



Offering support and understanding to bereaved parents of pregnancy and infant loss

## Rituals

At first, when we experience the death of our baby or babies, we may find ourselves looking to rituals for immediate comfort and reassurance. Over time, we may search for new rituals to help us at different points in the grief journey. Maybe we want to find or express meaning, help others, or give back somehow. Maybe it's just one of those days.

Some rituals stay with us for the rest of our lives. Some only for a season. Regardless, rituals give us something constructive to do with our grief and often really do help us feel better. Here are some examples of rituals that have helped others.

Plan a memorial service. This can even be done years after a loss.

Plant a tree or other plant in memory of your baby.

Name your baby.

Make a donation in your baby's name (money, books, toys).

Write a song for or about your baby.

Place a headstone or memorial marker at the cemetery.

Place flowers on the graves of other babies while you are at the cemetery.

Keep a journal, write letters and poems to or about your baby.

Make a keepsake box, scrapbook, website, quilt.

Wear a piece of memorial jewelry.

Include your baby's birthstone in a mother's ring or necklace.

Release biodegradable balloons, butterflies, or ladybugs.

Hang a special Christmas ornament or stocking for your baby.

Some parents like to write a letter each year to put in the stocking.

Hold a walk, run or other fundraiser for awareness, prevention, research, support, etc.

Light a candle.

Knit or sew hats, blankets, clothing for hospitals to give to other families whose babies will or have died.

Volunteer to support others walking the same road.

Create a garden stone in your baby's memory.

Utilize your faith tradition's rituals: prayer, music, etc.

Have an artist draw a picture of your baby from a snapshot.

Participate in a memorial ceremony for pregnancy or infant loss.

Send a bouquet of flowers to the hospital on your baby's birthday, to be given to a newly bereaved family.

Say thank you to someone who has supported you well in your grief.

Include your baby's name in the family Bible, siblings' baby books, or other family records.

Draw a star or heart to represent your baby when you sign cards naming everyone in the family.

Buy an outfit for your baby at the age he or she would have been; then when you are ready, donate it.

Buy yourself flowers or pick some for the table.

Participate in a support group.\*

## Future Topics

November

### Holidays

#### Deadline: October 15

What are your strategies for making it through the holiday season?

What are your rituals for remembering your child(ren)?

December

### How Grief Changes

#### Deadline: November 15

As time passes, we may find that our needs and challenges change.

Share how grief has changed for you.

We welcome and encourage submissions to the newsletter. Submissions may be published anonymously if requested. Sharing your story can provide healing and comfort for you—and other parents. The editor reserves the right to edit and select from the materials submitted. Views and opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of Brief Encounters, but those of the individual authors. Please send titled articles and submissions to:

**brief\_encounters\_news@yahoo.com**

## What is Brief Encounters?

Brief Encounters is a non-profit, non-sectarian support group for parents whose babies have died before, during, or after birth. At informal, mutually supportive meetings and through our monthly newsletter and Web site, bereaved parents and their families share their stories, discuss issues that arise from pregnancy and infant loss, and remember their children. Through reading, talking and listening, we learn what grief is—and how, through understanding and caring, we heal.

# Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day

## October 15th

### Resources & Announcements

#### Books on Marriage After Loss

The following books are available from The Centering Corporation ([centering.org](http://centering.org)). The Centering Corporation is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing education on grief and loss for professionals and the families they serve.

**Help Your Marriage Survive**, by Paul C. Rosenblatt. Contains practical information about the problems that grieving parents face. Offers suggestions and at the same time talks about honoring each other during the grieving process.

**Tunnel of Light**, by Richard Dew. When his only child is killed by a drunk driver, Dr. Dave DeMarco's well-ordered world unravels. Overwhelmed by grief, he alienates himself from his wife, his friends, and even from God. In the midst of this he makes a critical error in diagnosis. His attempts to save his marriage, regain his faith and find meaning in a world in which he sees no future are complicated by his determination to atone for his medical blunder even though this effort may cost him his medical practice, his wife and possibly his life.

**For Better or Worse**, by Maribeth Wilder Doerr. For strengthening marriages after a child dies. Looks at gender grief, building your relationship after your child dies, how to help each other heal; includes a grief chat. "While it's important to respect your spouse's needs, it's also wise to respect your own. You must take care of yourself both physically and emotionally before you can begin to help your partner or your children."

