



# REFLECTIONS

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WINTER ISSUE

November 2011

**President**

Jordy Jahn

**Vice President**

Penny Stastny

**Treasurer**

Evelyn Clemente

**Recording Secretary**

Liz Willett

**Historian**

Carole Guttilla

**Parent Contacts**

- Jordy Jahn  
(949) 501-6346
- Arlene Barela  
(520) 252-7660
- Colleen Ma  
(714) 315-4605

**Spanish Speaking**

**Contact**

- Liz Ramirez  
(562) 233-7864

**Grandparent Contact**

Carole Guttilla  
(714)524-7647

**Medical Advisors**

- Thomas G. Keens, MD  
Professor of Pediatrics  
University of Southern  
California School of  
Medicine/Children's Hospital,  
Los Angeles
- Henry Krous, MD, Vice-  
Chair Director of Pathology  
Children's Hospital,  
San Diego

**Technical Consultant**

Andrew Beale

Unisys Corporation

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Barbara Estep

## Angel of Hope Monument

It is with great pleasure that the Guild for Infant Survival, Orange County, invites you to the 10th annual candlelight memorial service of the Angel of Hope Monument. The ceremony takes place on Tuesday, December 6th at 7 pm at the El Toro Memorial Park located at 25751 Trabuco Road in Lake Forest.



This year's featured speaker is Erin Runnion, mother of kidnap victim, Samantha Runnion. She is an eloquent speaker and will offer hope to bereaved parents, family, and friends.

In celebration of our 10th anniversary, commemorative Angel of Hope pins will be given to attendees. Candles and flowers are also provided.

The most memorable part of the evening is when guests are invited to approach the Angel of Hope, say their child's name aloud and place a white carnation at her base. It is so healing to

be able to say your child's name aloud in front of others who understand how meaningful this truly is.

Thousands of parents have participated in this service and find the evening to be a wonderful way to begin the holiday season each year. I hope you'll plan to join us December 6th and allow us the opportunity to share in the memory of your child.

### Inside This Issue:

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Anaheim White House Fundraiser Luncheon             | 2  |
| Ask the Expert                                      | 3  |
| Coping with Grief at Christmas                      | 3  |
| Chiropractic Care and SIDS                          | 5  |
| American Academy of Pediatrics SIDS Recommendations | 7  |
| Donations   | 10 |
| Calendar  | 11 |

## **Anaheim White House Fundraiser Luncheon**

**The Guild for Infant Survival Orange County (the Guild) deeply appreciates being one of the winners in the "Anaheim White House Charity Luncheon" giveaway opportunity. Mr. Bruno Serato, owner of the historical Anaheim White House Restaurant, announced the winners at a champagne reception attended by 216 Orange County non-profit organizations, all of whom had submitted a grant request. Each winner was the recipient of a three course luncheon for up to 100 attendees with the venue, food and beverages donated. Mr. Serato commented on "how difficult it is for non-profit organizations to succeed in our current economic environment stating that he wanted to help by aiding them in their fundraising endeavors". As a result, the idea of the charity luncheon was born.**

**The Guild is looking forward to holding our fundraiser luncheon on October 17, 2012, and once again offer a huge THANK YOU.**

**Bruno Serato, no stranger to generously serving the Orange County community, was one of the "CNN Heroes" celebrated in an all-star tribute as one of the everyday people making a world of difference. Through his dedication, over 35,000 hot meals are provided each year to underprivileged children and 150 homeless "Motel" children are given a hot meal each night. These accomplishments are commendable and accomplished because someone had the heart to care.**

### **A New Year's Resolution: Hope**

**By Ellen Gerst**

**The beginning of a new year is a good time to formulate a plan on how you want to move forward in your new life without your loved one.**

**I find when I listen to my own intuition, I am usually headed down the right road. One way to assure yourself it feels right is to check to see if your brain, heart, and gut are all in alignment. There shouldn't be any little pings, nagging questions, or red flags waving in your face – only calmness and an inner knowing.**

