

## The Miscarriage Association of Ireland



## Welcome

**Welcome to the Miscarriage Association of Ireland (MAI) Spring/Summer Newsletter 2013.**

The newsletter is a space where we can share our stories of loss and find solace in the knowledge that we are not alone in our grief. It is also a place for sharing stories of hope and happiness amidst the sadness.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this issue; it really is great that you want to share your stories. Miscarriage is not something that is easy to talk about in society as people don't always know what to say and by sharing our stories it gives society something to think about and may just start that conversation. In this regard the Miscarriage Association of Ireland has been actively trying to bring the subject of miscarriage to the fore whilst all the time providing support to those women and their families who have suffered the trauma of a miscarriage.

We provide support via our website [www.miscarriage.ie](http://www.miscarriage.ie), telephone, email, and our monthly support group meetings held in Buswell's Hotel, Molesworth Street Dublin 2. We also hold our Annual Service of Remembrance every year on the 2nd Sunday of November in St Teresa's Church, Donore Avenue, off South Circular Road, Dublin 8.

In the last year we have partaken in several other activities that we think might help highlight the topic of miscarriage and have supported women and their families as they cope with their grief.

## Committee

### Chairperson

*Deirdre Pierce McDonnell*

### Secretary

*Niamh Ryan*

### Treasurer

*Marie McManus*

### Committee Members:

Mary Lawson, June O'Toole, Angela Grace, Yvonne Shiels, Liz Burton, Niamh Darcy, Edel Jauny, Anne Fitzsimons



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We have placed memorial stones in Ballymun, Lusk, and Kilkenny. We attended various maternity hospital Services of Remembrance and other services held in communities in Dublin, Kildare and Kilkenny. As Chairperson, I represented the Miscarriage Association of Ireland at the Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups when President Michael D. Higgins visited. We gave presentations on miscarriage to doctors, nurses and midwives who attended the UCD Graduate Certificate of Obstetric Ultrasound. We have written articles on miscarriage for various publications. We have also registered as a charity on [idonate.ie](http://idonate.ie)

Many people have taken part in various marathons on our behalf and will do so again in the coming months. As mentioned above we have now registered as a charity on [idonate.ie](http://idonate.ie) so this will help anyone who would like to take part on our behalf to raise funds online if they wish. Sponsorship cards for any event are available on request.



I would like to extend a huge thank you to all of you who are walking, jogging or running on behalf of the Miscarriage Association of Ireland in upcoming events- it is truly appreciated and makes us all feel less alone on our journey of loss.



A quote from Mother Teresa: *“Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love.”*

With this in mind let us all continue to do those small things that help us remember our babies and put us all on a path of healing and a renewed sense of hope towards the future.

“Remember you are not alone”

– The Miscarriage Association of Ireland is there to help and support.

***Deirdre Pierce- McDonnell – Chairperson.***

# Services of Remembrance

## **The Miscarriage Association of Ireland Service of Remembrance Sunday 11th November 2012**

This year we used the theme of the heart for our Service. During the year we were sent these words by Selena Byrne for her entry into our Book of Remembrance. As these words too had the theme of the heart we asked Selena to allow us to use these words on our Service Sheet and she kindly consented.



These beautiful words and music by Gifford and Friends set the tone for our Service, allowing us to feel that our little lost ones are so precious to us no matter how fleeting their little lives. Fr. Sean Mc Ardle provided practical and spiritual support as always, for which we thank him and we thank also the Rev. Anne Taylor for her contribution and her inspirational homily. Philip Lawson, classical guitar, supplied an atmospheric musical background to the procession of candles; Lorcan O'Toole steered the Service with his narration and all were warmly welcomed by our new Chairperson, Deirdre Pierce-McDonnell. Margaret Woulfe signed for the hard of hearing.

A special feature of our Service is the opportunity to avail of refreshments at the end of the Church. Dunnes Stores at the Pavilions Shopping Centre, Bewley's and Robert Roberts among others, provided refreshments such as tea/coffee, cakes, biscuits etc. This is an important part of our Service and while availing of these refreshments those present can take an opportunity to mingle, ask questions and make an entry in our Books of Remembrance, attended to by Catherine Geraghty. Each year we have invaluable help from Margaret and Noeleen, two ladies from Greystones, who make our Service complete with a cup of hot tea or coffee accompanied by plenty of cakes from Dunnes Stores.

We thank the team of Mary Lawson, Niamh Ryan and Liz Burton for making this Service such a success and hope that we will have many more in the future to which all are welcome.

*Marie McManus*

## Services of Remembrance

### **Coombe Women's Hospital Service of Remembrance 2013 Sunday 7th April**

The Coombe Women's Hospital held their annual service of Remembrance in the Our Lady of Dolours church on Sunday 7th April. The beautiful music, including the harp, filled the church and the hymns were very touching. The words, music and candle ceremony helped to give peace and comfort to those who attended. The church was filled to the brim and I am sure everyone was moved by this ceremony. After the candle procession everyone was given either daffodils or bluebells to take away and plant for themselves which was a lovely way for people to remember their babies.

