



SHARING PARENTS

PREGNANCY & INFANT LOSS SUPPORT GROUP

November 2016

Sharing Parents is a Sacramento based non-profit organization devoted to supporting parents who have experienced the loss of a baby from the time of conception through early infancy.

Our Purpose is to provide a safe environment where grieving parents with similar experiences can come together and share their feelings about the loss and the love of their babies. Our meetings are also a place where parents express the love they have for their baby in their compassion for others, where they can give and receive emotional support by sharing common experiences and learn about the natural grief process while working through and resolving their loss.

We Offer a variety of meetings and support services that are designed to help parents throughout the different stages of their grief. There is never a fee to attend our meetings.

Our Meeting Place

Sutter Roseville Medical Center
1 Medical Plaza Dr.
Roseville 95661
Medical Bldg. 1, 2nd floor

Our Mailing Address & Phone Number

Sharing Parents
P.O. Box 19538
Sacramento, CA 95819-0538
(916) 424-5150

Upcoming Grief Support Meetings

January 8: Stepping into a New Normal in the New Year

February 12: Honoring Each Other's Grief Journey

March 12: TBD

Milestones Meetings

January 22, March 26, May 21

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*Time may bring more sophisticated coping strategies,
but the absence of the loved child lingers in the heart
of the parent and remains there for their entire lives.*

~Julie Siri, Journey Through Loss

Message from the Sharing Parents' President

2016 Sharing Parents' Volunteers

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Kurt Seckington

Past President

Jennifer Stiltz

Vice President

OPEN

Secretary

Amy Andrew

Treasurer

Tom Andrew

Volunteer Coordinator

Sharon Cox

Navigating Grief Series**Coordinator**

Sharon Cox & Rachel Libby

Milestones Meetings Coordinator

Rachel Libby

Pregnancy Interruption Coordinator

Amy Andrew

Listening Line Coordinator

Lynne Genzel

Listening Line Volunteers

Molly Lawrence & Sharon Cox

Oct. Memorial Coordinator

OPEN

Community Outreach

Lisa Herrington

Bunco Coordinator

Audrey Cataldo

March for Babies Coordinator

Trina Giacomo

Librarian

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Newsletter Editor

Dorinda Gregory

Newsletter Assistant

OPEN

Webmaster

JB Cox

Facebook Monitor

Rachel Libby

Fundraiser Coordinator

OPEN

General Volunteers:

Tom Andrew, Geoff Brabec,
Toni Brabec, Tasauna Euwing,
Nicola Fertuna, Gavin Ferguson,
Daniel Gensler, Isabel Ginsberg,
Aaron Gregory, Zahra Hessari,
Deanna Lockhart, Sara Seberger, &
Chris Wooten

Dear Sharing Parents Families,

Thank you to all the parents, family, and friends who were able to join us for our 30th annual October Memorial last month. Each year I have attended the memorial, I am struck by all the ways in which it connects and supports our families. It is such a wonderful opportunity for us all to expand our community of support. I received numerous comments from first time attendees who were amazed by the intimacy and meaningfulness of the event, as well as from parents who have attended for many years who are so grateful for the space to celebrate their babies year after year. I want to thank our wonderful parent speakers, Kourtney and Greg Flagg, Crystal and Chris Adams, and Amy Andrew for openly, honestly, and compassionately sharing their stories with the group. I would also like to express my deepest appreciation to Sharing Parents' amazing volunteers for all of their hard work to make the event such a special place for us to collectively remember and honor our babies. Next years' memorial is already on the calendar for Sunday, October 8th. If you have never attended the October Memorial, no matter how long it has been since your loss, I invite you to join us for this special event.

Looking ahead to 2017, the Sharing Parents' volunteers are hard at work preparing for another wonderful year supporting families. We are excited to announce that we will now be offering our Milestones Meetings every other month, rather than quarterly. We will begin on January 22nd, and offer the meeting every other month throughout the year.

I would like to thank all the parents who have attended support meetings or participated in our private Facebook support groups this year. I am grateful for you all for sharing your stories and your babies with us. Sharing Parents thrives thanks to parents willing to open their hearts to give and received support throughout the grief journey.

Finally, as we head into the holiday season, we, as grieving parents, are often faced with a tremendous mixture of emotions. Whether this will be your first holiday without your baby, or whether your loss was years ago, I encourage you to be mindful and accepting of your emotions and to practice compassionate self-care throughout the season.

I wish you all a peaceful and gentle holiday season.

With gratitude,

Kurt



Remembering Our Babies With Love

Anniversaries, birthdays and holidays are difficult times for us. We remember with love....

Babies whose month of birth and anniversary of loss were not provided

Baby Adams
Baby Ahdan
Josiah Ridgeway Anderson
Babies Antolini
Baby Bailey
Baby Bansal
Baby Benevetis
Baby Boyle
Baby Brophy
Baby Camarena
Kaliyah Casto
James Robert Clarke
Babies Collier
Babies Diesslin
Baby Ellis
Baby Fatur
Baby Garrett
Baby Gastinell
Baby Gibson
Baby Gutierrez
Baby Hanson
Baby Harmony
Baby Henry
Baby Hernandez
Baby Holloway
Baby Hom
Baby Hoshovsky
Frances Jackson

Baby Knippen
Baby Lambert
Baby Lee
Baby Marr
Baby Marrow
Baby McAnelly
Baby McCarthy
Baby McDonald
Baby McNamara
Baby Millan
Baby Millar
Baby Millerd-Baker
Baby Moreno
Baby Mosley
Baby Muldonado
Babies Pambid
Baby Pascual
Maya Lauren Penn
Baby Puckett
Baby Ramos
Baby Rasmussen
Baby Ringenberg
Baby Boy Scacco
MaKenzie Lynn Scacco
Baby Scellato
Atlas Roland Schaefer
Baby Finley Schaefer
Baby Sheen

Baby Silva
Baby Snow-Schoepflin
Baby Teck
Baby Thompson
Joshua Shunk Thorne
Baby Tovar
Baby Vargas
Angel Villafán-Hermosillo
Gabriel Villafán-Hermosillo
Baby Xiong



Names are entered through the sign-in sheet at all Sharing Parents meetings.
If your baby is on this list, and you would like them included with their birth and anniversary month or months, please email sharingparents@yahoo.com

Remembering Our Babies With Love

Anniversaries, birthdays and holidays are difficult times for us. We remember with love....

