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# Helping Hands

Summer 2006

## Getting through Father's Day

By *Clara Hinton*

Father's Day has become a traditional holiday celebrated by many with gifts, cards, family gatherings, and perhaps even a special dinner out just for daddy.

Stores begin advertising for Father's Day weeks in advance of the actual holiday. The scenes in advertisements and cards always depict a loving father with a child snuggled close to that special man called daddy.

Many fathers, however, have experienced the devastation of losing a child, and there seems to be an almost non-existent recognition of the fact that fathers suffer from feelings of lost dreams, loneliness, failure, and loss of identity when a child has died.

Very rarely are comments of support made to the father in a family when a

child has died. For some reason, our society seems to be more in tune to the feelings of the pain a mother experiences during child loss. Fathers are somehow expected to be stronger emotionally, and they are expected to heal much sooner.

What can be done to show support on Father's Day

*Probably the most appreciated gesture of support would be to acknowledge the fact that the father is still a father, refer to him as a father, and express your genuine sorrow for his loss.*

to a father who has experienced the deep pain of losing a child? Probably the most appreciated gesture of support would be to acknowledge the fact that the father is still a father even though his child is no longer living on this earth. Refer to him as a father, and express your genuine sorrow for his loss.

**Father's Day** *continued on page 3*

# **USF nursing sorority honors HAND with fashion-show benefit**

The Tri Gamma Nursing Sorority Alpha Chapter at the University of San Francisco selected HAND of the Peninsula as the recipient organization for their 2006 41<sup>st</sup> annual fashion-show fundraiser held on Saturday, April 29.

The theme for this year's fashion show was "Helping Hands." It was quite an event, showcasing 40 models from Tri Gamma modeling nursing wear, USF garb, and the latest fashions. HAND of the Peninsula President, Catherine Hoff, and Past President, Jill Nelson, were pleased to attend the event and accepted the donation with enormous gratitude on behalf of HAND.

Tri Gamma was founded in 1948, by three registered nurses: Mary Gill, Margaret Graces, and Patricia Guiney. The purpose of Tri Gamma is to establish friendship among its members, to broaden the moral, intellectual and spiritual life of its members in every way possible, and to provide networking opportunities to its members as professionals. Tri Gamma also serves to develop quality leadership and to encourage its members to attain the highest responsibilities as students. Lastly, it serves to further the relationship within the University as a whole.

Tri Gamma established its annual Fashion Show 41 years ago to showcase charities in the Bay Area that work hard to help our communities. Karla Camozzi, a nursing student at USF, along with her aunt, Annette Gracia suggested that Tri Gamma consider HAND of the Peninsula as the charity to be honored at this year's event.

## **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  
<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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*Father's Day* continued from page 1

Fathers who have lost a child as early as miscarriage should certainly be included among the group of grieving fathers. Often, fathers of miscarried babies are never given any recognition of being a father.

Finding a Father's Day card specifically for fathers who have lost a child can be next to impossible. If you cannot find a card with an appropriate verse, choose a blank card and write your own message from the heart. "Sharing in your sorrow this Father's Day," will show a tremendous amount of compassion and support to a father who is grieving the loss of a child on Father's Day.

Recognize the fact that fathers go through emotional upheavals during the grief of child loss. Fathers grieve differently than mothers, so they might not want a lot of special treatment on Father's Day.

Men are generally less apt to talk about their feelings of hurt and loss than women, but those feelings are still there and need to be recognized. Father's Day without a child can be just as emotionally heartbreaking for a father as Mother's Day is for a mother without her child. We need to be sensitive to the needs of fathers, too!

Special holidays stir up many different emotions for fathers, and Father's Day is a particularly difficult holiday to go through following the loss of a child. With help and support from family and friends, a father can move forward in his grief.

By letting a father know that he has not been forgotten on Father's Day, you will validate his identity as a father, and you will allow him the special privilege of once again being called that most cherished name of all—daddy.

Finally, find some way to validate the fact that a father is still a father even though his child is not living. Fathers are by nature "fixers" and the loss of a child is one loss that cannot be fixed. This fact is often very hard for a man to accept.

By giving a card and a personal word on Father's Day, you will help validate to the father that he is still honored among that special group of men called fathers on Father's Day. Validation of fatherhood on Father's Day is one more step forward in this process we call grief.

Clara Hinton is author of *Silent Grief*, <http://www.silentgrief.com>

Jason and Cristi Leone lost their son, Jack Edward, to a placental abruption on November 11, 2004, his due date. His little sister, Jasmine Maia, was born April 12, 2006. Jason wrote this letter to his son.

*October 9th, 2005*

*Jack,*

*Lots has changed since November 10, 2004, the day you died. The long and bitterly cold winter has passed without a spring.*

*I miss you Jack. I still miss you, so much. Mama and I have moved to the South to be near family. But we will never be a complete family. Mama's pregnant again, she's got your brother or sister in her belly. Your brother or sister will never know you the way I do. I don't think anyone knows what Mama and I have been through. Losing you is impossible. Jack, Jack, Jack. I look at your face and say your name. You are Jack. You are me and Mama. I love you Jack.*

*We wanted to show you the sun. Instead, you showed it to us. We love you always, Mama and Daddy.*

*Sometimes I have to stop and think a minute to listen to those words. I wrote them, then, but it's as if you gave them to me:*

*"You wanted to show me the sun. Instead, I'm showing it to you. I love you always Mama and Daddy, Jack"*

