

P.S. Newsletter

A Parent Support Group publication for those who have experienced miscarriage, stillbirth, or infant loss.

Winter 2014/ Volume 35, Issue 17



I Am Still a Mother

Written by Kristina Marie Coombs and reprinted from the Share Newsletter at www.nationalshare.org.

When Mother's Day arrived just a few months after my first baby had been born still, I wasn't sure how I would get through the day. What I really wanted to do was pretend it didn't exist at all, but I knew I needed to find a way to celebrate it for my mother and my husband's mother. My biggest fear was that no one in my family would honor ME as a mother since my only child, my daughter Reagan, had died.

As the day approached, I really struggled. The year before, I had announced my pregnancy to my family on Mother's Day. I had told my mom a few days before, and she had a special "Congratulations to the Mom to be" card for me. She wrote in the card that she couldn't wait until next Mother's Day when she could celebrate her first Mother's Day as a grandmother. So I not only longed for a way to celebrate myself as a mother, but I longed for a way to celebrate my mom as a grandmother. I know that most people in my family didn't consider her a "real" grandmother since she had no living grandchildren, but I know she did, and I know I did too.

My mom loves to garden, and her flowers and plants are admired by everyone. So, I decided I would give her a special plant for her garden that would remind her of my Reagan. My mom loves all types of flowers and plants, and I had a hard time choosing. Since Reagan had been born in the winter, nothing was blooming in our cold climate, so that gave me no ideas. I finally decided to give her a white rose bush because it reminded me of the snow that was softly falling on the day we buried Reagan. I also bought one for myself, even though I didn't inherit my mother's green thumb. Three years later,

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get sound

Call us:

425-686-9451

Donations: In Loving Memory of...

- Susan Durante in memory of *Zachary Furtwangler* on his 2nd birthday!
- Alice and Bob Frewing in memory of our sweet granddaughter *Ella Sophia Hoelscher*.
- Eda Dedebas Dundar in memory of our dear baby boy *Baris Dundar*.
- Pranav Patel in memomy of *Ishaan Patel*.
- Kristine Brennan in loving memory of *Katura Marie Blunk*.
- Brynnen Ford in memory of *Alice Shirley Brown Ford*.
- Sanjay Radhakrishnan in memory of *Arjun Radhakrishnan*.
- Dustin Green
- Jessica Infantino in loving memory of *Bennett Morea's* 1st birthday.

Continues from front page...

both rose bushes are thriving, and every year around Mother's Day, my mom adds another white flower to her garden in memory of Reagan. The next year, I bought my mom and I both flat stones for our gardens. I plan to add something new to our gardens each year, and I have started a scrapbook only for pictures of Reagan's gardens.

Something else that was important to me on that first Mother's Day was for my family to acknowledge me as a mother, even though my child was not there celebrating with us. I told my mom this, and imagine my surprise when at dinner at my mom's house, everyone there, even my grandmother who had not been supportive of me at all had a card for me, placed it in a small white basket that my mom had decorated with pink and green ribbons. I cried when I read each of those cards. To this day, I keep them in the basket on a shelf in my living room. When I am feeling blue, I love to look through the cards. Even though I still do not have a living child, my family members still give me cards on Mother's Day, and over the years my collection has grown. Each year, I put the cards in that pretty little basket. Someday, I hope to have a living child, and I will add the congratulations cards to the basket.

That basket is one of my most treasured keepsakes because it reminds me daily that even though my child is not here, I am still a mother.



P.S.NEWSLETTER/WINTER 2014

Book Review: Healing Your Grieving Heart After Stillbirth: 100 Practical Ideas for Parents and Families

By Alan D. Wolfelt PhD (Author)

Review from Amazon.com

Beloved grief educator Dr. Alan Wolfelt compassionately explores the common feelings of shock, anger, guilt, and sadness that accompany a stillborn child, offering suggestions for expressing feelings, remembering the child, and healing as a family.

Ideas to help each unique person—mother, father, grandparent, sibling, friend—are included, as are thoughts from families who experienced a stillbirth. This new addition to Dr. Wolfelt's popular series is a healing companion to families when they need it most.

