

Helping Hands

Helping After Neonatal Death

Summer 2002

Opening our hearts for a new love

She allowed spring to bloom after such a long winter

By Christabel

We were so excited to be pregnant with our second child, and our little boy, age 2, greeted my belly with a good morning, good night, and tales of the day. He tried to share with the baby by putting the spout of his milk cup to my navel.

Unfortunately, our second little boy was born at about one pound and never came home from the hospital, never met his big brother face to face.

We named our son Teach-Us-Love, after trying several conventional names, both English and Korean, because he brought our family even closer together, and gave us a new compassion for others and ourselves. I hope he can do the same for others, too. If so, his 45-minute life may have accomplished more than most of us do in our much longer allotments.

The overwhelming loss is somehow almost invisible to those who have not experienced it. I had no idea before, of the grief carried by so many, until we joined that "many". We were fortunate to have very strong support from family and friends, support which did indeed teach us of the love which surrounds us. Our son's

name seems to have given us a kind of commitment to compassion, stronger than before.

Fortunately for us, the hospital gave us reading and resources to prepare for the loss we knew was coming, and we could help create good memories of that saddest day. For example, when he was born we were able to hold and talk and sing to him, and knowing

"The wail which accompanied his death came from somewhere so deep inside that I still feel its path through my heart."

how little time we would have, we somehow held off tears, not wanting to fill his little time in that way. Of course, the wail which accompanied his death came from somewhere so deep inside that I still feel its path through my heart.

Eight other babies were born in the ward that day, November 3, 1999, and for each one I held my breath until I heard the healthy cry, praying that no other mother should have to endure the loss of her little one. Somehow, though I felt pain, I could not feel any anger at their good fortune. I could not have borne it if anyone else's grief was added to ours.

One of the best things a friend told me was that this little spirit must have searched long and hard for just the right family to share a precious 45 minutes of life with, and that he must have enjoyed our daily life when he was still yet to be born, with such an attentive big brother.

Now, almost three years later, we have a beautiful little girl. How many tears did we shed, when what should have been the joyful news of pregnancy arrived. We finally released the fear of losing her, too. I didn't let go of her second brother until she was about a week old, and I could see how healthy she continued to be.

She allowed spring to bloom in our hearts after such a long winter. These two beautiful children, these loves of ours and how my heart always has a whisper of three when I speak of my little ones. He is forever in our hearts, yet forever out of reach of our arms. Thanks to God for all of them.

Children are so momentous. God Bless them, and give strength to us, their parents, that we may do our best by them.

Christabel resides with her family in Hayward. She wrote this article for Azriela Jaffe's e-newsletter.

HAND of the Peninsula

Follow the Money

Ever wonder where cash donations made to HAND of the Peninsula in memory of your baby go?

At a recent Board meeting, HAND Treasurer Cathleen Finley presented the year-end budget which spells out donations and fundraising income and operating expenses.

Cash donations and fundraising including the Human Race, eScrip, entertainment book sales, generated approximately \$18,000. At almost \$35,000, HAND's annual expenses far exceeded income and were covered thanks to the last of our grant money.

The largest expense, and among the most indispensable, is the salary of our only paid employee, office administrator Judi Weidenfeld. Including payroll service and employer taxes, it adds up to slightly more than \$20,000 for the year.

The next biggest bite is printing, reproduction and purchase of literature at nearly \$5,500 for the year. This includes printing the quarterly newsletter, reproducing literature for inservices, newly bereaved parents, their friends and relatives, anniversary and donation acknowledgement cards, purchase of books and pamphlets donated to hospitals who in turn give these and patients who have suffered a loss.

Postage alone is upward of \$1,500. Special events including a craft night, Service of Remembrance, the Human Race picnic, cost HAND another \$1,500 last year.

HAND of the Peninsula has survived by passing around the hat among the parents it serves. Despite occasional grants, parents' generosity remains the major way HAND supports itself. You, your family and friends can continue to remember your baby and support HAND by making regular donations of cash, shares of stock and mutual funds, by signing up for eScrip, buying the entertainment book which pays for itself with all the discount coupons inside, collecting pledges and participating in the annual Human Race. The Board and the fundraising committee headed by Christy Conklin continue exploring funding sources and welcome any suggestions you may have.

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

Editor: Leslie Muennemann
leslie@muenn.net

Contributors: Christabel,
Tracey Leshner

Printing: P.J. Hawkins

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Twinless Twin

Not only have I lost one twin,
I've lost part of myself from within.
For when she went to heaven
And from me did depart,
She took along with her
A part of my heart.

At times I wish I'd never known
That inside of me two babes had grown.
When I look at Amelia I know what I've lost.
I always wanted twin joy, but not at this cost.

