

# Angel Whispers

SPRING, 2014

*Angel Whispers  
Newsletter is a resource  
for parents who have lost  
a baby during pregnancy  
or shortly after birth.*

*Meetings are held in  
Sherwood Park and Fort  
Saskatchewan.*

*For meeting information,  
or to receive our  
newsletter or a special  
care package, please call  
780.998.5595,  
ext. 225.*

*You can also reach us by  
email at  
angelwhispers@  
familiesfirstsociety.ca  
or visit our website at  
www.angelwhispers.ca/  
angelwhispers.*



[www.familiesfirstsociety.ca](http://www.familiesfirstsociety.ca)

## *Hello to all of our Angel Whispers families,*

**W**e have finally made it out of the deep freeze here in our area of the world and the hope of spring is filling the air! Spring always makes me reflect on the cold and darkness of winter which reminds me so much of grief, and the newness of spring is much like that “new normal” we eventually find as we journey through our grief.

Life will never be the same as it was after the loss of a baby, however with time, as the intensity of the emotions soften and we learn to integrate the loss into our lives, we are able to find happiness again in small things, smile easier, laugh again and have hope for the future. That is the “new normal” I refer to. You will not be the same person as you were before your loss, how could you? Your life has been forever changed. Grief is the price we pay for love and the love we have in our hearts for our babies is the purest and most powerful love we experience, so naturally the pain of our loss can sometimes feel like it will never end. It’s completely consuming at times, especially early on in our journey.

As Program Coordinator with the Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program, I have the honour to walk the grief journey with wonderful families each and every day. Through my personal experience in the loss of our two babies, the work I do with Angel Whispers, and my Death and Grief Studies Certification that I am working towards, I have learned so much about loss and grief. I wanted to share some things that I have learned that have had a huge influence in shaping my philosophies and personal journey.

I hear so much about “closure” and the importance of finding closure after a loss. I’ve never agreed with this philosophy, and you may wonder why that is. Let me try to explain.

Let me start by looking at how the word closure is defined in the dictionary: To attempt to 'move on' following the termi-

nation of a relationship with another individual. It’s also been defined as: a bringing to an end; conclusion.

It’s impossible to find “closure” after the loss of someone you love. Death does not end a relationship, it ends a life. Grief does not end, it’s a lifelong journey. You will eventually learn to integrate the loss into your life and the pain softens, but the impact that the loss has in your life does not end. If you look at grief in these ways, the above definition of closure therefore means that closure after a loss is impossible to achieve. As it’s defined, closure would mean that you have moved on and forgotten your baby. That is something that would never happen.

Often times the terms grief and mourn are used interchangeably. Most people do not realize that there are distinct differences between the two words. Grief is the emotions we feel internally, mourning is the actions we take to externalize our grief. Crying is a natural response to a loss, and is also a wonderful way to mourn, especially when those tears are shared with others who understand and allow you the opportunity to share your story. Support groups can be a safe place to allow you to mourn, to give you the opportunity to share your story and memories of your baby, to cry and not feel judged, to surround yourself with others that are walking a similar journey as yours.

Angel Whispers offers a monthly baby loss support group for families, both moms and dads, to give them these opportunities to mourn. We also offer a monthly healing

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hands workshop that gives families a creative outlet for their grief. These workshops provide activities such as: journaling, scrapbooking and other ways we honour our babies like stepping stones, pottery, and memory boxes to name a few activities we have done in the past. These healing hands activities give families an opportunity to mourn in a safe understanding environment.

One of the hardest times of the year for parents after the loss of a baby is Mother's Day and Father's Day. I want to remind each of you that even if you do not have other living children, you are still parents. You deserve to be recognized and celebrated as such.

A wonderful baby loss mom named Carly Marie has created specific days to celebrate baby loss parents. International Bereaved Mother's Day is celebrated on Sunday May 4th, a week before the traditional Mother's Day. This is also the same day we hold our annual Rainbow Baby Reunion to honour our babies that we have lost while giving families a chance to celebrate our babies that have been born after the loss. This is also the first Sunday in May, so we will be holding our monthly baby loss support group meeting that evening. We invite moms and dads to come together to honour their babies and share their stories. Information on Carly Marie's International Mother's Day as well as International Father's Day (celebrated on the 4th Sunday in September) can be found in this newsletter edition. For more information on Carly Marie, please visit her website <http://carlymarieprojectheal.com/>.

In our Spring edition newsletter, mom's and dads are honoured. Stories from a few of our Angel Whispers mummies are included as they honour their angels. For the first time in a newsletter, I am sharing the story of my two angels, Loren and Brooklynn. Even though our losses were several years ago, I found it difficult to write my story and writing it triggered a grief burst for me. Those grief bursts can happen at anytime, sometimes without a trigger. Know that you can experience grief burst for the rest of your life.

I have often looked at my grief bursts as a way for my babies to say "don't forget me mommy".

In the next several pages, you will also find more information on our upcoming healing opportunities and meeting dates. As well I have included a new section for upcoming fundraising opportunities for Angel Whispers. As many of you are aware, Angel Whispers is a non-funded program. We rely heavily on individual donations, grants and fundraisers to sustain our services to grieving families. Check out this section for information on current and upcoming fundraisers for our program.

May this season bring you a renewed sense of hope for the future. Please know that even though the emotions that you experience after you've lost a baby are intense, that with time those emotions will soften. Much like the dreariness and darkness of winter, your grief journey will evolve and much like spring when the sun shines, the temperatures warm and flowers and leaves start to grow, your grief will change too, sometimes opening up your heart to the beauty of things you had not before discovered. Your perspective can change and your focus often shifts to what is most important in life.

Wishing each of you peace, love and joy in your hearts this spring!

With love and understanding,

*Lori-Ann*

Lori-Ann Huot  
Program Coordinator  
Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program  
(780)998-5595 ext. 225  
[angelwhispers@familiesfirstsociety.ca](mailto:angelwhispers@familiesfirstsociety.ca)

## Father's Day

A gift for you on Fathers Day,  
What on earth could it be?  
I know the gift you really want,  
Is to once again, have me.

Or perhaps the gift of understanding,  
To make sense of a senseless loss.  
I'm sorry, my dearest Daddy,  
But for those gifts, you must talk to the boss.

The gifts that I can give today,  
Are memories, both sad and sweet.  
From the touch of your hand on Mummy's tummy,  
To my tiny little feet.

Remember the joy you felt inside,  
When you found out you would be my Daddy?  
The great big smiles upon your face,  
You were over the moon, you were so happy.

Remember when you felt me move,  
The wonder and love you'd feel?  
Remember it today Daddy,  
It just might help you heal.

Remember the little cuddles we had,  
And the moments that we shared.  
Remember my little nose,  
And the colour of my hair,

I love you dearest Daddy, you know that this is true.  
Just keep your memories of me alive,  
And I will always live in you.

