



# ... Our Children



Rachel Hage



Victoria Renteria



Sara Victoria Koski



Tyler David Abarr



Nathaniel Jones



Zackary Shane Herkins



Samantha Ashley Morlan



Imogen Meagher



Jessica Hajdo



Collin James Watson



## Unearthly Disposition

Ironic, I suppose.  
Everyone tells me it's the same  
And I know it's not;  
At least I feel this way.  
What am I supposed to say  
To those who don't understand?  
Although they show their support,  
They will never know.  
Stephanie, my little angel,  
How I still love you so.  
Even though we never met  
And I'd never seen you before,  
I know you'll be with me everywhere that I go.  
The little place in my blood-thirsty heart  
Will always belong to you and no one else.  
You've grown wings and helped me fly  
Clasping my spirit  
And guiding me down the right path.  
Lord knows I do sinful deeds.  
But, still, I continue to try my hardest  
To be with you someday.  
We'll fly through the clouds,  
Play on the swings,  
Make castles in the sand;  
Save me a spot big sis.  
Just you wait. I'm coming!  
Just as soon as I escape  
From this earthly disposition.

*By Kyle Brooks, age 13  
Dedicated in Loving Memory of my big sister,  
Stephanie Denise Brooks*

*Editor's Note: Kyle Brooks, the author of "Unearthly Disposition," is a young man who has been around our house for six years. He and Cameron, my second child, have been best friends at school since they met. In a strange twist of fate, about two weeks ago, Cameron came in my office and said, "Mom- Did you know that Kyle had a sister who died at birth fourteen years ago?" I said, looking completely astonished, "What? What, Cameron?" He repeated himself. I couldn't help but feel frustration at that very moment. "Cameron," I said, "why didn't you tell me?" Cameron never knew. Kyle read this poem to his class: Stephanie was Kyle's sister born just before him. She died in Chicago. I had met Kyle's mom before but we never really talked. I sent home a packet and books for Kyle to give his mom. I said, "Kyle, I don't know if your mom will want this, but please tell her that my daughter died during birth too. I'd love to talk to her about it." About two hours later, Debra, Kyle's mom, called me. She was in tears. I was in tears. We were sisters; an instantaneous bond of grief and pain united us. Debra is now involved and attended her first support group since Stephanie's death. She is participating in the Kindness Project for Stephanie's 14<sup>th</sup> birthday, November 1. She donated funds for the 911 Grief Support Program. And it is apparent that their family, not even the little boy who would come after Stephanie's death, has not forgotten the little girl who should have been. Debra says she never understood why they came to Arizona from Chicago where they had no family, no job opportunity, and no friends. She said that now she knows why. I believe her; there are no accidents... - Joanne Cacciatore-Garard*



### Whisper of an Angel

The whisper of an angel, Can open Heaven's gate,  
A glimpse of faith and courage, A love strong enough to wait,

Whisper you are safe, Whisper softly, angel love,  
My heart is aching so, Needing comfort from above,

Tell me you are with me, Whisper gently in my ear,  
"You will always be my mommy", In the quiet I will hear,

My heart still aches to hold you, I close my eyes and see,  
Your face now, one year later, And who you were to be,

Though dreams I once held close, In the distance now, so far  
Still you're more than just my child, You're the twinkle in the stars,

So I'll hear your angel whispers, "You never need let go,  
Hold me, mommy, close within", Though the pain and sorrow flow,  
One day we shall reunite, Angels whisper words of grace,  
And I promise I will hold you, In another time and place.

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McKayla you have left your footprints in the hearts  
of those who love and miss you most. Until we are  
together again, watch over us our little Angel.