November Birthdays & Anniversaries:

*Carmen Rose Acuna
Sally Adame
Ryan Aidan
Isaac Alcaraz
Arman Cameron
DeOnt'e Crawford, Jr.
Josiah Nicolas Davidson
Baby Davis
Elliott Davis
Baby Denny
Victoria Rose Domino
Baby Donaghy
Justin Daniel Fleming
Abigail Furtado-Rinker
Keegan Turner Gilwee
Malachi Ezekiel Harvey
Donavon Kyle Holly
Baby William Huffman-Fly
Faith Marie Jones
Baby Krebs
Grace Kukas
William Leonard
Bodhi Ren Mackin
Travis Adrian Maheras
Gabriel Moore March
Grace Marie Nickles
Kori Peters
Elle Pop
Gabriella Rameriz
Baby Ranchod
Saphire Robertson-Horner
Tara Marie Schmidt
Jody Lee Shunk
Emily Steele
Samantha Rae Troutman
Zoey Louise Van Eenennaam
Isadora Vargas
Kate Walker
Luke Edward Whitten
Baby Wyzanowski
Zachary Zielinski-Kristianous*



December Birthdays & Anniversaries:

*Cherish Catherine Amyx
Emerson Avila-DeRosa
Elijah James Barker
Ava Gabrielle Barnett
Baby Berger
Lynn Blackmen III
Baby Camarena
Caitlyn Hope Dunn Catanyag
Karolina Yelzavetta Cooper
Molly Ann Cottman
Olivia Grace Cowan
Baby Cruz
Colin Devey
Samuel Isaac Dressen
Christopher Eells
Lane Esser
Zoey Grace Flag
Baby Fraser
Graham Lynn Graham
Ryle Lynn Graham
Swasti Gupta
Rebecca Grace Hadsell
Baby Heckley
Blaine Kevin Heckley, Jr.
Zackary Herkins
Jack Ryan Hildebrand
Olivia Lane Hirschberg
Santrika Shayann Holloway
Blaine Husmann
Zane Edward Ira
Justice
Grace Kukas
Sarah Lampe
Theo Lin
Alex Marin
Alura Marrow
Timothy Daniel May, Jr.
Michael McNeese
Gino Mills
Nico Mills
Jeremiah Harrison Murray
Julia Faith Murray
Alexandros Nichols
Baby Ocel
Gwenyth Marjorie Page
Justin Pardi
Babies Patterson
Aiden James Plautz
Angel Ramirez Aguilar
Sofia Senna
Kai Alexander Shamiyeh
Baby Snell*

December Birthdays & Anniversaries Cont'd

*Owen Staley
James Terrence Waldron
Nicholas John Waldron
Christopher Thomas Webster
Lane Williams
Coleman Winje*

January Birthdays & Anniversaries:

*Lannette Jasmine Adams-Steptoe
Liberty Annette Amyx
Payton Hadley Bazzocco
Baby Beck
Brandis Behnken
Logan Henry Berry
Lynn Blackmen III
Faith Ann Blakely
Andrew Bond dos Reis
Darian Brooks
Naomi Brown
Baby Cairel
Hector Campbell-Lockwood
Michael James Cromeenes
Corbin David Crouch
Samantha Dahl
Lily Grace DaPrato
Samuel Alan Demmin
Baby Donaghy
Baby Dressen
Baby Errichetti
Seeley Hiett
Elsabella Brophy Jett*



Remembering Our Babies With Love

Anniversaries, birthdays and holidays are difficult times for us. We remember with love....

January Birthdays & Anniversaries Cont'd:

*Kamore Kahealani
Tanner Kelley
Zachary Mikalos Kristianous
Gracie Ann Laackmann
Evelyn Lang-Cannon
Christian Lewis
Selma Livadic
Emelio Alexander Lopez
Levi Blake Losoya
Cashew Martinez-Gardner
Hananiah James Oates
Baby Payne
Angelica Robertson-Horner
Oliver Robertson-Horner
Jane Belle Rodriguez
Brayden Rose-Siefker
Raleigh Rose-Siefker
Baby Schreck
Nathan Russell Scott
Owen Staley
Mallory Van der Veer
Matthew Van der Veer
Jordan Vose
Presley Vose
Tyce Donald Wagnon
Baby Wildermuth
Elias Matthew Ponce Zepeda*



Baby names are entered through the sign-in sheet at all Sharing Parents meetings. If your baby is not on this list, and you would like them included with their birth and anniversary month or months, please email sharingparents@yahoo.com

News and Announcements

*To our new Sharing Parents families of these babies,
our deepest sympathies for your loss*

*Emily Horn
Donavon Kyle Holly
Noah Winje
Coleman Winje
Kinsley Gernandt
Joyce MacKenzie Sandra Felkins
Jackson Brent Clifton
Allison Russell*

There is no foot
too *small*
that it cannot leave an
imprint
on this **WORLD**

<https://www.nowilaymedowntosleep.org/>



News and Announcements

Sharing Parents Update

Milestones Meetings

In an effort to better serve the needs of parents, Sharing Parents offers quarterly *Milestones Meetings*. These meetings are open to all parents, and also welcome expectant mothers. The discussions are based on the needs of the parents attending. Discussions include any type of milestone, such as, but not limited to:

- considering a subsequent pregnancy
- experiencing a subsequent pregnancy
- approaching an anniversary or birthday
- approaching a holiday
- facing the beginning of a school year when your baby would have been entering preschool, kindergarten, middle school, high school, graduating, or any age in between.

Milestones Meetings are held on the 4th Sunday of the 1st month of each quarter.

The upcoming dates are:

- ★ January 22, 2017
- ★ March 26, 2017
- ★ May 21, 2017

Meetings are held at:

Sutter Roseville Medical Center
1 Medical Plaza Dr. (Building 1, 2nd Floor)
Roseville, CA 95661

Meetings are held from 7-9pm.

For those wishing to celebrate their safe arrivals with us, we invite you to bring your safe arrival to a meeting and share during the introductions portion of the meeting.



