



# The Hygeia Newsletter

Issue No. 3, Fall 2010

## In Honor of Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day: *A Service of Remembrance*

All are welcome to attend a service to honor children who have passed away due to miscarriage, stillbirth, or death soon after birth

**The High Plains Community Center Gazebo**

**525 Orange Center Road in Orange, CT**

**Thursday, October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2010**

**6:30 pm**

*In case of rain, the ceremony will be held inside the Senior Center at the same address*

**If you would like the name(s) of your child(ren) to be read during the ceremony, please contact Rachel Steigleder at [rsteigs@optonline.net](mailto:rsteigs@optonline.net) or 203-891-0969**

*The mission of the Hygeia Foundation is to comfort those who grieve the loss of a pregnancy or newborn child. Hygeia provides programs to educate, counsel, and support families who have lost a pregnancy or newborn child, to advocate for the health care of women and children worldwide, and to promote humanism in the education of tomorrow's health care professionals.*

## Remembrance

*by Rachel Steigleder*

I am a mom to four children: two are with us here on earth and two were taken away too soon. In 2000, my husband and I were expecting twins, Hannah and Michael. We received sad news in the 22<sup>nd</sup> week of my pregnancy that Hannah had no heartbeat. We were devastated; however we had to think of our son. Things progressed as a normal pregnancy until my 26<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy when we again had bad news. I was in pre-term labor and brought to Yale-New Haven Hospital. Fortunately they were able to stop my labor, however, two days later because of complications I needed to deliver Michael. He lived 14 hours. His lungs were not developed and he was too sick to put up a good fight. We had to make the hardest decision ever: we had to take him off life support. Michael spent his last 45 minutes in our arms where

*continued on page 2*

## Remembrance *continued from page 1*

he died peacefully. It is not a story that I ever thought I would be telling but I do. I do it to help other mothers and fathers know that they are not alone in their grief and to let others know I am proud of all my children.

In 1988, then-President Ronald Reagan proclaimed October National Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness month. October 15<sup>th</sup> is recognized as Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day. On October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2010, The Orange Park and Recreation Commission will honor, for a ninth year, my request to let parents and their friends and families gather for Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day. We will gather at the Gazebo at the High Plains Community Center (525 Orange Center Road, Orange, CT) at 6:30 pm.

This ceremony will be in honor of all those babies who died too soon. I have learned in losing Hannah and Michael that it is families who have experienced a loss of a baby who understand most. The event is more than a sad evening. Nationally, the grieving moms who are putting together this night are hoping to support, educate, and inform those who have lost a baby and their families about loss, to show them they are not alone. For many years, a pregnancy or newborn loss was not spoken of, but today you will find it is so common and mothers need to talk about the life and dreams that they lost. A pregnancy or newborn loss is different from other types of loss in that it is not the years of memories we look back to but the years of memories we will never be able to create.

I hope that you will join me and many other parents in remembering our children at the ceremony. Every life deserves to be remembered. ♦

### A Passage of Time

*by Michele Burlakoff, as spoken at the Yale-New Haven Hospital Night of Remembrance on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2010*

Memories flash back to me, as if it were yesterday. A decade ago my husband and I were sitting in the same seat as you. A decade ago we were plagued with despair, knowing our first child had died and induced delivery was taking place in my ninth month of pregnancy, not knowing why or how this could happen and too scared to ask what to expect. Seven hours seemed like an eternity. Upon my delivery my fears of what I would see turned to tears as I held the most beautiful baby girl. Her name is Rachael. A cord death was surmised with no supporting conclusive evidence.

To bury your child and say goodbye in a physical sense is monumental. The journey has been spiritually soul-stretching. Rachael has etched my soul and will live through me, as I now am a bereavement meeting facilitator for the Hygeia Foundation. You are not alone in this journey.

Within the timeline of ten years, my perspective on Life has changed, an awareness has been awakened. I have accepted there are in life unanswered questions and inconsolable answers.

GOD has blessed me with two other children, Hannah and Dillon, who show me the way to happiness and the pleasures of love.

I pray for each and every one of you to find your inner strength as you travel your journey...GOD BLESS YOU. ♦