©Sharon Swinney 1995

## Donations

*AngelWhispers accepts donations. A \$10 donation will sponsor a care package for an Angel Whispers family.*

*Donations can be made through the CanadaHelps website - [www.canadahelps.org](http://www.canadahelps.org)*

*Find us under Fort Saskatchewan Families First Society, find Angel Whispers under Fund Designation.*

# My Story of Harleigh Quinn Porteous

*and my thanks to have been given the chance to love and have an angel.*

I found out I was pregnant with my beautiful Harleigh in January of 2013. I was really surprised. I told Brian a week later after a really nice night out. I was so excited but terrified to tell Brian. He had just hurt his hand and was out of work and I had just started a new job a week before. We sat down and I told him. At first I could see panic on his face. As we sat there and talked about it more and more, the more excited we both got. Brian always thought he couldn't have children (not sure why, he just always felt that way).

This pregnancy was really different than with my daughter Lexus. Everything about it just felt different. By 12 weeks I looked 25 weeks. We were so excited. We needed an extra bedroom so we decided to move, we gave our months notice. Life was looking like everything was falling into place.

I went to my 18 week ultrasound and things started to get strange. The tech wouldn't tell me anything. She was very focused on certain places and was having a hard time seeing and getting all the pictures she needed. I was there for over an hour. During that time I thought it was weird, but who thinks there is something wrong with their baby? Another tech came in and took a few pictures and sent me home. A week later we had to move. The place we got was not available for a few more days so we moved in with the in-laws. After Easter we called and they told us they had no place for us to move in to. Here is where everything went downhill.

The next day after that I got a message from my Ob/Gyn saying, "Sherrell please call me back as soon as you get this. There is something wrong and I need to speak to you." I hung up the phone and I knew...I hit the ground crying and couldn't breathe. I finally got myself together enough to call her back. Here nurse got her right away and my doctor came on the phone and told me that she could not keep me as a patient and that she was referring me

to the perinatal clinic at the Royal Alex due to my high risk pregnancy and the problems with the baby.

She couldn't tell me what was wrong, just that something with the heart and that the ultrasound was concerning. I couldn't keep myself together long enough to leave the house. I waited a week for an appointment at the Royal Alex. During this week we also got kicked out of the in-laws place and had to move into my parent's house two doors down.

*My days are getting  
easier everyday.  
There is a light  
at the end of the  
tunnel.*

My family doctor told me that I needed to stay off work and that I might need to until after delivery. April was becoming the hardest most stressful month ever! Soon it was going to become the month we lost everything. At the perinatal clinic they told us that they could see multiply problems with our baby. They sent us for an emergency echocardiogram and that was the start. At the echo they saw that our baby had a heart disease called Truncus Arteriosus with a hole in her heart as well. We went back to the clinic and another ultrasound was done. From that they noticed extra fluid in her brain and that she had what they thought were club feet, her spine was also curved. They thought it could be the same chromosomes problem so they offered an amniocentesis. We agreed. We got ready for it and everything was good. They started the procedure and I fainted and then had a seizure so they couldn't complete the procedure and get all the fluid that was needed.

I have never been so scared in my life. When I came to I didn't know where I was or who anyone was for a minute. They offered to try again

but I couldn't. They then told us all the things that they could see on the ultrasounds and what they thought they might mean and told us our options. Our options were to go full term where and if she survived she would have multiple surgeries and would be in a wheelchair and may be mentally handicapped. Or we could induce labor and let her pass on her own. They also told us we only had one week to decide if we wanted to end the pregnancy because laws would prevent us from making that decision later.

We were there for two days and with everything together we decided to terminate. This was the hardest decision to make. She was my baby, moving and kicking inside of me. I wanted her so badly!!! We then booked the induction for Monday April 15, 2013. The night before I was in bed while Harleigh was moving more than usual in my belly, I was bawling and wondering if this was the right decision. How could I do this? Should I do this? Could I live with myself after? There were so many questions.

The morning came and we went to the hospital. They brought us to a very nice and private room and went over what was going to happen. I just wanted to run away. I went into another room to get the induction started. First was pills to get my cervix to dilate, then a balloon was inserted and filled with fluid. Then back to the room to wait until the balloon came out I delivered my baby. This took 11 hours, 11 hours of waiting to deliver her not knowing if she would be alive or how long she would live for.

This labor was so painful physically, but more so mentally and emotionally. At 7:38 p.m. on April 15th, 2013, Harleigh Quinn Porteous was born with a huge kick to me. They took her away and cleaned her up. I thought she was dead and the nurse asked if I would like to see her. I didn't realize that she was alive. She was placed in my arms and

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she started to suck her thumb. Wow she was so beautiful!

She lived for an hour and 7 minutes. The best hour and 7 minutes I could have asked for. Looking at her in such peace and seeing the physical parts of her, I knew we had made the right choice as hard as it was then and continues to be everyday, it was the best decision for her. We spent the night with her and got pictures done and had a naming ceremony for her. Then we had to say goodbye...walking out of the hospital without her was the hardest part of it all. I could barely walk. Everyone was staring. The pain was unbearable. I didn't want to do anything.

I have Lexus and needed to be strong for her. Then the waiting started all over again. What happened? Why was she so sick? What was wrong that we didn't know? More questions! After

1 month of waiting, we found out that her chromosomes came back normal. So what does this mean? We were then referred to genetics, but were unable to meet with them until Harleigh's autopsy report came back. After 8 months of waiting, most of the report is complete. We waited another month to see the geneticist. I finally know that it is a gene problem but will never know 100% what it is due to them not having enough DNA samples.

I know we made the right choice as we went through the reports. I will never get the answer I was looking for but I am now at peace knowing that she really was sick and would have suffered if we went through with the whole pregnancy and if she had lived. I am at peace knowing out of the syndrome's the doctors think it is that there is a 25% chance of it happening again. I am not waiting anymore! I feel like I can move on with this horrible journey. 2013 was a year from hell! I am go-

ing to make my Harleigh proud that I will always love her and miss her but I can breathe and smile. We will make it and live for her with her by our side everyday. I love you forever my angel Harleigh Quinn Porteous. Because of Harleigh, we as a family are stronger. We have our own place now and are getting married. We have lost everything which has given us everything.

I have met some amazing people and have amazing friendships that I never would have had if not for Harleigh. She truly is an angel. I look for the things she has given to me. I know she is loved here on earth but also up in Heaven. She has many friends and is healthy and is not in pain.

My days are getting easier everyday. There is a light at the end of the tunnel.

XOXOXO

Sherrell Knaption

## Love You Forever

The following excerpt has been taken from Robert Munsch's official website – [www.robertmunsch.com](http://www.robertmunsch.com) Love You Forever started as a song.

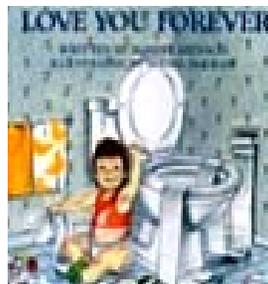
*"I'll love you forever,  
I'll like you for always,  
as long as I'm living  
my baby you'll be."*

I made that up after my wife and I had two babies born dead. The song was my song to my dead babies. For a long time I had it in my head and I couldn't even sing it because every time I tried to sing it I cried. It was very strange having a song in my head that I couldn't sing.

For a long time it was just a song but one day, while telling stories at a big theatre at the University of Guelph, it occurred to me that I might be able to make a story around the song.

