Do It Your Way This Holiday Season

By Linda Moffatt

The holiday season poses probably the biggest challenge to the coping skills of a bereaved parent. After months of grieving after Nicholas died, I was sure that the holidays would be the one thing that finally put me over the edge.

Thanks to the support of other bereaved parents who encouraged us to do it “our way” we did make it through and lived to tell about it. That first Thanksgiving, we went out of town. It had been nine months and we were ready to get away from it all. We were at that point when most folks thought we were doing better and they didn’t really give much thought to how the holidays might affect us.

We didn’t really know either, but the months of grieving plus the dread and fear of the coming holidays had us too worn out emotionally to try to explain it all.

We chose instead to drive to Atlanta to spend Thanksgiving with very close friends whom we trusted to be completely supportive. It cost much more than we could afford at the time, but it was well worth it, and I remember it as being the best week we had the whole first year of grief.

This was a total break with our holiday tradition, but it worked for us, and I believe it revived us a bit, leaving us perhaps better equipped to deal with December. I’m not suggesting that every bereaved parent go out of town for the holidays. It is neither practical, possible, nor right for everyone. It was right for us that year.

Each bereaved family must find and do what is right for them. We have to decide what we can handle, because others won’t know. Trust your instincts. Keep in mind that it is neither possible nor even desirable to avoid the intense pain of not having your child with you during the holidays.

Our grief traveled with us to Atlanta that first year. We were not seeking to interrupt the grief process, and we wanted and needed to remember Nicholas and include him in our holiday. Our friends let us do that.

Each bereaved family must find their own way to remember and include their child while placing as few demands and expectations on themselves as possible. If it’s the holiday meal with family we don’t feel up to, we can make arrangements to arrive later.

If it is the gift exchange that has us tied up in knots, we can ask our family to set a definite time for it so...
we can choose whether or not to be there. For myself, it always seems easier to “do the holiday” at my house. It’s a lot of work (and I had to learn to cook a turkey), but I’m free to remember Nicholas any way I want to because it’s my house.

If I’m not good company, or if lighting a candle or including my son in a toast or prayer makes others uncomfortable, they are free to leave. Again, this is what has worked for my family. It may not be right for yours. This year, be a little selfish. Think of yourself and your immediate family and do what feels right.

Do what will be easiest for you. If anyone’s feelings are hurt, they’ll get over it. You don’t have to put up a Christmas tree; and you don’t have to go to Aunt Martha’s for dinner. You don’t even have to stay in town.

Handle the holidays and remember your child in whatever way is appropriate for you and your family. In memory of all of our children this special time of year, I wish peace and love for you this holiday and the coming new year.

“Lovingly lifted” from The Compassionate Friends newsletter, November-December 1989

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Nothing Gold Can Stay

Nature’s first green is gold,  
Her hardest hue to hold.  
Her early leaf’s a flower;  
But only so an hour.  
Then leaf subsides to leaf,  
So Eden sank to grief,  
So dawn goes down to day  
Nothing gold can stay.

~Robert Frost
25K Challenge!

25K Challenge is restored until year’s end!

Dear friends of SIDS Resources,
A faithful donor and long time friend of SIDS Resources has presented us with a fantastic opportunity! For every donation made in the month of August, we received a dollar for dollar match up to $25,000.00!

This 25 K Challenge was a wonderful opportunity to raise much needed funds to support our programs and services. The good news is that the donor has now extended the challenge through the end of the calendar year! So again, your $10 becomes $20; your $50 becomes $100 ... and so on! We raised $13,000 in August and hope to raise the remaining $12,000 by the end of the year!

Please consider a gift today, because One is Too Many! Donating is easy, just go to our link:
https://www.sidsresources.org/?page_id=616

Thanks for your support~

Lori Behrens
Executive Director

“Happiness doesn’t result from what we get, but from what we give.”
—Ben Carson

Monthly Infant Loss Groups

Listed below are regular meeting times in each region. Meeting dates and times are subject to change. Please call to confirm time and location. Family members and friends are encouraged and welcome to attend.

Eastern Region
St. Louis

3rd Monday of the month at 7pm
SiDS Resources’ office
1120 S. 6th Street
St. Louis, MO 63104
Call Lori at 314-822-2323 or 1-800-421-3511

Western Region
Kansas City

4th Wednesday of the month at 6pm
Call Pete at 816-569-6956 for group location

South Central/SWest Region—Springfield area

Call Sara at 573-364-5900

If you want to connect with others who have experienced the sudden death of a baby, please consider joining our Yahoo group. This internet support group is open only to families involved with SIDS Resources—no one else has access to this discussion board. You may share something about your child, your experience, or ask questions. Please email Sara at stamburrino@sidsresources.org and request to participate in the Yahoo group.

Quarterly Update
Fall 2013
2nd annual Giving Tuesday

Giving Tuesday™ is a campaign to create a national day of giving at the start of the annual holiday season. It celebrates and encourages charitable activities that support non-profit organizations.

Following Black Friday and Cyber Monday, SIDS Resources and other non-profit groups want to encourage people to think of their favorite charity during the holiday season.

Because of the extension of our 25K Challenge Match, all donations will be matched dollar for dollar!

Visit [http://www.sidsresources.org/?page_id=1325](http://www.sidsresources.org/?page_id=1325)

Thank you very much!
Regional Activities

for SIDS Resources’ event information, visit www.sidsresources.org and click on “get involved”

Eastern Region
St. Louis

Candle Lighting
Sunday, Dec. 8th, 4-6pm
Washington University—Brown Lounge, St. Louis, MO

Schon...A Beautiful Cache
(by Mitchell James Salon)
Friday, Dec. 13th, 5:30-9pm
a benefit for SIDS Resources
Click for more info.: http://www.sidsresources.org/?page_id=614

Save the 2014 Dates:

Saturday, Jan. 11th
Party with a Purpose
St. Louis, MO
http://www.partywithapurposestl.com

Western Region
Kansas City

Candle Lighting
Thursday, Dec. 12th, 7pm
County Club United Methodist Church, Kansas City, MO
contact Pete Potts for details: ppotts@sidsresources.org

South Central/SWest Region – Springfield

Holiday Memorial
Date to be determined
In-person or via phone call are options—please contact Sara Tamburrino at 573-364-5900 or stamburrino@sidsresources.org

North Central
Jefferson City/Columbia

Holiday Service
Date to be determined
contact Lori Behrens for details: lbehrens@sidsresources.org

Sat. & Sun., April 5th & 6th
GO St. Louis
Family Fitness Weekend
SIDS Resources will one of the charity recipients.
Click for more info.: http://www.sidsresources.org/?page_id=1654
Quarterly Update  Fall 2013

Address Service Requested

This publication is published quarterly—Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall. We won’t be mailing the updates, however all updates are available on-line, or we can email it to you, which helps us realize significant cost savings.

If you don’t have internet access or email, please contact your Program Coordinator and we’ll work to make other arrangements. We appreciate your understanding.

If for any reason your would like to be removed from this mailing, please call 1-800-421-3511 or email Lori at lbehrens@sidsresources.org

To access support services for bereaved families, or to schedule a SIDS training for professional and community groups, please call 1-800-421-3511 or contact your regional SIDS Resources’ office.  
www.sidsresources.org

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