Following the service the chaplains, bereavement midwife, medical social workers and many other staff were available to speak with individuals while refreshments were served. The staff deserve a big thank you for all their hard work before, during and after the service.

*Angela Grace*

### **National Maternity Hospital Service of Remembrance Sunday 7th October 2012**

The annual Service of Remembrance which was organised by the National Maternity Hospital, Holles Street, Dublin 2 took place on Sunday 7th October 2012. Irene Roche and June O'Toole were once again proud to represent the Miscarriage Association of Ireland. The Service was truly inspirational and very moving. The incredible music, the Book of Remembrance, the beautiful flowers and the altar, alight with all the little candles, were a fitting tribute to all our children, sadly born too soon. This Service of Prayer and Reflection was one of love and compassion and showed just how much the medical profession really care. It seemed to offer new hope, healing and inner peace to all those who had experienced the loss of a child.

On behalf of the Miscarriage Association of Ireland, we would like to offer our sincere congratulations to all the staff of the National Maternity Hospital for organising this very moving and much appreciated Service of Remembrance.

*Irene Roche and June O'Toole*

# Services of Remembrance

## **Rotunda Hospital Service of Remembrance Sunday 18th November 2012**

The Rotunda Hospital Service of Remembrance took place on Sunday 20th November 2012 and it was a privilege for June and I to be able to attend this very reverend, beautiful and moving service as representatives of the Miscarriage Association of Ireland.

Dr. Sam Coulter Smith, Master of the Rotunda Hospital, in his opening address made a conscious and sincere effort on behalf of all the hospital staff, to ensure that everybody felt welcome. He spoke with empathy and understanding and acknowledged the sadness of losing a child.

Throughout the Service there was a theme of light, remembrance, and healing. The light was represented by the song “Christ be our light” and the lighting of the candles from the Pascal Candle. This light was taken by representatives from various organisations and used to light the candles held by members of the congregation and to light candles on the altar in honour of those who could not be present. Remembrance of all the precious babies was represented by the lighted candles, the minute of silence, the reflection “We Remember” and the Rotunda Books of Remembrance which were present on the altar. Healing provided by the psalm “Shepherd and heal us O Lord” (an adaptation of “The Lord is my Shepherd”) and the fact that we were all there together and not alone in remembering and reflecting on all those little lives that touched all our lives briefly but tenderly.

I think this quote on the Service says it all: “The value of life is not measured by the span of its years.” (Wisdom 4:8)

After the service there were refreshments provided in the Gresham Hotel and this was well attended and represented a lovely opportunity for people to come together and share their stories and feel less alone in their remembrance and reflection.

Great tribute and thanks to the Chaplain of the Rotunda Ann Charleton, the bereavement team and all the staff of the Rotunda involved, for organising such a beautiful and fitting service.

*Deirdre Pierce-McDonnell*

## Services of Remembrance

### **Service of Remembrance, Parish of the Holy Spirit, Ballymun Sunday 16th September 2012**

A memorial Service for babies who passed away through miscarriage, stillbirth and neonatal deaths was held on Sunday 16th September at 3pm in the Holy Spirit Church Ballymun. A Memorial Stone donated by the Miscarriage Association of Ireland, which was placed in the Memorial Garden in the church grounds was blessed after the Service.

A call to the Miscarriage Association of Ireland from Sammy Ni Bhroin a few months earlier set this in motion. Sam, an Adult Faith Development Co-ordinator for the Archdiocese of Dublin, who lives in the area and is involved in parish activities had a vision. This was to place a memorial stone in the memorial garden which would honour and acknowledge the lives of all babies who had died before, during and after birth.

Angela Grace and June O'Toole were proud to represent the Miscarriage Association of Ireland and were deeply impressed by the beautiful ceremony that took place. Fr. Gerry Corcoran celebrated a very moving Service and everybody present got to acknowledge their babies whose lives although short would live on in their hearts forever. The gentle music and very appropriate readings chosen by Sam added to the sacredness of the atmosphere. People were noticeably moved.

Tea and coffee was served afterwards and everybody got to share stories, support one another and ultimately feel less alone. Sam wanted everybody to feel welcome, particularly those united in the loss of a child. I don't think she was disappointed.

*Angela Grace & June O'Toole*

## Services of Remembrance

### **The Parish of St. MacCullin, Lusk, Co. Dublin Service of Remembrance, Sunday 24 June 2012**

There was a huge turnout at the first Service of Remembrance in Lusk. It was amazing and the atmosphere was incredible. This Service of Remembrance acknowledging all babies who died before, during and after birth included the dedication of a Memorial Stone – a permanent and significant marker that these lives, although short were real. It was a wonderful and beautiful occasion and indeed a very moving and meaningful Service of Remembrance for the Parish of St. MacCullin. It appeared as if the whole of the community of Lusk came together in this country churchyard on a beautiful sunny Sunday afternoon to honour and acknowledge all those little lives born too soon.

