
The Miscarriage Association of Ireland

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Summer Newsletter
2014



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Welcome

Inside this newsletter you will find stories and poems of loss and grief, and of how women and their families made it through the storm, acknowledgement of the babies to whom you had to say goodbye and with a sense of hope we welcome the babies that have arrived.

In 2013, The Miscarriage Association of Ireland commemorated 25 years of supporting women and their families through the pain and grief of losing a baby. The need for support, the need to talk and to share one's experience of loss with others who share similar experiences, is as great today as it was 25 years ago. It was then that the Association's founder Hilary Frazer, feeling isolated after her miscarriage, placed an advert in a newspaper and the first support group meeting took place in her living room. – Sadly a great many of you will be only too aware of the those feelings of isolation following the loss of a baby through miscarriage.



Deirdre Pierce-McDonnell

Chairperson – The Miscarriage Association of Ireland

Committee

Chairperson

Deirdre Pierce McDonnell

Secretary

Niamh Ryan

Treasurer

Marie McManus

Committee Members:

Mary Lawson, June O'Toole, Angela Grace, Liz Burton, Niamh Darcy, Edel Jauny, Anne Fitzsimons, Iga Lyczowska – Mazur, Maureen V. Ward



We provide support via our website (www.miscarriage.ie), facebook page, telephone, email, our newly updated information booklet, and through our monthly support group meetings held in Buswell's Hotel , Molesworth Street, Dublin 2. Our annual service of remembrance held on the 2nd Sunday of November in St Teresa's church Donore Avenue, off South Circular Road, Dublin 8 is also an important date in the calendar for those who need quiet time out to remember their babies.



Over the last year the Association has committed to getting the message across to as many women, men and their families as possible, that support is available. Activities to help us achieve this, have been to create a facebook page, where announcements of up and coming events are posted, to hold regional support group meetings (in 2013 we held a meeting in Kilkenny and in 2014 we held one in Kerry and Cork), to ensure that our information booklet will be distributed to all maternity units across the country and is given to those women and their families who need it. Everybody needs to know that they are not alone when they leave the hospital environment or when you miscarry at home, to know that there is somewhere to turn.



In addition the committee members have represented the Association at various events during the year, trying to ensure that people are made aware that miscarriage is not just a word, but a life changing traumatic event for women and their families. We attended the Irish Hospice Foundation - Public evening on bereavement, a CUMH conference on the impact of pregnancy loss and have made a submission to the HSE sub group on bereavement support available in Ireland. I think that slowly all hospitals and the staff are coming to realise just how important and valuable it is to have a good bereavement support system available to women and their families who have lost a baby at any stage.



The Miscarriage Association of Ireland is a registered charity and the committee are all volunteers. We are currently funded by the Child and Family Agency. We are extremely appreciative of this invaluable funding which allows us to carry out the support that we provide. In addition I would like to thank everyone who supports us in various ways, by giving donations, becoming a member (membership is €15 annually), by running at various events to raise funds and by buying our Christmas cards. I cannot express in words how much your support means to us and therefore means to all those women and men who contact us when they cannot see any light in front of them or which path to take. By talking to us they then "Know that Someone Cares"



Deirdre Pierce-McDonnell
Chairperson - The Miscarriage Association of Ireland

REGIONAL MEETINGS CORK & KERRY

The Miscarriage Association of Ireland decided to take some meetings out of Dublin to offer support to those around Ireland who couldn't make the journey up. We held our first meeting in Kilkenny in St Patrick's Parish Centre, Bohernatounish Road Loughboy on the evening of the 17th of October, 2013. The evening itself was very successful, we had a number of people living in Kilkenny and surrounds come to talk with us for a few hours and share their stories. Due to the positive feedback we received from the Kilkenny meeting, we felt that confident that this service was needed further afield so we decided to hold a meeting in Co Kerry in the new year. Listowel was earmarked as a central location for people to be able to access and we held our second meeting on the evening of Wednesday the 9th of April. Once again, we had a good meeting and it was well attended on the evening.

It is very important for us to bring our Association to other counties outside of Dublin and to support people around the country who are mourning their losses.

We would like to thank both the Listowel Family Resource centre and the St Patricks Parish Centre in Kilkenny for accommodating us so well for both evenings. We would hope to hold more regional meetings over the winter months this year, dates and locations will be announced on our Facebook page and on our website.

Thank you to all who came to the support meetings

REGIONAL SUPPORT MEETING CORK 10th APRIL, 2014

Last year the Miscarriage Association of Ireland celebrated 25 years in existence, having been begun by Hilary Frazer in September 1988. The seed sown by Hilary has flowered into a Committee of twelve, with monthly Support Meetings (except July and August), an annual Service of Remembrance, telephone support, e-mail support, a fundraising presence at the Flora Women's Mini Marathon each year, to name but a few of our services and activities.

