

# Miscarriage Association of Ireland



***Welcome to the Miscarriage Association of Ireland  
Autumn Newsletter 2016***

***The newsletter is a space where we can share our stories of loss and find comfort in the knowledge that we are not alone in our grief.***

***I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this issue, it is really great that you want to share your stories.***

***Deirdre Pierce-McDonnell  
Chairperson – The Miscarriage Association of Ireland***



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**Registered Charity No. CHY9738 / 20024420**

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## Welcome

*Another year has passed since our last newsletter. However fast time passes by, it is important to mark the lives of our babies in whatever little ways are of significance to us individually. For some this is lighting a candle on those special dates, wearing that special piece of jewellery, or attending to or replanting a garden or planter pots, releasing a balloon, writing your baby's name in the sand on a beach, or writing a blog or sharing your story.....*

*Thus this newsletter is a space where we can share our stories of loss and find comfort in the knowledge that we are not alone in our grief and I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this issue.*

*The Miscarriage Association of Ireland has had a busy year in terms of providing support to women and their families who have been through the trauma of losing a baby through miscarriage.*

### **We provide support in the following ways:**

- Telephone support lines- see **[www.miscarriage.ie/telephonesupport.html](http://www.miscarriage.ie/telephonesupport.html)** for the telephone rota and numbers
- Email – [info@miscarriage.ie](mailto:info@miscarriage.ie)
- Monthly support group meeting which takes place on the 1st Thursday of every month at 8 pm in Buswells Hotel, Molesworth Street, Dublin 2.  
***We have our Book of Remembrance at the meetings in September, December, March and June for those who might like to make an entry in the Book.***
- Our website **[www.miscarriage.ie](http://www.miscarriage.ie)** and face book page **[www.facebook.com/miscarriage.ie](http://www.facebook.com/miscarriage.ie)**
- Our Annual Service of Remembrance which takes place on the 2nd Sunday of November every year. The date for the Service of Remembrance 2016 is Sunday 13th November at 3 pm in St Theresa's Church, Donore Avenue, (off South Circular Road), Dublin 8
- Distribution of our information book and leaflet-  
This is available to download from our website, but this year we have also teamed up with [Healthbrochures.ie](http://Healthbrochures.ie) whereby our information book and leaflet can be ordered in bulk (or singularly). Visit **[Healthbrochures.ie](http://Healthbrochures.ie)** - Tel: 061-338580 or email: [enquiries@informireland.ie](mailto:enquiries@informireland.ie)
- Our books of remembrance – where you can make an entry in memory of your baby. See the website for details.

*Deirdre Pierce-McDonnell*  
*Chairperson – The Miscarriage Association of Ireland*

## YOUR STORIES

Hello

My name is Siobhan McDermott and last June I had a miscarriage and used your services which were so valuable to me. I had a sympathetic ear, given access to proper information and found your website and the information you sent to me very beneficial. You were kind enough to send me some bookmarks and a lovely decoration that I put on my Christmas tree last year. As the baby I miscarried was due on Christmas day your decoration meant so much to me that day.

The reason I am emailing, and I had intended to do this many months ago, was because last October around Remembrance Day on the 15th I recall reading and hearing on the radio stories about women who had miscarried and had felt that the treatment they received from the hospital they attended added to their suffering. I felt so sad for these women because my experience in hospital was quite positive (all things considered, after all I was having a miscarriage).

I found out I had what is called a 'missed miscarriage' on 16 June 2015 when I attend the hospital for my 12 week scan. I had started to have a light bleed a few days previously and deep down I knew I wasn't going to get good news. For that reason I told my husband to come with me but all that time I had told him not to be worried about the bleed. I really wanted to protect him. I told the midwife of my concerns before I was scanned. She scanned me and confirmed what I knew. The baby had stopped growing at approx. 8 weeks and there was no heartbeat. I was devastated but the midwife kept me calm and was so gentle in her approach. She said how sorry she was to give me this news and that she needed to refer me to a doctor to discuss the options available to me at this stage.

Even though I was only waiting 15-20 minutes it felt like a lifetime. A doctor came, and although the compassion wasn't as obvious (I think Doctors tend to be a bit more clinical), she acknowledged my loss and sympathised. She explained what a 'missed miscarriage' was and advised that medically it was best that I have a procedure called an ERPC as soon as possible. She explained why this was recommended, what it would involve etc. She gave me a HSE booklet on miscarriage which I found useful to read while she left to book the procedure. She returned a few minutes later to confirm it for 18 June 2015. She gave me two tablets, one I was to take the night before and one the morning of the procedure. It was a lot to take in for Brian and I. I returned to work afterwards numb with sadness, only telling my boss as I would be out of work for a few days.

