



Babylove Moments Jewelry features the unique and precious footprints of your child, presented in the form of solid fourteen karat gold pendants, charms, cufflinks, and tie tacs. Each and every piece of Babylove Moments Jewelry is handmade by local Indiana artist Christine Timberlake, who considers it an honor and privilege to create unique and lasting pieces of wearable art, inspired by the beautiful footprints of each precious child. To learn more about Babylove Moments, please visit www.buybabylove.com.



An Angel Passed This Way

By Helen Puskarich

This poem was written in memory of all babies who have died and is dedicated to their families.

An angel passed this way today,
a child of love and grace...
With tiny features and hair like silk,
and a small angelic face.

Lying within a mother's womb,
a tiny beating heart...
Unaware that from this life,
you would soon depart.

In an instant you were gone from here,
adrift on gossamer wings...
To an eternal place of glory,
where choirs of cherubs sing.

A precious child of God,
cherished and loved by all...
Who left this life so quietly
to answer heaven's call.
Your presence can be felt
in a gentle summer breeze,
and heard in the whispers
of falling autumn leaves.

In the stillness of the falling snow,
that a winter's eve will bring...
Hope and faith will sustain us
as we journey into spring.

Seasons will pass, and our spirits shall rise
as we go from day to day...
And love will abide forever in our hearts,
because an angel passed this way.

Notes From Open Arms



Community Health Network offers a support group every 3rd Thursday of each month from 7 to 9 pm. You may join us in the Professional Building Conference Room A located at 7250 Clearvista Pkwy. Please contact Joni Cutshaw at (317) 621-5275 with any questions or additional needs. Call us or email us if you no longer want to receive a newsletter.

This newsletter is a support group in print offering resources, articles, stories and poems from caregivers, grief educators, authors and most importantly, from the community.

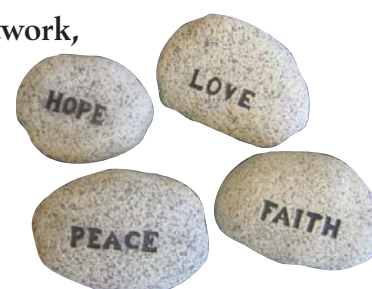
You will find information that has been requested by your peers and information that others would like to share. If you have any questions, comments or news to share, we encourage you to do so.

Please contact the editor, Joni Cutshaw at jcutshaw@eCommunity.com or (317) 621-5275.

Indianapolis Pregnancy Loss Support Groups

Reservations are not required. There is no fee.

Community Health Network, North Campus
7250 Clearvista Pkwy.
Professional Building
Conference Room A
7:00 to 9:00 p.m.
3rd Thursday of every month;
Contact: Joni Cutshaw at (317) 621-5275



St. Vincent Hospital, North West Campus
New Hope, 8450 N. Payne Road
7:00 to 10:00 p.m.
First Thursday of every month
Contact: Sharon Mason or Cathy Carroll at (317) 415-7494

St. Francis Hospital, South Campus
3145 E. Thomson Road
Carson Square Community Relations Room
7:00 to 9:00 p.m.
Second Tuesday of every month
Contact: Marcia Jenkins at (317) 865-5199

Heart Prints Support Group
An invitation has been extended to all bereaved parents to join a bereavement support group called "Heart Prints" at Holy Spirit at Geist Church. The group meets every last Tuesday of every month at 7pm. For more information, please call Kristy at (317) 823-5603 or Sandy at (317) 570-2397.

INSIDE: Holiday Memorial Service Invitation

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Holiday Memorial
Service Invitation

Maternity Services/Open Arms
7150 Clearvista Drive
Indianapolis, IN 46256



WINTER 2008

OpenArms

Pregnancy Loss Support Newsletter

Reflections of Noah

By: Melissa Smurdon in loving memory of Noah Gabriel Smurdon, born September 20, 2007; passed June 14, 2008

This morning, a little bit of sun snuck through the clouds and fog to warm my feet and heart. Just as quickly as I noticed it and smiled, it moved away again.

That's how I feel right now about my life. A little sun creeps in now and again, probably every day if I think about it. A note or calls from friends, genuine laughter, a butterfly flitting along beside me on a walk: those things are my sunshine. My clouds are grief and loss, a broken heart and aching arms.

Not long ago was the day that should have been my son's first birthday. My long awaited first and only child. I was thrilled to be a mom. Now I am supposed to go on without him. What is a mother to do whose child is no longer here with her?

Midway through our pregnancy we learned our baby had trisomy 18 and spina bifida. The doctors said his condition was "incompatible with life" and "there is nothing you can do to change the outcome." While that ultimately is true, I believe prayer changed our path. A little boy not supposed to survive a week. An enormous group of people praying we would get to meet him. A baby with so many problems predicted who surprised even the doctors.

Our Noah grew and thrived. He shared big smiles and twinkling eyes. He grinned when his daddy or I said "good morning" and said "goo" in the most precious voice imaginable. He had his struggles, but he overcame so much. We made many special memories with

him, feeling truly blessed for each day.

Sadly, we had to say goodbye to Noah in June. He was just a week shy of nine months old.

