



In the Springtime of Your Grief

By Judi Fischer, Cleveland, Ohio

Spring has fragile beginnings: a tiny shoot of green that emerges from the cold earth, a hint of pastel against the brownish grass, a bud that awakens with the morning sun. Sometimes spring comes so quietly we almost miss it, but once it begins, it is impossible to ignore the daily growth and change. The morning sun brings sounds that were not there before. The breeze carries warmth that invites us to venture outside of ourselves. A promise is released with the budding and blossoming surrounding us. Hope emerges for the beginning of a new season, and change is in the air.

What we experience in the springtime of the year is what we can experience in the springtime of our grief. There is a growing radiance. The radiance is not just around us, it is within us. A gradual warming of the heart silences the chill of intense pain. The natural unfolding of the grief process moves gently to remind us that we will survive.

Life is changing, and growth emerges through the changes. The song of our hearts that seemed off key begins to experience a harmonious blend of the past and present. The songs of the birds invite us to join them in a celebration of new life. In the springtime of our grief, there can be a new song for us to sing. It will be a song we composed through the heartache of loss.

Optimism for a better day may awaken us one morning. Hearing laughter and discovering it is coming from within ourselves gives us promise for today. Dreams and hopes for a better tomorrow shine brightly with the morning sun.

Nature's spring palette
softly covers winter's
gloom with new life
and hope.

Haiku by Diantha Ain

Surviving the winter of our grief with the openness to embrace change is a decision to embrace loss and integrate its impact into the fabric of our lives. It can be a willingness to explore new possibilities that create a different landscape to behold. We can make a decision that we will begin to appreciate what we still have, not just focus on what is missing.

We will know when we have made that decision. Something buds; something opens. The harshness of winter is softened with new life and new growth. It is not something we can force, it is something that unfolds when the time is right. The springtime of grief arrives with no dramatic entrance and no flashing lights. The stillness of the beauty unfolds and captures our attention. It is happening around us, but it is also happening in us.

If spring already has crossed the path of your personal journey of grief, rejoice! But if the chill of winter remains in your heart, be encouraged; spring is on its way. Look for it, expect it, and it will be yours to experience around you and in you! ❖

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Stop, Look, Listen and Sit

By Darcie D. Sims, PhD, CGC, CHT, Louisville, Kentucky

When was the last time you did nothing? Do you ever just sit anymore? Do you ever just lie on your back in new-mown grass and watch the clouds dance by? Do you ever chase after butterflies, trying to give them a message to carry? Or dangle your toes in a pond or watch kids dash through a sprinkler?

Do you ever sit on a porch or patio and smell the grass, the flowers, the air? Do you even have a porch or patio, and do you know what sitting means? Do you own a rocking chair, and if so, when was the last time you rocked in it? Have you read a book that wasn't non-fiction or "technical" in the last 10 years, 10 months, 10 days?

Do you subscribe to magazines that serve only to decorate your coffee table or have you actually read one of them, cover to cover, in the last year? Is there a clock in every room and more than three calendars in your life? How many watches do you own? Has the refrigerator become the "message center" in your home? Do you have a cell phone, a fax machine, a pager, e-mail and call waiting? Do you have a home office and an office you go to? Do you have your sprinklers on a water timer, your lights on a night timer and your life on a Day-timer?

Does everyone in your life have a computer? How many computers are in your home? Do you write thank you notes via e-mail, and when was the last time you actually spoke to your best friend? Do you have a checkbook and a time worn cookbook or recipe box, or has your life become electronic? Is everything in your life computerized or supersized?

When was the last time you let a

popsicle melt inside your mouth or watched a caterpillar make its journey across the sidewalk? When was the last time you felt like soaking in a warm bath or standing in a steamy shower, mindless of the water bill? Are you on a fixed income both financially and emotionally?

When did you stop dreaming and start running? When did the world end and the nightmare begin? We're too busy or too tired or too hurt just to sit anymore. Sitting has become a lost art, cast aside in the modern, fast food, quick stop, e-mail, fax message world. Sitting has become a sin.

