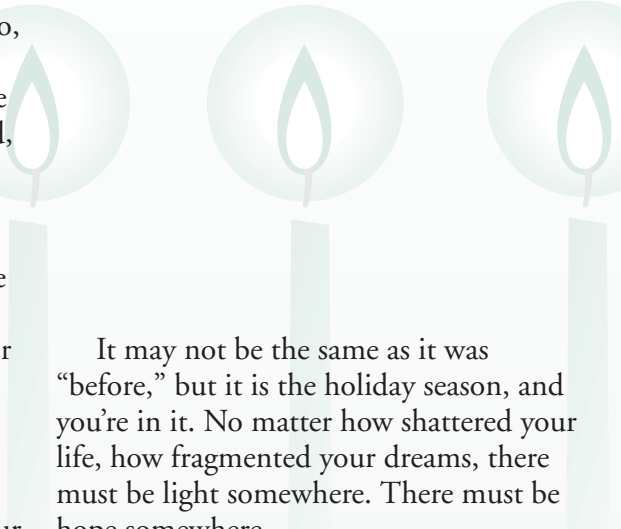


Tinsel and tears

Facing the holidays can be one of the most challenging and torturous experiences the bereaved must endure. Television, radio, movies, newspapers and magazines constantly reinforce the notion that during the holiday season families are blissfully united, sorrows and strife are forgotten, joy by the minute is the order of the day and there is truly “peace on earth, goodwill toward men.” A commercial designed to tug at the heartstrings with nostalgia and holiday spirit can be an arrow through the heart for millions of families who have a loved one who won’t be home for this or any other holiday, now or ever.

Maybe nothing seems quite right in your house or in your heart this season. Can you ever be happy again? Will the sights and sounds of the holiday season ever touch you again? Will the emptiness always be this big? No. Nothing stays the same, not even in grief.

Just as soon as you figure out how to get through one day, another day arrives ... with challenges and obstacles. What helps one day may not even touch the pain of the next, so be patient with yourself. Know that hardly anyone you see is as happy as you think they are. We all have our hurts to hide. Do what you can this season, and let it be enough. But whatever you do, try not to lose the holiday completely.



It may not be the same as it was “before,” but it is the holiday season, and you’re in it. No matter how shattered your life, how fragmented your dreams, there must be light somewhere. There must be hope somewhere.

Our loved ones were and still are a part of us. We cannot lose their love.

As long as we know there is joy someplace, then we know it will come to us again – and to you. We just have to hang on tight and believe. Believe in whatever you choose, but at least light a candle this holiday season. Remember the joy that used to light your heart. Light a candle for hope, for remembrance. No matter where you are or which holiday it is for you, light a candle for love. It is the greatest gift of all.

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www.idcw.org

It's not fair

By Cecilia Clayton, Newton, N.J.

"It's not fair!" How many of us have heard that and said that? When said by a young child, it is usually accompanied by tears, foot stomping and anger. What is really being said is, "Something in my world is not as I would have it to be. Something in my world is not as I expected and hoped it would be. Something in my world is wrong. Something in my world needs to be fixed and I want it fixed now."

Sound vaguely familiar? It's not fair. When a young child cries in frustration about the unfairness of his world, we can take it as an opportunity to offer a lesson in life. We can help, fix, negotiate, investigate, manipulate and try our best to restore "fairness." Or, when all else fails, as it often will, we can use the opportunity to instruct in the unfairness of the world and teach a lesson in coping and understanding. Some do have more toys than others, some are allowed to cross streets and others are not. Some are able to ride bicycles and others must walk. Some can go to the park and others must play in the yard. Small issues that are big problems to a youngster, but usually "workable" to an outcome that at least brings some satisfaction.

Life doesn't always stay quite so simple, though. We get older, our issues get bigger, harder to deal with, have

a greater impact on our lives. It's not fair! Again, what is being said is, "Something in my world is not as I would like it to be. Something in my world is not as I expected and hoped it would be. Something in my world is wrong. Something in my world needs to be fixed, and I want it fixed now."