The Memorial Stone which is placed just outside the church door appeared to stand tall in the sunshine. It was covered by a very dignified and delicate green linen cloth which Mrs. Bridin Clare, a member of the community had lovingly made. It seems appropriate on behalf of our Chairperson Mrs. Deirdre Pierce McDonnell and our committee that we express our gratitude for this beautiful gift which Mrs. Clare has since kindly donated to the Miscarriage Association of Ireland. We believe it will be a continuous sign of hope for all who have lost a child.

One of the parishioners, Mr. Liam Clare who is a member of the Black Raven Pipe Band composed and played on his bag pipes “A Lament for our Children,” followed by “The Joys of Love.” Then as the Service concluded he played “The Shepherd’s Song.” Mr. Clare has since donated a beautiful framed copy of his “Lament for our Children” to The Miscarriage Association for which we are very grateful.

Fr. Paul Hampson Parish Priest and the Pastoral Council believe that the Memorial Stone will act as a focal point enabling parents to acknowledge and reflect on the loss of their child and be ultimately a pathway towards healing.

Congratulations to Fr. Paul, the Sacristan Richard, the choir, Liam the Piper, the organisers and all the community on a very moving and meaningful Service of Remembrance. The sun could not but shine on such a sacred occasion.

## Services of Remembrance

### **Dedication of Memorial Stone, St Kieran's Cemetery, Kilkenny Saturday 29th September 2012**

It all started in May 2012 with an email to [info@miscarriage.ie](mailto:info@miscarriage.ie) from Meabh McGuinness. Meabh, who lives in Kilkenny, contacted the Miscarriage Association of Ireland about the possibility of placing a Memorial Stone in a graveyard in the city.

At the time, Meabh hoped but wasn't sure if this was possible. She made enquiries, worked tirelessly and following discussions with various personnel and the Senior Engineer, our tenth Memorial Stone found a home, four months later on 29th September 2012 in St. Kieran's Cemetery in Kilkenny.

The Memorial Stone, dedicated to all babies who died before, during and after birth was unveiled and officially dedicated during a very moving ceremony which was celebrated by Fr. Sean O'Connor from St. John's Parish. The mixture of beautiful music and significant readings chosen by Meabh, seemed to connect all present who came to honour the short lives of their precious babies. Niamh Ryan and June O'Toole were privileged to represent the Miscarriage Association of Ireland.

Meabh, Alan and all involved in organising this long awaited memorial "in loving memory," can be proud of their achievement. Without a doubt, they are parents we can all be proud of.

*Niamh Ryan and June O'Toole*

*June O'Toole*





## Services of Remembrance

### **Memorial Lecture for Kate O'Sullivan Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups Wednesday 5th December 2012**

It was a privilege for me to attend this memorial lecture which was held to honour the founding CEO of Carmichael Centre Kate O'Sullivan, who sadly passed away on 18th May 2007. Guest speaker, assistant editor of The Irish Times, Mr. Fintan O'Toole managed to captivate his audience as he expertly delivered his lecture.

Diarmuid O Corrbui, CEO in his opening address, welcomed everybody especially Kate's husband, Pat. Today we would be remembering Kate O'Sullivan and exploring some of the principles close to Kate's heart and her desire for a just society. This memorial lecture is a very important part of the Carmichael Centre calendar.

Fintan O'Toole said it was an honour for him to be here to remember Kate who had a vision of a fairer and socially just society. He mentioned that he was aware that Kate was held in enormous affection and enormous respect by all who came in contact with her. She was an inspiring figure in her fight for social justice. The initiative Kate took in establishing Carmichael Centre was during a lean period of savage cuts and attacks on the standards of living of the poor. Kate's initiative to improve the plight of the vulnerable is laudable.

Diarmuid O Corrbui remarked that Kate O'Sullivan was indeed a visionary in the Irish community voluntary sector and that the Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups is a lasting testimony to her memory.

*June O'Toole*

## Services of Remembrance

### **Service of Remembrance, Caragh, Naas, Co. Kildare The Church of Our Lady and St Joseph Friday 16th November 2012**

Great credit must go to Father Joe, Mary Bergin, Rose Dunne and all the members of the Parish Pastoral Council for organising this beautiful Service of Remembrance honouring all babies who died before, during and after birth. Their work and dedication is truly inspirational.

This was the second Service of Remembrance that my husband and I had the privilege to attend in Caragh on behalf of the Miscarriage Association of Ireland. Last year we were invited to attend another moving Service and witnessed the unveiling and dedication of the Miscarriage Association's sixth memorial stone. Mary Bergin wrote the piece below about her experience of that Service of Remembrance which was held on Friday 11th November 2011.

