Those who are experiencing a holiday season after the death of someone special in their lives often face that time with dread and foreboding rather than with a spirit of anticipation and celebration. This year, in thinking about Thanksgiving and the other approaching holidays, I was struck with the significance of the inspirational piece, *Risks*, by Carol Sapin Gold: To laugh is to risk appearing the fool. To weep is to risk appearing sentimental. To reach out is to risk involvement. To expose feelings is to risk exposing your true self. To place your ideas, your dreams, before the crowd is to risk their loss. To love is to risk not being loved in return. To live is to risk dying. To hope is to risk despair. To try is to risk failure. Risks must be taken, because the greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing. The person who risks nothing, does nothing, has nothing. He may avoid suffering and sorrow, but he simply cannot learn, feel, change, grow, love – live. Chained to his certitudes, he is a slave. He has forfeited freedom. Only a person who risks is free.

At our house it has been several years since the deaths of our sons, Mark and Dan and both of my parents. The first years after their respective deaths, we found our family feeling adrift and set apart from the time of celebration. Realistically, I can count many blessings – among them a faith that provides comfort and strength, our two surviving children and their families, and many a caring friend. But amidst all those blessings, there is still the very real pain of missing some very special people.

I have learned that knowing on some intellectual level that I am well blessed has not changed the fact that I have not always felt well blessed. Head knowledge and heart knowledge are not always the same. The pain of what I wanted and was missing overshadowed many of the blessings of my life. Reading *Risks* was a reminder to me that in living, we risk dying; in loving, we risk losing that special someone in our lives.

When I step back and really look at what my life might have been if I had not risked the loving and the living, I realize that while I would have missed some pain, more importantly, I would have missed countless special moments and many indescribable joys. Part of who we are is who we have learned to become because of those special people. Given the choice, I would choose the pain of missing, rather than not risking love.

To know true joy, we must have experienced true pain. For our family, one of the blessings we can count on is having risked the love. Love does not have to die, nor do the memories have to fade; they are forever. That indeed is being very well blessed.

Day to day coping with grief can be a huge task. Beginning in the autumn, we enter a “stress corridor.” Stress builds as the stores fill with decorations and friends begin to discuss their holiday plans. When someone loved has died, it is hard to even think about “getting through the holidays.” Planning and making choices are key parts of holiday coping, but when we use our limited energy to plan a special activity or memorial, it may help soften that painful time. (Continued on page 6)
From the Director’s Desk
Christy Schunn, LSCSW

Over the last several months, there has been great attention given to the issues surrounding infant death in Kansas. As you will read in the Network News section of this newsletter, new steps are being taken to determine the underlying causes of infant deaths. Steps that I believe will strengthen community awareness and reduce sleep related infant deaths.

The SIDS Network is pleased to be working collaboratively with community organizations to educate parents, family members and child care providers on safe sleep recommendations. The Network is committed to our mission of providing community education along with support services for families across the state. Please join us as we aim for improved interventions and increased safety for our infants.

In hope and peace,
Christy

Let us celebrate the power of memory to give us hope. Let us pray for the power of memory to help us heal. Let us honor the many gifts we were given by our beloved. Our challenge is to affirm and celebrate the joy, goodness and beauty of life.

— Lone I. Jensen

Congratulations to the following families. We celebrate these new lives with you and your family.

Tamara and Jacob Young welcomed a new baby boy, Ethan Gavin Clark Young on September 9, 2009.
Ethan was 7 lbs, 7 oz. and 20 in. long.

Aimee and Jason Schmidt welcomed a new baby girl, Isabella Kaye Schmidt on September 18, 2009.
Isabella was 7 lbs. 14 oz. and 19 in. long.

Drie and Kabran Chapek welcomed a new baby girl, Vione Pearl Chapek on September 19, 2009.
Vione was 8 lbs. 14 oz. and 22 in. long.
Six Steps to Safety—Thanks to a generous grant from Ronald McDonald House Charities, the SIDS Network will continue to provide Six Steps to Safety packets. These packets are an educational tool distributed to new and expectant parents throughout the State of Kansas to reduce the risk of SIDS and all infant mortality. Six Steps to Safety packets are distributed by the county health departments’ Healthy Start Home Visitor Program. Packets will be available to Healthy Start Home Visitors at the Governor's Conference on Public Health in April, 2010.

Cribs for Kids—Thanks to the Kansas Health Foundation for a generous grant to continue the Kansas Cribs for Kids Project. Cribs for Kids provides free cribs for Kansas infants who need them. Cribs are provided to identified families through the county health departments’ Healthy Start Home Visitor Program, based on financial need.

CJ Foundation for SIDS—The SIDS Network is honored to be the first recipient of the Barry Bornstein Program Grant for Dedication to the SIDS/SUID Community. The grant funds will be used to provide grief support to bereaved parents, family members and friends; purchase materials for a comprehensive grief packet and support the 10th Annual SIDS Network Candle Lighting Memorial. Please see page 10 in this newsletter for details about the SIDS Network Candle Lighting.