Love, Mommy, Daddy, Grandma, Jim, Molly and Ryan

## Safe Arrivals ...

**Jillian Anne Risberg**  
Sister of *Emily Ann*  
Daughter of *Jenny & Joe*  
May 18, 2001

**Ava Elizabeth Nolan**  
Daughter of *Liza and Michael*,  
Sister of *Emily & Isabella*



# Announcements! Announcements!

## Help needed:

MISS Foundation member, Jama Carpenter, needs help with a pregnant woman with triplets. She is a single mother with a very low income. Call Jama at 623-386-1513 or her work phone 602-277-5551 ext. 5954, if you can help. She is in need of:  
Three car seats, Crib, Playpen, Changing table, 3 seated stroller, Baby Clothes, Diapers, One-sies

## REMEMBER!

**Tell your friends and relatives: The MISS Foundation is a write in agency (you can write us in the blank) for their employer's United Way Designee Program. Please ask them to choose us as their charity!**

## Thank you to our United Way Donors:

**Banner Health Systems**

**Blue Cross Blue Shield** employee, **Cindy Barber**

**City of Phoenix Employees**

**Intel Corporation** employee, **Doug Morlan**

**Pfizer Corporation** employee, **G. Milo Caskey**

**United Parcel Service** employees, **Carla Atencio, Pam**

**Binder, Kim Bonnie, Geoff Estevez, Horace Hening,**

and **Karin Stafford**

Thank you so very much!  
Every penny helps us help families in the ultimate crisis!



## Don't Forget!

**Sunday December 9th**  
at Patriot's Square Park in downtown Phoenix

## Nationals Children's Memorial Day Candlelighting

Everyone Welcome  
Registration and Booths open at 6 pm  
**Join us for a night under the stars**

Dress Warm- Bring Chairs and Blankets  
We'll also be remembering those who died in the  
September 11 American Tragedies



*"Whatever course you decide upon, there is always someone to tell you that you are wrong. There are always difficulties arising which tempt you to believe that your critics are right. To map out a course of action and follow it to an end requires... courage."*  
- *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual

### "Sleepers from Samantha"

Baby Sleeper and Blanket Drive

**When: October 7<sup>th</sup> through December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2001**

In memory of our daughter and sister, Samantha Ashley Morlan, we are having The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual "Sleepers from Samantha" Blanket and Sleeper Drive in memory of her 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday in Heaven. This will benefit Phoenix Children's Hospital and Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center. Samantha died at the age of three days on December 11<sup>th</sup>, 1998. All sleepers and blankets will be donated to the nurseries of these hospitals for newborns that have nothing to wear during their hospital stay or upon time to go home. All clothing will be donated on Samantha's birthday, December 8<sup>th</sup>.

If you would like to donate, please contact:

Lee Ann Morlan at 480-963-9844, lamorlan@home.com

Or mail to:

Lee Ann Morlan, 669 E. Estrella Dr. Chandler, AZ. 85225

*Please remember to attach a "Kindness Card" in memory of your child or loved one.*

Sessions II and III of the MISS Foundation's Facilitator Training Program will be held **Friday and Saturday, November 9 and 10. BY SCHOLARSHIP ONLY.**

**Apply by November 1, 2001 by calling 623.979.1000**

### Agenda:

#### Session II, Friday:

The Grieving Child and Supporting the Multicultural Family

#### Session III, Saturday:

When Babies Die: Unique Dynamics of Infant Death

**Cost:** Free to MISS Certified Facilitators

**Scholarships:** Limited for Others, Call 623.979.1000

**Time:** 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

*Continuing Education and Certification Provided*

## Scrap Booking Class For Bereaved Parents

There will be a scrap booking class coming up on Saturday, January 5<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm at Day Spring United Methodist Church, 1365 E. Elliot Rd. in Tempe (on Elliot, between McClintock and Rural) upstairs in room 201 and 202. It will be directed by Asena Nicolosi, Mya's mommy. She is a Scrap booking Consultant and would like to do this in memory of her child, Mya.

For more information and to RSVP, please call Asena Nicolosi at 602-978-9305 or Lee Ann Morlan, Samantha's mommy, and Facilitator for the East Valley at 480-963-9844.

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# Allison's Story

by Carolyn Kuczmarksi, Allison's Loving Mother

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The terrorist attacks on New York and Washington brought the whole country to its knees in grief. I think so much of each and every one of those families because they are just beginning the grief journey that our family knows so well.

