



The Miscarriage Association  
OF IRELAND

Carmichael Centre, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7  
Telephone: 01 873 5702  
www.miscarriage.ie  
Registered Charity No. CHY9738

Winter  
2008

# NEWSLETTER

## *Hello again*

You are very welcome to the Winter edition of our Newsletter.

Now that it is Winter, many of you will be wondering how you will cope with all it brings – Christmas and festivities. It can be very hard at times to put on that “brave face” especially when you are grieving. Try not to feel alone. You have support on the other end of the telephone, somebody who has been there and understands. Check our website for the current Telephone Rota or you can always telephone Carmichael Centre (01) 873 5702 for details of who is on-call.

The Miscarriage Association was established in September 1988 by Hilary Frazer and Stephanie Blandford. Hilary had experienced a miscarriage and was feeling those all too familiar feelings of isolation, emptiness and sadness. She placed an advertisement in the paper and Stephanie answered. She too had experienced a miscarriage. This was the beginning of something bigger than both of them.

As we celebrate our 20th anniversary we can reflect on the fact that the need for support is greater than ever. Sadly, we have lost count of the number of miscarriages we have been told about. Happily, we recall many stories of personal triumph and healing.

On behalf of all you reading this newsletter and all of the countless others who have contacted us over the years, we would like to extend our gratitude to Hilary and Stephanie for what they started. They saw the bigger picture. For those of you who get the opportunity to see this bigger picture it has a powerful message. Every life, no matter how short has a purpose and a meaning. All those missing little lives have given us a life of purpose and so their existence has not been in vain. I think that you will agree that we have learned the meaning of unconditional love. Pain is the price we pay for loving and I believe that we would never diminish the love we have shared with our “lost baby.” In many cases, love makes the pain bearable. It shapes who we are and lets us see just what qualities are important in life.

After a miscarriage you are never the same again. Life takes on a new meaning. There will always be two parts to your life; before the miscarriage and after it. Nothing can be taken for granted. Sadly, we cannot find consolation for everyone. For those of you who are fortunate to have other children, cherish them and for those who don't, cherish your relationships. It is a difficult time but don't put yourself under pressure. People react and cope in different ways. Everybody is unique and everybody has the right to be treated with respect.

To all our members, on behalf of your Committee, I would like to wish you joy, peace, hope and love in the days ahead.

*June O'Toole*

## *Memorial Stone, Deansgrange Cemetery - Saturday 11th October 2008*

The Miscarriage Association of Ireland was delighted to place our second Memorial Stone in the Plot of the Angels in Deansgrange Cemetery on Saturday 11th October 2008. It was a sunny, autumn day and everything looked at its brightest as we placed the beautiful granite stone onto the newly re-developed Plot of the Angels. The stone reads “Behold I have carved you on the palms of my hands (Isaiah 49:16)” In memory of our precious little babies who never got the opportunity to share our lives with us but will live in our hearts forever. “And remember I am with you always to the end of the age (Matthew 28:20)” Erected by the Miscarriage Association of Ireland 2008'

It was an honour and a privilege for myself and my husband to be present while this stone was being placed and to be representative of all the parents whose babies lives were too short, regardless of the circumstances of their loss. We felt proud to be there honouring over 750 babies buried in this plot and all babies everywhere who died too soon and whose parents mourned their passing, many in secret.

We are very grateful to Catherine Keenan and Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council for their assistance and cooperation with this. We would also like to thank all the workers at Deansgrange Cemetery who took on the project of upgrading the Plot of the Angels and have made it a beautiful tribute to all the babies who are buried there. This was obviously a labour of love. Their plans are to have different flowering plants on the Plot for each season and also to erect a Christmas tree on it at Christmas time, in keeping with a tradition started by some of the parents visiting the plot before its recent 'make-over'. We are sure it will be a well visited place of peace for a long time to come.

The Miscarriage Association of Ireland hopes to have the Memorial Stone dedicated in the coming months. We are delighted we now have three Memorial Stones in various locations – Glasnevin Cemetery, Deansgrange Cemetery and at St. Theresa's Church, Donore Avenue – for more details visit [www.miscarriage.ie](http://www.miscarriage.ie) . These stones are dedicated to all babies lost through miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy and all babies whose lives were too short. Some babies have their own resting place in a family plot or a grave but some who only got to share our lives briefly do not and so their families sometimes need a memorial or a nice peaceful place to visit and think of them.