Out popped *Love You Forever*, pretty much the way it is in the book.

My regular publisher felt that it was not really a kid's book and I ended up doing it with another publisher.



One day the publisher called up and said "This is very strange. It is selling very well in retirement communities in Arizona. It is selling in retirement communities where kids are illegal. This is supposed to be a children's book. What is going on?"

"Grownups are buying it for grown-ups!"

In fact, it turned out that parents buy

it for grandparents and grandparents buy it for parents and kids buy it for everybody and everybody buys it for kids.

As a matter of fact, everybody buys it for everybody. That's why it sells a lot of copies. I think it's my best book. So far it has sold about 15,000,000 copies.

*Thank you to Robert Munsch for donating 3 signed copies of his best seller "Love you Forever" to Angel Whispers – one was auctioned off at our recent Silent Auction, one will be used for an upcoming fundraiser and the other copy will be kept as a special keepsake in the Angel Whispers library!*

# My Grief Journey

My grief journey began in 1998, our daughter Sabrina was almost 2 years old when we found out we were pregnant...we were ecstatic! Our plan was to have our children approximately 2½ years apart so the timing of when we conceived was perfect for our “plan”, little did I realize that our plan was not to be determined by us! Our dreams of adding to our family with another baby were soon shattered.

Right from the beginning of my pregnancy I felt like it was different, I felt different, but could not put my finger on why. I can reflect back now and say that somehow I knew that something was wrong even from early on, but at the time was in complete denial. It wasn't until I began to bleed that I knew something was truly wrong.

At the time I was having complications the Obstetricians were on strike in Alberta and I was unable to see my doctor. I was forced to see a new family doctor who assured me that lots of women bleed in pregnancy and that nothing was wrong, even when she couldn't find our baby's heartbeat she told me that my placenta was likely towards the front of my uterus and in the way of finding the heartbeat. She told me not to worry (much easier said than done...there is something to be said for a mother's intuition) and sent me on my way.

I tried to be optimistic but when the bleeding continued after several more weeks, I returned and insisted that she send me for an ultrasound. She reluctantly gave me a requisition while still trying to convince me that nothing was wrong. I had to book my own appointment, and when that I was finally able to get in for the ultrasound, my worst fears were confirmed. The ultrasound tech said nothing...she wouldn't look at me, she just stared blankly at the screen. I kept asking, how is my baby, she didn't answer. She left me alone in the room saying she was going to show the pictures to the doctor...moments later the technologist and doctor returned and stared at me and said “I'm sorry but your baby has died”,

they did not even go to get my husband from the waiting room before telling me. They brought him in after when I was crying hysterically.

We were sent home and told that I would go into labour on my own. After 2 weeks, nothing had happened. I was walking around knowing my baby was dead inside me waiting for something to happen. The obstetricians were still on strike, I was still experiencing morning sickness and I started to convince myself that my baby had not died and that they somehow were wrong. How could I still be feeling pregnant if my baby was dead.

*My husband returned to work and my perception was that he “got over” our loss and life returned to normal for him.*

I was finally able to convince my family doctor to see me and told her that I still felt pregnant...she did run some further tests. They did in fact discover that my pregnancy hormones were increasing, my interpretation of that was that my baby must still be alive or that I was carrying twins. My doctor however shared her concerns that she thought I was experiencing a partial molar pregnancy, she was able to speak with an obstetrician who confirmed her suspicions. I was immediately instructed to go to the hospital for a D&C as my body had not gone into labour on its own and they insisted that rather than delivering our baby I would have to have a D&C procedure done to ensure all the tissues were removed. I was confused and didn't understand why until later. I woke up from surgery never having the opportunity to see or hold our baby, I was told our baby was sent for testing.

When I returned for my follow up appointment with an obstetrician, he

explained that I had in fact experienced a partial molar pregnancy. I really knew nothing about them...he explained that there are 2 types of molar pregnancies, a full molar which is where cells develop into cysts, a partial molar is where the baby develops but with many chromosomal problems that are not consistent with life, for either one it's important to ensure all tissues are completely removed which is why they performed the D&C. My pregnancy lasted longer than most molar & partial molar pregnancies.

We named our baby Loren (a blend of my name & my husband Rene's name). We were devastated, how could this have happened, why were we one of the statistics for this very rare complication. To further complicate our grief, I was told that molar pregnancies can be cancerous and that I would have to go for an array of tests to determine if I had developed cancer as a result.

Was losing a baby not enough? How could a pregnancy that should end with a healthy baby end like this, my baby dead and me possibly having cancer?!?!?

Fortunately tests confirmed that I had not developed cancer, one good thing finally came from this nightmare I felt I was living. However it was several months before we were given the clearance to try to conceive again. During this time I cried all the time, I got up in the mornings only because our 2 year old needed me. My husband returned to work and my perception was that he “got over” our loss and life returned to normal for him. I began to feel resentful that he seemed ok and I was struggling. I finally confronted him with my feelings and he shared with me that he was in fact grieving, but that he was doing everything he could to keep it together to be strong for me.

What an eye opener that conversation was for me, I realized I had been so wrong about him getting over the loss of our baby. I began to see him through different eyes, when I was having a good day, he would have a tough day and vice versa. We realized that communication was the key to getting

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through this together! I received support through other moms I met who had experienced losses. I did go on to get pregnant again and gave birth in December 1999 to our beautiful Rainbow baby girl Alexis.

In the fall of 2000 I met someone who would become a very dear friend of mine, Melissa Kondro. I was facilitating baby loss meetings with a program I had become involved with when Melissa came to a meeting 8 months pregnant with her Rainbow Baby. She had lost her first baby girl Madison in June 1999 and was so scared leading up to her due date. I could connect with her as I had experienced the same feelings of fear & anxiety in my subsequent pregnancy. We hit it off immediately and became instant friends. I had become a birth doula after having Alexis and Melissa & her husband Blair had asked me to be at the birth of her Rainbow baby Darby, what an honour for me!

Our friendship continued to be nurtured by our deep connection and understanding of our journey's after the loss of Loren & Madison. Through our many conversations we realized that our philosophy's for how we felt families should be supported after a loss were the same, it was through these conversations that we decided we were interesting in eventually starting a program of our own to offer support to other families after the loss of their babies.

Our dream of starting a program became reality in September of 2002 after the birth of another baby for my husband & I, our daughter Jaedyn was born on Valentine's Day of 2002. mLittle did I know when we created Angel Whispers that I would soon be requiring the support of Melissa & others in our program.

We had assumed our family was complete when Jaedyn was born, how wrong we were. I decided that I should visit my doctor to get a prescription for the birth control pill until my husband was scheduled for his "procedure". During this appointment I mentioned

that I had been spotting, I didn't think much about it as my cycles had been all screwed up after having Jaedyn. My doctor asked if I could be pregnant, I laughed and said that there was no way I could be. She gave me a prescription for the pill and said to start taking it immediately. She also gave me a requisition for blood work for my annual physical, I noticed that she included an HCG test, she said it was only precautionary. I am notorious for

*My grief was very unique...I was grieving our baby that we lost while trying to remain positive for our baby that I was still carrying.*

not going for blood work in a timely manner after seeing my doctor, so in true Lori-Ann style I waited several weeks to go.

