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Helping Hands

Spring 2006

18 years later

Sorrow may have lessened but memories are still fresh

By **Rose Fonda**
HAND of the Peninsula

In March of 1988, I had a stillborn daughter, Laura Rose. She would be turning 18 years old on March 25, 2006. I pulled out a special album I made in remembrance, and found a poem written by my daughter Amy and an essay written by my daughter Marie (*see page 3*). They were 11 and 13 years old at the time.

Amy's poem appeared in the Fall 1988 issue of Helping Hands newsletter. I left in all the spelling errors, just as they had been written. I haven't looked in this album for a few years, and gazed upon my only photo of Laura Rose. Her death had a profound effect on my three daughters. They were old enough to feel the pain and sorrow.

It made me very sad to see them experience anxiety during their pregnancies. I know they were very scared, especially during the ninth month when they didn't feel their baby move within them. I was only a few days away from my delivery date when Laura Rose died. What a shame they knew something horribly wrong can happen during pregnancy! I wish they could have been spared this awful thought.

I'm especially sad for my eldest daughter, Sara. Laura Rose was stillborn on Sara's 14th birthday. We always try to make her birthday special, but, with unspoken words, we all remember.

My three oldest children were very aware of what happened that awful day in March of 1988. Luckily my son was only 5 years old at the time, and I hope he doesn't remember too much. It was hard for our whole family, I suffered a severe depression, and I know it didn't make it easy for my family. But with God's help I managed somehow to keep going.

I attended HAND meetings in Belmont in 1988. HAND of the Peninsula co-founder and grief-meeting facilitator Celia Hartnett was so good to me and I will never forget her kindness and patience with me (at all hours of the day).

My life has changed since the death of my little baby, but I have learned to live with my loss. I will always remember and miss my Laura Rose. God has blessed me in so many ways. I have four wonderful children, the best husband, and four beautiful grandchildren, whom I adore.

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.

Santa Cruz Mothers of Twins Club

Nancy Krop and J. Mike Hedblom, in memory of Kendra Krop Helblom

Stephen Buchner, M.D.

Emily and John Corpos, in honor of Joe and Ruth Zucca's wedding day, November 25, 2005

Elham and Farzad Heydari, in loving memory of our 2 angels, Neema Shams Heydari and Ideen Alex Heydari

Char and George R. Rocha, Jr., in memory of Taylor Ann Rocha, January 3, 1997

Rachel Kindt and Gregory Marcus, in memory of our twins

Myrna and Robert Filman Annette and Dan Gracia,

Gina and Daniel Guidi, in memory of Natalie Guidi

Irene and Maia Lustgarten in memory of our niece and cousin, Talia

Kristina and Michael Shulman, in memory of Daniel Shulman on his 10th birthday

Christina Conklin and Richard McCluney

Patricia Murphy and Lloyd Steadman, in memory of Craig Steadman, gone 9 years - always in our hearts

Irene Kennedy

Franchette and Juan Garcia, in memory of Melina Flora and Citlali Del Cielo Garcia

Stacey Soong and Gilbert Wu, in memory of Daniel Wu

Carla Altizer and Rod Pasion, in memory of Zachary Pasion

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

Laurie McLucas and William Crook

Jacqueline Willson, in memory of Mary Kate Holsinger

Alison and Larry Brown, in memory of James Philip Brown

Kathleen and Victor Parrette, in memory of Malorie Anne Parrette

Sharon and John Rayner

Teri and John Hastings, in memory of Lauren Hastings

Jill Nelson and Joseph Twicken, in memory of Talia Elise Nelson Twicken on her 7th birthday

Anjali Shah and Palash Desai, in memory and in honor of Amaani Ariana Shah Desai

Grace and Todd Moeller, in memory of Isabelle Grace Moeller's 7th birthday

Marty Ryhanych and Anthony Mueller, in memory of Troy Mueller

Colleen and Dwight Baulough, in memory of Art and Celia Rees

Bank of America Matching Gifts for Matty Salamy

Donations *continued on page 4*

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:

MAY 15, 2006

From grieving sister to motherhood

By Marie Fonda Spiteri
HAND of the Peninsula

I'll never forget the day that we lost Laura. I was 13 years old and drove with my mom to the hospital because she couldn't feel the baby. I was there alone with my mom in the hospital room when the doctor came in and told us the devastating news. I'll never forget that day and I'll never forget the look on my mother's face. I lost a part of my mom that day; a part of her that has been lost forever.

I remember being very sad at school and that none of my friends could understand how I could be so devastated over the loss of a baby that never took her first breath. But I knew better and I knew my truth. I felt connected to the baby even though she was never born alive. Most people, at least in my experience, (especially back then), don't realize the traumatic nature of a stillborn birth.

I could have never imagined that a stillborn birth in the family would have had such an effect on me. I think about it often and I think about what my mom has been through over the years. For many years, my sisters and brother and I had to accept the fact that our mom was only physically home and not there for us as she was grieving this horrible loss. I learned not to burden her with little problems and tried not to give her much trouble as a teenager. Somehow I knew she had enough to deal with. I remember many times in the middle of the night finding her crying on the phone with Celia (Hartnett) a HAND of the Peninsula parent. She was still my mom, but a mom deeply lost in grief for her baby.

I have always felt a deep sorrow for what happened 18 years ago, but only could begin to understand my mother's devastating loss when I became a mother myself seven years ago. In retrospect, I was grieving in my own way; mostly for the loss of a sister who I'd never know but also for the loss of my mother to many years of grief. I can say now that I understand my mom on a different level; a much deeper level. I can relate to her woman to woman and mother to mother.

Marie Fonda Spiteri, 30, is the mother of three

Stillborn

By Marie, 13 years old

*As we sit in this empty baby room
Staring, at all these lonesome baby clothes
no one's little body to fit in them
because now you are dead*

*They said that you did not live
registered you as stillborn
but I know that you indeed lived
for 9 months in my womb
I often saw you kick and move
I know you were an active baby*

*You were perfect within your little death
no reason for you to die
it was you're time to live
but I guess also to die
no time in between life and death
you just went strait to heaven*

*My Mom says it was silent when you emerged
No sound at all not even a cry
It must have been lonesome
After waiting all that time
Now there's no baby at all*

*We often bring flowers to your grave
It seems simple
But that's all we can do for you*

*So now we will have to wait until our own deaths
to see you
But until then we will
Carry you in our hearts
Forever.*

By Amy Fonda
11 years old

**Mayby she wasn't ment to be,
but I wish I could have her in are arms in
our warm house.**

**She's in heaven and that's what
counts, With God, with lots of pleasure.
I'll have to wait till Eternity
to be with her forever, But till
then your in my heart Little
Laura Rose.**

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: Mar. 1 and 15, 2006
Apr. 5 and 19
May 3 and 17
June 7 and 21
July 5 and 19

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: Mar. 15, 2006
Apr. 19
May 17
June 21
July 19

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: Mar. 8, 2006
Apr. 12
May 10
June 14
July 12

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

Jan. 5, 2006 — Youth and Family Enrichment Services Crisis Center Volunteers. Leslie Muennemann, presenter, Jill Ludwig and Anjali Shah, sharing parents.

Donations

continued from page 2

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

Lisa and Richard Jones, in memory of David Jones

Rebecca Lombardo, in memory of Monica Marie Lombardo on her 27th birthday

Melinda and Eric Ruchames, in memory of Zachary Clark Ruchames

Gail Shak, Ph.D., in honor of Celia Hartnett

Cherie and Marc Marcus, in memory of Baby Sarah Marie

Malka and Efi Lozon, in honor of Avinoam, Lily, and Talia

Rose and Max Fonda, in memory of Laura Rose's 18th birthday

Kimberly and Kevin Postlewaite

Barbara Intersimone

Rebecca and Andrew Logan

Jill Ludwig and Joel Lachter

Catherine and Gary Hoff, in memory of Neil Christopher Hoff

Shirley and David Guidi, in memory of Natalie at Christmas time

Hellene and Kenneth Barillas, in memory of Hellene Emil Barillas

JOIN THE ANNUAL HUMAN RACE

HAND of the Peninsula's

YEARLY FUNDRAISER

SATURDAY, MAY 13, 2006

HELD AT SHORELINE PARK IN MOUNTAIN VIEW

Registration starts at 7:00 a.m.

The 10K and 5K Runs start at 8:30 a.m.

The 5K (3.1 Mile) Pledge Walk starts at 8:45 a.m.

The Annual Human Race is a fun-filled day sponsored by the Volunteer Center of Silicon Valley. HAND of the Peninsula's participation enables us to raise money for our programs and services in a friendly, fun environment. **BRING YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS.** The activities include a USA Track and Field certified 10K and 5K run, as well as a 5K (3.1 mile) Pledge Walk that is easy and fun for all.

The course is flat and wheelchair accessible. Roller blades, scooters, bikes and strollers are welcome on the walk course. There is even a separate course for pledge walkers with leashed dogs!!

Participants collect pledges (or one-time donations) from friends and family and mail them to HAND of the Peninsula or give them to a representative at the day of the event. Participants register online at www.vcsv.us and can print out pledge sheets and other important information. All participants receive a complimentary t-shirt and pizza at the event, as well as fun, fun, fun.

Come look for our booth, with morning goodies to start you off. Please call Shirley Guidi at (650) 345-6566 or email at davidandshirley@comcast.net for further information.

Volunteer Training in April 2006

As an entirely volunteer-run organization, HAND of the Peninsula depends on volunteers to facilitate support meetings, offer phone support and in a variety of other ways. Currently we are in urgent need of new and returning meeting facilitators and phone-support volunteers.

New volunteers undergo a thorough training, and in support meetings are paired with experienced facilitators. A training session for new meeting facilitators and phone support volunteers will be conducted in April, 2006. Please indicate your interest in volunteering, or direct any questions by email to info@HANDsupport.org or by phone to (650) 367-6993. You will be notified of the specific date, time and location of the training session. Returning volunteers need not attend the training session, and may rejoin the facilitator rotation and/or the phone support roster immediately.