

Heartland Women

June 16, 2008
Page 4

Brief

Red Cross blood drives for June

June 17 at IDOT in Carbondale from 7:30 a.m. to noon.

June 19 at Aisin Electronics in Marion from 2 to 6 p.m.

June 20 at the Illinois Centre Mall in Marion from 2 to 7 p.m.

June 20 at Wal-Mart in Benton from 2 to 7 p.m.

June 20 at the University Mall in Carbondale from 2 to 7 p.m.

June 21 at the Illinois Centre Mall in Marion from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

June 21 at Wal-Mart in Benton from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

June 21 at the University Mall in Carbondale from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

June 22 at the Lake Creek Masonic Lodge in Johnston City from 2:30 to 6:30 p.m.

June 23 at Banterra Bank in West Frankfort from 2 to 6 p.m.

June 24 at Banterra Bank in Carbondale from 2 to 6 p.m.

June 26 at Murdale Baptist Church in Carbondale from 1:30 to 5:30 p.m.

June 26 at St Francis Xavier Church in Carbondale from 2:30 to 6:30 p.m.

June 27 at Banterra Bank in Marion from 2 to 6 p.m.

For more information, call 303-3162.

The Mom Project

Lisa Rebman and her group help give grieving mothers an outlet after the loss of a child

By Cindy Gunnin
For Heartland Women

At the park, with her 3-year-old twin boys and 2-year-old daughter, Lisa Rebman looks like any other overworked mother of preschoolers. She has her bottle of water, a purse full of child supplies and two used Band-Aids that the boys didn't need, but wanted, until they got to the park.

Annabelle will be 3 in September, and the boys turn 4 in July, and Lisa is thankful for them every day. They are also a large part of the reason that she began The Mom Project in October 2003.

"I lost my first baby in September 2003," Lisa said. "I had so much support that I wondered how others without that support system make it through. A month later, we started The Mom Project."

The support group and nonprofit organization is designed to give grieving mothers an outlet after the loss of a child either through miscarriage, still birth or death after birth.

"It started with people who were involved in other mother's loss support groups, like ILAC (I Lost A Child)," she said. "We began with taking donations to the hospital to support women and then grew from there."

In cooperation with other support groups, the Mom Project takes teddy bears and bracelets to mothers after the death of their children. The memory bracelets can be specialized to reflect the birthstone of the lost infant or other small charm that holds significance to the family.

"Right now, we're trying to reach out to local doctors to let them know that they can refer their patients to us after a loss," she said. "Until the last year, the only real

way for people to find us was via Google or word of mouth. Now, we send memorial bracelets around the world."

The memorial bracelets are free mementos of a child's life as are the certificates that the organization sends out. Since many states do not issue birth certificates in the case of a still-born infant and none issue them in the case of a miscarriage, the group offers substitute certificates. They provide a commemorative birth certificate that includes all the same information as a live birth certificate for still-born children, and a "recognition of life" certificate for children lost during pregnancy.

One of the many objectives of the Mom Project is to educate friends and family about the right things to say and do to support grieving parents after the loss of a child.

"People sometimes say all the wrong things, such as 'God needed another angel.' They mean well, but that really doesn't help," she said. "Other people don't know what to say, so they don't say anything at all."

"I saw a quote once that said something like, 'In tragedy, friends become strangers and strangers become friends.' It happens because people don't know what to say or do, so they simply draw away."

One of the best things to do is offer to help in a very specific way.

"Don't ask what you can do," Lisa said. "Women usually don't take care of themselves in this situation, and they have no idea what they really need. Offer to bring them dinner or help clean the house. It's much easier to accept a specific offer."

Often, she said, women need to talk about the baby, to remember that it was real. The best thing that



Lisa Rebman with one of her 3-year-old twin sons, Nick.



Lisa Rebman with her 2-year-old daughter, Annabelle.

friends and family can do is listen.

"It sounds so simple, but just saying that you're sorry means a lot," she said. "Some people are afraid to say it, but that's what most women need to hear."

The Mom Project is hosting its first annual memorial picnic on Sat., June 21, at Lake Murphysboro. The picnic begins at noon in the small picnic shelter near the Concession Stand.

"We will provide the

main dish and ask people to bring a side dish to share," Lisa said.

The picnic will include games for the entire family, face painting for the children, and a balloon release in memory of the lost children.

Anyone interested in attending is asked to contact Lisa at 713-7879 or at lisa@momproject.org so the organization can be sure to have sufficient supplies for the lunch.

Hiding in plain sight: A fear of change

Life Signs



Janice Staab

The first night that my now 6-year-old German shepherd, Lena, spent in our house, she was a ball of nervous energy. She ran from room to room not quite knowing where or how to light. Her new surroundings were making her uncomfortable to say the least. But more than anything, this little 6-pound fluff ball was wary of her new 105-pound brother of the same breed.

So, I was not surprised when I found her later that evening lying with her head under the bed. She had had enough of the new and



Lena, Jan's now 6-year-old German Shepherd, escapes from an uncomfortable situation by hiding her head under her bed.

wanted to escape for awhile. I promptly snapped the image for posterity, the photo shown here.

Snuggled under the bed skirt, Lena thought she was completely safe and covered.

In her mind, if she saw nothing, then nothing could see her. The photo shows us a different reality. Although she had managed to hide her head from the world, her little rump was still

showing.

We do the same thing at times, don't we? Newness can be a disruptive force in life. It confuses us and throws us off our game. Unexpected changes destroy our certainty and do away with the old rules for hassle-free living. They cause us to doubt the truth of our opinions, values and even relationships.

Thinking novel thoughts, feeling unfamiliar emotions and understanding ourselves in newer and deeper ways can be downright terrifying. Before we know it, we are doing our best ostrich impersonations, sticking our heads in the sand as the world stares at our exposed backsides. We are not fooling anyone but ourselves. We are hiding in plain sight.