News and Announcements

Sharing Parents Facebook Support Groups

Sharing Parents is excited to announce that we have created a new support space for our families in the form of three separate "Closed" Facebook groups. Our hope is to provide a kind and compassionate space where our families can continue to support each other outside of our support meetings. At Sharing Parents, we believe the greatest support comes through face-to-face interaction, but we also understand that support between meetings and the strengthening of a community of parents who are in different phases of their journey can help to broaden the scope of support we provide as we all grieve our babies. In an effort to maintain a safe and compassionate space for our families, we are opening these groups ONLY to parents who are currently attending Sharing Parents support meetings or to those who have attended support meetings in the past. If you have friends that you have met in the loss community who you think would be interested in participating in one or more of the groups, please invite them to attend one of our support meetings (Monthly Grief Support or Milestones Meeting) before requesting to join.

We invite you to join one or more of the groups at any time. The groups we have created are:

Sharing Parents Grief Support - A space for parents to both give and receive support through any aspect or portion of their grief journey, regardless of how long ago their loss occurred.

Sharing Parents Remembrances & Mementos - A space for parents to share photos of their babies, images of their mementos, artwork, poetry, music, or anything else they would like to share to honor and remember their babies.

Sharing Parents Subsequent Pregnancy Support - A space where parents who are considering a subsequent pregnancy or are currently pregnant can find support during this portion of their journey. Also, a place where parents can share their "safe arrival" with the group.

For those who are not familiar with Facebook's group designations, a "Closed" group is open by invitation only. The group name and who is a member of the group IS VISIBLE to the public within Facebook. However, in a "Closed" group, all posts, comments, and "likes" are ONLY VISIBLE to other members of the group.

For more info on Facebook group settings, read here:

https://www.facebook.com/help/397938530263094?expanded_faq=220336891328465

How To Join:

If you are interested in joining one or more of the groups please follow these instructions:

1. In the Facebook search bar, search for the group(s) you would like to join (Sharing Parents Grief Support, Sharing Parents Remembrances & Mementos, Sharing Parents Subsequent Pregnancy Support) and click on the green "+ Join Group" button. You must request separately to join each group you would like to participate in.
2. Follow this link (<http://goo.gl/forms/Duy7dUFlizPUA3Bz2>) to read through and agree to our Facebook Support Groups' "Terms of Use."
3. Once we receive your request to join and submitted form, we will add you to the group(s).

If you have any questions on the groups or the "Terms of Use," please don't hesitate to email us at sharingparents@yahoo.com.

Thank you for being a part of the Sharing Parents community of support!

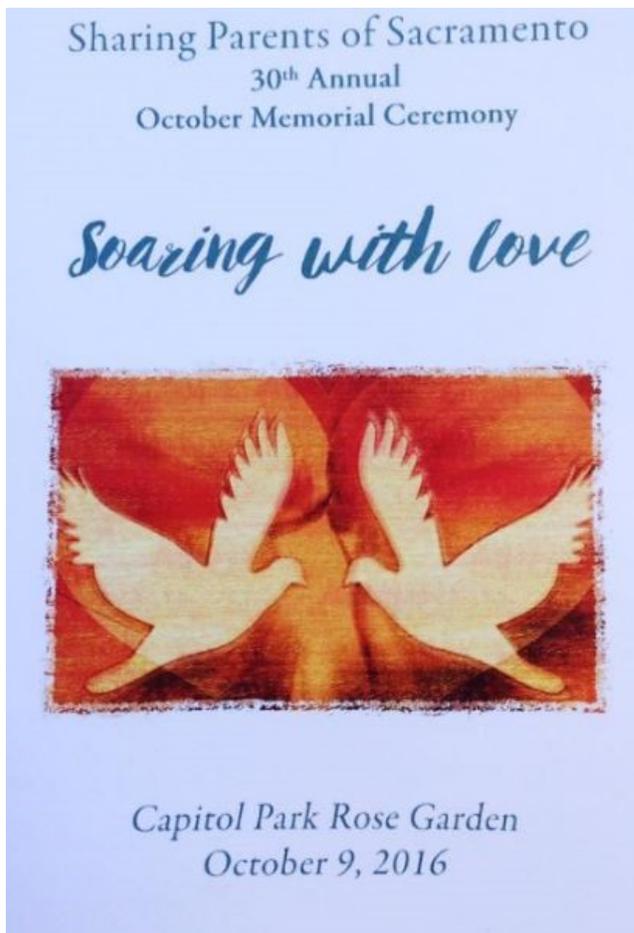
News and Announcements



30th Annual October Memorial

October was Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness month. Thank you to those who joined us at our 30th annual October Memorial. This year was an amazing event that allowed many parents the opportunity to remember, celebrate and honor their babies. We are so grateful to be able to come together as a community and say our babies' names with you.

Sharing Parents would like to thank all of our sponsors and vendors for their generous contributions in support of the October Memorial. A special thank you to John McCalmon of Wings of Love Ceremonial Dove Release for the donation of his time and beautiful birds year after year. The dove release is such a moving part of the ceremony every year. For more information, please visit <http://www.wingsofloveldi.com/index.html>



For those who missed the event, we would like to share a few of the speeches written by some of the parents who generously shared their stories. It was an honor to hear them speak at the memorial.



Parent Submissions

By Greg Flagg

“Can I hear the baby’s heartbeat?”

These were the last words my wife, Kourtney, said before an avalanche of sadness and disappearing expectations settled over our life. Kourtney had gone in for a regular ultrasound to determine the gender of our unmet child growing in her body. Instead, she was notified that the baby’s heart had stopped beating and any potential for this life we were anxiously expecting had ceased. I was at work and raced home to embrace my emotionally crumbling wife, and the small baby she still cradled in her womb.

We both fell to the floor and cried together.

Kourtney had experienced crippling morning sickness that required taking time off work and getting regular infusions of fluids. She had just moved into the second trimester and was starting to feel better. By all accounts, we had a healthy baby and were well on our way to growing our family even more. However, the news of the “fetal demise” introduced us to the truly sacred mystery of what goes on in the womb of a pregnant woman. It is a place of glorious and terrifying mystery with the power to bring both earth-shattering joy and heartbreaking sadness. We chose to induce the birthing process so we could find out the gender of our child and give him or her a name and officially make them a part of our family. This also brought some frustration, as issues beyond our control at the hospital caused us to wait almost a week before we could go in and begin the inducement process. For that week, my wife carried close to her heart the tiny body of the first member of our family welcomed into eternity. Life and death both held together behind the veil of her womb.

