Cara Sue Doriguzzi for her son Rio who was stillborn on April 3, 2002.)*

***"In my heart, Rio, I believe you would have grown to be a lot like Ryan—friendly, funny, loving and kind."***

## Letters From the Heart

*(Continued from page 5)*

now that it never will. After the first year, things start to turn slowly.

It's amazing that there were over 150 people at the Candle Lighting. That just shows how needed the groups are to so many. When I talk of Kevin, I tell people how Kevin, Sr., and I would not have survived (literally) without the groups. That's why so many of us come back to reconnect from time to time. So, remember, you never "let go" of us.

Vilma



Dear Pam,

Thank you very much for the Candle Lighting ceremony. The readings from some of the moms were so touching they drew tears from everyone. Eugene's singing was a magnificent gift for all grieving parents. Today, Thulan would have been 14 months old, and I miss her dearly.

Love,  
Jane



Hi Pam,

The Candle Lighting ceremony really hit home. As always it was beautiful. If it wasn't for the group I don't think I would have made it through all. I fully believe my life would be completely different. Ten years later, and I still believe this.

Jill Lennon



Dear Pam,

Thank you so much for forwarding the newsletter to me. I found it comforting and supportive. Lou and I are doing well in Maryland. We have grieved and cried—but eventually those tears became cleansing and restorative. We both feel much healed and ready to try again. We honored our baby boy's passing (September 9) by visiting a beautiful grotto in the mountains of Maryland. There we found butterflies, flowers, candles and a holy presence.

With all good wishes,

Linda Mercurio and Lou Vitulli



Hi Pam and Eileen,

I love Christmas time—the decorations, presents, spending time with family and friends, the kids waiting for Santa. I look forward to Christmas so much, I am like a big kid! In the next breath, I can't express how much I dread when it is over! That week is always a tough week for Jill and me, and it really just gets crappy as New Years approaches. I kinda keep counting the days down 7-6-5-4 until the eve is actually here, and although it has gotten easier—or maybe different is the word I am looking for—I still dread the eve and I guess I always will. Even though Jimmy and Bobby are here, and I am forever grateful that they are, I still think about our Emily each and every day. As I said, it has gotten better, or different, but it is hard for me to believe that it has already been six years since we lost our Emily!

Chris



Hi Pam,

How are you? I haven't spoken to you in a long time. Well that time of year is coming up again. The leaves are changing and there is that smell in the air. I'm missing my son. All I think about is not being able to look into his eyes and adore him the way only a parent's love can do. With every level of life that I see Shelby go through I think about Julian and what he would have been like. What his voice would sound like, how he would laugh. Would he be as handsome as Ronnie? Would he love life as much as me? Would he look at a beautiful day and take it in? And, how would Ronnie teach him to be a wonderful man like himself?

Everyday my life goes on without him being here, this I know. But the empty hole never goes away or even closes slightly. Shelby had a project to do at school that described herself, and while all of the other children wrote in their description about being a brother or sister, Shelby's quote was, "Shelby, daughter of Ron & Susan, sister of none." That was a stab. Both Ronnie and I felt the pain when we read that. Oh how I pray that there must be a reason this wonderful creature will not get the chance to be a big sister. I truly believe as a sibling there couldn't be better. She is so compassionate and loving. Maybe God is saving her for something else.

Take care,  
Susan



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

## Book Review



**T**ears of Sorrow, Seeds of Hope: A Jewish Spiritual Companion for Infertility and Pregnancy Loss

Reviewed by Tara Fishler

In dealing with my recent

Heartbreaking Choice, I sought the advice of my rabbi. He let me borrow the book "Tears of Sorrow, Seeds of Hope: A Jewish Spiritual Companion for Infertility and Pregnancy Loss" by Rabbi Nina Beth Cardin. The book is filled with advice, letters and

poems from those who have been in these difficult situations. It is of appeal to both men and women as well as their loved ones.

