

This issue of the newsletter is lovingly dedicated in precious memory of Brogan Hamilton.



Empty Arms Newsletter

Volume 2 Issue 7

Summer 2007

Coming Soon:

- Empty Arms on the Web
- Care Basket Assembly



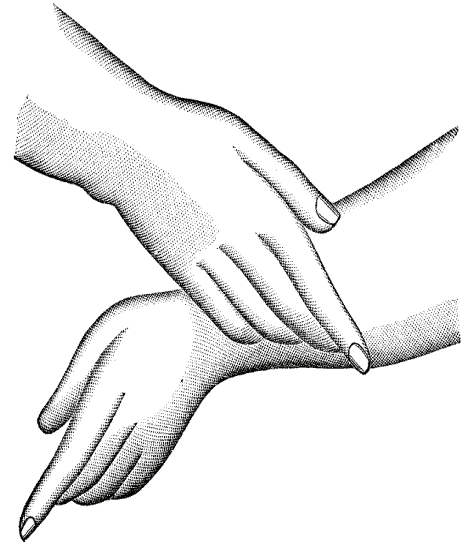
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Ministry Update

It's official. Summer is here as the mercury clearly indicates. I must admit, even though it's hot as blazes, summertime is synonymous with fun! Joseph (our 9 year old) is certainly enjoying his "break", but his schedule is filled with fun trips and activities with family and friends. I hope your summer is enjoyable and you find creative ways to keep cool.

Many things have taken place personally and for the ministry since the last newsletter. Some of these you will read about in this issue. Most exciting is the safe arrival of our daughter, Jolie Claire, who was born on March 13th weighing 6 lbs. 11 oz. It was a LONG pregnancy, but our fears were laid to rest when our beautiful daughter was placed in my arms. We are grateful everyday for this unexpected miracle. Thank you all for your fervent prayers on her behalf. Jolie is now 4 months old, going on two, and she is in love with her big brother.



The ministry has been staying busy delivering 31 baskets since February. Eight were miscarriages, twelve were stillbirths and eleven were early infant deaths. One care basket went as far as Germany to a family who is stationed there in the Army. Word certainly gets around. Please remember to pray for these heartbroken families. God is good all the time.

Golf Tournament a Huge Success



Thanks to Jason and Heather Kargel who chose the Empty Arms Ministry as the beneficiary of the 1st Annual Avery Grace Kargel Memorial Golf Tournament in memory of their daughter. As a result, \$6,000 was raised to benefit hurting families enduring the loss of a child. WOW!

We are in the process of revamping our care baskets to provide even more resources for our area. The second golf tournament is already in the planning stages and will be held on December 1st. Watch for details in the coming months.

Prayer Needs

A long list of prayer requests was e-mailed several weeks ago to those who have e-mail addresses. If you would like a copy, please let me know.

Please remember these families in prayer:

- Joseph and Misty Rhodes in the loss of their 16 month old daughter, Irelynd Kay.
- Paul and Paige Proffitt suffered a miscarriage at 4 months.
- Ryan and Courtney Azios are 24 weeks pregnant with their first baby and he has been diagnosed with Trisomy 18.
- The Ramirez family whose baby was stillborn.
- A local family whose baby was stillborn.

- The Hlavaty family whose daughter, Lexi, was stillborn.
- The Evett family, whose 3 month old son passed away.
- Stanley and Tracie Stewart in the loss of their 8 month old son.
- Rob and Melanie (Conerly) Duletzke whose baby was stillborn.



**THE PRAYER
OF THE
RIGHTEOUS
IS POWERFUL
AND
EFFECTIVE.**

J A M E S 5 : 1 6

M.E.N.D. is Here

Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death, a support group, is officially in operation in Nacogdoches. The group is directed by Lori De La Torre. Support groups are held the 2nd Thursday of every month at 7:30 and The Badders Law Firm on North Street. Lori can be contacted via e-mail at Lori@mend.org or by phone (936)569-1739. Daddies are invited to participate as well.

Some highlighted events that M.E.N.D. offers are a Walk to Remember in October and a Candlelight service in December. They also publish a free bi-monthly newsletter on topics pertaining to pregnancy and infant loss. Their website is www.mend.org.

Brochures will be included in our care baskets. If you'd like one, please contact me.

Be Not Afraid

In the next several newsletters, we will highlight some organizations that deal specifically with pregnancy and infant loss. Contact information is included in our care baskets as well.

Benotafraid.net is an online outreach to parents who have received a poor or difficult prenatal diagnosis. Personal family stories, articles and links within the site

are a wonderful resource for those who may have been asked to choose between terminating a pregnancy or continuing on despite the diagnosis. This website contains experiences of those who chose not to terminate. It offers encouragement to those who may be afraid to continue on. Included are also message boards and forums related to different topics of concern.

