



The Hygeia Newsletter

Issue No. 2, Summer 2010

Remembering Your Child after a Loss

by Claudia Esposito

My husband and I attended a memorial ceremony for children who have died. The ceremony took place on the island of Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts. At the base of the Edgartown Lighthouse sits a memorial site paved with stones engraved with the names of children of all ages who have passed away. We discovered the site last year while visiting the island, and purchased a stone paver in memory of our stillborn twin sons. The paver with the names of our boys was recently placed at the site and this was the first time we attended the service of remembrance there.

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The Dignity of a Name

by Mark Chartier

Sometimes in retrospect, an event will take on a significance that was not apparent when it occurred. I would like to recount such an experience.

After the stillbirth of our son, Wade and I came home from the hospital to find a gift of condolence waiting for us. My coworkers had sent a tree for us to plant. It was accompanied by a card that said simply, "In memory of Wyatt." I was touched that, instead of a generic "Sorry for your loss", they had chosen a message particular to what we had just suffered. Only later did I understand the full significance of the wording: By referring to our son by name, my co-workers had acknowledged that he was a person and that his stillbirth was tragic because a person had died.

It is all too common for friends and relatives to fail to grasp that a stillbirth is the death of a person.

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The mission of the Hygeia Foundation is to comfort those who grieve the loss of a pregnancy or newborn child. Hygeia provides programs to educate, counsel, and support families who have lost a pregnancy or newborn child, to advocate for the health care of women and children worldwide, and to promote humanism in the education of tomorrow's health care professionals.

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The service was incredibly emotional. I wasn't quite prepared for my reaction, considering we lost our sons eleven years ago this month. As we approached the lighthouse we were given a map to locate the placement of our stone. My eyes filled with tears. After a bit of searching my husband finally found the stone and as I read our sons' names I was overcome with emotion. Here at the base of this lighthouse, now sits a marker of their existence that will remain for many, many years to come.

I was surrounded by other parents, all who, like us, were searching for the name of a child who was once a part of their lives, now gone from this earth forever. As each parent sought out their stone, their first reaction was similar to mine. They seemed relieved to have found the stone, and then came the tears. Some placed flowers on the site; others placed smooth rocks or shells found on the beach nearby.

Nothing will bring back our children, but in the words of one of the speakers that day, the lighthouse will always be there, a physical reminder of our children we can visit for years to come. The lighthouse and pavers will never go away. I took comfort in those words, and thought about how true they were.

Even though our children can never be with us again physically, we can create reminders of them that can bring some semblance of comfort in the weeks, months and years to come. I have always found that services of remembrance bring me great comfort, as they allow me to grieve publicly with others.

Shortly after my sons died I planted gardens in the front of our house and placed a rock with the following inscription: "We planted this garden and left room for the angels to dance." I often sit in that special place in my garden and, warmed by the sun, I remember them with sadness, warmth and love.

There are many other ways we can memorialize our children.

Here are some ideas:

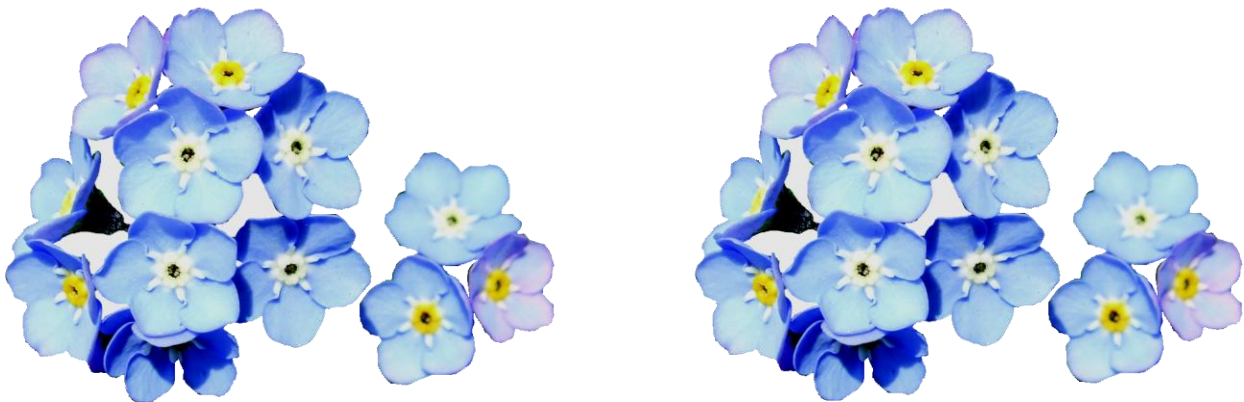
- Plant a tree, bush or flower that will bloom each year. If you are really ambitious you might try planting a small memorial garden.
- Have a place in your yard or home that you can go to to remember your child, like a bench or a quiet place to sit and remember them.
- If you don't already have one, create a memory box with some items that remind you of your baby (this can include ultrasound pictures, special mementos like a lock of hair or a piece of clothing, photographs, or anything physical that connects you with your baby).
- Create a scrapbook of ultrasound pictures, pictures of you pregnant or pictures of your baby, if you have any.
- Write in a journal about your pregnancy and/or about your child (this may be difficult if you just recently experienced a loss, but may be cathartic if you like to write). Keep your journal in a special place with other mementos.