The day after going I received a phone message from the doctor's nurse asking me to call, when I returned her call she said my doctor needed to see me that day. I asked if I could come in the next day as it was already late in the day, she insisted I needed to come immediately, which gave me great cause for concern. I called my husband in tears and said I needed to go in to see my doctor for results and told him how scared I was, he told me he would leave work and meet me there. On my way to the office I called my mom and she said "could you be pregnant", I laughed and said absolutely not.

Upon entering the doctor's office, the waiting room was packed, the nurse escorted me immediately to an exam room and my doctor left the appointment she was in to come see me, at that point I had convinced myself that I must be dying. She proceeded to say that she needed to run more tests, I asked why, she replied "because your pregnancy test was positive", I was still spotting and her concern was that I was miscarrying or was experiencing another partial molar pregnancy.

I looked at her and responded "that's not funny" as I looked over to see my husband with his jaw on the ground holding our baby.

The week after finding out I was pregnant I scheduled an appointment to see my obstetrician as I was still bleeding, when I mentioned to Rene that I had an appointment, he asked why. I said "because I am pregnant", he looked at me in shock and said "you are???" I said you were sitting there with me when I found out, his response was that he thought it was only a possibility.

Over the course of the next few weeks I had blood tests every 48 hrs to ensure my levels were rising normally. My levels were rising at a much higher rate than normal, which concerned the doctor as that can be indicative of a molar pregnancy. After seeing my doctor he scheduled an ultrasound, the first ultrasound showed that the baby was doing well, it wasn't until my second ultrasound that the doctor called to ask if I was sitting down. I expected the worst as I was still bleeding, he said that your ultrasound has revealed that you are having twins!!! My HCG levels were increasing at the rate they were because I was expecting twins, the ultrasound also revealed a sub-chorionic hemorrhage, where one baby's umbilical cord attached to my uterus it hit a major blood vessel causing the bleeding. I was assured that they are fairly common and that most heal on their own with no harm to the baby. I decided I would not tell Rene right away about expecting twins as he was already stressing about having another baby, Rene's ideal family included 2 children!

After my bleeding became worse is when I told Rene about the twins as I thought I was losing both babies. Another visit to my doctor and another ultrasound determined that one of our precious babies had died, sadly little Brooklynn could not survive the hemorrhaging. Our surviving twin Sydney was not negatively affected by the bleeding. I continued to bleed heavily for a few more weeks before it stopped

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suddenly.

My grief was very unique...I was grieving our baby that we lost while trying to remain positive for our baby that I was still carrying. Being involved with Angel Whispers was so helpful to me during this time, being able to talk with others that understood was so healing. As a facilitator with our support groups I could openly share my story and be accepted and understood. Even though the circumstances of my losses were different than the other families, we were bonded together by the fact that we had all lost babies. Sadly I also began another intense grief journey shortly before our surviving baby was born when my mom died suddenly & unexpectedly at the age of 49.

Our little Sydney entered the world 8 weeks prematurely weighing in at just over 4 lbs...she has proven to be a fighter since conception. Overcoming all of the bleeding during my pregnancy which took the life of her twin Brooklynn and overcoming all of the challenges that she has faced since her birth including being diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy at age 2 and being told she would never walk or talk. Well our little Sydney is now almost 11 and not only walks but dances and is the most talkative of all 4 of our girls here with

us! She will always face some challenges, but she has proven she is here for a reason and that her determination & spirit will allow her to overcome any future challenges. She often talks about her twin sister, she has talked about visits with Brooklynn and how much fun they had together. It has proven to me that there is a special connection between twins, even after one has passed.

Angel Whispers is a gift that my 2 angels, Loren & Brooklynn gave to me. My angels knew that this was a path in life that I was meant to follow. Not every family finds meaning in their loss, but for me I know my babies did not die in vain. Their deaths have allowed me to walk this grief journey with other families, their legacy along with Madison's legacy is Angel Whispers, and I am so grateful to my angels for showing me what my life's passion is.

I became Program Coordinator with Angel Whispers 3 years ago, I can honestly say that I love the work I do. Knowing that I can make the difference for a family that has lost a baby by being there to support them is one of the most rewarding feelings. If I can help one family then my pain, heartache & grief was in some small way worth it. Together with Melissa who co-facilitates the support group meetings along with our husbands Rene & Blair, we have been able to reach out to provide healing and sup-

port to hundreds of families locally & around the world.

You never "get over" losing a baby, when a baby dies, the family grieves for their baby but also for the hopes, dreams & plans for the future including that baby. Their lives are forever changed, eventually the intense emotions will soften and they find what we refer to as a new "normal".

My new normal is Angel Whispers and my beautiful family, my husband Rene and my 4 beautiful girls here with us, Sabrina, Alexis, Jaedyn & Sydney and of course my 2 angels that I know are always with me, Loren & Brooklynn.

Thank you to each of you who are helping us to ensure the success of our Angel Whispers fundraiser. As a non-funded program, we rely on our fundraisers, grants & individual donations to sustain the much needed support to grieving mommies & daddies.

And to all of our Angel Whispers families, thank you for opening up your hearts & sharing your angels with us – it is an honour to be walking alongside you in your grief journey. May you always feel the love of your angel with you each & every day.

With much love & understanding,

*Lori-Ann*

## Visit us on Facebook!

Facebook is a fast and easy way for us to send out meeting reminders and notifications about our healing hands workshops, as well as what is new in our community.

You are also able to make a donation to our program in memory of your baby through facebook.

Please visit:

[www.causes.com/angelwhispers](http://www.causes.com/angelwhispers) or <http://www.facebook.com/loriannangelwhispers>

Angel Whispers receives some funding from the Ed Stelmach Foundation. We also rely on grants, fundraisers, and donations from generous individuals to sustain our services to grieving families. Thank you for your continued support!

## You might want to check out these web sites:

- [www.facesofloss.com](http://www.facesofloss.com)
- [www.grieveoutloud.org](http://www.grieveoutloud.org)
- [www.nationalshare.org/creating-memories.html](http://www.nationalshare.org/creating-memories.html) - nationalshare.org serves those who have experienced the death of a baby due to early pregnancy loss, stillbirth, or in the first few months of life.
- [www.angelwhispers.ca/angelwhispers](http://www.angelwhispers.ca/angelwhispers) - find information on worldwide baby loss support programs and resources under the support tab.
- [www.tinyhandsofhope.ca](http://www.tinyhandsofhope.ca)
- [www.stillstandingmag.com](http://www.stillstandingmag.com)

# Finley's Story

I was very recent newlywed after a whirlwind relationship and my husband, a soldier in the British army, and I had just embarked on the opportunity of a lifetime - living in Italy for my husband's job. We were looking forward to spending two years living in the sunshine, travelling, learning a new language and enjoying the local history and culture. I thought that my life had really changed as much as possible in a short time, but I was wrong. On July 31, 2011 my life truly changed forever; that was the day that two pink lines appeared on my home pregnancy test - I was going to be a mother.