Cardin suggests rituals and prayers that may give comfort, and acknowledges the rainbow of emotions that's felt as a result of infertility or pregnancy loss. She says, "Emotions follow different rules, rising and falling like the heavings of a mournful chest."

Chapters in the book include "Mourning Loss," "Helping G-d Help Us: Prayers for Medical Intervention," "Pregnancy" and "Finding Peace." Although there are references to holidays and people of the Jewish religion, those of different faiths may

find comfort in the written words of others who have been in similar situations. There are many poignant passages, but the following is a poem, written by Merle Feld, which seems especially relevant:

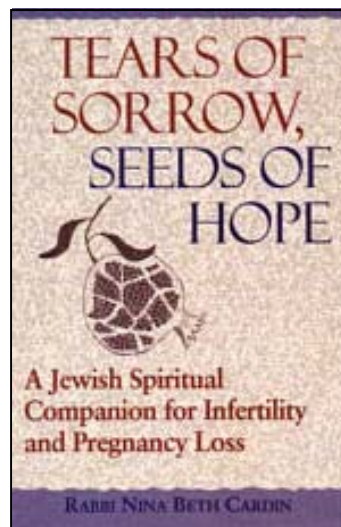
### Healing After a Miscarriage

Nothing helps.  
I taste ashes in my mouth.  
My eyes are flat, dead.  
I want no platitudes,  
no stupid shallow  
comfort.  
I hate all pregnant  
women,  
all new mothers, all soft  
babies.

In the space I'd made  
inside myself  
where I'd moved over  
to give my beloved room  
to grow—  
now there's a tight, angry,  
bitter knot of hatred  
instead.

What is my supplication?  
Stupid people and new  
mothers, leave me alone.  
Deliver me, Lord, of this  
bitter afterbirth.  
Open my heart to my  
husband-lover-friend  
that we may comfort  
each other.  
Open my womb that it may  
yet bear living fruit.

*"Emotions follow different rules, rising and falling like the heavings of a mournful chest."*



*"Tears of Sorrow, Seeds of Hope" was published in 1999 by Jewish Lights Publishing, Woodstock, Vermont. \$19.95. ISBN # 1-58023-017-2*



# Announcements



### Donate Through the United Way

You may make a donation to the GSH Perinatal Bereavement Program via the United Way. GSH'S code for the United Way direct donation is: GSH Perinatal Bereavement Program 036001.

### Borrowed Books/Donate Books

Please return borrowed books when you're finished. If you have books that you no longer need and wish to donate them to our lending library, bring them to a meeting, the Walk, or call the office.

### New Group Formed

In April 2004, Pam started a group for parents who experienced the loss of an older baby and toddler. Anyone needing support may call the office: 845-368-5297.

### Stop Junk Mail

If you are getting "baby" junk mail and wish to get off the list, write to: Mailing Preference Service, P.O. Box 9008, Farmingdale, NY 11735. For telephone solicitation removal: Phone Preference Service, P.O. Box 9014, Farmingdale, NY 11735. This will not stop every call or mailing, but it will catch the bulk. It may take several weeks to take effect. We hope this helps you all.

### Walkway Bricks

Commemorative bricks are available for \$50. Please call for information and an order form; orders need to be placed no later than June 1, 2006.

### Miscarriage and Infant Loss Jewelry

A unique line of jewelry created for healing the grief of miscarriage and infant loss is available from La Belle Dame. The designer says the special bracelet she wore after her second loss kept the memory of her baby alive and gave her the strength to get through her darkest days. See [labelledame.com](http://labelledame.com) for more information.

### Exciting News for Minnesota Parents!

The Missing Angels bill passed unanimously in both the House and Senate in 2005, and was signed by the governor making Minnesota the twelfth state to pass this law. Parents will now be able to receive a certificate of birth for their stillborn baby (over 20 weeks). Even those who had a baby years ago will be able to request a certificate. A special thanks to Joanne Cacciatori (MISS Foundation) and Richard Olsen (National Stillbirth Society) who played key roles in starting this movement and keeping it going!

### Remembrance Quilt/Need More Squares for Another Row!

Ongoing project; call the office for information.

