

Fathers

June 2018, Volume 24, Issue 6

Dear Father of Angel Babies on Father's Day

By Liz Marie

Dear husband and father of angel babies,

Happy Father's Day babe. You are such a great dad to our angel babies in heaven and our future children here on earth. You seriously give your all daily to your family, your work, school, and I just want you to know that it doesn't all go un-noticed. You may think that this day celebrating dads is not a day for you, but your love for your children while they were here on earth and your heartache over their short time here proves that this day is all about you. I know you are a strong silent type when it comes to expressing feelings, the man who comforts me and holds me and lets me cry on your shoulders while you show strength and stateliness, but I know how much you love all of our angel babies in heaven and how much it hurt you to say goodbye to them and how much you wish they were here on earth with us. With every loss we have had you had to watch me in pain physically and emotionally as I miscarried and you always tell me how you wish you would never have to see me go through something like this ever again and how you wish you could take it away. But the truth is that I'm glad it's me going through the physical pain of miscarriage and not you because it would kill me to see you having to feel physical pain along with the emotional pain I know you already have that alone makes my heart hurt so deep. It just shows how courageous you are to be by my side as I'm in pain and to be able to hold me, comfort me, and be able to be the rock for the two of us to start our healing after a loss of a child. I'm so grateful for your caring soul and how comforting you are through our fertility journey and how you never make me feel like there is something wrong with me as my body struggles to carry our babies full term. You cherish our babies, you praise me for being a good mom, and you do everything in your power to make our walk with fertility as easy as possible. You prove how you will raise our children here on earth in a Christ filled home with your close walk with God that you lead daily and your constant prayers for our angel babies and our future babies here on

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BRIEF ENCOUNTERS

Support for bereaved parents of pregnancy and infant loss

Safe Arrival

On March 24th Stephanie Andreason, Toby Roberts and sister, Evie Roberts (age 3) welcomed Tennessee Lewis Roberts, to their family. Tennessee weighed 7 pounds, 3 ounces. He is our little prince!

Upcoming Events

Jizo Ceremony for Loved Ones June 9th, 3pm - 5:30pm

Great Vow Zen Monastery
79640 Quincy-Mayger Road, Clatskanie, Oregon

To help families and friends in their process of grief, we honor their lost loved one by participating in a ceremony in the Jizo Bodhisattva remembrance garden. We will spend time making a personal memorial for our loved one. Families and friends are welcome to revisit the garden any time. The ceremony is very simple, and done in silence. There is no charge. All religious affiliations welcome.

Your RSVP is appreciated. Please email registrar@zendust.org to notify us of your attendance. More information at zendust.org.

NOAH'S QUEST

5K, 10K, Walk/Run, and Kiddie Run June 23rd, 8am - 2pm

Sandy Bluff Park
36910 Goldenrain Street, Sandy, Oregon

A benefit for Brief Encounters, for everyone who has lost a child or the hope of a child, and for those who care.

Registration @ 8:00am, Opening Ceremony @ 8:45am

Registration Fees

\$30 by Friday, June 22nd, \$35 the day of the race
\$5 Kiddie Run - Ages 6 & under free unless running the 1K

Proceeds benefit Brief Encounters Support Group

Contact information:

Carol Cohen, 503-475-2347, ccohen@cityof.sandy.com

Register online at www.ci.sandy.or.us
(Select Online Registration under Quick Links then view Community Events under Register Now)

From the editor...

It's Father's Day again and this year I'm once again overwhelmed with sadness for my husband. Watching him grow into his wonderful version of fatherhood has been so rewarding and such a privilege to witness. And as all things post loss, these beautiful moments come with a constant missing that's always humming in the background. I find it incredibly unfair for him and all the fathers I've met that they've been robbed of the chance to parent their children here on Earth. That this holiday isn't all cuddles and gifts but also a heavy heart full of longing and love for the ones that aren't here.

Shannon Stemm Patel
mother of Charlie and her big sis



Upcoming newsletter topics...

July

MARRIAGE AFTER LOSS

Everyone grieves differently. No matter how many times we remind ourselves of this truth it can be difficult when our spouse/ partner/lover is on another page, book, or bookstore across town. Please share your experiences of grieving together and grieving apart.