I endured a very long and difficult pregnancy. Though we were so very excited to become parents, I was incredibly sick from early pregnancy into my 8th month. I also struggled with not knowing very many people and being in such a strange new place. I am normally the kind of person who loves to get out, meet new people and explore, but my never ending sickness made it incredibly difficult not only to meet new people, but for also for us to get the most out of the beautiful place we were living. Because of that, I felt incredibly isolated, though I was lucky in the end to have met a few very close friends.

At our anatomy ultrasound at 20 weeks, we discovered we were having a little boy. This was for the best as we had never managed to agree on a single girl's name. We also found that due to a slight restriction in one of the arteries in the umbilical cord, our baby was slightly smaller than he should be. This meant that I was to be monitored very closely, and would end up with frequent ultrasounds. At around 7 months pregnant, this problem had fixed itself, and although our son was on the small side, he was still within the normal range for size and weight, and my pregnancy was classed as low risk. This meant that I would be able to deliver in the American Naval Hospital rather than one of the local Italian hospitals. I had been petrified of delivering in a place where I wouldn't understand the language and so for me

knowing I'd be somewhere familiar was a great comfort.

After many great name discussions, we decided on the very first name we'd ever discussed. It was strangely one we both liked, as my husband and I seem to have very different tastes in names. We decided on Finley as a first name and Arthur as the middle name. A beautiful name for our beautiful boy.

That Christmas during my pregnancy, we visited Canada to see my friends and family. My husband had yet to meet any of them due to the speed in which we married. I was excited to introduce him to everyone, and also for everyone to share in our pregnancy. I was just entering my third trimester, and was already obviously showing.

*Even through the pain of labour, I was in very high spirits knowing I was going to meet my son soon.*

As the pregnancy progressed, I threw myself into preparations for our little family. I researched everything from what the best baby monitor was, to breastfeeding versus formula feeding, to disposable versus cloth diapers, to birth plans. I made lists of things to buy and things to pack in the hospital bag. I learned how to knit because I wanted my baby to have things that were handmade, and by the end I had managed to make booties, a hat and the sweetest little cardigan for our little man.

Because of how limited we were in exploring due to my sickness, we began to make plans for after Finley was born. We planned holidays and trips and imagined how our son would be so well travelled at such a young age. We would have photos of him in front of such monuments as the Coliseum in Rome and the Leaning Tower of Piza. We planned for my husband's family to visit us for Finley's first Christmas. The future was so bright and promising - I

truly could not wait.

Nearer the end of my pregnancy, I felt a lot better. I was massively pregnant but I finally had the pregnancy glow. I managed to get out and about a bit more, and was finally really enjoying being pregnant. I was making an effort to meet more people, and even started attending the local playgroup for British families.

On March 22, 2012 I went in for a routine appointment. I had a quick ultrasound to see if Finley was still breach - he wasn't and everything was very normal. The doctor asked if I wanted an internal to see how things were progressing, but as I hadn't yet quite reached my due date, I told him we would wait until the following week. I was happy to wait for things to happen naturally.

I went to the grocery store after my appointment to do our weekly food shopping. I felt very funny as I was walking through the shop, to the point where I almost abandoned a cart full of food. I decided to persevere and that after I got home I would spend the rest of the day relaxing. That evening my husband got home from work. I made dinner and we were watching a movie (Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy). I was laying on the couch and my husband was on the love seat. Suddenly I felt a pop and my water started to leak. I told my husband that I thought my water had just broken and I sat up. When I sat up, it was more of a massive waterfall than a leak and he asked if I hadn't just wet myself. We laughed, and then realised what it meant - we were going to have our baby soon.

I went upstairs and got cleaned up, while my husband took our dog to stay with the neighbours. We both called our parents and told them the exciting news. I thought that I would be nervous when it came time, but we were both very calm and collected. And excited. During the 20 mile drive to the hospital, we were joking and laughing as I tried to figure out if I was having

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contractions. It was very sweet.

It was about 10 p.m. when we arrived at the hospital. I was admitted and left to see if I would labour naturally. My contractions started to build, but by morning had tapered off, so I was induced. Even through the pain of labour, I was in very high spirits knowing I was going to meet my son soon. I was happy to go along with the recommendations of the hospital staff, but I held off on having an epidural as I felt I was handling the pain quite well.

I ended up having the epidural after the hospital staff kept pushing me to get it. It took a very long hour to place during very painful contractions that my husband had to encourage me through. I had been feeling the urge to push, but wanted for them to finish with the epidural. Once they were finished, I was examined and sure enough I was 10 cm dilated, and it was time to push. I pushed, and pushed and pushed. Finley started to have heart rate decelerations and he was stuck. I had pushed for nearly 2.5 hours before my c section was called. I didn't know at the time, but he'd been showing signs of distress for hours already.

My husband was allowed in the room with me for the c section, and as far as anyone knew, everything was normal. In a very short amount of time, our son would be born. I was so excited.

He was supposed to be handed immediately to me once he was born, but he wasn't. He was pink, but he didn't take a breath straight away, and so was instead handed to the paediatrician. I wasn't immediately concerned, because I knew it was quite common, and as I was being stitched up, I remember looking into my husband's eyes and eagerly listening for Finley's first cry. It never came.

After an indistinguishable amount of time, it became very apparent that everything was not okay. The alarm for a code blue began to scream overhead and I was terrified. My husband sat there holding my hand as I was strapped to the bed, both of us too afraid to question what was happen-

ing. I ended up being sick, but nobody was paying attention to me because of what was going on with our baby. Phone calls were made by a terrified nurse to other doctors to come in, because, as we were forced to hear, the doctors who were working on Finley were failing to intubate him. I had no idea how much time had passed, or who had come into the room, but finally, Finley was intubated and taken from the room. They asked Steve if he wanted to go see Finley, and as I was still being stitched up from surgery, my heart was able to relax and I thought everything was okay.

I was wheeled into the room with Finley, and I was finally going to be able to meet my son. Steve made a joke about how it was definitely his baby, as he looked just like him. And then I laid eyes on him. I remember thinking how scrunched up and wrinkly he was. And tiny. So very tiny. They asked if I wanted to hold him before

*It took me a moment to fully understand what they were saying to me, and once it sunk in, I remember feeling as though I just wanted to run away.*

he was transferred to another hospital – there was no question in my mind. I couldn't really sit up after having just had surgery, so he was kind of propped onto me where I could hold him and really see his face. I remember his body shaking and wondering if he was having seizures. Everything seemed so very surreal, and I was still under the impression that everything was okay – he was alive in my arms after all. I only was able to hold him for a few minutes as the ambulance arrived to take him. I was adamant that my husband should go with him, but everybody disagreed with me. I was taken into a recovery room and left to ponder what was going on. Everything had happened so fast, my brain could not take it all in.

Everything after that point is a bit

mixed together. My husband was with me most of the time. I asked one of the doctors if Finley would be okay, and she said yes – that put my mind at ease. But things managed to go from bad to worse; I began to haemorrhage severely. I needed to have emergency surgery to save my life, but before they took me in, I had to sign a consent form allowing them to remove my uterus if the bleeding couldn't be stopped quickly enough. I had a bit of a break down at that point – somehow my perfect day had turned into my poor baby being very poorly, with the possibility of me never being able to carry another child. I screamed and cried and my husband told off the doctor for scaring me.