**As a New Year's resolution, may I suggest you make a decision to try to enjoy each day and do things that interest you, while sparking your mind to reach a higher level. Live in the present and allow your life to unfold in Technicolor before you. Project positive energy and watch it reflect right back at you.**

**Continued on Page 4**

**Ask the Expert**

*Is it true that chiropractors can identify babies who might die from SIDS and can prevent these deaths by realigning a subluxed spine? This question was recently asked by a PHN following a home visit to a parent who was seeing a chiropractor. See Page 5 to see how Dr. Thomas G. Keens, Professor of Pediatrics, Physiology and Biophysics Los Angeles, a renowned SIDS researcher, responded to this question. If you have a question for our medical expert just email us at [gisoc@att.net](mailto:gisoc@att.net) and we'll pass it on to Dr. Keens and share his reply in the next newsletter.*

**Coping With Grief at Christmas**

Holidays are a time for fellowship and friendship with those you love. However, for many bereaved families, it is also the time of year when they remember the ones in their lives who have died. How one handles this grief depends on many factors:

- ◆ Relationship to person who died
- ◆ Time since loved one's passing
- ◆ How many living family members and friends will join in holiday festivities
- ◆ What stage of grief the bereaved person is in

Once these factors are identified, the bereaved can decide what would be best in dealing with grief during the holidays. There are many ways this can be done including honoring the loved one lost or creating new family traditions.

Continued on Page 9

**Peer Contacts and Support Group Facilitators Needed**

Are you a parent, grandparent, family member, childcare provider or foster parent, affected by a SIDS death? Are you interested in learning how to help newly bereaved SIDS families? Then, consider being trained as a peer contact. We ask that interested individuals have experienced their loss at least one year before volunteering. Peer contacts who are interested in managing a SIDS support group are encouraged to be trained as facilitators. Please contact Jordy Jahn at (949) 501-6346 if you are interested in helping support SIDS families.

**Your Gift is Appreciated !**

**The Guild for Infant Survival is a United Way Approved Organization**

**GUI300**



**Newsletter Deadlines**

If you would like to contribute an article or poem to an upcoming issue of *Reflections*, please contact: Lisa Biakanja at (714) 960-9897 or email her at [lbiakanja@yahoo.com](mailto:lbiakanja@yahoo.com). **The next newsletter deadline is 1/1/12.** We encourage your participation!

Continued from Page 2

This is not to say you won't have occasional lapses and possibly more than a few pity-parties, but try to stay on a forward and positive looking path. This year, I invite all of you to take this giant leap forward on your journey.

Although my grief journey has been fraught with many sorrows, the joy and wonderment I found along the way made the burden of my husband's death easier to bear.

I believe that there is an ultimate purpose for all that happens to an individual. Each person then has the option of following a path infused with negativity or one with a positive bent.

Young widows and widowers, especially, have a lot of life left to live, for they may have children to raise and lofty goals still to accomplish.

However, no matter at what age and why one becomes a griever, I believe that deep down inside all of us is a well of strength waiting to be tapped and the capability to deal with the circumstances one has been dealt.

As you continue on your grief journey, learning important lessons about the true meaning of life, let it be your gift to the world to share these messages with others.

**REFLECTIONS**  
P.O. Box 148  
Tustin, CA 92781  
Editor: Lisa Biakanja

Reflections is a tri-annual publication of the Guild for Infant Survival, Orange County — a non-profit organization. Reflections is committed to the collection and dissemination of accurate, up-to-date, scientific and lay information and the correction of misinformation related to SIDS. The Guild is dedicated to the support of families and friends suffering the death of an infant to SIDS.

*Think of him still as the same, I say, He is not dead; he is just – away.*

*James Whitcomb Riley*

**The Far Beyond**  
By Joyce W. Gibson  
Los Angeles, California

The darkening sky is filled with stars  
And I gaze in awe and wonder  
At the beauty of the heavens that be  
And dream of what's beyond  
To all that I cannot see.  
The spirits of our loved ones...  
Are they waiting there  
Behind the veil of stars  
Reaching out for loved ones  
Still bound behind earth's bars?