Having to take the tablets was very difficult because I knew that this was final. I cried so much but knew I had to see this through. Brian came to the hospital as I was checked in and stayed with me for a while. Eventually I sent him away as I wanted to be alone and at that stage a nurse and anaesthetist had seen me to discuss what was going to happen. They were so professional, warm and polite. I was alone on and off for a few hours as the hospital was busy and couldn't carry out the procedure until closer to lunch time. I was visited by two wonderful women, a bereavement midwife and the hospital Chaplin. They were so nice to me, spent time having a chat, didn't judge me when I cried and listened to me.

*continued....*

It was so good to have someone listen to how I was feeling. I hadn't expected a visit like this and it meant a lot to me. I probably only spent 15 minutes at the most with each of them but it was comforting and reassuring to talk to them. The bereavement midwife gave me her card. Just before I went to theatre a nurse came down to collect me, had a chat with me and said how sorry she was for my loss. It was strange walking into a theatre not feeling sick, just sad and vulnerable. It's impossible to describe what it's like lying on that table, feeling so exposed. As the anesthetist started to prepare to put me to sleep I started to shake and panic. My chest got tight and my breath fast. A nurse took my hand, encouraged me to breath deeply and to not take my eyes off her. She reassured me the procedure would be short and that I was very brave. Within seconds I was asleep.

In recovery the nurses were attentive to my needs, I just remember being so thirsty, and a nurse gave me some strong pain relief. I was taken back to my room to rest and I slept for roughly an hour or two. A nurse got me some tea and toast and encouraged me to rest some more. I fell asleep again and when she returned she said my aunt was coming in to collect me and started the discharge process. She discussed how important it was to take time off to rest, grieve and to not rush back to work. She said this was a sad time and my priority needed to be to myself and not work or anything else. They were wise words as the first few days home were a real struggle, especially when my husband went to work and I was home alone.

I made sure to tell those closest to me what had happened as I was not myself for a few weeks after. I cried a lot and was not my usual chatty self. I felt it was the right thing to do, to not hold in all this sadness and sharing helped ease the pain. I was also lucky to have the love and support of my husband, family and friends.

It's nearly a year since my miscarriage but my story has a happy ending. About 2 months after my miscarriage I got pregnant and I am now the mother of a 4 week old boy called Christopher. It took a while to accept the pregnancy as I felt so guilty about losing the first baby but gradually I relaxed and embraced it. It's funny how things work out and as I look at my little boy I feel so blessed. I still grieve for my other baby but know how lucky I am to have a healthy baby boy.

I hope that services to those who experience miscarriage improves and that women in that situation are taken better care of just like I was.

You are welcome to share my story if it might help anyone during their time of sadness.

I wish to thank your association for all your support last year. I hope all the women who contact you get a happy ending like I did this year.

***Kindest regards,***

***Siobhan McDermott***



**Margaret's Story**

In our ideal life, pregnancy is a dream fulfilled. In real life, no matter how much you long for it, it's petrifying. Looking down from the heights to the unknown changing vastness of impending parenthood. It may undo your plans, stall your ambitions or as in my case, simply fill you with feelings of utter inadequacy. But the terror doesn't last, day by day you start to fall in love with this little possibility buried inside of you. Boy or girl, cot or Moses basket, which will it be? But that's the paradox, miscarriage rips that dream from you, and makes your pregnancy a reality only through its loss and aftermath. You'll never get to meet that person that could have been.

I've had four miscarriages. Three before 12 weeks, and one that ended at 14 weeks with a D&C. A lot of miscarriages, but still, not as many as some. Three times I've been lucky in my unluckiness and did not need any further medical intervention beyond an ultrasound, and that was only to establish miscarriage was complete. But that one time where I did require the awfulness of hospitalisation, I had insisted on trying to miscarry naturally. If such a phrase is fair and just. I still don't know why, a hopeless hope maybe, a primal irrational longing. It began but didn't happen entirely, and after over two weeks of bleeding, prudence prevailed and my doctor insisted on stepping in. Hospitals are a necessary evil for a miscarrying woman. Every visit is like a potential scald.

