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THE PLACE THAT SAYS HER NAME

*She's buried in a green field
Bordered by tress
Filled with quiet.
We always bring
A bouquet of soft colors
Soothing in beauty
And ritual.
We gentle our voices, ourselves,
As we move through the garden of souls
Peeling the world from us
And see the one place on earth
That will always say
Our daughter's name.*

*Now here, finally,
I can do for her.
I can find the best florist
Choose each blossom
Fill the vase
Arrange the bow.
I can hold her father's hand
And feel like her mom
And be a family.*

Donations

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Christina and Fraser Louie, in memory of Cosmo Forbes

Charlene Canger, MSW, Hand supporter, Advisory Board

Fahimeh and Mehregan Loatfi, in loving memory of Neema Shams Heydari

Lori and John Reid

Heidi Schiessler, in memory of Megan Marie Schiessler

Kathryn and Richard Breaux, in memory of Don Beaty

Christabel and Alexander Choi, in memory of Teach Us Love Hudson Choi

Thomas Corso

Tracey and Daniel Palmer, in memory of Ella Rose Palmer

Mary Gorski, in memory of Neema Shams Heydari

Alexis and John Culbreath, in memory of Jaicee Skylar Culbreath

Diane and Michael Vanni, in memory of Mitchell Buckley

Wendy Hopfenberg and Michael Occhiolini

Jana and Peter Perkins, in memory of Jack

Rebecca and John Fanous, in memory of Jasmine Christine Fanous

Roya and Omid Milani, in loving memory of Neema

Shams Heydari

Patti Leeper and Craig Ball, in memory of Abigail and William Leeper Ball

Delnavaz Sabeti and Ardeshir

Bolandi, in memory of Neema Shams Heydari

Laurie McLucas and William Crook, in honor of Isaac Leeper

Sarah Beekley

Pascale and Patrick Marion, in loving memory of Neema Shams Heydari

Gina and Dan Guido, in memory of Natalie Marie Guido

Margaret Quinan and Daniel Shen, in memory of Alison Quinan Wai-Yi Shen

Dora and Fidel Ramirez, in memory of Cynthia Ramirez

LaDawn and Bill Wilde, in memory of Linda Diane Wilde

Jacqueline Willson, in memory of Mary Kate Kolsinger

Su-Mien Chong and Kyle Elrod in memory of Samantha Chong Elrod

Sharon and John Rayner

Judith Moltzen

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

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Helping Hands

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The Pit Of Grief

Her Name

continued from Page 1

*No, it's not to sob.
It's not to create pain
That wouldn't be there
If we didn't go.
And it's not to say
She's not with me
Always, anyway.*

*It's just
To see her field greening
in June
The month she came and
left us,
To feel the lush of fall
The sting of winter
The promise of spring
In the one place
That says her name.*

*— by Jane Dirks,
on Amelia's first birthday
June 1988*

The day my children died, I fell into the pit of grief. My friends watched me struggle through daily life, waiting for the person I once was to arise from the pit, not realizing "she" is gone forever.

The pit is full of darkness, heartache and despair, it paralyses your thoughts, movements and ability to reason. The pit leaves you forever changed, unable to surface the person you once were.

Some of my pre-grief friends gather around the top of the pit, waiting for the old me to appear before their eyes, not understanding what's taking me so long to emerge. After all . . . in their eyes, I've been in the pit for quite sometime. Yet, in my eyes, it seems as if I fell in only yesterday.

Not all my pre-grief friends are gathered at the top of the pit. Some are helping me with the climb out of the darkness. They climb side by side with me from time to time, but mostly they climb ahead of me, waiting patiently at each plateau. Even with these friends I sometimes wonder if they are also, waiting for the pre-grief me to magically appear before their eyes

Then, there are the casual acquaintances, you know the ones who say, "Hi, how are you?" when they really don't care or really don't want to know.

These people are the people, who sigh in relief, that it was my child who died and not theirs. You know...the "better them, than me" attitude. (not that I blame them for that sigh or attitude, I too wish it happened to someone other than myself).

My post-grief friends are the ones who climb with me, side by side, inch by inch, out of the pit of grief. They have no way of comparing the pit climber, to the pre-grief person, I once was. You see, they started at the bottom of the pit with me. They are able to reassure me when I need reassurance, rest when I need resting, and encourage me to move forward when I don't have the strength. They have no expectations, no memories and no recollection of how I "should" be. They want me to get better, to smile more often and find joy in life, but they've also accepted the person I've become: The "person" who is emerging from the pit.

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 PM

Dates: June 4 and 18, 2003
July 2 and 16
Aug. 6 and 20
Sept. 3 and 17

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

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: June 18, 2003
July 16
Aug. 20
Sept. 17

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 as needed. Please call (650) 367-6993 if you plan to attend..