Or has their journey just begun  
Taking them on to realms unknown,  
Where there are no days or years?  
No time for grief, no time for tears,  
But only the beauty and the glowing  
Of celestial light, forever flowing?  
And will we join them and  
again be one  
When our early life is  
done?



**Chiropractic Care and SIDS**  
**Commentary Review by Thomas G. Keens, MD**  
**~ June 25, 2011 ~**

*Kitty Roche*, PHN member of the California State SIDS Advisory Council from San Diego, was sent this website link from one of the PHNs in her county. The PHN got it from a parent who was seeing a Chiropractor:

<http://www.stottschiro.com/chiropractic-treatments-and-conditions/chiropractic-for-children/>

The site is that of a Chiropractor named *Doctor Stotts*, in San Angelo, Texas, who claims that SIDS may be due to subluxation of the spine, and that chiropractic treatment of babies may help prevent this. The site references a book review from 2001 entitled, *The Best-Kept Secret to Raising a Healthy Child...and the Possible Prevention of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)\** written by *Craig Wehrenberg, DC* and *Dr. Tracey Mulhall-Wehrenberg, DC*. The book is available in small quantities from Amazon.com. The organization, presumably a chiropractic organization, which theoretically promotes SIDS and chiropractic research seems no longer to exist (the website in the review indicated that it was "for sale" by the previous owner).

While *Doctor Stotts* in San Angelo, Texas, is out of the jurisdiction of the California State SIDS Advisory Council, this is not a new issue, and we have had chiropractors in California claim that they could identify babies who would die from SIDS and prevent this death by realigning a subluxed spine. Previously, I contacted the California Board of Chiropractic, to suggest that such advertising was false, and I suggested that the Board should police its members not to make such unsubstantiated claims. To my dismay, their response was a typewritten article, without any references to substantiate their claims, indicating that such a practice was within the purview of chiropractic practice. Therefore, I do not think we will get much satisfaction from official chiropractic agencies.

Should you learn of chiropractors in California advertising that they can prevent SIDS, I would be very happy to contact them for their justification. I was not able to contact StopSIDS.org, as the organization has apparently ceased to exist.

Thank you very much for helping to improve SIDS services, education, and research in California.

---Tom Keens

Commentary provided by:  
Thomas G. Keens, MD  
Professor of Pediatrics, Physiology and Biophysics  
Division of Pediatric Pulmonology  
Children's Hospital Los Angeles  
4650 Sunset Boulevard, Box 83  
Los Angeles, CA 90027-6062  
Phone: 323-361-2101 □ Fax: 323 -361-1355  
Email: [tkeens@chla.usc.edu](mailto:tkeens@chla.usc.edu)



## Healing Choices

By Margaret Brownley  
Simi Valley, California

Writing about her research on the dual loss of a child and the role of a parent Kay Talbot Ph.D. reported her findings in *Omega, Journal of Death and Dying*. She found that the mothers she studied who had survived their loss and changed in positive ways had four things in common:

1. They resolved a spiritual crisis brought on by the child's death.
2. They made a conscious decision to survive.
3. They reached out to others by volunteering in a helping profession.
4. They integrated what they learned from surviving a child's death into a new, more compassionate identity.

In other words, these people made healthy choices. The most interesting part of her findings involved making the decision to survive. According to Dr. Talbot, three-quarters of the people in the survivor group made comments reflecting a conscious decision to survive compared to only one-third of those unable to work through their grief.

Though it might be too soon to know how or even when you will get through the dark tunnel of grief; it's not too soon to made the decision that you will do so.