Safe Sleep Presentations—The SIDS Network of Kansas and Kansas Association of Child Care and Resource and Referral Agencies (KACCRA) are working collaboratively to promote the health and safety of infants in child care settings by providing education and outreach to child care providers regarding safe sleep recommendations. Both the SIDS Network and KACCRA encourage safe sleep practices as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics, AAP. Please watch for upcoming “safe sleep” trainings.

Kansas Blue Ribbon Panel on Infant Mortality—The Governor’s Child Health Advisory Committee formed a special “blue-ribbon” panel of child care providers, public health advocates and medical professionals to examine infant mortality. The 16-member panel produced recommendations in November 2009 with hopes that the document will make its way to the 2010 Legislature.

BEST TEAM—The BEST TEAM was chartered as an advisory council to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment in 2007. Its purpose is to make recommendations for improvements to child care licensing systems and regulations to better meet the needs of children and families in the 21st Century. The TEAM has focused on day care homes, child care centers, and private preschools registered or licensed by the Department. Highest on the improvement list were making improvements in child safety and early learning, as well as balancing best practices with the business realities facing child care providers in offering available, affordable and quality child care services. The BEST TEAM membership includes a wide cross section of child care partnerships, including: day care home- and center-based providers; parents; college-level educators; KACCRA; Child Care Providers Together, AFSCME, Child Care Providers Coalition, Kansas Association for the Education of Young Children; Head Start; local health department surveyors and administrators; SRS and the Department of Education.

Sedgwick County Infant Mortality Review—Healthy Babies of Sedgwick County recently partnered with KDHE and local agencies, to form a Fetal Infant Mortality Review (FIMR) Quality Assurance Project. The FIMR project will collect and analyze data to determine the underlying causes of infant deaths in order to develop more effective preventive measures. This project will help develop a greater understanding of the social and health issues related to pregnancy outcomes and infant mortality.

Find the SIDS Network of Kansas on Facebook.
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<td>Syr Jackson</td>
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The mission of the SIDS Network of Kansas is to serve those who are or may be touched by the tragedy of SIDS by providing supportive services for all those affected, community awareness, professional development and support for medical research efforts.
Write Out A Memory

Holiday invitations may abound, but planning personal time and time with family and friends who were close to the deceased may prove helpful, and in some ways healing. Perhaps you would like to invite family and friends to write out a memory they have of your loved one. These treasured papers then can be rolled and tied with ribbon and placed on a special little tree or wreath or in a decorative bowl. Choose a time when you are all together to undo the scrolls. Each person then has a chance to share the memory, and the scrolls can be saved in a scrapbook or used again another year.

Share A Memory

At a special gathering, you might ask each guest to bring a favorite picture or memento, and during your time together, each person will have an opportunity to share. A teenage girl whose mother had died brought a sweatshirt that was worn and ragged but had been a favorite item of her mother. A husband brought the personalized license plates that he had made as a gift for his wife. Stacks of pictures and a pipe were the beginning of storytelling for another family.

Create A Picture Tree

A “picture tree” can be fashioned by tying several small pictures with ribbon and hanging them on a tree or wreath. The pictures can be “framed” by backing each one with cardboard or poster board a bit larger than the picture itself. The backing may be covered with wrapping paper or colored foil or it could be decorated with paints or stickers. These pictures then become a catalyst for sharing and storytelling.

Share a Blessing

Fashion a “blessing bowl” or a “grace bowl” by using a lump of clay. Pass it among you, with each person helping to fashion the shape of the bowl or object. When it is your turn to work the soft clay, add your own curve or design and tell about how you have been blessed or share a grace you have received from the person who died. Many clays are available that are easy to use and dry easily without baking. Some clays come in colors; others are easily painted with acrylic paints.

Whatever you choose to do, choice is the key. While remembering may be painful, the memories are gifts that we have been given that can be enjoyed time after time, year after year. Storytelling and memories are the gifts that will enable us to someday embrace the future.

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<td>Jason Jay Bennett</td>
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<td>Jacob Greenlee</td>
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We apologize for any errors made. Please call the office (1-866-399-7437) and we will make the necessary corrections.

If you would like a picture of your child in the newsletter and/or on the website, please send us a picture via e-mail or US mail. (We plan to return pictures, but please keep a copy just in case.)
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In Memory of
Jacob Michael Brown
Edgar & Vickie Clarke

Donate online at
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December 2009  SIDS Safety Net  9
SIDS Network of Kansas
2009 Annual
Candle Lighting Memorial

Date: Sunday, December 13, 2009
Where: The Grand Chapel
828 N. Broadway
Wichita, KS 67214
Time: 2:30 p.m.
RSVP: 316-682-1301/1-866-399-7437

The SIDS Network of Kansas 10th Annual Candle Lighting Memorial will feature poetry, a memorial slideshow, candle lighting and music by Rusty Rierson.

Parents, family members and friends are welcome to attend. A children's grief group and child care will be available. Please RSVP by Monday, December 7.

If we don’t already have a picture of your child for the memorial slideshow, please e-mail or mail a picture to the SIDS office at: info@sidsks.org or US Mail, 1148 S. Hillside, Suite 10, Wichita, KS 67211.