In our discussion regarding how to celebrate our 25 years and to bring our message and support to more people we decided to hold regional support meetings, helping people outside of Dublin who also need emotional support after a miscarriage. A group of our Committee held our first support meeting in Kilkenny in 2013 and the follow-on this year was arranged by our Chairperson, Deirdre Pierce-McDonnell, for two meeting in the south west of Ireland, in Kerry and Cork.

The Kerry Meeting was held by Deirdre and Niamh Darcy and Angela Grace and I joined Deirdre in Wilton, Cork on 10th April, to hold the Cork Support Group meeting there. While we had refreshments Deirdre filled us in on her meeting with the Bereavement Team of Cork University Hospital to discuss the support they provide. Deirdre gave them copies of our updated Information Booklet, which they were very pleased with and they agreed to distribute it to women who have suffered miscarriage, to let them know that there is support available outside of and in addition to the hospital support system.

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In order to let people know about our meeting Deirdre and Edel, a Committee Member, had spoken on Radio Kerry's Talkabout Show with Deirdre Walsh and mentioned the meeting was taking place. Deirdre advertised in The Cork Man, The Southern Star and the West Cork People that the meeting was to take place in the Bru Columbanus Centre, Cardinal Way, Wilton which is adjacent to the C.U.H. and the Wilton Shopping Centre. Just before the meeting was about the start a group of local women came to join us for our meeting.

Deirdre commenced the meeting with a brief history of our Association. We then went on to tell our stories and in so doing were given a chance to share the feelings of sadness and grief which comes with a miscarriage. I told my own story of my miscarriage which started when I was holidaying in Skibbereen, County Cork, and how I had to cut my holiday short and return to Dublin and try to come to terms with what was happening to me and facing up to the loss of my most wanted baby. Deirdre and Angela spoke of miscarriage also and there was a feeling of togetherness combatting the isolation which is so often a feature of miscarriage where people assume you get on with your life after miscarriage but the longing doesn't go away and you pine silently for your baby.

We held a short mediation and lit candles to represent our babies. It was very moving and we hoped and felt that the group did benefit in some way from our meeting. We hope to hold more support meetings around the country in future, ensuring that no one need suffer in isolation after a miscarriage, offering emotional support and continuing the wonderful work commenced by Hilary Frazer all those years ago.

Marie Mc Manus

THE ROTUNDA HOSPITAL REMEMBRANCE SERVICE, ST MARY'S PRO CATHEDRAL - SUNDAY 17th NOVEMBER 2013

The Rotunda Hospital Service of Remembrance took place on Sunday 17th November 2013 and it was a privilege for Maureen and I to be able to attend this very reverend, beautiful and moving service as representatives of the Miscarriage Association of Ireland.

The Service took place in St Mary's Pro Cathedral, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1, which is just a short walk away from the Rotunda Hospital, where the women, men and families attending the service would have had the sad experience of losing their little baby. The Cathedral was full to capacity, and the atmosphere was one of sadness, but there was also a sense of appreciation of being able to come together at this very beautiful service of remembrance, to do just that - to remember and acknowledge the babies that had been lost.

A line from the opening prayer summed up what I hoped most people would feel after the service was over - "As we pray together, lift us from grief and pain to the light and peace of your presence"

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After a welcoming address from Sam Coulter-Smith, Master of the hospital, the candles received by everyone on entry to the church, were lit from the Paschal Candle. In addition candles were lit by staff members, and members of various support organizations on behalf of those who could not attend the service on the day.

There was beautiful songs by Liam Lawton sung throughout the service, including "In the quiet", "There is a place" and the "Healing song". I think great comfort was found in the words of all these songs. The chorus from "There is a place" stood out in particular;

"There is treasure in our fields, There is treasure in our skies,
There is treasure in our dreaming, From the soul to the eye,
For wherever we gather, In the light of God's grace,
And for all who we remember, There will ever be a place."

The hospital book of Remembrance was laid on the alter throughout the service and was available after the service to make an entry in memory of the babies, or to view an entry already made.

The reflection "We Remember " was read also, and showed that we remember our babies in the everyday activities of our lives.

After the service there were refreshments provided in the Gresham Hotel. 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



COOMBE WOMEN & INFANTS UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL ANNUAL SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE , SUNDAY 27th APRIL 2014

Great credit must go to the Chaplains, Renee and Phil and all the staff of the Coombe Women & Infants University Hospital for organising such a beautiful and dignified Service of Remembrance. The Coombe Workplace Choir, led by Susan Dowling was amazing. The gentle music and singing was almost heaven-sent and added to the sacredness of the occasion. The Church was full and each person there had their own story to tell. People came from far and near to remember their babies, whose time was short, yet very precious.