If you know a cemetery or location in your part of the country that would have a suitable place for a Memorial Stone, please contact us and we will see if arrangements can be made to place a stone there.

**Michele Turner**



## *A Point of Light*

*You were a point of light*

*A beginning*

*We dared to hope*

*Your arrival longed for*

*Waves of joy*

*God's plan was different*

*You returned to the light*

*To be with angels*

*We were plunged into darkness*

*Deepest despair*

*Sorrow, loss, mourning*

*Then a window opened*

*A little light shone in*

*Was that you?*

*Now that point of light*

*Will always be in our hearts*

*Never forgotten, forever loved*

*Michael O'Reaffe*

## *Welcome Babies*

*A very special welcome to baby Annie Denise Fitzsimons, born on 4th September 2008, a beautiful daughter for proud parents Anne and Conor and a little baby sister for Lucy, Zoe and Sam.*

*A very special welcome to baby Callum Thomas Coleman, born 6th March 2006 and Baby Cassie Anne Coleman, born 15th September 2008, two very precious and much longed for babies for Grace and Paul.*

*A very special welcome to baby Áine Lawless O'Brien, born July 2008 a little sister for her two big brothers, James and Eoin and a beautiful baby daughter for proud Mum & Dad..*

## *Sad Farewells*

### *FOR LITTLE BABIES, BORN TOO SOON*

*Baby Aisling, born 6th April 2007.*

*Baby Canada, born 27th September 2007.*

*Baby Joe, born 18th January 2008.*

*Baby Mark Anthony, born 3rd July 2008.*

*Sadly missed by Mammy & Daddy, Liz & Michael and brothers Sean & Brian.*

*"To our wee one in heaven, you were due to be here on Dec 20th, lost from us on May 10th, We bought you a little teddy Christmas decoration & will put it on our tree. We will get you a new one each year.*

*You will always be quietly in our world but with so much love & smiles, Enjoy the angels, Love mammy olive & daddy mick xx*

*In memory of our special little angel Katie Doran sadly lost on 1st June 2008 due on 25th October 2008. Katie you are always in our thoughts and will never be forgotten. We think of you every day. Love always Mammy, Daddy and Callum.*

## *Anniversary*

*4th anniversary of Baby Dunlea 29th May 2004*

*Dearly missed and lovingly remembered for the joy you brought us during your short life.*

*You are always on our minds.*

*All our love, Mammy, Daddy, little sister Elizabeth & little brother Joshua Dunlea*

## POETRY

Little Angel

On the wings of an angel, you  
flew away

God wanted you for his  
garden, where flowers don't  
decay.

He saw your beautiful soul, he  
knew you were the one  
He carried you home to  
Heaven, to sit beside his son.

Now he knew how sad, we  
would be,

To say goodbye to you.  
So he made you our guardian  
angel,

To guide us in the things we  
do.

We are sorry you had to wait  
so long

For us to say goodbye  
But somewhere in God's  
bigger plan  
There are reasons, we don't  
know why.

Sometimes, we dream of how  
things might have been.

Of all the things we might have  
seen.

Of all the places we might have  
gone.

Of all the times we would sing  
a song.

Sometimes the pain is so hard  
to bear.

But we smile and look up to  
heaven.

And know you are there.  
Our special little Angel.

Mam and Dad (Helen & Tony)

Written by Helen McGrath in  
memory of Baby Alice

## Support Group Meetings

### *Dublin*

Our Support group meetings continue to be held in Buswells Hotel, Molesworth Street, Dublin 2 on the first Thursday of each month at 8pm (excluding July and August). This is an opportunity to meet with others who have experienced the trauma of miscarriage and air your feelings in a safe and confidential atmosphere.

*Please note:* The January meeting will be on the second Thursday 8th January 2009 as the first Thursday is New Years day.

### *Cork*

A dedicated group of people are working hard to establish a support group in Cork. We acknowledge that this is no easy task and wish them every success.

