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Helping Hands

Summer 2010

A kiss from Grandpa

By Ronna Edwards

HAND of the Peninsula

On November 6th, 2007, I was 9 months pregnant and something terrible had happened to our baby. Instead of getting the exciting news that a healthy, happy baby had been born, Grandpa heard the opposite: That his sweet little granddaughter had passed away. She was stillborn due to a cord accident. Right then, Dad drove to Las Vegas and got on a plane to San Francisco.

I had to be induced and so I was in the hospital waiting to have the baby when he arrived. I was still in shock and couldn't understand what had happened and why it had happened. When I saw his face in the hospital room I felt a sense of peace. Dad was there to comfort me and help me get through one of the hardest things I would ever have to do.

It was late and my body still wasn't ready to push her out, and my emotions still weren't ready to let her go, either. The next day, I woke to my biggest nightmare, but it was real. I don't remember much about the labor. But I do remember holding and loving my little baby after she was born. We named her Chelsea Lynn Edwards. She looked like a perfect combination of her older brother and sister. Her dad and I automatically loved her and kissed her. But I think it was because we had made her.

I don't know how other people would feel about holding a dead baby. But, I wanted Dad to come and see his newest grandchild. He didn't hesitate for one minute. When he walked into the room, I was nervous, to be honest, that he might be scared or freak out. But he did what any grandpa would probably have done. He walked right up and took her out of my arms and held and kissed her.

He was sad but tried to be happy for this short time he had with this precious baby. His comment cheered me up when he said "Well, she is definitely an Edwards!" With her long legs and arms that dangled like a frog (like my other kids). Her face and head was smothered in kisses from her grandpa and he rocked and rocked her for at least an hour. We cried a little but he just tried to comment on how beautiful and precious she was. He looked at her hands and feet, just like he would do with any other grandchild, not worried about her being already gone.

Grandpa *continued on page 5*

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.info@handonline.org>

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Helping Hands

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AUG 1, 2010

HAND Board welcomes new board members

Every October, HAND voting members elect a new Board which meets quarterly beginning in January. This year we welcome several HAND parents new to the Board:

Jennifer Hoppe, President, began attending HAND of the Peninsula grief support meeting in 2006 after the death of twins, Andrew and Benjamin, at 26 weeks gestation. She and her husband, Carlen, live in Sunnyvale with their sons Ellis and Miles.

Jay and Penny Crespo, Co-Secretaries. They came to their first HAND grief support meeting in 2008 following the loss of their son, Nathan. They live in Burlingame with their daughters Sydney and Ella.

Ellen and Tim Daley, Co-Treasurers, recently gave birth to their daughter Patricia "Patsy" Adelaide Daley. They began attending meetings in October 2008 following the death of their son, Seamus. They live in San Carlos. Patsy's big brother is Ryan.

Juliana Salfiti, Board member-at-large, lives with her husband, Marwan, and children Ava, Jacob and Natalie in South San Francisco. She began attending HAND meetings following the loss of son, Gabriel.

Julie Mitra, has joined HAND's Advisory Board. She is a bereaved mother who facilitates Grupo Amparo, a support group for Spanish-speaking parents with neonatal losses in San Francisco. She also provides phone support at (415) 764-0211.

HAND parents complete volunteer training

Congratulations to eight new trainees who completed HAND's volunteer training on May 15. Each one found they were in a place with their feelings of loss where they felt ready to offer newly bereaved parents the support they very much need. It is what HAND is all about — parents supporting other parents. The new trainees are:

Jennifer Wang, Eric Chan, Ronna Edwards, Jennifer Gilbert, Kara Juneau, David Pollack, Jasmine Forcier and Lisa Sass.

Among the topics at the training covered were:

HAND 101 — HAND of the Peninsula's mission, history, structure and services offered and volunteer opportunities.

Grief/Perinatal Loss — The stages, influences, sources of support a parent may experience.

Active listening

Mechanics of a meeting and role of a facilitator

Volunteer sign ups — Trainees indicated their areas of interest.

Buddy System — To support and encourage new volunteers, HAND has recently implemented a "buddy system," whereby a new facilitator is matched with an experienced facilitator who serves as an advisor, to share their knowledge and experience, and provide ongoing support to the new volunteer during their first year of facilitating or doing phone support.

The next Volunteer Training will be held on January 22, 2011. On Saturday, January 29, 2011, there will be a Facilitator and Phone Support Training for all new volunteers interested in facilitating or doing phone support as well as any current volunteers or former trainees wanting a refresher course and practice. For more information about volunteer opportunities and future trainings, call (650) 367-6993 or email info@HANDsupport.org

Continuing Volunteer Opportunities

Many of the essential functions of operating HAND of the Peninsula remain vacant or could use more volunteers. Most do not require attending the annual facilitator training.