We Want to Hear From You!

P.S. would love to hear your ideas for newsletter articles, community events, support groups, and more.

*This organization is about **YOU** so please share how we can make it more relevant and helpful for you and your families during this difficult time.*

Here's how:

- Visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/psofpuget_sound and share today.

- Send us an email at newsletter@psofpugetsound.org.

Website: www.psofpugetsound.org



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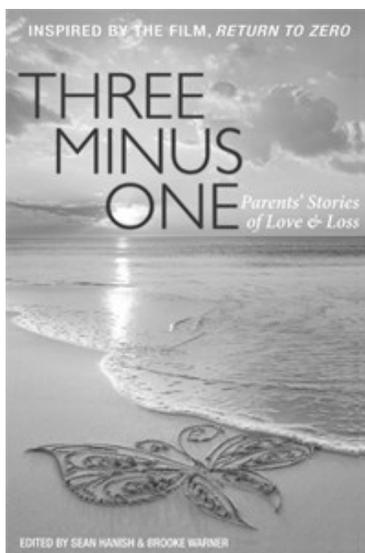
P.S. Vice President Contributes to Three Minus One

“We had no warning that Bennett was going to be sick when he was born. The moment the doctors and nurses rushed him away because he couldn’t breathe put me into a state of shock that would take weeks to come out of. As my mind started to heal, pieces of his birth, his 30 hours with us and his death began to come back to me. I didn’t want to lose him again, so I started to write. It wasn’t well-written or thought out, I wrote as if I could forget as quickly as I remembered.

When the opportunity to write for *Three Minus One* was announced, I went back to what I had written months before. Reading it again was horrible—a gut-wrenching sadness that no one should ever have to endure. It was bittersweet to find out my story would be included in the book. It’s an honor that our story may help another family cope with their loss and heartbreaking that we have this story to tell.”

Karin Morea

*P.S. Vice President and
Mother to Bennett*



*For more information about the book
Three Minus One, please visit:
[returntozeromovie.com/blog/the-
book-three-minus-one/](http://returntozeromovie.com/blog/the-book-three-minus-one/)*

You Are Not Alone

Reprinted from *The Compassionate Friends* website, www.compassionatefriends.org.

When your child has died, suddenly it seems like all meaning has been drained from your life. When you wake in the morning, it's difficult to get out of bed, much less live a "normal" life. All that was right with the world now seems wrong and you're wondering when, or if, you'll ever feel better.

We've been there ourselves and understand some of the pain you are feeling right now. We are truly glad that you have found us but profoundly saddened by the reason. We know that you are trying to find your way in a bewildering experience for which no one can truly be prepared.

When you're newly bereaved, suddenly you find yourself on an emotional roller-coaster where you have no idea what to expect next. Here are thoughts on some of what you may be experiencing or feeling (many of these will apply to bereaved siblings and grandparents):

Psychological

- Your memory has suddenly become clouded. You're shrouded in forgetfulness. You'll be driving down the road and not know where you are or remember where you're going. As you walk, you may find yourself involved in "little accidents" because you're in a haze.
- You fear that you are going crazy.
- You find there's a videotape that constantly plays in an endless loop in your mind, running through what happened.
- You find your belief system is shaken and you try to sort out what this means to your faith.

- Placing impossible deadlines on yourself, you go back to work, but find that your mind wanders and it's difficult to function efficiently or, some days, at all. Others wonder when you'll be over "it," not understanding that you'll never be the same person you were before your child died—and the passage of time will not make you so.
- You find yourself reading the same paragraph over and over again trying to understand what someone else has written.

Emotional

- You rail against the injustice of not being allowed the choice to die instead of your child.
- You find yourself filled with anger, whether it be at your partner, a person you believe is responsible for your child's death, God, yourself, and even your child for dying.
- You yearn to have five minutes, an hour, a day back with your child so you can tell your child of your love or thoughts left unsaid.
- Guilt becomes a powerful companion as you blame yourself for the death of your child. Rationally you know that you were not to blame—you most certainly would have saved your child if you'd been given the chance.
- You feel great sadness and depression as you wrestle with the idea that everything important to you has been taken from you. Your future has been ruined and nothing can ever make it right.

