

Newsletter



*Spring / Summer
2012*

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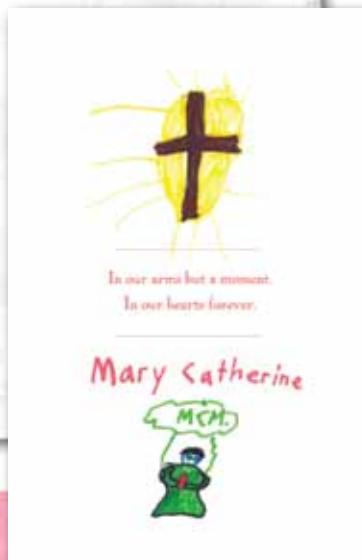
From The Founder*Treasured Friends,*

Every time I write to you I am aware of the grave responsibility that accompanies me and take the opportunity very seriously. I often wonder, "What on earth do I have to say that is worthy of your attention?"

The content of this issue is completely about children and how they react to and bond with and an unborn sibling who will die. In directly or indirectly learning from them, I am staggered, speechless. As such, there is nothing important I can say, so I am ending by simply thanking you for caring about this precious and holy work. As we are half-way through our Holy Year to 12-12, please keep praying for our intentions to build a Culture of Love!

May God bless and keep you.

*With Love,
Your Patti*

**Patrick & Debra McShane Family
About baby Mary Catherine**

We talked to our kids this weekend, and they were so individual, heartbroken and sweet. Our daughter, Annie, said she thought God must have put four seeds inside of me when I was created and one was an angel seed. So I had three babies and now I would have the angel baby. That's the story I am going with from now on because it sounds just perfect to me. Our oldest, Leo, was the most emotional. He quickly went to work drawing pictures and making a paper doll for Mary. He asked me to get a picture of her with the doll. He also thought we should make a special keepsake box to put things for Mary. He made us each a card with Mary's name (spelled "Merry") on it and told us to keep it in our wallets. Then one night I was lying in my bed with Jack watching TV. He took his favorite dog (named "Dog Dog Dog") and laid it on my stomach. He said he was letting Mary Catherine snuggle with it. He's so young, but he has come through this a very thoughtful little person. These kids are amazing.

3-D sonogram of Mary Catherine



I also called to schedule the 3-D sonogram for late April. I told the kids that we would get to see some really special pictures of Mary while she's still in my tummy. They are very concerned that they may not get a chance to meet her so hopefully this will help a little.

Ultimately the kids didn't get to meet Mary face to face as things moved so quickly with her birth. I took great joy in telling the kids how much she looked like them. It was amazing...such tiny little features, but so distinctly familiar to us.

The kids participated actively in Mary Catherine's life and even in planning her funeral service and they continue to talk about her.

Kids artwork for their baby sister.

From The Friends of Alexandra's House: Bow Ties for Babies Update

OUR 2012 Gala will feature artist Mr. Mike Debus. He will be creating original "art in action" for our *live auction* event. This auction will also highlight items such as a K C Chiefs' box package, other Chiefs items, Isharya jewelry, and a Glow Imagery Portrait Package.

Current Silent Auction Item:

Four seats to a Royals Baseball Game.
Tickets expire 10/3/12.

Please place bids at bowties4babies@gmail.com and on the Subject Line write: "Royals Tickets Auction" Minimum bid is \$100.00. All bids must be received by midnight, June 30, 2012. Please be sure to include your name and phone number.

For corporate and private sponsorships, please contact the

Friends of Alexandra's House at:
www.bowtiesforbabies.com
or at 816-931-5378.

Joy and Joya's Family

Joy and Joya were twins, very special twins. They were joined at the chest and shared one heart. After complex testing prenatally, it was determined that Joy and Joya could not be separated surgically. Neither would survive the surgery.



The twins', their Mother Jackie, and their older sister Jaterra were deeply embraced by Alexandra's House and its community. During phases of the pregnancy the little family lived here as our guests. Jackie reported that one night while getting ready for bed here that she and Jaterra, who was seven at the time, were chatting. Jaterra quietly asked Jackie if Alexandra's House was Heaven.

