



**Location**

Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital  
5401 South Street, Lincoln, NE  
(Lancaster Room)

**Date & Time of Meetings:**

Meetings are held on the  
Third Thursday of each month  
7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.  
There is no fee for attendance

**Supported by:**

BryanLGH Medical Center  
St. Elizabeth Regional Medical Center  
Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital

For Information about the meetings  
Call: 481-3068 or 477-0857

**Community Friends**

A self-help program facilitated by  
qualified volunteers and professionals.  
This group offers support & networking  
to promote healthy grieving and  
recovery for those who have experienced  
the death of a child.

These monthly on-going meetings are  
based on the process of sharing  
experiences, seeking information, and  
offering support.

**Future Meeting Schedule:**

October 16, 2008  
November 20, 2008

**Location**

BryanLGH Medical Center East  
1600 South Street, Lincoln, NE  
(Conf. Rm. #2, in the Medical Plaza)

**Date & Time of Meetings:**

Meetings are held on the  
First Wednesday of each month  
7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.  
There is no fee for attendance

**Supported by:**

BryanLGH Medical Center  
St. Elizabeth Regional Medical Center  
Sharon's Support System

For Information about the meetings  
Call : 402-477-0857

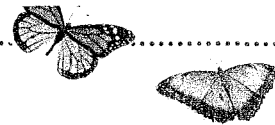
**H.O.P.E.**

(Helping Other Parents Endure)  
A self-help program facilitated by  
qualified volunteers and professionals.  
This group offers support for parents  
who have lost their baby due to  
miscarriage, stillbirth, or death of a  
newborn. These monthly on-going  
meetings are based on the process of  
sharing experiences, seeking  
information, and offering support

**Future Meeting Schedule:**

October 1, 2008  
November 5, 2008

## The Birth of Grace



I began my third pregnancy with the kind of renewed hope and apprehension that every mother feels. Except that this third pregnancy ended not with the birth of a live baby, like my other two, but with the birth of a stillborn child, a beautiful daughter and sister. It was the end of mine and my husband's parenting as we knew it, but the start of a whole other kind of parenting that neither my husband nor I thought we were capable of.

Grace's life ended too soon, but her life's worth telling and worth sharing because of the thirty-three weeks I got to hold her inside of me; because she is my third child; because she is still my daughter; and because I am richer as a wife, a mother, and as a person.

We do not spend enough time talking about death in this country. It is still a subject filled with fear. We have certainly made strides over the past few decades when it comes to dealing with grief, but there is more work to be done. Thirty-two years ago, when my father died, talking about death was so taboo that I have very few stories about him to tell. I was five years old at the time, and his death sealed his life in a capsule that remains closed. In my family if we spoke of fond memories, we would unleash the painful ones as well, and the painful emotions are the ones that my family was so good at avoiding over the years. We viewed these emotions as worrisome and filled with fear, and our fear took precedence over our need to share and process our feelings.

And so in the thirty-two years that my father has been dead, my family of origin and I have never processed his death together. It wasn't until I was an adult that I was given the opportunity in therapy to really grieve and to explore what was lost. I am still learning to grieve for my father.

And though we know so much more now about how children should grieve, we still know less about how parents and children should grieve for stillborn babies. It is something we need to explore and mourn publicly because I'm certain

that all of us knows someone whose baby has died, whose baby didn't make it to full term, whose baby wasn't born living. If you would have asked me three years ago if I knew anyone who had a stillborn baby, I might have said, "no". Yet, when Grace was born, I was amazed and relieved at the stories that came pouring out. I was not the only one. I was not alone in my grief. That knowledge was the beginning of my healing process.

When it comes to infant death, especially stillbirth, we are often told to keep the grief within ourselves. The doctors and nurses huddle in corners not knowing how to help and in our case, when the ultrasound showed us that Grace's heart was no longer beating, someone hung a bouquet of silk flowers outside of my room that would be the mark. I would later discover, to tell the hospital staff that the baby was dead. The staff entered quietly, took my blood, poked and prodded and urged me to accept the induction as quickly as possible so labor could begin. Fear was the primary emotion that hung in the room.

Both my husband and I were in a state of shock and disbelief and were unable to think for ourselves. The fear in the room, the fear among the nurses and doctor present was clearly affecting all of our choices so that none of us really felt informed – really understood that we had choices. We mostly did as we were told while the reality of the situation slowly made its way through my body.