The one memory that presents itself time and again, is not what happened, but how it mires you in powerlessness and secrecy. The experience is amplified by a voice from inside you, a voice every woman who has miscarried hears. It co-opts clinical language, telling you it was not a real baby and could never have been. It's the same internal voice that stares judgmentally from the side lines, ribbing you to cop yourself on and stop being so upset. That voice will at times become accusatory and nasty, calling you a failure that can't conceive a real baby. In hospital, individual members of staff were always collectively lovely, especially once they realise why you are there. But it's the repeated telling that's wearing. A restaurant can beam your order from a server to till in the peak of business hours. But a hospital can't call up your details between visits and departments. I remember sitting in a jam-packed waiting room in the height of summer. My miscarriage had originally presented as a potential ectopic. Instead it was a less serious blighted ovum. See what I mean? It's never a baby. But dates and measurements were sketchy, so we played a waiting game. The game where everyone loses. At one such visit I met a friend I had not seen for 15 years. She had her new-born in his or her car seat, I can't remember whether she had a boy or a girl. They were both there to be discharged at their six week check-up. I put on my happy face. I forgot her name repeatedly. The person I usually am, would have asked for her number and email and made a point of connecting. In the retelling I don't know what we talked about or what she said. I just didn't care. I wanted the poor girl gone. I wanted the day over and done. I wanted to get far away from that room with its magazine-reading pregnant ladies, waddling, glowing, complaining about their backs and joking about their bladders. I didn't begrudge them. I just wanted to sink my head in my hands and weep. I didn't want to be brave. I wanted to be destitute.

*continued....*

I could have just told my old friend what was wrong with me, but I didn't. Because I didn't want to upset her, she'd just had a baby and it wouldn't be fair. Instead I left her thinking I was disinterested and dismissive. A different waiting space would have prevented that hurt for both of us. And it does hurt, as much as you don't want it too. That waiting room betrays a common situation. One that exposes a societal tendency not to take miscarriage seriously enough, rendering the personal tragedy of it unimportant. But things are slowly changing, I see hope and openness to how devastating it can be, green shoots of healing. And you will heal. That I know, but not against the clock or to a prescribed set of rules. There is no word in any language that adequately sums up the loss of a baby that has only just let you be its mother, ghosting into your body with nausea, tiredness, plans and worries. I've had happy miraculous outcomes as well.

I had been told I'd miscarried my little boy. I had a huge bleed and thought that was it. But the sickness persisted and his heartbeat appeared like a blinking beam of hope on the ultrasound. He was five yesterday. But for each miscarriage I have no regrets. I will be sad always, because they all mattered. But I am also happy, because all my babies were worth it, each one a stab at hope. Human beings are experiential creatures. By that I mean we have to see, hear and touch to know and think. Even the most esoteric thought come the confluence of our experience. Your body with its swelling breasts, tiredness and tightening clothes has given you the knowledge, it has shown you a pathway for your grief. This was your child, your moment of hope and disruption, your great impending change. No matter how cloudy the image on the scan was, or how many weeks you were or weren't, irrespective of the detached terminology required by medical staff to give you the best care possible. It was your child.

I wish things could be better for women who have and will miscarry. That we can be supported more, and grieve as we choose, and not as time, facilities and opinions permit. I take my comfort from indisputable fact that I was mother to all four of my lost my babies as much as I am mother to my two healthy thriving children. And no one can take that from me and nor would I want them too. Once you are a mother, you are always a mother. That life that flickered for a moment beats forever in your heart, let it, give it room and let it stay, it will help you through those sad listless days. Your heart has loved without gain or reward. Your tears are your proof, don't let anyone deny you, especially the voice in your head.

**Margaret**



## ***Shelley's Story***

Starting off our married life together, children were not our top priority. We were both 22 and enjoying eachothers company, would take little to head off for a weekend break somewhere and had little responsibility (pre mortgage!). Fast forward 3 years and we felt ready to start a family. I had been working as a Bank nurse in the local hospital and when 'a line' came up to cover for a few weeks in Gynae I jumped at the chance of some stability, albeit the fact I had never worked in Gynae even during my training.

I had been hit by a bus. Daily seeing and nursing women and their partners through their loss from miscarriage and helping to not only nurse the physical but emotional side of miscarriage I was facing something I had never done before. But with the expert and excellent guidance of the ward sisters and senior staff I felt enabled to do this.