*Thank you Jack.*

*Love,*

*Daddy*

## 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:** June 7 and 21  
July 5 and 19  
Aug. 2 and 16  
Sept. 6 and 20  
Oct. 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:** June 21  
July 19  
Aug. 16  
Sept. 20  
Oct. 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 as needed. 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:** June 14  
July 12  
Aug. 9  
Sept. 13  
Oct. 11

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

### HAND of Santa Cruz

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

## Inservices

**April 3, 2006** — Nursing Mothers Counsel, San Mateo Chapter. Jill Nelson, presenter and Kelly Luckey, sharing parent.

## Donations

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

**Celera Matching Gift Program**, matching gift of Kyle Elrod and Su-Mien Chong

**Esther and Saul Twicken**, in memory of our granddaughter Talia Elise Nelson Twicken

**Joanne and Michael Regalia Todd Lund**

**Susan and Shannon Lee**, in memory of our granddaughter, Natalie

**Irene and Maia Lustgarten**, in memory of our niece and cousin, Talia Elise Nelson Twicken

**Leslie and Frank Muenne-mann**, in memory of our son, Ian, on his 18th birthday

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

**Mary and Paul Kusber**, in memory of Therese Marie Kusber, May 1st 2006, 16th year anniversary

**Kelly and Judd Luckey**, in memory of Jack Bradley Luckey's 1st birthday

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

**Judith Harris**, in memory of Sarah Friedman Harris

**Anu and Peter Minocha**, in memory of Kavin

**Donations** *continued on page 5*

## **Donations** *continued from page 4*

**Susan and Arthur Kluge**, to acknowledge the loss suffered by Jim and Lisa Harris of Palo Alto and their extended families

**Robin and David Costa**, in memory of Alec Robert Costa's 8th birthday, April 12th, 1998

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

**Vivian and Frank Bossuwe**, in memory of Laeticia Mei Bossuwe. Already your 2nd birthday, we think of you everyday

**Wendy and Dale Kunz**, in memory of Nicholas Adams Kunz March 2, 1985

**Carol and Matthew Cory**, in memory of Natalie Guidi

**Louise Scanland**, in memory of Natalie Guidi and in honor of the Guidi families

**Hillary and Ilan Frank**, in memory of Baby Girl Frank

**Herb Foedisch**, in honor of HAND and Shirley Guidi, who shared with me what HAND of the Peninsula does

**Iris Fisherman**, in honor of Emily Corpos

**Marlene and Anthony Panacci**, in memory of Thelma Rogers

**Elizabeth Rossner**, in memory of Natalie Guidi

**Pauline and Charles Baker**, in memory of Thelma Rogers

**Kristen and Nick Gracia**, in memory of Thelma Rogers

**Tri Gamma Nursing Sorority**

**Alison and Larry Brown**, in memory of James Philip Brown

**Malka and Efi Lozon**, in memory of Elana Imberman Lozon's short life

**Shoneen and John Erskine**

**Jill Nelson and Joseph Twicken**, for the Human Race 2006

**Shirley and David Guidi**, in memory of Natalie

# **Coping with the workplace after loss**

How do I cope with others and going back to work?

Even for someone who has experienced the loss of a baby, your experience is different and unique. Many times people just do not know what to say. They may say things that they feel are comforting, but make you angry. Most people are not trying to be insensitive to you; they truly just do not understand the impact the death of your baby had on you.

Some people don't understand that you lost part of you, including the future you were planning together. The best way to communicate with your friends, family, and/or coworkers when you are grieving is to be honest and specific in what you need. If you are not a

verbal person, write a note telling them how you feel, what you have been through, or how you need to be supported. Sometimes people can be astonished by the depth of your feelings.

Depending on the relationships you have built at work, going back might be difficult. You may have not been given much time off from work for this loss and you may feel torn about returning. You may not feel the support you need, or you may find yourself always being asked about how your partner is, but not how you are doing.

Realize that you need support too. Grief might make your normal days work unbearable. You may feel sudden urges of

sadness or the need to cry. You may experience difficulty concentrating or confusion at work. It is crucial to be open with your employer or coworkers about your needs.

You may need to delegate or share responsibilities to alleviate feeling overwhelmed. If you are in an authoritative position, you may have a difficult time understanding how your grief is going to be accepted in the workplace.

Do your best to find appropriate ways to communicate your needs as a grieving parent and coworker. As you continue grieving and remembering your baby, days will begin to fall into a new normal pattern.

*From the National Share Office*

## Mark your calendar

Every year in mid-October, as part of national Infant Death and Pregnancy Loss month, HAND of the Peninsula hosts a Service of Remembrance at Huddart Park in Woodside. This year the event is slated for 10 a.m., Saturday, Oct. 14.

Here parents who have lost a baby, along with friends and relatives, may gather with other grieving parents to remember and honor their lost children. In a moving ceremony usually accompanied by a talented singer-musician, parents read poems, letters and other pieces. A list of baby names is also read. The ceremony ends with the scattering of wildflower seeds which bloom the following Spring.

Parents who have attended find the event

sad but comforting and most look forward to returning. The event is free and open to the public. Additional details concerning the Service of Remembrance will be forthcoming. For more information call (650) 369-6993 or email [info@HANDsupport.org](mailto:info@HANDsupport.org). We look forward to sharing this event with you.

### *Helping Hands newsletter delivered via email*

Annually HAND of the Peninsula spends about \$700 on postage alone to mail the Helping Hands newsletter. It is now possible to email either a link to the newsletter on our website or a pdf of each quarterly issue. If you would like to receive an electronic version of the newsletter instead of a paper copy, please email your request to [info@HANDsupport.org](mailto:info@HANDsupport.org)