I can remember having needles stabbed in both of my arms, and a blood pressure reading of 79/37. I remember thinking that was really bad. I can remember the look on the nurse's face as she saw the amount of blood on the sheet she took from under me. I can remember thinking how much I loved my husband. And after that, I must have either passed out from blood loss or from anaesthesia.

I was very confused when I finally came to after the surgery. When I was under the anaesthetic I had gone somewhere else entirely; it was a peaceful place and I know that wherever I was, my baby boy was with me. I don't know if it was because we were so close to death, or if it was a dream, but it felt very real, and nothing made sense when I woke up. I kept asking where I was. I finally realised that my dream state wasn't real, and the whole real life situation came flooding back to me. I was tired. Through many blood transfusions, blood pressure tests, etc. I managed to fall asleep with my husband in a bed next to mine.

The next few days after that sort of all blur together – but the result was that I was very sick and I was not allowed to leave to see Finley. We received different reports on how he was doing, and Steve went to see him. I was told he seemed very peaceful. We were waiting on results of scans to see how he truly was. I just wanted to be with him. During my hospital stay, I

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had been expressing milk for him. That for me was the biggest reassurance that he would live – for why would they have me pumping milk for a baby that wouldn't need it?

The day I was supposed to be discharged, my blood test results were less than satisfactory and the doctor wanted me to receive two more units of blood in the hopes that I could see him the next day. I was unhappy, but wanted to feel well enough to truly be able to be there for my son so I agreed to the transfusions. My husband's mum had flown in the night before and she had just arrived with my husband to visit me. We looked at some photos of Finley and agreed how much he looked like his dad. My husband was just about to go to the vending machine for drinks when two of the doctors came in and asked to speak to me and my husband alone. We said him mum could stay.

They then delivered the news that Finley had suffered not one, but two cardiac arrests. They were able to

resuscitate him from the first, but not from the second. I remember holding on to so much hope that they were going to tell me he was going to be okay, but instead we received the news that he'd passed away. It took me a moment to fully understand what they were saying to me, and once it sunk in, I remember feeling as though I just wanted to run away. I wanted to leave my body. I couldn't breathe for the weight on my chest. I don't remember anybody else's reaction, I just had to try and breathe.

The next day I was discharged and I finally was able to go see Finley. I was terrified of how he would look, but when we got there, he was dressed adorably, and looked just perfect. No tubes or wires covered his face, and he was peaceful. My instincts kicked in and I just wanted to hold him. I remember thinking it was so odd that his skin was cold. I never wanted to let him go. Since then, we have been through a rollercoaster of fighting the American and British military and medical systems in search of answers. There was never an answer as to why our perfectly

healthy little boy died. Recently, we finally managed to find a law firm who would represent us. They conducted an investigation that found that if Finley would have been delivered when he first showed signs of distress, he likely wouldn't have needed to be resuscitated. But not only that, because he was pink and his cord gas levels were almost normal, if he'd been resuscitated properly and in a timely manner after delivery, he would likely be here with us today. The fact that his death was caused solely due to medical negligence has been very hard to come to terms with. We have recently filed the lawsuit and are awaiting the results of the case.

Nothing will ever, ever bring our son back. Finding justice won't make our loss of Finley any less. But knowing that we did the only thing that we could do for our son in some small ways brings comfort. And I truly hope that it will help to prevent this happening to even one more baby.

To my sweet little boy – I'll love you forever.

[www.thestarsapart.com](http://www.thestarsapart.com)

### A Mother's Day Wish From Heaven

Dear Mr. Hallmark

I'm writing you from heaven,  
and though it must appear  
A rather strange idea, I see everything from here  
I just popped in to visit your stores to find a card  
A card of love for my mother,  
As this day for her is hard

There must be some mistake I thought,  
Every card you could imagine  
Except I could not find a card  
From a child who lives in heaven.  
She is still a mother too, no matter where I reside  
I had to leave, she understands  
But oh the tears she's cried.

I thought that if I wrote you  
That you would come to know  
That though I live in heaven now  
I still love my mother so.

She talks with me, and dreams with me;  
We still share laughter too  
Memories our way of speaking now

Would you see what you could do?

My mother carries me in her heart  
Her tears she hides from sight.  
She writes poems to honor me  
Sometimes far into the night

She plants flowers in my garden  
there my living memory dwells  
She writes to other grieving parents  
Trying to ease their pain as well.

So you see Mr. Hallmark,  
Though I no longer live on earth  
I must find a way to remind her of her wondrous worth  
She needs to be honored and remembered too  
Just as the children of earth will do

Thank you Mr. Hallmark, I know you'll do your best  
I have done all I can do; to you I'll leave the rest.  
Find a way to tell her how much she means to me  
Until I can do it for myself  
When she joins me in eternity.

*By Jody Seilheimer*

# Calling Daddy From Heaven

I'm calling you Daddy, from Heaven  
Because we are apart,  
But the phone won't ring on earth  
today;  
In heaven we call heart to heart.

I just want to say, "I love you,"  
And I think of you each day.  
I hear you say you love me  
Each time you kneel to pray.

Sometimes I watch you working  
At a job you do so well.  
I tell all my friends in Heaven,  
"That's my Daddy, and ain't he swell!"

I'm working on a project  
To send you as a gift,  
And when you finally see it,  
Your spirits will really lift.

I'm painting lots of colors  
All across the sky,  
And after rain you'll see them  
And know we never die.

I'll also paint some flowers  
And send them down to you.  
They'll look so fresh and pretty  
In the early morning dew.

But best of all, I'll take some notes  
Of all the things I love,  
So you can read my journals  
When you meet me here above.

Your name will cover pages  
Of my moments to be shared;  
You'll see how much you've meant  
to me  
And how very much I cared.

Then, I'll have story time with Jesus  
And he'll tell me stories of you.  
I'll listen with a smile  
Of all the things you do.

- Author Unknown

# Imagine

Imagine a mother caressing her bulging belly, nine months pregnant and glowing from water retention and maternal anticipation as she speaks softly to her unborn child and gently encourages him to join her in the world.

Imagine a mother nervously hugging her daughter goodbye on the first day of kindergarten. Her daughter holds her close out of fear that her mother will let go as the mother holds her daughter close and fears the same.

Imagine a mother teaching her son how to ride a bike for the first time. The training wheels off. The wind in his hair and the smile on both of their faces as they revel in the shared pride they feel for his first sense of true adventure and independence.

Imagine a mother watching with joy as her daughter walks down the aisle, linked in arms with her father, as she approaches the man that will never truly be "good enough" for her sweet girl... as a mother always hopes her daughter would always stay "daddy's little girl" forever.

Imagine a mother wiping away tears of fear of the unknown and pride in her soldier as her grown son embraces her with his strong, courageous, camouflaged arms as he prepares to board a plane to serve overseas.

Now, imagine that same mother awoken from sleep one night to a phone call, the police at the door, or to the eerie sound of screaming silence from the nursery.

Imagine a mother who hears...

"I'm sorry 'mam, there was an accident, he didn't make it..."

