



*The Miscarriage Association*

*OF IRELAND*

Carmichael Centre, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7.

Telephone: 8735702/8725550

Registered Charity Number CHY9738

Autumn 1999

# NEWSLETTER

## Welcome

Hard to believe that the summer is over and again it's time for our Autumn Newsletter. For those receiving the newsletter for the first time, we would like to welcome you and to our regular members thank you for your continued support. Please remember whether you lost your baby recently or some time ago, support from the Miscarriage Association is always available. Often, facing into the festive season of Christmas brings back thoughts of what might have been and makes this time of year very difficult. We are always only a phone call away.

Mary Lawson & Maggie O'Neill

### Service of Remembrance and Dedication of our Memorial Stone

We are holding a Service of Remembrance on 7th November, 1999 at 2.00 p.m. in Glasnevin Cemetery Church for all babies lost through miscarriage. Our newly erected Memorial Stone, dedicated to all babies lost through miscarriage, will be blessed at this Service.

Some babies lost through late miscarriage are already buried in Glasnevin in the Holy Angels' Plot and their parents find comfort in being able to visit their graves and place flowers there on their anniversaries, Christmas time and other special days.

Now, with the erection of our Memorial Stone, all babies lost through miscarriage, some of whom went straight to heaven without the comfort for their parents of having a final resting place, can be commemorated on their special days also.

As the Holy Angels' Plot is a special place for all babies who have sadly died at different stages of their tiny lives, the Miscarriage Association of Ireland feel that having this Memorial Stone would make all parents feel a little less isolated that they already do and will benefit them greatly by making them feel welcome and giving them a setting that is serene, quiet and peaceful for their grief.

All are welcome at this Service regardless of when they lost their baby.

### Committee

**Maggie O'Neill**  
Chairperson

**June O'Toole**  
Joint Secretary

**Karen Gilligan**  
Joint Secretary

**Mary Lawson**  
Treasurer

**Eilis Kinnane**

**Julie O'Donovan**

**Monica Dunne**

**Cathy Lynch**

**Joanne Kinney**

You may notice some changes on our committee. We would like to thank Eilis Kinnane and Julie O'Donovan for all the hard work that they did as secretaries for our association.

We welcome June and Karen's appointments as joint secretaries. They've both been working very hard. Our new member Joanne, appointed at our AGM in May, has already proved invaluable to our organisation.

## Meetings – Dates and Venues

- DUBLIN:** First Thursday of each month except July and August at 8 p.m. in Whitefriar Street Community Centre, Aungier Street, Dublin, 2.  
PLEASE NOTE that our Book of Remembrance will be available for completing at our December 1999 and June 2000 meetings in Whitefriar Street, Dublin.
- CORK:** Monthly meeting in Bon Secours Hospital, College Road, Cork, Second Monday of each month – Bank Holidays included 8.00-9.30
- CO. MAYO:** Claremorris Social Service Centre. First Thursday of each month. Contact Martina at 094-80334.
- WATERFORD:** Last Thursday of each month. Contact Lorraine Hales at 051-878829
- LIMERICK:** First Wednesday of each month at Social Service Centre, Henry Street at 8 p.m.
- SLIGO:** Meetings held monthly in St. Michael's Family Life Centre, Church Street Sligo on the 2nd Thursday of the month. Further details from Pauline at 071-63745 or Siobhan at 071-63790.

## We've been busy ...

### Service in Galway – 23rd May 1999

On Sunday, May 23rd, 1999, I travelled to Galway to attend a Remembrance Service in Bohermore Cemetery organised by the Galway Branch of ISANDS. The ceremony started with a reading of the poem "Innocent" by local poet Mary O'Malley which is on the headstone at the ISANDS plot. This was followed by some hymns and readings. Then came the most moving part of the day when we were asked to name our babies. We were all given a flower to place in a vase at the foot of the headstone while beautiful tin whistle music was being played. This was followed by more singing and prayers. Afterwards, many people took the opportunity to sign our Book of Remembrance. I found this a very moving service and was glad I had made the journey to Galway. Well done to Mary and Jo and all in ISANDS, Galway.

Monica Dunne

### Service of Remembrance ("Remember our Baby") held in Castleblayney on Sunday 12th September, 1999

A Service of Remembrance for all babies lost was held in the Concert Hall, Our Lady's Secondary School, Castleblayney. It was organised by the Jubilee 2000 Committee as one of the ways of celebrating the new Millennium. The

service was attended by people bereaved recently and many, many years ago. This Service gave great comfort and reassurance to all who lost their babies. For many it was the first time they had been able to publicly acknowledge their lost babies. They were able to express emotions that they had never been able to express before and it was a very healing day for them. Karen Gilligan and I both felt very privileged to be there. It was lovely to think that at the dawn of the new Millennium our lost babies are not forgotten.

Mary Lawson

### Infant/Child Memorial Service held on Saturday 2nd October, 1999 in St Joseph's Carmelite Convent, Malahide

It was a great honour and privilege to be present at the above Service organised by the Vincentian Mission Team. The serene atmosphere and the simplicity of the Service was particularly fitting and allowed people time for calm reflection. It was a moving and deeply touching experience and hopefully it will be repeated in different locations. If ever you get an opportunity to attend such a Service, I would highly recommend it. Great credit must go to the Mission Team for organizing such a beautiful Service.