August

GRANDPARENTS

Do your parents participate in your grief process? Do they include your baby with their other grandchildren for family events? How has your relationship with your parents changed now they are grandparents to baby that has passed?

Newsletter Submissions

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: newsletter@briefencounters.org

Newsletter printing provided by AnchorPointe

* * * * *

*There are some who bring a light
so great to the world that even
after they have gone the light
remains.*

–LoveLivesOn.com

BRIEF ENCOUNTERS

2116 NE 18th Ave., Portland, OR 97212

Message Phone: 503-699-8006

Web: www.briefencounters.org

Twitter: twitter.com/briefencount

Facebook: [private/closed groups Brief Encounters Pregnancy and Infant Loss Support and Brief Encounters Parenting After Loss](#)

Established in 1992 by a group of parents, 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, bereaved parents and their families share their stories, discuss issues that arise from pregnancy and infant loss, and remember their children. Through talking or just listening, we learn what grief is --- and how, through understanding and caring, we heal.

EXECUTIVE BOARD AND STEERING COMMITTEE

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OTHER VOLUNTEERS

Monica Thompson (Spanish interpreter)

LOVE GIFTS

Please send Love Gifts and messages to 2116 NE 18th Ave., Portland, OR 97212. For Love Gifts to be acknowledged in a specific newsletter issue, we must receive it by the 10th of the prior month. Please assist us in reducing the chance of errors by using the form on page 5.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR REMOVAL FROM MAILING LIST

Please contact our database manager Megan Wright at 503-646-1335 or by email at database@briefencounters.org.

OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED: INCLUSIONS OR CHANGES

Please contact our database manager Megan Wright at 503-646-1335 or by email at megan.k.wright@comcast.net. For children to be remembered in a specific newsletter issue, we must receive your request by the 10th of the prior month.

SAFE ARRIVALS

Please send Safe Arrivals to newsletter@briefencounters.org.

Stillborn: A Father's Perspective

By David

My daughter Grace lived a full life. A full womb life. A life in which she heard the voices of my wife and me, in which she heard us sing. She saw shades of light and she dreamt unborn baby dreams. She moved, full of life and showed us her developing personality.

On the 1st of May, excitement set in as contractions began; on the 2nd of May my life became a series of moments.

Trying to put on my 4-year old's coat while watching the midwife struggling to find a heartbeat.

Driving to the hospital, hoping against hope. The longest journey of my life.

Watching the stillest of scans and knowing the results before they spoke.

Trying to eat lunch knowing I would need my strength but struggling with the sick feeling deep inside.

Returning to the hospital for my wife to be induced.

And this is where the real difference between my wife and me hit me. Whilst my world had fallen apart, whilst I was trying to find the strength to endure what was to come. I was not the one with a dead baby in my body. I was not the one who would have to endure the pain of childbirth knowing that only the continuation of tragedy awaited. Even now a year and a half down the line, I cannot conceive of that mental anguish.

The next few hours were a mixture of heroism and despair. In turns we joked with the midwives, we cried and sobbed with each other and we stared at each other in numb disbelief.

When my beautiful and perfect daughter Grace was born I held her, still radiating her mother's warmth and thought for a moment that it was a cruel joke. I smiled at her and sang to her. I asked her, I begged her to breathe for me, to open her eyes and look at me.

She didn't.

Her weight in my arms teased me with all her unrealized potentialities and I was struck by the awful, almost physical pain that comes with the dawning knowledge that all my fathering instincts, the desire to protect, to nurture had nowhere to go.

I dressed her then and put her in a cot. My wife was having complications with her placenta and needed me so I had to do what no father, no parent wants to do. I had to walk away from my daughter. Leave her in a corner. I wanted to look after her, protect her but it made no difference, so I walked away. Even today I struggle visiting her grave because I, at some point, will have to turn and walk away a visceral reminder of my frustrated fatherhood.

My brave, strong, warrior woman of a wife endured and achieved so much and I felt inadequate. I wanted to hurt and ache like she had. I decided very quickly that I wanted to dig my daughter's grave. And I did just that. I carved her resting place from the ground myself, grateful for my brother who worked with me every step of the way –

feeling the ache and pain with me.