Dogs sit. Birds sit (well, perch). Babies sit. Kids sit. Grownups don't. Even if you used to sit, you probably gave it up as you joined the bereaved world. Sitting just becomes too painful. Sitting leads to thinking. Thinking leads to remembering. Remembering leads, too often, to tears and who needs those?

Sometimes, in our grief, we try to escape the hurt and the horrible by picking up the speed of our existence. We add activities, places to go and things to do, as if keeping busy will keep the hurt away. We run faster and faster, trying to outdistance the memories, the pain, the very thoughts that keep us connected to the horror of our loved one's death. If we stop too long, if we sit, we might begin to remember and to feel again, and what is there left to feel and remember except the hurt?

We become afraid of the dark, the daylight, the twilight and everything in between. We grow anxious for no particular reason. Our pulse quickens, our hands feel moist and our breath grows

short. If only we could have a heart attack and die! But even that wish seems to elude us, and we begin to realize we aren't going to die, but have to figure out how to live through all of this grief. It seems safer to keep moving.

We're not the only ones running, however. The whole world seems to have speeded up lately. Is everyone running to or from something? We seem to be chasing something or hiding from something. Half of the world seems to be too future-focused while the other half can't seem to let go of the past. "If only" and "what if" have become the watchwords of our culture.

We find ourselves wallowing in self pity and despair. We become caught in the web of grief, and it seems too hard to break the threads of hurt. I sometimes think we are afraid to break those threads, because we begin to fear that hurt is the only connection we still have with our loved ones. We get too focused on what we've lost to ever inventory or treasure what we had and still have. Sometimes we don't even look at the pictures because we only experience pain and renewed grief. Sometimes we miss what is because we only search for what was.

Grow quiet. Be still. Learn to listen. Begin to hear. Somewhere deep inside us is the one voice we never listen to. Somewhere deep within our beings are the answers to our fears, our prayers, our hopes. We spend so much time chasing after others' advice when the secret of survival lies right within ourselves. Scientists call it instinct. Some call it faith. I call it truth. Each species knows what it needs to survive, and

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By Ralph A. Franciosi, MD – *Franciosi is medical director of Pathology at Children's Hospital of Wisconsin and a professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at the Medical College of Wisconsin.*

Is there a fetal equivalent of SIDS?

I recently examined a stillborn that died suddenly and unexpectedly at 35 weeks gestation. An unexpected finding was absence of the arcuate nucleus (ARNC) in the brainstem.

Matturi and his colleagues first reported abnormalities in the ARNC in nine of 25 instances of unexpected late fetal death. They considered this abnormality a primary developmental defect and noted Hannah Kinney's work in SIDS which documented abnormalities in the arcuate nucleus.

Kinney and her colleagues proposed the triple risk model as an explanation for SIDS. The three factors that must coexist to result in SIDS are a vulnerable infant, a critical time period after birth (the first year of life) and environmental stressors.

The demonstration of an abnormality in the ARNC of a fetus suggests a relationship to SIDS. Is there an in-utero equivalent to SIDS? The answer to this question requires accurate postmortem examination of unexpected late fetal death.

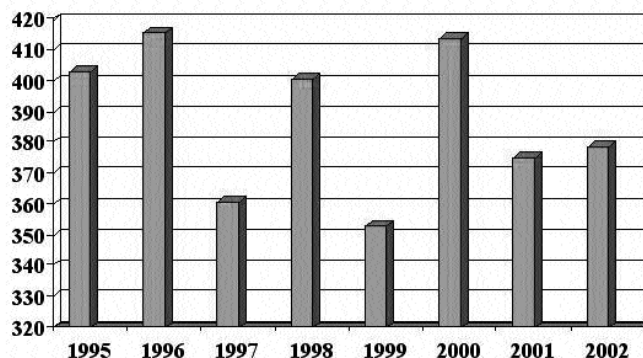
Unfortunately our knowledge is limited due to the lack of autopsies on fetuses. Additional research must be done to better understand the frequency and importance of this abnormality. By studying this we can learn how the fetus controls its environment and how the autonomic system functions during fetal development. We have not collected data on how the fetus responds to challenges and regulates blood gases. It has been assumed that this is regulated by the mother's body, but data is needed to confirm this assumption.