We were delighted when in the Summer of 2007 I had a positive test. Things could not have been brighter, I just couldn't wait to tell my family and I thought I would soon burst if I couldn't! At work one evening I had a pain in my side, niggly at first it but it began to annoy me and I mentioned it to one of the doctors. Not really wishing to get scanned without Gary there but feeling the need to, at 7 weeks they 'couldn't see anything.' My heart was broken. I was sure of my dates so the line of 'perhaps you're earlier than you thought' didn't sit well with me and I was sent home to rest. The line that had rolled off my tongue more than enough times 'We'll see you for a re-scan in a week' was now been said to me. A WEEK! A whole 7 days to ponder, wish, pray that things would be different. They also took my BHCG level and when it slightly increased after 48 hours I was then admitted in case of an ectopic. More scans, more bloods and telling my family the news of 'I'm pregnant but it's not good news' was something I never thought I'd do.

Yet being nursed on my own ward was actually very therapeutic and being cared for by the very doctors I worked with was lovely. I went on to miscarry naturally and took 6 weeks off work. I needed to be fully recharged to return to a working environment that dealt with my very own loss. It was an experience I will never forget but it did not happen for nothing. Our wee angel I believe was conceived and died to make me into the nurse I am today. I am so very thankful that we have been blessed with 3 children, Nathan, 7, Megan, 6 and Holly 3 and a half. Nathan was conceived before the due date of our loss and we are so thankful that we are their parents. When I sit with a patient and sympathize I often use my own experience and it's like their face changes and their guard comes down when I say 'When I had my miscarriage.' It's like, ah she understands! So I truly believe that is why I can work in such an environment and honestly feel privileged and honoured to work with women and their families in such a traumatic time for them. I love my job and often refer women to the Miscarriage Association.

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So when this year I decided to train for my first marathon, and wanted to raise money at the same time the Miscarriage Association was my port of call. I started running after my third child was born to get fit never realising it would give me not only a healthier outlook but head space and a great deal of new friends. Fast forward 3 years and as my miles increased, one of my bucket list ideas of running a marathon was coming to fruition! Aiming to raise €300 (whilst secretly hoping for €500) I was completely overwhelmed when the grand total amounted to €1602!! Past patients and their husbands, colleagues, family and friends all gave generously and I can honestly say I ran each step with a smile knowing that the money raised would be put to fantastic use by the Association.

***Shelley***





## Baby Loss Awareness Evening – 15th October 2015

In recent years, October 15th has been marked as International Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day. In honor of this day last year, Ectopic Pregnancy Ireland (EPI), The Miscarriage Association of Ireland (MAI) and Feileacáin joined together to host a Baby Loss Awareness and Remembrance Evening to observe this day in Ireland.

Everyone who had been affected by ectopic pregnancy, miscarriage or baby loss was welcomed to join us at the Davenport Hotel in the heart of Dublin City. After refreshments, Lorcan O'Toole, our compere for the evening, invited everyone to remember our lost babies with a Wave of Light Ceremony. Candles were lit by representatives from MAI, EPI and Feileacáin and also by Dr. Rhona Mahony, Master of the National Maternity Hospital, Holles Street. This was a moment shared internationally as candles were lit all across the world at that particular time to remember lost babies.

Our first speaker was Dr. Rhona Mahony who spoke on baby loss in her professional capacity. Imogen Carter spoke about how 'Cakes for Conor' came about after the loss of her baby boy Conor. Imogen found that watching the Great British Bake Off and the resulting cake making by herself was a small source of consolation that kept her going even though she was suffering great pain without Conor. Dr. Pat Tunney spoke about medical follow-up after a loss and Georgina Curshaw told Molly's Story. Ann Bergin from the Health Service Executive spoke on 'Standards on Bereavement' and then we had a Butterfly Barn where everyone was invited to pin a butterfly, representing their baby, onto a Remembrance Wall. Edel Juany, committee member of the MAI, spoke movingly about recurrent miscarriage and Jennifer Ryan of EPI told her own story of ectopic pregnancy.

There were many volunteer stands in the room giving people an opportunity to talk to representatives from the various charity groups who have an input into the area of baby loss whether it be Miscarriage, Stillbirth, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), or the death of a Newborn. We were delighted with the many groups who availed of the opportunity to take part in our evening which included Anam Cara, Irish Hospice Foundation, SOFT Ireland, Irish Childhood Bereavement Network and One Day More to name but a few.