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Physical

- Either you can't sleep at all or you sleep all the time. You feel physical exhaustion even when you have slept.
- You no longer care about your health and taking care of yourself—it just doesn't seem that important anymore.
- You're feeling anxiety and great discomfort—you're told they're panic attacks.
- The tears come when you least expect them.
- Your appetite is either gone or you find yourself over-eating.
- Fleeting thoughts of pleasurable activities bring about feelings of guilt. If you child can't have fun, how can you do anything that brings you enjoyment?
- New friends come into your life who understand some of your grief because they've been there themselves.

Family & Social

- If you have surviving children, you find yourself suddenly overprotective, not wanting to allow them out of your sight. Yet you feel like a bad parent because it's so difficult to focus on their needs when you're hurting so bad yourself.
- You find that your remaining family at home grieves the loss differently and you search for a common ground which seems difficult to find.
- You've been told by well-meaning people, even professionals, that 70-80-90 percent of all couples divorce after their child dies. You are relieved to find that new studies show a much lower divorce rate, from 12-16%, believed to be caused by the "shared experience" aspect of the situation.
- Old friends seem to fade away as you learn they cannot comprehend the extent or length of your grief.
- Things you liked to do which seemed so important before now seem meaningless.
- Others say you'll someday find "closure," not understanding that closure never applies when it is the death of your child.



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What You Can Expect at a P.S. Support Group

First off, we are so sorry you have a need to attend a support group for the loss of your baby. Every P.S. Support Group is a little different, but many things are constant. All P.S. facilitators have experienced losses of their own. In my three years as a facilitator, every single group has been filled with caring and compassionate people. We welcome many combinations of people in mourning. Couples attend, moms and dads on their own, a grandmother or friend may attend with a parent to offer additional support. Sometimes people wonder, given their situation, if they are welcome...same sex couples, parents who have had to make the horrible "choice" of ending a pregnancy, mothers who have had a D and C. Please know if you are grieving the loss of your baby, you are welcome. However, this is not a place for young children. Adults only, please. Here are a few other things you can expect:

-The facilitator will hand out new Welcome Packets (full of resources, articles, poems, etc.) and have everyone sign in. (We report to the hospital how many people attend since they are donating the space.) After a general welcome, the facilitator/s will begin by sharing the story of their child/children. Thereafter everyone is encouraged to share their story, but it's not required. This usually takes about 5-10 minutes per person. If the group is large (10-12 people), there may only be time for everyone to tell their story. If the group is smaller, everyone can share more. Sometimes, someone needs help with how to deal with a family member, doesn't know how spend a holiday, or wants to decide what to do with their baby's clothes so we'll talk about ideas to help each other. There are certain topics I always like to touch on such as guilt, physical symptoms of grief, family dynamics, how women and men grieve differently, and how it is of utmost importance to follow your heart. Grieve the way you need to grieve--not how someone else thinks you should. If one topic is of particular interest, we talk about it in more depth.

-Each P.S. facilitator has a library which you are welcome to borrow books from. We just ask you return them at the next meeting. If you would like to donate a book, we'll be happy to add it to the library.

-I always tell my group members I'd rather they come late or leave early than not come at all. It's okay to bring dinner or answer an important phone call if that means you can attend.

-It's also okay for you to attend more than one group a month or switch groups. Some facilitators will just click with you, and if one doesn't, then try another group. We just want you to find support; even if that means it's not with us.

-If you would like to bring a memento or picture of your baby, please do. We'd love to see your sweet baby or something that reminds you of him or her. My Caroline was born at 19 weeks gestation, and I bring her little photobook to each meeting I facilitate.

-It's okay to be different. Some parents name their babies, some do not. Sometimes people don't know if their baby was a boy or girl but they choose a name anyway--Raspberry, Bumblebee, etc. Whether it's a name or something else that you have chosen to do differently than others, it's okay. Everyone should do what feels right for them. You will not be judged.