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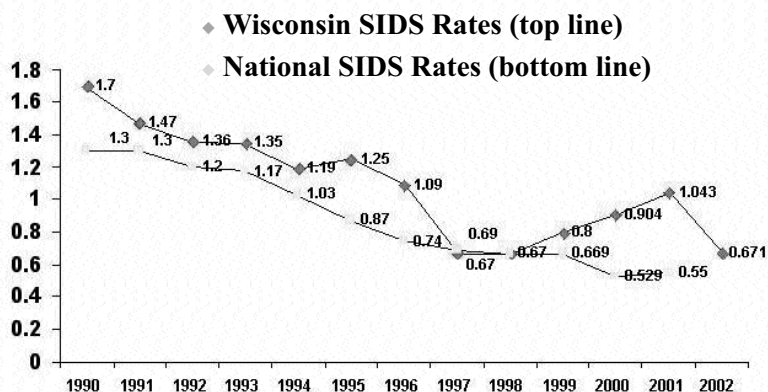
Pregnancy outcome facts in the United States:

1997	1998
6.2 million pregnancies	26,702 stillbirths
62% liveborn	28,371 infant deaths
22% miscarriages	
16% fetal deaths	

Fetal Deaths in Wisconsin



NATIONAL AND WISCONSIN SIDS RATES



Personal viewpoint continued from Page 2

only when we can come to the quietness of ourselves can we begin to hear.

We carry souvenirs of our hurts, each stored away until time to add them to the next hurt, thus piling up one hurt after another, all to be carried forever in our being. Each hurt adds a new layer to our outer shell and eventually we begin to resemble a rather large onion, made up of layer upon layer of hurt. These hurts have scars, some big, some small, but all significant in their pain. Each scar must have a place in our being, so we become a carefully organized mass of layers, each with a symbol or with some “stuff” that represents it.

I'm not sure an onion is the perfect example of grief, however. After sitting for some time and thinking about all of this, I have decided that an artichoke is a better image of me. When you peel an onion down, removing every single layer (hurt), all you end up with are tears. An artichoke, on the other hand, has layers like an onion, except each leaf (layer) has a tiny pricker on the end – just like life does. But when I peel an artichoke, removing each layer, when I finally get to the end, there's a heart. And that's right!

No matter how hurried I get, no matter how fast I run or how far away from the inner me I get, there is still a heart. Whatever hurt we are carrying begins to weave itself into our very beings and eventually becomes a part of our history – a part of us. It's in the heart that hurt is stored, but that also is where hope and healing begin.

So, sometime in your journey, take the time to just sit. Turn on the answering machine and run away – to within. Dance in daisy fields, wade in icy streams and blow bubbles in the afternoon. Don't get lost in the hurry of today, don't get too busy with “stuff” to cherish what is within you. Nothing is lost. It is all there, waiting for you to retrieve it, hold it, experience it again and then, to let it place itself wherever it needs to, within you. You lose nothing, although some things seem far away.

You don't stop loving someone just because they died, and you don't forget them just because you hurt a little less as healing begins to come. Finally, as you stop, look, listen and hear, the knowledge comes.

Even though death comes, love never goes away. Grow quiet. Sit a spell and reconnect to the magic, the wonder and the joy that dwells within. Trust me. You have it inside you. They loved us. We loved them. We still do.

Shhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh, love is trying to speak. ❖

Research continued from Page 3

The observation that the ARNC is abnormal in some fetuses will stimulate research into how the fetus responds to the in-utero environment. We have assumed the fetus is a passenger and depended on his or her mother to respond to challenges that would threaten the fetus' critical oxygen supply. As research uncovers new information about the neurobiology of the fetus this assumption may be false.

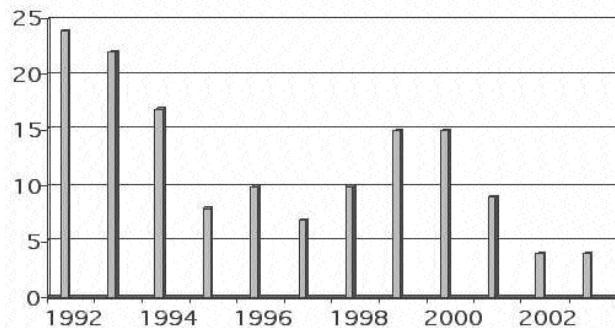
Fifty percent of stillborn deaths are unexplained. No significant funded national research program exists to study the problem of stillbirths.