Refreshments were served after the Service. This was an opportunity for people to come together and share their thoughts and feelings. It was a beautiful afternoon and yet nobody seemed in a hurry to leave! There were mixed emotions of sadness, loss and grief - but also a sense of new hope. I experienced an atmosphere of caring and sharing; one of solidarity – a community united in the loss of a child.

It was a privilege for me to be present and represent The Miscarriage Association of Ireland at such a beautiful Service of Remembrance.

June O'Toole

SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE , ST. PHILOMENA'S CHURCH, PALMERSTOWN , FRIDAY 29th NOVEMBER 2013

It was an honour for me to represent The Miscarriage Association of Ireland at St. Philomena's Service of Remembrance. For Fr. Tony and the Parish Pastoral Council, this Service was obviously a labour of love. The chosen readings and reflections offered hope and comfort to all present. The members of the church choir resembled a choir of angels with their beautiful singing and harmony. Afterwards, refreshments were served in the Parish Centre, offering people an opportunity to come together, share their stories and ultimately feel less alone.

Great credit must go to Fr. Tony and his team for organising such a fitting tribute to all those children, sadly no longer with us, but whose memories will live on in our hearts forever. A thought that stayed with me as I drove home after the Service was that Love never dies. I experienced a caring community united in prayer, offering love and support to one another.

June O'Toole

Note: Members of the committee also attend the National Maternity Hospital and Caragh Services of Remembrance.

FUNDRAISING

We would like to express our gratitude to all of you who took part in the Ladies' Mini Marathon, whether you ran, jogged or walked on our behalf.

We would also like to thank all those who took part in other Marathons and fundraising events on our behalf.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Our Annual Service of Remembrance, Sunday 9th November 2014 at 3.00 p.m.

This year Our Service of Remembrance will take place in St. Theresa's Church, Donore Avenue at 3pm on Sunday 9th November 2014. 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.

The Miscarriage Association of Ireland has recently placed it's **11th Memorial Stone in St. Patrick's Cemetery, Clonmel, Co Tipperary**. A dedication ceremony will take place in the near future, please see the website and facebook where details of date and time will be announced. The dedication on the stone is: "Behold, I have carved you on the palms of my hands" (*Isaiah 49:16*) "In memory of our precious little babies, who never got the opportunity to share our lives with us, but will live on in our hearts forever. Dedicated to all babies lost before, during and after birth.

FACEBOOK

Late last year we launched our Facebook page www.facebook.com/Miscarriage.ie. As the world's largest social media network, Facebook allows us to reach out to an even bigger audience and to share with more people than ever before. It also gives us more flexibility to advertise our and other likeminded events for those affected by miscarriage. We have had a great response so far from our many followers.

If you have not done so already, why not not like us on Facebook and share our link with your friends.

Thanks
Angela Grace



WELCOME BABIES

Iris April Mary Edith Margaret Black was born on Monday 23rd April 2013 born to Mary and Graham.

Pola Lyczlowska-Mazur born on Friday 9th May 2014.

ANNIVERSARIES

Poppy Black to be remembered on 13th May by her parents, Mary and Graham and her little sister, Iris.

For our little baby Bobby O Sullivan Duffy

1st birthday/ Angelversary 10th June 2014

Loved and missed by mammy, daddy, grandparents, auntys, uncles and cousins xx



POETRY CORNER



For my Angel, Gone but never forgotten

It was a shock at first to see the plus sign
 But as the week went on I knew things would be fine
 We were having a baby and excitement grew
 I couldn't wait to go and buy everything new
 I felt in my heart I would be buying pink
 And hoped the 9 months wouldn't go by in a blink
 I loved being pregnant on your two big bro's
 And loved each month how my belly grows
 I couldn't wait to see you and have my 1st scan
 So I was booked in September I hoped the time ran
 But at 5 weeks & 4 days my world changed for the worst
 I couldn't believe it, my bubble had burst
 I would never hold you, you would never cry
 My heart was broken, my tears wouldn't dry
 With every month that passed I thought I was fine
 But the pain wouldn't go so easy, I wanted you to be mine
 But I had to accept you were an angel now
 Watching over me from heaven and do I know how?
 You send angel kisses to your brother to give me
 It gives me such warmth as I'm sure you can see
 I keep them all safe and cherish each one
 I know they're from you pet I love what you've done
 I will never forget you, we will never be apart
 The day you became an angel you took a piece of my heart