Then came an event that every father dreams of but in a fashion that is every father's nightmare. I got to walk my daughter down the aisle.

I carried her in a white wicker basket, wondering where I found the strength from. During the service my wife and I sang Amazing Grace through the lumps in our throat.

In the last year and a half I have learnt one very important lesson. Know yourself.

In knowing yourself you can find an emotional language to express yourself.

I am unashamed of the tears I cry. If holding tears back is manly, then screw that. I couldn't give a damn about what a man is supposed to be. I don't help my wife or myself by not being in touch with my emotions, and seeking counseling for both of us has helped us process this ongoing sadness. In embracing them, it helps me deal with the unexpected lashing out, with the anger that I didn't realize was just below the surface. It helps me to be there for my 4-year-old Alannah as she continues in her horrible quest to understand the impact of having a sister that never came home, of what death means. Helps me to be there for my wife whose grief is a step more immediate than mine. Helps us as we attempt to find joy in a world which seems very different; as we adjust to the "new normal".

Grace's legacy has touched many and indeed our 4-month-old Kira wouldn't exist if she hadn't.

She was real; she had a full womb life, for which we are thankful. But I'll never know the color of her eyes; she'll never hug me; never know my warmth.

My daughter lived a lifetime, and that's how long I'm going to miss her, a lifetime.

David Monteith lives in London with his wife Siobhan and 3 daughters Alannah, Kira, and Alyssa. He is an actor, director and tutor. He is the co-founder of the Geek Syndicate, a website, podcast and BBC documentaries. David received the Inspirational Father award at The 2015 Butterfly Awards this year. He documents his thoughts on various matters but primarily on surviving stillbirth, attempting to communicate the raw emotion that comes with this loss at his blog davidmonteith.blogspot.com. Follow him on Twitter.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

I'll never get to hear you laugh and giggle, or see your little toes wiggle. There are many things I will never get to do, but the hardest is not being with you.

-SayingGoodbye.org

Love Gifts

Donations to Brief Encounters help us to maintain our outreach to bereaved families through this newsletter, support groups, and other resources. Often Love Gifts are given by a family in memory of a child who has died. Others may wish to give a general donation, or give thanks for their own living children. We acknowledge gifts here without reference to amount given.

Brief Encounters is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization; therefore, no gift is too small. Each donation goes a long way toward printing brochures, maintaining the Brief Encounters website, providing monthly meetings, performing outreach to healthcare providers, mailing this newsletter, and many other ways we seek to care for bereaved parents

Love Gift Donation Form

Enclosed is a donation of: \$
In memory of:

Message to be included in the newsletter with your
donation acknowledgement:

Birth date:

Death date:

Donated by:

Please consider your employer's matching gift program when submitting a donation. To receive a receipt, please provide your return address:

I wish for my gift to remain anonymous.

Name(s) of Parents:

Please assist us in reducing the chance of errors or omissions by sending your Love Gift message with this form. Please **do not** send your message separately to the editor or database manager. Thank you!

Send form and payment to: 2116 NE 18th Avenue, Portland, OR 97212

Checks can be made payable to Brief Encounters.

For credit card payments, please provide the following:

Name as it appears on card:

Credit/Debit # _____ - _____ - _____ - _____ Exp date ____ - ____ CVC# _____

Please note: For Love Gifts to be acknowledged in a particular newsletter issue, we must receive it by the 15th of the prior month (example: June 15th for July issue).

BRIEF ENCOUNTERS is a non-sectarian, non-profit organization recognized as tax-exempt under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3), Federal ID #45-4822283.

Men Don't Grieve Differently, They Just Grieve

By Rachel

As grief steps into the spotlight of mainstream media, there is a light being shone on the bereaved mother. She is vulnerable and strong all at once. She inspires our deepest sympathies and encourages us to listen to her story. But, what about the fathers? Despite our best intentions, women have become the face of grief and the men who grieve are being left in the shadows.

Even in our loss community, there is an assumption that we are keeping men out of the spotlight because that is the way they want it. We espouse the myth that men grieve differently from women and that they wish to do so in private. Perhaps, men don't actually grieve differently and we don't know because we've left them alone with our assumptions about their strength and stoic nature.

