



Helping Hands

Fall 2007

After Jordan

By **Lori Reddy**

HAND of the Peninsula

It's been more than seven years since we lost our beloved daughter, Jordan. I can't believe all of the time that has passed. Since then we've been lucky enough to have three more daughters. All healthy. A miracle.

As of ten months ago, when my last daughter was born, I am done having children. Closing this chapter of my life is a real milestone. In some ways, it feels like I'm growing more distant from Jordan. She was my first-born and when she was conceived, the rollercoaster of my life began. I went through so many heartaches to create the family we have today. Failed adoptions, failed IVF cycles, miscarriages.

But as I tried and tried to have more children after Jordan's death, I still felt close to my firstborn. I was creating babies and that world is where my Jordan was in my mind and in my heart. Now I'm done. I don't want more children. Now I raise the ones I have - leaving Jordan behind, or so it seems.

The question keeps coming up in my mind: How do I get off this fertility ride, enjoy my surviving children while also keeping Jordan with me? I don't know. It's a struggle that I'm going to have to navigate as I go. It's as

though the pursuit of having more babies kept me from dealing with the realization that she is gone - forever. Because as long as I was busy making children, I wasn't forced to stop and think of the end result: A beautiful family, which I have now, minus one precious family member.

It seems strange, I know, to talk about accepting Jordan's death this long after her passing, but I think I found it easier to keep the cold hard reality out of my mind while I kept busy with IVF treatments and adoption attorneys.

Over the years I've received some beautiful pieces of advice. One grief counselor told me I would weave Jordan's death into the tapestry of my life. But as I create

this tapestry of my life, I find it's not that easy. I look at my surviving children's faces and think of what I lost just as I think of the joy of what I have. Such a dichotomy. Such heartache. Such profound joy.

That's the secret, I guess - allowing myself to experience utter joy once again while living with the pain of loss. Day by day. It's the only way.

Lori Reddy, lives in Foster City, CA, with her husband, Dave, and daughters Hannah, 7, Abby, 6 and Rebecca, 10 months. Their daughter Jordan Nicole Reddy, died at the age of five months on Nov. 7, 1999.

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eScrip is effortless way to support grieving families

Imagine raising hundreds of dollars a year to benefit HAND of the Peninsula without doing anything other than shop as usual.

eScrip is a fundraising program that allows participating merchants to contribute a percentage of your grocery loyalty card, credit card, and debit/ATM card purchases to HAND of the Peninsula.

There is no cost at all to you. Simply register any or all of your cards for use in the program, and specify HAND of the Peninsula (**eScrip ID 141808774**) as your organization of choice. Then, participating merchants will automatically transfer a percentage of your purchases to HAND each and every month. Since eScrip was introduced in 1999 by Electronic Scrip Inc., ESI has distributed over \$120 million to schools and non-profit organizations such as ours.

Complete information on the eScrip program is available at www.escrip.com. Registration may be completed at the same site. Questions about HAND's participation in the eScrip program may be directed to info@HANDsupport.org or (650) 367-6993.

We urge all of our families, relatives and friends to participate in this great and effortless fundraising program. Remember to keep your eScrip registration current anytime your registered card numbers change or you change cards. eScrip contributions to HAND on behalf of our participating families have ranged up to \$350 per family per year!

Helping After Neonatal Death

Chapters:

HAND of the Peninsula
P.O. Box 3693
Redwood City, CA 94064
(650) 579-0350 crisis line
(650) 367-6993 office
<http://www.HANDsupport.org>

HAND of Santa Cruz Co.
P.O. Box 3693
Redwood City, CA 94064
(650) 367-6993 office
(831) 438-4513

HAND of Santa Clara, Contra Costa, Alameda Counties, Central Valley
1-888-908-HAND

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Helping Hands

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Loss bestows unwanted gifts

By **Beckie Fanous**
HAND of the Peninsula

It's hard to believe that five years have passed since we lost Jasmine. This time five years ago, my heart was aching and I was still reeling from the shock of her stillbirth.

It had been a rocky pregnancy that included the discovery of Down Syndrome in our daughter and then later facing the possibility of a premature birth. We had prepared as thoroughly as we could for our future with a child with disabilities, but we were not prepared in any way to lose her.

In some ways, though it was hard to admit at the time, there was a sense of relief that the rollercoaster had ended; not a relief that we lost her, but the relief that comes when you finally know the outcome of a struggle after a long period of waiting. On the other hand, I have never wept so much in my life as I did in the weeks and months after losing her.

