What I Need

August 2019, Volume 25, Issue 8

BRIEF ENCOUNTERS

Support for bereaved parents of pregnancy and infant loss

FINAL IN-PRINT ISSUE

* ACTION NEEDED *

To ensure continued delivery of the newsletter to your email and have your child(ren) included in Our Children Remembered, go to briefencounters.org and click on "Subscribe to Newsletter" at the bottom of the homepage.
Need assistance? Contact Megan Wright at 503-646-1335 or database@briefencounters.org

NEWSLETTER TRANSITIONS *UPDATE*

As you may know, this newsletter will be transitioning to digital form starting next month in September. With input from the board, the newsletter editors, web manager, and database manager have been hard at work creating a format for the new emailed version along with collecting as many email addresses and baby names/dates as possible. *In order to have your child(ren) included in the online version, it is essential that you opt-in.* There is also the option to simply sign up for the newsletter and not include your baby's information if you'd prefer that it not be shared in this way. With any transition period, there is both excitement and a healthy amount of trepidation as we move ahead. We hope that the new format will allow the newsletter to be more accessible to parents, caregivers, family and friends as well as being an environmentally friendly and economical option. We hope, too, that our children will continue be remembered in a meaningful way. We also plan to send an annual in-print holiday mailing containing information about our holiday remembrance events, how to order ornaments in honor of your baby(ies), and pieces related to getting through the holidays. This printed newsletter has been a lifeline for many of us. We have faithfully scanned its pages for the name of our child(ren) and even saved issues through the years. This transition does not go without notice. We know that change of any kind, even if it has its merits, is a challenging experience. We mark this passage and thank you for continuing to walk beside us.

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Upcoming Events

Brief Encounters Board Meeting

The B.E. Board welcomes you to our upcoming meeting on Monday, August 19th at 6 pm. We are in need of several open board positions: Hospital liaison coordinator(s), members at large, and more. Even if you simply want to come and listen, we hope you will attend. We ask that volunteers be one year out or more from your loss. Board meetings are held on the third Monday of each month at Sunnyside Community House, 3520 SE Yamhill, Portland. (This location will change in September. Keep an eye out for updated information at that time.) Contact Board Chair Rachel with questions at RachelM@briefencounters.org

Happy Hour

Tuesday, August 13th, 5:30 pm
Laurelwood Brewing Company SE
6716 SE Milwaukie Ave, Portland 97202
Share some food and drink with the Brief Encounters community in a casual and relaxed setting. Look for the bamboo plant on the table.
Adults only, but we are also looking for parents who want to set up kid-friendly events.
Questions? newsletter@briefencounters.org

Hands on Hope Benefit 2019

Saturday, September 28th, 6:30 – 10:30 pm
Aerie at Eagle Landing
10220 SE Causey Ave., Happy Valley, 97086
After losing their daughter, Hayden, her family started a non-profit foundation that helps pay the hospital bills after the birth of a stillborn baby.
More information and tickets at:
www.haydenshelpinghands.com

Brief Encounters Remembrance Walk

Saturday, October 12th, 10:00 am
Peace House 2116 NE 18th Ave, Portland 97212
As part of Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month, we will join in community as we walk from the Peace House to the Wishing Tree. We will hang our wishes on the tree, listen to readings, and support each other as we remember our children together. Refreshments provided. Suggested donation of $20 per family. Children welcome. All proceeds go directly to Brief Encounters.

From your editors...

When I began compiling the comments made in our Facebook groups on this topic, the raw, fresh grief of the first few months came flooding back. I vividly recall the cutting comments that were made about how "it wasn't meant to be" or the quick change of subject that would come out of nowhere. Many of the do's and don'ts that parents contributed are ones that are all too familiar. I wish we didn't have to be the ones to educate those around us, but, sadly, this often falls on our shoulders. I hope that this issue might be one you can give to your friends, family, and caregivers. More so, I hope that they will stretch outside their comfort zones to give you what you need. And when it feels like the world doesn't "get it," know that Brief Encounters and our community loves you... and your baby.

Nicole Keeler and Laura Klyzek
Mothers of Braxton, Claire, and their siblings

Upcoming newsletter topic...

SEPTEMBER: EARLY PREGNANCY LOSS
The moment we learn we are pregnant, we start planning a new life. A life that includes a child. Baby showers begin to be planned, we take better care of ourselves in order to nourish the life inside, and we are filled with joy and excitement. And then... there's no heartbeat. Or we begin bleeding. The life we imagined is torn into pieces. We mourn our baby no matter how short a time we carried him or her and the trauma of an early pregnancy loss can affect us long after. This month, tell us the story of your baby and how having an early loss has affected your life. Please share your story by August 15th via email to: newsletter@briefencounters.org or comment on the early loss submissions post in our Facebook groups. (Please note that September's issue will be sent via email.)