But there are events that occur in our lives that are beyond our control. Indeed, at times, they are beyond our imagining. They are un-resolvable and finite. There isn't a lot of room for negotiation or manipulation and things sometimes can't be "fixed" to our satisfaction. There are things that are beyond our ability to restore to an acceptable level of fairness. "It's not fair." Everyone who utters that phrase is totally, completely, 100 percent correct. It's not fair. The world is not a fair place.

So, we cry out in frustration and fear. We lash out in anger and hurt. We unleash emotions that are alive with a power we never knew we possessed. We will search incessantly, desperately hoping that we will find a way to make everything right. We rage against all who try to tell us that we "just have to understand." There is no understanding that will bring us the peace we long for and restore our world to what it once was. Now, the lesson we really learn is that "it's not fair."

continued on Page 4

Suggestions for New Year's resolutions

Below are some suggestions you may wish to consider for New Year's resolutions to help you as you enter the coming year.

- * Try not to imagine the future – take one day at a time.
- * Allow yourself time to cry alone, as well as with your loved ones.
- * Don't shut out family and friends from your thoughts and feelings. Share these difficult times.
- * Make plans firm enough to support you, but flexible enough to change if they do not feel right as the day or event gets closer.
- * Make sure your plans are your own. Don't worry about what others think. You and your family must be comfortable with them.
- * Be realistic about your expectations – of yourself, your spouse, other family members and friends.
- * Relish good days, don't feel guilty and don't be discouraged because it doesn't last – it will come again and multiply.
- * Take care of your health. Eat nutritious foods, get moderate exercise, drink a lot of water and rest. Help your mind and body heal.
- * Keep a journal to see your progress through grief.
- * Do something to help someone else in memory of your child. In doing this your child will live through you.
- * Be kind to yourself – give yourself permission to have quiet time.
- * Reach out to others who are grieving, share your feelings and let them share with you. ❖

It's not fair continued from Page 2

Life is full of experiences that we will never fully understand, and yet we are charged with the awesome challenge of creating within ourselves an understanding of how to make these experiences a part of our lives. How does the parent of a child with crippling disabilities come to believe that the world can be a safe place? How does the parent of a dying child come to an understanding of the meaning of life? How does the parent of a child who has died come to learn how to keep on living? How does the spouse who is now "single" after 50 years of marriage or five years of marriage, come to gain comfort

in the knowledge of love everlasting? How does a young child understand that Mom or Dad will not be there to answer questions or hold a grandchild? How can a brother or sister reconcile within themselves the knowledge that the only other person who shared their unique relationship, with whom the growing years were truly the beginning of growth, will not share any more memories?

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The emptiness
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fragments of hope.*

It's not fair, and yet we must find the strength to bring balance and trust back into our world – a world resonating with lost innocence – pulsing with the tremendous knowledge of pain unimaginable. No, it's not fair, and we must all readily admit this fact. To offer platitudes of comfort, to try to create fairness where none exists, is only denying the reality of the situation.

The first step in understanding will come from the true acknowledgement that fairness is a code that we create in our minds, not the law of nature we think we know. There is fairness in the destruction of the pinecone by the heat of a raging fire that destroys the growth of trees and allows the sun to shine on the earth

so the seed that was released can create new growth. Yes, there is fairness there, but what we see is total, complete, overwhelming destruction. We are not capable, in the moment, of seeing the final outcome.

There are events in our own lives, and in those whom we love, that are those times of destruction. We cannot know what is to come of this. Actually, we are trying so hard initially just to survive that looking at a final outcome, looking at the future, is not even within our capabilities. What we see looming in our future is more of what we have now – darkness, emptiness and despair. Gradually, though, the darkness is pierced by slivers of light. The emptiness begins to hold wisps of peace and the despair gives way to the tiniest fragments of hope.

There always is the dawn, but it should be remembered that not every night is bound by the same hours, and not every dawn comes to us in identical intensity. There are blazes of glory that spring quickly through the darkness, illuminating the land with perfect clarity, offering warmth that spreads readily through the cold. But there also is the dawn that breaks slowly with vague penetrations of light, barely burning the morning (mourning) tears of dew from a land that is struggling to bring forth life.

