



Helping Hands

Summer 2009

Round Two

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By Lisa Morse

Excerpted from pedroandarcher.blogspot.com

November 2008

Wow! So we are pregnant again. The four-month anniversary of Pedro and Archer's birth and death is this Sunday, and here I am harboring new life. I am excited, and feeling blessed, and at the same time feeling guilty and feeling very, very suspicious. I feel guilty because I am afraid it is disrespectful to Pedro and Archer, to be excited about this new life.

I had a dream about being in a hotel room after I'd checked out, and the new inhabitant of the room was there and trying to unpack her bags, and I wouldn't leave and kept telling her that all the bags in the room were my bags not hers. I'm assuming the room is a metaphor for my womb, and I am refusing to let go of what already "checked out" in order to let the new inhabitant in. It's also possible that the room is the hospital room in Portland. I've often thought about someone new being in that room, our doctors and nurses working on new cases, and I hated the idea, mostly because I wanted to still be there, still be going strong, protecting Pedro and Archer and making everyone laugh. Gotta love pregnancy dreams.

*From the very beginning,
I have been afraid I will
miscarry. I have viewed every
single thing as proof that this
gift will be taken away from us.
I read into every communica-
tion I have with the doctor . . .*

I feel guilty because I worry it is too soon to be having another child. Guilty because I am afraid people will want to forget Pedro and Archer, will want to stop saying their names, stop mourning their loss, will want to hurry us past all that as if our sons were a bad dream instead of our first children. That people will find it distasteful for us to continue to talk about Pedro and Archer, to continue to count them as members of our family. That they will see it as morbid or obsessed. I know I need to not worry about anyone else, but it never quite works out that way, does it. Life doesn't compartmentalize like that.

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HAND of the Peninsula

An indispensable volunteer, Shirley Guidi, is leaving HAND after generously devoting more than five years of her time and care to a long list of behind-the-scenes jobs.

The death of her granddaughter, Natalie Marie Guidi, prompted her to become involved in 2004, taking responsibility for many essential tasks including writing and mailing a card marking the one-year anniversary of HAND parents' loss, recording and acknowledging donations and promoting participation in the annual Human Race, one of HAND's fundraisers. She was a board member from 2005 to April 2009.

"Shirley has been a super volunteer," said Emily Corpos, cofounder of HAND. "She has many solid, affirming qualities. She always added in a very positive way to our meetings and events. She and husband, David, are very giving and they will be missed."

Mothers' Day donation

Emily Corpos and Celia Hartnett, cofounders of HAND of the Peninsula, attended the Unitarian Universalist Church in Redwood City on Mothers' Day to receive a donation the congregation was making on behalf of HAND. Congregation member and HAND parent, Emily Mockett, nominated HAND of the Peninsula to be the recipient of the Mothers' Day collection.

Emily and Celia addressed the congregation explaining HAND's mission. Emily Mockett also read a very moving poem during the service.

"We felt very grateful, both to the church congregation and to Emily Mockett for honoring HAND in this way," said Celia.

Volunteer opportunities

Many opportunities are available for HAND parents interested in getting involved in small ways that don't require training. Some include collecting mail at the Redwood City post office box, writing thank-you cards to donors and anniversary cards to parents, entering information into HAND's database and helping with the annual Service of Remembrance in October.

Administrative duties can easily be managed from home on one's own schedule. If you have any interest in supporting HAND by volunteering, please call (650) 367-6993 and leave a message or email volunteers@HANDsupport.org.

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>**

**HAND of Santa Clara,
Contra Costa, Alameda
Counties, Central Valley
1-888-908-HAND**

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Helping Hands

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Round Two *continued from page 1*

I feel suspicious because I no longer believe that I can count on anything. When my husband, Bruno, got his job offer, we didn't tell anyone until he stepped into the office for the first day of work; we were so afraid the opportunity might get taken away at the last second. And now, I am afraid to get excited, afraid to let myself talk about the future. I can't believe the waves of fear I've felt in only this first week of knowing.