Write the following affirmations on sticky notes and put them on your bathroom mirror:

- ◆ I will survive
- ◆ I will get through this
- ◆ I will heal

## There's a Hole in the Fabric

by Linda Romar, Westlake, Ohio

The tightly woven fabric of the family has a hole in it today. We lost a member of our family. There will be no way to ever mend that fabric completely. It will eventually fray out and become softer. It's hard to look forward to the time when that will happen, because it is so painful now. That hole is hard, sharp and hurtful. My heart is blinded by the pain. My mind knows it will soften with time, but when will that happen? ...that nice, soft, frayed hole in the fabric of our family.

### Guild For Infant Survival, Orange County

#### Information:

2130 E. Fourth Street #125

Santa Ana, CA 92705

Ph: (714) 973-8417

Fax: (714) 973-8429

(800) 474-SIDS (7437)

Email Address:

gisoc@att.net

Website Address:

www.gisoc.org

**Your gift to honor a loved  
one will be appreciated.**

**Send your tax deductible  
donation to:**

**Guild for Infant Survival,  
Orange County**

**P.O. Box 148  
Tustin, CA 92781**

## **California SIDS Community:**

### **New American Academy of Pediatrics SIDS Recommendations**

**To My Esteemed Colleagues in the California SIDS Community:**

**The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recently released their newest recommendations to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).**

**These recommendations update the previous 2005 recommendations by the AAP. Most of the 2005 AAP recommendations remain, though many are clarified more than in the original 2005 document. There are a few new things:**

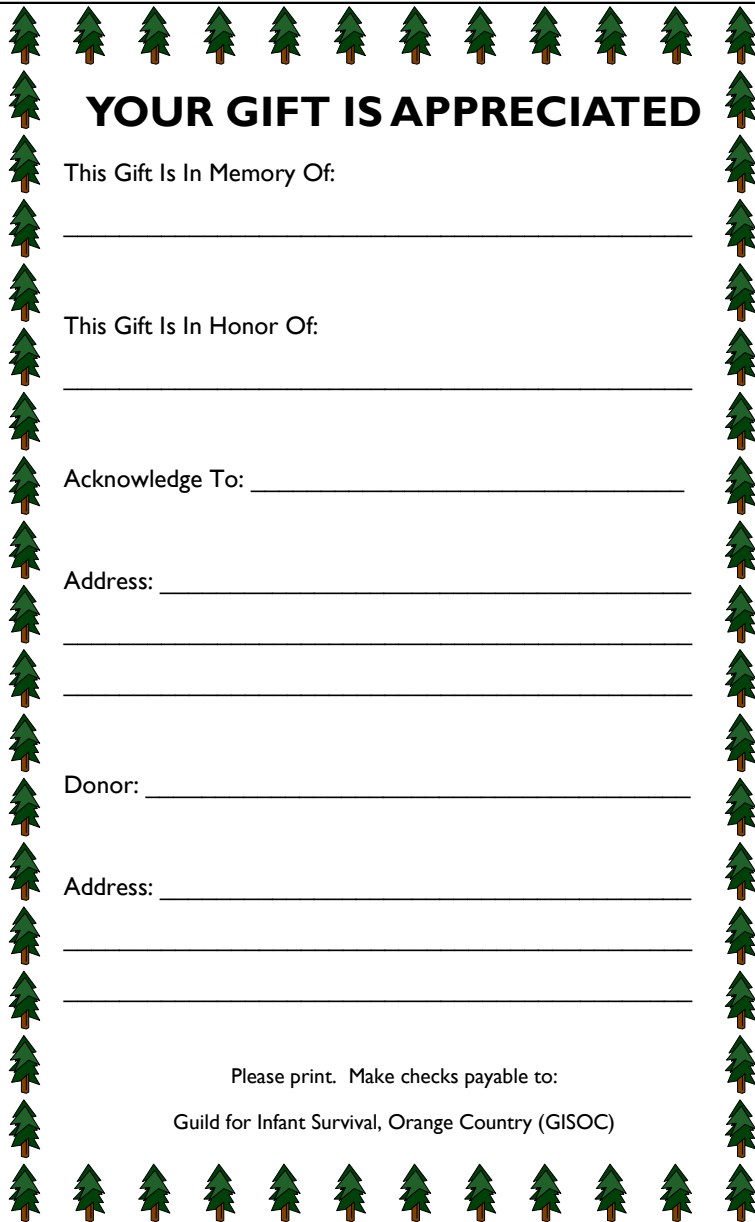
- ◆ **Breastfeeding is now listed as having a protective effect. This was not listed in the 2005 recommendations because, at that time, it was believed that other factors common in breastfeeding parents actually explained the apparent protective effect. However, research performed since that time indicates that breastfeeding has a protective effect not due to other variables.**
- ◆ **That mothers receive prenatal care, and that infants receive their recommended immunizations are now included as factors which reduce the risk of SIDS.**
- ◆ **Bumper pads are not recommended to be used in cribs. The 2005 recommendations suggested that thin bumper pads were acceptable.**
- ◆ **The new guidelines also warn against potentially hazardous situations which might cause suffocation, strangulation, or entrapment. This is not to suggest that SIDS is due to suffocation, strangulation, or entrapment, but rather to broaden the scope of the recommendations to address other unsafe infant sleep situations. After all, the overall goal is to prevent infant deaths, whatever the cause. It is important to note that these 2011 recommendations do not suggest that SIDS is due to these accidental causes, but some infant deaths are, and it is important to try to reduce their numbers as well as reducing SIDS.**
- ◆ **The recommendations include some policy recommendations, including that SIDS research should continue and the officials should endorse the public education about SIDS risk reduction and infant safe sleep.**