Confirmed: 2nd July 2012
 Became an Angel: 16th July 2012
 Birthday: 8th March 2013

Pamela Brady

*For our little baby Bobby O Sullivan Duffy
1st birthday/ Angelversary 10th June 2014*

*When your beautiful heart stopped beating
My heart just broke in two*

*Knowing that here on earth
There will never be another like you*

*We are sending a dove to Heaven with a parcel on its wings
Be careful when you open it, it's full of beautiful things.*

*Inside there are a million kisses, wrapped up in a million hugs
To say how much we miss you and to send you all our love.*

*Loved and missed by mammy, daddy, grandparents, aunties, uncles
and cousins xx*



Hope

Wind blows, rain falls, rivers flow and sun shines.

We live, we loose, we hurt but we always have hope.

*Hope makes us see one day through to another, hope is the eternal
flame that never blows out.*

*Because of hope I know that while our journey together was so very
brief we will meet again one day and take up just where we left off.*

Mairead Cassidy

Gone

It's time to go, I see red.
 I hold my breath.
 I panic, I stop, I look.
 The urge comes.
 I try to hold.
 I can't.
 It's happening.
 The red just keeps coming.
 I'm so scared.
 What's happening?
 Please don't be it.....it can't be.
 We have hope.
 We see a flutter.
 We have a little fighter.
 He is dancing.
 How can it be?
 The red keeps coming.
 More and more and more.
 I'm scared.
 What's happening?
 This doesn't feel right.
 What is happening to him?
 Am I dying? Is he dying?
 I'm scared.
 I've left the scene...I've drugs for the pain.
 It's happening.....everything is a blur.
 My poor little baby.
 From dancing to being limp.
 All in a few hours
 He is gone.

MINE

He lived 10 1/2 weeks inside me.
 A joy in itself.
 A joy inside me.
 I'm empty now, so empty.
 My little boy gone.
 Gone before I got to hold him.
 Never got to hold him in my arms but
 always holding him in my heart.

Holding

An intensity I've never known.
 A depth I've never been to.
 An ache deep within me.
 My head says move on.
 My heart says hold on.
 Hold on to my little boy.
 While never in my hands
 always in my heart.
 My heart cries hold on.
 Hold on to my little boy.

No title

Three lines go across my chest.
 They are deep and entrenched.
 They appear at unexpected times
 in unexpected places.
 My hand goes to my heart.
 My heart squeezes.
 My hand eases.
 The three lines are sharp and
 dull all at once.
 They pierce me.
 They flatten me
 and then their gone.
 Is this what grief is?
 Is this how it feels?
 So unexpected in unexpected places.



Mairead B

YOUR STORIES

Baby Poppy

I attended the Service of Remembrance held on 10 November 2013 with my husband, Graham. I found the Service emotional, spiritual but comforting at the same time. It is lovely to sit and think for an hour along with others who know exactly what we are going through. I lost my baby through miscarriage on Friday 13th May 2011. At first I didn't know how I felt as the pregnancy was unplanned. We already had two sons and had decided we were happy with the family we had. As the days passed, I began to fall in love with my unborn baby thinking "maybe this time we'd have a girl", "where would she sleep", "what name we'd choose" and "who we'd pick to be godparents", all the little questions that take up place in your mind. However, it was not meant to be and the day I lost my baby, I had never felt more devastated.

My husband was so good to me as were my family and friends but the usual comments of "it obviously wasn't the right time" or "at least you have your two sons" didn't replace the heartache.

Out walking one day, I noticed there were so many poppies around and when I got home there were poppies on the pictures in our hall and landing that I hadn't even noticed before so I called our baby Poppy.

Every now and again I will see a white feather or a beautiful butterfly when I am low and I know that is Poppy letting me know she is okay and with God.

After I lost her, my need for a baby was so intense, so we decided we would try. The first month while we were on holiday in Lanzarote, I discovered I was pregnant. We couldn't have been happier and yet the fear of the same thing happening again was never far from the forefront of my mind.

Iris April Mary Edith Margaret was born on Monday 23rd April, our rainbow baby. As I'd found out I was pregnant in Spain, the Spanish word for "Rainbow" is arco iris, hence her name. We all love her so much and are so lucky to have her with us. But even with my three children here with me, I will never forget Poppy, my angel baby who I know watches over us.

Thank you

Mary Black

Jennifer's story

I'd like to share my story in the hope that it might offer someone else some hope. There was a point when I started to think all hope was lost but I think my journey shows that things can work out. I'd hope that my story might help someone else that is going through the pain of miscarriage.