# A Cookbook for Grieving Parents

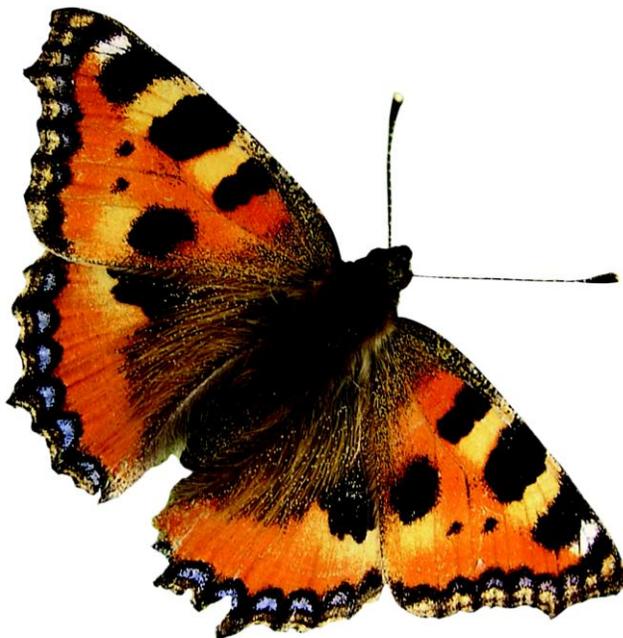
*an invitation from Laura Russo*

After the death of our daughter, Francesca Eve, in April 2009, at 25 weeks gestation, I have at times been drawn to cooking comfort food. Through some of our darkest days (not all...many times I couldn't even think about eating, let alone try to lift a finger to make something), I poured my heart and tears into cooking something that my husband and I could come together over, talk, and try to enjoy. Nurturing my husband through food was my way of expressing my mommy instincts that my body and mind were preparing me for 6.5 months to trust. At times it became healing as it allowed my mind to wander and I was *mostly* focused on the task at hand. I am not an expert chef (not even close) and my recipes never come out the same way twice, but, nevertheless, they work for us. We love the aromas in the house of food being prepared; it seems so cozy and inviting. I love the look in my husband's eye when he tastes something he really enjoys....His moment of small happiness means mountains to me. If it weren't for him being my rock during the worst hours of our lives, I don't know what would be left of me.

I now would like to create a cookbook for grieving parents. I welcome everyone to send me one or two recipes and, if you would like, an idea for the cookbook name or a quotation, poem, prayer, etc., that you have found some comfort in or has some meaning to you. You are welcome to share anything about your babies that you want. I will compile everything I receive into a cookbook that can then be given to bereaved parents.

If you would like to submit a recipe, or if you have questions about this project, please e-mail me, [Laura Russo](mailto:LJD142@aol.com), at [LJD142@aol.com](mailto:LJD142@aol.com)

I look forward to sharing recipes and comfort with all of you. ♦



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*Assistant Editor:* Mark Chartier

*Submission deadline for the  
next issue:*

**DECEMBER 15, 2010**

# In Support of Hygeia

## *The Hygeia Foundation Burial Fund*

One important aspect of Hygeia's work is maintaining The Hygeia Foundation Burial Fund. The loss of a pregnancy or newborn can be not only emotionally devastating, but financially devastating, as well. Families sometimes find that on top of their medical bills and missed wages due to time away from work, they simply do not have the money to bury their children. Trying to come up with the necessary money for the burial while in the midst of overwhelming grief is a task no parent should ever have to face.

The Hygeia Foundation Burial Fund assists needy families in the greater New Haven area respectfully bury their children. Families are referred to us by social workers at Yale-New Haven Hospital or at the Hospital of St. Raphael. After arranging to provide financial support, we send our monetary assistance directly to the appropriate funeral homes, where it is applied directly to the cost of the burials.

We are pleased to announce that we are the recipients of a generous gift from **James M. Shure and the Robert E. Shure, Inc., Funeral Home of New Haven, CT**, in support of our Burial Fund. Mr. Shure has pledged an annual donation of \$1000 to the Fund, beginning this year. His financial support will help an untold number of grieving families for years to come. We are tremendously grateful and honored to have Mr. Shure's support.

Our hope in highlighting Mr. Shure's gift is that others will be inspired to donate to the Burial Fund so we may help an even greater number of families at a time of great need. Please contact us at **1-800-893-9198** or at **info@hygeiafoundation.org** if you would like to learn more about the Burial Fund and/or make a donation. ♦

### *Volunteer Opportunity Spotlight:* **Grant Writing**

Do you enjoy conducting online research? Do you have strong writing skills? If you said yes to either, please consider helping to research and/or write grant applications on behalf of Hygeia. We need help compiling information about and data for various grants, as well as with writing the actual applications. No prior experience with grant writing is necessary - we will provide you with whatever training and assistance you might need. If you are interested in lending a hand, please contact us at **1-800-893-9198** or **info@hygeiafoundation.org**.

**Hygeia needs you.** If you would like to plan your own special event to benefit Hygeia, please contact us at **info@hygeiafoundation.org** or **1-800-893-9198**.

Here are some fundraising ideas you might consider, both big and small:

- Host a luncheon - collect donations at the door and/or auction goods and services donated by local businesses.
- Hold a tag sale and/or a bake sale.
- Put out donation boxes at local businesses.
- Musicians: Perform a benefit concert.
- Runners: Ask people to sponsor you during your next race by donating to Hygeia.
- Artists and crafters: Sell your work to benefit Hygeia.