Our husbands and partners and boyfriends don't grieve differently because they are men. They grieve differently because they are individuals facing their own unique experience with grief. The same way that one bereaved mother grieves differently from another. Our stories of grief may connect or overlap in places, but no two stories are the same. We accept this as truth for bereaved mothers, so why have we given our bereaved fathers a different truth? Furthermore, we need to ask ourselves why we are giving men the narrative for their grief when we so strongly encourage women to write their own.

In our community of loss parents, it is never our intention to judge the grief journey of another. However, we are doing that with the fathers in our community. When we tell men that they grieve differently, there is an implication that they are grieving wrong. Our intention is to showcase understanding, but the impact is different. We are so busy trying to help men grieve the right way, that we are missing how they have chosen to grieve. Our intentions are good, but it is our impact that matters.

We need to stop telling men how they grieve, and instead listen to their stories. Their stories will differ from yours. Not because they are men, but because their experience is not your experience. Even if you lost a child together, you are not the same person. Your grief may travel side by side without ever touching the other's path.

This is what makes grief so hard. The journeys are difficult and they are heartbreaking. We don't want to walk them alone. But remember, we are not. Even when our husbands and partners don't match our strides, their path is paved with the same heartache

and devastation. Ultimately, we need to remember the following: men aren't from Mars and women aren't from Venus. Instead, we're all just trying to make sense of life here on Earth without the children we love so deeply.

Originally posted on StillStandingMag.com

Rachel Whalen is a mother, wife, and Kindergarten teacher from Barre, Vermont. Her life's work is to keep the memory of her daughter, Dorothy, alive through words both spoken and written. Rachel shares her family's journey through loss and all that has come after on her blog: An Unexpected Family Outing.

A Dad Hurts Too

By Unknown

People don't always see the tears a dad cries,
His heart is broken too when his child dies.
He tries to hold it together and be strong,
Even though his world's gone wrong.
He holds his wife as her tears fall,
Comforts her through it all.
He goes through his day doing what he's
supposed to do,
But a piece of his heart has been ripped away too.
So when he's alone he lets out his pain,
And his tears come like falling rain,
His world has crashed in around him,
And a world that was once bright has gone dim.
He feels like he has to be strong for others,
But Dads hurt too, not just the Mothers,
He searches for answers but none are to be found,
He hides behind a mask when he is feeling down.
He smiles through his tears,
He struggles and holds in his fears,
But what you see on the outside is not always real.
Men don't always show how they really feel.
So I'd like to ask a favor of you,
Next time you see a mother hurting over the loss of her
child,
Please remember... a Dad hurts too.

Dear Fathers, *continued from page 1*

earth. You are the best husband and my best friend and the best dad already. You impress me daily with your goals, achievements, and motivation. Our babies and future babies are so blessed to have you to look up to. You give me hope, you give me strength, and you give me the drive to continue on this fertility journey with joy, grace, and thankfulness. I hope you never feel forgotten or dismissed as you and many others are comforting me during our miscarriages, and that you know that you are thought of, prayed for, and truly and deeply cared for by many through our losses as you are our babies father and they are a part of you too. I want you to know what a wonderful dad you already are and that you are being celebrated this Father's Day and everyday by our tiny little babes in heaven. We love you!

Read more from Liz Marie at LizMarieBlog.com

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 meetings.

For more information or directions, please call 503-699-8006.

PARENTS OF INFANT LOSS & PREGNANCY LOSS, INCLUDING EARLY PREGNANCY LOSS

Out of consideration for other bereaved parents, we ask that children not attend these meetings. Thank you.

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

June 11, July 9

Contact: Rachel Murfitt (RachelM@briefencounters.org)

This group also meets the fourth Tuesday of each month, 7:00pm

June 26, July 24

Contact: Daniele (DanieleR@briefencounters.org)

PARENTS OF PREGNANCY INTERRUPTION DUE TO MEDICAL REASONS

Out of consideration for other bereaved parents, we ask that children not attend these meetings. Thank you. Meets the fourth Thursday of each month, 7:00pm

June 28, July 26

Contact: Heather (HeatherS@briefencounters.org)

PARENTS OF SUBSEQUENT PREGNANCIES, ADOPTIONS, & PARENTS TRYING TO CONCEIVE

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

June 25, July 23

Contact: Heather (HeatherS@briefencounters.org)

All meetings held at The Peace House, 2116 NE 18th Avenue, Portland

RESOURCES

Brief Encounters Online

WEBSITE

The Brief Encounters website www.briefencounters.org is a great resource, including past newsletter issues, upcoming events and announcements, helpful links, numerous resources, support meeting information, etc.

