January News

A steady start to 2015 with 2 Memory Box making sessions, attendance at the Welsh Network Day, a planning meeting for the joint SandsNI/RCM conference for Health Professionals in June, attendance at the MBRRACE UK Conference in Lisburn, dates set for IBC & GOR training days and the generous monthly donations from you.

Support Groups

We have support groups in the following areas:

- Antrim - 1st Thursday Next Meeting - 5th Feb
- Belfast - 1st Wednesday Next meeting - 4th Feb
- Coleraine - Last Wednesday Next meeting - 25th Feb
- Cookstown - 3rd Wednesday Next meeting - 18th Feb
- Derry - 1st Tuesday Next meeting - 3rd Feb
- Downpatrick - 1st Thursday Next meeting - 5th Feb
- Enniskillen - Next meeting - 11th Feb
- Newry - Last Thursday Next meeting - 26th Feb
- Omagh - 1st Wednesday Next meeting - 4th Feb
- Portadown - Next meeting - 24th January
You may have heard the sad news of the death of Ben & Marina Folge's son, Willem, in August 2014. Recently, Marina shared Willem's story in a beautifully written piece in The Telegraph. Many of you may have seen the story on Facebook and other social media outlets, but we thought we'd share the link to this moving account of how Marina, Ben and their family are coping with their grief. Click the link below to read the story.

http://fw.to/yn7jrpB
Splish, Splash, Splosh

While most of us were still in our pyjamas on New Years Day a group of nutters, sorry, keen fundraisers, were running into the freezing cold sea at Portstewart Strand. This is the third year these (fool) hardy souls gathered to willingly of their own accord, run into the cold, icy waters of the Atlantic Ocean. The money is still being collected in, (it has taken them this long to get the feeling back in their hands & feet) and we'll let you know what the grand total comes to asap. On a serious note, we are extremely grateful to everyone who took part in the Splish, Splash, Splosh on our behalf. Maybe, after reading this, you've been inspired to join them on New Years Day 2016? or, maybe you'll stay in your nice warm jammies?
We had a great response to an email appeal for help with our Memory Boxes and held 2 Memory Box making sessions on 7th & 13th January. In total 96 Memory Boxes were made, a total of 16 cartons of 6. and everyone felt a great sense of achievement at the end of each session to think that through their efforts 96 families will be supported by receiving a Memory Box. Sadly 5 cartons of boxes have already been sent out to hospitals.
Our Co-ordinator was off on his travels again this month, this time attending the Sands Welsh Network Day in Cardiff. The day was different to the North East Network Day last November as health professionals were invited to the morning session. This session included "Stillbirth - does pathology make a difference" presented by Margaret Evans, a pathologist (from Wales) based in Edinburgh and who recently joined the Sands National Board of Trustees. This was delivered with compassion for the parents Margaret meets in her work and dedication to her quest to reduce the number of babies that die through detailed PM investigation. The next presentation was "ISA - A Midwives perspective" which was presented by Karen Symonds, one of 2 Midwives sponsored by Cardiff & Newport Sands to attend the International Stillbirth Alliance conference in Amsterdam last September. Karen clearly has a passion for bereavement care and enthusiastically shared her experience of attending the ISA and the ideas she has taken back to her unit. Laura Price, Sands Research & Information Officer then presented "Research & Prevention - a
Welsh Update” which showed that there is a lot of work happening in Wales. After lunch there were discussions around running effective groups/committees/Networks and a presentation on Sands Improving Bereavement Care training. During the day Cardiff & Newport Sands presented Judith Abela, Sands Operations Manager & Laura Price, with a cheque for £10,000 to be used on UK research projects. Our Coordinator found the day interesting and engaging and has some ideas to discuss with the NI Steering Committee about the content of the NI Network Day.

SandsNI/RCM joint conference planning meeting

The Royal College of Midwives
The only professional organisation and trade union led by midwives for midwives

We met at the RCM offices in Belfast to plan ahead for our annual joint conference on Wednesday 17th June 2015. This was the third such planning meeting and we have confirmed almost all of the speakers and a day-plan and booking is now open. SandsNI as in previous years, will again subsidise delegate fees for the conference which means the delegate fee will be just £10 and will include tea/coffee on arrival and a 2 course lunch. Please email Anne Marie O’Neill at RCM Belfast to book your place annemarie.oneill@rcm.org.uk

Gifts of Remembrance bereavement photography training
We are delighted to announce dates for two more Gifts Of Remembrance bereavement photography training days on Wednesday 27th & Thursday 28th May 2015 at Dunadry Hotel, Antrim. Below are some comments from the evaluation forms from the GOR training days in October 2014.