## Support Group Meetings

Below, please find the schedule of our free support group meetings. Dates and times are subject to change, so **please check the current schedule at [www.hygeiafoundation.org](http://www.hygeiafoundation.org) prior to each meeting.**

### *Pregnancy and Infant Loss Groups*

Parents who have lost a pregnancy or newborn soon after birth, no matter when the loss occurred, are welcome to attend. Feel free to come to multiple meetings each month.

Second Wednesday of the month *and*

Third Monday of the month

7:00 – 8:30 pm

Hygeia Foundation

264 Amity Road, Suite 211

Woodbridge, CT 06525

Third Thursday of the month

7:00 – 8:30 pm

Women and Family Life Center

96 Fair Street

Guilford, CT 06437

Fourth Monday of the month

7:30 – 9:00 pm

Saugatuck Congregational Church

245 Post Road East

Westport, CT 06880

\*Please RSVP to 1-800-893-9198 if you plan on attending a meeting in Westport.

### *Subsequent Pregnancy Group*

Bereaved parents who are trying to conceive (or thinking about trying to conceive) and parents who are pregnant are encouraged to attend this group.

First Monday of the month

7:00 – 8:30 pm

Hygeia Foundation

264 Amity Road, Suite 211

Woodbridge, CT 06525

### *Parenting After a Loss Group*

This group addresses the concerns of parents who have lost a pregnancy or newborn and who have living children at home. Babies and children are welcome at meetings.

Second Saturday of the month

11:00 am – 12:30 pm

Hygeia Foundation

264 Amity Road, Suite 211

Woodbridge, CT 06525

## *In Memoriam*

Contact us at [info@hygeiafoundation.org](mailto:info@hygeiafoundation.org) if you would like to honor a baby who has passed away.

*Zachary Sage Emil Petkovich* – November 12, 2005

Parents Jennifer Rosenzweig and Geoffrey Petkovich

In memory of *Victoria Rose Songhurst*, daughter of Lacey and Jeff Songhurst, born asleep at 35 ½ weeks on February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2010

Our three angels:

*Jonathan Daniel Begej, Alexander James Begej, and*

*Matthew Stewart Begej* – June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2010

Parents Daniel and Marianne Begej

## **The Cord**

*Author Unknown*

We are connected, my child and I,  
By an invisible cord not seen by the eye.

It's not like the cord that connects us 'till birth.  
This cord can't be seen by any on earth.

This cord does its work right from the start.  
It binds us together, attached to my heart.

I know it's there, though no one can see,  
This invisible cord, from my child to me.

The strength of this cord is hard to describe.  
It can't be destroyed, it can't be denied.

It's stronger than any cord man could create.  
It withstands the test, can hold any weight.

And though you are gone, you're not here with  
me,

The cord is still there, but no one can see.

It pulls at my heart, I am bruised, I am sore,  
But this cord is my lifeline as never before.

I am thankful that G-d connects us this way,  
A MOTHER and CHILD...Death can't take this  
away!!

**The Hygeia Foundation, Inc.**  
264 Amity Road, Suite 211  
Woodbridge, CT 06525  
1-800-893-9198  
[www.hygeiafoundation.org](http://www.hygeiafoundation.org)  
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## MAKE A SUBMISSION TO THE HYGEIA NEWSLETTER

Would you like to contribute something to the Hygeia Newsletter? We welcome original essays, articles, poetry, photographs, and artwork, along with submissions to our "In Memoriam" and "Safe Arrivals" sections. In addition, if you are planning a fundraiser or event to benefit Hygeia or to raise awareness of pregnancy and infant loss, please contact us in advance so we may feature your event in the newsletter. After the event, we would be happy to publish photographs of the event, along with a list of thank yous.

All newsletter submissions and/or questions about the newsletter may be sent to [info@hygeiafoundation.org](mailto:info@hygeiafoundation.org).

## *\$14 for 14 Years*

Since its founding, Hygeia has become the most enduring program – both online and off – of compassion, empathy, and support pertaining to pregnancy and newborn loss. Many of you have come to Hygeia seeking information, comfort, and support when no other support was available to you when your baby died. Providing this support has always been my commitment and Hygeia's mission.

We are now completing our 14<sup>th</sup> year and we still provide support to bereaved parents locally, nationally, and internationally. We are, however, in need of financial support so we may continue to help families who grieve the loss of a pregnancy or newborn child. Help us to continue our work.

If you feel that you have benefited from Hygeia,

**please consider making at least a \$14 donation  
– 14 dollars for 14 years –  
at [www.hygeiafoundation.org/donations](http://www.hygeiafoundation.org/donations)**

You may also send a check to:

**Hygeia Foundation  
P.O. Box 3943  
New Haven, CT 06525**

Thank you in advance for your generosity.

Michael R. Berman, M.D.  
Founder and President  
Hygeia Foundation, Inc.