I also had no idea that our journey through grief was in no way over. Jasmine was our first pregnancy. When we got pregnant again, we thought, surely, this cannot happen again; not to us. We soon discovered that the reproductive side of life is full of surprises and mysteries. Our next two pregnancies resulted in first trimester miscarriages.

My husband and I are Christians, and believe children are a gift from God. So, why was He allowing this to happen to us? Why must we go through this suffering, when all we want is to take care of and raise a child in a loving, caring home? Why not let this happen to someone who would wind up abusing or hurting their child? Why us? That question was a constant one in the back

Gifts *continued on page 7*

My Ideen

Your name won't appear in the birth announcements

By **Elham Heydari**
HAND of the Peninsula

The house is too quiet these days. I come home to a dark and lifeless environment every night and wonder. . . What would it be like to have my little 6-year-old Neema today? Getting ready for first grade and all the excitement that comes with it. What would life be like? Neema and his little 2-year-old brother, Ideen, running around the house driving Mommy crazy!

July 25th would have been my little Ideen's second birthday. Nobody remembered but Grandma. Life moved on for all but Mommy.

My dearest little Ideen, I miss you. I just miss you very much. I get the HAND newsletter every time, and my heart melts. When you were moving in my womb, I was looking forward to the day that your precious name would appear in the newsletter's new birth announcements section. I wanted to announce to the world that you were born.

But my sweet, precious baby boy, you died too soon. Your big brother wanted to have a playmate in heaven, and now you are together.

I never got a chance to see your name among the birth announcements and my heart aches. I now want the world to know that you were here. You lived for 45 minutes, surrounded with lots of love. I held your lifeless little body for two days, and didn't want to let you go. You are gone now but, sweetheart, you were here. You were born and you died on July 25, 2005. I miss you.

Mommy

Support Meetings

Support meetings are informal gatherings where parents can receive and give support by sharing common experiences as we work through and resolve our losses. We cordially invite you to attend.

Meetings may start out with a topic of discussion, but everyone is free to bring up any questions or aspects of their losses which may concern them.

Attending your first meeting does take courage, but parents who attend find a comforting network of support, encouragement, friendship and understanding.

Nothing is required of you. There are no dues or fees. You need not speak one word. Even if you no longer need the meetings for yourself, come and share your experiences with someone who has recently suffered a loss.

HAND of the Peninsula

Support meetings are held on the first and third Wednesdays of the month. Contact: Jill Ludwig (650) 367-6993.

Time: 7:30-9:30 P.M.

Dates: Sept. 5 and 19
Oct. 3 and 17
Nov. 7 and 21
Dec. 5 and 19
Jan. 2 and 16, 2008

Location: Ellsworth Room at Mills Health Center, 100 S. San Mateo Dr., San Mateo

HAND of Santa Cruz

Support meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month. Contact: Kristie Shulman (831) 438-4513.

Time: 7:30-9:30 P.M.

Dates: Sept. 19
Oct. 17
Nov. 21
Dec. 19
Jan. 16, 2008

Location: Congregational Church of Soquel

Pregnancy Support Meeting

Parents who are pregnant again after a loss have special emotional and psychological needs.

Pregnancy Support Group meetings address the concerns of bereaved parents who have started or are thinking about starting another pregnancy. Fathers are especially encouraged to attend.

HAND of the Peninsula holds subsequent pregnancy support meetings on the second Wednesday of the month on an as needed basis. Please call the

HAND office (650) 367-6993 if you plan to attend or need more information.

Time: 7:30-9:30 P.M.

Dates: Sept. 12
Oct. 10
Nov. 14
Dec. 12
Jan. 9, 2008

Location: Ellsworth Room at Mills Health Center, 100 S. San Mateo Dr., San Mateo

HAND of Santa Cruz

HAND of Santa Cruz County's subsequent pregnancy meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month. Please call (831) 438-4513 for more information.

Births

Jeremy Scott Scheirer – Oct. 20, 2006, to Allegra and Dan Scheirer

Scarlett Jennifer McElroy Folger -- June 5, 2007, to Katherine and Nick Folger

Lila Kay Genereux -- June 17, 2007, to Kim and Steve Genereux

Scott Armstrong Harrison, Jr. and **Peter Ragnar Harrison** – Aug. 2, 2007, to Scott Harrison and Linda Sonne-Harrison

Donations

Our warmest thanks to those who have sent donations to HAND of the Peninsula. It is through your support that HAND is able to grow and continue helping others.

Anna and Rob Strong

Jill Ludwig and Joel Lachter

Jane Zimmerman

G. Gloria Gillogley, in memory of Walter J. Gillogley, M.D.

Dana and Michael Knowles, in memory of Jake Wilcox

Linda and Scott Harrison, in memory of Miles Harrison on his first birthday

**Leslie and Frank Muenne-
mann**, in honor of all HAND volunteers

Jennifer and Carlen Hoppe, in memory of Andrew and Benjamin Hoppe

Twila Forbes, in memory of Cosmo Forbes

Gina and Blair Glenn, in memory of Brianna Glenn

**Gina Holmes and Harvey Gay-
lin**, in memory of Devin Steadman

Kristin and John Steadman, in loving memory of Devin Cole Steadman

Dana Hale-Mounier, in memory of Devin Steadman

Goodbye for Now

*You were to be my saving Grace
But now I will never see your face
Or touch your skin so soft and sweet
The pain is more than my soul can meet.*

*You are with me every day
Though I thought it would be in a different way
That with your big sister you would play
That on this planet you would stay.*

*Instead it now pains me to see her delight
Every time she sees in a baby the miracle of life
She'll never run down the hospital hall
To meet you, kiss you, and share with you her all.*

*Though very few admit you existed and were real
You will always be my baby; whose body in me I still feel
I love you more than you will ever see
For I've been robbed of the chance to have you be.*

*And while your father calls you tissue
That is just his own issue
In my heart I believe
He couldn't stand to see you leave.*

*So please seek out your brother
So you will have another
And watch over Gianna with great care
For I desperately need her to stay here.*

*For the pain in my heart is so very hard to bear
I ache for you and your brother to be here*

*But here you will we never be
And if this is to be the end of birth for me
Please help me to let you free*

*And if I may ask
And this is no easy task
Please help me heal my broken self
To learn how to live fully with a part of me dead
To reconstruct a life with two babies gone but one with a life ahead.*

*So goodbye for now, but our paths shall cross again
I don't know how or when
But with every breath and beat of my heart
You will forever in my life be a part.*

Love, your Mama

After losing two babies late in pregnancy, Corinne Wayshak of Los Altos, CA, created Groovy Goddess® a line of unique statement apparel available at www.groovygoddess.com

HAND of the Peninsula

Invites you to our annual

SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE

Huddart Park's Miwok Shelter in Woodside

10 a.m. Saturday, October 20, 2007

All parents, relatives and friends are invited to join others to remember their babies. Infants' names submitted before October 12 will be read at the service, along with personal readings, music and reflections.

Breakfast beverages and snacks will be served and wildflower seeds to scatter will be provided. To submit babies' names and birthdates, to volunteer and for any other information, please email info@HANDsupport.org or call (650) 367-6993.

Huddart Park parking is \$5.

From highways 280 or 101, take the Woodside Road exit. Drive 1.5 miles west past the Woodside Road/Highway 280 intersection to Kings Mountain Road, turn right. Drive 2.3 miles to park entrance on the right. Ranger will direct you to the Miwok shelter area.

Gifts *continued from page 3*

of my mind for the next two years, especially every time a friend would announce their pregnancy or healthy delivery.

Honestly, that question was never answered. What did happen surprised me. As I would shout that question to God in my head or out loud, I found a place to let out my grief. And the more I let it out, the more I felt God expanding my heart for others around me who were suffering; some from a similar experience; others from something I had never been through.

I found myself feeling more connected to my human brothers and sisters around me. I wanted to help them carry their burdens and not feel isolated by their pain. And this turned out to be a gift to me. Every time I made an effort to reach out to a hurting friend in some small way, I too became less isolated. I felt less prone to compare myself or feel jealous and more likely to care about their struggles.

At Jasmine's memorial, someone spoke words to my husband and I that have stuck with me. He said that this experience was now

part of who we are; part of our story. My would-be five-year-old is not with me, but the impact of her brief life is. In addition, she has shaped the story of my life.

Though I would not have chosen the rollercoaster that surrounded our lives five years ago, I remain grateful for how it has changed me. I have learned how important it is to reach out and not remain isolated. Now, as a mother of two small children, I am still struggling to reach out instead of trying to do it all on my own.

But Jasmine helped me get a little better at it. Moreover, reflecting on her life reminds me of the gifts that await when I choose to care about someone else's struggles or let them more intimately into mine.

Ten days ago, we visited Jasmine's grave with our two young boys, Nathan, 3, and Eli, 1. They never knew their sister, but we are talking to them about her already. My prayer is that they too can benefit from the gift of her life in our family.

Beckie Fanous, her husband, John, and two young sons live in Antioch, CA.