### *Listowel*

A support group meeting has been setup in the Duagh Family Life Centre, Listowel by Margaret Payne. The first meeting was held on Wednesday 10th December 2008. To find out about the next meeting please contact Margaret on 0879347300.

### *Sligo*

St. Michael's Family Life Centre in Church Hill, Sligo acts as a base for anybody seeking support in the Sligo Area. (Contact No. 071 917 0329).

### **Website**

[www.miscarriage.ie](http://www.miscarriage.ie) is there for you and offers help, information and contact details. It keeps you up to date on all the latest news and events. It is proving to be a tremendous point of contact and a great resource.

### **Membership Renewal**

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

## Holles Street Service of Remembrance – Sunday 7th September 2008

June O'Toole (Chairperson) and I attended on behalf of the Miscarriage Association of Ireland the annual Holles Street Service of Remembrance which was held in St. Andrew's Church, Westland Row.

I was not sure what to expect as I had never attended this service before. However as soon as June and I walked through the entrance of St. Andrew's Church, everything worked so well, from the welcoming staff of Holles Street (many of whom had looked after me so well during my many visits and stays in Holles Street) to the refreshing and much needed cup of coffee after the service. It was greatly appreciated by all that attended.

It was a very special and moving service, especially when the staff formed a procession and carried lighted candles to the altar in memory of many babies whose parents were unable to attend for many reasons. I was deeply touched to know that although I had never attended this service my babies were not forgotten by the caring staff of Holles Street.

I could see that a lot of hard work and thought went into organising this wonderful service, from the comforting readings, the fabulous music and even the little bag of snowdrops that was presented to each one of us to plant in memory of our child or children.

Great credit and admiration go to all concerned and also a big thank you.

It was an honour and privilege to be present that afternoon and I certainly will be attending next year.

*Yvonne Shiels*

### **FLORA WOMEN'S MINI MARATHON – 2nd June 2008**

The Flora Women's Mini Marathon took place in Dublin on Bank Holiday Monday the 2nd of June. Our thanks and gratitude go to the members and friends of The Miscarriage Association of Ireland who took part to raise funds, especially those who traveled long distances to participate. Plenty of fun and chat was to be had as we made our way around the course. Sincere thanks go out to all those who supported the walkers and runners with generous sponsorship. A total of €1,856.00 was raised.

### **CORK WOMEN'S MINI MARATHON – 28th September 2008**

Many thanks to the women in Cork who walked/ran the mini-marathon in aid of the Miscarriage Association this year. It is great to see so many participating and raising awareness of miscarriage. A total of €1862.00 was raised on the day. Well done to all who participated.



## *Annual Service of Remembrance - Sunday 9th November 2008*

On Sunday the 9th of November, the Miscarriage Association of Ireland held our Service of Remembrance in St. Theresa's church, Donore Avenue, SCR, Dublin 8.

This year is particularly special as the Association itself was 20 years in existence. I attended the service with my younger daughter Aoife and I have never seen the church so full since I started attending the service nine years ago. It was a lovely sight to see so many people.

Fr. Sean McArdle and Rev. Sonia Hicks came out of the church at 3pm to the memorial stone which was erected in the grounds of St. Theresa's church as a permanent dedication to all miscarried babies. It was indeed a very special moment. Then at 3.30pm the Service of Remembrance started with beautiful music from the Lucan Folk Group who sang very meaningful songs for the whole service itself.

A procession of children and adults brought up "Remembrance Books" and there was a lovely candle procession where the candles were set up on the altar and each family got to take their candle home with them. Each family was also given a lovely silver dove to hang on their Christmas tree, a dove which represents a sign of peace. It was especially meaningful to me as that is what my name means. Lorcan (husband of our chairperson June O'Toole) ended the service by thanking everyone for their help and for attending the service by coming along and giving their support. One of the committee member's daughter, Aisling Lawson, played the violin and it was indeed lovely to listen to. In addition to the lovely music from the Lucan Folk Group. My daughter Aoife and I are very pleased to have been able to attend the lovely service and it was nice to be able to remember the babies we lost and to pay tribute to them in this very special way.