I married in August 2007 at the age of 23. Some people I'm sure thought I was mad getting married so young but I'd met a man I loved with all my heart, who I could be myself with, my soul mate and my best friend. I was young, healthy and very happy. In November of that year at my husband's nephews christening we decided we'd like to have a baby of our own and got down to the business of making a baby. Of course we knew people had miscarriages but that wouldn't happen to us, miscarriage was something that happened to other people, so we gave it no more thought.

Before long we were expecting and our baby was to be born in August just before our first wedding anniversary, how much more perfect could life be!! I started to think of what this little person would be like and started imagining life with three of us, it was going to be great, just perfect. I had pretty bad morning sickness but we were looking forward to our first scan and getting to finally see this little person we had made. At our routine first scan at 13 weeks in CUMH on the 5th Feb 2008 our world fell apart when we were told our baby had no heart-beat and was only measuring just over 8 weeks. I will never forget the stillness and the look on the sonographers face. We drove home utterly heartbroken. We had been naïve and the thought of anything going wrong had never come into our minds, why would it. We'd told our families but I couldn't bring myself to tell them the bad news so left it up to my husband. He was so strong and held it together so well when telling my mother and asking her to let my father, my three sisters and brother know. He then called his own mother and my heart broke all over again to see him break down on the phone to her, he fell apart and had to hang the phone up. It was hard to see him like that but in a strange way it helped me as I knew then he was hurting just as much as I was and I wasn't the only one feeling so lost, vulnerable and devastated. I took the tablets to help get me ready for a D&C but the next night we ended up back in hospital. I had awful pain and the bleeding got quite bad. The ride to the hospital is a daze, I remember but it was like I was outside watching it all going on. At the hospital I remember telling my husband if anything were to happen me it was OK for him to be happy with someone else, I really thought at that point I was going to die and I was OK with that, I'd be with our baby. I lost our baby and was kept in that night. They had no beds so I was in a room with a lady who had just had her baby. I felt awful for her as she must have known why I was there, not much privacy between a little curtain, I felt like I was ruining her special time with her little baby. I was home the next day.

Not long after, maybe looking back it was too soon, we decided to try again. I thought being pregnant again would somehow help to heal the pain. We'd had our bad luck so surely it wouldn't happen again. Lightning never strikes twice after all, they say that don't they. It didn't take long before we were pregnant again. This time our baby was due just before Christmas, again a perfect time to have a new baby, home in time for Santa. What more could we ask for.

Again morning sickness hit but I was delighted, surely that had to be a good sign. I had a little spotting coming up to the date of our scan, we went to the GP and she said seeing as I had a scan coming up to just go to that, I had no pain and women have spotting in pregnancy and everything works out so we were going to be fine I told myself. The morning of the scan I had an awful feeling in the pit of my belly, I just knew it wasn't to be and a scan on the 6th of May when I should have been 8 weeks confirmed our worst fears. The sonographer looked worried and called in another person for a second opinion and they said it looked like a Molar Pregnancy with the pregnancy sac measuring 7 weeks and 4 days. I had never heard of a Molar pregnancy and had no idea what it meant but was advised a D&C was the best course of action to take.

This confirmed the diagnosis of a Molar pregnancy. Basically the pregnancy is replaced by a benign tumour of the placenta and it occurs in approximately one in 2,000 pregnant women. This meant I had to have follow up bloods done every two days then weekly until my HCG levels came back down to below 5. We were also advised that we could not try again for between one and two years. This was hard to hear but looking back it was probably what we needed to heal and recover. I don't think I had fully come to terms with our first loss when the second happened and I shut my husband out and pushed him away, I didn't know how I was going to get through this again but he understood it was just my way of coping and was my rock the whole time. I was also starting to worry that maybe things were never going to work out for us, that there was something wrong with me, that I was broken, faulty somehow and I was so upset that I couldn't give my husband the family I was sure he wanted!!

After a few months my bloods were back down and armed with research from on-line I went to my GP to get the go ahead to try again after 6 months. He looked at my research and told us he was happy for us to try again but I would need to have my bloods checked after baby was born to make sure HCG dropped right back down.

A few months later we were pregnant again. Getting pregnant didn't seem to be a problem for us but from the minute I got a positive test the dread was there that things would not work out again and we'd have to deal with losing another baby. Would we really cope with that, I didn't know how and wasn't sure that I would. I was a bit of a wreck at times and was worried sick. Every ache and pain would send sheer panic through me. Would I cope if I lost another baby, would our relationship survive another loss but we knew it was what we wanted? I was very sick but delighted to be sick, never thought I could be so happy to be so sick. My husband has commented since that it was the strangest thing in the world to see me coming out of the bathroom after being very sick with a smile on my face!! Early scans showed our baby waving at us with a beautiful little heartbeat. A scan at 20 weeks told us we were having a little boy. I was sick throughout the pregnancy but our handsome perfect little boy, Daithí James, was born after a long hard labour on the 2nd September 2009 weighing 7lbs 1. He was absolutely perfect and the long labour was soon forgotten. I never imagined I could love someone I had just met so much.