- To encourage others to gain knowledge and skills I have achieved today
- Important that all staff should feel confident in taking photographs
- Gives tools, builds confidence. People came saying ‘I’m not very good at taking photos’, but they caught some lovely moments and increased their confidence
- It highlights the importance of taking plenty of photographs
- To enable colleagues to help parents and families who are bereaved
- Invaluable
- This is essential for all midwives to have these skills
- To give them confidence in this area
- You think differently about your practice/care of parents and their little angel
- To understand what bereaved families want when going through hard times
- Yes –Absolutely! Found it a wonderful day with Rachel and Steven.
Totally invaluable
• The knowledge I have gained today is priceless
• It has been the most beneficial training throughout my career.
Such a simple approach has the greatest impact – a small touch that leaves a lasting impression
• It was very enjoyable, and it is a very important part of caring for families of babies that have passed away - how to approach and how to help parents deal with this very difficult situation
• Very worthwhile day. I feel it would be extremely beneficial for all staff to have had this training and put it into every day practice

To Health professionals

BOOKING IS NOW OPEN

If you are a health professional or a member of staff working in maternity or neonatal wards/units and would like to learn how to provide lasting and precious photos for parents, then click on the link to book your place on your preferred date. Each of these days are separate, complete workshop training days and certificates of attendance will be provided. SandsNI is funding both of these training days and booking is free. PLEASE BOOK ONE PLACE PER PERSON.

For 27th May
https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/myevent?eid=15597349091
For 28th May
https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/myevent?eid=15597390214

To Parents

Did you have photographs taken of you baby by the midwives or nurses? If so, would you like to share your thoughts on how the suggestion of photos was made and how you feel about the photos and how they were taken? We would like to feed back your comments to the delegates at future training days to let them see that parents greatly appreciate their taking the time to attend training days to learn how to take these precious photos. Email steven.guy@uk-sands.org
Improving Bereavement Care - (IBC) training workshop

Date for your diary
Not only have we set dates for GOR training, we have also set a date for an Improving Bereavement Care full day workshop in Dunsilley Hotel Antrim on Wednesday 15th April 2015. This is the second IBC workshop we have held since the new look training was introduced last year and with last year’s workshop providing such positive feedback and a newly appointed NI Facilitator to deliver the training here we will plan more IBC Workshops this year, ideally we would like to hold an IBC Workshop each quarter starting in 2016. Booking will open soon and we are certain that places on this workshop will go very fast and, as places are limited to 20 delegates please book early to avoid disappointment.

Neonatal Network Northern Ireland

We have been invited to join the Neonatal Network for Northern Ireland (NNNI) to represent bereaved parents views on the care they received with a view, where possible, to improving the care given to parents and their families. The next meetings are in February & March 2015 and we would like to hear your experience of the care given to you when your baby died in a neonatal unit. All stories will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous, and will be used to help improve the care given to
future parents. Please email your story/experience to steven.guy@uk-sands.org

Border Life - Scotland

Our good friend (and colleague) Ann McMurray, Sands Scottish Co-ordinator sent us a link for ITV Scotland’s Border Life programme broadcast on Monday 19th January which included a feature on the work of Dumfries & Galloway Sands. As it was only aired in Scotland we thought we'd include the link so that you can see the great work our near neighbours are doing just across the Irish Sea. Click on the link to view http://www.itv.com/news/border/story/2014-07-23/watch-border-life/

Fundraising News
Another busy month of donations from your fundraising activities. We had donations in lieu of Christmas Cards, donations in memory of, and a donation from Poppy’s Christmas Run with more to follow. The total amount lodged to our bank account was a staggering £4,996.99. A HUGE thank you to everyone who raised funds for us, without your support we could not continue to provide Memory Boxes and support to bereaved parents in NI.
We have been contacted by Lee-ann Mullan with an amazing personal challenge she has set herself. Lee-ann plans to complete 5k-a-day during February in memory of her niece, Bethany Rose. Lee-ann says

"I am doing a 5k a day walk / jog every day in February to raise funds for SandsNI and I will post on this page everyday with my 5K updates. In memory of my beautiful perfect niece Bethany Rose, born on 4th September 2014. Only here for a short while but touched the hearts of so many family & friends. She will always be in our hearts! SandsNI Charity is an amazing comfort for grieving parents of newborns and I know Bethany’s mum and dad found them a great help as did the extended family. I would be very grateful if you could spare what you can and donate via this page or by contacting me directly. These funds will help parents, just that little bit”

If you would like to encourage and support Lee-ann on her 5K-a-day challenge then visit her Justgiving page www.justgiving.com/Lee-annmullan1 or, if you’d like to "join” Lee-ann by doing your own 5K
one day/evening in February, or just send her a message of support then email her at lee-annmullan@hotmail.co.uk

