

First Candle: Honoring Our Babies: Insights, Research, and Support from the Latest SUID Conference

Alison Jacobson



Saving babies. Supporting families.

First Candle's efforts to support families during their most difficult times and provide new answers to help other families avoid the tragedy of the loss of their baby are without parallel.

"This past week, we presented at the Isabel Davis Center for Safe Children Conference, Beyond the Crib: Innovations in SUID Prevention and Research, supported by Baylor College of Medicine and Texas Children's Hospital."

This past week, we presented at the Isabel Davis Center for Safe Children Conference, Beyond the Crib: Innovations in SUID Prevention and Research, supported by Baylor College of Medicine and Texas Children's Hospital. I had the privilege of sharing how First Candle supports grieving families while our Director of Education and Bereavement Support, Barb Himes, presented our [Let's Talk Community Chats](#) as a successful prevention program.

The conference featured some truly fascinating research, and one session in particular focused on bereavement. Dr. Rick Goldstein, Director of the Robert's Program on Sudden Unexpected Death in Pediatrics and Associate Professor at Harvard Medical School, presented his work on prolonged grief among parents who have lost a child suddenly and unexpectedly, with no apparent cause. His session was eye-opening and insightful.

Each session began with parents sharing the heart-wrenching stories of their baby's death. Unfortunately, many of these stories included troubling experiences with law enforcement during the death scene. We were, however, encouraged by Dr. Savannah Lusk, who has developed a training program for law enforcement on how to interact respectfully with grieving parents. Seeing such meaningful work being done to address these issues was moving.

The conference also included a memorial service to honor babies

lost too soon, where everyone lit an electric candle and shared who they were honoring. Pictures of our babies and SIDS Quilts, dating back to the 1970s, were displayed, creating a powerful and emotional tribute to the lives we carry in our hearts.

"The conference also included a memorial service to honor babies lost too soon, where everyone lit an electric candle and shared who they were honoring. Pictures of our babies and SIDS Quilts, dating back to the 1970s, were displayed, creating a powerful and emotional tribute to the lives we carry in our hearts."

The conference brought together top researchers in Sudden Unexpected Infant Death, including **Drs. Rachel Moon, Fern Hauk, Nino Ramirez, and Russell Ray**. Even more encouraging was the presence of many young researchers eager to contribute to the field.

A particularly special moment for me was witnessing **Dr. Hannah Kinney** receive the inaugural Hannah Kinney Lifetime Achievement Award. Dr. Kinney is a pioneer in SUID research, and she was the first person I reached out to when my son passed. Seeing her honored for her extraordinary contributions was deeply moving.

Conferences like this are crucial for highlighting important research and offering a space where families can come together to support each other.

We are excited to host the **ISPID International Conference on Stillbirth, SIDS, and SUDI** this October, where parents, advocates, healthcare providers, and researchers will discuss further advancements in research, community advocacy, and bereavement support. [You can learn more, register to attend, and submit an abstract here.](#)

This past week reaffirmed how vital it is to continue supporting

About First Candle

First Candle, based in New Canaan, CT, is a 501c (3) committed to eliminating Sudden Unexpected Infant Death while providing bereavement support for families who have suffered a loss. Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID), which includes SIDS and Accidental Suffocation and Strangulation in Bed (ASSB), remains the leading cause of death for babies one month to one year of age, resulting in 3,700 infant deaths nationwide per year.

families through education, research, and compassionate care. Together, we can create a future where fewer families experience these heartbreaking losses.

“This past week reaffirmed how vital it is to continue supporting families through education, research, and compassionate care. Together, we can create a future where fewer families experience these heartbreaking losses.”

Disclosure: The author is the Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of First Candle, a Connecticut-based not-for-profit 501(c)3 corporation.

NT



Corresponding Author



Alison Jacobson
Executive Director
Chief Executive Officer
First Candle
21 Locust Avenue, Suite 2B
New Canaan, CT 06840
Telephone: 1-203-966-1300
For Grief Support: 1-800-221-7437
Email: Alison@firstcandle.org