*June O'Toole*



I think that Mary's words are worth sharing:

***He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. Ps. 147:3***

*Mary Bergin (Chairperson, Caragh Parish Pastoral Council)*

### **CARAGH 'S SPECIAL PRAYER SERVICE HELD ON FRIDAY, 11th November 2012**

With the support of the Miscarriage Association members of Caragh Parish Pastoral Council and liturgy committee held a special prayer service for parents who have suffered the loss of a baby before, during or after birth. Caragh is located just outside Naas in Co. Kildare and our Church of Our Lady and St. Joseph stands majestically on a hill.

The prayer service was a new experience for our parish community and the numbers that attended revealed to us the huge need that exists amongst us to reach out for healing and to touch one another by sharing our experiences of loss. June and Lorcan O'Toole from the Miscarriage Association came along especially to be with us and June spoke movingly about their personal experience. We became acutely aware of the depth of grief and sense of loss that was being experienced. There can be no doubt that coming together in this sacred way was a moving experience and for some it may have been an opportunity for acknowledgement and a pathway towards healing. This was reinforced for all of us when we later gathered outside our church where a memorial stone, donated to us by the Miscarriage Association, was blessed by our Parish Priest Fr. Joe McDermott. Our parish community's vision for the future is to develop this sacred space into a garden of remembrance and reflection, a place where everybody is welcome.

## Presidential Visit to the Carmichael Centre – 17th April 2013



The Miscarriage Association of Ireland has its registered office at The Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups, Richmond Street Dublin 7. The Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups has 47 resident members, hundreds of associate members and is an invaluable support to thousands of volunteers, board members, managers and staff who avail of training, information, organisation and meeting facilities.

It was therefore with delight that we were able to attend President D. Higgins's visit to The Carmichael Centre on the 10th April 2013. The President met with 8 of the 47 registered charities on a one to one basis and gave a fantastic speech to everyone in The Richmond room. The President was very impressed with the Carmichael Centre for voluntary groups, its ethos and the work carried out by its 47 registered charities and 350 associate members. He thanked all the volunteers for their excellent work in providing support where it is required and for gaining the trust and respect of the people/users of the services. President Higgins commented on the fact that each charity provides a safe place where people can talk, enabling them to heal and empowering them to move on with their lives.

He said that we as volunteers are doing vital work in trying to get on with things through this recession; it is important not to be depressed about the state of the country but to continue thinking about how the country is going to move on from it through community resilience and communication.

Very inspirational.

*Deirdre Pierce-McDonnell*

## Fundraising

We would like to thank all those who participated on our behalf in the mini marathon this year and the Cork and Dublin marathons and mini Marathons last year. You raised a substantial amount of money on our behalf so well done.

### **Christmas cards**

We would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all those who purchased our Christmas cards this year. The sale of Christmas cards is not only a financial benefit to our Association but also helps to promote awareness of miscarriage and let people know that there is help at hand for those that need it.

## Forthcoming Events

### **The Miscarriage Association of Ireland, Annual Service of Remembrance Sunday 10th November 2013 at 3.00 pm.**

This year Our Service of Remembrance will take place in St. Theresa's Church, Donore Avenue at 3pm on Sunday 10th November 2013. It is a special place for people to come and remember their babies and spend time with their thoughts alongside others who have shared similar experiences of loss through miscarriage. We would like to extend a warm welcome to you and anyone else you feel might benefit from attending this beautiful Service whether you lost your baby recently or long ago. We hope it will offer you comfort in your grief and help you feel less isolated.

## Welcome Babies

"We, Damian & Margaret, are delighted to announce the birth of our son, Benjamin Jack Dunlea, born at 12.45 pm today, 22.02.2012, weighing 7 lb 7.5 oz. All doing well thank God. A beautiful little baby brother for Elizabeth, Joshua & Victoria.

Siofra Máire Ní Dhubhgáin born at 12.53pm weighing 8lbs 3 ozs. A little sister for big brother Daithi. All delighted!

Jennifer & Paudie Duggan

## Sad Farewells

### ***Baby Joanne***

A very sad farewell to our third angel baby Joanne, who sadly left us at 13 ½ weeks on 7th October 2011. You are deeply missed by us all and especially by your big brother Daniel (5) who was so looking forward to you being with us. He misses you deeply and wants you to come back.

You are now with our first angel Sam, lost in November 2004 and angel Lily, lost in June 2007. Please look after each other. You are all loved deeply and missed incredibly by Mammy and Daddy (Ena & Ciaran Ryan), Daniel (5) and Stephanie (2). All our love forever.