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

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
Chair: Rachel Murfitt
Co-Chair: OPEN
Advisor: Pat Schwiebert, RN
Treasurer: Sandy Faber
Secretary: Laura Klyzek
Database Manager: Megan Wright
Newsletter Editors: Nicole Keeler and Laura Klyzek
Web Site Manager: Lucas Klyzek
Members at Large: OPEN

MEETING AND PHONE FACILITATORS
Daniele Riehl, Pat Schwiebert, Heather Smith, Megan Wright, Shannon Stemm Patel, Laura Klyzek

HOSPITAL LIAISONS
Rachel Murfitt

BOARD MEETINGS
Board meetings are conducted monthly each third Monday at Sunnyside Community House, 3520 SE Yamhill, Portland. Those interested in volunteering are welcome to attend. Please email inquiries to RachelM@briefencounters.org.

LOVE GIFTS
Love Gift submission form available on page 6. For Love Gifts to be acknowledged in a specific newsletter issue, we must receive it by the 10th of the prior month.

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.

What I Need: Submissions from Bereaved Parents

After a call for submissions in our Facebook groups, comments came flooding in with the Do's and Don'ts that we wish those around us knew; what we needed or didn't need after the loss of our precious baby(ies). If a bereaved parent has gifted you this issue, please take these to heart. They need you to show up for them right now.

Do's

Be there when invited. Be gracious when you aren't.

Be understanding when I'm not ready for big groups or holidays or baby showers or first birthday parties. Be encouraging when I try.

Listen. Cry with me. Laugh with me, too.

Be real. Platitudes won't make me feel better.

Apologize when you know you said the wrong thing, even if it is years later.

Bring meals and treats. Bring paints or magazines or a journal. Walk with me. Sit with me.

Remember with us. Keep checking in. Say our baby's name. Send a card months later. Let us know when you think of our baby. Bring flowers or balloons to our baby's spot. Reach out to us on our baby's anniversary.

Let me know that you still love me even though I'm different now than I used to be. I miss my old self too, but maybe this new self isn't so bad either.

Help in practical ways. Call the formula people and ask them to stop sending me packages that make me cry. Unsubscribe me from the baby e-mails that are clogging my inbox. Return the Pack-n-Play and be the one to argue with Babies R Us when they don't want to return it.

Let us keep our nursery just as it was or help us take it down. Be supportive of our decision.

Encourage me to talk to a counselor or find a friend who understands or go to a support group. It is so nice to not feel like the only one.

Do be happy for us if we get pregnant again. Remember it does not fix us and that it is terrifying. Be hopeful and helpful.

Listen, be there, speak my child's name. Visit and contribute to (or start) a meal train. Be a FRIEND. If you don't know how to help... just be there.

Bring food or anything else that is thoughtful and offer to leave it on the porch if I'm not feeling up to talking.

Say my baby's name and talk about him/her openly. Ask questions. Let me talk without changing the subject.

Send just a quick text to tell me you are there and thinking about me. Don't expect a response. I might not feel up for it. Keep doing it anyway.

Do something nice in remembrance of my child.

Continue to let us know you're thinking about us on my baby's birthday/anniversary- even if it's years later.

Attend the funeral, if invited and just be there, no matter how uncomfortable and even if you don't know what to say.

Drop off pads, Preparation H wipes- things I need following delivery of my baby. My body needs to heal and be comforted. Leave it on the porch and text me that it's there.

Try to be willing to sit beside me in the heaviness and discomfort of grief.

Tell me it's OK to grieve for as long as I feel I need to and not to let anyone else stipulate when I should be "over" the loss & moving on.

Tell me to be gentle with myself. Nap if needed. That it's OK to want to be alone, or not be alone - it's my choice.

Acknowledge our babies. They existed, they lived, they're still our babies. And they matter. Show kindness, empathy, and that you care.

Tell us you're sorry we are having to go through this pain, grief, and loss.

Show support, check in, send a care package, drop off a meal. These are all very needed and accepted in this time.

Love us. Love our baby.

Continued on page 6

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©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.

This month, we thank the following donors for their generosity and love:

In loving memory of **Emma Claire Prins** donated by her grandparents, Phil and Lori Prins. We love you
sweet Emma.