On a Tuesday night we were finally admitted. After many rounds of drugs to induce labor, on Wednesday night, we met our tiny, eternally sleeping, fragile, but still beautifully formed daughter.

We named her *Zoey Grace*.

Zoey comes from the Greek word meaning life. We chose this because even in the sadness of death, we still believe deep in our hearts that this little girl was once a living and active part of our family. Grace because, well...we have needed double portions of grace during this whole experience.

Parent Submissions

By Kourtney Flagg

I knew this journey was going to be the most challenging and emotional when it started with me walking out of labor and delivery without my daughter in my arms. For most of us here, our journeys started with a walk like that. Or perhaps it was when I held my daughter for the first and last time. She was so small but so perfect. My mind could not wrap itself around the fact she was gone. My journey continued with more challenges that to this day can take my breath away. Signing my name over “mother of deceased” or bringing her home finally...her ashes that is. She stayed with us for a few days before we gave her back to God and nature by scattering her ashes over the Marin Headlands in San Francisco.

The next step in my journey was a service with a small group of friends and family. What would this look like? How do you have a service for someone who came 4 months early, 4 months too soon. We passed out prayers, sayings and quotes to attempt to capture what was in our hearts. What was next in our journey? What was going on in my heart during the sleepless nights and many decisions that had to be made was, “what was my role as Zoey’s mother? I can’t change her diaper, feed her or teach her how to walk.” What is my role as her mother? I have come to realize it is to make sure that she is remembered. Whether I do that by saying I have three children instead of two, or by creating shadow boxes, ornaments or buying angels, or if it is sharing her story with a large group of strangers. God granted me the honor of sharing Zoey Grace’s story. In her short 5 months of life in my womb, she has impacted many. She has shown Greg and me that we are loved, exposed my heart and soul in its most raw form, and brought me closer to my husband. She has taught me to be grateful for everyday that I get to spend with my children. I thank Jesus for her life. She has allowed me to connect with other families who have gone through similar experiences. We were so grateful for Sharing Parents that helped carry and grow our connection, and ultimately work through our grief.

So my journey continues without her, our second daughter, Aurora’s little sister, and our guardian angel up above.

To this day, we don’t know why we lost our Zoey Grace, but God has taken something so painful and uses it and redeems it so that Zoey’s memory and our journey will continue.



Parent Submissions

My Personal Journal Volunteering for Sharing Parents

By Kristin Linardi

When my husband and I learned that we were pregnant in early 2007, we were absolutely thrilled. We were so excited. The pregnancy was going great and we passed the first trimester with no problems. Since I was an older mother, age 37 at the time, I had high risk monitoring for several issues. Once we were well into the 2nd trimester, we thought that we were out of the woods for anything to go wrong, so we planned a trip to New York, as we knew that it may be quite some time before we could take a vacation like that again with a newborn. We took pictures of my growing belly and even went into Little Italy in New York and asked for ideas for Italian names for our sweet baby to be, as my husband is Italian. We shopped for cute baby clothes and talked about how wonderful it was going to be as parents when our baby would arrive later in the year. I even wrote a letter to our baby on the flight home about how much I loved him/her and couldn't wait to hold him/her in my arms.

We went to a Dr.'s appointment the day after we returned from our trip and we took my stepdaughter, who was 6 years old at the time, so she could hear her brother's or sister's heartbeat. The doctor gave my stepdaughter the Doppler and she placed it on my belly. We didn't hear the beautiful heartbeat as we did almost weekly for several months. My doctor kept trying and this went on for what I thought was forever. Then, I saw a worried look in my Dr.'s eyes. She told me we would need to go into the ultrasound room. She tried again and we saw our baby still as could be on the monitor. Our sweet baby who was so active for so many ultrasounds prior wasn't moving anymore. There was no heartbeat. I kept asking her to keep trying and started to panic myself. My doctor told me she was sorry and that our baby died. I immediately started hysterically crying and couldn't breathe at times I was so shocked. The next couple of days were horrific. I had to go to another doctor's office the following day to confirm what they called fetal demise (which I thought was a horrific term for our precious baby who we loved so dearly), and then had to wait another day before I could have a procedure to take our baby from us. I didn't want him taken from us. I was numb and in shock from it all. I was so upset I couldn't talk. I was crying, screaming at times, and didn't want this to be a reality. I wanted this to be a horrific dream. The doctor encouraged me to be asleep during my D&E procedure and to not see our baby, but to let them take the baby and have the baby tested to see what may have gone wrong. Not knowing what my rights were as a parent, or even having any rational sense of anything at this point, I listened to them and let them take our baby. I never saw him or held him. I asked afterwards if it was it a boy or a girl. The doctor told me it was a boy. We named him Nicholas....sweet precious Nicholas. After the procedure, I fell into extreme sadness, depression, and anger at times. I felt regret that I didn't demand to see and hold our baby. And I felt guilt, as maybe it was the glass of wine I drank before I knew I was pregnant....what if it was because I was on a flight and maybe I shouldn't have been on an airplane.....what if it was the coffee I had with dinner....maybe it wasn't decaffeinated....maybe I shouldn't have exercised, etc.....I felt like nobody understood what I was going through. I felt angry at now what I know was mostly well meaning people who didn't know what to say said things that sometimes hurt me more and completely discounted my feelings of grief by saying things like, "there must have been something wrong with him...At least it happened early," and, "you can have another one," among other attempts to try and make me feel better, which of course made me feel worse and more isolated.

Continued on next page

Parent Submissions

My Personal Journal Volunteering for Sharing Parents

By Kristin Linardi

Continued from previous page

I would have done anything to have more time with him. I don't want another baby, I wanted this baby. I felt isolated from almost everybody, but my immediate family. I felt anger at people who were pregnant and fury at mothers who I would see with their children who appeared not grateful for their children.

