

Dear Newly Bereaved Parent,

How can a parent say goodbye to their baby? As parents, we do not expect to outlive our children. They are meant to grow up and live a long and happy life surrounded by love. All this feels so backwards and so unfair. Yet you do not need to travel this path alone. We at HAND would like to help you with your journey—to listen, to affirm, to share, to encourage, and to listen some more.

When no one seems to understand what you are going through, other parents who have “been there” are an invaluable source of support. HAND support groups bring us together as a community of bereaved parents, helping to ease the loneliness and isolation of grief. Together, we find comfort in sharing our experiences in a judgment-free space filled with compassion, empathy, and understanding. At our meetings, some parents have just lost their babies, while others are years past their losses, serving as hopeful examples that you can survive this, and that grief softens over time.

No two people experience a loss in the same way. It is important to remember that it's not about the length of your pregnancy or life of your baby, but the depth of love and attachment you felt as a parent. The grieving process is often more of a zigzag than a straight line. It can't be rushed. It often starts out very raw and then evolves, getting easier to carry over time, but the memories will always be with us.

As bereaved parents, we understand that our lives are forever changed by our losses. We at HAND have supported countless families on their journey to a “new normal.” Many HAND parents develop deep and life-long friendships.

We hope that you will consider joining the HAND community. Attending your first support meeting does take courage. You may find you just want to come and listen, and that is okay.

Take your time. We are here for you whenever you are ready.

Sincerely,
HAND of the Bay Area

From Those Who Have Been There...

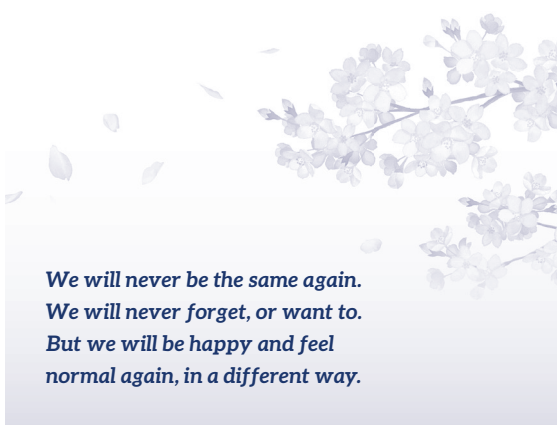
“After the first month, most of my friends had gone back to their regular lives, but I was still here without my baby. No one understood what I was going through, except for the folks I met through HAND. It was a real comfort to know that I could depend on them...”

“I would get so angry at people, and myself, who would wonder why I wasn't ‘over it’ already. It was through the help of HAND that I understood that grief takes time, and that I was not crazy...”

“I didn't think I was getting any better – the pain was still there. But, in talking with others at the support group, I could see myself slowly moving along the path to recovery...”

“When I miscarried, I never thought to have a memorial service for the baby I lost. When I attended HAND's Service of Remembrance, at last I could feel like I had honored the precious life I was so looking forward to...”

“Perhaps I will never know why this terrible loss happened to me. I do know that I have a new outlook on life, and seek to help others as a way of remembering my baby...”



**We will never be the same again.
We will never forget, or want to.
But we will be happy and feel
normal again, in a different way.**