There was a very good attendance at the event which we felt was a successful collaboration between the various groups with common interest in baby loss. We look forward to working with Ectopic Pregnancy Ireland and Feileacáin again on future projects and hope to host another Baby Loss Awareness Evening in the future.

**Marie McManus,**  
**Treasurer.**

## *Miscarriage Association of Ireland – Service of Remembrance Sunday 8th November 2015*

We held our Annual Service of Remembrance in St Theresa's Church, Donore Avenue on the second Sunday of November which is a tradition that has built up over the years. St Theresa's has been the home of our service for many years now and we have always received such a warm welcome from the parish. Our service is an opportunity for all those affected by miscarriage, whether parents, grandparents, siblings or friends to come together in acknowledgement of the tiny life that was lost. There was a great turn out on the day with a broad spectrum of people from the very young to the very old.

The theme of our service this year was light which is reflected in the beautiful poem below.

*"Your loss left a longing that time cannot heal,  
Yet love is a treasure that time cannot steal.  
In darkness it seemed that my world fell apart  
But love's light eternal remains in my heart".*

The beautiful music from Barbara Galvin-Sheridan really set the tone for our service, allowing us to remember our lost babies in a very special place. Father Cormac McNamara and Rev. Lorraine Kennedy-Ritchie were our celebrants and brought dignity and compassion to our service. Father McNamara provided practical and spiritual support and Rev Kennedy-Ritchie's moving sermon touched the whole congregation.

In time honoured tradition, for our candle procession, everyone in the church placed a candle on the altar in memory of their babies. To remember the babies of those that couldn't attend for whatever reason, a children's procession followed to remember all babies lost through miscarriage. It was quite overwhelming to see all the candles lit on the altar signifying all the lost babies but I feel it gave some consolation to those in attendance. It helps us all to realise that we are not alone. There are so many of us affected by miscarriage and the candles represent in a small way the magnitude of our loss.

After our service people stayed to enjoy some refreshments provided by our many sponsors which is an important part of the day. It is good to get the opportunity to meet with our committee and others attending the service. Many also signed the our book of remembrance giving them the opportunity to have a permanent record of their baby.

There is a huge amount of effort put in to our service, from the planning to the actual execution on the day. So I would like to thank our sub-committee for the service, other committee members and all of our volunteers who contributed to making this a very special day.

***If you didn't make the service last year, maybe we will see you this year in St Theresa's on 13th November. ....***

## *Lighting of the candle in Remembrance of International Pregnancy and Infant Loss Day at Dáil Éireann*



On November 4th 2015, Deirdre Pierce McDonnell and June O'Toole represented The Miscarriage Association of Ireland at a very special event, where for the first time a candle was lit "In Loving Memory" and in Remembrance of International Pregnancy and Infant Loss Day (which is Oct 15th Annually). Members of Feileacain and mums and dads who have lost their babies were represented.

Thank you to Feileacain who liaised with Senators and TDS to bring this very special event about. Hopefully it will become an annual event on October 15th.

***Deirdre***



## *UCD Talk to graduates of the certificate in Ultrasound - 22nd January 2016*

On January 22nd Deirdre and I went to UCD to speak with student sonographers about delivering the news of miscarriage to parents.

We discussed how the clinical language often used in hospitals and doctors' surgeries can be cold and often confusing to the parents whose lives are being shattered with the devastating news of losing their baby. I think we all learned a little from each other through the interaction with the doctors and midwives present at the lecture. We learned how important it is to offer our services in more languages so as to be accessible to minority language communities in Ireland who are also experiencing loss and have minimal support systems.

I think that when Deirdre and I spoke openly about our own experiences it personalised the loss for the students/doctors present. I think they realised that although it's something very common for them to come across, miscarriage is devastating for those personally involved and delivering that news needs to be done in a kind, compassionate yet honest way.

I felt the talk went really well and I hope that in the future the doctors, nurses and midwives who need to deliver the awful news to parents that their baby's life is over before its begun will be done in a much more gentle way and that also in the future there will be even more available in terms of support directly after the delivery of this devastating news.