-You do not have to tell us you are coming to group, but it does help--especially since you will be new. I like to warn people that the Overlake group is located in the bottom of the Women's Center. It's the same parking area as Labor and Delivery, but it's a floor of meeting rooms and doesn't look like the hospital. I also have directions to our meeting room at Overlake that cannot be found online.

-Parents who attend meetings regularly often build a friendship...which we encourage. It's why we are named *Parent Support*. The facilitators are really there just to facilitate. You will gain so much from hearing everyone else share their stories as well. Many long-lasting friendships have been formed through group. As you know by now, if you aren't in this club it can be difficult if not impossible for outsiders to understand what we are going through when we grieve our babies. There is a great sense of comfort that comes from knowing people really understand your heartache.

I hope this gives you some insight into what our groups can look like. If you have further questions you can contact the facilitator of the group you are interested in attending.

Cami Carris
Mother of Caroline and Courtney
Overlake Facilitator and P.S. Facilitator Manager

January Forget Me Nots

Abigayle Christine Jones

1/31/2009

Arielle & Joshua Jones

Angelique Renee Schermerorn

1/29/1998

Leigh Ann & Ed Schermerhorn

**Ashley Elizabeth Schlott &
Emily Kaitlyn Schlott**

1/20/1996

Deborah Schlott

Baby Pitts

1/21/2013

Nathan & Hannah Pitts

Baby Querec (Twin A)