**Dr. Rachel Moon is the lead author of these recommendations and Chair of the AAP Task Force on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.**

**Thank you so much for all you do to improve SIDS services, education, and research in California.**

**—Thomas G. Keens, M.D.**

**Chair, California SIDS Advisory Council**



# YOUR GIFT IS APPRECIATED

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Acknowledge To: \_\_\_\_\_

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Please print. Make checks payable to:

Guild for Infant Survival, Orange Country (GISOC)

## To the California SIDS Community:

The *2012 International Conference on Stillbirth, SIDS, and Infant Survival*, sponsored by First Candle and by ISPID (International Society for the Study and Prevention of Infant Deaths) will be held in Baltimore, Maryland (Baltimore Marriott Waterfront Hotel), October 5-7, 2012. More information will be forthcoming. However, these international conferences combine the latest in biomedical and epidemiological research with support for parents and SIDS and infant death program professionals.

— Tom Keens

### The Rose

by Erica Sukay (age 11)  
Mt. Pleasant, PA

I watched for days upon a single rose that set so lonesome, but yet so exquisite, in a vase, trying to comprehend, "Why me? Why did I have to be the one to lose the one I loved?" Why couldn't it have been me who agonized throughout the pain and suffering?

Now I just ponder the question, "Why me?"



I watched a petal fall from the enchanted rose that stood so lonesome in the vase. I now understand. Life is just like a rose. The center of the flower cannot forever hold the petals that are so lovingly attached. One day, they will have to fall, and yet one day all the petals will meet again upon the ground so soft and gentle.

Falling off the center is just a process of life. But even though the center cannot forever hold them as one, it does not mean they cannot forever hold their love.



Continued from Page 3

### **Grieve**

It's OK to be sad when you miss someone you love. It's only natural to feel the grief and heartache associated with being alone. When you start feeling overwhelmed by the holidays:

- ◆ Spend some time alone, reading your bereavement cards or letters from others about the person who died.
- ◆ Go to the cemetery or other resting place.
- ◆ Write a letter to the person who died.
- ◆ Seek counseling if the grief is too overwhelming to handle alone.
- ◆ Share memories of the person with whomever will listen.