References

Matturi L, et al. Hypoplasia of Medullary Arcuate Nucleus in Unexpected Late Fetal Death (Stillborn Infants): A Pathologic Study. *Pediatrics* 2002;109:1-5.

Kinney HC, Filiano JJ, White WF. The Medullary Serotonergic Network Deficiency Hypothesis In The Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. A Review Of A 15-Year Study Of A Single Database. *J Neuropathol Exp Neurol* 2001;60(3):228-247.

SIDS in Child Care in Wisconsin



Graph shows decrease in SIDS in child care rate

The graph above shows the incidence of SIDS after a statewide training of child care providers began the third quarter of 2001.

Upcoming events

The following families are planning upcoming events. We encourage you to save the date and support their efforts to provide financial support for the center:

Cassidy's SIDS Awareness Charity Bowl

1 p.m., Sunday, May 23

AMF Bowlaro, 117th and Burleigh. Come for an afternoon of friendship, bowling and great door prizes, including a grand prize for top donation collector. Bumper bowling available for families with young children. Registration fees are \$20 for individuals collecting donations (\$15 ages 7 and under) and \$35 for individuals not collecting donations. Registration fees include three games of bowling, shoes and a commemorative T-shirt. For more information, contact Cheryl Weyek at (262) 502-0128.

Registration deadline is April 30.

The Alexis Rose Mathison-Szozda (A.R.M.S.) Memorial Golf Outing,

9 a.m., August 7

Irish Springs Golf Course, Freedom Wis.

A \$320 fee per team includes 18 holes of golf, cart, food and refreshments. Four man scramble format. Limited to 36 foursomes. Raffle will be held during and after dinner. For more information, contact Romy Szozda at (920) 788-4666. ❖

“Seeds of hope” spring family conference March 26 and 27 – Wisconsin Dells, Wis.

The spring family bereavement conference, “Seeds of hope,” will be March 26 and 27 at Raintree Resort and Conference Center in Wisconsin Dells, Wis.

The planning committee includes parents from throughout the state.

Features include:

- Keynote speaker: Debbie Laurie Smith, bereaved parent.
- A chance to meet other families who are dealing with similar situations.
- Memorial program.
- Breakout sessions that provide an open forum for discussions.
- A program for adolescents: a chance for adolescents (age 10 and older) to share their grief if they choose.
- On-site child care.
- Free time: the planning committee encourages each person to take some quiet time during the conference to reflect, release stress and rejuvenate.
- Reduced-room rates at Raintree Resort and Conference Center. (\$65 a night).

Mission: The conference is intended to help families develop the skills to integrate the death of their infant into their lives. A number of alternatives are available to assist individuals and families in networking and developing their coping

skills. You are encouraged to take a break, take time for yourself, think, release stress or just relax.

Opportunity for consultation: Medical director, Ralph Franciosi, MD, will be available to meet with families by appointment to discuss questions and concerns. If interested, call the central office at (414) 266-2743 for an appointment or further information.

Cost: Adults \$15 each. Fee includes continental breakfast, lunch and conference. Children \$5 each for materials and child care.

More about the speaker: Laurie Smith is a bereaved parent who has shared her family's story at a national conference. She has incorporated their story in her work on death and dying following the death of her infant son Andrew.

More information: A mailing has been sent out, however, feel free to call for more information. If you have not received the mailing, call the central office at (414) 266-2743.

Fundraising kits now available

Many families consider fund raising for the Infant Death Center, but do not always know where to start. Children's Hospital and Health System Foundation, in collaboration with center staff, have developed a folder with information that can help you decide, plan and promote an event.

If you are considering a fund-raiser to benefit the Infant Death Center and would like a kit, call (414) 266-6197.

