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# Helping Hands

Spring 2007

## Do's and Don'ts

### *If someone you know miscarries*

**By Nancy Faulstich**  
*HAND of Santa Cruz County*

I'm a 41-year-old woman who has experienced three miscarriages, with no live births yet.

Miscarriages are surprisingly common. Currently, it is estimated that between 20 and 50 percent of all pregnancies end in miscarriage, including many before a woman even knows she's pregnant.

Yet, they remain largely invisible and many well-meaning people unwittingly say or do things that leave a woman feeling hurt, alone, and misunderstood precisely when she needs to feel supported and loved. It seems no one really understands how it feels to miscarry until going through it personally.

Therefore, with the hope of making a very difficult experience more bearable for some women, I'd like to offer my opinion of how to respond to someone who has miscarried or experienced stillbirth or neo-natal death, with the caveat that each person is unique so responses must always be individually considered.

**DO** acknowledge the loss as a death in the family. It is forefront in my mind, and if I know you know but you don't say anything, I may feel you don't care about me.

**DON'T** worry about making me feel sad – the sadness will be there right under the surface for quite a while and your caring and acknowledgement may actually help allow me to release it and thereby heal. This type of loss is especially difficult to heal from because we have no concrete experience with the deceased. We are mourning the unknown, the dream of a future, the potential of a human being.

**DO** listen. Ask ME how I am or what I need, ask what my experience has been like, and listen, listen, listen.

**DO** initiate contact with me through phone calls, emails, cards, visits, hugs. It may be hard for me to reach out. Keep in contact even after the initial stage of mourning has passed. Know it may take me months or years to recover.

**Miscarriage** *continued on page 3*

# Feelings

*I feel like I've just existed  
And now it's been a year  
I don't know how I've lived and breathed  
Without you being here.  
I know you lived your lifetime  
As short as that seems to me,  
But the pain in my heart is still so great,  
Yet I know your spirit is free.  
At times I think I hear you  
The thoughts come to my mind.  
I struggle for the sound of your voice,  
But your voice I cannot find.  
Yet you come to me in many ways  
So I know you did not die,  
You want to tell me that you're close,  
And to please stop asking Why.  
Our lives on earth seem all too brief,  
Or brief as it seems to me.  
But where you are is forever,  
GOD calls that Eternity!*

**By Joy Curnutt,**

**In memory of Jason 11/26/74 - 4/11/99**

## **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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## **Miscarriage**

*continued from page 1*

DO hold out hope without promising me anything specific. The perspective that life can be full and wonderful with or without bearing a child is very useful.

DO offer to help me and my family as needed with childcare if applicable, meals, and so on.

DO understand if it's hard for me to be around other pregnant women, but don't let me shut babies out of my life permanently. It's not ultimately helpful for me to feel sorry for myself or victimized, and it IS possible to share in other women's joy.

Please DON'T feel you have to give me advice, recommendations, or tell me stories of all the women you know who have miscarried. I'm not ready to listen and I will likely end up feeling resentful.

DON'T tell me it was for the best, God's will, or meant to be – that doesn't help me heal.

DON'T promise me that I'll have another one. No one can foresee the future and there are no guarantees when it comes to birth. In any case, human beings are not replaceable.

Above all, DO be yourself, show you care, and allow and encourage the emotional healing process to take place, as difficult as it may be to witness. Time by itself does not heal all wounds, but slowly, over time, one CAN heal from any trauma, no matter how painful.

## **“Blighted ovum”**

*An offensive term*

*for an insulting condition*

*pregnancy*

*with*

*no*

*baby*

*body preparing for occupation and lactation*

*breasts and belly swelling*

*appetite increasing*

*hormones surging*

*breathless, exhausted*

*but all, in the end, an illusion*

*No new life*

*no minuscule embryo*

*only a mixture of blood and pain*

*no one to mourn*

*nothing but a dream to bury*

Nancy Faulstich  
HAND of Santa Cruz County

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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 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:** March 7 and 21  
April 4 and 18

