

*(As reported in the Fall/Winter 2009 issue of ANA Happenings)*

Joe Stamm, funeral director and musician, learned about ANA through one of his clients. The family was in need of assistance, and had applied to ANA for help. “Michelle Mosca called to let me know that ANA would be assisting the family, and she explained ANA’s programs and services. I was touched by ANA’s mission, both personally and professionally,” remarked Stamm. “I wanted to support ANA and decided to share my story, and my music, in an effort to do so.”

Stamm sent his album to ANA to review, offered to donate to ANA a percentage of the proceeds from sales of the album, and recounted his personal experience with loss.

His story, written in his own words, follows.

I received a phone call on the morning of May 17, 2007 that remains very clear in my memory. Within a few seconds I learned that I was a father to a person I would never have a chance to meet, know or love. This heartache was only the first step in a grieving process throughout which I experienced significant disillusionment and confusion. I was ill-prepared for the tragedy, and even more ill-prepared to assist the baby’s mother in her sorrow and grief.

While I certainly felt the sting of sadness and loss, I soon learned that her mother’s sorrow reached much deeper and stemmed from an emotional connection that only a mother can know and truly understand. The weeks and months of miscommunication, lack of understanding and confusion that followed only testified further to the extent of tragedy that a miscarriage truly is.

In the end, all I could manage to do in order to communicate my emotions and sense of personal loss to the baby’s mom was to write a song about the little girl we named Ellie Rain—a song that I intended to honor both Ellie and her struggling mother.

I wrote “Ellie Rain” in hopes that her mother might catch a glimpse of the peace that Ellie was born into and the peace that I pray we will all share someday.

I hope that “Ellie Rain” will touch others who have endured loss yet long to see the sun’s rays pour through clouds on the horizon. I hope that mothers will hear its words and know that while fathers of miscarried and stillborn children go through a very different grieving process, it still hurts and we still care very much.

Years later, the memory of that phone call still lingers, and the love and loss I had for Ellie remain as strong as ever. Yet time has a way of putting life—both our own as well as those that have passed on—into perspective. I may never think of Ellie without the sting of having lost a chance to know and love a dear child who never got a chance to see the world, but as the days pass I reflect upon the brevity of all our lives and where it might lead.

Ellie is out there somewhere, and her life in the ultimate sense is not lost or meaningless. She just had a shorter run at it in this world than most of us. Yet her memory—or the knowledge I have of her brief time here—will accompany me throughout my life.

Joe will donate 50% of all ANA-generated sales back to ANA. For more information about Joe Stamm’s music, to sample his music or purchase the album, visit [www.joestamm.com](http://www.joestamm.com).