



The Miscarriage Association

OF IRELAND

Carmichael Centre, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7.

Telephone: 8735702/8725550

Registered Charity Number CHY9738

SPRING  
2006

# NEWSLETTER

## *A Word from the Chairperson*

Spring is here and it's lovely to see the first plants pushing up through the soil. It's a happy reminder that even in the bleakest of times, that life goes on and new lives keep appearing. For many people, spring marks a time of renewed hope, the brighter days helping to lift spirits after a long time in the dark. Sometimes it helps to remember that no matter how bad things seem, winter is always followed by spring, night by day.

The Miscarriage Association exists to help those who have been plunged into a personal "winter" by miscarriage. We are there to help them see the coming spring. We cannot take away their grief and pain but we can add hope and comfort to their lives. This work takes time, dedication and compassion. The workings of the Association depend on a small team of enthusiastic volunteers.

I would like to say a very big Thank You to our Committee members for all their hard work, effort and particularly their sense of humour, which I have noticed since becoming Chairperson. There have been times when it would have been easier to say "No" to some of the many requests but the girls on the Committee have always been there when needed.

We have been together through the sad and bad times but we have learned to accept life and can really appreciate the good times.

I feel privileged to be part of such a dedicated Committee and to have such sincere and wonderful friends. To all our readers, I would like, on behalf of the Association, to wish you joy and peace for 2006.

June

## Goodbye Maggie!

We would just like to take this opportunity to say a very big thank you to Maggie for her commitment to the Miscarriage Association of Ireland over the past 12 years. She has been an outstanding Chairperson and has worked endlessly on the issues surrounding Miscarriage.

Maggie has also been a wonderful friend to us all and we will miss her, particularly for her fun and sense of humour. Our loss will be another's gain!

Hopefully Maggie won't be too far away and we can count on her support to keep us on the right track.

We would like to wish her well in her career as Psychotherapist and Counselor.

*From the Committee of the  
Miscarriage Association of Ireland.*

## Christmas Cards/Greetings

We would like to take this opportunity to say thank you for all your good wishes at Christmas. We would also like to thank all of you who supported the Miscarriage Association by purchasing our Christmas Cards. We hope to promote these more strongly next year and hopefully we can count on your support once again.



Thankfully, with the help of Michele Turner and committee member Angela Grace, we are beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel with regard to our Website. This will be a huge benefit to us all. Thank you so much in anticipation. We will keep you informed of developments and look forward to its launch in the near future.

## Miscarriage Association of Ireland Committee

June O'Toole  
Chairperson

Karen Gilligan  
Secretary

Mary Lawson  
Treasurer

Cathy Lynch  
Committee Member

Angela Grace  
Committee Member

Niamh Ryan  
Committee Member

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## Annual Service of Remembrance – 13.11.2005

# A Unique Perspective

I have attended several of the previous Annual Services of Remembrance. This year I had the opportunity to view the event from an entirely new vantage point.

I was a little taken aback when the Chairperson, June, asked me if I would consider giving the narration at this year's service. Cathy Lynch has always done this in the past and she has always done an excellent job. Unfortunately, Cathy was unable to attend this year. It was suggested to me that "it might be nice to have a male voice for a change".

I will confess to more than a little anxiety in the time coming up to the Service. Here I was, supposed to be leading the sequence of events when I had always taken a back seat before, literally. This year I was not only to be on the altar but I was to make sure everything moved along.

I had to overcome my personal fears and anxieties and just get on with my role in the service. Later, it occurred to me that almost everyone there had to do something similar. I am sure that many of those who came along had to overcome grief, pain and fear just to get there. I could see on the faces of many of

them that they were dealing with huge emotions. But they were dealing with it and I think the Service can only have helped them along the way.

Many of you reading this will have a mental image of what the service was like. Those of you who were there will have their own special memories. I have mine, and here are some of them.

From the altar the view was spectacular. The church was not full but there seemed to be an awful lot of people there. All those faces, some sad, many clearly wrestling with their emotions, some shining with hope.

I felt I should make some comment about being the first male to have the honour of delivering the commentary. This naturally led me to comment on the role of the male in miscarriage. So many men feel they are helpless and unable to contribute. Little was I to know that the Rev. Aisling Shine, in her homily would also, later in the Service, follow the theme of the role of the man. You would almost think it was a plan but it was just a happy coincidence!