I was told about Sharing Parents from my doctor and gave them a call. I remember the first phone call I received. I immediately felt supported and understood. I went to my first meeting and although it was so emotionally difficult, I left feeling so supported and understood. I felt a little less "crazy." We attended meetings for many months, navigating grief meetings and then the subsequent pregnancy meetings once we were so lucky to become pregnant again, but feeling extremely anxious about losing our baby again. The meetings were necessary for me. As rough as things were, I always knew I would get a chance to honor and share my feelings of love for Nicholas with other parents who just "got it" when we would attend meetings. Even though many of us had different experiences, we all shared a common bond of the grief we were experiencing over losing our precious babies. I have made lifetime friends and have such love for fellow parents who we shared so much with as a participant in the Sharing Parents support groups. Almost 2 years after losing Nicholas, we did have our precious subsequent son, Anthony, and he's happy and healthy, and is now 7 years old. How blessed we were, but no matter how many children we would have, we were always missing one....our precious Nicholas.

When Anthony was born, I knew I needed to give back to Sharing Parents because if it wasn't for Sharing Parents' support, and the people I met, I wouldn't be able to work through my grief nor get through my subsequent pregnancy. I started to volunteer and it was the most amazing experience. Not only did I get to give back, but I also got to honor Nicholas each time I told my story. I volunteered for 6 years, and told my story so many times, yet never enough...I will never grow tired of talking about our sweet first son. Each time I told my story throughout the years, I could remember every second of that horrific day. Although my grief has changed throughout the years, and I'm in a different place in my grief journey, I will always grieve for my baby Nicholas....it has just become a bit more bearable throughout my participation in support groups, and continuing my grief journey through my volunteering.

Within my volunteering experience, my grief journey continued, but in a very different way. I was so scared of the thought of facilitating. I wondered if I was ready to be present with other grieving parents and would I be able to support them. I was so worried about what I may say while facilitating. After facilitating my first meeting, I realized that it just came naturally to me, and although it was hard emotionally, it was necessary for supporting, and was extremely rewarding. By helping others, I was honoring Nicholas. There were things that I didn't realize about my grief until I worked through them as a volunteer. Prior to volunteering, I felt so much regret over not asking to see Nicholas after he was taken from us. I learned so much about parent's rights after a pregnancy and infant loss, and was able to share with Sharing Parents' participants over the years. This helped me and made me feel empowered helping others when I felt like I didn't have any power immediately after our son died. By helping others, and giving back, this really gave me peace and acceptance over that regret. I have learned how to have uncomfortable silence while in group, and in other situations in my life, as so much powerful work is sometimes being done in these uncomfortable silences.

Continued on next page

Parent Submissions

My Personal Journal Volunteering for Sharing Parents

By Kristin Linardi

Continued from previous page

I've learned that I don't have to say something when somebody is grieving. I've learned that being present with that person with an open heart and just saying, "I'm so sorry" is sometimes the most helpful. I've learned how to be honest in my feelings, even if expressing my feelings may sound "ugly or irrational" when said aloud. I've been so fortunate to volunteer with so many amazing men and women over the 6 years that I volunteered, and have learned so much from them.....we have laughed, cried, and shared so much about our precious babies. We all speak a similar language. We're all part of this secret club that none of us wanted to join. This is where people remember Nicholas. Nobody is afraid to speak his name...people remember him on the day that he died.....what would have been his birthday.....he's still with me with my Sharing Parents family when so many out there have forgotten. And I've accepted that.....truly. I no longer have anger over this. And I have learned this throughout my journey.....as I was grieving as a participant and in my grief journey as a volunteer for Sharing Parents for 6 amazing, fulfilling years. I had the honor of co-chairing the October Memorial, chairing a fundraiser, doing community outreach , doing presentations at places like hospitals, funeral homes, social work agencies, etc., facilitating meetings, among other wonderful volunteer opportunities, which have been so incredibly rewarding. This last October Memorial was my 10th Memorial, and I really wanted to write to share my story and to talk about my volunteer experience and I felt like this was an important milestone to share my thoughts about Sharing Parents and volunteering.

If you are a bereaved parent who is considering volunteering for Sharing Parents someday, I highly encourage you to. It will be an incredible, sometimes emotionally draining, yet extremely rewarding experience. I strongly believe that it can also possibly help you work through your grief in other different and beautiful ways as a volunteer. There are many opportunities to volunteer. Please contact a Sharing Parents' volunteer and ask if you may be a candidate for this amazing volunteer opportunity. I'm forever changed by my experience.

With much love,

Nicholas' Mommy, Kristin Lunardi



Parent Submissions

Getting through the Holidays

By Jennifer Stiltz

I can still remember dreading the first holiday season after we lost Emily. I was at a loss about what to do, what I would want to do. How would I possibly be able to celebrate the holidays again when my baby girl wasn't here? My family always comes to our house for Christmas, and that year was supposed to be extra special...two babies, Emily and my sister's son (6 months older than Emily would have been), and our 4-year-old daughter. Now, instead of excitement, I was feeling dread and anger for having the holidays and the joy of others in my face constantly for months. Every store window and commercial seemed to highlight all the whole and complete families, while mine was not complete; someone very important was missing.



Emily's mini tree that we decorate each year for her gravesite.

To ease my pain of my loss and the stress of dealing with the impending celebrations, I ended up making a list of things I thought I might like to do to honor Emily that year. I then wrote a letter telling my family some things I planned to do and how I would like them to participate. In the letter, I also let them know that I reserved the right to hide in bed all day and pretend the holidays didn't exist. It made me feel more in control to have my thoughts laid out, with no pressure to follow through if I didn't feel up to it or changed my mind.

As I prepared the house that year, I knew I needed to acknowledge Emily, and I needed others to acknowledge her. I could not stand the sight of the stockings without one for her, so I made her one. I invited family members and friends to write her a message and leave it in her stocking. They still sit in her stocking today, and every year when I pull out her stocking, I take comfort in feeling the bulk of the letters that have been added each year. There were many other ways we honored her that first year. Some traditions, like leaving letters in her stocking, and Santa leaving a stuffed animal for her gravesite felt right and we have continued each year. Others were less helpful, so we let them go.