May 2 and 16  
June 6 and 20  
July 4 and 18

**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:** March 21  
April 18  
May 16  
June 20  
July 18

**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:** March 14  
April 11  
May 9  
June 13  
July 11

**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

## **Rebecca Lily Reddy**

Nov. 28, 2006, to Dave and Lori Reddy and big sisters Hannah and Abby

## **Julia Rose Erskine**

Jan. 9, 2007, to Shoneen and John Erskine and big brother Adam

## **Maxwell Cian Kanar**

Jan. 26, 2007, to Zan LaHara and Bryn Kanar

## Donations

**Paula and Joe Osorio**, in memory of Alexis Marlene Osorio

**Stephen Buchner, MD**  
**Barbara Kirsch, PhD**  
**Peter and Judith Mason Benson**  
**Sharon and John Rayner**

**Diana and Howard Bujtor**, in memory of Peanuts

**Carla Altizer and Rod Pasion**, in memory of Zachary Pasion

**Elham and Farzad Heydari**, in memory of Neema and Ideen Heydari

**Kristi and Robert Zuniga**, in memory of Mariana Teresa Zuniga

**Rachel Kindt and Gregory Marcus**, in memory of their twins

**Tracey and Daniel Palmer**, in memory of Ella Rose Palmer

**Patricia Leeper and Craig Ball**, in memory of Abigail Leeper Ball and William Leeper Ball

**Hillary Walsh**  
**Joanna and Steve Beaty**  
**Emily and John Corpos**  
**Todd Lund**

**Diana Duff**, in memory of Devin Steadman

**Michelle Stosiek**, in memory of Johanna's 18th birthday

**Nina and Art Squillante**, in memory of Leonardo Charles Squillante

**Parnaz Abidi and Kasra Baigi**, in memory of their daughter

**Linda and Scott Harrison**, in memory of Miles George Harrison

**Michele and Mark Hollar**, in

memory of William Adam Hollar

**Lisa and Christopher Kirby**, in memory of William Kirby

**Phyllis Van Hagen**, in memory of Spyder West-Ostwald and Sarah Louise Cook-Mills

**Teri and John Hastings**, in memory of Lauren Hastings

**Laurie McLucas and William Crook**, in honor of Celia Hartnett

**Kathleen and Victor Parrette**, in memory of Malorie Anne Parrette

**Rebecca and John Fanous**, in memory of Jasmine Christine Fanous

**Jill Nelson, Joseph Twicken, Irene and Maia Lustgarten**, in memory of Talia Elise Nelson Twicken on her 8th birthday

**Mary and William Schorr, and Katie Schorr**, in memory of Daniel Patrick Schorr

**Celia and Donald Hartnett**, in honor of Catherine and Gary Hoff

**Deepti and Piyush Jain**, in memory of their son, Amol, who is missed by Mom, Dad, and his big sister

**Kimberly and Steven Genereux**, in memory of Jack Duncan Genereux

**Melinda and Eric Ruchames**, in memory of Zachary Clark Ruchames's 20th birthday

**Char and George R Rocha, Jr.**, in memory of Taylor Ann Rocha

**Marty Ryhanych and Anthony Mueller**, in memory of Troy

Mueller

**Jacqueline Willson**, in memory of Mary Kate Holsinger

**Wanda Lee and Kenneth Allen**, in memory of David Lee Allen, loved and remembered for 15 years

**Lori Williamson**, in memory of Shelby Williamson

**Twila Forbes**, in memory of Cosmo Forbes

**Jeannette and Arnold Ricard**, in memory of A. Jeannette Ricard

**Gina and Daniel Guidi**, in memory of Natalie

**Suzanne Gallie and Mark Mitchell**, in memory of Kyra Moree Mitchell

**Wendy Hopfenberg and Michael Occhiolini**

**Rebecca and Andrew Logan Margarita and Andres Mera Christina Conklin and Richard McCluney**

**Anna Heffron**, in memory of Amy Kucserka

*In memory of*

*Jake Eldon Wilcox:*

Sharon Bassett and James Rollins, Rolly Slatt, Melinda and Daniel Friedeberg, Gavin Jones, Barbara Pitkin and Brent Sockness, Lauren Alexandria Rhue, Lesley and Mark Ruzon, Ross Shachter, Alyson and Donovan Yisrael, Kathryn A. Fitzgerald, Joan Gallagher, Joan Marie and Edward Gallagher, Kathleen Moran, Gisselle M. Gaitan, Teresa La Fromboise, Julie and Michael Tomz, Ellen and Arcadio Morales, Jr., Catholic Community at Stanford, Leah Hall, Thomas Limanek, Indhika Jayaratnam, Lauris Jensen, Andrea Wolf, Anonymous

## **An 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](http://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](mailto: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!