## Poetry Corner

### **Rory Jack**

*We didn't have the pleasure to say hello or meet  
Shake your hand or wash your tiny feet  
Yet you touched our hearts beyond belief.  
Only The Lord knows why you had to go  
And I'm sure in time he'll let us know.  
Until then may you Rest In Peace  
Our Little Angel  
Gone from us to God to keep*

### **Deirdre Pierce McDonell**

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### **My Little One**

*You lived in me for 5 weeks 6 days  
you never ran and never played  
You never smiled or called me mum  
I never fed you or wiped your bum*

*I never held you, you never cried  
I never saw you become a bride  
and though you left me at 6 weeks pet  
I refused to let you go just yet*

*I held onto you and I resisted  
more than twice as long as you existed.  
but then I had to let you leave  
and I thought that I was ready to grieve*

*but there's a space so empty I cannot fill  
I can't feel joy, I have no will.  
My heart is broken, I miss your soul  
I felt it inside though you'd barely grown.*

*Now your grandads look after you way up high  
and you play with your cousins above the sky  
But once in awhile please look down on mum  
because I'll think of you often, my Little One*

### **Remembered by Mom**

*We found out that we were going to have you in our lives  
We were so proud and so happy  
To lose you the pain never goes away  
We love you and miss you  
You will never be forgotten our angel  
You can never be replaced  
Love you always and sleep tight our angel  
We will meet again some day  
Love mummy and daddy xxxxx*

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### **Charley O'Sullivan**

*As The Sun Came Up This Morning  
I Watched You There Below  
Your Hearts Seemed Oh So Heavy  
But There's Something You Should Know*

*I'm Not Gone So Don't Worry  
I'm Just A Step Ahead  
And I'm With You Every Single Day  
As You Rise Up From Your Bed*

*I Am The Sun That Warms You  
I Am The Moon's Soft Glow  
I Am The Stars That Twinkle  
And Light Your Path Below*

*So When At Times You Miss Me  
Just Look For Me I'm There  
For You Cannot Hide My Spirit  
It Is With You Everywhere.*

**Missed everyday by her Mummi, Daddi,  
big brother Darragh and big sister Abi.**



## Ena's Story

*I can't believe I am here again. At 10 weeks I had a scan and the baby was perfect, the right size and a strong loud heartbeat. We passed the magical 12 weeks and really believed we could start to relax now and enjoy this pregnancy. But at 13 weeks I knew something wasn't right. A few days later I managed to get another scan at the local maternity hospital. I was now 13 ½ weeks pregnant. I lay there and could see my baby on the scan monitor but I still knew something wasn't right. The nurse then turned to me and said that it's not what we would like to see, there is no heartbeat. I couldn't believe it. My baby had died, I really couldn't believe it. My baby was dead.*

*I had a miscarriage on my first pregnancy and I was devastated. This was at 6 weeks and was a complete miscarriage so there was no baby to see on the scan. A few years later I had an ectopic pregnancy which ruptured at 7 weeks and left me unconscious and I almost died. Again in this situation there was no baby to be seen in the womb, as the baby was in my tube. Having passed through my own "danger zone" of 6 and 7 weeks and then the magical 12 weeks marker, I really thought everything would be fine on this pregnancy. I can't believe that I got to 13 ½ weeks and then my baby dies. This time I actually found comfort in seeing the baby. My previous two experiences were more intangible as I could not see my baby each time. A D&C was scheduled for the next day and I went to bed with some comfort knowing I had my baby for one more day. I cried all night. I wanted to hold on to the baby and keep her in my belly but I knew I had to have the D&C. My husband said that I have to let go and it's like a funeral and burying the person, we have to say goodbye.*

*I didn't know what to expect with the D&C as I had never had one previously. I had to have a general anaesthetic and I wasn't sure how I would feel physically afterwards. When I had the ectopic pregnancy, it ruptured and I had to have an emergency operation to save my life. I lost a lot of blood, some internal organs were damaged, I was cut right open and had a lot of tubes and wires hanging out of me when I woke up. I lost my fallopian tube as well as my baby. The physical recovery was very hard, I was in hospital for 6 days, I wasn't allowed to walk for 2 days, drive or lift anything for 6 weeks and it really took me 6-12 months to fully recover and get back to "normal" physically. So I did not know what to expect after the D&C physically. Thankfully 6 days after the D&C, I am tired and have some cramps but otherwise physically everything seems to be ok. Emotionally is obviously a very different story. I think I am still in shock, I cannot believe I have lost my baby, I cannot believe I have lost a 3rd baby, I cannot believe I lost my baby at 13 ½ weeks.*

**Ena Ryan**

## Tara's Story

*I never knew what I wanted to "be" when I grew up. I went through the motions of school and ended up doing much better than anyone ever thought. I took a year out trying to decide what I wanted to study in college. All I really ever knew I wanted was to get married have a nice house and a few kids. I eventually decided on an arts degree. I met my husband Seán while I was at college. He was a bit older than me and was mature enough to talk about having a family.*

*I got married at 24 after 4 years of being together, my friends all thought I was mad getting married so young, yet it never stopped them celebrating at our wedding! My family loved my husband, and I think his family liked me. We are a very happy couple, so alike in some ways so very different in other ways. It just works.*

*A few months after we got married on my 25th birthday I took a pregnancy test, we had literally only started trying to conceive three weeks earlier. There they were two pink lines. Later, I took a digital test. I wanted to see the 'P' word 'pregnant 1-2 weeks'. We were so excited we told everyone right away!!! Nine happy and healthy months later I had a very normal, healthy (but LONG) delivery, our perfect daughter Aoibh was born. I felt complete. I was so happy to be a mammy at last.*