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

Dates: June 11, 2003
July 9
Aug. 13
Sept. 7

Call (650) 367-6993 for more information.

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

Births

Jack David Guido, Feb. 20, 2003, to Gina and Dan Guido.

Alexandra Grace Hamel, April 6, 2003, to Jeanne and Richard Hamel.

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.

Patty McLucas, on behalf of John McLucas who is Laurie McLucas' brother

Caryn Goldman, in memory of Sasha
Peter Benson

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

Marty Ryhanych and Anthony Mueller, in memory of Troy

Mryna and Robert Filman

Ellen and Warren Dodge, in memory of Matthew Dodge

Karen and Gary Rogers, in memory of Carly Ann Rogers

Janine and Daniel, in memory of Renee and Lisa

Dr. and Mrs. Pualuan Diana Marie-Nicole and Wayne

Marisol Richardson, in memory of Julia Marisol Richardson

Laurie McLucas and William Crook, in memory of Henry McLucas Crook

Alison and Larry Brown, in memory of James Philip Brown

Ada and Robert Lai, in memory of Matthew Francis Lai

Christine and Michael Reeve, in loving memory of Edgar and Christian Reeve

Jill Morgan and Doug Keare, in memory of Steven Bradford Keare

Donations continued on Page 5

Donations

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Kerstin Spangner, in honor of Emily, Celia, Jana, Mary, Elham, Twila and Kristen for the support training

Twila and Paul Forbes, in memory of Cosmo Forbes

Jennifer and Michael Weise, in memory of our twin girls

Sharon Slezak, in memory of Joel Contreras

Becky and Andy Logan

Hellene and Kenneth Barillas, in memory of Hellene Emil Barillas

Melinda and Eric Ruchames, in memory of Zachary Clark Ruchames' 16th birthday

SBC Employee Giving/United Way, pledged by Joanne Regalia in honor of our twins, Melissa and Vincent

Tish and Richard Alfonsi

Irene Lustgarten, in memory of Talia Elise Nelson Twicken

Robin and David Costa, in memory of our son, Alec Robert's 5th birthday

Ann and Louie Schaffer

Maureen O'Connor, in memory of my granddaughter, Samantha Chong Elrod

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

Emily and John Corpos, in memory of Maria

Dr. Stephen Buchner, in honor of HAND volunteers

Kara and Darrell Chang Carlyle, in memory of Christopher Zane Carlyle

Lisa and Dick Jones, in memory of David Jones

Christina Conklin and Richard McCluney, for all our children

Lori and David Reddy, in memory of our daughter, Jordan Reddy

Alison and Larry Brown, in memory of James Brown

Laura and Ken Bevington, in memory of our three miscarriages and for all of your help and support

Joan and Doug Stone, in memory of Baby Mac Stone

Celia and Don Hartnett, in memory of Gregory Hartnett

Jennifer and Eric Jessica and Stephen Hope

Margaret Harris-Ryan, in honor of Emily Corpos and HAND

Julia McDonald Marianne Dunn

Linda and William Parrette, in honor of Emily Corpos and The Human Race

The Chiuchiarelli Family Foundation

Jerilyn and Robert Pelikan, in honor of Devin Steadman and The Human Race

Carolyn and Bill Wilson, in memory of our daughter, Amanda, on her 8th birthday

Paula Jo Husack, MA, LMFT, in honor of all the HAND volunteers

Jill Morgan and Doug Keare, in memory of Steven Bradford Keare

Michele and Mark Hollar, in memory of William Adam Hollar

David Pollack Irene Kennedy

Mary and Anand Thiagarajan, in memory of Ku-A and Ku-B Thiagarajan

Paulette Goodson and William Majoue

Myrna and Robert Filman Louise and John Pencavel

Grace and Todd Moeller, in memory of Isabelle Grace Moeller

Kathleen Addison, Hand supporter, Advisory Board

Stephanie Allen, in memory of Alex Allen

Pamela and Peter Musladin, in memory of Danielle Hefner Musladin

Leslie and Frank Muennemann, in loving memory of Ian

Christine Wood

Alicia and Tom Zigterman

Margo and Jerry Estruth, in memory of Mollie Kristin Estruth

Elham and Farzad Heydari, in memory of Neema Shams Heydari

Shoneen, John and Adam Erskine, in memory of Jessica Luck Erskine

Kellie and David Bliss, in memory of Rose Tamikka Bliss and Landen Michael Bliss - gone but not forgotten - in our hearts forever

Aurelia and Ric Ricard, in memory of Kevin Ricard. "Our little angel will always be remembered for his big smile and sense of humor"

Donations *continued on Page 2*