June O'Toole

### New Support Group in Sligo

We would like to welcome Pauline Kilfeather and Siobhan Burke who have set up a support group in Sligo. They offer telephone support and hold meetings (see above).

## FUNDRAISING

### A Run For Your Money ...

Thanks a bunch, all you ladies who ran for us in the Ladies' Mini-Marathon in June. Your hard work, both in running and sponsorship, brought in £1,093.90 to date. This money will enable us to keep up and running. Please keep us in mind for next year. Thanks again.

### Piling On The Pounds ...

Thanks to Julie O'Donovan who ran a Tea Party in June and raised the sum of £127 on the night. Thanks to her fancy cream cakes, we gained £127 and endless lbs. which some of us are still trying to shed.

### Talk About A Good Start ...

Our newest Committee member Joanne Kinney raised £500 for the Association which promptly went towards the erection of our Memorial Stone.

# Your Stories

## Monica's Story

Our story starts in March 1993 when we first discovered I was pregnant. At eight weeks, I had slight spotting and panic set in. I had a scan and we were delighted to see a heartbeat. I continued to spot on and off for five and a half months. Otherwise everything went according to plan and our son was born in December 1993.

I got pregnant again in March 1996 and thought I was destined to have December babies. Again I started to spot around the eight week mark and thought "Here we go again". I went for a scan at ten weeks and was told they were not sure and come back the following week for another scan when I was told there was no heartbeat and I would have to have a D & C. I got pregnant again quite quickly in September 1996. Again at eight weeks I started to spot. This time I was not so relaxed but hoped it would not happen to us again but it did. Another D & C. I got all the usual useless advice from friends and family. It was too soon after the first mis. / I should give myself a break etc. Others who did not know were saying it was time Cathal had company. All these comments I found very hard to take and the only thing that kept me half sane was the Miscarriage Association. Anyway I got pregnant again in June 1997 and really took it easy. At about 10 weeks this time I again started to spot. I was sent for a scan where I was told they thought they could see a heartbeat but were not sure. "Was I sure of my dates?" I went back the following week for another scan but once again our baby had died in my womb. As I had then had three miscarriages, I was sent for tests. I had really pinned my hopes on the outcome of these. On my son's fourth birthday, my doctor rang me to tell me everything came back clear so I was left wondering. This is my story so far, whether it is the end or just a chapter only time will tell ...

**Monica Dunne – September 1999**

## Rachel's Story

### *Another Angel – Diary of an early miscarriage*

Wednesday 19th May 1999 had to be one of the most confusing days of my life.

I woke up at 7 a.m. and went to the toilet. Not that this was an unusual thing to do, but this morning I had more things on my

mind. I was going to repeat my pregnancy test from the week before which had shown a weak, yet positive result.

A few minutes later, I scrambled back into bed, over the top on my fiancé and grinned. "Look at this!" I thrust the stick under his nose, "How positive is that?"

Richard opened his eyes to be greeted by a thick pink line and unable to contain himself said, "Morning, Mum!"

We had told a few people that it might be possible I was pregnant, but now I wanted to tell the world, yet at the same time wanted to be cautious as I knew the statistics for miscarriage before 12 weeks was pretty high. All the same, we were elated and were working out dates and what I should and shouldn't eat.

Life went back to normal then, Richard got off to work and I set about cleaning the house before meeting a friend for coffee at 2 p.m.

My friend and I talked about Richard and my wedding in 2 months time and houses and like all females do, babies. "You'll have babies soon, I bet", she said. I just thought "Little do you know".

At about 3 p.m. I made my excuses as I was teaching at 4 and needed to get back to pick up my things. I walked back to the house and paid my usual frequent visit to the loo. Suddenly I found myself staring in panic at what looked to be blood on the tissue. No, not me, it couldn't be. I rang Richard at work and cried, "I'm bleeding, I'm scared, what shall I do?"

"Keep calm, ring the doctor and make an appointment, and I'll be back as soon as I can" he tried to calm me.

I rang the doctor and made an appointment. Quite ironic really as the week before I had been in making my first prenatal appointment for the following week.

The doctor told me what I knew already, miscarriage is a high statistic, bleeding doesn't always mean you'll lose the baby, nothing can be done as such, just go home to rest and try not to worry. She was trying to be helpful, but I knew all that. What I wanted was for someone to tell me my baby, my new little growth inside me, was going to be fine, they could stop me bleeding and anyway it was only spotting, most women bleed a little.

She wrote a letter to the hospital for me to have in case things got worse and I went home, numb.

That night I didn't know what to think. The bleeding had seemed to have stopped. Part of me wanted to believe it was just a little spotting and nothing to worry about, yet part of me knew something was wrong. It wasn't our time to have a baby yet.

The next morning there was no more

bleeding .....until the afternoon. I rang the doctor again and asked whether I should go to the hospital. She asked if I had pains. Well, no. Sure I had a little backache, but then who wouldn't sitting cramped up on a small sofa for two days, but no period type pains ... maybe I was going to be okay.