My personal highlight? After the Procession of Candles the congregation brought up small lit candles and placed them on the steps of the altar, a candle for each lost baby. I know that, seen from the body of the church, it is hard to appreciate just how many candles there are. I was looking down on them and I could not only see their glow but I could actually *feel* the heat from them. It was spectacular. It was, as I said at the time "both a heartening and a saddening sight to see so many."

I would love to have had the church lights turned off for a minute so we could all appreciate the light from all those candles, each one representing a personal loss, a memory, a hope. Maybe next time?

The music throughout the Service was wonderful; reflective at times, uplifting at others. It helped to set the perfect atmosphere. I am certain that most people there were touched. I hope some found some comfort. As for me, I had an unforgettable experience. It was a privilege, an honour and a pleasure to have had such a high profile role.

**Lorcan O'Toole**

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## Iron Man Challenge

### 26th June 2005

Again we would like to extend our congratulations and our heartfelt gratitude to **Ann and Nicky Burke** for organising the first and hopefully not the last Iron Man Challenge.

As mentioned in our previous Newsletter, this was a 52 mile cycle from Carrandulla in Galway to Croagh Patrick, climbing to the summit and descending before returning to Carrandulla again by bike.

I had the great honour of travelling to Galway and accepting a cheque for **€2,380** on behalf of the Miscarriage Association of Ireland. This will greatly enhance our funds and help us to continue our work and reach out to all sadly affected by miscarriage.



The photo shows Iron Man "Nicky Burke" centre with his little supporter in front, surrounded by his merry men.

With a little luck, the Iron Men of Carrandulla will continue the challenge this summer!

**June O'Toole**

## Fundraising

If you are interested in fundraising for our Association, we would welcome your ideas.

## Support Group Meetings

Our Support group meetings continue to be held in Buswells Hotel, Molesworth Street, Dublin 2. They are held on the first Thursday of each month at 8pm. The next meeting is on Thursday 6th April. The Book of Remembrance will next be available at the June meeting if you wish to view it or perhaps enter your baby's name. This book is indeed a treasure and very special indeed.

## Membership Renewal

Just a little reminder - your membership may be due for renewal. Our annual membership is €15. We would also ask members not to send cash in the post – cheque or postal orders please.

## Opinion Page

Articles are welcome for our Opinion Page. This page is used for people to state their opinions regarding miscarriage. This could mean:

- Treatment in hospital
- Aftercare
- Infertility problems
- Future pregnancies
- News that you wish to share with us about your miscarriage

Though people may wish to talk about their worries and concerns on this page, we would also welcome any positive experiences you have had. You may wish to remain anonymous in the newsletter but your name and address should be submitted to the Miscarriage Association of Ireland along with your letter.

# Flora Women's Mini Marathon Run for Us!

**When:** Bank Holiday Monday  
5th June 2006.

**Time:** 3pm

**Venue:** Dublin City Centre  
Start: Fitzwilliam Square.  
Finish: St. Stephen's Green.

We would be very grateful for your support. This is a real fun event. It is a great opportunity to get together for a very worthwhile cause and keep fit at the same time. It is a carefree day where **everybody** supports each other.

Afterwards we usually meet and enjoy a meal while discussing all the events of the day!

Let us know if you are interested and we can arrange to forward Tee-shirts and Sponsorship Cards.

**Please Note:** being sponsored for a charity does not entitle you to participate in the event. All participants must enter on an official entry form which will appear in the Evening Herald every Thursday and Saturday from **Thursday, 2<sup>nd</sup> March**, or online at [www.womensminimarathon.ie](http://www.womensminimarathon.ie). No photocopies will be accepted. You are welcome to visit the website for more information.

## Anniversaries

Second Anniversary of our precious little baby daughter Alanna Gavin-McGill who was born an Angel on November 7th 2003.  
Love and miss you so much Alanna.  
Sweet dreams.  
Love Mammy, Daddy, Emma, Dara and Stephen xxx

## Welcome Babies

We celebrated the birth of Niall on 3rd March 2005, a very welcome son to Marie McManus and Antoin Mullen. A brother for Eoghan and Lorcan.

# Holles Street – Service of Remembrance

4th September 2005

This service of remembrance was organised by the National Maternity Hospital, Holles Street and was held in St. Andrew's Church, Westland Row. It was deeply moving and it was obvious that everyone felt enriched by the experience.

Niamh Ryan and I attended on behalf of the Miscarriage Association of Ireland and it was an honour and a privilege to be present at such an uplifting and special occasion.

A lot of hard work, research and effort was put into organising this ceremony, which was a source of consolation and hope to parents and families of babies lost, before, during or after birth.