This is the world in which we live and the life that we share. We are all connected in this life that is filled with the unfairness of pain, grief, loneliness and hardships. But also a life that is filled with the caring of strangers, the love of friendships, the joys that spring unbidden when we are again able to see the triumphs that result from the struggles. It's not fair, but it is what we have.

Always remember that when the journey is calm on your side, it might be turmoil on another's side. Therein lies the opportunity to bring some balance by offering our peace to another, to help another in the struggles of life. Fair enough?

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Random thoughts

By Cecelia T. Perciballi-Clayton, Newton, N.J.

Do you know what you have taught me? Do you know what I have learned? Do you know how you have changed me? Do you know how I go on?

There are incredible voids in life. There comes an overwhelming sadness. There are the tremendous gifts of love and of sharing. There are the deepest pains of loss and suffering.

I have learned that I see more with an open heart than with open eyes, and it is when I feel like I have hit the bottom, that I find the roots and foundations that hold me together. When it looks like I have gone nowhere, I find myself in unknown territory. When I am too tired to go further, somehow I am guided to a new beginning and the distance between the flames of a bonfire and the stars that dance among the pine trees is nothing.

The God I thought I knew is not the one whom I have come to know. More can be accomplished in remaining still than in all the movement I might try. A moment can seem an eternity, and a lifetime is never long enough.

Love does more than endure, love becomes the strength that keeps some alive. I can love beyond the physical and feel comforted by love that is no longer spoken. I hear clearly words that are unspoken and am guided by wisdom from beyond. When I think I am ready, I find that I have more to learn.

Tears will never stop, and memories are never forgotten; laughter can happen; peace can reign. Darkness provides illumination and light can be blinding. Passion never leaves us, it merely changes form.

Friends can mean well and hurt deeply, and strangers understand what they don't know. When I open my arms for a hug, and no one steps in, then I must remember how to love myself, and I am capable of doing so.

I cannot take away another's pain, I can only allow myself to be present with the pain. I can only encourage the desire to do so. I cannot convince another that it will be better, only that it will be different. The most difficult thing to do is to do nothing ... more is spoken with silence than with words.

I still get angry and annoyed, but I now know the worst that can happen – until the next time – and so I try to let the “little things” slide away. I am more patient and more kind, less tolerant of ignorance, but more willing to understand.

I know that I cannot change the world, but I can change the world of an individual who is lost. What I was so sure of is no longer, and things that I thought I forgot now come back to me as truths. True reality is not tangible and often not logical. When I least want to participate in life, life presents me with the most beautiful gifts. There are gifts that I give that I never knew I possessed, and gifts I receive come

unexpectedly and without ribbons or bows.

Sometimes life seems unfair and unjust, yet it is all we have to work with. Sometimes it feels like it is too much effort to go on living, yet to give up is betrayal. Courage takes many forms, and to be “strong” can seem so very weak.

Pain strengthens, love heals, life is, sharing helps, the source of peace is in turmoil, joys surprise us, there is more, there is different, there is the legacy that nurtures, there is hope.

These are the random thoughts of a griever, a lover, a helper, a teacher, a student and a friend.

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Center and satellite summaries

U P D A T E

Infant Death Center and South/ Southeastern Region

Anne Harvieux: (414) 266-2746
Vivian Jackson: (414) 266-2745

Educational programs

Oct. 5 - Creating Smoke Free Environments.

This now is available for viewing on the state Web site, <http://media1.wi.gov/dhfs/viewer/>.

The purpose of the program is to give providers evidence-based strategies to assist their patients in smoking cessation.

Informational exhibits

July 8 - Beloit Wisconsin Gospel Fest.

Aug. 19 - Milwaukee Urban League Back to School Fair.

Aug. 26 - Beloit Wisconsin Informational Exhibit at Farmers Market.

Sept. 18 - Milwaukee Back to School Fair South Division High School.

Other

In recognition of October as Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Awareness Month, safe sleep information was sent to churches in targeted areas of Milwaukee and Beloit to share with their congregations through church bulletins, bulletin boards and for use by parish nurses. The packet included information on statistics and risk reduction.

