

**Sudden Infant & Child Mourning Outreach Network
(The SIMON Project)
Of Vermont and Northern New England
Program Up-dates**

November 21, 2006

Happy Thanksgiving to all.....I hope this up-date finds you all in the spirit of Thanksgiving and celebrating the fact that there are no more political commercials on television and radio. After a very long political season in Vermont this past spring, summer and fall, it is nice to be back to the process of moving on, moving forward and getting on with making a difference instead of finding fault and being negative. Now we all can focus on achieving peace - both locally, nationally, and worldwide.

Much has taken place over the past several months and I have not been the best of reporters to you all. For that I apologize. If for any reason you feel like you need an up-date, you are always welcome to call me or e-mail me to answer questions, make suggestions, or give any input. Constructive criticism is always welcome and necessary for us to make this outreach effort successful, helpful and as up-to-date as is possible.

The Web-Site:

The “new” improved web site was up and running in September. Thanks to the web site “hit” counter on the front page, we can estimate that we are getting about 50 hits a week on the site so far - and the site is still not fully completed! The final cost for the site so far, far exceeded the original estimates - coming in at around \$1300.00 total cost. In addition, “Off The Page Creations” the organization who did this round of improvements and up-dates to the site actually donated \$400.00 worth of time and work to the site for us. Thanks to Stephanie and her husband for their great work and their dedication to helping The SIMON Project web site become so successful! Please feel free to contact them for any web site work you might need in the future - that are very competitive in price and are fun and easy to work with - with great ideas and they are excellent communicators and media formatters.

Although the site is yet to be fully complete - we have made a great deal of progress. I have been researching content information to be placed in the section named “What to think about just after an infant or child dies.” This is one of the most important areas of the site and it has had no content to date. I have found some excellent examples of information to place in this section and it is my goal to have it ready for the site but the beginning of the next year - January. I have had some help with this from Jennifer Stocks. If you have any suggestion, comments or content you would like to submit for consideration - please feel free to e-mail them to me directly.

I have also been collecting more related web sites to link in to ours - including a site out of Alaska related to supporting families related to the death of twins, a twin etc. The CJ Foundation for SIDS will be linked, various SIDS sites from throughout the US. I need good sites related to Stillbirth, Miscarriage, and accidental death of infants and children so we can develop specific content pages for The SIMON Project web site. Again, please forward any comments or suggestions to me ASAP.

Listed under the “Vermont Resources” button are all the Community Mental Health Centers in Vermont, and Parent Child Centers. The Vermont Mental Health Counselors’ Association is linked and I’m looking for individual therapists and specialist to link in as well. All the support / bereavement groups that I know about are also listed - but not all the information is up to date or correct - so I need to know what needs to be readjusted on the site and what needs to be added. I understand there is a new Compassionate Friends group forming in the Franklin County area (St. Albans) and I’d like to link that specific info. in as well (I’ve seen the meetings advertised in the Seven Days Paper).

If you are a parent of an infant or child who has died, I would ask you to consider honoring your child by placing a photo of your child on the front page of our web site. We now have a photo of Simon and Maddie that rotate on the sites front page and we can add more photos if people would like to memorialize your child in this way. Let me know - or e-mail me a scanned / digital photo and I'll have it placed it on the rotation with you child's name. This issue can be difficult for those of you who may not have a photo or who have experienced a miscarriage or multiple miscarriages - in those cases we can list you child's name(s) on a new memorial page or you could use the First Candle Memorial page link directly from The SIMON Project web site. Also, your written story can be a healing process not only for you but many others - so I also ask you to consider submitting your particular child's story for the web site. There is a specific link to do this on the site. Your privacy and level of sharing the details of your feelings and experience are of the highest importance to us - so please, share only what you are comfortable with.

Donations:

We have received a \$50.00 donation via PayPal on the web site this month. Additionally, \$120.00 dollars from DragonFly Candle Sales (The SIMON Project Candle), and the donation of \$400.00 worth of web site work by "Off the Page Creations." Thanks to you all for this support....! Additional candle sales are happening directly through DragonFly Gifts web site or by phone - sales are brisk due to the up coming holidays and gift season. I've order another two dozen to sell or give away and Heather is backed up on production due to demand....that's a great sign!

Projects:

While Michelle and I were in residence at the Copley Hospital Birthing Center in Morrisville, we were reacquainted with the Nursing staff and support staff who helped us deliver Simon back in May of 2005. Sophie Gabrielle Hunsberger was born on Nov. 1st - healthy and happy weighing 7 lbs. 1 oz. - and a full head of dark hair!

I met the new Birthing Center Nurse Manager and we have begun to discuss our various projects and ideas and I hope we will be working together to make these trainings and support functions happening for Lamoille County and Copley Hospital come to fruition. Wendy Andres, a nurse at the Birthing Center is working on a project of building a memorial gazebo on the hospital grounds. A donation has been made toward the project by a couple who experienced the death of their child a couple of years ago - and to date - the remainder of the funds have not been raised. I have agreed to donate some of the remaining needed funds personally and I will be asking our group at the next SIMON Project meeting to consider a project donation as well to complete this project for all families in the Lamoille valley region and state wide remembrance / memorial. I can't think of a more worth cause as a way to support parents and families as giving them a small place to pause and remember / celebrate / mourn the death of their child or children. Memorial markers could also be placed on small metal markers and placed on the gazebo for each child remembered. Please help me and this couple, the Copley Hospital Birthing Center Staff raise the additional \$3000.00 needed to complete this project - your contribution will be used to make this memorial be the center of many private and public memorials happen in the future and give strength and support to those in North Central Vermont. Donate on-line through The SIMON Project web sites front page link to the secure PayPal link (at bottom of the front page). Please indicate the Copley Birthing Center Gazebo Memorial Project.

Recognition:

I received an e-mail from Dr. Steve Shapiro (The Chief Medical Examiner of Vermont) saying how helpful The SIMON Project web site is to him as a resource for parents who have experienced the death of their child. We greatly appreciate Steve's personal and professional support, participation and encouragement.

In Remembrance:

Please keep these children and families in your thoughts and prayers over the next days and months - they are mourning the loss of or the anniversary of their child's / grandchild's death:

Owen Michael, Janine, Connor, Simon, Maddie, Hudson, Madison, and countless others.....

Next Meeting of The SIMON Project:

I am trying to organize a meeting before the 12th of Dec. - I'll send out a notice as soon as it is determined.

In Peace and Gratitude, Smile and be Kind in our Children's HonorMy Best, Jeff

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