



# Iowa SIDS Foundation

Support

Education

Hope

Volume 15, Issue 3

Fall 2006

## From My Perspective

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The death of a child changes a person. I have been irrevocably changed since the death of my son, Brenden, to SIDS. It happened in the early morning of October 9, 2003 when he was only 18 days old. They say life can change in an instant, but it seems unbelievable until it happens to you. In one moment my life shattered. My family and I were left to pick up the pieces of what my husband and I had said, only the day before, was a perfect life.

Brenden was our last child — a little of a surprise, but a welcome one. We had three children at home already. I had just started my first semester of nursing school when I became pregnant, but my husband and I were excited all the same. Future goals, plans and timelines were adjusted to meet our surprise. When Brenden arrived prematurely, our plans were abruptly changed. It was another adjustment and we rolled with the punches. Brenden came home from the NICU and our family was complete.

Then the bottom fell out. The most unthinkable thing happened. I lost my son and my life in one horrific moment. I became lost, confused, hurt, angry, and scared. In a word, I had to learn how to *survive* this loss. I survived the last few years and I continue to survive.

Fear and anger is a constant companion after the death of a child. Fear and anger crowd out so many of the more healing emotions, taking the space that love would normally occupy. I had to find a way to get beyond these emotions. For me, that meant I stayed really busy the first year after Brenden died. It was not difficult, after all I needed to go back to nursing school and finish what I had started. I was afraid if I did not keep moving forward I would stop and never start again. This is a common fear after losing a child.

My life had become a study in going through the motions. I had not died like my child, but my life was limited to minimal functioning. I got up in the morning to begin my daily routine. I took the medication the doctor had subscribed for my grief-induced depression. I continued to mother my children in all the necessary ways. I went to school. But I was a shell of the happy, bubbly woman I had once been. I could no longer believe that everything in life was going to be alright just because I was a good person. I had gone to church, prayed every day, volunteered for charity and cared about my fellow man. I had been a good wife, mother and daughter. I fit none of the criteria, in my mind, that warranted this punishment from the universe. And I had no idea of how to deal with this change in my paradigm.

There are no easy or logical steps to the grieving process, and for me that became

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## From My Perspective

*(Continued from page 1)*

difficult and confusing. My initial strategy was to continue things as they were. But I stubbornly learned this was not working. I needed to learn to ask for help. I found that I could not go through grief by myself. I was not a person who typically asked for help. I had always been self-sufficient and did not depend on other people. Realizing I needed help was the most important step on my journey of healing.

That help came in the form of going to conferences and camps for grieving families, talking to other bereaved parents, and simply asking for help. I learned that another parent could be my best help because that parent had been there and understood. I could handle comments like, “you’re wallowing in pity,” because I respected the fact they had been there also. . I could let them sympathize or be tough with me. At times, I became angry with them, only to realize my anger was not with those who were trying to help me. I was just angry—angry at the world. But, I could be less angry with someone who had also lost a child. They had been where I was. Other people who were grieving understood what I was feeling better than someone who had not lost a child.

Another way to help with my grief came in a more unusual way. I could not find anything that was helping on a day-to-day. I began seeking complimentary therapies such a Reiki (an energy healing modality used in the US), aromatherapy and massage. Although they are not commonly suggested in dealing with grief, each one of these techniques was a help towards my learning to trust life again.

Reiki was the biggest part for me during my journey. Reiki taps into the energy that exists in all living things. It helps restore balance and harmony in our spiritual field, creating increased relaxation and feelings of well being. An imbalance or blockage of this field can result in disease on the physical, mental, emotional or spiritual level. Reiki helped me to start to restore balance in my life and health, and reconnect with my spirituality and faith (light), a very important tool for my healing and something I had lost with the death of my child.

The combined complementary therapies helped me to relax and taught me about the importance of living in love and light, not fear. Fear crowded my other emotions and left nothing for others, even in the best of times. I could not be complete when I was in such a negative space in my life. These therapies helped me to start refueling and become cognitive of my surroundings. As I healed my energy, I found that I was able to put fear and anger into perspective. I then began having room again for my family’s needs. I found that what I had been longing for was right there when I knew how to reach for it. It had been there all along, even though so much of the time I had felt like it was lost.

My life will always have a hole in it. I will always be missing one of my family members, one who had such potential and no chance to live it out. I am learning to accept these changes in my life. I am now a Reiki Master, giving treatments and teaching others the techniques I have used for myself. I take my life one day at a time and try to be kind to myself each day. It is not always easy, but I try. Life does go on. Complementary therapies have helped me in this journey to recovery.

The death of a child is very difficult for anyone, and how one reacts to grief is very personal. Each person copes and learns to survive differently. To you who are grieving, do not fear to reach out for help and explore all avenues of healing on the journey back.