Joy and Joya were born alive and survived seven incredible days. Literally everyone who met them fell in love with them. Even in their short lives, though quiet, they were very interactive with each other. Joya often nuzzled Joy's face and Joy would use a hand to push her away. Soon all noted their very distinct mannerisms and saw subtle yet special differences. They were both seen as completely unique individuals. Jaterra spoke that her favorite memory was brushing their hair. That was her special job.

On the seventh day they rested. We miss them so but Alexandra's House will always bear the fragrance of their sanctity and treasure their memory.

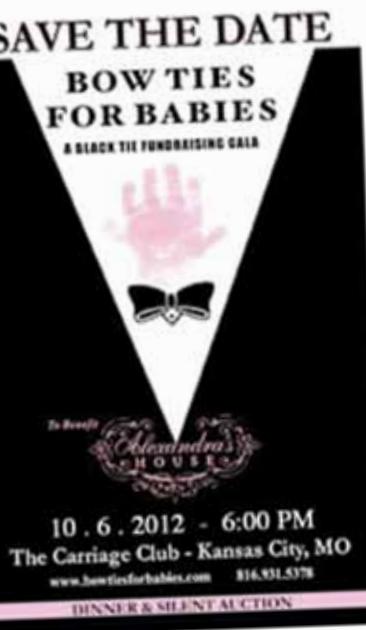
A few years after Joy and Joya's deaths, Jaterra and her family were back here visiting. Jaterra lay on the floor while we all visited with Jackie. This is what she drew for us.



Joy & Joya cheek-to-cheek



Jaterra's artwork for
Alexandra's House



John &
Lucas



John and Kim Lozano Family

Editor's note: Kim and John's first born is the delightful Gabriel. We met them when their second son was diagnosed prenatally with a fatal birth defect. Zachary did not survive. Several years later they conceived a beautiful baby girl and the pregnancy was advancing normally. Unexpectedly their perfectly formed Isabella was stillborn. Recently Kim and John received a new baby into their family through adoption. He is Lucas and these are their reflections with Gabriel.

We've been extremely busy. Lucas is very adorable and very demanding! What five month old isn't!

Anyway, Gabriel is totally in love with his new brother. The first thing Gabriel does in the morning is to kiss Lucas. He constantly wants to hold him and has even shared his "baby" toys with him.

This past March before going to bed, I told Gabriel that it was his sister Isabella's birthday. I had questioned whether to say anything or not. I wasn't sure how he would react. We talked about how old she would be now and what we thought she would like; playing dolls, dress up, etc. After the conversation it was time for bed. Gabriel was saying his prayers and said, "God, please tell Isabella I said happy birthday."

Lucas has been a blessing! He fits in our family so well. Our adoption isn't finalized yet, (another month) but it's hard for us to believe that he ever had other parents. I asked Lucas the other day if he was born for us and I got the biggest smile! That's all the answer I will ever need!

I asked Gabriel if there was anything he would like to say and he said, "I like Lucas and he likes me, and if Zachary and Isabella were here they would like me and I would like them too!" Well said!! HA!

Kim

**Tyler
Brown
About
Baby
Brother
Trenton**



Baby Trenton

My mom (Janet Brown) let me know about the writings for the Alexandra's House newsletter. Hopefully this doesn't sound like an overt advertisement for Alexandra's House rather than a story, but Alexandra's House was a crucial part of my family's story. So, telling it without Alexandra's House would make it incomplete. Regardless, here's my own story:

Although Trenton died around ten years ago, I still remember the effect Alexandra's House had on my mom. Essentially, when Mom found out that Trenton had Trisomy 18, she was heartbroken. We all were, but it affected my Mom the most. Frankly, none of us really knew how to fully support Mom. We couldn't put ourselves in her shoes as an expectant mother.

I remember how inadequate I felt to comfort Mom. I don't remember talking about Mom with my dad or my sister, but I'm pretty sure they felt it too. That's where Alexandra's House came in. Somehow, Mom got connected with them, and suddenly she was understood. She got to meet other women who had been through or were going through the same thing. This brought an incredible level of relief to Mom and therefore to the rest of our family.