As the years pass, we continue to recognize Emily in our holiday traditions. Every holiday is still bittersweet. Last year was especially hard. It was the first time my brother came with his wife and their two new foster children, who they have since adopted, joined us. Our subsequent son was 21 months, and at a wonderful age for the holidays. Yet there was a huge longing for Emily. Seeing the kids together was a very visual reminder that Emily, and my brother's two biological babies, who were born too soon in the years following our loss of Emily, were missing. I will always miss my baby girl, but I take comfort in knowing that she will not be left out or forgotten, and that her siblings and cousins will know about her and help carry out the traditions we have chosen (and continue to choose) to honor her.



Emily's white stocking hanging with stuffed animals from Santa for her gravesite.

As a Sharing Parents facilitator, I'm sometimes asked how the holidays or anniversaries should be handled. I wish no parent had to face such decisions. I wish I had a magical answer that could ease all pain. The truth is that there is always pain. But, as you travel through your journey of grief, you can find rituals and traditions that help ease the pain and feel right to you. Not every new tradition you try will feel right. Like me, you may just want to reserve the right to ignore the holidays. I wish you comfort and peace in whatever you choose.

Remembering all of our precious babies throughout this holiday season.

Parent Submissions

**We know the importance of remembering our babies during the holidays.
Here are some of the ways that we honor them.**



- 1) Every year, I buy and hang Christmas Ornaments for them.
- 2) We hang a stocking for each one.
- 3) We buy two toys to donate in honor of my beloved boys. We donate the toys to the Sleep Train Foster Kid's program.
- 4) We include our boys names on our Christmas Cards.
- 5) Each family member receives a small gift in memory of the two boys.

Dionne Martinez



"We hang ornaments in our Christmas tree to honor Cherish and Liberty. We try to do something different to honor them each year."



Dorinda Gregory

"We have a stocking for Everett and we give a gift to the boys from Everett (the first Christmas after Everett died it was a giant trunk full of used dress up clothes and costumes that still get used a ton...good gift!). Also, last year, I went shopping with Ian and bought a present for his school's "Toys for Tots" drive, it wasn't specifically as a replacement for gifts we would buy for Everett, and they were not age specific to the age

he would be, but we definitely talked about how Everett's death has made us more compassionate to the needs of others and how truly blessed and fortunate we are!"

Kurt Seckington



"Every year, our family hangs a stocking for each of our family members, including our Ethan Maxwell, on the mantel. Last year, we started a new tradition, we took time first thing on Christmas morning to each write him a letter. We had the fire going, and gentle music playing, and we let our 'missing him' fill the pages. We acknowledged how much we wished he was with us.

We filled his stocking with these letters. It was so meaningful to each one of us. We, as a family, decided we wanted to continue this tradition every year. It's a way to speak to how much we miss him, and honor our hearts in the process. The missing never goes away, but the acknowledging of it soothed our hearts."



Sharon Cox



Community Resources

Some parents find it helpful to start a new tradition around the holidays in honor of their baby. Here are a few resources you may find helpful if you are searching for something to try.

Locally:



Worldwide Candle Lighting December 11, 2016

10th Annual Bereaved Parents USA Candle Lighting Ceremony
Sponsored by the Sacramento-South Placer County Chapter

This year's theme is *Forever in Our Hearts*

December 11, 2016

6-8:30pm

Creekside Church, 290 Technology Way, Rocklin

<http://sspcc.org>

On the December 11, 2016, The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting will unite family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor the memories of the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and grandchildren who left too soon. As candles are lit at 7:00 p.m. local time, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor the memory of all children gone too soon. TCF's WCL started in the United States in 1997 as a small internet observance, but has since swelled in numbers as word has spread throughout the world of the remembrance of children who have died, but will never be forgotten.

Register online at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2016-candle-lighting-tickets-20023359407>

There is no charge to attend the event. More information is provided on their invitation flyer on the next page.



Community Resources



Annual World Wide Candle Lighting

*Presented locally in Rocklin by the Sacramento-South Placer County Chapter
Bereaved Parents of the USA*



WINGS OF HOPE

Our theme this year is “Wings of Hope.” We are designing this very special memorial service for our children to bring HOPE to everyone who attends. We encourage you to invite your family and friends to join

Candle Lighting Service

- 6:00 Doors open
- 6:30 Service begins
 - Welcome, Speakers & Music
 - Lighting of Candles
 - Reading of our children’s names
 - Slide show of our children’s photos
 - Words of Inspiration
 - Food and Fellowship

us.

Register Online

Registration is available online at www.sspcc.org. After you register on line, please email up to 3 digital photos of the child(ren) you are honoring in high definition jpg format to CandleLighting2016@gmail.com.

Register by Email

To guarantee your child’s name and pictures will be in the printed program and slide show, photos and information needed no later than Wednesday, December 7. Email the following information to CandleLighting2016@gmail.com:

- 1) Your child’s full name, date of birth, date of loss.
- 2) If your child served in the US military at any time, please include their branch of service and rank.
- 3) Parent(s) and sibling(s) names and, if applicable, the name of their spouse and their child(ren).
- 4) Attach to your email in high resolution jpg format up to 3 photos of the child(ren) you are honoring.

To ensure your child will be included in the slide show and program, photos and information will be needed **no later than Wednesday, December 7.**

Framed Photos on Display

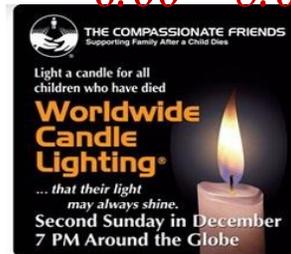
Please bring a framed 8”x10” photo of your child to display at the front of the auditorium.

Refreshments

You are encouraged to bring your child’s favorite holiday snack to share during our refreshment time.

Sunday, December 11, 2016

6:00 – 8:00 p.m.



This is a beautiful event that you won't want to miss!

*Hosted by Creekside Church
290 Technology Way, Rocklin 95765*

History of the Candle Lighting

The Worldwide Candle Lighting started in 1997 by The Compassionate Friends (TCF). Many candle lighting services are held each year across the nation and throughout the world.