### Parental Grief Survey

You are warmly invited to take part in a research study into Parental Grief following miscarriage, stillbirth, neonatal death, or death in later infancy or childhood. The purpose of the study is to investigate how certain aspects of a person's personality affect the nature of their grief. Dr. Peter Barr of The Children's Hospital at Westmead, Australia, and Joanne Cacciatori, MSW, of the MISS Foundation in Arizona are conducting the study. For more information, go to [missfoundation.org](http://missfoundation.org) and click on "Bereaved Parent Research Study."

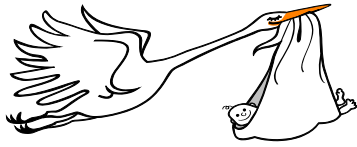
### 2006 Walk to Remember Sunday, October 22, 2006 1:00 p.m.

If anyone would like to participate: speak, read, sing, play music, etc., let Pam or Eileen know by the beginning of September.

### 2006 Candlelight Memorial Service Sunday, December 10, 2006

If you're interested in participating in this program. let Pam or Eileen know by the beginning of November.

## Safe Arrivals



**Caleb Hunter**  
Lauren Colby & Joe Alexander

**Jenna Catherine**  
Eleanor & Carmine Catalano

**Evander Michael**  
Eraina & Terry Collazo

**Drew Thomas**  
Sharon & Robert Geerlof

**Jacob**  
Susan & Justin Greisberg

**Christina Anne**  
Maria & Jason Hilliard

**Jason Maxwell & Zachary Allan**  
Kristin & Larry Kahn

**Bailey Olivia**  
Jen & David Karatz

**Regina Marie**  
Dianne & Kevin Moore

**Zoey**  
Lori & Rick Poulin

**Anthony Dominic**  
Diane & James Schiavo

**Jillian Eileen**  
Theresa & Jim Schlag

**Alexander**  
Tara & Chris Stearns

**Lauren Nicole**  
Adrienne & Nick Tuck

**Lily Anna**  
Beth & Karl Whipple

*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...

Angela Anna Leva.....	Nonna Maria Castellaneta
Patrick & William .....	Leonora & John Sinnott (Mom & Dad)
Michael John.....	Amy & Todd Mondelli (Mom & Dad)
Nicole.....	Linda & Pete Bitts (Mom & Dad)
Arianna Jade.....	Zchantell McDonnell (Mom)
Luke William Nilsen.....	Minnie Rimland, Patricia Scully, Richard & Norma Menocker, Jodi & Edward Anton, Roz Kremin, John & Carol Skrypek, Dorothea & Robert King, Joanne & Toni Martucci
Babies Moore.....	Dianne & Kevin Moore (Mom & Dad)
Baby Tromer.....	Ann Marie & Keith Tromer (Mom & Dad)
Amanda Ashley .....	Eileen & Cornelius Noordyk (Mom & Dad)
Baby Weinacht.....	Julie & Paul Weinacht (Mom & Dad)
Emily Lauren .....	Jill & Chris Giorgio (Mom & Dad)
Emily Lauren Giorgio.....	Betty & Charles Craft (Grandma & Grandpa)
Victoria Elizabeth .....	Bo & Ed Buchanan (Mom & Dad)
Lucia Rose Wogisch-Fasano.....	Denise & Gary Wogisch (Grandma & Grandpa)
Emma Catherine Hogan.....	Donation Made in Liew of Favors for Gail & Giacomo's Wedding Maureen Lynch (Great Aunt)
Alex Kunis.....	Carolyn Keidel (Mimi)
Ashley Marie.....	Karen Nicosia (Mom)
Austin Bernard.....	Michelle & John Calvello (Mom & Dad), Charles & Mary Lippman (Grandma & Grandpa)
Patrick Ryan Wright.....	Mary & Rick Radatovich
Juliana Elise Falce.....	Mr. & Mrs. Carlo Corvino, Mr. & Mrs. Sabino Iodice, Michele & Michael Teter, Vincenza & Thomas Columbia, Toyota North America
Tony C. Fernandes.....	Elizabeth Heath & Conrad Fernandes (Mom & Dad)
Juliana Elise Falce.....	Joanne & Richard Gentile