"I'm sorry 'mam, there was nothing we could do. She wasn't breathing when we went to wake her..."

"I'm sorry 'mam, there were no survivors, his service to our country will be remembered..."

"I'm sorry 'mam, there is no heartbeat. There will be no baby."

Imagine a mother whose child's life stops there and her life is lost amongst the fog left behind by the grim words that the unknowing messengers of death brought to her door.

Imagine a mother left imagining what life would have been like with her child now gone too soon.

Imagine this mother and realize that she is no figment of imagination. She is your neighbor. She is your mother. She is your therapist, your maid, your gas station clerk, your nurse, your friend, your sister, she is you.

And remember, although she lives in fear of being only a figment of a mother.

She is just as real as moms with living children.

For she is still a mother.

She is the bereaved mother.

Created in an instant but remains for a lifetime.

by Lindsey Henke

# Congratulations!

*Koen Jaxon McCracken*

*Born on January 24, 2013 weighing 8 lbs. 9 oz. to proud mommy Candis McCracken  
Koen's big brother in heaven is Jessie James Anthony Hayworth-McCracken,  
he's celebrating with the angels!*

*Avery Dawn Williams*

*Born on January 13, 2014 weighing 8 lbs. 9 oz. to proud parents Amanda and Doug  
and big sister Abby!  
Big sister Emily is celebrating her safe arrival from heaven!*

*Andrew Everett Barnes*

*Born on March 12, 2014 weighing 9 lbs. 9 oz. to proud parents Courtney and Tye  
and big brother Eric!  
Big sister Catherine is smiling down from heaven!*

## Healing Opportunities

### 4th Annual Rainbow Baby Reunion

Sunday May 4th, 2014 1-3pm

This is an opportunity to remember our Angels and celebrate our Rainbow Babies. Moms, Dads, children and Rainbow babies are encouraged to join us for this celebration!

FCSS offices - 401 Festival Lane, Sherwood Park

Please come through the library entrance and proceed to the second floor.

For more information or to register, please call Lori-Ann at (780)998-5595 ext. 225

### Spring Memorial Service

Sunday May 25th, 2014 - 1pm

Every spring the funeral homes, hospitals, cemetaries and support groups in the Edmonton area collaboarte to hold a special memorial service for families who have lost a baby.

This year's service will be held at Connelly & McKinley Funeral Home 10011-114 St. Edmonton - there will be graveside service to follow

If you are unable to attend but would like your baby acknowledged, please call Lori-Ann at (780)998-5595 ext. 225

### Yoga for Grief Support:

Yoga specifically designed for people who have suffered the death of a loved one. Classes involve yoga postures, breathing and meditation along with educational and supportive topics related to bereavement support. Guided by Sandy Ayre, and Occupational Therapist and Certified Yoga Instructor. For more information & upcoming class dates, please visit - [www.yogaforgriefsupport.com](http://www.yogaforgriefsupport.com).

## Upcoming Meetings:

***Baby Loss Support Group*** - for families who have lost a baby during pregnancy or after birth. Meetings are held on the first Sunday of each month from 7-9 p.m. in Sherwood Park at the FCSS offices at 2001 Sherwood Drive. April 6, May 4 and June 1

***Subsequent Pregnancy Support Group*** - for families who are trying to conceive or expecting again after experiencing a previous loss. Contact Lori-Ann for meeting location. April 13, May 11 and June 8.

***Healing Hands Workshop*** - an opportunity to remember your baby through healing activities such as scrapbooking, card making and other crafts. From 1-3 p.m. April 26 and June 21 at the FCSS offices in Sherwood Park.

***Parenting after Loss Group Meetings*** - an opportunity for moms and their rainbow babies to meet and discuss the emotions and challenges parents experience in parenting a Rainbow Baby. Dad's are welcome to attend!. Sunday's from 1-3 p.m. at the FCSS offices April 13 and June 8.

*For all meetings and workshops please contact Lori-Ann to register (780) 998-5595 ext. 225.*



## Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program

*"How very softly you tiptoed into our world, almost silently, only a moment you stayed.  
But what an imprint you footsteps have left upon our hearts."*

*- Dorothy Ferguson*

Dear Friends;

Our silent auction pub night fund raiser for the Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program was a huge success! The total amount raised was \$5000, every penny of which will make a difference in the lives of Angel Whispers families.

It is with a grateful heart that we thank you for helping us support Angel Whispers. By honouring our angels and supporting this event you have helped the program to continue the vital work it does with grieving families and in maintaining the lifeline that it creates for so many.

Thank you for your support in assisting Angel Whispers to continue to provide hope and healing to grieving families both in our community and beyond. For more information on the program, visit the Angel Whispers website – [www.angelwhispers.ca/angelwhispers](http://www.angelwhispers.ca/angelwhispers).

Sincerely,

*Lori-Ann*

Program Coordinator

Angel Whispers Baby Loss Support Program

## Upcoming Fundraising Opportunities:

### Ongoing Pampered Chef Fundraiser (now-May)

A portion of all sales will be donated to Angel Whispers.

Please visit [www.pamperedchef.biz/tirsa](http://www.pamperedchef.biz/tirsa), click Shop online and type in and then select "Angel Whispers".

Thank you to Tirsa Smale for organizing this fundraiser!

### Sunday May 11, 2014 - 10am-4pm

Mother's Day fundraiser for Angel Whispers

Hosted by Lumina Mobile Spa for Kids & Macaroni Kids

Lorelei Beaumaris Community League 16220-103 St., Edmonton

Tickets \$5 - includes FREE activities for moms and kids

For more information, please contact Samantha at (780)907-2828

Thank you to Samantha and Denise for organizing this fundraiser!

### Stay tuned for information on upcoming fundraisers:

- Dueling Piano Pub Night Fundraiser
- 5th annual Madison Memorial Golf Tournament

*Visit our website - [www.angelwhispers.ca](http://www.angelwhispers.ca) for updated information.*

# Thank you!

- to Strathcona Family and Community Services for allowing us use of their meeting space.
- to Betty Dean for helping with our newsletter!
- to Allison Smith for her assistance with our website!
- to the mommies who decorate our memory boxes and to all our volunteers!

## and for the following donations:

- Ajibola Adeoye - in memory of little Johnny
- Liane McCorriston - in honour of Sophie
- Sam and Barb Bundt - in memory of baby Emma
- David Paul Crumback
- Jodi Heidinger
- Amanda and Kevin Hromota - in memory of Columbus
- Kristen and James Rino - in memory of Amber
- Robert Munsch for donating 3 signed books of "Love you Forever" to Angel Whispers. Included in this newsletter is Robert Munsch's inspiration for his best selling book.
- Tirsia Smale - for doing a Pampered Chef fundraiser for Angel Whispers
- Mary Graham from A Little Bit of This Crafting for donating a portion of each sign she sells to Angel Whispers.
- Samantha Karina from Lumina Lash and Mobile Spa for Kids and Denise from Macaroni Kids for planning a Spring fundraiser for Angel Whispers. See details in Fundraising Opportunities.