Great credit is due to all concerned for their wonderful work.

June O'Toole

## From the Gynaecology Ward, South Tipperary General Hospital, Clonmel

*In Remembrance of Babies lost at different stages of Pregnancy – Early or late Miscarriage, Intra-uterine Death, Stillbirth, Cot-death, Neo-natal Death, or, at whatever stage of their short lives...*

On Friday evening 11th November 2005, we held our fourth Annual Service of Remembrance in the Education Centre of the hospital. The evening was once again very well attended. The participation, help and support from members of the Interdisciplinary team and parents attending the Service was very much appreciated and received.

At the Entrance to our venue, Parents had the opportunity to write the name of Lost Loved One in the Book of Remembrance and take a Tee Light – 7 – lights were lit in the course of the Service and placed on a central round table along with a beautiful Flower arrangement and the Book of Remembrance. These were all blessed by our Celebrant Fr. Bobby Power cc.

Readings, Bidding Prayers etc. were beautifully read by Parents and Staff members.

Hymns and Music were supplied and performed by three young girls, Aoife, Deirdre and Aine. Their performance added so much to our evening.

Acknowledgements were made to all those who assisted, helped and supported in making our Service possible.

In conclusion, an update was given on plans to develop and improve our "Holy Angel's Plot" in St. Patrick's Cemetery. i.e. planting of seasonal shrubs and to erect a curbing around the plots.

On behalf of Gynae Management and Staff, I hope our Annual Service of Remembrance helped Parents in their healing process with their grief and sadness on the loss of their loved ones.

**Eileen Hanrahan, Gynaecology Ward, South Tipperary General Hospital**

## Remembrance Service, Greystones

19th November 2005

A Service of Remembrance for babies lost before, during and after birth took place in the parish of Greystones in the Blacklion church on Saturday 19 November 2005. It was the first such service in the area and was supported by the local community. Margaret, Noleen and Rosaleen of the local liturgy group along with Father Enda arranged the beautiful and thoughtful service.

Our Miscarriage Candle, Babe in Arms and Book of Remembrance were carried to the altar in the procession. The candle procession was a reminder of the babies we have lost. Our Chairperson June O'Toole gave a very sincere and friendly homily and I led the church in a meditation for our lost babies. The music at the service was beautiful and was performed by the local folk group. The readings and reflections were very comforting.

Most of the congregation took time after the service to sign the Book of Remembrance. A lot of people expressed thanks that the service had been organised and said that they were delighted to attend. For many it was the first time that they were publicly able to acknowledge their lost babies. Many hoped it would now become an annual event. The liturgy group hope to organise a similar service next year.

Both June and myself felt privileged to have participated in the service.

Angela Grace

**JUST A NOTE:**  
Sometimes, for whatever reason it is not always possible to publish or acknowledge everybody's correspondence. This does not mean it is not important so please keep forwarding your items of news for sharing.

### Reflection

*"Sharing a burdened heart with another who has the wisdom, strength and knowledge to carry it, frees us from its weight long enough to focus on solutions."*

– Liane Cordes

Our obsession with a problem, any incessant problem, keeps it a problem. Our focus on it destroys the balanced perspective that is necessary for a solution to become apparent.

Sharing a problem's details with an interested friend clarifies the muddle. It also doubles the chances that a solution will emerge.

Holding on to problems, like keeping secrets, keeps us stuck. Our emotional health is proportionate to the freedom with which we willingly share ourselves with the people close to us.

Sharing our joys doubles them. Sharing our burdens diminishes them. But more than that, it promises the discovery of their solutions.

*"Today I will share a problem – perhaps my own, or someone else's. A solution will be apparent nevertheless."*

From the Promise of a New Day  
Living Solutions/Hazelden  
PO Box 616, Cork.

**I came across the above Reflection in the Sunday Independent 5/2/06 and I just thought it was worth sharing for those of you who might have missed it.**

June

Please let us have your stories, poetry, articles, coming events, sad farewells, welcome babies, anniversaries and anything you feel will help those who read our newsletter. Please mark all envelopes "Newsletter". Please include name address and a contact phone number. Your name does not have to be included in the article if you wish to remain anonymous.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Our newsletter is circulated to members, hospitals and other interested parties and is available on the Internet courtesy of the Coombe Women's Hospital. The opinions in this newsletter are those of the contributors and are not necessarily those of the Miscarriage Association of Ireland.

**Closing date for contributions to the next Newsletter – 12th May 2006**