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Helping Hands

Winter 2004

Coping with the Holidays

Remember One Day at a Time

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envelope and put it in a safe
place.

Try to mentally prepare
yourself for the many confus-
ing emotions this season
brings.

Shop for the holidays on
one of those "good" days,
choose gifts from a catalog, or
have a good friend shop with
or for you.

Begin making a special
holiday ornament for your
baby. Cross-stitch, ornament
kits, angels, are all good ideas.
Or engrave the name on a
beautiful brass ornament.

Try to rest as much as
possible. Cook meals in double
portions and freeze half for a
time when you are feeling tired
or overwhelmed. Use paper
plates and napkins. Do things
the easiest way.

If you are sending holiday
cards, consider
signing your
baby's name or
use a special
symbol in their
memory. A
lovely sticker or
stamp is a quick
and easy solu-
tion.

Excuse
yourself from
social
engagements if
you feel uncomfortable with
them.

Take time to reflect on the
life of your baby. Always hold
on to the LOVE. Write a love
letter to your baby. Tell him
how much you miss him and
wish he were here. Seal it in an

**It's okay to
make some
changes. Think
of ways you
want the family
to remember
your baby dur-
ing the holidays.**

Tie ribbons
on a tree in
memory of your
baby. Blue for
a son; pink for a
daughter; white
for a baby whose
gender is un-
known. Tie rib-
bons to denote
how old your
child would be
now.

Adopt a needy child from
an Angel tree; maybe the same
age as your baby would be
now. It may help you to
browse the toy or clothes de-
partment and purchase a gift
for that age.

Holidays continued on page 5

HAND of the Peninsula

Resource lending library information available online

An annotated bibliography of materials available at our Resource Lending Library is now accessible online.

“We offer a variety of publications, audiotapes, and videotapes on topics of interest to our grieving parents and their families,” said HAND volunteer Catherine Hoff, who inventoried the collection.

To view the summary of available materials, please go to <http://www.HANDsupport.org/library.html>

Of particular interest to bereaved parents at this time of the year might be the pamphlet entitled, “One Holiday at a Time,” by Mask Publications, Inc, 1990.

This booklet is intended for anyone dealing with the grief of a spouse, child, parent, or loved one around the holidays. It describes the meaning that holidays can hold for individuals and shares useful coping skills for each holiday and significant times of the year.

These include New Year's Day, Valentine's Day, Arrival of Spring, Mother's Day, Memorial Day, Father's Day, Beginning of Summer, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Beginning of Autumn, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Halloween, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving, Beginning of Winter, Hanukkah and Christmas.

Annual Service of Remembrance

HAND parents, new and old, friends and family gathered to remember their babies on a picture-postcard morning, Saturday, October 16, at the Miwok Shelter in Huddart County Park in Woodside.

Special thanks to HAND volunteers Joan Stone, who organized the event and published the program and to Leslie Muennemann, who secured the venue and musician/singer Jamie Kelly Curtis, who has a knack for finding the perfect song for the moment.

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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**Submission deadline for
next issue:**

FEB. 15, 2005

Intensive Volunteer Training

Saturday, January 22, 2005

Daylong instruction for HAND members interested in facilitating meetings and offering phone support (also known as peer buddies).

If interested, please leave message at
(650) 367-6993 or email
info@handsupport.org

Subsequent Parenting Meeting

Sunday, January 23, 2005, 3-5 p.m.

27 Bayport Court, San Carlos (near Laureola Park)

Come and share your experiences parenting children after a loss of a baby. Moms, Dads and kids welcome. Please bring a snack to share.

We will meet at Emily Mockett's house in San Carlos and if the weather is nice we can walk across the street to Laureola Park.

Please RSVP to emockett@hotmail.com

Adoption Night

Wednesday, March, 30, 2005

Please contact HAND of the Peninsula for information and to indicate your interest
(650) 367-6993 or email info@handsupport.org

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: Melisse Lusin (650) 367-6993

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

Dates: Dec. 1 and 15
Jan. 5 and 19, 2005
Feb. 2 and 16
Mar. 2 and 16

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 Shul-

man (831) 438-4513.

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

Dates: Dec. 15
Jan. 19, 2005
Feb. 16
Mar. 16

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 the HAND office (650) 367-6993 if you plan to attend or need more information

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

Dates: Dec. 8
Jan. 12, 2005
Feb. 9
Mar. 9

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.