Looking back, Grace's birth happened exactly as it was meant to, offering me a full twenty-four hours of labor, a day of grief before she arrived, a day of planning, a day to cry with my husband and children, a day for my mother to fly 1,200 miles to be present for her twelfth grandchild's birth – the only birth she's witnessed, and a day for my best friend to drive across state to offer her help to us, a day for our pastor to remain with us, to offer guidance and counseling when we didn't know what we should do. One last day for Grace to be inside

me, to lie still and float in the only place she ever lived.

I couldn't choose the kind of birth I wanted. I couldn't give Grace the kind of welcoming I was dreaming of. Instead, Grace gave me the kind of birth she needed, a birth surrounded by a host of women, her brother and sister, her mother and father. This is after all a birthing-story, a story of a baby who was born into the world the same way other babies are born, only this baby was not breathing, this baby had her eyes closed, this baby arrived silently into a room of weeping members of her family.

I want people to know that my baby, my daughter, Grace Susie, was stillborn on June 1, 2003 – that Grace was a living breathing human being inside of me for 33 weeks. That I have three children, two are living and one sweet girl who is not. I have a desire to validate Grace's life, to make sure that people know she existed and to us she still matters. Grace is one of our children.

Stillbirth is a subject that does not come up very often, and when it does there is discomfort and silence. But stillbirth is real and it happens and we need to find the language to talk about it – a safe place to share our feelings and emotions among each other, despite the fact that some of us might be pregnant, because of the fact that many of us have healthy, thriving children. We can't be afraid of one another.

I miss Grace deeply and forever. Yes, it is still difficult for me to be around pregnant women, around nursing moms, around girls that are the age Grace would be today. Yes, it is difficult, but not impossible.

It is because of Grace and because of all the stillborn infants in the world that birth truly is a miracle. That the babies we hold and love and nurture truly are miraculous.

Tonight, I lay in bed with my son, Carver, who is eight years old, to tell his birth story. I haven't repeated it since Grace's birth and death – as if speaking of the joy of his birth would somehow diminish our experience with Grace. I have found that it enhances it.

Speaking and writing about grief is healing and natural.

Carver's eyes are beginning to close and his

yawns are growing larger and more frequent. He smiles as I tell him how the doctor held him high in the air, how his father whispered, "It's a boy." And how the tears of joy fell from all of our faces as I held him close, brought him to my breast, and began the amazing journey of becoming his mother. He yawns one last time as he falls asleep, and I remain next to him on his bed.

I trace his features and notice that his nose is the same shape as Grace's nose was. They are inextricably linked to one another. Grace's death does not mean she has disappeared. She is with us. She is here with her brother and sister, part of our family. Grace is present in our lives, which are all the richer because of her, because of Grace.

*By Sarah Bain, Spokane, WA  
Grief Digest, January 2006*

*Our grief always brings a gift.  
It's the gift of greater sensitivity  
And compassion for others.  
We learn to rise above our own grief  
By reaching out and lessening  
The grief of others.*

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### WALK TO REMEMBER

*Sunday, October 5, 2008  
1:00 PM – 2:00 PM  
Lincoln Memorial Park  
6700 South 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Lincoln, NE*

#### WORLD WIDE CANDLE LIGHTING

*Sunday, December 14, 2008  
Bryan LGH College of Sciences  
Lincoln, NE*

*"May love be what you remember the most!"*

**BIRTHDAYS AND ANNUAL REMEMBRANCES** can be difficult days for bereaved parents and siblings. Perhaps you would like to lift these families up in thought and prayer as these difficult days approach for them.

**OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS**

Will Broening	10-03-2007
Jonathan Engle	10-17-1998
Emily "Em" Herting	10-08-1985
Rebekkah Jo Lee	10-16-1977
Elizabeth Kunkee	10-10-1987
Lucas "Luke" Saathoff	10-26-1993
Kendra Nicole Semmler	10-03-1984
Hailey Nevaeh Yavoich	10-20-2005

**OCTOBER ANNUAL REMEMBRANCES**

Flash Blizzard	10-18-2007
Will Broening	10-03-2007
Iven Jerome Lottridge Williams-Barney	10-07-2007
Kelly R. Delp	10-06-2007
Chase Daniel Madsen	10-17-2007
Isabelle Rigatuso	10-21-2002
Laura Renee Schmid	10-18-2003
Rhuen LaRee Wichman	10-08-1979
Hailey Nevaeh Yavoich	10-20-2005

**NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS**

Aydan Lee DeFruter	11-28-2006
Kelly R. Delp	11-17-1980
Randy Miller	11-25-1958
Myles Ray Hill	11-24-2007
Lacy Pittman	11-04-1987

**NOVEMBER ANNUAL REMEMBRANCES**

Baby Beam	11-27-2007
Brian John Brinker	11-17-2002
Zak Epke	11-15-2003
Myles Ray Hill	11-24-2007
Benjamin S. Johnson	11-02-2003
Keithen Weist	11-28-2002

In remembering our precious children there may be errors or omissions for which we are deeply sorry. If there are errors, please contact Trish Schuster at 673-5395 or [trish\\_schuster@yahoo.com](mailto:trish_schuster@yahoo.com) if you have attended a meeting, and have not filled out a database giving us permission to print your child's birthday and annual remembrance please let Trish know.

Please, remember when it is your child's birthday or annual remembrance date, you are welcome to bring their picture, a poem, a keepsake, a candle to that month's Hope or Community of Friends Meeting

**THIS IS YOUR NEWSLETTER**

Please remember this is your newsletter! We welcome any poems, stories, or sayings that you have found to be healing in your journey of grief. You may donate it at any time and it may be in memory of your child, sibling, grandchild, or friend. Please send it to Trish at [trish\\_schuster@yahoo.com](mailto:trish_schuster@yahoo.com). Any comments you have about the newsletter can also be directed to Trish by e-mail or at 402-673-5395. A special thank you goes to Cindy Voderstrasse for her help with the art work for this newsletter.



## As We Reflect



### **"THAT' TIME OF YEAR**

It's Halloween time again. Is that thought bothering you? It probably is, particularly if you had a little one who would have been out doing a little tricking and getting a lot of treating that night.

Or, maybe your child was too small or didn't live to see even one Halloween. That hurts, too, doesn't it? Sometimes we grieve for what could have been.

Maybe, like me, your child was too old for conning neighbors into treats, but it still is a hard night in the beginning. All special days and nights are.

If you have small children who need to be a part of this special night, maybe a family member or a good friend will accompany them on their appointed round. They'll enjoy the evening just as much and you can "treat" yourself by choosing to stop the world and get off for a little while.

If you have no children at home, this may be a good time to close up shop for that one night. Take in a movie or stay at home and give no inviting signs that say you want to participate in the festivities of the evening. Do what is comfortable for you.

One day you will be able to enjoy treating the little ones again. This just may not be the year. Isn't it good to know our needs and abilities change as time goes by?

*By Mary Cleckley*



### **GIVING THANKS**

I can not hold your hands today,  
I cannot see your smile.  
I cannot hear your voices now,  
My children who are gone;  
But I recall your faces still  
The songs, the talks, the sighs,  
Story times and winter walks,  
And sharing secret things.  
I know you helped my mind to live,  
Beyond your time with me.  
You gave me clearer eyes to see,  
You gave me finer ears to hear,  
What living means, what dying means  
My children, who are gone;  
So here it is Thanksgiving Day,  
And you are not with me.  
And while I weep a parent's tear,  
I thank you for the gifts you were  
And all the gifts you gave to me,  
My children who are gone.

*Author Unknown*



### **A THOUGHT AS WE NEAR THANKSGIVING**

*I'm thankful, Lord, for loving care,  
I'm thankful, too, for something more.  
I'm thankful, Lord, that I can bear,  
The things that I'm not thankful for.*

Bu Claire Sanford, TCF, Logansport, IN  
Cape Cod Chapters Newsletter  
Oct/Nov 2002

You and your family are invited to attend

# A TIME AND A PLACE TO REMEMBER

1-2 p.m.

Lincoln Memorial Park  
Sunday, October 5, 2008  
6700 S. 14th St.

A memorial celebration  
including the 16th annual

## WALK TO REMEMBER

The WALK TO REMEMBER takes place each October during NATIONAL PREGNANCY and INFANT LOSS AWARENESS MONTH to remember the 870,000 babies who die each year through miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, stillbirth or newborn death. The walk symbolically unites those who have experienced the loss and those who care for them, and raises public awareness to ensure parents receive the sensitivity they deserve.

The babies' names will be written on slips of paper and placed in the soil around the roots of the Snowdrift Crab tree dedicated in 1993.



Sponsored by:  
BryanLGH Medical Center  
Saint Elizabeth Regional Medical Center  
HOPE - Parent Support Group  
Remembering Our Children