

Helping Hands

Helping After Neonatal Death

Fall 2000

Sunrises and Sunsets

By Heidi Olson

HAND of So. Alameda County

Each life is lived in neat and tidy segments of time... weeks, months, years, sunrises and sunsets, births and deaths. There is nothing which happens to us that cannot be placed in a specific framework of organized time.

Spring, summer, fall and winter not only measure seasons of the year, but the ages of our life as well. It is said that the very young are in the springtime of their life, the very old are in the winter of their years. Sunrises are beginnings. Sunsets are endings.

During the progression of time, we keep mental ledgers where we record the passing of time by our successes, mistakes, love given and received. If we are lucky, we live long and our sunsets are bright and beautiful and welcomed when we are full of time and memories.

But there are sunsets which are not so fulfilled, when the evening comes prematurely to a child of ours, and we are plunged into darkness in the middle of our day. Then, there is only night, pain and confusion to measure; the what-might-have-beens to tally.

Every scrap of memory is salvaged to bring a spark of warmth to the coldness of the night to come. Each failure in our ledger is magnified and mixed with guilt and unanswerable questions.

When the memories are painful, we may even replace them with a more acceptable unreality to armor our hearts and minds until the time when we can accept the harshness of what has been, and we are strong enough to begin again -- never the same, but sustained by our faith and the healing of time.

There are no memories of a beloved face, no remembered firsts or lasts, only the vacuum created when the mind has been geared to expect so much and is rewarded with empty arms and blank pages in a baby book.

But when the child's sunrise and sunset have been compressed into a few hours or days, the lack of memories can be equally as hurtful.

There are no memories of a beloved face, no remembered firsts or lasts, not even a remembrance of some irritating habit to tuck into our battered hearts -- only the vacuum created when the mind has been geared to expect so much and is rewarded with empty arms and blank pages in a baby book.

And so, if you should find yourself measuring your pain against another's, remember this: If you have memories and if your memories are beautiful, you have a gift that is the most worthy of all.

For when your morning finally comes after the darkness has lifted, you can look back and see that the darkness was not as complete as you had thought. For there in the darkness will wink and glimmer the light of your memories -- like fireflies on a summer night.

Annual Meetings

HAND chapters seek Board nominations

HAND of the Peninsula, HAND of Santa Cruz County and HAND of Santa Clara County which includes South Alameda, Contra Costa counties and the Central Valley, are accepting nominations for their respective Boards. Any HAND parent or person associated with HAND may serve for a one-year term.

Members of HAND of the Peninsula will elect Directors and Officers at the annual meeting, **Wednesday, Oct. 25, 2000, at 7 p.m.** in the Sequoia Health and Wellness Services, 702 Marshall St., Redwood City. Persons interested in serving on the Board or nominating someone must call Celia Hartnett or Emily Corpos before the annual meeting. Newly elected Board members will begin their terms Jan. 1, 2001.

Helping After Neonatal Death, a California non-profit corporation covering Santa Clara, Alameda, Contra Costa, and the Central Valley counties, will hold its annual meeting on **Thursday, Nov. 16, 2000**, to elect Directors and Officers and conduct other business. If you plan to attend, please contact Craig Pampeyan for more information. Craig can be reached via e-mail at secretary@h-a-n-d.org or at (408) 246-9474.

Helping After Neonatal Death

Chapters:

HAND of the Peninsula
P.O. Box 3693
Redwood City, CA 94064
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(650) 367-6993 business office
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HAND of Santa Cruz County
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Helping Hands

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Printing: P.J. Hawkins

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next issue:
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Grocery Shopping ——— By Kristie Shulman

*A tiny one I spy
across the produce department,
his mother cooing softly
as she puts her lettuce in a bag.*

*The pain wells up...
a familiar visitor;
or maybe a friend...
Should I look away
or steal a peak?*

*"Confront it!" I tell myself.
So I take a look,
carefully...*

*Sweet baby boy,
you look so warm and soft
snuggled in that blanket
and those booties--
baby blue, like my son's...
never worn,
packed away now.*

*Tears come
to the surface
but don't spill over
like they did last time.
This is progress, I think.
My grief is becoming
invisible.*

*The mother looks away
and selects carrots,
unaware of me
and my envy.
She takes it all for granted,
I think.
She doesn't realize...*

*she just doesn't know.
It could have been me,
a few months ago,
shopping with my baby,
innocent,
unscarred.
But it wasn't,
isn't,
never will be.*

*To her, I am just another
shopper
picking bananas
and thumping melons.
I am an outsider in her world
of diapers,
feedings,
and soft, sweet-smelling things.
I want to shout
"I'm a mother too!"*

*Oh, this place!
I must leave this place
where proud mothers
and newborn babies
are on display
among the fruits and vegetables,
and childless mothers
like me
steal glances
and confront their pain...
again
and again.*

**HAND of Santa Cruz parent
Kristie Shulman wrote this shortly
after her first child, Daniel, was
stillborn Dec 1, 1995.**

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 Santa Clara County

Support meetings are held on the first and third Thursdays of the month.