When Daithí was a few months old we started talking about going again. We were pregnant again not long after and this time baby was due in April 2011 but I started bleeding a week later and lost our baby in August 2010 at a little over 5 weeks. I tried to tell myself that as it was so early maybe it meant I should be hurting less but it was still just as hard. Once you see those two little lines, you see and imagine your baby and you are his or her mommy and that happens the second the second line comes up.

We knew we wanted Daithí to have a little brother or sister. We went to our GP for tests but he would only do basic bloods. We were told as we had Daithí it showed we could do it and it was just bad luck and the policy was to only investigate after 3 in a row. This to me seemed a bit crazy but he knew what he was talking about so we said we'd start trying. He said we'd just been very unlucky to have had three miscarriages and that even if we did tests the likelihood was that they wouldn't show up anything and no reason would be found. So with the idea that it was just bad luck and surely we couldn't be that unlucky for it to happen again we started trying again.

Again it didn't take long and we were pregnant again, this time due in May 2011. We went for an early scan at just over 6 weeks and got to see our little baby's tiny heart beating away. This helped to ease my worries and we started to believe all would be OK, after all the statistics all said the risk was reduced once heartbeat was seen. I had some pain but no bleeding about two weeks later and my GP thought it was a urine infection. I went to A&E with pain a few days later and was told they couldn't find our baby's heartbeat but to come in again in the morning to the EPU as their scanning machines were better. This just confirmed what we already knew. We were having our fourth miscarriage and losing our fourth little baby. I should have been 8 weeks and 4 days but baby only measured 7 weeks and 6 days.

We asked for tests to be done but again were told that due to policy they couldn't investigate until I had three miscarriages in a row, and as Daithí was born in the middle they couldn't do the tests. We fought tooth and nail and eventually a junior doctor went to his senior doctor and got the go ahead to run tests. I had another D&C and tissue was sent to England for genetic testing. To me it was barbaric to tell a woman she had to lose another baby to make it three in a row before they could try to find the reason why it kept happening. It didn't seem to matter that I had already been pregnant 5 times and lost four of our babies. We were told tests would take a few weeks.

In the meantime we decided to be proactive and take matters into our own hands. I needed to feel that I was doing something. We started treatment with Napro Technology. A month or two later we got the results from the Genetic testing that showed I carried a Balanced Robertsonian Translocation, again like with the Molar pregnancy we had never heard of this and had no idea what it meant for us, our son, our future and our chance of having another baby. On the day we met with the consultant at the hospital for her to explain the results to us I found out I was pregnant. I was terrified. My Napro doctor put me on progesterone injections three times a week, along with Cyclogest pessaries as my bloods showed my progesterone was on the very low side. I was also put on baby Aspirin. I would take anything and do anything if it meant this little baby was going to be OK.

The consultant explained roughly what the translocation meant and sent a request to Crumlin for us to meet with a genetic counsellor. She also agreed to see us at her high risk clinic for the duration of my pregnancy, however long that might be.

I was scared throughout but all early scans were positive. I was almost waiting for things to go wrong or get bad news, so far we seemed so get more bad news than good, so bad news almost became the norm and was what I came to expect! I again was very sick but this eased around 14 weeks. Being high risk and given the translocation we had an anomaly scan at 20 weeks. I felt so sick going for that scan; I was almost expecting bad news. I started crying before she even started scanning but all was OK and baby was looking perfect.

Our beautiful daughter, Síofra Maire, made her way into the world on the 23rd October 2011 weighing a healthy 8lbs 3. She was and is absolutely perfect and a total joy.

With Daithí and Síofra to keep us busy we were happy as we were for awhile. Then thoughts of having number three started to come into our heads. We decided that we should get as much as we could right before we went again so started back with Napro. This time my bloods showed up a slight issue with my thyroid and also the issue with the progesterone was still there so I started Eltroxin and progesterone injections again, this time just 4 injections a month after I had ovulated. This seemed to be doing the trick and we decided we were ready to try again.

Of course we were terrified but we knew the risks and knew there was a chance of things going wrong again. We were delighted but scared when we found out we were pregnant. Baby was due the end of September 2013. We had everything confirmed and I started back on injections 3 times a week to help with the progesterone along with Cyclogest twice a day and Eltroxin and baby Aspirin daily. We decided we would enjoy every minute and try to be as positive as we could and just take it one day at a time. Not easy but it was the only way I knew how to get through it or I would go mad. I couldn't think too far ahead and could just do it day by day.