**Tara**



## The Rotunda Remembrance Service – St. Mary’s Pro-Cathedral, Dublin 1. Sunday 22nd November 2015.

As a representative of The Miscarriage Association of Ireland, I attended the Rotunda Service of Remembrance which takes place annually in November. I was also attending in a personal capacity in memory of my own babies who passed away at the Rotunda Hospital. For me it is a very special service and one which I like to attend every year. I remember my babies Rory and Jules everyday but this service allows me the time to bring their memory to the fore.

The quote on the front of the service leaflet puts in words how important every little life is:  
“The value of life is not measured by the span of its years” Wisdom 4:8

On entering St Mary’s Pro- Cathedral, everyone was given a candle and service leaflet. The service started with a beautiful soloist singer, accompanied by the haunting music of the harp. After the opening address by the Master of the Rotunda, staff members from the hospital lit tapers from the light of the Pascal Candle and lit the candle that everyone received on entering the church. The candles were lit as symbols of the babies who died and are now with God. More candles were lit and placed on the alter by staff members and representatives from various support organizations, such as The Miscarriage Association of Ireland, Feileacain & A Little life time etc. These candles represented those who could not be at the service and those who died long ago.

The light of the all those candles gave the church a beautiful glow and there was a beautiful silence in the church. The song “In the Quiet” by Liam Lawton was sung and the words acted as a reminder that in the silence and quiet times we can feel our baby’s presence in our lives.

### ***“In the Quiet” – Chorus:***

***Be still, oh be still, for I am your God, be still now and listen and you will hear my word.***

***Be still oh be still, deep within your life, for you will find me, In the quiet.***

The first reading – “Everything has its time” – Ecclesiastes 3:1-6, the psalm “There is a place” by Liam Lawton and the second reading Revelation 21:1-4 were followed by the prayers. In those prayers, God’s blessing was asked for everyone attending the service and all the mums, dads, siblings, grandparents and extended family who have experienced the loss of a baby.

A prayer was also said for the babies who died long ago, those who were not helped to openly acknowledge or publically mourn their babies and who may not have a special place to visit.

*continued.....*

A beautiful poignant reflection was then read which captured the sense of loss and grief that not being able to hold our babies brings, but also captures the depth of love for our babies in their short lifetime.

**Too Soon**

There were lives that had hardly begun  
No time to find your place in the Sun  
No time to do all you could have done  
But we loved you enough for a lifetime

No time to the enjoy the world and it's wealth  
No time to take life down off the shelves  
No time to sing the songs of yourselves  
Though you had enough love for a lifetime

Those who live long endure sadness and tears  
But you'll never suffer the sorrowing years  
No betrayal, no anger, no hatred, no fears  
Just love – Only Love – In your lifetime

***(Mary Yarnall)***

Towards the end of the service it was mentioned that the Rotunda Hospital Books of Remembrance would be available to view after the service and anyone wishing to make an entry could do so. The Reflection "We Remember" was then read followed by the sign of peace, a concluding prayer and thank you address, where everyone was invited to tea/ coffee and biscuits in The Gresham Hotel, following the service.

The final blessing wished that God's gentleness, compassion and peace be with everyone.

***Please note that the date for the Rotunda Service 2016 is Sunday the 6th November.***

***Deirdre***



## The Irish Hospice Foundation Bereavement Information Evening - Living with Loss - November 5th Alexander Hotel, Dublin 2.

**LIVING WITH LOSS** was a public bereavement evening held in the Alexander Hotel on November 5th to coincide with the National Month of Remembrance. The city centre location was easy to access and the room was full to capacity, with over 250 people present. Angela and I attended on behalf of the Miscarriage Association of Ireland. The Irish Hospice Foundation hosted this free information event. Every year 29000 people die in Ireland and on average 10 people are affected by each death. This event aims to open up a discussion on bereavement and inform members of the public of the range of supports available.

The evening began at 5.30pm, with hot tea, coffee and delicious biscuits which provided a warm welcome on a cold winter night, especially to anyone attending on their own or for the first time and feeling a little lost and vulnerable, it was an ice breaker and a chance to chat with others.