Time: 7:30- 9:30 PM
Dates: Sept. 7 and 21
Oct. 5 and 19
Nov. 2 and 16
Dec. 7 and 21

Location: Our Savior's Church, downstairs library, 1224 N. Winchester Ave., Santa Clara (between Pruneridge and Scott). Call (408) 732-3228 for information.

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: Sept. 6 and 20
Oct. 4 and 18
Nov. 1 and 15
Dec. 6 and 20

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

HAND of Santa Cruz County

Support meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month. Contact Kristie Shulman (831) 438-4513.

Time: 7:30-9:30 PM

Dates: Sept. 20
Oct. 18
Nov. 15
Dec. 20

Location: Congregational Church of Soquel

Facilitators: Kristie Shulman (831) 438-4513

Kelly Passanisi Tartala (831) 662-0263

HAND of So. Alameda/ Contra Costa counties

Meetings are currently being held on the first and third Wednesday of each month.

Time : 7-9 PM

Dates: Sept. 6 and 20
Oct. 4 and 18
Nov. 1 and 15
Dec. 6 and 20

Location: Call (800) 963-7070 and ask for "HAND" for more information.

HAND of Central Valley

Support meetings are held on the first, third, and fifth Sundays of the month.

Time: 6:30 - 8:30 PM

Dates: September 3 and 17
October 1, 15, and 29
November 5 and 19
December 3 and 17

Location: Call (209) 823-5503 for information.

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 Santa Clara County

Pregnancy support meetings are held the second Thursday of the month. Anyone wishing to attend may call Gina (408) 868-9605 or Kathy (408) 948-1716.

Time: 7:30-9:30 PM

Dates: Sept. 14
Oct. 12
Nov. 9
Dec. 14

Location: Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 12770 Saratoga Ave., Saratoga, conference room off of sanctuary.

HAND of the Peninsula

Subsequent pregnancy support meetings are on the second Wednesday of every month at 7:30 p.m.. Anyone wishing to attend a subsequent pregnancy meeting may call HAND at (650) 367-6993.

HAND of So. Alameda/ Contra Costa counties

Subsequent pregnancy support meetings are being held as needed. Anyone wishing to attend a subsequent pregnancy meeting may call (800) 963-7070 or (925) 373-4114 and ask for "HAND."

Births

Olivia Ellen, April 11, to Mike and Sheri Herauf

Joshua Robert, April 18, to Robin and David Costa

Avalon Frances May, June 8, to Stephanie and Gary Allen and big brother Hobson

Emily Nicole, July 4, to Christine and Michael Reeve

Anders Steven, July 9, to Jeanne and Steve Lovell and brothers Alton, Quintan, and Ardan.

Makenna Sarah, August 7, to Eric and Alexis Halliday

Special Thanks

To **Pat Boehle** for her help and support over the years as a member of HAND of the Peninsula's Advisory Board. We wish her luck in her move to Grass Valley.

To **Christy Conklin** for putting together a brochure "Pregnancy Loss Resources in the Peninsula and South Bay," that was sent to over 200 hospital emergency rooms, doctors, nurse practitioners and midwives.

To **Tish Alfonsi** for her administrative help with this mailing.

To Creative Cremains, especially **Reyna Fregosi**

To the following for the exceptional support they have provided to HAND parents during the last few months:

Jones Mortuary Inc., especially: **Mr. Jones, Myrtle and Sandra.**

El Camino Hospital Labor and Delivery staff.
Skylawn Cemetery
UCSF, Labor and Delivery staff.

Crosby-N. Gray and Co., especially **Jack Jensen.**
Gate of Heaven Catholic Cemetery, especially **Carol Carrier.**

To **Chuck and Cherisse White**, who organized, sponsored, and ran an extremely successful raquetball tournament fund-raising event in memory of their daughter, Montana Lafayette White.