Candles will be lit from 7-8 p.m. local time, creating a virtual wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone around the world, honoring children who have died. You are invited to post a message in the Remembrance Book which will be available on December 11 on line at www.compassionatefriends.org. Every year, thousands of messages are posted in memory of children.

Helping Yourself Heal During the Holiday Season

by Dr. Alan Wolfelt

Holidays are often difficult for anyone who has experienced the death of someone loved. Rather than being times of family togetherness, sharing and thanksgiving, holidays can bring feelings of sadness, loss and emptiness.

Love Does Not End With Death

Since love does not end with death, holidays may result in a renewed sense of personal grief—a feeling of loss unlike that experienced in the routine of daily living. Society encourages you to join in the holiday spirit, but all around you the sounds, sights and smells trigger memories of the one you love who has died.

No simple guidelines exist that will take away the hurt you are feeling. We hope, however, the following suggestions will help you better cope with your grief during this joyful, yet painful, time of the year. As you read through this article, remember that by being tolerant and compassionate with yourself, you will continue to heal.

Talk About Your Grief

During the holiday season, don't be afraid to express your feelings of grief. Ignoring your grief won't make the pain go away and talking about it openly often makes you feel better. Find caring friends and relatives who will listen—without judging you. They will help make you feel understood.

Be Tolerant of Your Physical and Psychological Limits

Feelings of loss will probably leave you fatigued. Your low energy level may naturally slow you down. Respect what your body and mind are telling you. And lower your own expectations about being at your peak during the holiday season.

Eliminate Unnecessary Stress

You may already feel stressed, so don't overextend yourself. Avoid isolating yourself, but be sure to recognize the need to have special time for yourself. Realize also that merely "keeping busy" won't distract you from your grief, but may actually increase stress and postpone the need to talk out thoughts and feelings related to your grief.

Be With Supportive, Comforting People

Identify those friends and relatives who understand that the holiday season can increase your sense of loss and who will allow you to talk openly about your feelings. Find those persons who encourage you to be yourself and accept your feelings—both happy and sad.

Talk About the Person Who Has Died

Include the person's name in your holiday conversation. If you are able to talk candidly, other people are more likely to recognize your need to remember that special person who was an important part of your life.

Continued on next page

Helping Yourself Heal During the Holiday Season

by Dr. Alan Wolfelt

Continued from previous page

Do What Is Right for You During the Holidays

Well-meaning friends and family often try to prescribe what is good for you during the holidays. Instead of going along with their plans, focus on what you want to do. Discuss your wishes with a caring, trusted friend. Talking about these wishes will help you clarify what is you want to do during the holidays. As you become aware of your needs, share them with your friends and family.

Plan Ahead for Family Gatherings

Decide which family traditions you want to continue and which new ones you would like to begin. Structure your holiday time. This will help you anticipate activities, rather than just reacting to whatever happens. Getting caught off guard can create feelings of panic, fear and anxiety during the time of the year when your feelings of grief are already heightened. As you make your plans, however, leave room to change them if you feel it is appropriate.

Embrace Your Treasure of Memories

Memories are one of the best legacies that exist after the death of someone loved. And holidays always make you think about times past. Instead of ignoring these memories, share them with your family and friends. Keep in mind that memories are tinged with both happiness and sadness. If your memories bring laughter, smile. If your memories bring sadness, then it's alright to cry. Memories that were made in love—no one can ever take them away from you.

Renew Your Resources for Living

Spend time thinking about the meaning and purpose of your life. The death of someone loved created opportunities for taking inventory of your life—past, present and future. The combination of a holiday and a loss naturally results in looking inward and assessing your individual situation. Make the best use of this time to define the positive things in life that surround you.

Express Your Faith

During the holidays, you may find a renewed sense of faith or discover a new set of beliefs. Associate with people who understand and respect your need to talk about these beliefs. If your faith is important, you may want to attend a holiday service or special religious ceremony.

As you approach the holidays, remember: grief is both a necessity and a privilege. It comes as a result of giving and receiving love. Don't let anyone take your grief away. Love yourself. Be patient with yourself. And allow yourself to be surrounded by loving, caring people.

<http://www.centerforloss.com/tag/blending-mourning-and-celebration/>

Little Snowdrop

The world may never notice
If a Snowdrop doesn't bloom,
Or even pause to wonder
If the petals fall too soon.
But every life that ever forms,
Or ever comes to be,
Touches the world in some small way
For all eternity.

The little one we long for
Was swiftly here and gone.
But the love that was then planted
Is a light that still shines on.
And though our arms are empty,
Our hearts know what to do.
Every beating of our hearts
Says of our love for you.

~ Author Unknown

<http://www.grievingparents.com/Poems.html>

Remember Your Child During the Holidays

Written by Clara Hinton | Dec 09, 2002

Silent Grief

A message of hope for the grieving heart

http://www.silentgrief.com/articles/index.cgi?view_records=1&Category=Loss+Of+A+Young+Child&ID=86

We generally associate the December holidays with festive decorations, gift giving, and the laughter of little children. For a parent who has lost a young child, just the word holiday can cause great emotional pain. It is difficult to walk into a store and be bombarded with all of the reminders of children. The toys, holiday clothes, colorful children's gift wrap, and the holiday music being sung by young children all bring on waves of grief that are difficult to bear.

Often parents who have lost a young child find themselves falling into a depression around holiday season time. It would be far easier to avoid the holidays than to face the season without the joy of your precious child. With some planning prior to the holiday season, the pain of loss can be softened somewhat.

At some point, though, it becomes necessary to face the reality of the holiday season as being very different. Parents need ways to remember their child during this time of the year. By doing something special, parents will find it a bit easier and far more healing to face the otherwise empty holiday season.

It is quite healing to remember your child by lighting a candle in memory of your little one. The candle can be placed on a decorated table in a special place in your home where you will feel your child is still very close to you. There are many types of memory candles one can buy, and you can place small mementos of your child on the table with the candle. This might be painful to see at first, but it will also create an atmosphere for healing.

Remember your child by placing a special ornament on the tree. There are many stores that will do creative engraving, which you might find to be a desirable option for you. Have a special phrase or saying engraved along with the date of your child's birth and death. The keepsake ornament will become treasured all the days of your life.