I was a little worried as I didn't feel as sick as I had in past pregnancies but we put it down to me maybe getting used to the hormones in my system, after all loads of people go through pregnancy without being sick and everything works out ok. My husband's sister had three kids and was hardly sick at all. Again I had no pain or bleeding and bloods early on were good so there was no real reason to worry but my gut was still telling me there was something wrong. I tried to shake the feeling and didn't tell my husband how worried I was, no point in the two of us being so worried when it really was at this stage unfounded. When my bloods dropped I knew what was happening. We went to the emergency room of our maternity hospital but as I had no pain or bleeding they sent me home saying there was nothing they could do. I knew in my heart it was over and an early scan a few days later confirmed it. We lost baby number 5 at the start of February 2013 at a little over 7 weeks. I somehow thought that seeing as this was our fifth loss that it would somehow be easier in some way but it wasn't. It still hurt and the pain of losing another baby was very real and very hard to deal with.

We were and are very lucky in that we have two very special little people , Daithi and Siofra, here that keep us going. They still need our love and attention no matter what we are going though and they help us so much, I know not everyone is as lucky as us and I can only imagine how hard it must be for those people who don't have what we have.

It has been a very hard road and not always easy but it has thought me many things. We are stronger than we think we are. It has also thought me not to judge people and to understand that we don't always know what goes on behind closed doors. Even when people may seem like they have it all they are often going through their own struggles and journeys. I know people must look at us and think we have things so easy and everything perfectly planned. Daithi was 4 in September 2013 and Siofra was 2 in October 2013. But people don't realise we have 5 little babies who aren't here with us. They don't know the heartache that we hide on a daily basis. We get on with life because that's what we do, what else can we do but we will never forget what we have lost nor do I want to.

People ask us or pass comment on it being time to have another without realising the pain we've gone through to get where we are. I know people mean well and don't realise what we have gone through and most of the time I can take it but other times it is hard. People mean well. Once someone gets married the next step is babies but it's not always that simple and people forget that. Its very hard to understand for people when they haven't been in the same situation.

I think it is important for people to realise this and see that things are not always how they seem. That everyone has their own cross to bear and their own struggles. People who are going through loss need to know they are not alone and it's ok to talk about it. That it's not something to be ashamed of or embarrassed by. They need to know that there is hope and that things can work out. I think one of the hardest things is that after our first loss people that knew like family acknowledged it as did the staff at the hospital. People told us how sorry they were, they acknowledged this little person we would never get to meet but after our fifth loss family did not seem to acknowledge it as much, in the hospital they never said they were sorry for our loss, which hurt me more than words, not even sure why it did so much but it did. We had still lost a baby and it still hurt.

I think hospitals need to handle situations better. Going back into the hospital for bloods after you have lost your baby and having to put on a brave face when your heart is breaking so as not to upset the pregnant ladies is hard. There is often very little privacy when being told sad news. Then you have to walk out of the hospital past all the ladies holding scan pictures and beaming with delight, it's not their fault but it just makes your situation harder to cope with. After our first loss I was put on the post natal ward as they had no bed. The woman in the bed beside me had just had her baby. She knew I was loosing mine, a thin curtain between us so any conversation was not private. I'm sure she thought I was sleeping when her baby was upset but she knew I'd just lost mine and she called the nurse to ask her to take her baby away so as not to upset me further, which broke my heart. I felt so bad for this woman who should be enjoying that precious time with her new little baby but she was thinking of me. It shouldn't be like that. They need to look at things like this.

I guess the point I'm trying to make in a very long winded way is that there should be more awareness made of pregnancy loss. People who are going through it and have been through it need to be made feel that it's OK for them to talk about it if they need to. They need to know they are not alone and there are supports there. They need to know they will get through it and there is hope. People who have never been there need to know how lucky they are and need to realise that things are not always easy and things are not always as they seem. They need to realise that sometimes their well meaning comments like "ah that's not so bad, you were very early", "At least you know you can get pregnant", "at least you have children already", "At least it happened early" etc can really hurt. All I wanted to hear was "I'm sorry for your loss; if you need or want to talk I'm here". I've lost friends I feel along the way because they are not at the same stage in life as me and don't know how to handle the issues I've been through, they don't know what to say to me any more and can't really relate to what I have been through. It's sad but I guess people drift apart but this just makes that happen a little faster.