- Submitted by Cathy Meinecke, mother of Brenden (9/21/2003-10/9/2003)

*The combined  
complimentary therapies ...  
taught me about the  
importance of living in love  
and light, not fear.*

## Remembering Our Babies

### Happy Birthday

#### January

Justice Marie Ruthann Newsom

#### February

Grant Philip Evans  
Kenneth Edward Giffin

#### March

Kelly Pitts  
Benjamin James Swanson

#### April

Ryan Mouglin  
Tianna J'Nae Purk  
Andrew Jay "A.J." VanDerSchaaf

### In Memoriam

#### January

Hailey Erin Lincoln  
Cody James Beck  
Robin Carrell Beimer

#### February

Ross "Rosco" Jacob McGlothlen

#### March

Robby Matthew Miller  
Nathaniel Charles Seymour

#### April

Kenneth Edward Giffin



To include your baby, please send the following information via email ([info@iowasids.org](mailto:info@iowasids.org)), phone (515-279-6928), or mail: Your name(s); baby's name as you would like it listed; baby's birthday (M/D/Y); baby's death anniversary (M/D/Y)

Please indicate if you would like us to recognize your baby's birthday, death anniversary, or both.

We will continue to recognize your baby each year after unless you contact us.

## Thank You... See You Soon

It is with great sadness and great joy that I will resign my position as Executive Director at the end of this year. This is the most rewarding job in my life so far, and it is hard to leave. However, I will be beginning another rewarding position as stay-at-home mom to our two growing sons.

The mission of the Iowa SIDS Foundation was already important to my family and me well before I took this position, and it will always be important to us. I look forward to continuing my relationship with the people of this organization as a volunteer. So, instead of goodbye, I'll say, "See you soon," —at the conference, at a Walk for the Future or in some other place where I hope our paths will cross.

The Foundation is very fortunate to have the support of a strong board of directors. I am confident that the work we have done together will not end, but rather grow into new ideas and endeavors. The search for my replacement is underway. I look forward to following where a new director will lead us!

I want to take this opportunity to say thank you. Thank you for sharing your stories with me. Thank you for teaching me how very priceless our children are. Thank you for showing me how to live life with hope. And, most of all, thank you for allowing your babies' lives to touch and forever change me. —With warm regards, *Ingrid Stukerjungen*

**Now accepting applications for Executive Director position: Deadline Dec. 7—**  
call 515-965-7655 or email [info@iowasids.org](mailto:info@iowasids.org) for a job description.

## Walk for the Future 2006 Wrap-Up

The seventh annual Walk For The Future was held on Saturday, August 26 in Albia, Cedar Rapids, Keswick, the Quad Cities and West Des Moines. It was a soggy day in some locations, so we are even more thankful to walkers who came out in those conditions.

There were around 700 participants across the state. The event raised nearly \$46,000 of which over \$10,000 came from generous corporate donations. The following amounts were raised at the various locations the day of the walk:

Albia	\$ 1,165	Quad Cities:	\$ 8,017
Cedar Rapids:	\$12,330	West Des Moines:	\$ 6,790
Keswick:	\$ 4,045		

Thanks to all of the participants and volunteers for making this event so successful!

Special thanks to the following walk coordinators for their hard work:

Dawn Maughan in Albia, Tricia Borelli and Jodi Greene in Cedar Rapids, Ann Danner in Keswick, Betsy VanDerSchaaf and Jenny Atzen in the Quad Cities and Delaine and Gary Marker in West Des Moines...And to the many volunteers who faithfully gave their time, whether this was your first year or your seventh!

We also thank Megan Beenblossom for designing our walk t-shirts again this year.

Please read our Memorials and Donations section on page 5 to recognize our kind corporate contributors.



## Holidays can be "For the Birds"

Approaching a holiday and other landmark dates after losing a baby is not easy. It is your right to choose how and if you will celebrate any holiday.

Some parents find it helps to do something special to honor their child's memory. For instance, one family buys a toy for a needy child. Another family keeps a candle burning during the anniversary of their baby's death.

And another family makes a bird seed cake to honor their child's birthday. Together, the family takes the cake to the cemetery and leaves it for the birds to enjoy.

Here is their recipe:

- 1 C shortening
- 1 C peanut butter

Unsalted peanuts and bird seed

Line 9x9 cake pan or bundt pan with plastic wrap. Melt shortening slowly. Add peanut butter and stir. Remove from heat and stir in bird seed and peanuts until consistency of very thick, lumpy cake batter. Spoon into cake pan and spread evenly. Cool 24 hours or freeze. Remove pan and plastic wrap.

No matter how you choose to recognize the holidays, as you move through this time and into another year, may you find peace.



## Save the Date! Conference and Memorial 2007

Mark your calendar! The Iowa SIDS Foundation and SIDS of Illinois are teaming up to host a conference for childcare and healthcare professionals and families as well as a memorial.