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- Wear a special piece of jewelry that reminds you of your baby.
- Many sites on the web about miscarriage, stillbirth and infant death offer places for you to write about your baby and post pictures, if you have any.
- October 15th is Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day. You can find the official website at www.october15th.com. There you can find information about memorial services around the country.

There are certainly other ways you can memorialize your baby. One of the greatest things I have done is volunteer work in my children's honor. The work has helped me keep my sons' memory alive, and I feel good knowing that something positive has come from their short lives. Do whatever it is that helps you to feel closer to your child. We all need that physical connection in some way to the children we have lost to bring us some sense of comfort and peace. ♦



The Dignity of a Name *continued from page 1*

When someone, with the best of intentions, tries to comfort a grieving parent by saying, "You can always have another child", he or she betrays that misunderstanding. If you have the misfortune to lose a friend, no one tells you, "You can always get another friend." Everyone understands that a new friend cannot replace the old one, because the lost friend was a person, a unique individual, and therefore, by the very definition of uniqueness, irreplaceable. For the same reason, another child does not replace one lost by stillbirth, miscarriage, or any other kind of premature death, because the lost child was a person, unique, irreplaceable.

I've drawn a lesson. There is a temptation for us to feel that only other parents who have had the same experience as ourselves can truly understand our loss. I disagree. Some don't understand, but some do. My co-workers understood. The loss of a child is not a universal experience, but loss in general is certainly universal, because we are all mortal. Some members of the "secular world" are able to make the connection. Don't underestimate the rest of humanity.

And I've adopted a simple rule. Whenever I meet someone new in Hygeia, I'll ask, "Did you name your son?" or "Is there some symbolism to the name you gave your daughter?" If the child was given a name, I make a point of using it. It is a small way to recognize the loss the parents have suffered and to honor the memory of the child, as we should honor any deceased person, unique, and therefore, irreplaceable. ♦

In Support of Hygeia

The Hygeia Foundation recently held two successful fundraisers. On May 22nd, nearly 200 people came to the SportsCenter of Connecticut on a beautiful spring night for a fun-filled evening of games, magic, food, raffles, and more. "Get Your Game On for Hygeia" is destined to become an annual event; we hope to see you there next year!

On June 19th, Hygeia was the proud recipient of all of the proceeds from the Magical Charity Carousel at Lenny and Joe's Fish Tale in Madison. A big thank you to Lenny and Joe's!

A special thank you to the following people and businesses for their contributions to our fundraisers:

The Allen Family • Bennett Business Services • Bethwood Pest Elimination • Café Tacuba • County OB-GYN Group • Danny Magic • Dr. Ron Clark • Global Marketing and Sales Practice • The Harkness Family • The Hygeia Foundation's Parent Advisory Board • Jim and Lee McParland • Lenny and Joe's Fish Tale • Lil Kate & Campy • Melissa Wilson Photography • Minuteman Press of Shelton • The Rinaldi Family • SportsCenter of Connecticut • State Canteen • Stew Leonard's • Stop & Shop • Tino Aldo for Premiere Jewelry • Trader Joe's • The Weitzer Family • Westport National Bank

Dr. Michael Berman and members of the Hygeia Parent Board at the SportsCenter of CT



Volunteer Opportunity Spotlight: Fundraising

Hygeia holds several fundraisers of various types and sizes throughout the year. We are currently working on our upcoming fall and winter fundraisers, and we need help of all kinds, from lining up sponsors and marketing the events to simply stuffing envelopes. No prior experience with event planning is necessary – all we require is your dedication and enthusiasm. If you are interested in lending a hand with our fall spa fundraiser or with any of our future fundraisers, please contact us at 1-800-893-9198 or info@hygeiafoundation.org.

Hygeia needs you. If you would like to plan your own special event to benefit Hygeia, please contact us at 1-800-893-9198 or info@hygeiafoundation.org.