Although the pain from Trenton's death has never fully healed for our family, Alexandra's house definitely helped alleviate a lot of it. We still commemorate Trenton's passing by going to the cemetery on his birthday in order to give him a new teddy bear and some balloons, just to let him know that he's loved.

I don't know exactly if the scars from Trenton's tragic death will ever fully heal for our family. And frankly, I don't know if they're supposed to. I don't think it's right to try to forget and to try to run away from his impact on our lives. However, I do know that Alexandra's House was there for my family and my mom especially when she needed them the most. For that, Alexandra's House will always hold a special place in our hearts."

Thanks again for helping my mom when she had her deepest need, **Tyler Brown**

Brandon and Lindsey Carlson Family

We wanted to send these thoughts on our precious Caden from big brother Connor and big sister Kylee:

"When I held him in my arms, he felt light, but I knew his Spirit was in heaven with God."

"I remember Caden with my bear, Carl." "I felt sad knowing that Caden wouldn't be here with us, but am happy knowing that Caden is living a happy life in heaven." - *Connor Carlson, Age 9*

"When I held him in my arms, I knew that he had light in heaven."

"I remember Caden with my bear Sparkles and with the (memory) garden outside."

"Caden's body was sick, but his heart was so strong." - *Kylee Carlson, Age 7*

As you know, the kids' experience with creating bears in memory of Caden sparked the creation of Caden's Cubs (<http://cadencubs.blogspot.com>) We have attached a picture of Connor and Kylee with their bears along with a photo of our newest blessing, Hadley. We have also attached a picture of artwork that Kylee created at school when she was asked to draw a picture of her favorite tree. She drew the tree we have planted out in Caden's garden with the quote "This is my favorite tree because....it stands for my baby brother. And it is old."

Thank you for this opportunity!

With Love,
The Carlsons



Kylee, Hadley & Connor Carlson



Artwork remembering brother Caden

Ben and Christy Shively Family

(These are thoughts the children wrote before Baby Ian was born)

Dear Ian,

I know you have problems and we pray for you at dinner. People have been bringing food to the house because mom can't. I love you Ian. Mom has told us all about your problems and Ian, I felt you kick. I like to give my mom's belly kisses. Can you feel them? I can't wait for you to be born. That's all for today. *Love, Olivia*

Dear Ian,

I am sorry for your conditions. We are praying for you. I love you. I hope you get to meet us when you are born. If you live for a long time, Tyler would be your best bud. I love you. I'm your biggest sister. You might be going to a soccer game of mine if you are well enough. We are thinking of you a lot. When you go up to heaven, can you tell me what it's like? I'll listen in my heart when you tell me. Look for Toby, Smokey, and Moose when you go up to heaven. They are some pretty cool dogs. That's all I have to say today. I'll write more another time.

Love, Samantha

ps - my nickname is Sam

Dear Ian,

It's your sister Lucy here. I love you. I want to give you a hug and a kiss when you are born. You will be my baby brother. I want to be with you when you are sick. And that's it now.

Love, Lucy

Ian's Birthday

Ian's Day: July 7, 2010 according to Samantha (10)

"I remember going to the sonogram and looking at him on the screen. I wasn't sure why we were crying. I was trying to help Lucy to understand that Ian didn't have a heartbeat. Later that night, I came home from an event and my Aunt Lou Lou was over. She took us to the hospital to meet Ian. I was able to hold him and he was baptized in my arms. I was sad and happy because Ian was going to live a better life in heaven rather than struggling on earth. If it weren't for Ian, we wouldn't know what it felt like to have someone die close to us. I remember seeing one eye open a little bit. He had blue eyes like me. There was a drop of holy

continues on page 5

water on his eyelid. Ian was really small. Patti from Alexandra's House was there, taking pictures. Now we can look at those pictures. A couple weeks later, we had a Mass and a balloon launch for Ian. There were balloons with his name on them. After letting them go, I felt kind of sad but happy because I wrote him a note but I knew he would get the note in heaven. We planted a tree in his honor and wrapped our palms from church on the trunk. I like to see his tree everyday so that I am reminded that he is always with us in our hearts. At night when I see one big star and one little star, I know it's my baby brother and my uncle watching over us. I sometimes wonder if he has other little friends to run around and play with up in heaven."