Last summer we were attacked by our own terrorist. Our nightmare began on August 24, 2000, when our 17 month old baby girl, Allison Rose, was found dead at her baby-sitter. What we initially discovered was that Allison had a good day, was playing and happy and active. She ate a good lunch, then took a nap and died! It just didn't make any sense! It didn't make sense until two weeks later when the Coroner discovered diphenhydramine, the active ingredient in Benadryl, in Allison's blood. The Coroner also told us at this time that Allison was found in a portable crib that had 8 blankets and three nylon covers for the portable crib, and because Allison was so drowsy from the drugging she asphyxiated on the blankets. The baby-sitter obviously wanted to have the children take good naps, and Allison was a child who didn't like to nap, so giving a dose of Benadryl would give her a free afternoon. We also found out that there was no monitor in the room where Allison was sleeping which was far from the rest of the house. The coroner also did a hair analysis on Allison and one other little girl who was also sleeping in this room with Allison which revealed they had been both repeatedly drugged with Benadryl without our knowledge or consent.

The Coroner ruled Allison's death a Homicide, and the babysitter was indicted on charges of involuntary manslaughter and child endangerment. She agreed to plead guilty to a lesser offense of Reckless Homicide, which could have held up to a five year prison term. We were shocked and dismayed when the judge gave her five years probation, 250 hours of community service, a \$10,000 fine, and 6 months of house arrest. The sentence created such an outrage in the community as a whole!

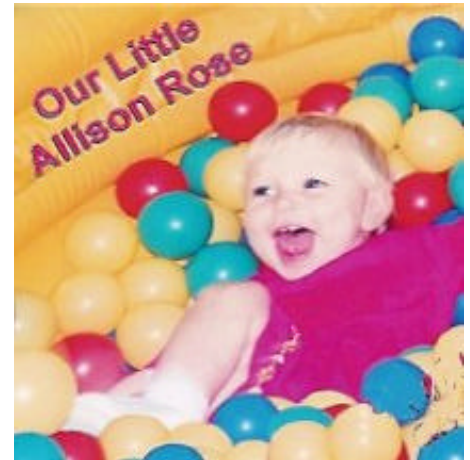
Our family has been living our pathway of grief for the past year. At

first, I couldn't even function. I would spend hours just laying on my hammock in the back yard, not even able to take care of even the most simple things in life. I felt I had a good day if our 8 year old twins, Mark and Sarah, got off to school with matching socks! Thankfully we had kind friends and neighbors who made sure we had food to eat and my office staff who kept the office running. I can't even remember what happened in September or October! The whole time passed in a fog.

Even though the easiest thing to do would be to spend the time in bed, I had to force myself to go through each day and keep going for myself, my husband Rick, and Mark and Sarah. One of the things I tried to do regularly was to get exercise. As I am not a big exerciser, I have a friend who I "assigned" to call me every few days to "force" me to get out and walk. Even if I was having a bad day, I would always feel better after a walk.

Second, I took every opportunity to tell my story to anyone who would listen and I found the best listeners to be other grieving parents. The MISS website has been a great source of support for me, especially Netpals. I met another mother whose son died just a few weeks after Allison. He was only six years old and was killed by a dump truck. We still write just about every day. Her letters have been so comforting to me, and my letters to her so therapeutic for me to write. I think that writing, whether to another person or just in a journal, is an excellent way to put your feelings into words.

Finally, we got professional help. This is really a BIG life event. We go to doctors for something as simple as a bad cold at times. Why are we often so reluctant to get professional help to maintain our emotional well being? Rick and I attended a support group through our local hospice that had a component for our children at the same time. That helped us realize we were not alone and gave us the steps to expect as we walked this pathway of grief. The group made us realize there are no short cuts. We couldn't just put off grieving and expect not to



have to grieve. This is a long, hard pathway and the only way to get to the other end is by walking that path.

We also see a counselor through our Coroner's office which offers free counseling for any Coroner's cases. One thing that especially helped me that a counselor told us just a few days after Allison died, was that each of us would be on our own roller coasters. She said that all four of us would grieve on our own timetables and in our own way. That advice has been so helpful in allowing us to respect the differences of each other.