Heavenly Friendships



We met through our children, Gracie and Dawson, both in Heaven as a result of Trisomy 18. Although my son Joseph refers to her as my “internet friend”, we officially “met” by telephone through a friend of a friend. Dawson had just recently been diagnosed with the lethal disease and this friend asked if I could call Dana since we had traveled the same road almost a year prior with Gracie. From that moment on, it was instant friendship and we soon found out how much more our lives would parallel. We met face to face a few months after Dawson passed away, though we remained in constant contact through e-mails and telephone calls. It was difficult watching this sweet family experience such tragedy, but their faith in God was evident throughout. So, there we were at a Mexican restaurant in Cleveland, Texas sharing our scrapbooks and tears as we introduced our children to one another. God is good to provide someone to share tears of sorrow. Since that time, we have experienced similar sorrows through infertility and miscarriages, literally one after

another. We questioned why, we mourned our losses, we listened to one another. We even diagnosed our own fertility woes—what did those doctors know anyway? Inevitably, when one of us got pregnant, the other was losing a pregnancy. We prayed and hoped that one day, we would be pregnant together and have healthy babies. When I discovered I was pregnant with Jolie, Dana was the first person I told. I couldn’t have had a bigger cheerleader. Then, she called me when I was 7 months pregnant and told me that she and Dan were going to adopt a baby girl that was due on March 7th. My due date was March 30th! Delaney Grace was born on March 7th. Jolie Claire was born on March 13th. God is good!

The tone of our conversations are a little lighter these days as we revel in the miracles we hold in our arms. I am forever grateful to God for introducing us through our children in the midst of shared sorrows. I am equally grateful to Him for allowing us to share our joys. God is good to provide someone to share tears of joy!

Where Joy and Sorrow Meet

There’s a place of quiet stillness ‘tween the light and shadows reach. Where the hurting and the hopeless seek everlasting peace. Words of men and songs of angels whisper comfort bittersweet. Mending grief and life eternal where joy and sorrow meet.

There is a place where hope remains in crowns of thorns and crimson stains. And tears that fall on Jesus’ feet. Where joy and sorrow meet.

Performed by Avalon

There’s a place the lost surrender and the weary will retreat. Full of grace and mercy tender in times of unbelief. For wounded there is healing, strength is given to the weak. Broken hearts find love redeeming where joy and sorrow meet.

There is a place of thirst and hunger where the roots of faith grow deep. And there is rain and rolling thunder when the road is rough and steep. There is hope in desperation, there is victory in defeat. At the cross of restoration where joy and sorrow meet.

E-Mail Addresses Still Needed

If you have an e-mail address and would like to receive the newsletter as well as other notices from Empty Arms, please e-mail me at: jonathangerland@consolidated.net.

Also, we are currently working with Keith Nash on including information about the Empty

Arms Ministry on the church’s website. We would like to include links to other websites dealing with pregnancy and infant loss as well as an archive of past and current newsletters. If you have any other ideas. Please let me know. This will be a summer project. I will keep you posted on its progress.

**THIS ISSUE OF THE NEWSLETTER IS LOVINGLY
DEDICATED IN PRECIOUS MEMORY OF
BROGAN HAMILTON.**

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Issues of this newsletter will be distributed quarterly. If you would like to submit an article or any information to be included in the newsletter, please contact Jill Gerland at (936) 634-3175. Each issue will be dedicated in memory of one of our precious babies.

Editor: Jill Gerland

The Empty Arms Ministry of Denman Avenue Baptist Church was created in October 2004 to reach out to those who have suffered the loss of a child through miscarriage, stillbirth, or early infant death.

Ministry opportunities include delivering care baskets, grief partnering by sharing experiences and information with someone who is beginning their grief journey, praying and offering support through a variety of ways to the ministry. It is our prayer that we will be a valuable, Christian resource for those who are hurting as a result of losing their child.

“God blesses those people who grieve. They will find comfort!”

Matthew 5:4 (CEV)



SPOT- LIGHT ON...

This issue of the newsletter spotlights volunteer Pam Ray. Pam and husband Kurt joined DABC 9 years ago along with their two sons Bryan and Brandon. Since that time, Kurt passed away while her sons have grown up and established lives of their own.

Bryan is married and he and wife Julie are expecting their first child (Pam's first grandbaby) this Fall. They are told that it is a girl. They recently moved to the Dallas area. Brandon works for Boeing in Seattle and is quite a world traveler.

Pam is a registered nurse in the education department at Woodland Heights. She has been instrumental in delivering numerous care baskets to grieving families at the hospital following the loss of a newborn child.

When asked why she became involved with this ministry, Pam replied, “I hold a special place in my heart for the Kendrick/Gerland families and all they experienced with little Gracie Beth. They had faithfully been by my side through the illness and death of my

Volunteer Spotlight: Pam Ray

husband Kurt and I wanted to return that support in some way during the pain of their loss. Empty Arms became a way to not only reach out to them but to others who have had similar experiences. I feel privileged to be a part of this ministry which has touched so many young families during such a difficult time in their lives.”



Pam's favorite verse is found in Phillipians 4:13. “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” A copy of this verse has been on her bathroom mirror since the week of Kurt's diagnosis and is a constant reminder of who is in control.