Was one month of pure joy
Worth a lifetime of pain?
Right now I am not sure,
I feel I've had little gain.

And now the pain is so hard to bear,
Her senseless death is so unfair.
I want to ask God, "How can you let this be?"
If he had to take someone, why not me?

I feel like I'm stuck, like I can't move on.
Everyday I think of my twin who is gone.
I ask myself, "What can I do to get through?"
The answer is "Nothing."
I was supposed to have two.

All I want is to hold my lost babe in my arms,
To love her, protect her, and keep her from harm.
But I can't do this for she flies in the sky.
I am asking you God, "Why, oh why?"

Most everyone thinks I'm now doing just fine,
Because I try to act happy and show no sign
Of the tears I cry, my heart heavy with sorrow.
At times it is hard to see sunshine in tomorrow.

Will happiness ever come back to me?
Or am I bound to sadness for eternity?
Will I ever know the joy I knew
When I found out I was carrying two?

I know I've changed, I'll never be the same,
And I still have to wonder if I am to blame?
Was it my fault I lost my babe while within?
Is it my fault I have a twinless twin?

Tracy Leshner

A Perfect Fundraiser: Small Effort, High Return

In 2001, 26 supporters signed up with **eScrip** generated more than \$1,500 in contributions for HAND of the Peninsula by simply going about their day-to-day shopping.

Now, imagine if every HAND member as well as their friends and relatives across in the United States, supported HAND in this manner. Our budget needs would be handsomely satisfied with a minimum of effort —**at no cost to you** —allowing HAND volunteers to focus on what really matters —supporting grieving parents.

eScrip is a proven fundraising resource in which participating businesses, ranging from Safeway to Eddie Bauer, contribute a percentage of your purchases made with grocery loyalty cards, credit cards, and debit/ATM cards to HAND. Electronic Scrip Incorporated (ESI) is a California-based corporation dedicated to establishing relationships between commerce and community. In 2000, ESI distributed \$14 million to participating nonprofits and this year, eScrip projects over \$20 million in contributions.

Here's how it works: You register any or all of your existing grocery loyalty, debit, and credit cards for use in the program. Participating merchants will contribute a percentage of the purchase you make with these registered cards. Your purchases are tracked and available to you online, allowing you to see just how much you are earning on HAND's behalf. Your shopping information is confidential and will only be used by eScrip to collect contributions for HAND. You will receive a monthly statement showing you exactly how much money your shopping has generated.

Simply fill out the form enclosed in this newsletter, or available online at <http://www.escrip.com> or call Judi at the HAND office (650) 367-6993 and she will mail you an application. HAND of the Peninsula's ID number is 141808774.

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: June 5 and 19
July 3 and 17
Aug. 7 and 21
Sept. 4 and 18

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: June 19
July 17
Aug. 21
Sept. 18

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: June 12
July 10
Aug. 14
Sept 11

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: June 5
July 3
Aug. 7
Sept. 4

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

Births

ALEXANDER FRANCIS, March 19, 2002, to Christine and Michael Reeve and big sister Emily.

GEMMA ELIZABETH, April 12, 2002, to Christy Conklin and Richard McCluney

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.

Mr. and Mrs. Michael May, in memory of Dillon Thomas Torresson

Darlene Heath and Art Schneiderman, in memory of Natalie Marie Guidi. Happy Birthday, Shirley

Laurie McLucas and Bill Crook, in honor of Talia Nelson Twicken. "Our thoughts and prayers are with little Talia."

Kathryn and Richard Breaux, in honor of Emily Corpos. "In appreciation of her vision and efforts. The community has benefitted greatly."

Sara and Jason Braden, in memory of Kira Meghan Dolan

Selene Moseley and Paul Martin, in memory of our sweet baby girl, Dillon.

Twila and Paul Forbes, in memory of Cosmo Forbes.

Sofia and Paul Seregin, in memory of David P. Seregin, our beautiful son on his 6th birthday
Susan Hief Pon, in memory of Lorelei Leigh and Erin Colleen Hief Pon

Donations continued on page 5

Donations *continued from page 4*

Margaret and Daniel Seligson

Suzanne and Suresh Bhat, in memory of Dylan Thomas Torresson. "We are so sorry for your loss." Love, Suresh, Suzanne, Anjali and Kiran Bhat

Janella and Harry Thodos, in memory of Baby Nicholas Burr and Elizabeth Thodos

Margaret Dalton, Jennifer and Tom Torresson, Joanne and Thomas Torresson, Elizabeth Chambers, Judith and Richard Griek, Bridget Lawhon, Martha Lawhon and John Earhart, Margaret and Jerrold May, in honor and recognition of Dylan Thomas Torresson who was born and died at 5:01 a.m. on March 6, 2002. " We are saddened by your loss. Wish we were closer in times like these."