**Why Mine?** by Joy and Dr. S.M. Johnson with Billy Williams. For parents whose child is seriously ill. This simple and supportive booklet covers other children, your marriage, anger, hope, depression, single parents, and community people. "When your child is ill you come to know a lot about fear. Fear of the unknown. What will happen? Fear of treatment. What will they do? Fear of tests."

### Thank you, Susan Takko

Susan has stepped down as Treasurer after many years serving all of us, keeping track of love gifts, nonprofit reporting, and goodness knows what else. We are deeply grateful for her contribution to Brief Encounters, and I personally have enjoyed working with her immensely these past few months. Susan, you will be missed! -GJ

### Capturing a Short Life 72-hour Free Online Screening

Full video available for screening *for 72 hours only* on **Palliative Care Network's YouTube channel**, starting October 1.

Sheona McDonald's documentary is a beautiful, intimate and life-affirming documentary about families with infant loss. It explores how critical it is to remember and celebrate the beautiful babies who are only with us for a moment, and how impossible it is to forget them.

See the trailer anytime at [capturingashortlife.com](http://capturingashortlife.com).

### Walk to Remember: "We Walk for the Steps They Will Never Take"

**Longview, WA: October 7, 1:00 p.m.**

McClelland Center, 951 Delaware St.

[walktoremember@live.com](mailto:walktoremember@live.com)

[www.walktoremember-wa.com](http://www.walktoremember-wa.com)

Fawn Harris (360) 575-9729

Sonya Stemkoski (360) 673-6377

**Clackamas, OR: October 13th, 10:30 a.m.**

Valley View Church, 11501 SE Sunnyside Rd.

[www.abutterflystouch.org/events.html](http://www.abutterflystouch.org/events.html)

Katie Wheat (503) 922-1048

Please visit the above websites for more information about each event.

## Bereaved Parent Organizes Fundraiser for Brief Encounters

A bereaved parent, who for now remains anonymous, has arranged a fundraiser and invites everyone to join in. If you would like to participate, present the flyer below (or a copy) when you place your order on November 6 and 7 at the Clackamas Town Center California Pizza Kitchen, and the restaurant will donate 20% your purchase to Brief Encounters.

If you would like, you may make copies and hand them out to supporters, family, friends, and coworkers ahead of the event, but copies may not be distributed in or near the restaurant itself. Thank you to California Pizza Kitchen, the parent organizer, and everyone who comes out to support Brief Encounters.

### Join us at **California Pizza Kitchen** for a flavorful FUNdraising event!

**Just bring in this flyer**, present it to your server, and **20%** of your check will be donated to our organization. Purchases include dine-in, take-out, catering and alcoholic beverages!

Fundraiser in support of  
**Brief Encounters**  
**11/6/12 and 11/7/12**  
(All Day)

**California Pizza Kitchen**  
Clackamas Town Center •  
11840 SE 82<sup>nd</sup> Ave, Happy Valley  
(Next to Sears)  
503-659-0760

Go to [cpk.com](http://cpk.com) to view our pizzas, pastas, salads, appetizers & desserts. You can even order online!

Join the **CPK Adventure Club** at [cpk.com](http://cpk.com) and receive **\$5** off your next visit!



Eligible groups include non-profit schools and 501c organizations. Donation amount excludes proceeds from tax, gratuity, gift card and retail purchases. Valid for dine-in, take-out, online orders, catering or curbside service. Alcoholic beverages included. Not valid on delivery. Event proceeds void if flyers are distributed in or near the restaurant. Manager, please attach this flyer to the guest check.

## Support Between Meetings

Do you need to talk but don't want to wait until the next group meeting? Here are some friends who are willing to talk—or just listen. You may be looking to connect with someone who has experienced similar circumstances in his or her loss(es.) These volunteers welcome your contact by phone or e-mail. Please put "Brief Encounters" in the message line of your e-mail so that our volunteers will be sure to read your message. If you are interested in being listed as a support person, or wish to have your name removed, please contact the editor.

**Dominique Dallmayr** (503-281-6970 or ddallmayr@yahoo.com) adopted a son after a full term stillbirth.

**Caroline Falcone** (cfalcone@mail.com) had a son, Cyrus, who was born in 2007 with a rare genetic anomaly. He lived for eight days in the NICU. Her daughter was two years old at the time and she gave birth to a healthy son in 2008.

**Gayla Jeppesen** (gayla.jeppesen@gmail.com) lost her daughter, Olivia, in 2006, stillborn at 32 weeks. No medical explanation was found. She also experienced three early miscarriages in 2001-02 and has 3 living children.