*A few months on I really knew this was what I wanted to 'BE', a mammy. Every day with my daughter brought happiness. I learned more from her than I ever thought I could. Shortly after her first birthday we decided she might like a brother or sister. Three weeks later we got our Big Fat Positive we were so excited!!! My plan was to have four children by the time I was 30! Ambitious, but that was my hope.*

*Three months in to my pregnancy I had my 12 week check up with my GP. I told him how I had started to feel less pregnant the past few weeks. He didn't take much notice and told me I was a third of the way through. Three days later I had some spotting. I went straight to the hospital and had a scan right away. My baby had no heart beat. A missed miscarriage she said. I had never even heard of it. Naively I thought 27 year olds don't have miscarriages! I was devastated. I was given two cytotec tablets to prepare me for my ERPC the next morning. I took one and woke up at 2am in a frightful state. Blood was everywhere. My white bedcovers were drenched. My husband was covered in it too. I felt weak. My husband showered me and called an ambulance. Thankfully my mam was available to take Aoibh. We went straight to the hospital and I had to deliver the left over "products of conception" as they called it. I was in agony all night. The nurse had to keep changing my covers as I bled so heavily. I had an ERPC the next morning at 7am. I actually didn't bleed much afterwards.*

*It was over. I cried. I cried over everything. The toaster broke and I was devastated. I dropped a plate, it smashed & I couldn't control the tears. I had to be strong for my daughter. I am her primary care giver. I had to pull myself together and get on with life. After one cycle and a little holiday I became obsessed with trying to conceive again. Eight long months later and still no positive pregnancy test I thought I was broken. 2013 started with the happy news my sister in law is expecting in September 2013. I'm really close to my brother so this news lifted me and I thought, "Well, if I can't give my daughter a brother or sister at least she'll have a little cousin". Two weeks later at the end of January I got a positive pregnancy test!! I was so excited, I told my mam, "We'll have two tiny babas for Christmas!"*



## Tara's Story *continued.....*

*We had just bought a new house and it was finally like everything was starting to work out. The day we were supposed to move into our new home, a week later I had some bleeding. More bleeding. Bright red blood, cramps. It was happening again. I had my second miscarriage at 5 weeks pregnant. I told Seán I couldn't cope with it again. I didn't think I could mentally cope with the heart ache of losing another baby. We put the past in the past and started a new life in our new home.*

*I got some blood tests done to see if there was anything wrong. I actually paid for a full medical-just in case. At just about to turn 28 the Doctor thought I was mad, and the youngest by about 30 years that had gone to the clinic!! Not one single thing wrong with me. Everything came back perfect! Then at the end of February on my 28th birthday, I started to get the usual pregnancy symptoms, I hadn't even had a period since my last miscarriage. I had some pregnancy tests in the bathroom, and what do you know? As clear as day, there it was 'pregnant 1-2 weeks'. This is my baby. I felt so positive. I believed it was going to be a little boy. He and my brother's baby would be best friends. Aoibh will make the best big sister. She loves babies and she's the kindest most loving little girl ever. Life was good again.*

*Then at the end of March, I was 8 weeks pregnant and there it was again. The familiar spotting...I rushed straight to hospital, and again I was told the baby had no heart beat. Another missed miscarriage. Thankfully I escaped having an ERPC as the cytotec really worked this time in a much more controlled way than my first experience, despite taking 4 tablets this time.*

*Three miscarriages in less than a year. I'm 28, perfectly healthy and I have a perfectly healthy & pretty perfect daughter already who is now two and a half and wonders why everyone else has babies in their houses or in their bellies. I'm at my wits end. All I've ever wanted was to have children. I feel selfish in some ways because I have my wonderful daughter who I'm so proud of and I am so grateful for every minute I spend with her. All I want for her is a sibling to play with especially considering my great relationship with my brother. It's something I fear she is already missing out on. I have so much love to give and I really, really would love nothing more than more babies to share that love with. At times I feel so lost. I know plans don't always work out and I accept that, but this is also MY one shot at life. I don't want to ever have to go through another miscarriage. I just don't know where to go from here. If we try again and I do get pregnant we could have a perfectly healthy baby like Aoibh or we could have to face this all again. How does anyone make that decision?*

*Having a miscarriage has changed me forever. The past year has been incredibly hard. Not only is losing babies extremely difficult but there is still a stigma attached to miscarriage. Nobody wants to hear about it. I understand the ignorance of never experiencing this awful thing because I remember how I used to feel. It was when I lost my first baby that I realised a miscarriage wasn't just passing a few cells. It's the death of your child. Once you get that positive pregnancy test you fall in love. You begin to make plans. You have hopes and dreams for your baby that's growing inside you. Losing that love, those hopes and dreams can never be replaced going through the physical and emotional process of a miscarriage is traumatic to say the least.*