*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: Susan & Eran Bemergi on the loss of Baby Bemergi ♥ Tara & Damian Bruno on the loss of Chloe ♥ Michelle & John Calvello on the loss of Austin Bernard ♥ Marie Louis-Charles & Raoul Creole on the loss of Daniel ♥ Melissa & Paul Crowe on the loss of Sawyer James ♥ Josephine & Vinny Cusmano on the loss of Christopher & Faith ♥ Kathy Denuel on the loss of Kevin Paul ♥ Eileen & John Dinice on the loss of Melissa Elizabeth ♥ Lynda & Anthony Falce on the loss of Juliana Elise ♥ Tara & Stephen Fishler on the loss of Collier Bradley ♥ Joanne Gonzalez & Jeffrey Jerome on the loss of Jeffrey Vincent Jerome ♥ Miriam & Dov Klein on the loss of Adam ♥ Yelena & David Kulick on the loss of Victoria ♥ Audra & Kevin Legacy on the loss of Babies Legacy ♥

Theresa & Tim Lilly on the loss of Matthew Aaron ♥ Melissa & Todd Mace on the loss of Baby Mace ♥ Terry & Rich Muller on the loss of Faith Ann ♥ Jenn & Chuck Mullins on the loss of Mackenzie Rose ♥ Tania & Angelo Narcise on the loss of Baby April ♥ Kathy & Paul Nilsen on the loss of Luke William ♥ Renee & Bruce Rabinowitz on the loss of Harrison ♥ Kimberly & Geoffrey Myles Ramsey on the loss of Emily Emmanuelle, Daniel, & Baby Girl Ramsey ♥ Trish & Ed Ranney on the loss of Babies Ranney ♥ Ruxandra & Michael Risko on the loss of Avery Marie ♥ Vanessa Calgna & Doran Robinson on the loss of Baby Calgna-Robinson ♥ Sharone White & Joe Schassler on the loss of Joseph Marc Jr. ♥ Maureen & Joseph Schepis on the loss of Brian

Joseph ♥ Diane & James Schiavo on the loss of Dominic Aldo ♥ Penny & Mehran Shirazi on the loss of Tea ♥ Lauren & David Shpigler on the loss of Sammy ♥ Kara & Chris Smith on the loss of Alexander Joseph & Elizabeth Agnes ♥ Michelle & Terrence Smith on the loss of Aeneas Remiel Smith ♥ Mae & Gerard Somma on the loss of Petra Jordan ♥ Lauren & Jon Theodore on the loss of Abraham Russell ♥ Joanne & Chris Vella on the loss of Baby Vella ♥ Dawanna & Ray Venerable on the loss of Raygo David & Babies Venerable ♥ Linda & Lou Vitulli on the loss of Samuel Joseph ♥ Julie & Paul Weinacht on the loss of Baby Weinacht ♥ Pam & Kenny Weinstein on the loss of Babies Weinstein ♥

*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.*

## To My Support System

*by Angelo Narcise*

**T**here's never a day that goes by that I don't think of you and our Angels! So much time has passed, and sometimes I think we were different people then (Tania and I). I wonder how we survived those moments in the darkest days of our lives. Grieving. Dying inside.

I know now. It was with your help, your love for us, the phone calls just at the right time. It was the special people in our group (who we still keep in touch with), the Walk to Remember and the Candle Lighting ceremony that carried us through the holidays and into the next year. Often these times are lonely, even though we are together. Still, it is these special events that have helped pull us through these sad and hard times. They help fill some of the void that we, as loving parents, growing

siblings and wishful grandparents, feel as we all gather here together and share what we miss. The love we all waited to give to all those little babies who have become our family of Angels in Heaven.