We are now at the point where we are ready to try again. Its scary but I know its what we both want. We are stronger now as a couple and we know we have 5 very special angels watching over us who we will never forget. They may have only been with us for a very short time but they were and still are our babies. We won't forget them. To anyone going through miscarriage, I am sorry you are on this road. It will get better but it takes time. Allow yourself to heal and take the time that you need. Everyone copes in their own way and that's ok. There is hope and things can work out.

To our five special babies watching after us 'An Angel in the book of life wrote down our babies births, and whispered as she closed the book....." Too beautiful for this earth "' Love ye always and forever Mommy, Daddy, Daithí and Síofra. XXX

Jennifer Uí Dhubhgain



My Story

I was taken completely by surprise when I looked at the pregnancy test with its positive two lines. I had just come home from working in San Francisco and was planning on going back to college to study Photography in Cork. My boyfriend followed me 2 weeks later and, both in a little shock; we started planning for our unplanned pregnancy!

I arranged an appointment and scan as early as I could. A couple of days before this was due, we decided to visit my folks in Dublin. On the bus back down to Cork, I got very strong cramps in my belly and just as I turned my head around to tell my boyfriend, my waters broke. I was 26 years old and 17 weeks pregnant when I lost my first baby. It took about 8 hours of constant bleeding, clotting, cramping and crying through a long winter night on a ward with other pregnant women. The nurses working that night were amazing, despite seeing this happen on a ridiculously regular basis.

I spent the days following the miscarriage reliving the most prominent moments of the experience...Having to tell the nurse that I thought I had given birth into the toilet bowl, and her having to check. The Sonographer telling me the next morning that we should be seeing the baby on the screen and then announcing 'No, there's nothing there'. My surprise at seeing pregnant women pulling on cigarettes in a smoking room inside the hospital and thinking how unfair it was.

The following months resulted in me leaving Cork, my boyfriend and my photography course to move back to Dublin to sort myself out and try to deal with my loss. I struggled with my guilt and grief and thought that I needed to be by myself to do this...but I actually needed to talk to someone. At this stage I didn't know anyone else who had lost a baby and my own friends were having children of their own so I didn't really feel that comfortable chatting to them in their time of happiness. They were very supportive of me but it was independent help that I needed.

I'm pretty sure you could say that I was suffering from depression although I didn't know it at the time - I felt sad, alone and down. It wasn't until I suffered two more miscarriages that I finally went to a meeting with the Miscarriage Association of Ireland and got some independent help.

My second and third miscarriages happened quite close together - and were completely different to the first. I was 8 weeks pregnant on baby number two when I went for a scan. Immediately the sonographer said that there was a problem, called in a doctor to review and I was told that the baby had no heartbeat. It's so hard to hear those words. This time, unlike the first, I had to stay in hospital for a D&C. I don't think I've ever been as scared as I was on the way into the operating room. The nurse sat me down and let me have a cry for myself and for my second baby.

My last loss was a little more complicated. I felt unwell so I went into the hospital for bloods. They sent me home with the promise to call with blood results...and about an hour later, I got a call telling me to come straight into the A&E as they thought I had an ectopic pregnancy. Another scan showed that it was a small fibroid hiding in the womb lining and the foetus was nestled in the womb.

As this was so early in the pregnancy, around 4 weeks, it was impossible to hear the heart beat yet so for the next 3 weeks I was in and out of the scan room in a general hospital getting checked for the growth and beat of the baby. There was never any strong positivity about this pregnancy and I guess that because of my past two experiences, I was unbelievably nervous and expecting the worst from the beginning. I was in bed one evening after a scan and woke to heavy bleeding. This time there was no need to rush into the hospital as I had a complete miscarriage in my bathroom. This was confirmed in hospital later on in the day.

It was a few months after this miscarriage that I decided I had to go to a group meeting in Dublin. I was sad, frustrated, guilty, tired and felt alone. This meeting was the beginning of my turnaround. Slowly, over much time, I got to where I am now... happy, healthy and helping with the Miscarriage Association of Ireland.

I'm currently in the middle of investigations for recurrent miscarriages and I don't have any children to date. I'm 39 now and it's been a long road since my first miscarriage 12 years ago. Over the last 12 years, whenever friends or family announce a new arrival or pregnancy, my overwhelming feelings are pure excitement and happiness for them but there is always a tinge of sadness at the thought of my kids that never got here.

Niamh

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 at: info@miscarriage.ie or post at the Carmichael Centre and your email or letter 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/phonesupport.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.

Regional support group meetings may take place in various centres around the country during the year. Please check the website and facebook page to see the date, time and venue of future meetings.

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 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 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 2014

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

The Miscarriage Association
of Ireland



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