## Tara's Story *continued.....*

*It's a million times harder when the people you expect to support you during this time issue you with a set of rules as to how you're "supposed" to deal with it. If I can get any message across I would hope that people who haven't had to experience this horrendous, life changing experience try to empathise with the loss of any family member or friend who losses their child through miscarriage feels. Let them mourn their baby. And when you don't know what to do or say be honest. Don't crawl under a rock waiting for them to "get back to normal" hold out your hand and just hold theirs. Nothing else needs to be said or done. To my three little lost souls. I will always be your mammy and love you forever. One comfort I hold is wherever you are I'm just glad you have each other.*

*Codail go sámh mo leanai.*

**Tara UiAdhmaill**

## A Road from Loss to Hope – My story of a miscarriage

*Rain streamed down the windscreen as the wipers fought bravely to keep the view ahead clear. Suddenly the car stereo belted out a familiar song but the words had a new significance for me. "If there's love then feel it, if there's life we'll see it".... The rest of the James Morrison song trailed off and I was studying the doctor's face as he stared intently at the monitor while he ran the scanning equipment over my slightly rounded belly. Call it instinct but I knew by his expression that something was wrong as he searched for the heartbeat of our unborn baby. "Is there something wrong?" I asked, already knowing the answer.*

*"The sac appears to be empty and as you should be 10 weeks, the results show differently". I glanced at my partner who was clutching my bag and coat in his hands but his expression was hard to read, staying strong and brave. "We'll have you come in next week for another scan and if things are the same we'll discuss it then" said the doctor. The nurse handed me a large paper towel to wipe away the clear gel she had smeared on my belly only minutes before as I had laid back in anticipation of see our child's heartbeat for the first time. I deposited the used towel in the metal bin and nodded absently at the doctor. Suddenly I wanted to get outside of this little room away from the screen that offered me no hope.*

*I returned my folder to reception and walked deflated back to the car with my partner, trying to remain positive and believe that next week would bring good news but somehow I already knew that was not going to be. Maybe it was women's instinct but in the pit of my stomach I felt our dream slipping away. A few days later feeling slightly crimpy I knew our happy ever ending was fading. The spotting on my underwear was not noticeable that day and for awhile I thought maybe....*

*We were due to be married in a few weeks and the stag night loomed. His best man had planned a night out and feeling ok I brushed off his concern at him going out while I was pregnant and encouraged him to enjoy the evening. Despite my insistence for him to go, a fear crept into me at the thought of anything going wrong while he was away. I was a worrier anyway so I told myself to stop fretting, that everything would be okay.*

## A Road from Loss to Hope – My story of a miscarriage *continued..*

*In hindsight I should have voiced my concerns to him and asked him to stay, but I didn't want to worry him as I think being a man he still held out hope of this pregnancy progressing. A woman has the advantage of carrying a baby and knowing the changes in her body; a man can only take the facts from the doctor and act on that. I settled down to watch some TV and after my 9 year old had gone to bed decided to go up soon after myself. It was 3 am when I heard him being dropped off in a taxi after his night out. He moved around in the dark trying not to wake me but I lay awake in the night almost sensing that our lives were about to change forever in the coming hours. The next morning dawned and with relief I woke to see that everything was still okay and maybe I had been worrying about nothing. We spent a lazy reading newspapers and taking things easy. Towards evening I had begun to feel cramps again and so had an early night that Sunday.... tired but otherwise ok.*

*I awoke Monday morning to get my daughter ready for school and thought about my appointment for the next day for another scan. Maybe we would get a glimpse of our baby's heartbeat after all. I swung my legs out of the bed and stood up to use the bathroom. Blood flowed down my legs and into my slippers and I shouted to my partner to check the bed. He threw back the covers and the pool of red on the sheets confirmed what had happened. I staggered to the bathroom and as I did so a warm slimy mass slid down the leg of my pyjamas. I called for him to grab a bowl we had in the office and catch what had fallen out. I covered the bowl and stepped into the shower watching the swirl of red as it disappeared down the plughole. In that moment our dreams were washed away. Period-like cramps overtook me and I felt weak. I crawled into the spare bedroom. Trying to keep things normal for our daughter we sent her to school oblivious to the drama that had unfolded right next door to her bedroom. We phoned the hospital but they suggested staying at home and taking things easy and attend the scheduled appointment the next day.*