Friday things turned from bad to worse. I woke up with pains and although Richard went to work, he was back by 9.30. We knew this was it, the inevitable had happened and we didn't know which way to turn. I couldn't stop crying and the bleeding was heavy and I was in pain. Richard was worried and so by 2 p.m. we were in the hospital.

I was taken to admissions, along with all the lucky mums to be and put in a cubicle next to a young teenager who was about to have her baby.

Much as the staff were very nice and sympathetic, nothing and nobody could have prepared me for what I'd feel. After giving my medical history to the midwife ... midwife, I thought they only appeared when you were successfully pregnant, I had to drink a jug of water before heading down to the ultrasound room.

My body ached. My stomach hurt and my bladder was full to bursting and then a doctor was going to put gel on my belly and put a camera to it to see, what ... nothing, I could have told her that! "I can't see a pregnancy there, you must have expelled all the baby and the sac", she said.

There is no response to that and after an internal by a rather sullen senior house officer, I was discharged, armed with leaflets and words of encouragement and a telephone number of a counsellor.

So now what?

Here I am a week later, not knowing what to feel or think. I still ache and want to cry. I would have been 7 weeks today.

People have been kind and full of advice. "You will have a healthy baby", "It's very common", "Well at least it wasn't later on in the pregnancy". I know they are all trying to be helpful, but after a miscarriage, however early on it is, it was still "your baby".

Others don't know what to say. I don't want to talk to my pregnant friends at the moment for fear of being really jealous and nasty to them and articles in papers and on the news about babies set me off for no reason.

Each day I ask myself hundreds of questions. Did I do anything wrong? Why am I one of the unlucky ones, it's supposed to be 15% of women, or so I read in one of the many leaflets I was given. 15% isn't very many, so why wasn't I one of the 85% who could manage it. How come you hear of so many people in the news who have successfully had babies, look at all the pop stars and tv stars?

Then there are the things that make me really angry, young women who are pregnant and don't want the baby, people who beat and abandon their children. Why should they be allowed to have children when there are so many of us that suffer the loss of a very much longed for child in one way or another?

About a month before I lost the baby, I lost my dear grandmother, so another part of me is finding it hard to have faith in God. I am not a particularly religious person, I go to church once or twice a month, yet whereas before when things went wrong, I found solace in knowing God had his reasons, this time I really do find it terribly hard to know what he meant by doing this, and so close together.

I sing a lot and listen to music and found comfort in the words of one of my favourite groups

*"There's only so much I can take,  
And I just got to let it go.  
And who knows I might feel better,  
If I don't try and I don't hope."*

I will try again and there will be more hope, naturally, we're only human.

I know I will probably have a baby one day, I am young and fit and healthy, all the things that should be on my side are, but that still won't take away the pain of a miscarriage. However small our baby was, it was still a presence in our lives, and until the day I hold our healthy child in my arms I will not be relaxed.

Rachel Potter – May 1999

## Sad Farewells

Baby "Zinzan" of Joanne and John Kinney.

Babies of Angela and Danny Holland:

Baby Kate – 27th June 1988.

Baby Luke – November 1989.

## Welcome Babies

Baby Liam to Cathy and John Lynch, a very welcome brother for Sean and Conor.

Baby Christine to Susan and Noel Muldowney.

Baby Emma-Mary to Antoinette and Terry Keogh – a very welcome sister for Seán.

# Poetry Corner

## Joanne's poem – written on the day her baby was due to be born

*Today I hoped to hold you  
And tell you, you are loved,  
But that was not to happen  
And you're with God Above.*

*I never got to tell you  
All my hopes and fears  
And since the day I lost you  
My heart's been full of tears.*

*My life goes on without you  
I take each day by day  
But know I'll always love you.  
You're in my heart to stay.*

Joanne Kinney – August 1999.

## Poem submitted by Karen – From Alive-O

### BEINGS

*Lots of little beings with a personality.  
Each a little different and a little like me.*

*Lots of little beings like stars in the sky.  
Each one had a different little twinkle in it's eye.*

*Lots of little beings like leaves on a tree  
Hanging all together in a being family.*

*Lots of little beings like peas in a pod.*

*Beings all together.*

*Being loved and cared by God.*



## Our Own Christmas Cards

This year, we are glad to be able to tell you that we have had Christmas Cards printed. They are packed in bundles of nine at a cost of £2. If you wish to purchase some of our cards, please send a cheque or postal order for £2 per pack and 75p postage and packing.

## Baby Wraps

One of our projects at the moment is to produce miniature baby wraps. These tiny wraps will enable babies lost through late miscarriage who are too tiny to be dressed to be handed to their parents with the dignity and respect they deserve. This has not always been the case in the past. This very small change would make such a difference to grieving parents enabling them to hold their tiny baby and spend some precious time with them.

If you feel you would like to help with this project by making a donation, we have a special account set up in:

**BANK OF IRELAND  
BLANCHARDSTOWN  
DUBLIN 15**

**Account Number 57899352  
Bank Sorting Code 90-04-20**