Staff participated in the City Match Conference in Providence, R.I., on Health Disparities.

Oct. 1 - Staff participated in the Walk to Remember and Kite Fly, Milwaukee Lake Park Pavilion.

June 8 - Southern/Southeastern Regional Advisory Council meeting.

June 23 and Nov. 17 - Statewide council meeting.

Collaborations

The Center continues to be involved with:

- Association of SIDS and Infant Mortality Program Professionals.
- Black Health Coalition.
- Community Health Improvement Project.
- Dane County Child Fatality Review Team.

- Fetal Concerns Program.
- Great Lakes Intertribal Council Honoring our Children Project.
- Healthy Babies in Wisconsin Steering Committee and Regional Action Teams.
- La Causa.
- March of Dimes.
- Milwaukee Area Hospital collaborative.
- Milwaukee Birthing Project.
- Milwaukee County Child Fatality Review Team.
- Milwaukee Fetal Infant Mortality Review Project.
- Milwaukee Healthy Beginnings Steering Committee, Data Evaluation Committee and Consortium.
- Milwaukee Tobacco Free Task Force and Faith Based Community Health Committee, Black Health Coalition.
- Racine County Death Review Team.
- Spanish Center of Kenosha.
- State of Wisconsin Bureau of Health Information.
- State of Wisconsin Division of Public Health.
- Supporting First Time Parents.
- Waukesha County Child Fatality Review Team.
- Wisconsin Association for Perinatal Care.
- Wisconsin Child Care Resource and Referral Network.
- Wisconsin Early Childhood Association.
- Wisconsin Maternal and Child Health Coalition.
- Wisconsin Public Health Association.

Northern/Western Region

Dora Gorski: (715) 843-1877

Educational programs

Aug. 22 - Display and presentation at the Public Health Nurse conference, Stevens Point, Wis.

Oct. 20 - High school presentation on SIDS - Revised curriculum.

Informational exhibits

First Wednesday of the month - New Beginnings Birthing Center, open house, Aspirus Hospital, Wausau, Wis.

June 29 - Women, Infant and Children conference, Appleton, Wis.

Support to families

The Support After Infant Death group meets the second Thursday of every month at Children's Service Society in Wausau, Wis.

Other

June 27, Aug. 8 and Sept. 26 - Coordinator's staff meetings.

June 30 and Sept. 29 - Great Lakes Intertribal Council Honoring Our Children Program Advisory Committee - Lac du Flambeau, Wis.

July 6 - Child Fatality Review team meeting, Marathon County.

Sept. 18 - Western Community Council meeting.

Sept. 19 - Healthy Babies Steering Committee meeting.

Oct. 11 - Western Region Healthy Babies Action Team meeting, Eau Claire, Wis.

Oct. 25 - Northern Region Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Transitions meeting, Wausau, Wis.

Nov. 6 - Northern Region Community Council meeting, Wausau, Wis.

Nov. 20 - Western Region Community Council meeting.

Dec. 12 - Healthy Babies Steering Committee meeting.

Northeastern Region

Anne Harvieux: (414) 266-2746

Educational programs

Sept. 7 - March of Dimes/Association of Women's Health and Neonatal Nurses Prematurity Summit.

Other

Aug. 2 and Oct. 18 - Regional Community Council meeting, Neenah, Wis.

Collaborations

The Northeast Regional office continues to be involved with:

- The Center for Grieving Children.
- Hispanic Interagency Council.
- Hmong Interagency Council.
- Northeast Healthy Babies in Wisconsin Regional Action Team.

Infant Death Center of Wisconsin:

Working to improve infant health

Last year, we told you about the expansion of our prevention work to meet our goal of working to improve infant health and reduce racial and ethnic disparities in infant mortality. In this issue, the Infant Death Center of Wisconsin is introducing a tagline to our logo, "Working to improve infant health."

IDCW has become more active in prevention and wants that focus to be reflected in our logo. We maintained our name because it is important to remind our communities that babies are dying and families are grieving the loss of their precious children. We want everyone to be aware that this is a problem not generally acknowledged by communities.