I am a different person today than I was a year ago before my precious little girl died. I value life so much more and try not to take anything for granted. I have much more empathy for the suffering of others. I also feel willing to take more risks like getting a dog for the first time in my life and going parasailing. I miss my Allison every moment of every day, but I want to live a life that would make her proud. I am so very thankful for the short time we had together. As Darcie Sims says, "*Thanks for the Little While.*"

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*And as we let our light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear our presence automatically liberates others.*

-Nelson Mandela, 1994 inaugural speech.

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# The Privilege of Being of Service

*Serving God is doing good to man. But praying is thought an easier service and is therefore more generally chosen.*  
- Benjamin Franklin

So many of us would like to be of service, if we just knew how. And we're daunted by the prospect. Actual service is so *personal*. It's so *hands on*. And, let's admit it, some of us feel shy and inadequate when it comes to doing service directly. We'd rather give money – a good thing and not very personal. We rather pray - more sanitized and again

not personal. We feel better after both. Still, nothing can substitute for doing something for someone else - personally.

There is something about this particular activity that adjusts the vertebrae of our very being. We don't have to do anything big. We can build our service muscles through small tasks, such as helping an elderly person, picking up trash, letting someone in a hurry before us in the check out line.

Regardless of what we do, service is a

prayer, and we need all the prayers we can get to balance our lives.

Do some kind of service every day, and you will start seeing opportunities for more. Service is a kindness in action.

*Meditations for Living in Balance – Anne Wilson Schaefer*

***Volunteer for the MISS Foundation when you are ready to help others!***

## The MISS Foundation Testifies in Washington, D.C.

On Saturday, September 8th, one of our members, Richard Olsen, appeared representing the MISS Foundation and remembering his daughter, Camille Rayana Olsen, before the Medical Committee of the National Academy of Sciences. The NAS is examining national protocol on child death in America, a change in psychosocial direction that may help perpetuate change in the way public health policy deals with the deaths of children and intervention for families. The MISS Foundation was also invited to submit a written manuscript on psychosocial intervention which was authored by Joanne Cacciatore with the assistance of Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross.

## **I've Seen The Angels Cry In Memory of the Police and Fire Heroes Who Lost Their Lives Trying to Save Others on September 11, 2001**

I have always thought that angels, wore halos and wings of white....  
But now I find they wear hard hats and black coats with yellow stripes

And angels, in my mind, wore long flowing gowns of white....  
But now I see dark pants and shirts and badges shining bright.

And angels always floated, with bare feet above the ground  
Not true! For they wear steel toed boots and go where death is found

Not all angels have smooth hands that look like porcelain  
Some angels have torn gloves and cuts and burns upon their skin.

And while I thought all angels glowed from heavens light  
I see an angel cutting steel, his torch is shining bright

And while these earthly angels passed buckets of debris  
The angels up in heaven looked down on bended knee

So while the smoke continued to rise into the sky,  
I watched the rescue workers weep, I've seen the angels cry.

## Arizona Peer Contacts

If you need one on one support and friendship contact one of our Peer Contacts. Because we understand your pain, call if you need to talk.

Ed and Robin Kennedy	602-547-1244
Alan and Karen Wondra	623-412-9806
Jim Nibali	480-814-7013
Andy Castellanos	623-780-9546
Linda Schmidt	623-362-8838
Juleigh Fullerton	623-587-1914
Lee Ann Morlan	480-963-9844
Kellie and Nathan Gatewood	602-866-3645
Tom and Traci Johnson	602-789-8068
Anne Rumps (Tucson)	520-795-4712
<i>(Toddler Contact):</i>	
Heather Lewis	623-334-4044
<i>(Subsequent Pregnancy/Family Planning):</i>	
Anna Kennedy	602-439-9025
Margaret Abarr	623-872-8082
<i>(Drowning/Accidents):</i>	
Katie Hodge	602-571-8758
<i>(Spanish Contact):</i>	
Alicia Cunningham	623-772-1358

***Support groups and contacts for areas outside of Arizona can be found on page 23 of this newsletter.***

***If you are interested in filing an application to begin a MISS Foundation Support Network in your area, please contact Jana Vorhis, California MISS Foundation Coordinator and National Facilitator Director at 626-357-4816.***

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# A Major Social Problem Gets Noticed in Washington D.C.