**Shannon Mackenroth** (adamshannon75@q.com) lost her daughter, Heather Renee, stillborn due to an intrauterine infection and premature birth. She has experienced a successful subsequent pregnancy.

**Eric Murfitt** (503-621-2361 cell, r.murfitt@comcast.net) lost twins, Noah & Emily, born at 21 weeks in 2004, went through three miscarriages with his wife and has 2 living children.

**Rachel Murfitt** (503-287-2628) has had 3 early miscarriages and lost twins at 21.5 weeks due to premature labor in January 2004. She has 2 living children.

**Elizabeth Odekirk-Hash** (503-648-1458 or odekirk\_hash@yahoo.com) lost a child at 6.5 months gestation after trying to conceive for 7 years and using IVF. She has since adopted a girl.

**Daniele Riehl** (daniele@dignlife.com) lost her daughter Audrie in 2009 at 38 1/2 weeks as the result of an umbilical cord accident during birth. She has one living son, Cole (2006). Due to fertility challenges, both of her children were conceived through the assistance of IVF. She and her husband are currently waiting to adopt children in State foster care.

**Sarah Ellwood Vera** (scellwood@yahoo.com) lost her daughter, Audrey, stillborn at 38.5 weeks in January 2008 due to an umbilical cord incident. She has two living daughters.

**Joanie Wheeler** (miniquilter79@hotmail.com) had a daughter, Melissa Catherine, who died of SIDS at 6 weeks of age. She has 3 living children.

**Charlotte Williams** (503-513-5448) had a son who died at one month of a heart defect. She has also experienced four early pregnancy losses, infertility issues, and a successful subsequent pregnancy.

**Shannon Zelazek** (djzela@yahoo.com) lost her daughter, Dorothy Raine (6/1/07), full term (39 weeks) during labor due to an umbilical cord incident. She and her husband have a son, born 11/08.

**Additional peer support volunteers can be found in the Resources section of the Brief Encounters website:**  
[www.briefencounters.org](http://www.briefencounters.org)

## Brief Encounters Meetings

Our support group meetings are a safe place to talk about your child, your loss and your grief. You are welcome to share, or just listen. A facilitator guides the meeting. For more information or directions, please call (503) 699-8006.

### Parents of Infant Loss and Pregnancy Loss, Including Early Pregnancy Loss

*We ask that children not attend these meetings. Thank you.*

Meets the second Monday of each month, 7:00 pm

Portland: Peace House, 2116 NE 18th Ave.

#### Westside Meeting

Meets the fourth Thursday of each month, 7:00 pm

**Beaverton:** Fire Station #60, 8585 NW Johnson St.  
E-mail Caroline (cfalcone@mail.com) or Dominique (ddallmayr@yahoo.com) with questions.

#### Vancouver Meeting

Meets the second Thursday of each month, 7:00 pm

**Vancouver:** Felida Fire Station #62, 11600 NW Lakeshore Ave.  
E-mail Viktoria (rhubarbart@yahoo.com) with questions.

### Parents of Pregnancy Interruption Due to Medical Reasons

*We ask that children not attend these meetings. Thank you.*

Meets the fourth Thursday of each month, 7:00 pm

Portland: Peace House, 2116 NE 18th Ave.

### Parents of Subsequent Pregnancies and Adoptions & Parents Trying to Conceive

Meets the fourth Monday of each month, 7:00 pm

Portland: Peace House, 2116 NE 18th Ave.

### Fertility & Adoption Support Group

*We ask that children not attend these meetings. Thank you.*

This group is exclusively for women who are trying to conceive their first, second or more child. Women who have not experienced a loss are also welcome. This group offers a friendly and relaxed atmosphere where you can have a sense of not being alone and receive encouragement, have a chance to express what the experience is like, share what we have learned about fertility and ourselves, and receive positive support. Questions? Contact Anne at (503) 570-3498 or anehend@aol.com.

Meets the first Tuesday of each month, 7:00 pm

Portland: Peace House, 2116 NE 18th Ave.

### Brief Encounters

Metanoia Peace Community

United Methodist Church

2116 NE 18th Ave.

Portland, OR 97212

Message Line: Support, Questions

(503) 699-8006 (Spanish line: 503-972-3376)

Web site

briefencounters.org

Mailing List: Add or Drop, or Address Changes

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