Ian's Day: July 7, 2010 according to Olivia (9)

"I remember the day Ian died. We were watching Ian on the screen at the sonogram and then he didn't have a heartbeat. We were all crying because it was sad that he wasn't alive. We went to the hospital late at night with my Aunt so that we could hold him. I remember holding my baby brother and wearing the scrubs like my Dad was wearing when Ian was born. He was such a beautiful baby. Fr. Farnan baptized Ian in my sister's arms. We were all around him and it was so nice. I really liked that we lifted balloons off to him in heaven. All of our friends and family were there. I pray to Ian when I need his help. I will miss him."

Ian's Day: July 7, 2010 according to Lucy (5)

"I remember everyone crying when we went to see him on the computer. I was sad because Mommy was sad. I remember holding my sweet baby brother but he wasn't alive. My sisters got to hold him too. Mommy was really sleepy but she was covered up with blankets. I like that we planted his tree because I can sit on the bench next to it and think about him. I feel my brother hugging me when I am warm and cozy in my bed at night. I love him."



Ian's balloons

Ian's blessing



Fordham Family

Megan Fordham's Story

My name is Megan Fordham. I am 11 years old, and I am the oldest in my family. My youngest sister is named Noelle. She is 3 years old. My middle sister's name is Mallory. She was stillborn when she was 32 weeks old. She had a form of dwarfism, and doctors told my parents that she would not be able to live after she was born. There are many kinds of dwarfism, and since I was only 6 at the time, I did not really understand that there were kinds you could die from. I kind of knew a little bit of what was going on. I remember everyone being sad after they went to the doctor visits. Mom and dad told me what was going on. I had been really excited to finally have a baby brother or sister. It was no fun being an only child. I had been very lonely all by myself. Mallory's birthday is December 06, 2007. The first year after she was born, we got a balloon for each one of us, and we let them go on that day. It was a dark cloudy day, and we watched them go all the way up into the sky. We sent them to her. We still celebrate her birthday every year. Last year, I got to pick out the cupcakes for our family celebration. I chose some with Christmas lights on them, since she was born so close to the holiday. We go to visit the cemetery a few times a year. We bring flowers. It is sad for us. We have some very nice pictures of Mallory all over the house. It is nice to be able to see her, and know she is still part of the family, even though she is in Heaven. I am glad mom and dad hung them up. I know I can always talk about her, and she is not a secret. Someday, when Noelle is big enough, I will tell her all about her other sister, who watches over us, but is not with us here on Earth. I am glad I have Noelle, and I am glad we had Mallory too.

Megan Fordham, Age 11
Parents: Amy & Byron Fordham



Fordham Girls with Santa

Morris Family Story

Dawson Morris, age 9
Brother of Drew Morris

Since my brother, Drew, has been in Heaven, I have been very sad and happy, too. I think of him a lot. At Christmas, we read him a story and hung up a stocking for him. Also, we hung a wreath at the cemetery for him. I did a power point at school and I mentioned him as my brother. His birthday is April 1st and we are going to get the basement done at our house by then. For his birthday, I want to do something fun. Mom says we may release balloons.

Dylan Morris, age 12
Brother of Drew Morris

Since Drew was born and passed away, we have done many things to honor him, including talking at Bowties for Babies and visiting Alexandra's House several times. On Christmas Eve of last year, my brother, Dawson, and I read to him. We also each bought him a little gift for the only Christmas we got to spend with him. This year we visited his stone and hung a wreath right by it, so he could look down on us and see it. Our little cousin, Gavon, even brought him a couple of books for Christmas gifts. It was hard having a Christmas without him and it seems funny because we have not even known Drew for two years, but I can't remember life without him. Now it is nearing this little miracle's first birthday. Last year on his day of birth, it was a beautiful 80-degree day, and he passed away after two hours and twenty-two minutes of life. It was the happiest and saddest day of my life but I definitely don't regret it.