Donations from Human Race

In honor of Jill Nelson and Joe Twicken:

Jean Nunes, Victor and Linda Bartolotta, Kirstin Schlueter, Greg Brinkerhoff, Bryce and Shirley Nelson, Janet Scanlon and Bruno Perreault, Lowry Fenton, David and Julie Hughes, Jim and Maureen Donohue, Barbara Miller and Arni McKinley, Don and Laura McMillan, Linda and Bruce Bertell, John Baron and Snezana Maslakovic, Mitch Oslick, Richard & Janice Miller, George and Stephanie Zurich.

In honor of Ron Shapera: Andrea and Harvey Schloss, Barbara and Jerry August, Frieda and Sterling Haidt, Leonard and Terry Goldberg, Hudit and Joseph Podolsky, Robert and Sheila Lewis, Milton and Lois Siegel, Bonnie

Scholes and Marvin Siegel, Marlene Levenson and Marshall Greene, Paul Resnick and Joan Karlin Resnick, Edwin and Sylvia Alderman.

In honor of Kellie Bliss and her daughter

Rose Tamikka Bliss: Carol Schulze, Susan Skousen, Michelle Robinson, Barbara Lindeman, Lynn Madden, Abby Munro, Darcy Lambert, Geri Lieby, Walt and Bernie Bliss, Sandy McKeithan, Georgia Collin, Amy Ackerman, Melisse Lusin, Twila Forbes, Lucinda Turner, Tifin Kutch, Sara Slocum, Rosalia Wilkins, Joan Whaley, Mirela Massad, Jan Krawitz, Lisa Angst, Dennis Eakin, Irene Lipshin, David Bliss.

In honor of all participants: Celia Harnett, Judi Weidenfeld

Participants: Jill Nelson, Joe Twicken, Ron Shapera, Kellie Bliss, Wanda Lee, Joan Stone.

eScrip Donations

HAND of the Peninsula has received \$1,942,36 in the past 12 months from 27 supporters signed up with the eScrip program. To learn more about this painless method of supporting HAND of the Peninsula and how to sign up, turn to page 3. A heartfelt thank you to those of you currently signed up.

Stacey Ahrens, Tish Alfonsi, Sara Braden, Christy Conklin, Kristine Cornwall, Emily Corpus, Shoneen Erskine, Cathleen Findley, Suzanne Gallie, Lori Goldman Reddy, Celia Hartnett, Tracy Hieber, Laurie McLucas, Debbie Mekeeb, Edith Muennemann, Leslie and Frank Muennemann, Shirley Nelson, Maureen O'Connor, Mary Angela Pechacek, Julie Raithel, Ron Shapera, Kristina Shulman, Alison Tam, Joe Twicken and Jill Nelson, Judi Weidenfeld, Jackie Willson.

Volunteer Help Wanted

Inservice coordinator to schedule presentations and parent sharing before various community groups, healthcare providers and other professionals interested in supporting grieving parents. Most of the job can be accomplished over the phone.

Support-meeting facilitators to set up the meeting room, greet parents in attendance and moderate the two-hour discussions held the first, second and third Wednesdays of the month. Training provided.

Newsletter contributors to write first person articles or other stories of interest to HAND parents, healthcare providers and other professionals coming in contact with grieving parents.

For these and many more ways to get involved in supporting other grieving parents, please contact Wanda Lee at (650) 367-6993 or walee@sfsu.edu

Mothers with recent loss sought for survey

Grieving mothers who have recently suffered a perinatal loss are sought as survey subjects by a doctoral-level clinical psychology student, David Wing. He and his wife lost their first child to a miscarriage 19 years ago.

The purpose of this research is to examine ways that hospitals, doctors, and nurses can be helpful in meeting the special needs of parents who have lost a baby through pregnancy complications, miscarriage, stillbirth, or medical problems during the first month of life, Wing explained.

This research is designed

specifically to include:

1) women who have experienced the perinatal loss of their baby;

2) where the gestational age of the baby (or number of weeks that the mother was pregnant) at the time of loss was 16 weeks or older; and

3) where the amount of time since the loss is no less than 3 months ago, and no more than 24 months ago

“It is just as important to us to hear from mothers who feel they were not treated well or who did not receive enough support at their time of loss, as it is to hear from mothers who are more satisfied with the support they received at their

time of loss,” Wing said.

The entire questionnaire should take approximately 30 to 40 minutes to complete. This is the only request that will be made of you. The survey will continue through August 2002.

To receive a survey packet, please write or e-mail David Wing at dwing@student.gsu.edu or by mail to:

David Wing
2362 Mahogany Glen Place
Lawrenceville, GA
30043-3453

Please include your name and mailing address when requesting a survey packet.