Research has provided more information on infant mortality and new strategies have been identified to reduce the number of babies dying. Because of these advancements, it is vitally important to distribute information to the community in a meaningful way. In Wisconsin, we are working collaboratively with other programs and services to share information in a timely manner. Across the nation, bereavement programs now are actively engaged in providing prevention information to their communities.

Our prevention work does not diminish our concern or commitment to families whose infants have died. We will continue to reach out to support bereaved families in their journeys through grief. ❖

Gifts

The Infant Death Center of Wisconsin thanks the following individuals for their generous donations in honor of someone or in memory of a special child.

These donations were received between June 1 – Sept 30, 2006.

Aurora Health Care

Ms. Carn M. Bade

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Baumler

Anne M. Harvieux

Ms. Judith Kubash

The Nurturing Nook

Mr. and Mrs. Donald E. Pagel

Mr. and Mrs. James A. Schoesser

Mr. and Mrs. James A. Weyek

In memory of

Erik Baumler

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Baumler

Justyce Braz

Ms. Carn M. Bade

Mr. and Mrs. James A. Schoesser

Carmela Ciofani

The Nurturing Nook

Starr A. Prokop

Ms. Judith Kubash

Cassidy Tiana Weyek

Mr. and Mrs. James A. Weyek

In memory

The Infant Death Center of Wisconsin lost a friend and colleague. On Oct. 15, John Teggatz, MD, passed away. He was a respected clinician, forensic pathologist and educator. Since 1994, he served on our Statewide Community Council and the Southern/Southeastern Regional Council. He was the deputy chief medical examiner for Milwaukee County and recently was an associate professor of pathology at the Medical College of Wisconsin. Dr. Teggatz's sensitivity to families and his ability to effectively communicate with them during times of crisis were well known. He will be missed. ❖

2006 Worldwide Candle Lighting

The 10th annual Worldwide Candle Lighting is Sunday, Dec. 10. Everyone, in every time zone around the world, is invited to light a candle in honor of all children who have died, so that their light may always shine.

As candles go out in one time zone, they will be lit in the next, creating a wave of light that will encircle the globe. Join the 24-hour memorial by lighting a candle, wherever you are, at 7 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 10. ❖

Wisconsin Perspectives is the newsletter of the Infant Death Center of Wisconsin. The goal of this newsletter is to provide information to help reduce infant deaths and improve infant health.

The Infant Death Center of Wisconsin is funded by Children's Hospital of Wisconsin and a MCH Title V Services Block Grant, through the Maternal Child Health Bureau of the Health Resources and Services Administration, Department of Health and Human Services.

If you are receiving this newsletter for the first time, it is because you have been referred to the center at Children's Hospital of Wisconsin. Please contact us at (414) 266-2743 if you wish to be removed from the mailing list. With any questions or comments about the program or newsletter, contact Anne Harvieux, program administrator, at (414) 266-2746 or aharvieux@chw.org.

To reach the center and the South/Southeastern regional office, contact Anne Harvieux at (414) 266-2746 or aharvieux@chw.org or Vivian Jackson at (414) 266-2745 or vjackson@chw.org. To reach the satellite center in Northern/Western Wisconsin, contact Dora Gorski at (715) 843-1877 or Dora.gorski@cssw.org. To reach the satellite center in Northeast Wisconsin, contact Anne Harvieux at (920) 969-7903 or aharvieux@chw.org.



Children's Hospital
of Wisconsin®

A member of Children's Hospital and Health System.

Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, Inc.
PO Box 1997
Milwaukee, WI 53201-0997

New arrivals:

Congratulations to the following families on their new additions:

Kaylee Hamann was born Feb. 23, 2005, to Cindy and Randall Hamann

Olivia Mayeshiba was born Sept. 28, to Kali and Gregory Mayeshiba.

Zane Frederick was born Oct. 20, to John and Karen Bullock.



If you would like your baby's birth announcement in the newsletter, contact the Infant Death Center satellite or central offices.

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