Births

Benjamin Ariel Lachter — Nov. 9, 2004, to Jill Ludwig and Joel Lachter.

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.

Su Mien Chong and Kyle Elrod, in memory of Samantha Chong Elrod
Lisa and Kevin Kirkpatrick, in memory of Daniel James Kirkpatrick

Bryce and Shirley Nelson, in memory of Talia Elise Nelson Twicken

George and Ruth Frausto

Rosemary and Harry Reeve, in memory of Edgar and Christian Reeve

Arnold "Rick" and Aurelia Jeannette Ricard, in memory of Kevin L. Green
Margaret A. Quinn, in memory of Alison Quinn-Shen

John Hastings, in memory of Lauren Elizabeth Hastings

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

David and Shirley Guidi, in memory of our granddaughter, Natalie Marie Guidi

Shoneen and John Erskine, in memory of Jessica Luck Erskine on her 4th birthday

Keri Starling, in honor of Christina Rivas-LouieLea and Brian Greenberg, in memory of Lauren Greenberg

Mary and Bill Schorr, in memory of Daniel Patrick Schorr's 27th birthday anniversary on October 4

Jessica and Steve Hope, in memory of the Peticolas-Immel family's two miscarriages.

Holidays *continued from page 1*

Bake a batch of holiday cookies and share them with a friend or neighbor in need.

Consider traditions - are there some you want to keep? Some you feel you can't handle? Do something different this year. It's okay to make some changes. Think of ways you want the family to remember your baby during the holidays.

Plan to decorate your baby's gravesite. A decorated tree or wreath, small toys, snow blanket, flowers, angels, gold or silver garlands work well.

Keep a written journal of your day-to-day feelings. Add to it every year. Be aware of how you change and grow as you learn what you need during the holidays.

Share your holiday plans with the extended family. Will traditions be changed? Let them know what you need from them. It's okay to take care of YOU.

Hang a stocking for your baby. Ask family to share written thoughts to or about your baby. You and your spouse may want to exchange special gifts in this way.

You may wish to invite family and friends to bring an ornament in memory of your baby to help decorate a Christmas tree. Serve spiced tea and cookies if you feel up to it. Or ask guests to bring dessert to share.

Decorate your baby's grave - either alone, with a caring family member or a compassionate friend. Take your time and do it in your own way.

Reach out to another hurting or lonely person today. Visit a senior citizens' home, volunteer with the needy, etc. Realize you are not alone.

If it hurts too much to use a particular decoration, pack it safely away for another year. In time, your heart will be ready to celebrate.

Plan to decorate your place of worship with a poinsettia or other flower in memory of your baby during the holidays. Expect tears in the days ahead.

Be gentle with yourself; allow the feelings to come. If there is a moment of peace, open your heart to welcome it.

Decorate the mantle around a picture of your baby or a special keepsake/symbol if you don't have photos. Some parents find and save from a magazine a photo of what they imagine their child would appear.

Use greenery, twinkling lights, toys, angels, etc. Light a candle and keep it lit during the days ahead.

Display a photo album or scrapbook of your baby on the coffee table. Let your family know it's okay to talk all about him or her. It's okay to share your tears, too.

Record the family story of your baby: "Remember when . . .?" Recall when you learned you were pregnant, special memories of the pregnancy, etc.

Do something special in memory of your baby: light a candle; say their name out loud; hang an ornament; create a table centerpiece; give a gift; share your love.

You may continue to burn your baby's special candle if you wish. Close your eyes, take a deep breath, and listen to soothing music.

After the holiday rush, you may feel either a great sense of relief or letdown. Admit those feelings and share them freely.

Write a poem or story about your holiday experience. You may wish to save it to share in a newsletter next year in memory of your precious baby.

Spend a quiet moment with a picture or special keepsake/memento of your baby. Feel his or her presence with you.

Reflect on what you might want to do differently next year. Write this year's date on those ornaments bought or received in memory of your baby, then lovingly wrap them in velvet or tissue paper.

You may wish to spend New Year's Eve alone, with your spouse or in a group of people. Resolve to reach for "hope" this New Year.

Inservices

Nov. 18 — Stanford University Hospital social workers. Christine Reeve, facilitator and Emily Mockett, sharing parent.

Nov. 18 — Nursing Mothers' Counsel San Mateo County chapter. Jill Nelson, facilitator and Anjali Shah, sharing parent.