1/22/2009

Misty Saracino & Travis Querec

Baby Sparkman

1/18/1999

Heather & Eric Sparkman

Brandon Michael Doyle

1/24/1998

Jeannette & Michael Doyle

Brayden Borichewski

1/18/2000

Joe & Shawna Borichewski

Casey Alan Osborn

1/28/1991

Chris & Linda Osborn

Claire Bei Bei Habber

b.1/3/2000 d. 9/30/2000

Kim Haber

Daniel Cutler Elwell

1/1/2000

Bob & Kathryn Elwell

Devin James Fend

b. 1/10/2000 d. 4/24/2000

James & Brandy Fend

Eric Brandon Sickles

1/8/1992

Marc & Janet Sickles

Ethan Angel Forbes

1/28/1997

Cheryl & Tom Forbes

Grant Alan Chandler

b. 1/3/1998 d. 1/3/1998

Kelly & Rob Chandler

Josiah Bennett Adams

b. 1/10/2004 d. 1/25/2004

Alice & Dave Adams

Karina Joy Ann Bledsoe

1/1/2003

Amy Bledsoe

Lillian Jean Londroche

1/21/2011

Ashley & Kevin Londroche

Malarie Addison Jenkins

1/30/2005

Steve & Rhonnda Jenkins

Matthew Luper

1/6/1992

Joy Luper

Nailah Iman Bradshaw

b. 1/19/1999 d. 10/23/1999

Dexter & Sabine Bradshaw

Nathan Joseph Benson

1/10/2002

Donna Petruzzi & John Benson

Peanut

1/15/2013

Ginger Hudson & John Ikeda

Peanut Iler-Geltz

1/28/2010

Kurt & Cheryl Geltz

Peter John Brillault-Kenny

1/7/2003

Jeanne Brillault

Rachel Lynn Abrams

b. 1/1/2007 d. 1/17/2007

Juston Abrams

Samuel Frederick Gleason

1/25/1996

Susan & Tim Gleason

Thomas Ray Stafford

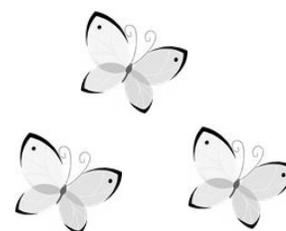
1/3/2009

Hannah Stafford

Zeppo Bourne Akeley

b. 1/22/1992 d. 1/22/1992

Katy Bourne



February Forget Me Nots

Aaron Paul Dunkle

2/9/2011

Lonnie & Susie Dunkle

Angel Dzikon

2/7/2013

Caitlin Schultz & Jay Dzikon

Baby "T" Peranzi

2/19/2005

Jennifer & John Peranzi

Baby Dahman

2/1/2002

Fina & Mike Dahman

Baby Lacy-Roberts

2/16/2002

Doug & Karen Lacy-Roberts

Christestelle Le Ann Frost

2/1/1976

Marie Frost

Christopher Lee Towers

2/11/1993

Kristy Towers

Colin McIver & Tristan McIver

2/1/2009

Patrick & Jennifer McIver

Debra Sue Johnson

2/5/1992

Ed & Lisa Johnson

Elijah Mortinson

2/22/2013

Jason & Angela Mortinson

Harmony Kissel

2/19/2005

Loretta Crawford & Scott Kissel

Kieran Phillips Stuart

2/27/2007

Suzanne Phillips & John Stuart

Maddison Rose

2/28/2009

Candice MacDonald

Olivia R. Amend

b. 2/22/2005 d. 2/22/2005

Steve & Amanda Amend

Oskar Kicinski

2/11/2009

Kristian & Jennifer Howard-Kicinski

Pacita Regalo Maisano-Torres

b. 2/7/2002 d. 2/7/2002

John & Portia Maisano-Torres

Red Nichols & Fred Nichols

2/18/1999

Fritz & Kate Nichols

Samuel Jacob Weaver

2/9/2003

Jolene Westphal & Derek Weaver

Sarah Rae Sammons

b. 2/11/1982 d. 2/23/1982

Bailey Sammons

Vincent Dean Stephens

b. 2/13/1994 d. 2/18/1994

Dean & Jennifer Stephens



March Forget Me Nots

Adam Neil

b. 3/9/2001 d. 3/9/2001

Jenny Neil

Aidan Bales & Graeme Bales

b. 3/12/2009 d. 3/13/2009

Mark & Jen Bales

Amelia C. Stevens

3/18/2009

Corey & Katlyn Stevens

Angel Baby Johnson

3/21/2005

Aaron & Jennifer Johnson

Ashley Joy Judah

b. 3/2/1998 d. 3/2/1998

Sam & Jill Judah

Samantha Ann Judah

b. 3/2/1998 d. 3/21/1998

Sam & Jill Judah

Ashley Louise Davis

3/10/1987

Bill & Megan Davis

Hansel Davis

3/20/1987

Bill & Megan Davis

Baby Bryant

3/1/2003

Mike & Kim Bruns

Baby Furtwangler

3/9/2012

Alison & Tyler Furtwangler

Baby Pitts

3/19/2013

Nathan & Hannah Pitts

Baris Dundar

3/27/2013

Eda Dedebas-Dundar & Baha Dundar

Bryant Edward Hillock

b. 3/25/1998 d. 3/28/1998

John & Peggy Hillock

Patrick Presley Hillock

3/24/1998

John & Peggy Hillock

Caden Lee Vatne

3/17/2003

Jason & Charro Vatne

Caden Michael Harris

b. 3/31/2010 d. 4/25/2010

Greg & Kate Harris

Charlotte Wallace Wright

3/13/1993

Deb & Jim Wright

Christopher Michael Scuderi

3/21/1997

Michael & Shelley Scuderi

David Beeler

3/20/2009

Michelle Beeler

Emma Rose Duncan

3/6/2005

Sarah Duncan

Hope Vaule

3/22/2009

Carlene Vaule

Hugo Sadi Damas

3/20/2005

Christina & Hugo Damas

Jack Michael Giesy

b. 3/3/2002 d. 3/5/2002

Michael & Michele Giesy

Tyler Steven Giesy

b. 3/3/2002 d. 3/6/2002

Michael & Michele Giesy

Jacob Evans

b. 3/6/1998 d. 3/6/1998

Shan & Rich Evans

Jessica Mary Elizabeth Day

3/14/1991

Wendy & Steven Day

Karl David Jacobsen

3/5/1986

Kurt & Perdix Jacobsen

Kyle Wayne Stebner

3/28/2000

Maureen & Wayne Stebner

Lauren Faith Baker

3/25/2001

Lucy & Scott Baker

Lauren Louise DuFresne

b. 3/30/2005 d. 4/16/2005

Shirley & Larry DuFresne

Madison Elaine McInerney

b. 3/13/2002 d. 3/15/2002

Krista & Brian McInerney

Natalie Scott

3/29/2005

John & Valerie Scott

Sophia Grace Harris

b. 3/16/2010 d. 3/21/2010

Joseph & Sarah Harris

Thomas Benjamin Elbert

b. 3/28/1995 d. 3/29/1995

Steve & Mary Ann Elbert

William Kings Gonzales

3/16/2001

Daniela & Joe Gonzales

President's Message



Welcome to 2014! May this year bring you peace, happiness and a fresh outlook on life.