The first speaker, clinical psychologist Dr Susan Delaney, Bereavement Services Manager at the Irish Hospice Foundation, spoke on providing practical advice on coping with bereavement. Orla Keegan, Head of Education, Research and Bereavement Services, stated that November is traditionally a month when we remember those who have died and that this event allows people who are living with loss, to come together in the act of remembering. She said that she hoped that the evening would be informative and a source of support to those attending. She also welcomed guest speaker, Jane McKenna, founder of LauraLynn Children's Hospice. Jane spoke lovingly and beautifully about her own personal experience of loss, when 16 years ago she and her husband, Brendan, lost their two daughters within two years of each other. The couple managed to channel their grief into something positive and undertook a major fund-raising campaign to develop the Hospice in their daughters' memory and using their daughters' first names, Laura and Lynn. It is a tribute to them and to her own determination and she was an inspiration to everyone present.

Coping with loss can be different for everybody, and in four short videos produced by the Irish Hospice Foundation, four people shared their personal experience of loss. The Miscarriage Association of Ireland was represented, as were many other support groups, each with their own stand. The arrangement of stands around the room made it easy for everyone to see the different Voluntary Organisations present and an opportunity was provided before and after the presentations for those attending to talk to the representatives about the support services provided and information leaflets, books and contact details were available to all. Following a useful Q & A session, more tea and coffee was provided and an opportunity for informal discussion.

The evening was very worthwhile and very successful. It provided support and valuable information to those who had experienced loss and were going through a bereavement, whether recent or in the past, and the event created awareness of and access to the many voluntary support groups attending.

**Kate**

## Memorial Stone - Clonmel

The Miscarriage Association of Ireland's 11th Memorial Stone is placed in St Patrick's Cemetery, Clonmel, Co Tipperary. A dedication to officially mark the stone was held on Sunday July 19th. Thank you to Joanne and all her team in Clonmel for organising a beautiful dedication service.

*June*





## The National Standards for Bereavement Care Following Pregnancy Loss and Perinatal Death

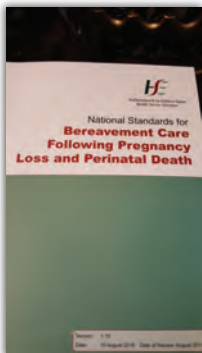
The National Standards for Bereavement Care Following Pregnancy Loss and Perinatal Death were officially launched on 10th August 2016 by Minister for Health Simon Harris at a reception in Farmleigh House. The chair of the Bereavement Care Standards Development Group, Ciaran Browne PhD introduced the launch and outlined the main areas of the Standards. The main aim is to incorporate bereavement care into day to day clinical care and that parent's preferences are key to how the HSE responds. The key to implementation will be putting in place a Bereavement Specialist Team in every maternity hospital and maternity unit countrywide. The Bereavement Specialist Team will be supported by hospital policy and staff.

An implementation committee is already in place to start the implementation process and funding has been secured for 15.5 Bereavement Clinical Midwife Specialists to be appointed in 2016.



Tony O' Brien, HSE CEO, spoke about how it was good to now have a clear and unambiguous standard against which the HSE can measure its performance. He also spoke of the fact that there are many practical day to day changes recommended in the Standards that require no additional resources, for example, women who have been diagnosed with a miscarriage do not leave hospital without a phone number and name of person whom they can contact if necessary and that there is a prompt system of admission of required. He again reiterated Ciaran's point that the care preferences of parents is key and that they are given time to reflect upon their situation and given information and contacts to follow through with their chosen plan of care.

Following on from this speech, the Minister for Health then officially launched the National Standards for Bereavement Care Following Pregnancy Loss and Perinatal Death. The Minister said he was proud of HSE staff and the work they do. He said that families need to know that there will now be a national system of bereavement care no matter what the postal code, that today marked a new start for Bereavement Care, where nationwide there will be a consistent care policy on a clinical and counselling basis and that bereavement care is an integral part of every hospital policy.



The Minister said that these standards are one building block in improving maternity care in Ireland and in conjunction with the National Maternity Strategy published earlier this year and the National Standards for safer and better maternity services that a consistently safe and high quality maternity services will be provided going forward.

## WELCOME BABIES

Lynn & Jason Cassidy are delighted to welcome their twin babies Ben & Rebecca, born one minute apart on the 21st of January 2016, weighing 6lb & 5lb 9oz. A little brother & sister for Julia & Jamie. Double the joy!

## POETRY CORNER

Tiny fingers & tiny toes, Little hands we'll never hold,  
Dainty shoes your feet won't fill, Nor teddies or trophies on the window sill.

No cuts to cover with a plaster, No endless days of happiness & laughter,  
No shopping trips or girly days, Just the memories of what we almost made.