*We travelled to the hospital that Tuesday knowing that the scan this time would show up the empty place where our child had been. Our hope this time was that everything would have come away naturally and I wouldn't need a D & C to remove anything left behind. We queued up with all the other moms and their partners with bumps of every size. Everyone drank water from plastic bottles as they sat around (you need a full bladder to show a clear scan). I unscrewed the top on my water bottle and took a gulp feeling like a fraud because I had no baby in my belly anymore and yet here I was sitting in line surrounded by pregnant women rubbing their swollen tummies. My name was called and I returned to the small room I had been in the week before. Like a re-enactment of the time before I lay on the bed and held my breath, the gel was smeared over my belly and the screen flickered beside me. "Yes it's empty, I'm very sorry", the sinologist handed me the obligatory paper towel. The rest of the visit passed in a haze as I waited to see the doctor before we could leave. All I remember is seeing a little girl climbing on the seats playing with her Dad while she waited for her Mom to return. Watching her was a distraction in the waiting room until a lady came in with a newborn in a car seat. Clutching my partners hand even tighter I could be brave no longer. Suddenly my eyes filled with tears and I was met by tears in my partner's eyes and all the disappointment of our dream came crashing down upon us. I saw a doctor who assured we could try again in the future and then we were back in the car heading home feeling numb, almost feeling as if it was happening to someone else.*

## A Road from Loss to Hope – My story of a miscarriage *continued..*

*The swishing of the wipers brought me back to the present and James Morrison was still singing on the stereo....” If your sky is falling just take my hand and hold it, you don’t have to be alone...I won’t let you go”. My tears mingled with the rain on the car windscreen until I could no longer tell which was which.....*

*I had transferred the contents of the bowl from the morning of the miscarriage to a lidded box I had hidden in the freezer until I decided what I was going to do. The thought of it being flushed away was unimaginable to me at the time, it was, after all, the beginnings of our baby no matter how small. I decided to go to the garden centre and choose a plant that would flourish each year and remind me of the child we had conceived and lost. I knew I would know the right one when I saw it. I wandered through the nursery and suddenly I saw it. A copper coloured cluster of leaves, vibrant and alive. I pulled back the branch and stared at the name tag on the plant “Tom Thumb”. We had planned to call the baby Tommy and here was a plant called after the nursery rhyme character... a little boy called Tom the size of your thumb. I knew I was doing the right thing and carried it carefully to the lady at the till. When I got home I chose a large pot and half filled it with soil, I took the frozen placenta from the freezer and placed it in the soil. Placing my Tom Thumb place on top if it I knew it was safe and protected. I placed the pot outside the patio door where I could see it from the kitchen. This little ceremony was my own and mine alone.*

*My partner had been there for me but insisted that he could not go down that road of burying the placenta. He felt he would spiral down into a place of grief that frightened him and one which he did not want to visit. People have different ways of coping, that was his and this was mine. It was a lonely place for me to be and some days my grief overtook me and threatened to hold my head below the waterline. Sometimes the big strong arms of my partner holding me were enough, at other times I was in a bubble that could not be penetrated.*

*Our wedding day came and went and while the spotlight was on the preparations and the big day, deep down my soul was hurting and my spirit could not fly. On the outside I functioned but on the inside I was drowning. I saw parents pushing buggies and heard of people’s pregnancies and could only think that that should be me. Eventually I ended up sitting opposite a counsellor and through weekly visits I learned to look at this painful episode of our life and not feel overwhelmed and consumed by it. I learned to talk about it although there were many out there who did not acknowledge it. Because it was a loss in early pregnancy and there was no baby to show for it, I think some people don’t see your loss. It is not just the loss of a baby but the loss of a shared dream between two parents. All the plans are suddenly gone and the anticipation of holding a child in your arms has disappeared. I will not lie and say it was easy, but it got easier. My husband and I had arguments due to misunderstandings and hurt feelings but eventually peace resumed and communication opened up again. It was a long and hard road back and one which he and I were blessed to survive, some couples are not so lucky. On what would have been Baby Tommy’s due date, the plant outside flourished and had turned from Autumn tones to lush and vibrant green. New shoots sprung up strong and sturdy, a sign of hope in Spring. A sign that things would get better and life would go on. To all parents who have gone through the experience of losing a child no matter what stage of pregnancy, please know I have shared my story in the hope that you don’t feel alone. As James Morrison sang: “Just take my hand and hold it, you don’t have to be alone... I won’t let you go”*

**Alison Keogh**

## An Invitation to 'Remember You'

An Invitation to Remember You (working title) is a feature length documentary seeking participants on the topic of miscarriage. We are looking for any woman or man who has experienced miscarriage in their lives. It can be recent or happened many years ago. We are hoping to make an insightful and compassionate documentary that gives women a place to express the feelings in a safe and understanding environment. The overall aim of the documentary is to make a personal film that focuses on the human stories rather than clinical facts or statistics. If you would like to participate or inquire further please contact Siobhan at [siobhanfrancesperry@gmail.com](mailto:siobhanfrancesperry@gmail.com).

### ***Please note:***

***The Miscarriage Association of Ireland are not involved in the creation of this documentary. However, we felt that it might interest to one or more of our readers.***

## 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 8.00 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month, except July and August. 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.



## 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. Articles may be submitted to us at [newsletter@miscarriage.ie](mailto:newsletter@miscarriage.ie) or by post to Carmichael Centre, North Brunswick Street, Dublin, 2 and marked “Newsletter”.

### **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, 2 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 30 September 2013*

**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*

### **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.