SandsNI Golf Day & Dinner

Remember last month we told you about Robert who is organising a golf day at Omagh Golf Club on Friday 1st May?, well, there are still places available for the event. This will be a mixed four-ball team event and the entry fee is just £25 per person and includes a place at the prize-giving dinner in the clubhouse that evening. There will be prizes for the winning team, winning individual, longest drive, nearest the flag and other prizes too. Planning is just beginning for the event and we will update on progress here. In the meantime, why not ask your golfing friends if they would like to raise funds for Sands while playing their favourite sport and have a great night’s craic afterwards as well. Please contact robert.bolton@live.co.uk to find out more or to register your team.
Rachel McLaughlin is holding a coffee morning in Ballycoleman Community Centre on Thursday 26th February from 10am - 2.30pm. If you are in the area why not call in for a cup of tea or coffee and some tasty treats, all in aid of SandsNI.
This is the first of 3 events Rachel is planning in memory of her Son, Darren, the other two will be a charity night in the Fir Trees Hotel, Strabane (date to be confirmed) and Rachel is in training for the Strabane Half Marathon, all in aid of SandsNI. For more information on any of Rachel's fundraising events please email her rachel.mclaughlin@hotmail.co.uk
Our friends at Life After Loss are holding a fundraising Quiz Night in Kilkeel Golf Club on Saturday 7th May. If any of you clever-clogs out there want to test your depth of knowledge then why not get a team together and go along. For more information or to register your team email gjscullion@gmail.com
We received an email from Samantha Curtis which we just had to share with you.

Dear SANDS Northern Ireland

I am a Stillbirth Awareness Campaigner (focusing on the healing and love side of baby loss). I also run a Literary Agency. SANDS has played an important role in my own healing journey, since my baby daughter, April, died in January 2009.

The taboo surrounding stillbirth is really starting to evaporate, with documentaries aired on mainstream channels, articles appearing in newspapers and magazines, radio stations shattering the silence, blogs being written across various social media sites, and parents of all generations opening up, sharing their baby stories and beginning
So I am excited to be writing to you about a new book, 'Three Minus One.'

The book is the companion to the Hollywood film, 'Return to Zero', the first movie with stillbirth as its central theme, starring Minnie Driver and Paul Adelstein. It aired on Sky's Lifetime UK channel last May and was deservedly nominated for a number of awards, including an Emmy.

'Three Minus One' is a beautiful and heartfelt anthology of parents’ love and loss, poems, photographs and art. It is also endorsed by Cindy Crawford.

The book has already been published in America and we are now working closely with a UK publisher who is hoping to publish the book in the UK in the summer, if we can guarantee a minimum number of sales. It will help us greatly if would would please send us a response with your answers to the following questions by the end of January. Many thanks.

'Three Minus One' will retail at around £15 and, If it looks like we can guarantee a total of just 200 copies worth of sales across the various bereavement and midwifery groups in the UK, then the book will be published in the UK in the summer.

We very much hope that you will be enthusiastic about this new resource for those affected by baby loss and we look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards - Samantha

If you would like a copy of this incredible book (we've seen a preview of it) then please email Samantha as the more people who pledge to buy a copy the more likely it will be that the book will be published in the UK. Samantha Curtis booksthatchime@gmail.com
Snowdrop Walk

We have been asked by the Bereavement Team at Antrim hospital to let you know about their annual Snowdrop Walk. The walk takes place in the grounds of Shane’s Castle estate on the Randalstown Road, Antrim from 1pm - 3pm. There will be some poems and a few words of welcome and then parents are invited to plant snowdrops in the private burial grounds on the castle estate. Refreshments will be served and snowdrops are provided. This is a very simple yet emotional and moving afternoon and we can highly recommend it as another way of remembering your baby. Please wear suitable outdoor clothing & footwear.

Special Song
We've chosen a simple yet stunning song this month from Katie Meluia "I cried for you". This is the live version of this song and is just breathtaking.

"I cried for you and the sky cried for you and when you went I became a hopeless drifter" pretty much sums up how most of us feel after the death of our precious babies. Please have tissues at hand when listening to this emotional song [http://youtu.be/F-vaRLYG3vA](http://youtu.be/F-vaRLYG3vA)

Please Let Us Know................
If you or a friend or family member is planning any kind of fundraising event in aid of SandsNI please let us know and we'll shout about it here, on our website and social media OR, send us photos of the event and we'll create a photo-special to share with everyone.

.......If you would like to share your story with other parents and tell the world about your baby, please email it to steven.guy@uk-sands.org. Include a photo and we'll include it in the next edition of the E-newsletter. If you have a special song you'd like to share with others, please send it to us. Or if you have any questions at all please contact us.

You can quite literally share your story with the world as this E-newsletter has readers in the UK, USA, Canada, Australia, Japan, Switzerland, Belgium, Ireland & Spain

Did You Know?...............That we have a Facebook page www.facebook.com/sandsni