Center and satellite summaries

U P D A T E

Infant Death Center and South/Southeastern Region

Anne Harvieux: (414) 266-2746 or
Larry Uglow: (414) 266-2745

Educational programs

Presentations on SIDS, risk reduction strategies, grief/loss issues and services provided by the Infant Death Center of Wisconsin were given on:

- Oct. 1 – 16th Street Clinic, Milwaukee
- Oct. 3 – Outreach Training, Janesville
- Oct. 23 – Grief Presentation, Madison
- Dec. 3 – Outreach Worker Training, Waukesha (Parish Nurses)
- Dec. 5 – Paramedic Training, Milwaukee
- Jan. 12 – Port Washington High School
- Jan. 13 – Foster parent training, Madison
- Jan. 14 – Outreach Worker Training, (Ho-Chunk)
- Jan. 30 – Infant Mortality, Medical College of Wisconsin
- Feb. 10 – Bureau of Child Welfare, Milwaukee
- Feb. 12 – Mom and Me Support Group, Kenosha
- March 13 – Metro Childcare Conference, Milwaukee
- March 30 – Prematurity Lecture by Karla Damus

Informational exhibits

March 9 – Fulfilling the Promise: Home Visitor and Parent Educators

Programs for families

A support group for families meets at 7 p.m. every fourth Tuesday of the month at Children's Hospital of Wisconsin. For more information, call Larry Uglow at (414) 266-2745.

April 18 – Memorial program

Other

April 24 – Peer Parent Training, Madison

Collaborations

The center continues to be involved with:

4Cs of Milwaukee County, Association of SIDS and Infant Mortality Program Professionals, Dane County Pediatric Death Review, Fetal Concerns Program, Great Lakes Intertribal Council, Honoring our Children Project, La Causa, March of Dimes, Milwaukee Fetal Infant Mortality Review Project, Milwaukee Healthy Beginnings Steering Committee, Data Evaluation Committee and Consortium, State of Wisconsin Bureau of Health Information, State of Wisconsin Division of Public Health, Supporting First Time Parents, The African Infant Mortality Workgroup, Wisconsin Association for Perinatal Care, Wisconsin Child Care Resource and Referral Network, Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, Wisconsin Maternal and Child Health Coalition and Wisconsin Public Health Association

Western Region

Phillip Nielsen: (608) 791-9410

Educational programs

Presentations on SIDS, risk reduction strategies, grief/loss issues and services provided by the Infant Death Center of Wisconsin were given on:

- Dec. 4 – Franciscan Skemp Leadership Series – Bereavement Support
- Dec. 8 – Eau Claire outreach training
- Dec. 8 – New Richmond outreach training
- Dec. 17 – La Crosse Pregnancy and Infant Loss Christmas Candle Light Memorial Service
- Jan. 21 – Onalaska Fire Department first responders

Programs for families

The La Crosse Pregnancy and Infant Loss support group meets from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. the third Wednesday of each month at Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center (La Crosse) in the Mooney Center Patient Education Room. Call (608) 791-9410 for more information or to register.

Northeastern Region

Beth Tourville: (920) 969-7903

Educational programs

Presentations on SIDS, risk reduction strategies, grief/loss issues and services provided by the Infant Death Center of Wisconsin were given on:

- Nov. 11, 20 – Marian College Nursing Students, Children's Hospital of Wisconsin–Fox Valley
- Nov. 11 – Menominee Tribal Clinic
- Jan. 13 – Oneida Tribal Clinic

Programs for families

- Oct. 19 – Walk to Remember Memorial Walk, Appleton
- Dec. 3 – Memorial Candlelight Service, Kimberly

Other

- Dec. 12 – Northeastern Region Healthy Babies/Call to Action meeting
- Feb. 11 – Center for Grieving Children and Families Task Force/Steering Committee Meeting, Appleton
- Mar. 11 – Northeast Regional Council meeting
- Mar. 19 – Great Lakes Inter Tribal Council, Lac du Flambeau
- May 14 – Northeastern Region Healthy Babies/Call to Action meeting

Northern Region

Dora Gorski: (715) 843-1877

Educational programs

Presentations on SIDS, risk reduction strategies, grief/loss issues and services provided by the Infant Death Center of Wisconsin were given on:

- Dec. 12 – Outreach Worker Training Program, Wausau
- Jan. 6, Feb. 4, March 3 – Display at Baby Fair New Beginnings Birthing Center, Wausau
- Feb. 4 – Drop-In Playtime Parent Group, Marathon

Programs for families

SAID (Support After Infant Death) meets at 7 p.m. on the second Thursday of every month at 705 S. 24th Ave., Suite 402 in

Center summaries cont.