**Friday, April 20:** Professional Conference; **Saturday, April 21:** Family Conference

The memorial event will be held either Friday evening or Saturday afternoon. More details will follow soon!

## Quick Takes

### Donating through your employer

Many work places recently held their annual United Way campaign. The Iowa SIDS Foundation can be designated as the recipient of your United Way donation. If you participate in this campaign at your workplace, please consider designating the Iowa SIDS Foundation as an organization to receive your donation by writing in the organization name and address on your form.

We appreciate those of you who have chosen

to donate to the fight against SIDS in the past, and we thank those of you who have already designated the Iowa SIDS Foundation to receive your 2007 United Way or other employer-sponsored gift.

**Did you know?** The Iowa SIDS Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Many employers have programs where they match employee donations to a non-profit. Check with your employer today and make your donation go further!

## Memorials and Donations

The Iowa SIDS Foundation thanks the following individuals for their generous donations. These donations were received as of November 16, 2006.

### In Memory Of

#### Elizabeth Atzen

Aaron and Cynthia Erndt  
Michelle Hunt  
Ronald Hunt

#### Nate Borelli

Tammy Armbrust Family  
Alice Carr  
Barbara Klein  
Jayne McGrath  
Brett and Elizabeth Papendick  
Dave Storey family  
Tim and Debbie Weber

#### Ryan Burris

Jeff and Jill Jost

#### Allison Elliott

Betty Elliott

#### Alex Thomas Marker

Gary and Delaine Marker

#### Kathryn McGrath, great-grandmother of Nate Borelli

John and Pat Bystry  
Friends at Goodwill Industries

#### Ryan Mougins

Frank and Vivian Mougins  
Richard and Jane Gent

#### Samantha Alina Parks

Max and Patricia Ridenour

#### Edmund Pezolt

Norman and Adela Pezolt

#### Zach VanVleet

Jeri L. Henry

### General Donations

Heidi Burton  
Scott R. Frost  
Jennifer and Richard Head  
Tim and Jodi Hoskins  
Modern Woodmen of America  
Robert and Grace Scammell  
Richard VanVleet



## Walk for the Future Corporate Contributors

Thank you to our corporate sponsors:

### \$1,000 or More

Friends of Albia Restoration Days  
Grinnell Mutual Reinsurance Company  
Panera Bread Company of Iowa  
Wal-Mart  
Wellmark BlueCross  
BlueShield of Iowa  
Wells Fargo

### \$500

Aegon  
East Moline Glass Co.  
Genesis Health System  
J&R Construction  
Mercy Birthplace  
Pediatric Center, P.C.  
Quality Plus Feeds  
Therapy Solutions

### \$250

Bankers Trust  
Builders Sand and Cement Co.

Dickens Consulting & Construction  
Merchants Bonding Company  
Pat McGrath Chevyland  
Valley Bank  
Valley Construction Co.

### Other

Group O Companies

### Media Sponsor

The Gazette

## SIDS Support Group Meetings

**Des Moines** group meets the second Tuesday of every month from 7-9 p.m. in the Kelley Room at Iowa Methodist Medical Center, 1200 Pleasant St. (basement level, past the cafeteria). For information call Carol at 515-223-1600.

**Quad Cities** group meets every month, second or third week Wednesday or Thursday at 7:00 p.m. For information call Betsy 563-332-6265.

**Cedar Falls** group meets as requested by appointment. Call Roxanne Novak at 319-277-3476 for information.

**Knoxville** group meets as requested by appointment. Call Lori Howard 641-828-6515 for information.

**Cedar Rapids/Iowa City** group meets as requested by appointment. Call Tricia Borelli at

319-398-6795 for information.

**Washington** group will meet the second Tuesday, of each month from 7-8:30 p.m. at St. James Catholic Church basement. For information about meetings, please call Karen Swanson at 641-472-0898.

**Clarion** group meets as requested by appointment. Call 1-800-944-1713 and ask for Cheryl.

### PEER CONTACT SUPPORT

If you are a bereaved parent, grandparent or family member and would like additional peer contact individuals who are willing to listen, feel free to call:

Karen Swanson (641) 472-0898  
Gary Marker (Grandparent) (515)285-2605

## Other Resources

### Serving all of Iowa

Amanda The Panda Support Groups (ages 6-17) – Children and families meet in a group with a therapist for 6-8 weeks periodically during winter, spring and summer months. Weekend camps. Family “Fun Days.” Pen Pal Program. No charge. Chat line and bulletin board on website. [www.amandathepanda.org](http://www.amandathepanda.org) 1000 73rd Suite 12, Des Moines, IA 50311-1321. 515-223-4847.

Camp Amanda (for grieving children, teens, young adults and families) – Children’s grief camp held 3 times a year for 40 kids ages 6-17. Adult camps also held 3 times a year. College-age camp held once a year. No charge. 1000 73rd St. Suite 12, Des Moines, IA 50311-1321. 515-223-4847.

