



#### Mission Statement

Our Mission is to bring light in a time of sorrow. To provide a bear as a reminder of your little angel and that you are not alone, but accompanied by the thoughts and prayers of everyone who has shared in this emotion.

PO Box 212, Jenison, MI 49429 P.616.481.3727 [www.briannaleefoundation.org](http://www.briannaleefoundation.org)

Volume 1, Issue 3

September 2013

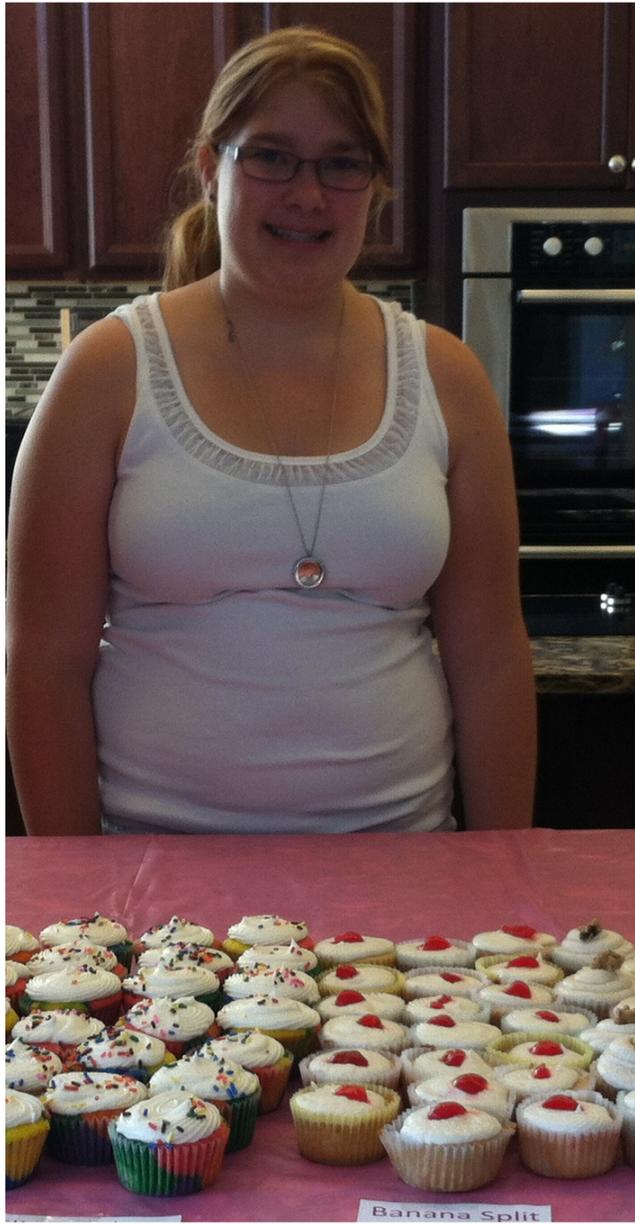
### “Rainbow After the Storm” Our story, by Ruth Gifford

It was August 2011, I was 31 weeks pregnant and things were going great! Doctor visits, ultrasound pictures, and my growing belly were all showing that baby was healthy and on schedule to arrive at the end of October. On August 27<sup>th</sup>, everything changed. After feeling no movement for an entire day, I called my doctor expecting her to reassure me everything was ok. Instead she recommended I get checked out as soon as possible. At the time, we were up north with our kids and my husband’s family for what was going to be a fun, family weekend. So, we left the kids with the family, and we drove to the hospital in Traverse City. It was there that began the most difficult time of our lives. After what felt like hours of searching for a heartbeat, and finally looking at an ultrasound, we were told there was no heartbeat and our baby had died. Because labor had not begun yet, we were allowed to come home to deliver the baby at Spectrum Hospital. I was induced late that evening and delivered our beautiful baby girl the next morning, on August 28<sup>th</sup>. She was 3 lb. 11oz., 18” long, and had a head full of hair. We named her Jocelyn Marie, and the first thing the doctor told us was that she was a “little gymnast;” she had gotten tangled up in the umbilical cord. Jocelyn was baptized that same day with our parents by our sides, and we held a private graveside service for her a few days later. Words cannot describe the pain and heartbreak we suffered those several days, and still continue to suffer. After coming home from the hospital, without our precious baby, I longed for something to hold. My arms literally ached with emptiness. It wasn’t until I was given a teddy bear that I started to feel some comfort. That is why the Brianna Lee Foundation is so special to me. The mothers who receive their teddy bears will cherish them forever and they will find so much comfort in knowing they are not alone in their pain.

We know we cannot be sad for Jocelyn; she is the lucky one. She has gone straight from my womb to Jesus’ arms and she will never have to see the sins of this earth. However, we also know that it is alright for us to be sad for ourselves. We truly miss our baby girl. Throughout the sadness, God has truly blessed us. He has loved us unconditionally and He has given us His Word. Psalm 147:3 says “He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.” In Hebrews 13:5, Jesus says “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” The Bible also tells us we will one day hold our babies again. God also blessed us with the love and support from family, friends, and even strangers. Our older two children, Lincoln and Annalise, have brought us tremendous comfort and joy, especially during our time of grief. Two years have passed since we said goodbye to our sweet girl; but if God had not taken her, we would not have had our fourth child, London. She turned one this past July and she has been our rainbow after the storm. Although she never got to meet her sister, we plan to tell her as much about Jocelyn as possible.