Wausau. For more information, call Dora Gorski at (715) 843-1877.

Other

Dec. 11 – Candle Memorial Service,

Wausau
Jan. 12-13 – Wisconsin Coroner and
Medical Examiner Association
Feb. 2 – Northern Regional Community
Council meeting

Mar. 19 – Honoring Our Children Advisory Council Meeting

Gifts

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

These donations were received between Oct. 1, 2003 and Jan. 31, 2004

In memory of

Isabelle Kathryn Anderson

Mr. and Mrs. Harold C. Aghjian
Mr. and Mrs. Paul J. Anderson
Mr. and Mrs. Robert A. Anderson
Mr. and Mrs. Reginald Becker
Ms. Rita Betts
Mr. and Mrs. Frank Boucher
Brookfield Elementary PTO
Mr. and Mrs. James R. Buege
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Buth
Mr. and Mrs. Frank J. D'Amato
Dr. and Mrs. Gerald J. Dorff
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Ms. Josie Petersson
Mr. and Mrs. Mats E. Petersson
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Ms. Mary J. Regele
Ms. Cynthia J. Salamati
Ms. Virginia Wheir
Ms. Alison M. Yahnke

Erik Baumler

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David Joseph Crawford

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Danielle Marie Fischer

Mr. and Mrs. Jason C. Fischer

Kera Jo Haase

Mr. and Mrs. Allan J. Gilbertson
Mr. and Mrs. Bruce A. Otterberg

Patrick Harrington

Reverend and Mrs. James L. Harrington

Ellen Marie Hoffmann

Mr. and Mrs. Warren L. Wilson

Madeline Hoy

Mr. Peter F. Mullaney

Devon Alan Kramschuster

Mr. and Mrs. Craig D. Arendt
Big Sky Sports Service
Mr. and Mrs. Lee A. Bowe
Mr. and Mrs. Loren J. Bowe
Mr. and Mrs. Luke Bowe
Mr. and Mrs. Tracy Brown
Ms. Cleone M. Cripe
Mr. and Mrs. Rodney Dahl
Mr. and Mrs. Timothy T. Dubbs
Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Fallon
Ms. Lucy A. Fallon
Ms. Alysa J. Froiland
Ms. Molly M. Greynolds

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Mr. and Mrs. Timothy L. Trowbridge
Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Wildenberg

Mark Galen Magler

Reid and Karen Magler

Madeline R. Thorpe

Mr. and Mrs. Daniel N. Burnside

Cassidy Tiana Weyek

Mr. and Mrs. James A. Weyek

Joely Lynn Wills

Mr. and Mrs. Douglas A. Wills

Joshua Yaccarino

Mr. and Mrs. John F. Binder

Wisconsin Perspectives is the newsletter of the Infant Death Center of Wisconsin. The goal of this newsletter is to promote the statewide exchange of information regarding infant death issues.

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 Larry Uglow at (414) 266-2745 or luglow@chw.org. To reach the satellite center in your region, contact Phillip Nielsen in Western Wisconsin at (608) 791-9410 or Nielsen.Phillip@mayo.edu, Dora Gorski in Northern Wisconsin at (715) 843-1877 or Dora.gorski@cssw.org, or Beth Tourville in Northeastern Wisconsin at (920) 969-7903 or Btourville@chw.org.

New arrivals:

Congratulations to the following families on their new additions:



Evelyn Tahmazian was born April 16 to Wendi and John Tahmazian.

Lynzee Torres was born June 23 to Krystal and Antonio Torres.

Allyson Rae Nourse was born Oct. 22 to Tamara Bratsven and Jeremy Nourse.

Alanna Marie Logemann was born Nov. 21 to Michelle and William Logemann.

Simon Witt was born Dec. 12 to Peter and Michelle Witt.



Torina Leigh Finnegan was born Jan. 21 to Tanice and Joe Finnegan.



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