From the very beginning, I have been afraid I will miscarry. I have viewed every single thing as proof that this gift will be taken away from us. I read into every communication I have with the doctor, I spend way too much time on the internet googling symptoms. I am shocked at how my normally optimistic outlook has been taken over by this **Obsessive Fear Monger**—OFM.

I will fight this OFM. I will not let it ruin this experience. If I have learned nothing else from losing my sons, it is that knowing it might happen, preparing for it to happen did nothing to mitigate the pain of their loss. So why waste time anticipating the worst. I will fight for the freedom of hope.

Unfortunately, Lisa lost this pregnancy at 7 weeks but remains hopeful for her future family.

A Normal Evening

Excerpted from pedroandarcher.blogspot.com

Friday, November 21, 2008

Sitting around the bridge table I inherited from Nana, playing cards: Mom, Dad, me and Bruno. We're cracking jokes and being silly, high on the adrenaline of competition, not to mention sugar from the ice cream. Mom and I dip our spoons directly into the chocolate sauce. Mom has it all over her teeth and we all poke fun at her sloppy mouth.

I have a whisper of guilt, but just a whisper: We haven't mentioned the boys tonight. And I decide it's alright. Looking at my father's smiling face (he's losing, and he's not even being grouchy about it), looking at my husband's relaxed brow, my Mom's chocolaty smile, I decide it's alright to be normal for once. To have an evening where

our grief isn't center stage, the main event. Where eggshells are abandoned, crunched on, even. My father tells a story and I start to laugh, really laugh, and I could almost cry with how nice it feels to catch a glimpse of our New Normal.

Still

Excerpted from pedroandarcher.blogspot.com

Thursday, April 23, 2009

I was talking on the phone the other day with a dear friend in the area. I apologized for failing to come to visit earlier that week: I had called to see if she were free, and she said she had another friend over, but I was welcome to come and join. I had declined. I confessed to her that I had been having one of those days when I just couldn't be with new people. She remarked, "I am so sorry to hear you are still having those days."

Yes, I am having those days. Still.

I know that it is impossible to know what this journey is unless you have had the misfortune to travel it. Hell, I'm in the middle of traveling it and I still don't know what it is. But it certainly isn't following the time-line I might have imagined. Well, not much has followed the time-line I imagined. I thought I'd meet my Prince Charming in my twenties, but I had to wait for my thirtieth year for my beloved Bruno to show up. I thought I'd be an actress on a Broadway stage before I left NYC, but it looks like that dream won't fulfill itself until maybe I reach my 40's or 50's or maybe my 60's even. That's OK. I practice yoga: I'll be here, ready and able when the time is right. I was sure that I'd have two children by now. Nope, not even one yet. Still . . .

I don't think I am still. Those days aren't the same days I had nine months ago. They aren't even the same days I had one month ago, or last week. I am not still: I am moving, I am evolving, I am battling over, under, around and through this grief which will not conform to the prescribed stages, which is neither orderly nor organized, which is impervious to reason, and has no eyes for calendars or clocks.

No, my loss will not stay still. And so neither do I.

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: June 3 and 17
July 1 and 15
Aug. 5 and 19
Sept. 2 and 16

Location: Ellsworth 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: June 17
July 15
Aug. 19
Sept. 16

Location: Congregational Church of Soquel

New Chapters

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: June 4 and 18
July 1 and 15
Aug. 5 and 19
Sept. 2 and 16

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: June 3 and 17
July 1 and 15
Aug. 5 and 19
Sept. 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: June 10
July 8
Aug. 12
Sept. 9

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

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

Dates: June 3
July 1
Aug. 5
Sept. 2

Location: Congregational Church of Soquel

Births

Lena Louise Bartle — April 20, 2009, to Staci and Ben Bartle

Inservice

San Francisco Public Health Nurses on Feb. 26, presented by Chris Lehr, facilitator of HAND of San Francisco

Doula Class, Twin Lakes College of the Healing Arts in Santa Cruz on April 18, presented by Kristie Shulman, facilitator of HAND of Santa Cruz