If you are unable to attend the SIDS Network memorial, please light a candle in recognition of the Worldwide Candle Lighting, initiated by The Compassionate Friends, and place it in your window to honor all children who have died too soon.

The SIDS Network 10th Annual Candle Lighting Memorial has been graciously funded by the Barry Bornstein Program Grant for Dedication to the SIDS/SUID Community.

Halo SleepSacks™ & Sleepsack Swaddle-Me™
infant wearable blankets have arrived
for the fall and winter months.
Order yours now for shower or holiday gifts.

The Halo SleepSack™ is a wearable blanket with a zip front closure for easy changing. The design eliminates the need for loose blankets in the bed and encourages caregivers to place their baby on its back for sleep.

Available through the SIDS Network for $12.00 (plus shipping).

The SleepSack Swaddle-Me™ Wearable Blanket has an adjustable, removable swaddle feature. The 2-in-1 SleepSack™ Swaddle hugs your baby to prevent the startle reflex and eliminates the need for loose blankets in the bed.

Available through the SIDS Network for $12.00 (plus shipping).

All are available in microfleece, for the cooler months, and come in an array of colors and prints. For more information contact the SIDS Network office toll-free at 1-866-399-7437. All profits go to SIDS research through the CJ Center without Walls.

For more information about the Halo Infant SleepSack™ please go to: www.haloinovations.com
Haley’s 9th Annual SIDS Scramble
was held September 28, 2009 at Tallgrass Country Club in Wichita, KS.
This year Haley’s Scramble hosted over 100 golfers and raised over $10,000 to support bereavement and community outreach across the State of Kansas.
The Network is grateful for the hours of preparation dedicated by the 2009 volunteer Scramble Committee: Norm McNeely (chair), Don Bean, Linda Hall, Sonia Phillips, Kurt Schmidt, Jack Standiferd and Lori Wright.

Thank you to all the golfers, sponsors and volunteers who helped make the 2009 Scramble a success. Mark your calendars for Haley’s 10th Annual SIDS Scramble on September 27, 2010.

Mark your calendars for the 7th Annual Step Up for SIDS
Saturday, April 17, 2010
WSU Cessna Stadium in Wichita
Step Up for SIDS is the signature fundraising event for the SIDS Network of Kansas.
Come join the 2010 Ambassador Family; Erin, Travis and Jerin Cobb, as they participate in memory of Kody Cobb.

NEW THIS YEAR...The 2010 Step Up for SIDS event will include a 5K USATF certified run meandering through WSU campus, in addition to the memorial walk around Cessna Stadium, the children’s fair and the SIDS Network Annual Memorial Balloon Release.

Participants and volunteers needed. Please call, e-mail or visit the SIDS Network web site for details.
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How to contact us—
We want to hear from you. Whether you or someone you know needs services, or you want to volunteer with the SIDS Network of Kansas, we look forward to hearing from you. We can be easily reached through:

Mail:        SIDS Network of Kansas, Inc.
             1148 S. Hillside, Suite 10
             Wichita, KS 67211
             Office hours: please call to ensure staff is present.

Phone:  1-866-399-7437 (toll-free) or 316-682-1301 (Wichita)
Fax:     316-682-1274
Web site:  www.sidsks.org
E-mail:  General mailbox—info@sidsks.org
        Christy Schunn—christys@sidsks.org
        Tonya Rose—tonyar@sidsks.org
        Lindsay Suderman—lindsays@sidsks.org

Online Support Groups

General Web site:  www.sidsfamilies.com

Support Groups:
—General SIDS Discussion:  www.groups.yahoo.com/group/sidsfamilies
—SIDS Grandparents:  www.groups.yahoo.com/group/sidsgrandparents
—SIDS Fathers:  www.groups.yahoo.com/group/sidsdads
—Expecting SIDS Moms & Moms w/subsequent babies:  www.groups.yahoo.com/group/babiesaftersids
—SIDS Moms Trying to Conceive:  www.groups.yahoo.com/group/sidsmomstrying
—SIDS Siblings:  www.groups.yahoo.com/group/sidssiblings
—SIDS Parents a Few Years Down the Road:  www.groups.yahoo.com/group/sidsdtr
—Help with SIDS websites and related graphics:  www.groups.yahoo.com/group/wsng
—SIDS Aunts:  www.groups.yahoo.com/group/sids-aunts
—SIDS Awareness:  www.groups.yahoo.com/group/angelsinthemedia

SIDS Support Meetings

Wichita
Meet 4th Monday of the month, 7:00 p.m.
SIDS Office, 1148 S. Hillside, Suite 10, Wichita, KS.
Child care available—Please call in advance so arrangements can be made.

Topeka
Meet 3rd Thursday of the month, 7:00 p.m.  1-866-399-7437
Pozez Education Center—1505 S. W. 8th, Topeka, KS.
RSVP is required otherwise meeting will be canceled.

Salina
Meet 1st Monday of the month, 7:00 p.m.  R.S.V.P.  1-866-399-7437
Salina Public Library—301 W. Elm St., Salina, KS
RSVP is required otherwise meeting will be canceled.

If you are interested in attending a group in Hays, Hutchinson or Pittsburg please call the SIDS office at 1-866-399-7437.