TWITTER

@briefencount (twitter.com/briefencount) is the Twitter handle to follow for news and helpful links and information about pregnancy loss, infant death, and grief resources.

FACEBOOK

Brief Encounters Pregnancy and Infant Loss Support and *Brief Encounters Parenting After Loss* are the names of our private/closed Facebook mutual support groups. Because they are private, each group requires approval to join, and posts are hidden from anyone who is not a group member.

Please remember to take the usual precautions to protect yourself when using any social media outlets, keeping in mind that online communication is never completely private or secure. And remember that everyone who posts or reads will be in different places in their grief, so let's all be mindful and considerate. You can find articles about online safety with a quick online search. Be safe.

Counselor Referrals

Not all counselors are familiar with the issues that parents face after the death of their baby or during infertility treatment. If you feel like you would like to talk with a counselor, listed below are individuals who have been recommended to us by parents in the BE community.:

- ♥ Gaby Donnell, LCSW, Inner NE Portland
503-287-2295 www.mootherootscounseling.com
- ♥ Teni Davoudian, Ph.D., OHSU
503-418-4500 www.ohsu.edu
- ♥ Britta Dinsmore, PhD, SW Portland
503-913-4791 www.brittadinsmore.com
- ♥ Adria Goodness, CNW, PMHNP, SE Portland
503-224-3438 www.adriagoodness.com
- ♥ Rachel Starck, LPC, North Portland
503.929.2773 www.thethrivingmama.com
- ♥ Laurie Cox, LCSW, NE Portland
503-819-6354 mootherootscounseling.com/laurie-cox
- ♥ Lauren Marie Barthelemy, LPC, SE Portland
412-715-2391
- ♥ Debbie Bensching, MSW, LCSW, SW Portland
503-944-5032 DebbieBensching.com

- ♥ Tina Lilly, MS, Inner SE Portland
503-380-0424 www.foryouaremadeofstars.com
- ♥ Ava M. Stone, Ph.D., PC, SE Portland
503-279-8160 www.pacificcenter.org
- ♥ Tara May, PhD, Vancouver
360-904-1008 www.taramay.com
- ♥ Nalini Kuruppu MSW, LCSW, North Portland
503-753-9157
- ♥ Kari Maljai, LPC, SE Portland
503.936.7658 www.pnwbh.com
- ♥ Brooke Noli, MFT, Inner NE Portland
971-645-1180 portlandbirthcounseling.com
- ♥ Brynna Sibilla, LCSW, Inner NE
503-280-1101 www.psychotherapyportland.com
- ♥ Jennifer Singleton, PhD, PC, Downtown,
503-242-1558
- ♥ Lynne Phillips-Werbel, LCSW, Beaverton
503-690-9119 www.wildwoodpsych.com
- ♥ The Dougy Center (for bereaved siblings)
503-775-5683 www.dougy.org

Editor's note: We would appreciate receiving suggestions, changes, or corrections to any of these resource listings; please send them to the editor at newsletter@briefencounters.org

BRIEF ENCOUNTERS

Support for bereaved parents of pregnancy
and infant loss

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Portland, OR 97212

Message Phone: 503-699-8006

Web: briefencounters.org

Twitter: twitter.com/briefencount

Find us on Facebook

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**Return Service
Requested**

Postmaster: Dated material, please do not delay

Fathers

Change of Address or Removal from Mailing List

Please contact our database manager Megan Wright at 503-646-1335 or by email at database@briefencounters.org.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

PARENTS OF INFANT LOSS & PREGNANCY LOSS, INCLUDING EARLY PREGNANCY LOSS

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See page 7 for a detailed schedule

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June 28, July 26

PARENTS OF SUBSEQUENT PREGNANCIES, ADOPTIONS, & PARENTS TRYING TO CONCEIVE

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

June 25, July 23

All meetings held at The Peace House, 2116 NE 18th Avenue, Portland