For Tania and I, four years have passed by. Our triplet boys (M.A.C.) would have been 3 1/2 years old, Linda would have been 2 1/2, and our last Angel would have been born in December 2005. Baby April.

It's not just what happened then, it's everything till this day. It's a big circle of love and sadness that goes from one anniversary date to the next, with times in between filled with happy moments that we are thankful for here and now, for those we do have. Also for that special person holding your hand, and the tears that fill your eyes for someone you miss so much—and

a memory of what should be, and a heart that will never let you forget.

We all share the pain and happiness, together in the same smile—happy for what we have, and sad for what we miss. Our eyes see what is in front of us like the smile of a young child's face, and our hearts sadden for what we know should be.

Our Hope we put in a place where we wait to live again in Heaven, and pray that our Angels are safe and well. Our Faith is in each other and God—that he holds us here together. And as a family—on this earth and in Heaven above—we will always be together holding hands in our big circle of Love. May God bless all of you in your journey!

Angelo Narcise and Family

## Walk to Remember

*(Continued from page 1)*

choices about what I want to take from my experiences.

So now, instead of clamping my eyes shut and squeezing the rail, I throw my hands in the air and keep my eyes open so I won't miss any of the lessons. Because there are lessons to be learned in every dip,

every loop, every curve, every stop and every start.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people that are here to support me today because I just learned a very important lesson. It's been a tough time for me since Hayden died and my

husband left. And there have been times that my anger and depression has gotten the best of me. I need to ask forgiveness of those people and tell

them that I love them for their patience, understanding and support.

The lessons that we learn here in this life are what our soul takes to Heaven. They are what our soul uses to grow. You see, that's the point of getting on the ride in the first place.

Some (well most) children come to this life to learn from their parents. I believe our children come here to teach us.

Please don't miss their lessons. Please don't lose the beauty of their life in the depth of your grief. No, it isn't fair, but it's what we've got.

So today as we walk up to the memorial park, maybe we can use this time to reflect back on some of the lessons we've learned from our Littlest Teachers.

*Written in honor of Hayden Grace Jaffe, born May 30, 2003, died October 15, 2003.*

## The Other Side of Grief

*(Continued from page 1)*

goes by that we do not think of them and imagine what they would look like and what milestones they would have reached over the past five years. Yes, we still feel sadness, but we also now feel happiness and have created a family bond that no adversity can ever separate.

A huge step for us was deciding to adopt our daughter, Leah, from China. She has answered all our prayers, and because of the strength of our family, friends and ourselves, we have found happiness in our lives.

Adoption was an answer for us. At first we thought it would be too expensive, but then after a few appointments with a specialist we realized that the specialist's costs were perhaps just as costly as adoption. After much research we decided on adoption from China and found out that the United States gave a \$10,000 tax credit for international adoption! The adoption became affordable to us, and we were on our way.

The adoption gave us a purpose and helped us realize and obtain our dreams. It was an answer to our prayers and we are doing quite well. Leah gives us hope!

*(Written in honor and memory of Moira, Faith, Rebecca and Baby Brennan.)*

***“Some (well most) children come to this life to learn from their parents. I believe our children come here to teach us.”***

## Losing Anna

*(Continued from page 11)*

baby, so tormenting ourselves with “what if” and “if only” caused me unnecessary and unhealthy guilt. Over the years I have tried to:

- Accept that what has come to pass cannot be changed.
- Accept that it is you who is still living, and live.
- Accept that life can be too short and live each day as if it is your last.
- Accept that it is okay to grieve and lean on people when you need to.
- Get counseling if you are not coping.

Most important, don't insulate yourself from your family and friends. They still need you as you need them, for they are grieving too. It is not easy. The pain is still here! I miss Anna every day, but I have come to accept that she has died.

We hope you find some hope to help you through this most difficult time. Our thoughts are always with you all. God Bless.

*(Happy Birthday and Merry Christmas Anna Therese (December 6 to 23, 1995). We love and miss you very much!)*



**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.***

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- Please remove my name from **ALL** of your mailing lists.

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**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:** \_\_\_\_\_