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Helping Hands

Spring 2010

Grandson's death stirs Nana's memories

By Peggy 'Nana' Peterson

HAND of the Peninsula

April 10th, 2006

Saturday morning, Staci's water broke. She was only 19 weeks pregnant. Later in the day, doctors found no fluid left, but a strong heartbeat. Had there been fluid, they would have sewn her cervix closed and put her to bed for the rest of the pregnancy. God had other ideas.

The medication they gave her at 8:30 p.m. should have, but didn't, expedite her delivery. By morning they tried again. At noon she got up and walked the halls to get things going. The doctors told Staci the baby would be born still but she knew this baby would be born alive and wanted to deliver the baby so we all could have time to connect and say goodbye. She was certain the baby would be born alive, due to the strong heartbeat. She was right and after a bit of walking she was in labor.

Robert Benjamin Bartle was born at 12:50 p.m. and went home to Jesus almost two hours later, at 2:40 p.m. on Palm Sunday, April 9, 2006. He weighed 7 ounces and was 9 inches long at 19 weeks gestation. The gates of Heaven only had to open a tiny bit for our precious little bundle. What a surprise to greet the new arrival. This precious little fighter that made us all instant grandparents.

Oh the Heavenly chorus! His little heart continued to beat for nearly two hours. He was perfect, and beautiful, and AMAZING!

As long as God lets me live, I will forever see his little face, with his Mama's tiny nose, and his Grandma Peterson's ears, and the cutest little penis you ever saw... perfect in every way. Many pictures were taken and he was truly covered in love for his journey home. No life saving heroics, just a miniature bassinet, with all the trimmings and the privacy to hold and love him for as long as we could.

Staci and husband Ben were able to go home in the evening, Staci did very well. Ben was amazing. They were numb and sad and still in a state of disbelief, but they got to keep their little man with them for several hours, even after his spirit went to Heaven. He fought to stay alive for all of us and even as my heart breaks, it heals . . . finally.

Our faith tells us "in all things give thanks" and yes, that's very hard to do in the midst of this, but between you and me, our loving Father answered yet another prayer. He made this baby a boy, probably yesterday, as Staci was so sure it was a girl. But our God heard my prayer to please not take their hoped for daughter, to be named after Grandma.

Robbie *continued on page 3*

HAND of the Peninsula

Ways to support HAND parents

Among the many ways one may honor the memory of their children is to give back to the organization and ensure that HAND of the Peninsula will continue to provide the caring support and other vital services for which it has become well known over nearly three decades in existence.

As a 501c3 non profit, HAND of the Peninsula is governed by a Board of Directors which welcomes new members who bring fresh ideas, talent and energy to our common endeavor. The Board meetings are held quarterly in the evening on the fourth Wednesday of the month. HAND of the Peninsula is run predominantly by parents who have experienced a loss and financed entirely with donations from parents, family and friends. Without their support, HAND would cease to exist. Consider getting involved in any of the following ways:

- * **Schedule and/or facilitate inservice trainings where a sharing parent tells their personal story to healthcare providers interested in learning how to be more sensitive and helpful to parents experiencing a loss**
- * **Library organization and management**
- * **Write and edit the quarterly newsletter, *Helping Hands*, get it to the printer and post office**
- * **Distribute brochures to area hospitals which in turn give these to parents experiencing a loss**
- * **Bookkeeping and accounting**
- * **Fundraising (donations are our sole support)**
- * **Special event coordination such as annual Service of Remembrance, Volunteer Appreciation, Scrapbooking or other creative activity workshops**
- * **Anniversary and Special Dates remembrance**
- * **Schedule meeting facilitators**
- * **Attend training and become a meeting facilitator or phone support volunteer**

If you have a talent you wish to share or would like to learn more about ways to get involved and support parents please email: volunteers@HANDsupport.org or call (650) 367-6993.