Here are some fundraising ideas you might consider, both big and small:

- Host a luncheon - collect donations at the door and/or auction goods and services donated by local businesses.
- Host a wine tasting - see above re: luncheon.
- Hold a tag sale and/or a bake sale.
- Put out donation boxes at local businesses.
- Musicians: Perform a benefit concert.
- Runners: Ask people to sponsor you during your next race by donating to Hygeia.
- Crafters: Sell your wares to benefit Hygeia.

Support Group Meetings

Below, please find the schedule of our free support group meetings. Dates and times are subject to change, so **please check the current schedule at www.hygeiafoundation.org prior to each meeting.**

Pregnancy and Infant Loss Groups

Parents who have lost a pregnancy or newborn soon after birth, no matter when the loss occurred, are welcome to attend. Feel free to come to multiple meetings each month.

Second Wednesday of the month *and*

Third Monday of the month

7:00 – 8:30 pm

Hygeia Foundation

264 Amity Road, Suite 211

Woodbridge, CT 06525

Third Thursday of the month

7:00 – 8:30 pm

Women and Family Life Center

96 Fair Street

Guilford, CT 06437

Fourth Monday of the month

7:30 – 9:00 pm

Saugatuck Congregational Church

245 Post Road East

Westport, CT 06880

*Please RSVP to 1-800-893-9198 if you plan on attending a meeting in Westport.

Subsequent Pregnancy Group

Bereaved parents who are trying to conceive (or thinking about trying to conceive) and parents who are pregnant are encouraged to attend this group.

First Monday of the month

7:00 – 8:30 pm

Hygeia Foundation

264 Amity Road, Suite 211

Woodbridge, CT 06525

Parenting After a Loss Group

This group addresses the concerns of parents who have lost a pregnancy or newborn and who have living children at home. Babies and children are welcome at meetings.

Second Saturday of the month

11:00 am – 12:30 pm

Hygeia Foundation

264 Amity Road, Suite 211

Woodbridge, CT 06525

In Memoriam

Contact us at info@hygeiafoundation.org if you would like to honor a baby who has passed away.

Connor Jackson – February 9, 2009

Parents Meghan and Mark Jackson

Timothy Mark Larchar – December 31, 2009

Born to Heather and Mark Larchar

Nora Kimberly Nelly – April 19, 2005

Parents Joe and Kim Nelly

Our baby girl, *Emma Lynn Buontempo* – April 5, 2010

Born to Lindsay and Tony Buontempo

Angel of Love

by Karen Grace Vazquez

dedicated to Michele in memory of Rachael

I came and touched a part of you if only for
a brief time.

I've been chosen to live eternally.

You gave me transcendent life.

A real life angel has been chosen for you,

An angel of love to guide you through.

Never forget the gentle flutter of my hands
and the beating of my heart,

And in the quiet hours when you feel alone
just think of me then,

And you'll know we'll never be apart

'Cause I live deep inside your heart.

Safe Arrivals

Contact us at info@hygeiafoundation.org if you would like to announce a birth or adoption following a loss.

Iris Yael Baden-Eversman, born June 1, 2010, to

Gillian Eversman and Joel Baden

The Hygeia Foundation, Inc.
264 Amity Road, Suite 211
Woodbridge, CT 06525
1-800-893-9198
www.hygeiafoundation.org
info@hygeiafoundation.org

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MAKE A SUBMISSION TO THE HYGEIA NEWSLETTER

Would you like to contribute something to the Hygeia Newsletter? We welcome original essays, articles, poetry, photographs, and/or artwork. In addition, if you are planning a fundraiser or event to benefit Hygeia or to raise awareness of pregnancy and infant loss, please contact us so we may announce your event in the newsletter. All newsletter submissions may be sent to info@hygeiafoundation.org.

Newsletter Editor: Gillian Eversman
info@hygeiafoundation.org

Assistant Editor: Mark Chartier

Submission deadline for the next issue:

SEPTEMBER 15, 2010

\$14 for 14 Years

Since its founding, Hygeia has become the most enduring program – both online and off – of compassion, empathy, and support pertaining to pregnancy and newborn loss. Many of you have come to Hygeia seeking information, comfort, and support when no other support was available to you when your baby died. Providing this support has always been my commitment and Hygeia's mission.

We are now completing our 14th year and we still provide support to bereaved parents locally, nationally, and internationally. We are, however, in need of financial support so we may continue to help families who grieve the loss of a pregnancy or newborn child. Help us to continue our work.

If you feel that you have benefited from Hygeia,

**please consider making at least a \$14 donation
– 14 dollars for 14 years –
at www.hygeiafoundation.org/donations**

You may also send a check to:

**Hygeia Foundation
P.O. Box 3943
New Haven, CT 06525**

Thank you in advance for your generosity.

Michael R. Berman, M.D.
Founder and President
Hygeia Foundation, Inc.