*Irene Roche*

## *Remembrance Service, Greystones - Sunday 16th November 2008*

A service of remembrance was held at St Killian's Church, Blacklion on Sunday 16th November which was presided over by Parish Priest Mons. Enda Lloyd. The service, organised by the local Liturgy Group, was both moving and prayerful. The readings selected were most appropriate to the occasion. The singing by The Parish Folk Group added greatly to the service and again it was obvious that much thought went into the selection of the pieces sung. Michael O'Keeffe read his poem 'A Point of Light' which is reproduced elsewhere in this issue. We were very pleased to welcome June O'Toole and Angela Grace from The Miscarriage Association who, as always, are very supportive and generous with their advice. A number of entries were made to the Book of Remembrance after the service and the cup of tea and chat added a social dimension to the occasion. We feel that those who attended, both young and not so young, derived solace from a moving and reflective ceremony.

*Michael O'Keeffe*

## *The Rotunda Hospital, Service of Remembrance - Sunday 30th November 2008*

"Sometimes love is for a moment  
Sometimes love is for a lifetime  
Sometimes a moment is a lifetime."

Denise Shaw and I had the privilege of representing the Miscarriage Association of Ireland at the Rotunda Hospital Service of Remembrance in St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral, Dublin. It was a very beautiful Service and the sight of all those little white candles on the altar glowing brightly was of huge significance as all those little candles represented our missing babies, "who never got the opportunity to share our lives with us, but will live on in our hearts forever." Most Reverend Raymond Field D.D., auxiliary Bishop of Dublin brought an air of great honour and prayerful reflection to this very special event.

Our gratitude and thanks go to The Chaplain, Ann Charlton and indeed all the Staff of the Rotunda Hospital for their dedication in organising this memorable service dedicated to all our little angels.

*June O'Toole*

## *Christmas Cards*

We would like to take this opportunity to say thank you for your support over the years. The sale of Christmas cards is not only a financial benefit to our Association but also helps to promote awareness and let people know that there is help at hand. Our cards sold out completely at our Service of Remembrance and the orders are still coming in by post and email.

## **Publicity and Awareness**

While miscarriage remains for many a hidden grief, we are very grateful for the publicity gained from RTE and the media.

We would like to thank RTE and the media for providing us with a forum to continue to highlight the heartbreak of miscarriage.

## **Hospitals and Medical Staff**

We will continue our efforts to meet with the medical professionals with the purpose of highlighting awareness and supporting each other.

We were delighted to accept an invitation from the Coombe Hospital and from the National Maternity Hospital, Holles Street to meet with the Social Workers and discuss issues relating to miscarriage. Hopefully, we will get many more opportunities to share our knowledge and work together.

## **Our Logo**



The Tree with the falling leaf speaks volumes! Our Logo is the family tree and the falling leaf represents the missing family member – in this case – our precious little baby lost through miscarriage.

This Logo has been an inspiration and a source of consolation for so many over the years. We would like on behalf of the Committee and all the members of the Miscarriage Association of Ireland to extend our gratitude to Marie McCarthy who was inspired all those years ago and came up with this beautiful and very appropriate design.

### ***We need your help!***

As you can imagine, there is a great need for support following the loss of a baby through miscarriage. We do the best we can but would love to be in a position to do more. With your help, maybe this is possible. If you feel you might be in a position to help, we would love to hear from you. Nobody is asked to take on more than they can handle. Every bit of support, no matter how small makes a huge difference.

You can contact us online or by telephone or by letter.

### ***Fundraising***

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

### ***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

### **Note**

Our newsletter is circulated to members, hospitals and other interested parties and is available on the internet. The opinions in this newsletter are those of the contributors and are not necessarily those of the Miscarriage Association of Ireland.

### **Closing Date for Next Newsletter**

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.

*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.*

**Closing date for entries for next newsletter is 10 April 2009**

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**June O'Toole, Chairperson**

**Niamh Ryan, Secretary**

**Angela Grace, Treasurer**

*Committee members:* Mary Lawson, Denise Shaw, Yvonne Shiels, Marie McManus, Helen Groves, Jennifer Ryan, Deirdre NiFhaolain