Remember your child by creating a memory box that can be shared with others during the holidays. Use your imagination as to what you want to place in the memory box. You can even decorate the memory box together as a special time of gathering the family together to remember.

Many parents find it very healing to hang a stocking with their child's name on it by the fireplace mantle. Fill the stocking with some small gifts that were memorable of your child. Also, it might be very healing to write a letter or poem to your child and place it in the stocking. During a family meal, have someone read the letter, then place it in the memory box you've created. Each year a letter can be added. This will one day become a family treasure.

If you have some sewing ability, a wonderful way of remembering your child is to create a small quilt from some of your child's clothes. This quilt will be cherished for years to come, as it will remain a priceless remembrance of your special child.

As you think of ways to remember your child during the holidays, do things that will be healing to your heart. Re-member—there is no right or wrong way to remember. Do those things that are healing specifically to you! By remembering and including your child in the holiday, you will promote an atmosphere of healing and hope.

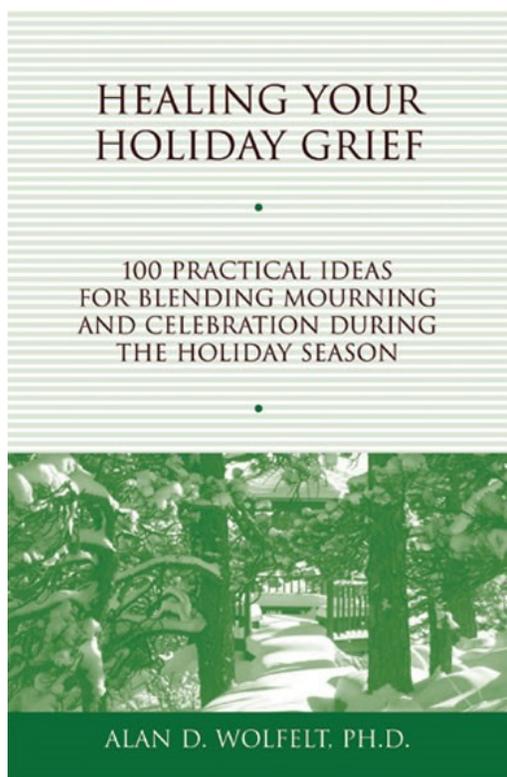
Librarian's Corner

Book Highlight

Healing Your Holiday Grief

by Alan D. Wolfelt, PH.D.

Review by Dorinda Gregory



This book outlines 100 different ideas on how to get through the holiday season. Each idea also has a *carpe diem* exercise on point with the numbered idea. The ideas vary from suggesting to simplify gift giving to singing, starting new holiday traditions, crying, observing a moment of silence, etc. My favorite "*carpe diem*" exercise relates to Item #70 - Ignoring Hurtful Advice. This idea described how sometimes well-intended, but misinformed family or friends will say hurtful things unknowingly (i.e. keep your chin up, this is a blessing, think of all you have to be thankful for, time heals all wounds, he/she wouldn't want you to be sad, the holidays are a time to be happy, etc.). The exercise said that the next time someone gives you this type of advice to tell the person how you honestly feel, or give yourself permission to walk away. I realized that I really need to practice this.

I also liked the idea of making handmade gifts in memory of the person who died (decorate frames & insert photos of your babies, make holiday ornaments with the name, birth/death dates on them, paint, etc.).

The ideas in this book were extremely helpful and I found a lot of ideas that I hadn't thought about or hadn't given myself permission to do (i.e. cry, embrace my pain, etc.). I almost want to start 100 days before Christmas and follow one idea per day.

There were a few quotes that really stood out to me too. For example:

"Mourners don't recover from grief. We become "reconciled" to it...we learn to live with it and are forever changed by it."

"The only way to the other side is through." - Helen Keller

I'm adding this book to my collection and I know I'll flip through it for coping ideas as the holidays approach. It was a very therapeutic read!

If you find a poem or article that is helpful to you, please consider sharing it with others in our next newsletter. Please send newsletter contributions along with the source and author of the poem or article, to sharingparents@yahoo.com with "newsletter contribution" in the subject line. The deadline for submissions for the next newsletter is January 15, 2017.

Safe Arrivals



Welcome Baby
Theo Jonas Ferguson
8/18/16

Little brother to Phoebe Laine (angel)
and
Connor Lee (sunshine)

Proud Parents
Gavin and Stacy Ferguson



Safe Arrivals



Welcome Baby
Cyra Bibi Wooten
9/4/16

Little sister to Roya and Emir Wooten

Proud Parents
Zahra and Chris Wooten



Welcome Baby
Skye Zane Magaoay
8/12/16

Baby sister of Maverick Zane Magaoay

Proud Parents
Nick and Janeen Magaoay



Love Gifts

A love gift was made in loving memory of

Everett Leimbach Seckington

5/22/12

By Bill and Carol Leimbach

A love gift was made in loving memory of

Christopher Mateo De la Cruz

5/16/15

For my grandson and all families

By Georgina Rivera



Love Gifts

A love gift was made in loving memory of

Addison Rose Lauder

4/01/14

*Happy 2nd birthday, Addison! You will always be in our hearts.
Love, Mom and Dad*

By Steven and Casey Lauder

A love gift was made in loving memory of

Lena Renee Bailey

10/19/15

Mommy and Daddy are forever loving you

By Kelly and Melissa Bailey



Love Gifts

To honor your child's memory, send a "Love Gift" to Sharing Parents. A Love Gift is a monetary donation given in honor of someone or as a memorial to a baby, relative or friend. Not only will you be memorializing your baby but you will be helping Sharing Parents, which survives on donations and fundraisers. If you would like to donate a Love Gift to us, please fill out the form below. The deadline for inclusion in the next newsletter is **January 15, 2017**.

A love gift was made in loving memory of

In the name of

We welcome your Love Gifts in support of Sharing Parents. A Love Gift is a monetary donation made to honor your child's memory. Please make checks payable to

Sharing Parents.

(Donations to Sharing Parents are tax deductible.)

Enclose your check, attach any special message to this form and mail to:

Sharing Parents

P.O. Box 19538

Sacramento, CA 95819-0538

In Loving Memory of:

Date of Birth:

Date of Death/Loss:

Message: