

# Helping Hands

Helping After Neonatal Death

Spring 2002

## Human Race brunch-picnic *20th Anniversary fete May 11 at Coyote Point Park*

By Christy Conklin  
*HAND of the Peninsula*

Thanks to many dedicated volunteers, HAND of the Peninsula has now been helping families for 20 years! We want to celebrate this landmark with a brunch-time picnic for all HAND members and friends.

At this picnic, we particularly want to honor Emily Corpos, HAND of the Peninsula's founder and ongoing supporter, and Celia Hartnett, a pivotal and devoted volunteer for many years. If your life has been touched by either Celia or Emily, please help us honor them and HAND of the Peninsula's other longtime supporters at this special event.

This picnic is being held in conjunction with the annual Human Race, the 5k or 10k pledge walk/run that is one of HAND of the Peninsula's major fundraising events each year. We encourage everyone who plans to come to the picnic to also take part in the walk if possible. Pledge forms can be obtained from HAND of the Peninsula's office or downloaded at <http://www.vcsmco.org>. Pledges, collected from friends, family,

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## End of a dream

# Terminating a pregnancy

By Rita Lomio  
*Stanford University Community  
Service Writing Program*

Nineteen weeks into her pregnancy, Kris learned her unborn baby had Trisomy-18, a serious genetic condition.

***“You want to think it will all work out, but there wasn’t much of a decision to make. There’s no question, no hope, nothing really to decide.”***

“We weren’t even sad at first, we could not believe that news.”

Monday night, Kris’ husband took the call. The doctor had scheduled the operation to terminate the pregnancy on the Friday of that same week. In the few days between hearing the news and undergoing the procedure, Kris felt helpless and alone.

“You want to think it will all work out,” she states, “but there wasn’t

much of a decision to make. There’s no question, no hope, nothing really to decide.”

Laurie received similar news in the beginning of her third trimester. Her baby was diagnosed with Wolf-Hirschhorn syndrome. One week later, the pregnancy was terminated.

“Henry (the unborn son) wouldn’t have walked or talked,” she explains. “It just seemed to us our child would have no life. It wasn’t like there was any kind of hope.”

For some women, there is a decision of whether or not to terminate a pregnancy. For others, like Kris, the doctors have already made arrangements for termination. Regardless of the situation, the time

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## **HAND of the Peninsula**

### ***Shoneen Luck Erskine, Wanda Lee chair program, inservice committees***

Wanda Lee, a longtime member of HAND of the Peninsula was recently named to the board of directors. She graciously also took on making sure support service programs run smoothly.

"I've been a HAND parent since 1991 when my husband and I lost our first child shortly before his due date.

"I'm also a professor in the Counseling Department at San Francisco State University. I have a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology, but do not have an active license.

"I see my role as Program Committee Chair as one of supporting caregiver and coordination activities and bringing their needs to the attention of the board.

"Secondarily, I would like us to develop some ways to collect systematic program evaluation data and have smooth transitions when there are changes in personnel in service coordinator or other volunteer roles."

Welcome also to Shoneen Luck Erskine who is going to be our new Inservice Coordinator. She will coordinate parent sharing presentations in the community with professional and lay groups interested in learning more about HAND and supporting families whose baby has died.

HAND parents are encouraged to participate in volunteer opportunities such as inservice sharing parents, meeting facilitators for both grief and subsequent pregnancy groups, writing articles for the newsletter, or clerical and operations tasks. HAND of the Peninsula is also seeking HAND supporters interested in serving on our board. Many grieving parents find the act of supporting others in whatever way they can to be rewarding and may ease their grief.

## **Helping After Neonatal Death**

### **Chapters:**

**HAND of the Peninsula**  
P.O. Box 3693  
Redwood City, CA 94064  
(650) 692-6655 crisis line  
(650) 367-6993 office  
Web site: <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 Santa Clara Co.**  
(408) 732-3228  
**South Alameda &  
Contra Costa Counties**  
(800) 963-7070  
**Central Valley**  
(209) 823-5503

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## **Helping Hands**

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# Human Race fundraiser supports grieving parents

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neighbors, co-workers, or local businesses, form a very important source of funding for HAND of the Peninsula's programs. If you are not able to collect pledges, we hope that you will still come and walk with us, perhaps adding a pledge from your own family.

The registration fee for the Human Race is \$20 before May 3rd or \$25 on race day. Not only will you receive a complementary race t-shirt, a brisk walk with friends in a breathtaking setting, you will also be ensuring that other grieving parents receive the peer support they need and deserve. Seventy-five percent of funds raised will go directly to HAND of the Peninsula programs and 25 percent to the event's sponsor, the Volunteer Center of San Mateo County. If we can raise

more than \$7,500, HAND of the Peninsula will keep 90 percent of any additional money!

So please consider collecting pledges on HAND of the Peninsula's behalf. Family and friends who may feel awkward about discussing our loss, often welcome the opportunity to let us know they care by supporting our mission in this way.

Let them know how much HAND of the Peninsula has helped you navigate the roller coaster of emotion following your baby's death. Remind them we can only continue to provide our support and education services with the community's help. Every dollar donated to HAND is tax deductible and goes directly into support services.

The walk/run starts at 8:30 a.m. (registration opens at 7:30 a.m.), followed by kids' races at 10 a.m. The HAND of the Peninsula picnic will start at 10:30 a.m. It will be a brunch buffet in the eucalyptus area near the playground, and children are welcome. We hope you can come to both events, but you and your guests are welcome to attend one or the other. Entrance to the park and parking are free.

For more information about the Human Race or a pledge form, go to [www.vcsmc.org](http://www.vcsmc.org), or call the HAND of the Peninsula's office at 367-6993. Please also call Judi at the HAND of the Peninsula office to RSVP for the 20th anniversary picnic. We hope to see you there!

*Christy Conklin is a HAND board member and chairs the fundraising committee.*

## **Dream** *continued from page 1*

between diagnosis and termination is short, as the baby is growing each day.

Sharing the news with friends and family and accepting their reactions are especially difficult.

"At first there were congratulatory cards, but after that . . . silence." Kris recalls. "Or people would just start avoiding you."

You can't be truthful with some people because they have strong feelings against it, Kris explains. She still hasn't told her best friend about the termination. She hopes someday to be able to, but explains that it's "kinda risky".

Laurie sent out an announcement to

friends and family, alerting them to the situation.

"Most people didn't do anything," she says. "It's hard to get support from people because they don't always know what to do or say, so they don't do anything."

To help cope with the loss, many people write in journals, read books on the topic, or attend support groups. Support groups exposed Kris to people whose losses happened a couple years ago.

"You say to yourself: 'they look okay, they look normal.'"

Both Laurie and Kris agree that supportive friends are invaluable after the termination. Kris had friends who had a similar experience five years before. After hearing the news, Kris was not in a state of mind to think about what

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## 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 loss. 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 loss 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 Wednesday of the month. Contact: Celia Hartnett (650) 367-6993

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

**Dates:** March 6, 2002

March 20,

April 3 and 17

May 1 and 15

June 5 and 19

**Location:** Sequoia Health and Wellness Services, 702 Marshall St., Redwood City.

## HAND of Santa Cruz Co.

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:** March 20, 2002

April 17

May 15

June 19

**Location:** Congregational Church of Soquel

## Pregnancy Support Meetings

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 Wednesdays of the month.

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

**Dates:** March 13, 2002

April 10

May 8

June 12

Call (650) 367-6993 for more information.

HAND of Santa Cruz's subsequent pregnancy meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month.

**Dates:** March 6, 2002

April 3

May 1

June 5

Call ((831) 438-4513 for more information.

## Births

**Peter Martin**, to Carol and Craig Martin

**Rodrigo Lima**, Oct. 26, 2001, to Samya and Rodrigo Lima

**Brielle Vanessa Goldstein**, Nov. 28, 2001, to Jen and Dan Goldstein

**Owen Thomas and Jayna Renee Rogers**, Dec. 12, 2001, to Karen and Gary Rogers

**Lea Elena Nelson Twicken**, Dec. 26, 2001, to Jill Nelson and Joe Twicken.

**Emma Jane Christensen**, Jan. 8, 2002, to Amanda and Don Christensen

## 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 help others.

Joe Twicken and Jill Nelson, on behalf of Richard Miller and Janice Fried's pledge to the Human Race

Thanks to Christy Conklin for donating "Parenthood Lost" to HAND's library.

Daniel and Jennifer Goldstein generously donated five books to the HAND of Santa Cruz Library in memory of their son, Ryan Wade Goldstein.

Special thanks to HAND's new Treasurer, Cathleen Findley who donated eight books to our library.

Thanks to Jim Zoland and the 14 people who bought entertainment coupon books, HAND of the Peninsula's new fundraiser. Watch for them late this summer.

# Donations

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Anna Conklin, Human Race  
pledge in honor of Christy  
Conklin

Lam Research Corporation,  
matching gift given by  
Michael Hofmann

Darcy, David, Connor and  
Liam Lambert, in loving  
memory of Rose Bliss

Peggy and Ron Shapera  
Jane and Mitchell  
Zimmerman  
Char Rocha Sharon and  
John Rayner  
Keith Kroeker

Jill Nelson and Joe Twicken,  
in honor of Emily Corpos  
and Celia Hartnett, and in  
memory of all the HAND  
babies

Denise and Miles Bresee, in  
memory of Emma Gabriella  
Bresee

Velma and Larry Bruschini,  
in memory of Natalie Marie  
Guidi

Darlene Heath and Art  
Schneiderman, in memory  
of Natalie Marie Guidi

Trish and Gerard Inguagiato,  
in memory of Baby  
Inguagiato

Mary and William Schorr ,  
in memory of Daniel Patrick  
Schorr .and in honor of  
Emily and Celia. Thank you  
for the love and dedication  
over the past 20 years!

Cara Romanos, in memory  
of Kalli Smith-Tanforan

Sonia and Paul Seregin, in  
honor of Celia Hartnett.  
Thank you for all your love.

Melisse, Brian and Zoe  
Holtz, in memory of Blake  
Charles Holtz

Joel Norvell, in memory of  
Roberto Carlo Pianetta

Grace and Todd Moeller, in  
memory of Talia Nelson  
Twicken

Marcy and Robert Walliser  
Peter Benson, M.D.

Mary and Anand  
Thiagarajan, in memory of  
our loving son, Bunny  
Thiagarajan

Carol Marie and Fernando  
Vega, in memory of Ruthie  
Agustina Maria Vega

Mauricio Caro, in memory  
of Mateo Caro

Kathleen and Victor  
Parrette, in memory of  
Malorie Anne Parrette

Shalom/Lightness , from  
Anne Graham, R.N., Thanks  
for all the work you do.

Grace and Todd Moeller, in  
memory of Isabelle Grace  
Moeller

Christine and Michael  
Reeve, in loving memory of  
our twin boys, Edgar and  
Christian, who are always in  
our hearts

Anne and Kenneth Graham,  
in memory of Natalie Guiti

Frank, Leslie, Ansel and  
Steve Muennemann,  
remembering Baby Ian on  
his 14th birthday

Mary and Dave Avelar, in  
honor of Celia Hartnett and  
Emily Corpos  
Joanie and Carl King, in  
memory of Katherine King

Rosemary and Robert  
Sainez, in memory of Ana-  
Isabel Sainez

Lori and David Reddy, in  
honor of Lea Twicken's  
birth

Patti Leeper and Craig Ball,  
in memory of Abigail Leeper  
Ball and Baby Boy Leeper  
Ball

Sharon and Leo Quilici, in  
memory of Christina Quilici

Patti and Lloyd Steadman, in  
memory of our baby, Craig  
Steadman

Melinda and Eric Ruchames,  
in memory of Zachary Clark  
Ruchames

Emily and John Corpos, in  
memory of Marvin Fishman,  
George Shapera, Marjorie  
Jagger Baldwin and Maria  
Corpos

Celia and Don Hartnett,  
in honor of Emily Corpos,  
founder of HAND of the  
Peninsula. "Maria's life  
continues to touch so many  
people."

Caryn Goldman, in memory  
of Sasha

Becky and Andrew Logan  
Alison Tam

Oracle Corporation,  
matching gift given by Jill  
Nelson

Jana Perkins, in memory of  
Jack Reed Perkins

United Way -SBC  
Employee pledges during  
2001

Carolyn and Bill Wilson, in  
memory of Miss Amanda C.  
Wilson, our angel

## **Dream** *continued from page 3*

her options or needs would be. Her friends helped her realize what questions needed to be asked and what actions needed to be taken. Her friends told her, for example, that after the delivery, the child might be disposed of like a removed kidney.

“For the medical community it’s a procedure,” Kris explains. “Nowhere did anyone say it was our baby.”

With the aid of her friends three days before the operation, Kris was able to make arrangements through the Neptune Society to cremate the baby. She was also able to obtain a death certificate. The certificate, for Kris, gave tangible evidence that this was a baby.

“There was going to be another baby in this family,” she explains. “That was so important.”

Kris advises parents going through similar situations to get in touch through HAND or genetic counseling to find out what questions

To ask because she only had three days to make some really important decisions.

“You don’t want to have to live with that regret,” she says. Laurie advises parents contact HAND or other people who are supportive.

“Don’t be too disappointed if people you feel close to don’t reach out to you or meet your expectations.” she says. “Others will.

“Try to be kind to yourself. Don’t go to that baby shower or to the mall where there are so many kids and strollers.”

Parents, family and friends are not left unchanged. Many find themselves more sensitive, more empathetic. It can bring families closer.

One day, Kris says, she will tell her daughter about the pregnancy termination. She will also tell her daughter that she would have been a great sister.