Teen Line – A statewide hotline that offers counseling and education 24 hours a day, seven days a week. 800-443-8336.

### Des Moines Area

Compassionate Friends -Meets the first Tuesday of each month at Hamilton’s on Westown Parkway, 3601 Westown Parkway, West Des Moines, 7:00-9:00 p.m. Contact Anne at 515-276-7302.

Empty Arms - Meets along with Compassionate Friends, the first Tuesday of each month. See above. Contact 226-3143.

### Cedar Rapids Area

Compassionate Friends – Meets at Mercy Medical Center, McKinley Room the second Monday of the month from 7:30-9 p.m. 319-626-6246.

Empty Arms – Meets the third Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m. in the formal lounge of St. Luke’s Hospital Resource Center. 319-369-7347.

Grieving and Growing Support Group – Mercy Medical Center Hospice. Open to youths up to age 14. Six sessions offered in the spring and fall. 319-398-6496.

### Iowa City Area

Compassionate Friends – Meets on the first Monday of each month (in the case of a holiday – the second Monday) at 7:00 p.m. in the First Floor conference room at Mercy Hospital, 500 E. Market St. 319-351-2255.

### Lake City Area

H.U.G.S. Support group for Children – For children 5-15 years old. One-on-one support for children who have experienced a death loss. For registration, contact Community Hospice, Stewart Memorial Community Hospital, 1301 West Main, Lake City, IA 51449. 800-262-2614.

### Manchester Area

Regional Medical Center Grief Support Group – Support group for adults grieving the loss of a loved one. Meets the first Wednesday of each month at 4:00 p.m. at the Regional Medical Center of Northwest Iowa and Delaware County, conference Room B, 709 W. Main St. Please check in advance as time is subject to change. 319-927-7330.

### Mason City Area

Understanding Grief & Loss Support Group – A six-session grief support group held periodically throughout the year to provide education and support for anyone affected by a death. Free of charge. Offered by Hospice of North Iowa. 232 2nd St. SE. 641-422-6208.

### Nevada Area

Bereavement Support Group – For adults experiencing loss through death. Call St. Patrick’s Catholic Church for more information. Daytime-515-382-2974, Evenings-515-382-2539.

### Pella Area

Empty Cradle Program – Sponsored by Hospice of Pella to provide emotional support and educational materials to families who have experienced the death of a baby due to miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, stillbirth, SIDS and early infant loss. Services include support groups, individual counseling, keepsake box and newsletters. Empty Cradle educates the general public and medical professionals in the area of pregnancy loss and newborn death. Hospice of Pella, 414 Jefferson. 641-628-6644.

## HOPE Woman's T-shirt Order Form



### Order One Today!

Women's light blue t-shirt

Logo is bright yellow star with bright blue lettering

T-shirt says "hope" through the star and "iowa sids foundation" is in small lettering under the star

Women's Sizes XSmall through 2XL available

\$20.00 each

**Make Checks Payable To:** Iowa SIDS Foundation

**Mail to:** Iowa SIDS Foundation

406 SW School St., Ste. 205

Ankeny, IA 50023

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Woman's Size:** \_\_\_ XS \_\_\_ S \_\_\_ M \_\_\_ L \_\_\_ XL \_\_\_ XXL

**Total Shirts Ordered:** \_\_\_\_\_ x \$20= \_\_\_\_\_

**Shipping:** + \$3.00

**Total Due:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Shop and Support the Iowa SIDS Foundation



**Forever In Our Hearts**  
Light Purple  
Silicone Bracelet



**P. Buckley Moss**  
**Heavenly Babe**  
12"x13" unframed  
Limited Edition Print

Order Form	Quantity	Subtotal
Bracelet \$3 X	_____ =	_____
Moss Print \$70 X	_____ =	_____
		<b>TOTAL: \$ _____</b>

Your Shipping Address:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ ST \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Mail Check and Order Form to:

**Iowa SIDS Foundation**, 406 SW School St., Ste 205, Ankeny, IA 50023 — or purchase them online at [www.iowasids.org/products/products.htm](http://www.iowasids.org/products/products.htm)



## Iowa SIDS Foundation

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### In This Issue...

Wrapping up Walk for the Future 2006... Honoring your Baby during the Holidays...

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Ingrid Stukerjurgan

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### *Iowa SIDS Foundation*

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515-279-6928  
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Email: [info@iowasids.org](mailto:info@iowasids.org)  
Web: [www.iowasids.org](http://www.iowasids.org)

### **Our Mission**

The Iowa Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Foundation is a statewide, non-profit, voluntary health organization dedicated to providing emotional support to SIDS families, educating professionals and the general public about SIDS, and funding medical research into the causes of SIDS.