Note: Dylan and Dawson wanted to do something 'fun' in honor of Drew's first anniversary. One of our other families Bob and Staci Courter recently started a new program in honor of their two baby girls who died of an inherited disease. Mallory Hope and Julia Faith Courter inspired their program called *Project Fun with Hope and Faith*. Knowing how much time families spend planning for and collecting memories of their babies' births and deaths, they want to help the family create new and happy memories, yet always in honor of the siblings who have died. Dylan and Dawson were the first recipients of this gift from Bob and Staci's family.

Dante

I was a rainy day.
I was at the hospital
because my baby
sister was born her
name was Sophia. I
held her. She was light
like a pillow. It
was fun. I like
It's my Sophia.

Letter from
brother Dante



Baby Sophia

Jordan's Angel

She never opened her eyes but I already knew her eyes sparkled like the night sky. Sophia, born an angel that God needed. Her life lasted only a few hours but changed my life forever. Only the best die young. Sophia deserved the life that she will never be able to experience but we will live through her. She made the biggest impact on my life even though she'll never know it.

Sophia was born and Mom gave her to me to hold. I just looked at her face and began to cry, knowing that her life was about to come to an end. The most beautiful baby girl I had ever seen in my life, just lying in my arms. After the doctor told us that she might have some deformities, I expected the worst, and was almost afraid to see her but she was incredibly beautiful. She looked like every other normal baby, just a little smaller, but I can't even express the true beauty I saw in her.

Sophia survived longer than the doctors predicted. She pushed through and lived for 2 hours. I never thought that something so tiny could have such a large impact on me. In a heartbeat, I would have traded places with her just to let her have a chance to live her life. Sophia brought our family closer than we've ever been before. She taught me to take nothing for granted and that your family is the only thing that matters because when you're at your lowest, they're going to be there to pick you back up.

Jordan Michaelis, age 17



Clara



Landon

PREGNATAL IMAGING: A BONDING EXPERIENCE FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

Ten fingers and ten toes - that's the first thing every parent checks on their newborn. For the parents of Alexandra's House those simple things are not taken for granted. I am Jeanette Burlbaw, a sonographer with 35 years of experience. Twenty of those have been in the perinatal departments here in Kansas City. I have been the sonographer who evaluated your baby prenatally and have been with you when you found out there was a complication with your pregnancy. Currently I have a private office, Prenatal Imaging Centers, LLC, in south Kansas City. I created my office in 2002 as I realized we are a visual culture. I realized I could offer parents the opportunity to look at their babies as well as quality affordable diagnostic Sonography for the uninsured. I also realized parents of babies with malformations have questions that in a busy clinical setting just don't get answered during sonograms.

Patti came into my life when she felt a mother needed a clearer look at her babies. She called to see if I would image conjoined twins. She realized that parents of children with malformations often need the reassurance of sonography on their terms. They want to see what the perinatologist looks at during each office visit without the need for the explanation of the images in 2D sonography. The 3D sonography presents the baby in a manner that is more easily understood. You are often allowed to see their expressions, simple little gestures and eye-brow movement that replace a multitude of words. Fluid around your baby is very important to acquire the best images. Some complications that limit fluid make creating those images difficult.

I now own remarkable new equipment, the GE E8 BT12 with HDlive. HDlive is the second generation of 3D imaging. It provides extraordinary image clarity and exceptional anatomical realism. You can find my new pictures on my facebook page, Prenatal Imaging. I also have a web site, www.prenatalimaging.com. My web site is currently being redesigned to remove my old images and incorporate my new images. I have been allowed to serve the families of Alexandra's House ever since Patti called me and I look forward to serving you for many years to come.

*She is too kind to include this but Jeanette offers all her services to the families of Alexandra's House as a gift.
Thank you, dear Jeanette! AH*

More Pictures of Families & Children



Zachary Lozano (page 3)



Mallory & Julia "Project Fun" (page 6)



Carlson Family with Caden (page 4)



Ian Shivley's Sisters (page 5) 7