This event raised a significant amount of funds in support of HAND of Santa Clara and the California SIDS Alliance. Many thanks, Chuck and Cherisse, for a wonderful memorial effort!

Service of Remembrance

HAND of Santa Clara County will be holding its annual Service of Remembrance on Sunday, October 15th at Sanborn Park in Saratoga.

Families and friends looking for a nice afternoon service to remember their children should plan to attend. For more information, please contact Marianne at (408) 448-5017 or Karen at (408) 269-5230.

Inservices

Aug. 5, 2000 -- HAND of Santa Cruz members **Kristie Shulman Carolyn Dybsetter and Kelly Passanisi**, spoke to pastoral counselors and counselors-in-training at a workshop sponsored by Christian Counseling International.

Donations

Our warmest thanks to those who have sent donations to HAND. It is through your support that HAND is able to grow and help others.

Tracey Erwin in memory of Andy Raznick.

Emily Corpos in memory of Mario Ponzini.
Emily Corpos in memory of John Camerlengo.

Wilma Burchell, on behalf of Christian Counseling International.

Graphic arts services donated by Daniel Matsuda.
Lending Library books donated by Heidi B. Olson, in loving memory of her son Jake.

Blankets for bereaved parents donated by Papa and Grammie Orella in memory of grandson Matthew William Katreb.

Legal advice donated by Roxanna Shayan, Esq. Adobe Corporation, in memory of Christopher Ryan Hansen

Ken and Carmen Banuelos, in memory of Vincent Elias Banuelos.

Victor and Sharon Barnett, in memory of Baby Barnett.

Nina and Torsten Borchers, in memory of Tara Maria Cherian Borchers.

Karen and John Carroll, in memory of Justina Maxime Rose.
Richard and Camille Coonradt, in memory of Kristina Coonradt.

Al and Maria Dias, in memory of Alejandro Jesus.

Donations

(continued from page 5)

Dan and Dana DiVerde, in memory of Baby Girl DiVerde.

Teri and Jeff Dunkin, in memory of Miranda May Dunkin.

David and Kathy Haney, in memory of Jessica Haney.

Mike and Sheri Herauf, Steve and Jeanne Lovell, Paul and Julie Rettig, in memory of Nicole Adamo

David and Laura Hoff, in memory of Jennifer Christine Hoff.

Pamela and Jeff Hoffman, Cyder Sinclair, and Gerald and Margaret Gagle in memory of Garrett Hoffman.

Roshan and Lucy Joyce, in memory of Arun Joyce.

Devin and Nidhi Kalra, in memory of Amar Kumar Kalra.

Alana and Robert Lee, in memory of Kyle Robert Lee.

Paul and Anne Musial, David and Jane Breder, Michelle Dolan, Randal and Shonna Helm, Christopher and Jodi Mickey, Gary and Cynthia Mulloy, Diane Rudolph, Bill Sanders, Edward Fila and Joyce Struthers, in memory of Natalee Elizabeth Musial.

Joel and Shawne Smith, in memory of Rebecca Chu.

Mike Smith, in memory of wife Lynn and son Samuel Smith.

Dana and Jodie Sugiyama, in memory of Andrew Sugiyama.

Edgar and Yolanda Thompson, in memory of Antoni Edgar.

Kathryn and Steven Wahl, in memory of Karyn Jean Wahl.

Bob and Astrid Warner, in memory of Jessica Marie Sousa.

Peter and Lori Williamson, in memory of Shelby Hemenway Williamson.

Patrick and Janet Adamiak
Debasish and Basabi Bhattacharya
Stephen and Laura Decker
James Pellegrin and Pamela Pocketsch

Bob and Sue Salutric
Nancy Stevens
Carol Tunney
Robert Wright
Andrea Cook

Robin and David Costa, in memory of their son Alec Robert's second birthday.

Susan and Michael Lydon, in honor of Celia Hartnett.

Christina Conklin, in memory of Jordan Reddy on her first birthday.

Via United Way: Rob and Anna Strong, Joanne Regalia, Diana Walker.

Helene H. Oppenheimer, in honor of Christina Conklin.

Cherie and Marc Marcus, in memory of baby Sara Marie and in celebration of Gabriel's first birthday.

Mary Ellen Buck
Jane and Rev. Graham Crawford
Santa Cruz Mothers of Twins
Laurie McLucas Crook in honor of Daniela Rivero's 1st birthday.

Maria Medina in memory of Luis Manuel Vasquez.
Gail Shak, Ph.D. in recognition of the important work being done by HAND volunteers and thank you to Mr. And Mrs.