Board of Directors

Fundraising

Education/Inservice (conduct training for health-care professionals, serve as presenter or sharing parent)

Events (annual Service of Remembrance, volunteer recognition picnic)

Volunteer Coordinator (find volunteers to complete miscellaneous tasks)

Operations (voicemail, email, anniversary cards, donation acknowledgement)

Library

Outreach (distribute brochures to area hospitals)

Newsletter (write and edit; published quarterly)

Technology (manage website and/or database)

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 2 and 16
July 7 and 21
Aug. 4 and 18
Sept. 1 and 15

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: June 16
July 21
Aug. 18
Sept. 15

Location: Congregational Church of Soquel

New Chapters

HAND of Antioch

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

Time: 7:30-9:30 P.M.
Dates: June 3
July 8
Aug. 5
Sept. 2

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 2 and 16
July 7 and 21
Aug. 4 and 18
Sept. 1 and 15

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 start-

ing 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 9
July 14
Aug. 11
Sept. 8

HAND of Santa Cruz County 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 2
July 7
Aug. 4
Sept. 1

Location: Congregational Church of Soquel

Births

Mikaela Anne Hardtke — Oct. 5, 2009, to Charlie and Sonia Hardtke and big brother Cole

Patricia “Patsy” Adelaide Daley — March 28, 2010, to Tim, Ellen and big brother Ryan Daley

Gracie Elizabeth Squillante — April 5, to Art and Nina Squillante

Ryan N. Tay — May 11, to Jafar Tay and Pany Naeimi

Miriam Nora and Lydia Sara Kurtic — June 3, to Lisa Morse and Bruno Kurtic

Inservice

April 12, 2010 — Lucile Packard Children's Hospital social workers. Presenter Shoneen Erskine and Jennifer Hoppe as 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.

Kathleen Addison, MA, MFCC

Anne Graham, in memory of Leo Squillante
Nursing Mothers Counsel, Inc.

Jane Zimmerman, LCSW

Penny Floor

Cheryl and Charles Gagliasso, in honor of John and Emily Corpos

Carolyn and Gerald Dybsetter, in memory of Emily Ann Dybsetter

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

Sonia and Charlie Hardtke, in memory of Luke Hardtke and in honor of the birth of Mikaela Anne Hardtke

Emily and John Corpos

Irene and Maia Lustgarten, in loving memory of Talia Elise Nelson Twicken

Anna and Rob Strong

Esther and Saul Twicken, in memory of Talia Nelson Twicken

Joanne and Michael Regalia

Robin and David Costa, in memory of our son, Alec Robert, on his 12th birthday

Michele and Mark Hollar, in memory of William Adam Hollar

Rebecca Lombardo, in memory of Monica Marie

Julie Van Gelder and Brent Gregory, in memory of Little Ben

Susan Blanco and Jeff Morton, in memory of Izabelle Rhea Blanco

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

Lisa and Andrew Cope, in memory of Charles Joseph Cope

Nancy Faulstich

Twila Forbes, in memory of Cosmo Forbes

Wai Yan Lam, in memory of Laeticia Mei Bos-suwe, on her 6th birthday

Leslie and Frank Muennemann, in memory of our son, Ian, on his 22nd birthday

Nina and Art Squillante, in memory of our son, Leo, on his 4th birthday

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

Carolyn and David Assell, in memory of Josephine Louise Kerr

Elise Schlessel, in memory of Josephine Louise Kerr

Stephanie and Paul Verbansky, in memory of Josephine Louise Kerr

Bevan Vinton and Manny Myers, in memory of Josephine Louise Kerr

Grandpa *continued from page 1*

My dad spoiled her as much as he could in that short time. When it was time for him to go, he cried and then gave her back to me. He leaned down one more time and kissed her on her tiny head, trying not to cry, kind of like he does when we have to go home after a long vacation at Grandpa's and Grandma's. Then he looked at me and told me he loved me and gave me a kiss too. I needed it more than her of course. But then again, my Dad probably needed comfort too. He had just

lost his granddaughter!!! But Dad had to be strong and brave, because, well, that's what dads do. I love you Dad!

Love, Ronna

Ronna Edwards wrote this as a journal entry on the occasion of her dad's, Terry McDonald's, 60th birthday and in memory of her daughter, Chelsea Lynn Edwards. She lives in Palo Alto with her husband, John Edwards and children Luke, Brooke and Caitlyn Rose.