### **Hold a Memorial Service**

On Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, hold a special graveside memorial service honoring the person who died. This will give everyone a chance to connect with their feelings about the deceased person. Activities to include in the memorial service are:

- ◆ Singing a few special holiday songs
- ◆ Reading a few favorite Bible passages or poems
- ◆ A photographic slide show at the Christmas celebration
- ◆ Placing favorite flowers or grave blankets on the headstone
- ◆ Have a special Mass or religious service held in the deceased person's memory

### **Create New Family Traditions**

Grief at Christmas can be eased by changing family traditions that normally would make you sad. If it is a parent you grieve, then make your holiday festivities different than what they were when he or she was alive. Change the location of the celebration or just do things different if that is what you prefer. If it was a child who passed away, consider including him or her in your celebration:

- ◆ Put up a stocking with the child's name on it

- ◆ Add the child's name to Christmas cards in a way that makes you and your family feel comfortable
- ◆ Place flowers or toys at the child's resting place
- ◆ Make a toy donation in his or her name
- ◆ Buy a special angel ornament to add to your tree

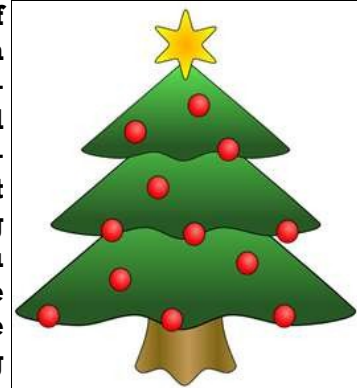
### **Take a Year Off**

There is no rule that says you have to celebrate Christmas with your family and friends. If your grief is so fresh or overwhelming, take a year off. Spend the day watching your favorite movies alone if that is what you want to do. You don't have to put a Christmas tree or send out holiday cards. If anyone asks, tell them you needed some time for yourself this year and hope to be back into the festivities next year. Instead of celebrating, you can:

- ◆ Volunteer at a food kitchen
- ◆ Spend time at your favorite spot meditating or reflecting
- ◆ Take a long walk
- ◆ Spend time with an elderly neighbor or one who is alone on Christmas
- ◆ Create your own support group and invite others over who are suffering through the same kind of loss

### **A Final Thought**

Christmas is exactly what you make of it. It can be a joyous time of year or it can leave you feeling sad and lonely. Remember, don't do anything that makes you uncomfortable -- you are the one grieving and need time to do that.



**Community Campaign  
Donations**

Thanks to:

Peggy Sisson

Elaine Nelson

Kendra Lakkees

We appreciate the  
Employees  
Community Fund of  
Boeing California and  
thank them for their  
generous grant,  
helping the Guild to  
help others in our  
community.

**END OF THE YEAR  
DONATIONS**

Please don't forget to make  
your charitable donation to  
GISOC for 2011 prior to  
December 31.

**Special Thanks**

This newsletter is being  
published thanks to a  
grant from Wells Fargo  
Foundation.

**Grants**

We are deeply  
appreciative of grants  
from Pacific Life/  
Foundation and CJ  
Foundation for SIDS.  
Without their support  
we would not have the  
capacity to be here for  
SIDS families and for  
outreach programs to  
our community.

*Friendships multiply joys and  
divide grief.*

*Thomas Fuller*

# 2011 MEETING CALENDAR

**Parent Support Meetings**— All meetings are from 7:00—8:30 PM.  
Meetings are hosted by Colleen Ma and Penny Stastny and take place at the Guild for Infant Survival, Orange County office located at 2130 E. 4th Street, Suite 125, in Santa Ana.

\* Please RSVP to Barbara Estep at (714) 973-8417 prior to the meeting

**December 19**

**January 9**

**February 13**

**Business Meetings**— held at the Guild for Infant Survival, Orange County office located at 2130 E. 4th Street, Suite 125, in Santa Ana. Meetings begin at 7:00 PM. If you would like to have an item added to the agenda, please contact Jordy Jahn at (949) 347-8583.

\*Please RSVP to Barbara Estep at (714) 973-8417 prior to the meeting.

**December 13**

**Save the Date!**

December 6th at 7 pm  
Angel of Hope 10th Annual Candlelight  
Memorial Service  
25751 Trabuco Road  
Lake Forest, CA 92630  
For more information please call Lisa Biakanja at  
(714) 658-0797