Helping After Neonatal Death

Chapters:

HAND of the Peninsula

HAND of Santa Cruz County

HAND of Antioch

HAND of San Francisco

P.O. Box 3693

Redwood City, CA 94064

(650) 579-0350 crisis line

(650) 367-6993 office

<http://www.HANDsupport.org>

Helping After Neonatal Death

Santa Clara, Alameda, Contra Costa and Central Valley counties

P.O. Box 341

Los Gatos, CA 95031-0341

(888) 908-HAND (4263)

<http://www.handonline.org>

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Helping Hands

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Submission deadline for next issue:

MAY 1, 2010

Robbie *continued from page 1*

If it was His perfect will to take another baby from us, could it please not be a girl. He heard, He did, and the peace I saw in my daughter's face spoke volumes. Staci's faith base is different than mine, but she knows how I feel and the look on her face I'll remember forever. This baby was a boy for a very good reason.

You know how God promises us that "He will work ALL things together for our good, to those who love Him?" Well, He did it again. 36 years ago, when my premature twin boys were born in 1970. It was very different in the world of medicine then. I never got to see them, kiss them, or even name them. They have only been really real to my husband and Staci's dad, Bob, and me. Oh sure, references would be made in conversation, but it was different with our daughter Melissa.

Born at 32 weeks gestation in 1975, she died a few hours after birth from under developed lungs. She was named and had a funeral, therefore, she was real! I was the only one who saw her and that was at a distance.

But I remember her every detail. The twin boys were just a 'date in time' to everyone else.

But yesterday, my beautiful daughter Staci, handed me a gift. When she placed my grandson in my hand, she also turned the tape in my heart back to her twin brothers' birthday. They were the same size and the same age. I got to see them, through Robbie, and it healed me. I was finally able to grieve for my little boys, too. All the pain and hurt from 36 years ago came up from deep within me. It breaks my heart that this healing came through our daughter's grief. She was so strong!

Pacific Gardens does cremation for infants at no cost to the parents and Robbie's little ashes will be scattered at the bridge, here on the ranch, just like Grandma's were last Easter. Who ever would have thought what this year's Easter would bring.

April 21, 2009

We were sure God had a plan and we kept believing and trusting and yesterday we were rewarded with hearts full of abundant love. Three years and 11 days after Robbie changed our lives, our MIRACLE granddaughter, Lena Louise Bartle, was born healthy and full-term on April 20, 2009.

She was perfect, peaceful and looked intently at her mama the moment they made eye contact. Staci and Ben were just so full of love and excitement as the whole family was there to witness this miracle birth. All of her grandparents, great-uncle and big sister were there to welcome her. It was the most beautiful moment this family has ever felt and Robbie was right there with all of us, smiling right through Lena's beautiful blue eyes. It will be a day we remember forever... as we watched our daughter's dream come true.... FINALLY!

We are reeling from the shock and disbelief that this has in fact happened to our family again. But we believe God has a perfect plan, and we have the opportunity to grow better, instead of bitter.

So proud of your strength, my precious daughter, all my love,

Mom

Peggy Peterson is Staci Bartle's mom and Lena Louise Bartle's "Nana."

HAND of the Peninsula wants your books!

Do you have a book that you found particularly useful after the loss of your baby? HAND of the Peninsula is interested in donations of current books. We are also soliciting book reviews to help other parents find the right book.

Please send book reviews to: info@HANDsupport.org. Put "HAND Book Review" as the subject, and be sure to list the name and author of the book along with your review.

Send your used books to:

HAND of the Peninsula
Attn: Library Donation
P.O. Box 3693
Redwood City, CA 94064-3693

You can also bring your books to any HAND meeting. We encourage parents to write a special message in the book itself. Write a message to your baby, other HAND parents, or even share a poem.

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: (650) 367-6993

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

Dates March 3 and 17, 2010
April 7 and 21
May 5 and 19
June 2 and 16

Location: Follow signs to Palm Room at Mills Health and Wellness Center, 100 S. San Mateo Dr., San Mateo

HAND of Santa Cruz Co.

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 March 17, 2010
April 21
May 19
June 16

Location: Congregational Church of Soquel

HAND of Antioch

Support meetings are held on the first and third Thursday of the month. Contact Elham Raoufian, (925) 437-3406 for location.

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

Dates: March 4
April 8
May 6
June 3

HAND of San Francisco

Support meetings are held on the first and third Wednesday of the month. Contact: Chris Lehr, LCSW (415) 282-7330

Time: 6:30-8:30 P.M.

Dates: March 3 and 17, 2010
April 7 and 21
May 5 and 19
June 2 and 16

Location: Davies Campus California Pacific Medical Center, Support Service Conference Room, Level B, Castro at Duboce Streets, San Francisco

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 Wednesday of the month at Mills Health and Wellness Center, 100 S. San Mateo Dr., in San Mateo. Contact: (650) 367-6993.

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

Dates March 10
April 14

May 12

June 9

HAND of Santa Cruz Co.

HAND of Santa Cruz County's subsequent pregnancy meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month. Contact: Facilitator Kristie Shulman (831) 438-4513

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

Dates March 3, 2010
April 7
May 5
June 2

Location: Congregational Church of Soquel

Births

Natalie Grace Salfiti — Dec. 10, 2009, to Marwan and Juliana Salfiti, siblings Ava Lauren and Jacob Elias

Severin Cayden Hirsch — Jan. 12, 2010, to Paige and Scott Hirsch

Brayden Luke Sarbiewski — Feb. 12, 2010, to Jennifer and Mark Sarbiewski and sister Sela

Inservice

Jan. 30, 2010 — Doula II Class at Twin Lakes College of the Healing Arts in Santa Cruz, Kristie Shulman as presenter and sharing parent.

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.

Eric Rodenbeck, Nikki Gunn and the Kenneth Rainin Foundation in memory of Lola Gunn Rodenbeck

Michael R. Berman, M.D., in honor of Leslie Muennemann

Stephen Buchner, M.D.

Twila Forbes, in memory of Cosmo Forbes

Donations continued on page 5

Volunteer Training

Saturday, May 15, 2010

HAND of the Peninsula will hold a free training workshop on Saturday, May 15, 2010, for HAND parents interested in giving back by facilitating meetings or offering phone support to newly bereaved parents, their relatives and friends. You are welcome to participate whether you feel ready to jump in and support others right away or down the road. HAND of the Peninsula depends on parents to return and volunteer to support newly bereaved parents.

For more information call (650) 367-6993
or email volunteers@HANDsupport.org

Donations *continued from page 4*

Lisa and Richard Jones, in memory of David Carl Jones
Lori and David Reddy, in memory of Jordan Nicole Reddy
Kathleen Addison, MA, MFCC, in memory of Baby Mac & P.J.
Christina Conklin and Richard McCluney
Katie and Jack Gallagher
Suzanne Gallie and Mark Mitchell
Celia and Donald Hartnett, in memory of Gregory on his 27th birthday
Teri and John Hastings, in memory of Lauren Hastings
Ashley and Jeff Johanson
Rachel Kindt and Gregory Marcus
Nancy Krop and J. Mike Hedblom
Rebecca Lombardo
Irene Lustgarten, in memory of Shirley Nelson
Irene Lustgarten, in memory of Talia Elise Nelson Twicken
Kathleen and Victor Parrette, in memory of Malorie Anne Parrette
Melinda and Eric Ruchames
Mary and William Schorr, in memory of Daniel Patrick Schorr

The Kenneth Rainin Foundation

Diana and Howard Bujtor, in memory of our Peanuts
Amanda L. Anderson
Peter and Judith Mason Benson
Thomas Corso, in memory of Nicky
Shoneen and John Erskine, in memory of Jessica Luck Erskine
Shirley and David Guidi, in memory of Natalie Marie Guidi
Michele and Mark Hollar, in memory of William Adam Hollar
Jane and Mark Hoppe, in memory of Andrew and Benjamin Hoppe
Irene Kennedy
Patricia Leeper and Craig Ball, in memory of Abigail and William Leeper Ball
Joe Twicken and Jill Nelson, in memory of Talia Elise Nelson Twicken on her 11th birthday
Paula and Joe Osorio, in memory of Alexis Marlene Osorio
Nina and Art Squillante, in memory of Leo
Rebecca Turner and Erik Soule, in memory of Daniel Shulman
Heidi Salisbury and Doug Slezak, in memory of Thomas Michael Slezak
Marie Violet