With the major holidays now behind us, the P.S. Board is getting back into the swing of things. We had wonderful turnouts for our holiday events in December and it has been a large part of discussion at our board meetings to add events outside of our traditionally busy Fall-Winter.

While the hype of the season is not nearly as grand for Mother's Day and Father's Day, for parents who have suffered a loss, the buildup can be overwhelming—a sense of urgency to feel like and be recognized as a parent and honor your child. Because of this, P.S. would like to solicit ideas for events around this time of year. What can we do to support each other and make it a memorable and even joyous time as we do with the Holiday Ornament and Memento event?

I urge you to reach out and share your ideas for not only events, but newsletter topics and anything else your heart desires. After all, P.S. is about supporting you! So please write us a message on Facebook, email or snail mail so we can better tailor our organization to you, our very loved and respected parents.

With your help, we can continue to improve the support system that is Parent Support. I look forward to another year of making memories with you in honor of our children.

Warm regards,

Ali

P.S. Officers

Monthly Support Group Listings

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Alison Furtwangler

Vice President

Karin Morea

Secretary

Heather Kahan, 425-443-3464

Treasurer

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Facilitator Manager

Cami Carris

Outreach Manager

Sanjay Radhakrishnan

Website & Facebook Manager

Alison Furtwangler

Newsletter Editor

Jill Hoelscher

Printing, Mailing & Publications

John & Donna Benson
(425-415-6118 for newsletter copies)

Members at Large

Abbie Poynter, Shelley Scuderi,
Therese Joyce

••• **SEATTLE:** Children's Hospital 7:30 p.m., First Thursday. Rm RC.3.905 or RC.3.906, River Entrance, follow signs. **Contact:** Sanjay Radhakrishnan at sanjayrad@gmail.com or 425-505-8358.

••• **SEATTLE:** Pregnancy After Loss Group. Children's Hospital, First Wednesday. Rm G1027, 7:30-9:30 p.m. **Contact:** Jennifer Howard-Kicinski at 206-227-2207 or jhowardkicinski@yahoo.com.

••• **OLYMPIA:** Providence St. Peter Hospital, 7:00 p.m.-8:30 p.m. Second Thursday. Check main lobby for room information. **Contact:** Spiritual Care Office or Doug and Karen Lacy Roberts at 360-534-0192.

••• **OLYMPIA:** Pregnancy After Loss Information. **Contact:** Kirsten at 360-923-0344.

••• **EASTSIDE:** Overlake Hospital 7:00 p.m. Third Thursday of every month. PACCAR Education Center. **Contact:** Cami Carris at 425-277-9494 or camicarris@hotmail.com or Alison Furtwangler at alifurt@live.com.

••• **EVERETT:** Providence General Medical Center, 7:30 p.m., Second Thursday. **Contact:** Ann Wilson at 425-258-6106.

••• **AUBURN:** Auburn Regional Medical Center, Cardio Pulmonary Rehab Classroom, 7:00 p.m., First Wednesday. **Contact:** Wendy/Guy Thomas at 253-863-1791 or Michael Scuderi at 253-373-0297.

••• **WHIDBEY ISLAND:** **Contact:** Phone support only—Jolene Weaver at 360-331-5495 or 425-319-8695.

••• **TACOMA:** **Contact:** Phone support only—Robb or Sara at 253-238-3474.

••• **EDMONDS:** Swedish/Edmonds, third Wednesday from 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m., third floor conference room. **Contacts:** Kathy Albin, Bereavement Coordinator, at 425-640-4404 or Jolene Weaver at 360-331-5495 or 425-319-8695.

P.S. Newsletter

Parent Support for Miscarriage,
Stillbirth, and Infant Loss

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