"Love each other dearly always.
There is scarcely anything else in the world but that:
to love one another."
- Victor Hugo

Love Gift Donation Form

*** To donate via PayPal, go to briefencounters.org and click on the PayPal link.**

Enclosed is a donation of: $
In memory of:

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:

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

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.

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.

What I need: Submissions from Bereaved Parents
Continued from page 3

Don’ts

Don't tell me it's for the best or everything happens for a reason or God is in control or tell me they are “in a better place” or time heals all wounds. Platitudes don’t help me.

Don’t compare your own loss to mine as if it's a contest for who gets to grieve longer or who should be grieving harder. A loss is a loss regardless of how far along someone is in their pregnancy or how old their child is.

Don’t tear down the nursery without consent of the grieving parents. It is not easier to come home to a half-dismantled nursery that catches you off guard.

Don't ask, “How does it feel to be the mother/father of a dead child?”

Don’t tell me how to grieve or what I should be doing.

Don’t complain about anything really, especially your children. Complaints seem trivial to me right now because I’ve experienced the most horrific thing I could ever imagine.

Don’t compare my loss to your experience or someone else’s experience.

Don’t tell me that I will get over it.

Don’t say how good it is to hear me laugh or that you’re so glad I’m feeling better after I smile, laugh, or make a joke. I can be sad and happy at the same time.

Don’t tell us to have another child or to try again.

Don't make it about yourself. Keep it about us and the baby.

Don’t let the fear of needing the perfect words keep you from saying anything.

Don’t rush me.

Don’t expect me to act like myself and don’t tell me you miss the old me.

Don’t change the subject.

Don’t forget about my partner. He/she is grieving, too.

Don't promise to bring a meal and then never follow through.

Don’t push me to give away stored milk right away. Give me an option to help find someone to take it when I’m ready.

Don’t disappear. Show up for me. Even if you’re uncomfortable. Especially after the first couple of months when most people around me are forgetting.

Don't pretend nothing happened.

Don't say: "Well, maybe your child would have grown up to be a horrible person and, in this way, you were spared that.”

Don’t be afraid to bring it up because you don’t want to upset us- it’s comforting knowing someone else remembers.

Don’t tell me anything that begins with “at least.”

Don’t take things personally if we break plans, flake often, are angry, or flustered easily.

Don’t assume that I am ready to be around babies or children yet- even months or years later. Always ask or give me a heads up that babies or children will be present at a function. Let me make the choice.

Don’t be offended if I can never go to another baby shower again. Offer to shop for the gift and take it for me.

Don’t judge. At all. Everyone grieves differently and grief changes minute by minute in the first few years. I may still have a sense of humor on my darkest days. It doesn’t mean I don’t wish that I died instead of my baby.

Don’t assume that if I’ve now had a living baby, my child who died has been replaced and I’m just fine now. I am still grieving. And my child can never be replaced.

Don’t be afraid to talk about it with me or just hold space with me and listen.

Don’t ask if it’s “*My Baby’s Name* Stuff” that is making me sad. My baby isn’t “stuff.” My baby is my child.

Don’t leave once the dust settles... that’s when you’re needed most.

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
August 12, September 9
Contact: Rachel Murfitt (RachelM@briefencounters.org)

This group also meets the fourth Tuesday of each month, 7:00pm
August 27, September 24
Contact: Daniele (DanieleR@briefencounters.org)

PARENTS WHO HAVE ENDED A WANTED PREGNANCY 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
August 22, September 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
August 26, September 23
Contact: Heather (HeatherS@briefencounters.org)

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

~ Safe Arrival ~

Clara Oliver Goodwin

Born safely on June 4th

Clara joins her brothers Eli and Wyatt at home with parents Annabelle and Ben Goodwin.

Big brothers Charlie and Oliver stay close in spirit and memory.

♥

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.motherootscounseling.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 motherootscounseling.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
- ♥ Audrianna J. Gurr, MS, NCC, SE Portland 503-522-6327
  www.gurrtherapy.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

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ACTION REQUIRED

See Page 1 for Details

Brief Encounters

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Portland, OR 97212

Message Phone: 503-699-8006
Web: briefencounters.org
Email: info@briefencounters.org
Find us on Facebook

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→ FINAL IN-PRINT ISSUE! ACTION NEEDED! ←

* Newsletter Transitioning to Digital September 2019 *

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Change of Address or Removal from Mailing List

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

UPCOMING MEETINGS

See page 7 for a detailed schedule

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