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The National Institute of Child Health and Development (NICHD) – a Branch of the National Institute of Health in Washington DC - is at long last turning its attention to stillbirth. Depending upon the source of the data used, stillbirth, which claims between 26,000 and 39,000 babies every year - most at or near full term – remains one of the last great mysteries of obstetrics.

Only about 40% of stillbirths can be attributed to a specific cause; the other 60% are categorized as “unknown.” However, babies, like adults, die for a reason. The problem is that the reason is not known in the majority of cases. Not knowing the reason means there can be no preventative. Not knowing leaves parents full of concerns for subsequent pregnancies. And yet, that hopefully is about to change.

NICHD, which helped promote the “Back to Sleep” campaign for SIDS, has been responsible for a 50% reduction in sudden infant deaths during the past decade. Parents of stillborn infants, however, are now mobilizing and demanding answers for this long-ignored social and public health problem.

On March 26, 2001, NICHD held a workshop in Washington to set a national agenda for stillbirth research. In the workshop they acknowledged there is currently no significant funding for research into the etiology and/or pathogenesis of stillbirth. They further pointed out that nationally no data are collected on the causes of stillbirth prior to delivery, although 40 states do use a code for age and cause of death.

The agenda formulated by this workshop includes the following:

## **Improvement of record keeping and reporting in each state**

- The Center for Disease Control (CDC) is in the process of revising their ‘fetal death certificate’ to be more sensitive to bereaved families’ needs.

- Improved education of how to complete the forms for the physicians and health information services. Also the draft of an informational form that would accompany the death certificate document for parents to complete was introduced by the CDC.

## **Adoption of a standard postmortem protocol for stillbirths**

- The committee devised a protocol that will be given to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG).
- Improved education of medical students/professionals on the sensitive ways to present the choice of autopsy.
- Better education of medical providers and families experiencing stillbirth losses about the benefits of autopsy.

## **Research into the actual causes in the deaths of stillborn babies and causal factors to decrease the risk of future stillbirths**

Areas that were explored were:

- Medical conditions
- Placental and fetal pathology
- Umbilical cord accidents
- Genetic/metabolic causes
- Infectious causes
- Blood clotting disorders
- Unexplained stillbirths
- Relationship of stillbirths to deaths in the early newborn period

## **Increased awareness of the stillbirth problem for the general public**

- Press releases were sent out to all the major metropolitan medical writers and to the participants of the workshop.
- Continuous updates of information

## **Dissemination of perinatal loss bereavement resources**

- Shared available resources with group.
- Ways to collaborate with bereaved parents and all the perinatal loss groups were addressed.

The December 2001 issue of *Seminars in Perinatology* will be dedicated to stillbirth. It will contain manuscripts which resulted from the NICHD meeting. Topics include:

- Setting a research Agenda for Stillbirth
- Certificate of Birth Resulting in Stillbirth - **the Arizona Story**
- Overcoming Data Gaps and Methodological Barriers to Population Based Research on Stillbirths
- The contribution of stillbirths to US perinatal mortality rate, 1995-98
- Epidemiology of stillbirth
- Maternal Medical Disease: Risk of Antepartum Fetal Death
- Inherited and acquired thrombophilias and stillbirth
- Genetic and metabolic disorders and stillbirth
- Umbilical Cord Accidents: Human Studies
- Stillbirth: Tissue Findings with Environmental and Genetic Links
- Neuropathology Associated with Stillbirth
- Sudden fetal and infant deaths: shared characteristics and distinctive features

In addition the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) will survey the Fellows for their practice patterns in stillbirth. A questionnaire has been developed and should be in the field

(Continued on page 19)