Noah means peace. His middle name, Gabriel, means strength. I can't imagine a more fitting name. When he looked into your eyes, it was if he saw into your soul. I know. He and I spent countless hours gazing lovingly at one another. Friends wanted to come see and hold Noah. I called him "my little Zen baby" because he exuded such love and peace. And he fought such odds stacked against him. He was an amazing little boy!

Noah taught me so much. I experienced unconditional love and saw firsthand how prayer works. His daddy and I shared our walk freely and have witnessed that Noah touched so many lives. One little boy fulfilling his life purpose without question or reservation. A precious gift from God. A monumental walk of faith. Lives forever changed.

So I write and I remember. And the sun starts to shine again.



Special Ways to Honor Your Baby During the Holidays

- ♥ Light a candle every day as a silent reminder of your beautiful baby, or share special thoughts with someone close while the candle burns. You may want to light four candles: one for memories, one for courage, one for love, one for grief
- ♥ Buy flowers for your church or synagogue
- ♥ Write a poem or letter to your baby
- ♥ Hang a stocking in remembrance of the baby and invite family to place notes in the stocking and read them during a special time
- ♥ Buy a special ornament and place it on the tree
- ♥ Donate a favorite pregnancy loss book to your local library in your baby's name
- ♥ Visit the grave site and take flowers or decorate
- ♥ Attend memorial services
- ♥ Name a star
- ♥ Call an organization for children and shower a needy child with gifts in your baby's name
- ♥ Some special organization ideas:
 - Angel Tree www.angeltree.org
 - Operation Christmas Child (*Heritage Christian School is a drop off location starting November 10th*)
 - Toys for Tots www.toysfortots.org
 - My Two front Teeth www.mytwofrontteeth.org

SURVIVAL PLAN for the holidays

- If you shop, go early in the day when it is not so busy
- Let family shop for you
- Minimize family traditions unless they are a comfort to you
- Give yourself time to cry if you feel like crying
- Be aware there can be many triggers for crying and they can hit at any time
- Give your spouse a code word and prepare an excuse to leave an event if it is too hard
- Bake those cookies only if you want to
- Don't feel guilty if you are not be able to send cards this year
- Share your feelings with family and friends because they may have no idea what it is like for you
- Take care of your health
- Minimize your alcohol and sugar intake
- Don't feel guilty if you enjoy yourself, your baby would want you to

You may be someone who has dearly loved the holidays and plan for them throughout the year. Stores are preparing for the holiday season and others are filled with the spirit of joy. Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas and the New Year are supposed to be "happy" times. This can be a very hard time when your heart is broken. We offer some suggestions to help during this time. Take care of yourself and may the season bring you peace.

*You and your family are invited
to attend the annual*



CHRISTMAS MEMORIAL SERVICE

Thursday, December 4, 2008 / 7:00 p.m.
Ellenberger United Church of Christ

*5520 East 10th Street, Indianapolis, IN 46219
(located at the corner of North Ritter Avenue and East 10th Street)*

Please detach and complete the RSVP/Memory card below and return



*"To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything and your heart
will certainly be wrung and possibly broken."*

- C.S. Lewis



*"The two greatest emotions that you can experience
in life are love and grief."*

- Chuck Lammert

Open Arms Open Chat

Bulletin Board of news to know and share!

- Please consider coming to at least one **Open Arms Support Group** to see if it might benefit you. Support Group is on the third Thursday of each month.
- You can keep in contact with other families who have experienced a pregnancy loss on our bereavement blog from our website www.ecommunity.com/openarms.
- **Share Your Story** - We are looking for stories or poems that you have created in memory of your baby to print in the newsletter. It is the hope of Open Arms that this newsletter becomes the voice of the community. As a community, we would like to hear of your "safe arrivals." Please contact us with your news so that we can celebrate with you and your new baby. If you have news to share, comments or resources that you have found helpful, please contact Joni at jcustshaw@eCommunity.com or at (317) 621-5275.

Book Review and Online Resources

Mothers in Sympathy and Support - Miss - www.missfoundation.org
Support for the whole family!

Subsequent Pregnancy after a Loss-SPALS - www.spals.com
A discussion list for persons considering a subsequent pregnancy after a loss

Compassionate Friends
www.compassionatefriends.org
Support for families that have lost a child at any age

Grieving the Child I Never Knew: a Devotional Companion for Comfort in the Loss of Your Unborn or Newly Born Child, by Kathe Wunnenberg

Handling the Holidays, by Bruce Conley

Aromatherapy: Clinical Aromatherapy can be used to promote wellbeing and relive anxiety, emotional stress, and aid coping with grief through the use of essential oils. If you would like to learn more about our clinical aromatherapy services, please contact Pam Conrad, RN, clinical aromatherapist at Wellspring Pharmacy, located in the gallery of Community Hospital North. Pam can be reached at www.ecommunity.com/openarms.

Books and resources available online at www.ecommunity.com/openarms



Community Health Network
FOUNDATION

Community Health Network Foundation is proud to provide financial support for Open Arms. The Foundation is the not-for-profit philanthropic organization of Community Health Network. Proceeds support programs and services that benefit patients, families and employees of the network, while ensuring the exceptional experience. The foundation's philanthropic efforts, scholarship programs and promotion of healthy lifestyles inspire a culture of philanthropy throughout central Indiana. For more information about the foundation, or ways you can get involved, call 317-355-5261 or visit eCommunity.com/foundation.