## and to our incredible Angel Whispers families

for their assistance in planning our recent Angel Whispers pub night fundraiser and silent auction! Stay tuned to our website [www.angelwhispers.ca/angelwhispers](http://www.angelwhispers.ca/angelwhispers) for details on more upcoming fundraising opportunities!!!

Thank you to everyone for your generous donations which help to sustain the services provided by Angel Whispers.

## *Just For Today For Bereaved Parents*

Just for today I will try to live  
through the next 24 hours  
and not expect to get over my  
child's death,  
but instead learn to live with it, just  
one day at a time.

Just for today I will remember my  
child's life, not just her death,  
and bask in the comfort of all those  
treasured days and moments we  
shared.

Just for today I will forgive all the  
family and friends  
who didn't help or comfort me the  
way I needed them to.  
They truly did not know how.

Just for today I will smile no matter  
how much I hurt on the inside,  
for maybe if I smile a little,  
my heart will soften and I will begin  
to heal.

Just for today I will reach out to

comfort a relative or friend of my  
child,  
for they are hurting too,  
and perhaps we can help each other.

Just for today I will free myself from  
my self-inflicted burden of guilt,  
for deep in my heart I know if there  
was anything in this world  
I could of done to save my child from  
death,  
I would of done it.

Just for today I will honor my child's  
memory  
by doing something with another child  
because I know that would make my  
own child proud.

Just for today I will offer my hand in  
friendship  
to another bereaved parent  
for I do know how they feel.

Just for today when my heart feels  
like breaking,

I will stop and remember that grief  
is the price we pay for loving  
and the only reason I hurt is because  
I had the privilege of loving so much

Just for today I will not compare  
myself with others.  
I am fortunate to be who I am  
and have had my child for as long  
as I did.

Just for today I will allow myself to  
be happy,  
for I know that I am not deserting  
her by living on.

Just for today I will accept that I did  
not die when my child did,  
my life did go on,  
and I am the only one who can  
make that life worthwhile once  
more.

*by Vicki Tushingham*

# In Memory of our New Angels

Chloe Renee Waters  
January 1, 2006

Emily Budziszyn - September 14, 2013  
January 1, 2014

Annie Raya Sutankayo Smale  
January 1, 2014

Jaxson Craig Hoffman  
January 15, 2014

Makai Robert Jackson Edwards  
June 27, 2013 - January 19, 2014

Baby Radford  
January 30, 2014

Baby Gillis  
January 31, 2014

Grace Fleming  
February 6, 2014

Jackson Tomas Fung  
February 8, 2014

Bella Robitaille  
February 16, 2012

Lily Weir  
July 9, 2011

Declan George Ackeral  
July 26, 2013

Christian Lee Stamey  
August 27, 2010

Lachlan Jamieson  
October 15, 2013

Kayson Littlejohn  
November 8, 2013

Johnny Adeoye  
November 22, 2013

Cyrus Kal El Hopper  
November 25, 2013

All angels can be found on our website at:  
[www.angelwhispers.ca/angelwhispers](http://www.angelwhispers.ca/angelwhispers)

Please call or email us if you would like to submit your baby's name to be remembered. If we have forgotten to remember your baby on this page, or have misspelled your angel's name, please let us know.

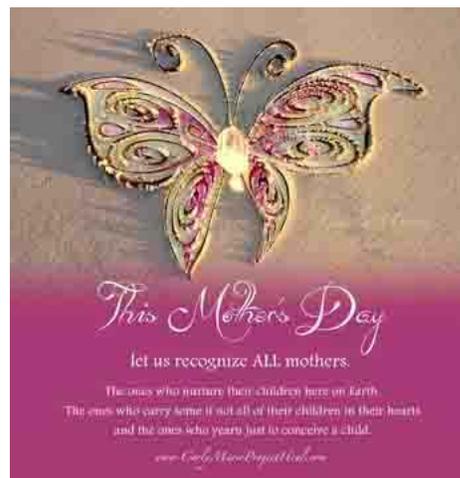
## International Bereaved Mother's Day Sunday May 4, 2014

This is what the creator of International Bereaved Mother's Day had to say about this special day...

*"This day was created to get people to start talking about the real meaning of Mother's Day. Do you know who started it? Anna Jarvis founded the traditional Mother's Day to honour her mother who experienced the death of 7 of her children and somehow through the years it has turned into a commercialized mess that card companies make millions of dollars from, but the worst thing is that bereaved mothers are completely forgotten.*

*This special day was created in 2010 to honour and celebrate the mothers who carry some if not all of their children in their hearts rather than their arms. In our modern day society, mothers who are grieving the death of their babies and children are usually forgotten. The traditional Mother's Day has proven to be an emotionally difficult day for so many mothers around the world. Just because your baby died does not mean that you are not a mother anymore. You are your baby's mother forever and people need to start recognizing this fact."*

International Bereaved Father's Day will be celebrated on Sunday September 27, 2104 to honour and celebrate father's who carry their babies in their hearts instead of their arms.





**Families First Society** is a non profit organization established in 1996. We are directed by a volunteer board and work in partnership with many community agencies to offer a variety of programs and services. Our programs promote positive parenting and early childhood development.

**Families First Society** offers parent education, programs for young children to learn and play, and family support services, as well as information and referral to other programs and services in the community.

*Fort Saskatchewan Families First Society (main office)*  
 10302A – 99 Avenue T8L 1Y2  
 or Box 3285 T8L 2T3  
 Fort Saskatchewan, AB  
 Parent Link Centre

*Phone: 780-998-5595*  
*Fax: 780-998-5503*

**Angel Whispers** was created by three moms in the Edmonton area who experienced the loss of their babies: one shortly after birth, one through miscarriage, and one through still birth.

It is a program of Families First Society of Fort Saskatchewan, a non-profit charity funded primarily through individual donations.

Donations, in memory of your baby, are acknowledged in our newsletter at your request. Charitable donation receipts are issued upon request.

**Angel Whispers provides:**

- baby loss support group
- Healing Hands groups
- subsequent pregnancy support group
- resource lending library
- quarterly newsletter
- special care packages
- Memory Box program
- one-on-one and email support
- birthcertificate keepsakes
- website with memorial star page [www.angelwhispers.ca/angelwhispers](http://www.angelwhispers.ca/angelwhispers)

**Angel Whispers Care Packages**

*Angel Whispers* sends out care packages to grieving families. Each package includes a special memento and strategies for coping. Birth Certificate keepsakes are also available.

If you would like to receive or send a care package, please call us or email [angelwhispers@familiesfirstsociety.ca](mailto:angelwhispers@familiesfirstsociety.ca) ,

**Baby Loss Group**

For families who have lost a baby during pregnancy or after birth. Meetings are held on the first Sunday of each month from 7-9 p.m. in Sherwood Park at the Family and Community Services offices at 2001 Sherwood Drive.

April 6, May 4 and June 1

**Subsequent Pregnancy Support Group**

For families who are trying to conceive or expecting again after experiencing a previous loss. Contact Lori-Ann for meeting location.

April 13, May 11 and June 8

*For meeting information, or to receive our newsletter or a special care package, please call 780.998.5595, ext. 225.*

*Angel Whispers is a non-denominational program. However we honor and respect the individual beliefs of our families.*