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

Todd Lund

GAP Inc. Giving Campaign-matching gift for donation by **James Wevley**

Esther and Saul Twicken, in memory of our granddaughter, Talia Nelson Twicken

Wendy and Dale Kunz, in loving memory of Nicholas Kunz who would have been 24 on March 2, 2009

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Irene and Maia Lustgarten, in loving memory of Talia

Joanne and Michael Regalia

Cherie and Marc Marcus, in memory of Baby Sarah Marie

Su-Mien Chong and Kyle Elrod, in memory of Samantha Chong Elrod

Georgia and Robert Vierra, in memory of our grandson, Alec Robert Costa

Nina and Art Squillante, in memory of Leo on his 3rd birthday

Deepti and Piyush Jain, in memory of Amol Jain

Sun Microsystems Foundation, Inc. matching gift for a donation by **Suzanne Gallie**

Kristi and Robert Zuniga, in memory of Mariana Teresa Zuniga

Gigi and Joe Casey, in memory of Timothy Hoang Casey on his 6th birthday, April 1, 2009

Robin and David Costa, in memory of our son, Alec Robert Costa

**Nancy Faulstich
Hillary Walsh**

Microsoft Giving Campaign matching gift for a donation by **Mar and Matt Hershenson**

Google Matching Gifts Program matching gift for a donation by **Shoneen and John Erskine**

Julie Van Gelder and Brent Gregory, in memory of Benjamin Gregory

Thomas Corso, in memory of Nicki

Cassandra and Jake Nelson, in memory of Margaux Lily Nelson

Anne Graham, in memory of Leo Squillante

Twila Forbes, in memory of Cosmo Forbes

A Poem for Gabriel

Feeling love fleeting, slipping through my hands.
An impossible choice before me, the pain I cannot stand.
What should I do? No one seems to know.
Time stands still and yet you continue to grow.

Walking into a cold sterile room, I drift to sleep.
They took you away from me, as I wake I start to weep.
The sound of your heartbeat slowly disappears,
A grieving mother left, my face covered in tears.

An empty womb, a broken heart.
An unfinished life before it could start.
How will I ever forgive myself for letting you go?
Your beautiful face, your laugh—things I will never know.

People say stop crying, you did the right thing.
Yet the sound of your heartbeat continues to ring.
Every time I close my eyes, I imagine your face.
I feel like I let you down, I am a disgrace.

I gave up on you before you were even born.
The Earth has become my hell to which I constantly mourn.
I tell myself I protected you, spared you from needless pain.
Instead I feel selfish and hollow, my efforts in vain.

I barely knew you and yet I miss you so much.
Your tiny hands and feet I will never touch.
My heart bleeds for you and my anger seems to grow,
My body has forgotten you and I cannot let go.

Dreams, plans the future stands quietly still.
All of life's beauty, that you will never fulfill.
I promise I will remember you every single day.
Sometimes I imagine you when your siblings play.

I pretend I can hold you and sing a lullaby.
The music is quickly drowned by the sound of my cry.
I have never felt more alone in my entire life.
Strangely your memory somehow comforts all of the strife.

You were an innocent child and I am sorry for what I did to you.
It's so easy for others to say what they will never have to do.
It is difficult to express how I truly feel.
This entire experience has been utterly surreal.

Please forgive me my son for taking your life.
The pain cuts through me just like a knife.
Gabriel, I promise to love you as though you are here.
An angel in the heavens, I know you are near.

Can you hear me singing to you, this silly lullaby?
Can you hear me stuttering, trying to say goodbye?
They say time heals all wounds, but this scar shall always last.
Your memory will linger in the present, never in my past.

I hope you are happy wherever you may be.
You may be gone, but you will never leave me.
My heart and my soul shall always bear your name.
Your memory I carry. Please time, fade this pain!

You left my life as quickly as you came.
For this, I'm afraid I have no one else to blame.
I hate myself for what I have done.
My children lost a brother and I lost you my son.