

Media Release

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Day of Remembrance ceremony connects families after loss

By Brandy Gill, CRDAMC Public Affairs

FORT HOOD, Texas – Approximately 30 moms, dads, children and Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center staff participated in the Day of Remembrance ceremony Thursday to honor babies who were lost to fetal demise.



Figure 1

Those who attended lit candles and released balloons in honor of those they lost. They also received a poem, refreshments and a chance to visit with others who had endured similar experiences, which, according to Chaplain, (Cpt.) James Russell, CRDAMC chaplain, is the most important part of the event.

"During the balloon release, I saw a son look up at the sky and he said, 'Mommy, they are not alone. Just like my brother is not alone.' Through these support groups and gatherings the parents and families know that they don't have to go through this alone," Russell said.

Maj. Dorene Owen, a CRDAMC maternal child health clinical nurse specialist who hosts a bi-weekly bereavement group, said the ceremony helps many

families find closure.

"I believe it was very beneficial to the families and staff who attended. When the balloons were released in honor of the lost child or baby, many were teary-eyed," she said.

While the ceremony is beneficial Owen said she thinks the connections participants make can sometimes be even more healing than the event itself.

"One of the couples who attended yesterday just lost a full term baby very recently. I had them talk with one of our group regulars who had a similar story because these guys do more for each other than I can do as a healthcare professional," Owen said. "They can sympathize and relate to what is going on and the uniqueness of losing a child and all that this entails."

Russell, who with the help of Owen coordinates a quarterly Day of Remembrance ceremony, agreed that the families who participate can help one another by sharing their experiences.

"I know from personal experience that the loss of a child is easily one of the most traumatic events any parent can experience. This is a way for the parents to share their stories and heal from loss," he said.



The ceremony is just one step in the healing process for parents who have experienced a fetal demise, Owen said.

While the ceremony is very beneficial sometimes these families need longer-lasting support," she said. "That's why we encourage all those who have experienced the loss of a baby to participate in the Infant Loss Support Group which meets in the hospital classrooms above the Emergency Department every first and third Thursday of the month at 3:30 p.m."

All members of the Fort Hood community are invited to participate in the bereavement

Figure 2
support group Owen said.

"Our loss group consists of mothers and fathers who have either had infertility issues, a miscarriage, a second trimester fetal loss, a full term demise, or lost an infant. The one thing that they all have in common is the need to share their experiences and connect with others that have been through similar trying times," she said. "This is extremely healing and our group has formed bonds that are considered tighter and closer knit than one's own family. The group is also supported by the hospital's chaplain service and our social workers here at CRDAMC."

To learn more about the CRDAMC Infant Loss Group or the Day of Remembrance Ceremony you can contact Chap. Russell at (254) 553-1853 or Maj. Owen at (254) 287-3489, or visit the Fort Hood Pregnancy and Infant Loss Support facebook page.



Figure 3

CUTLINES:

Figure 1: A balloon release was a symbolic part of the recent Day of Remembrance ceremony held at Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center. The ceremony is designed to help families who have lost a baby to fetal demise cope with their loss and introduce them to others who have had similar experiences. (Photo by CRDAMC PAO).

Figure 2: Chap. (Cpt.) James Russell talks to family members prior to the release of balloons at the Day of Remembrance ceremony held at Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center Dec. 6. Approximately 30 families and CRDAMC staff members came to honor and remember babies who they have lost to fetal demise. (Photo by CRDAMC PAO).

Figure 3: Fort Hood families watch the retreat of balloons after they are released in honor of babies they have lost to fetal demise. (Photo by CRDAMC PAO).