Sometimes it’s hard to know God’s plan, and why he allows certain things to happen in our lives. When Jocelyn died, I wondered why God chose us, but I trusted that He had, and still has, a plan for us. Even though she is not here with us now, I am truly thankful to God for the short time we had with her, and that He chose *me* to “carry her.”

## Supporting the Brianna Lee Foundation with Creativity



Brianna's Cousin Mackenzie Wiersma wanted to help support the foundation, but how does a 14 year old help. The best way she knew, baking cupcakes. Mackenzie decided she could use her baking skills to bake cupcakes from scratch and sell them at a Women's Expo. Mackenzie manned the booth and handed out newsletters and business card to the ladies at the expo, in order to help bring awareness to the foundation. She then donated all her proceeds to the foundation.

Deanna Duram a Thirty-One Consultant in Georgia, held a fundraiser for the foundation and donated a percentage of her profits from her sales during the entire month of July. She sent emails and letters to all her customers letting them know she was doing this as well as spreading the word about our foundation. Thank you Deanna!!

*thirty-one*™

The Brianna Lee Foundation would make a great mission project! If your church, group, or organization would like us to come and speak at an event to let people know about stillbirths and our great foundation please feel free to contact Linda Miller (616) 481-3727.

## Save the date! Upcoming events around the area

Zumba For a Cause Class September 10<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. Dr. Brian Nylaan, D.D.S.– 5011 Plainfield NE Grand Rapids Michigan. Dr. Nylaan offers a complimentary Zumba classes led by instructor Kate Rehmus of Live. Dance. Move. These classes are free and open to the general public. However they do ask that attendees bring a donation to support the featured cause. Our foundation will be feature (and we will be there!) September 10<sup>th</sup>.

The staff and patients of Port Pediatric Dentistry will be accepting donations through the month of September and first week of October. Each donation allows you to place your name on a paper bear and hang it on the office wall. At the end of the 4 weeks all money collected will go to the Brianna Lee Foundation. So if you are in the Holland area, stop by and meet the staff as well as make a donation.

The West Michigan Walk to Remember is an annual event at Fallsburg Park in Lowell Michigan to honor the memory of our beloved children who died due to miscarriage, stillbirth, or early infant death. This year's event is on October 5, registration is from 9:00 am to 10:00 am, Memorial Service from 10:00 am - 10:30 am, Decorate Balloons 10:30 am - 11:00 am, Walk to Balloon Release 11:00 am - 12:00 pm, and the Walk to Covered Bridge 12:00 pm - 12:30 pm. You can now register online at <http://www.ellabullis.org/events/walk2013>. Shirts and apparel will be available to order thru the site as well. You can look them up on Facebook to stay up to date on the latest information.

Addyson's Angel Run is a 5k run/walk to support the Star Legacy Foundation. The Star Legacy Foundation is an organization dedicated to Stillbirth research and education (for more information on the Star Legacy Foundation, please visit [www.starlegacyfoundation.org](http://www.starlegacyfoundation.org)). This is the first year for this event and it will take place on October 12, at Hagar Park in Jenison Michigan. Cost of the Event is \$25 if you pre-register (\$35 day of), which includes a t-shirt and lunch from Palermo Pizza. You can also pre-register kids 3-10 years old for \$10 (\$15 day of) for a 100-yard fun run. You can visit their website, <http://www.addysonsangelrun.com>, to register for the event and for more information. They also have a Facebook page so you can stay up to date on the latest information

### Contact Information

Address:

P.O. Box 212 Jenison, MI 49426

Phone # (616) 481-3727

Like us on Facebook: Brianna Lee Foundation or

Follow us on twitter:@BriannaLeeFound

Web site:

[WWW.Briannaleefoundation.org](http://WWW.Briannaleefoundation.org)

### Brianna Lee Foundation Board

|                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| Linda Miller     | President      |
| Jessica Miller   | Vice President |
| Jennifer Wiersma | Secretary      |
| Jim Miller       | Treasurer      |

### Board of Directors

Brian Miller, Jeff Miller, Jamie Wiersma, and Mackenzie Wiersma

We want to thank the smallest donation to the largest donation. Again, it is your donations that allow us to get more bears into more hospitals to touch more moms. So a huge THANK-YOU to each and every donor!!



A special thanks to the following great folks that donated this quarter.

|  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| Tom and Tammy Nevins                             | Dr. Kevin Campbell        |
| Dr. Derek Draft and Staff                        | Terry and Lisa Ernst      |
| Randy and Lynette Zuiderveen                     | Larry Winch               |
| Dr. Harvey Weingarter and Staff/Ethics Committee |                           |
| Ed and Deanna Howe                               | Dr. Bill DeWitt and Staff |
| Dr. Jere and Tim Meade                           | IDS                       |
| Rick and Sheryl Jones                            | Andrea Boot               |
| Wayne and Linda Wagner                           | Kevin and Tracey Weberg   |
| Staff at Fifth Third Bank Jenison Branch         | Pam Howe                  |
| Mackenzie Wiersma                                |                           |

Your donations allow us to purchase additional bears so we can touch more moms. Know that we couldn't do this without you!! Thank you!!

Due to the generosity of everyone that has donated to the Brianna Lee Foundation we have supplied 2 more Hospitals with Brianna Bears. We would like to welcome Holland Hospital and Metro Hospital of Grand Rapids to the Brianna Lee Foundation Family.