As time goes by, we think of you often, And the thoughts of you makes our sadness soften,  
For you will always & forever be close to our hearts, Because brief as it was, of our lives,  
you were a part.

**Mairéad Mc Keown**

We will never meet, we will never hold hands, we will never play together,  
we will never will make any plans.

We will never listen to music, we will never read a book,  
we will never dance together, we will never catch fish on a hook.

We will never know if you were a boy or a girl, we will never see you high or low,  
we will never have your first day at school, we will never watch you grow.

We will never stop thinking of what might have been, we will never see your dreams  
come through, we will never stop our cuddles and we will never stop loving you.

**Barrie**

"A Rose once grew where all could see, sheltered beside a garden wall,  
And as the days passed swiftly by, it spread its branches straight and tall.....  
One day, a beam of light shone through a crevice that had opened wide –  
The Rose bent gently towards its warmth then passed beyond to the other side.....  
Now you, who deeply feel its loss, be comforted – the Rose blooms there-  
It's beauty even great now, nurtured by God's own loving care "

***Extract from the The Rose beyond the Wall (A.L. Fink)***

## Date for your diary - Our Annual Service of Remembrance

The Miscarriage Association of Ireland – Annual Service of Remembrance will take place on Sunday 13th of November 2016 at 3 pm in St Theresa's Church, Donore Avenue (off South Circular Road), Dublin 8.

## Date for your diary - Charity Christmas Concert

This year I am delighted to announce that Talented Kids Ireland & The Maureen V Ward Talent Agency are performing a Christmas Variety Concert in the Helix, DCU, Collins Avenue, Glasnevin, Dublin 9 on Monday 19th December 2016 with proceeds going to The Miscarriage Association of Ireland. See our website and facebook page for more details closer to the date.

## Donations and fundraising:

On behalf of the committee of The Miscarriage Association of Ireland, I would like to thank everyone who has made a donation to us or taken part in fundraising on our behalf. In particular, I extend a big thank you to those who took part in the mini marathon on our behalf this year. I would also like to mention and give a huge thank you to those who attended the Letterkenny Service of Remembrance and where €500 was donated on our behalf. Also to Shelley Gellespie from Letterkenny, who ran a marathon (a great personal achievement) whilst raising significant funds €1,602 for the Association. These specific efforts and donations were brought to my attention but everyone's efforts to donate and raise funds for us are really appreciated. We could not continue to provide the much required support without your help.



*Pictured above is Shelley Gellespie, Letterkenny General Hospital*

## Funding:

Thank you to Tusla – the family and child support agency for their continued support.

## Other Activities and Events Attended

Representatives of the Miscarriage Association of Ireland attended the following events:



***Coombe Women & Infants University Hospital Service of Remembrance  
– 3rd April 2016***



***National Maternity Hospital Service of Remembrance  
- Sunday 2nd October 2015***

## Our next Newsletter/Your Ideas

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 forward them to us at [newsletter@miscarriage.ie](mailto:newsletter@miscarriage.ie) or by post to Carmichael Centre, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7 and marked "Newsletter" and include name and contact details. Your name does not have to be included in the article if you wish to remain anonymous.

***Closing date for entries for next newsletter is 31st January 2017***

**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.

## Our Newsletter

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.

***Angela Grace***



## TELEPHONE SUPPORT, EMAIL SUPPORT, SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

Please remember we offer support to those who have experienced miscarriage and their families. You are welcome to contact us by **EMAIL**, [info@miscarriage.ie](mailto:info@miscarriage.ie) where your email will be read and replied to with sympathy and understanding. **TELEPHONE SUPPORT** is also available, for those who would like to chat to someone who has had the experience of miscarriage. Please check our website [www.miscarriage.ie/telephonesupport.html](http://www.miscarriage.ie/telephonesupport.html) to obtain the number of the person on call. If we are not able to take your call, please leave a message and we will contact you as soon as possible.

We also hold **SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS** in Buswell's Hotel, Molesworth Street, Dublin 2 at 8 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month. Both women and their partners who have experienced miscarriage are very welcome to attend. You will be in a safe place to talk about the loss of your baby in the company of others who have had a similar experience.

We have our Book of Remembrance at the meetings in September, December, March and June for those who might like to make an entry in the Book.



## *Membership Renewal*

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

*Angela Grace*



The Miscarriage Association  
of Ireland



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