Seymour Messinger.

Kathryn and Richard Breaux in honor of Emily Corpos and her compassion and vision.

Lisa Morgan in memory of Scott and Justin Gaines.

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

Esther and James Roberts in memory of Jerome Roberts.

Human Race Donors

Jacqueline Willson, John and Danny Holsinger.

Kevin P. Schromm, Gail Brenner, Ward Dander, Toni Pickerill, Michelle Galvin, Angelo DeBernardo.

Erin and Alissa Osai, Donna Marie Baldwin.

Kristie Shulman, Keather Bruce, Rebecca Turner, April Keenan, Lynn Reno, Gina Hoffman, Keri Landrum, Stephanie Affolter, Carole Shulman, Michael Schromm, Vallee Bubak, Erica Ray, Rena Mills, Cathie Simonovich, Michele Jackson, Anne Virjee.

Leslie Muennemann, Rick Voreck, Mike Wong, Patricia Villarreal, Edith Muennemann, Frank Muennemann.

Barbara Jud, Roberta Smith.

Celia, Don, Meredith and Felicity Hartnett.

Christina Conklin, Lisa Kremer Brown, Byron Blunt, Davis Norris, Darlene York, K. Kirtley, Heidi Buck, Natalie Harding, C. Matthews, Janet Willis, Ceice Tacang, Dick Oppenheimer, Mary Ann Myers, Anne Scott, Gary Blunt, Brian Odlum, Barbara Stalions, Jamie Pettengill.

My Angel

I had only dreamed of angels
until I held one in my arms.
This angel had no wings on him.
He neither had a halo,
nor did he play a harp.
He just lay there, in my arms,
sleeping quietly, in heavenly peace.

He had his mother's eyes and nose
and hands and feet, just like his dad's.
A nice broad forehead - that was mom's
plus dad's, lots of black hair and the
cutest face ever.
He just lay there, calm and quiet my
little angel, my little baby boy.

I looked down at my angel, whom
I held in my arms and hoped with
all my heart . . . Would I get to take him
home? I had the crib there at home, laid
out for him. I had the car seat and the
diaper pail. I even had the baby swing
and the stroller to take him around.

I just needed my angel back, to take
with me home.
Did God love my boy so much that He
made him an angel right away? But
what about the love I had for my baby?
What about the dreams and hopes I had
built around him?

Did God not see them come crashing
down? Did He not see my love for him?
Did He not see how much I would miss
him? . . . Or did He see,
just didn't bother to care?

I know He's a god who cares, and that
He understands. But as the heavens are
higher than the earth, so are His ways
higher than our ways and His thoughts
higher than our thoughts.

So here I move on, trusting and hoping
that God would someday, wipe away
my tears. And knowing that my angel
is watching over me
day in and day out, all through my life.

Lucy Vithayathil
In loving memory of her son, Arun Sebastian
Joyce, who died during delivery Oct. 17, 1999

You are the BEST MOM!

*On days that I become overwhelmed in grief
it has helped me to remember that I am still
a good mother even though my little bundle
of joy is not living here on Earth.*

*I gave my child more love than I ever knew
I could. I held him in my arms only to feel his
spirit return to the One who gave him life.
I trusted in My Lord to take him into His care
and give him paradise.*

*I was willing to give my own life for his.
I was the only mother God has selected for
my son. I carried him in my womb knowing
miracles of life are not guaranteed . . .
I took that chance.*

*I mourned uncontrollably for the loss of my
precious baby. I gave him a name. I buried his
little body in the ground. I have pushed on in
life with that empty space still in my heart.*

*I keep his memory alive by continuing to
remind others that he was here but now he
is gone. I am still proud that I conceived him,
gave birth to him and he was so beautiful.*

*I said hello and good-bye to him and told him
how sorry I was to let him go. I will always
cherish him. Everything I did for my son makes
me a good mother . . . I did not fail!*

*Other mothers too . . . should hold their heads
high stay proud . . .
and remember . . .
you are the BEST MOM !*

Author Unknown

Meeting Facilitator Training

**HAND of the Peninsula is offering an intensive two-day workshop to
HAND volunteers interested in facilitating grief and subsequent
pregnancy support meetings or phone support**

Celia Hartnett and Emily Corpos will conduct the training

Saturday Oct. 21, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

and Thursday Nov. 2, 6-9 p.m.

**For more information and to sign up, please call Celia or Emily at
(650) 367-6993**